

Patterns for the Last Days.

PATTERNS FOR THE LAST DAYS

Preface

According to the pattern.

Num 8:4. And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick.

As Moses was directed by the Lord to make the Tabernacle and its contents according to the pattern he was shown on the mount, so the Tabernacle itself became a pattern of a greater and more perfect one. Likewise was it written of David concerning the Temple that Solomon was to build.

1 Chr 28:11-12 "Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things:"

Again, this Temple would itself become a pattern of a greater Temple.

Thus do we see illustrated the deliberate choice of the Lord to make use of patterns as recorded in His Word to point towards greater realities yet to be manifested in the course of His great plan. There are numerous such examples of situations and events foreshadowing others yet to be.

It is our objective in this sequence of articles to particularly concentrate upon such portions of the Word of God that appear to illustrate the days in which we are so privileged to live, these days of the winding-up of the work of the Gospel age as it overlaps the age of kingdom development. The concept that some of these patterns even exist *would have been a matter for speculation before 1914*. It is because we can now look back over a period exceeding 120 years since 1874, the time of Our Dear Master's return, that these patterns are now discernible, *no longer as speculations*, but as the emerging succession of *historic events* showing interesting comparison with former times and periods in the plan of God.

From Jacob's wrestling at Jabbok with its bearing on the present situation in Israel, to the sense of great joy and rejoicing as the Ark of God enters its eternal resting place, the Christ complete, in consideration of each parallel there is a sanctifying message for our day. Joseph, Moses, even Balaam, each tell much to confirm our understanding of the times in which we live. Joshua, Cyrus, Esther and Nehemiah, each have something to add, and David not least.

What a privileged people we are with such a vantage point, and what responsibility too with such light upon the path, to take comfort from the reassurances and give heed to the exhortations...so much the more... now that we are living in the day so long prepared of the Lord!

1 Cor 10:11 "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

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Jacob at Jabbok

In 1914 headlines in newspapers in England would be relating to the dramatic turn of events in Europe, events that were altering the course of history. These were stirring times for Bible students who had been led to anticipate these events for decades. In terms of time prophecy, this was zero hour.

Another item too was finding mention in the press, one of the greatest witnesses to Truth ever presented in this country. The Photodrama had reached England, and was being shown in towns to audiences of thousands throughout the land. Sufficient truth-tracts inviting attendance had been circulated for every adult in England. The result was a turnout of public so large that the halls were inadequate. Deacons were sent along the queues pulling out the brethren to leave more room for others. Two million in England alone saw the Photodrama during those months. What a witness! Elsewhere it was the same.

Long, long before this happening the Lord had engaged His own "actors", and provided a strong supporting cast of angelic hosts to enact the original version of the Photodrama. This consisted of a great scenario of the entire plan of God, and it was enacted through the lifetimes of four generations. In Abraham's life we glimpse the age of faith leading up to the coming of the seed of promise. First stage was from Eden to the flood, suggested by the death of Terah, when Abraham passed over the river from the old order and began his walk of faith as a stranger and pilgrim until the seed appeared. Then the scene of the offering on Moriah of that dear and special child of promise, and his receiving, as it were, from the dead. Then Isaac's experiences and the depiction of the call of the church in the mission of Eliezer. Finally, Joseph, again a special and dear son of his father, after his release from the prison-house (of death) and exaltation and his finding of a bride, is seen with his blessings of life for mankind. What a scenario indeed of the whole plan of the ages! Yet something would be missing but for Jacob filling that gap. Jacob was to highlight for us in particular the restoration of Israel and her preparation to fulfil all the Lord has purposed in and through His people.

The story has been told of Queen Victoria visiting a paper mill near Windsor castle. To illustrate the process involved she was led into a rag-sorting shop where men were picking out rags from the city rubbish. What was to happen to that dirty heap of rags, she asked, and was told that those rags would be processed to make the finest white paper. Shortly after her visit the queen received a package of the most delicate white paper bearing her own image as water mark, and with it a letter explaining that this was the paper made from those very rags she saw before. Quite aptly does this sum up the story of the Lord's processing of Jacob from what he was to what the Lord had in mind when first He brought him forth from the womb clutching to the heel of his twin brother Esau. It is a story of greatest encouragement to us all, for the process is not peculiar to Jacob alone. It applies equally to the church, and ultimately will apply also to the whole world of mankind. Al one day will confess, in the words of Psalm 146, verse 5, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." Sooner or later, everyone is to find this out for himself, but remember, he saw it first in the life of Jacob.

Let us commence this story from the very moment of time in which we find ourselves today... this very special hour of Israel's history. Look at those headlines of not too long back. Thousands of Jews transported from Ethiopia... Collapse of an empire, the USSR... Who would have thought it? Centre of it all.. Israel! Jacob is at the ford of Jabbok.

Gen 32:22-24 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had. And Jacob was left alone; Yes, even in the Hebrew, rather as it comes over in the English, the name Jabbok is a phonetic word-play on the name, Jacob. It denotes, we are told, "wrestling," an appropriate setting for the struggle that is here to take place.

The ford of the river Jabbok was the place where there was a conflict between two paths. It was at the confluence between two streams. It was also the only place where it is possible to brave and wade through the torrent that crosses the path of the road or trek that passes on further into the land of Israel. At certain times of year this was quite a struggle, and especially if there were goods to be carried over, and cattle and flocks to be got across, not to mention family and children... a lot of children at that! (Twelve with his daughter, Dinah.) The very youngest arrival was Joseph, the very precious first-born of Rachel, and it was his coming into the world that seemed to mark the fresh surge in the old urge to return to the land. Now, after so long a time, that return was taking tangible shape. It appears to have been shortly after Joseph arrived (prefiguring Jesus,) that the Lord tells Jacob to return to the land of promise.

Gen 31:3 And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.

Now Israel, or rather Jacob, is on the march. He is already in the land. The very place he now walks on is within the boundaries. But there is a very important sense in which Jacob has yet to arrive, yet to know and receive the full blessing the Lord intends to bestow. What Mt Moriah was to Abraham, Jabbok is to Jacob. It is here that the Lord's work on human trust and faith is to reach its peak. Jacob is to leave that place a changed man, ready, prepared for the full blessedness of his role in the divine purpose... an instrument of blessing and happiness for all.

But at this moment he sits there at sundown, the effort of getting his family and flocks thus far across those troublous waters has wearied him, and he is glad to now wait behind on the former bank alone with his thoughts, his conflicts, his fears of what awaits both him and his seed.

Doubtless he recalls the experiences of past years, and the memories of former days, and looks for some pattern, some meaning in his life. Perhaps he remembers how he once laid himself down in loneliness and foreboding that very first night of exile when he fled from his family home for fear of his life. The cause of his plight.. his estranged brother, Esau. It does not yet occur to Jacob even now that his twin brother represented part of himself, his own flesh and blood.

Esau seems to represent that within each human mind and character which tends always to resist the ways of the Lord his God. It is that which despised the birthright given him, and values the

promises of God and His declared purpose far below the exigencies of the moment, the appetite that demands immediate though, oh so transitory, a satisfaction.

Gen 25:22 "The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD." (NIV) Gal 5:17 "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (KJV)

Jacob was not himself defiant of the divine promises, nor did he undervalue them. He simply lacked the faith to believe that the Lord could fulfil them without Jacob's human scheming, craftiness, wiles, and cunning. So he had found himself ready to comply with the idea to deceive in order to obtain. How many Christian people have still this same lesson to learn who glory in appearance. Jacob put on a skin with the intent to deceive even his own father with that which was superficial and pretentious. Oh what a lot that skin tells us about the Jew, and what a lesson to us all! The promise was his. The blessing would be his. The Lord would see to that in His own way regardless of Isaac's intent. But Jacob trusted his own wiles and craftiness, his own judgment and ability to achieve this, rather than the Lord's. Thus, for lack of faith in his God to bring about that full blessing, Jacob had found himself running for his life, cast out of the land of promise.

Ladder up to heaven.

Yet even this was overruled, and the very first night of his exile the Lord had granted Jacob that first vision of heavenly involvement in Jacob's life. In total, seven visions, according to the records, were granted to Jacob. This was the first. There in weariness he had fallen asleep, a pile of small stones for a pillow in that rugged stony place. Then, in his dream, he had seen stone laid

against stone, ascending and ascending still upwards till the very topmost step of this great stairway reached, it seemed, into heaven itself. There, above all, stood the Lord. Jacob had found himself gazing up at the Lord. Then, as he watched with great awe this astounding spectacle, angels appeared, first he noticed their ascent up that stairway, then that others came down to replace them here on earth, right next to where he lay... and he heard the voice of God, and received that message from His own lips, a message specially for Jacob, personal and reassuring.

Gen 28:13-15 "And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Next morning early Jacob rose knowing he would never forget that experience or that place where human thought is drawn up that steep ascent to the thoughts of God. How could he forget that continual ascending and descending of angels, overruling, intervening, a vision so transforming of the daily trial of human life. Have we seen that stairway? Can we forget once we have glimpsed that vision of the Lord's concern in our life?

Gen 28:20-22 "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." This may sound a rather mercenary attitude as it reads, a kind of "ten per cent" agent's fee, but the word "If" at the outset should read rather "since", and this statement seems to be prophetic of Israel's future appreciation of divine overruling, when they will pay to the Lord their dues of gratitude and trust and loving obedience. Mal 3:10 "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Meditating on the bank of Jabbok, Jacob listened to those waters dashing through the rocks, rocks that seemed to stick out and intrude in the life, just to demonstrate that conquering overcoming power of that relentless flow of the river of God's pleasure. Nothing that great purpose can thwart. Over the sound of those many waters Jacob may have thought he could still hear that voice of God speaking above the troubles of his mind, the travail of his soul.. "The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed." Certainly the Lord had fulfilled His word thus far, though the path for Jacob had been sorely trying to his faith.

As an exile from the land Jacob had spent the years in servitude. He had known no place of his own, not even a home life, for he had been a shepherd for Laban, a most menial task of a slave, and this had entailed much hardship. As shepherd, Jacob had been held responsible for the flock of that mean and grasping master, and that was the story behind the dark tanned face of Jacob. Through the burning of the noon-tide heat of the sun he had watched against the wild beasts culling the flock.

Gen 31:39-40 "That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes." Isa 42:24-25 "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart." (Cp Isa 49:10 "They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.") That was an awful moment too, so recently behind him, for after the Lord had told him to depart from alien lands and return to the land of promise such animosity arose in Laban's heart that he threatened to completely wipe out the chosen race, Jacob's seed. Only the Lord's intervention achieved Jacob's escape. Anti-semitism first reared its ugly head in Genesis 31:1&2, because even in those adverse conditions the Lord made Jacob to prosper. Gen 31:1-2 "And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before." & Gen 31:29 after Laban was prevented from his evil design to destroy the people of Jacob, "It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your

father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad." We cannot miss the parallel here to the similar attempt of Hitler in this our day after the Lord had said it was time for the return of Jacob to the land of promise. Satan is at enmity with the seed to this day, both the natural and the spiritual.

Oh why was life so hard? Looking back Jacob would recall how it was, as it were, his own nature that had been played back upon him. He now found what it was like to be at the receiving end of deceit, and pretence, the victim of scheming and plots against him... what it was like to be taken advantage of, as when he had taken advantage himself of his brother's weakness to his own ends.. "Sell me the birthright.." Isa 42:24-25 "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart."

Seven years he had known servitude (= 2520 days), and at its close the expected bliss had not come. The deceiver had been deceived. All his works were in vain. Israel did not obtain that which he sought after. Then seven years more, a further 2520 days of servitude, and even then the full fruition of his hopes were still not realised. [1914 saw the end of that second seven "times" or seven years of years. See "He made it again."] Why was the Lord still keeping Jacob waiting for the blessing so long promised even after the years of servitude were fulfilled? Was it not the Lord Who had said to Jacob, "It is time to return to the land..and I will be with thee.."? Gen. 31:3. Before Jacob stood that old enemy.. in the shape of Esau. Even at this point, already back in the land, an obstacle stood in the way between Jacob and the full realisation of the blessedness towards which the Lord was leading... Esau, his own twin, his own flesh and blood! One great crisis was past, a threat to wipe out the seed of Jacob, Laban and his host had retreated under the hand of God. [Compare the threat of annihilation of Jews from Europe under Hitler prior to Israel's entry of the land.] And as Jacob went on his way, we are told in Genesis 32:1, "the angels of God met him.." Everything now seemed to be working for Jacob. Nothing surely could stand in the way of that divine purpose? Could anyone resist that heavenly army that defended his way? Yet in the eyes of him who waited in the land, Esau, Jacob was still the usurper, still pushing him out, still using his cunning and intelligence and devious ways to achieve his own ends, still arrogantly resting in his own ability, in human integrity and strength, to achieve the purpose of God.

Jacob had revealed his fears. He had prayed earnestly to the Lord. Gen 32:9-12 'And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

The company was now found to be composed of two bands..one in heaven, the host of accompanying angels, and one earthly, Jacob and his camp (Gen.32:2 margin. Compare Mat. 24:31, which may apply to both gatherings now taking place, the earthly as well as the heavenly seeds.), but as Jacob now desperately applied his mind to what strategy he should use to overcome this ultimate adversary that threatened to forever stand between him and the security and peace and prosperity in the land of promise that the Lord had said would be his, perhaps he found his mind also divided between two possible tactics.. one aggressive, and one placative. ["Hawk" and "dove".] He could not go on forever fighting his brother, his own flesh and blood. How was he going to work out a solution to this ultimate challenge? This was the very point of time marked out in the purpose of God. So near, yet apparently so far away, lay the prospect of lasting bliss for which he had longed in so many years of bondage. Was this to be it? Was it to be a future of continual strife, tit-for-tat skirmishes, bloodshed, and bitterness of soul, resentment, mistrust? Was he forever to live by his wits to ever remain one step ahead of his enemy, or retaliating, and eye for an eye.

Israel faces today a crisis even deeper than that realised in the Knesset. The flow of Jews from eastern Europe flood over into the boundaries of the little land. It was as if a great clock chimed, and the gates were opened, the last restrictions lifted. This is a time, surely, of great blessedness, for which so many so long have prayed. Yet bringing in its wake a crisis for Israel beyond any of the past. As we write the Great Powers, so called, lean hard on Israel to work out a solution towards Middle East peace. The Palestinians, many of them ancestral blood brothers of the Jew, live in increasing fear of the consequences of this insurgence into the land of so many thousand fellow Jews. Tension is at its height! Recent attacks by extreme groups of Moslem faith shatter prospects for peace. Jacob planned a gift. He was ready to share much of his own possessions with his brother Esau, but the Lord has a more enduring solution in mind. The struggle that now engulfs Israel will go on, and it will not end until the Lord's purpose is achieved. Before he comes through this struggle Jacob will be a changed man..Israel will be at last made worthy of that God-given name. [Israel means "God prevails". See RV margin "God striveth".]

Jacob begins the struggle of mind inflicted upon him believing he is wrestling with a human foe who attacks him. He schemes with man's thoughts in the endeavour to outdo his human opponent. But sooner or later in the struggle he recognises in himself the chief opponent, for he comes to realise that he is fighting with God. This moment of awing truth brings about a great loss of confidence in his own ability and strength, for, at the Lord's touch, that in which he trusted becomes as weak as a little child. All that he can do now is to use his arms to hang on to his opponent, only by this time he is no longer resisting the Lord but using all the power he can muster to cling to the Lord. He is now wrestling in prayer, and will not let go until he has the blessing of God for which he longs. What a wonderful scene is this in the great Photo-drama of Creation, and WE ARE WATCHING IT NOW!

And so the Lord speaks to him and asks a remarkable question.. "What is your name?" Oh what point in this enquiry! How well the Lord knew Jacob's name, knew his character.. usurper, schemer, but Jacob has to confess it and acknowledge what he is. "My name is Jacob, supplanter, deceiver, liar, hypocrite, thief. My life has been one long career of crafty cunning and greed and reliance on self. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Gen 32:28. Israel means "God prevails". A profound Hebrew scholar tells us that in names compounded with 'el' it is the 'el', or God, that is the doer of the rest of the name if it should be a verb. (eg. Daniel = God judges, Gabriel = God is my strength, etc.) Israel, therefore, means God rules, or prevails, or commands. It is the Lord's turn now to make a play on words, and with what wisdom. When it is acknowledged that God prevails, God rules, then does man prevail and rule with God. This is the victory of full surrender to the Lord. When He is our overcomer then do we overcome in Him. The kingdom is for the violent to take by force. Their victory...total defeat of self. The battle is first with all that opposes His dominion in the heart, and the conquest is for clinging even until the dawn of new day, and not letting go until the blessing is received.

Gen 32:29 'And Jacob asked him, and said, "Tell me, I pray thee, thy name." And he said, "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" Here is the desire to more fully know the Lord, even as He knows us, but that fuller knowing comes with experience in walking with God. When Moses asked that similar question he too received a puzzling reply.. "I AM.." All that He IS only time and closeness can reveal. And we read.. 'And he blessed him there.' Where, we may ask, was "there"? It was "there" in the state of heart and mind the Lord had achieved in an unworthy man. It was "there" in Jacob's tears, for we read in Hosea 12:4, 'Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him:'

On one other occasion it is recorded that Jacob wept before this. That was when he first set his eyes upon that sweet vision of his soul that was called "Rachel" (Hebrew for a female lamb). In Jacob's eyes she would represent that time of coming blessing promised. She was a vision of a future of happiness, a vision he would slave to attain.. the blessing of the Lord. As we read in Gen. 29:11 'And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.' Now, at last, the Lord had blessed him there, and, as Hosea said, Jacob wept. The Lord blessed him there, in that dark prolonged conflict.. He blessed him there, in the attitude of deep contrition and acknowledgment of all he was.. He blessed him there, in that desire to know his God.

And even as the Lord blessed him, the sun rose upon him, and his eyes adjusted to its warming rays and glory he realised that he had looked upon the face of God and yet survived that 'burning bliss'. Now he could see God's face wherever he looked. He even saw the face of God in his brother Esau when he met him.. Gen 33:10 'And Jacob said, "Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.'" For the battle was done, and as the words of Prov 16:7 "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.'

This was not the end of the story. Jacob still had further stages of processing ahead. At Shechem he pays the price of disobedience. Then the Lord reminds him of his vow at Bethel. He has to get rid of his strange gods and idols, build an altar to the Lord at Bethel, weep over the "Saviour of the world" as his own son, the greater Joseph. [See the article on Joseph.] So our hearts go out to the chosen race today in the land of promise, so near, yet so far from realisation of the blessedness of the Lord's purpose for them. This is an essential part of the process leading to that full realisation. Morning indeed cometh for Israel, but also night. [The statement of Isa 21:12, 'The watchman said, "The morning cometh, and also the night:" is directed to Edom, the old Adam within which must be overcome before the blessings may flow. Cp Isaiah 34 preceding 35.] The struggle against the enemy without will surely turn to dark wrestling with the enemy within, but the Lord yet will touch Jacob's prided human glory so that it fails him, and Jacob will come to recognise the true nature of the struggle, and learn to cling to his God.

Today Jacob sits at Jabbok's ford contemplating those torrents that threaten to engulf and sweep him away. Isa 43:1-11 'But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe

me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

And in Isa 43:21, This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise. But the Lord goes on to reflect on Jacob's resistance to His hand in the past. That is why He adds, verse 28, 'Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.' (the ban from the land of promise.

Isa 44:1-5 'Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the LORD's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.' And that self-righteous spirit, like filthy rags in the eyes of the Lord, will be processed into something pure and white, a worthy medium for the hand of the Lord to write upon, and on it will be seen the watermark of the likeness of Jacob's God and King.

More on the story of Joseph.

"Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" Gen 41:38
The words were those of Pharaoh, supreme ruler of Egypt, and they concerned a young man of 30 years, a Hebrew, called Joseph.

The first book of Holy Scripture is remarkable for its account not only of the origin of man and the universe, but also for the first language in picture form of the whole plan of redemption from the fall in Eden to the restoring of life under the ministry of Christ. Even the place of the cross was marked by the offering of a dearly loved son. The pictures are so vivid, and have long been perceived by students of the Word of God. What is also remarkable is the almost total silence of the New Testament writers on some of these pictures from the history of the patriarchs. When we find reference, say, to Isaac, it is a somewhat oblique reference drawn into a discussion of the covenants in Paul's letter to Galatians. There Isaac is compared with the church (Gal.4:28), and we have to work our logic backwards, as it were, to realise that it was Jesus Who first Isaac was pointing to as a type.

Joseph is a similar case. That he was a type of Jesus has been recognised for many years, perhaps from the beginning of this age. Yet where in the N.T. do we find this beautiful allusion explained?

Perhaps the nearest we get results from a careful examination of the last sermon of Stephen to the unwilling ears of his accusers. What was the point and purpose of this defence if not to witness to Jesus as Messiah? So, after briefly tracing the movements of Abraham to Jacob and the origin of the tribes, Stephen dwells for a while on Joseph. He retells how his brethren mistreated him and he was placed at the mercy of Gentile powers in order to be rid of him. Stephen then proceeds to where Joseph was made known to his brethren, now in a position of greatest honour over the realm of Egypt. Why did he tell this story? Why did he go on to speak of Moses also rejected by his fellow men and the way in which, nevertheless, divine deliverance was put into his hands? The history of Israel was, he showed, one of rejection of the ones sent of God for their deliverance. Without doubt, Stephen was making a strong point of comparison between Joseph, Moses, and this Jesus to Whom Stephen stood as witness that he was sent of God. Peter had already identified Jesus with the "prophet like unto me" predicted by Moses. Now Stephen is adding the similar case of the rejection of Joseph.

The language of the picture of Joseph's life and experiences speaks for itself. He was the son so loved of his father, who, in the purpose of God as revealed in his dreams, was to become exalted high. But the way to that exaltation was a hard one which greatly developed and proved the character thus being prepared for great future responsibility. As with all picture language, it fits the truth it depicts wherever it touches. For example, the time features of Joseph's life are clearly not parallel to that of Jesus, though the general sequence of events suggests greater similarity. Yet there are remarkable points of comparison beyond the overall picture of the path to glory.

Joseph was the first son of Rachel, a seed long desired and waited for. She was to bear but once more before her demise. This woman was Jacob's first love, and the longing for her child was reflected in the special place that Joseph held close to his father's heart. The name, Joseph, means "He shall add." In her strong faith Rachel now believed that in his birth she had the guarantee of further fruitfulness. Joseph was seen to be a first-fruit, a promise or earnest of more yet to follow. Later Jacob was to bless Joseph as a "fruitful son (or shoot) set over a spring of water, climbing a wall and flowing over it." (Gen.49:22.) Certainly, in the words of Isaiah 53:10, "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." We know something of the strength of that "wall", the mighty power of God, and we know too that "fount" of living water, the One Who was and is His life. We speak of Jesus when we speak of Joseph.

This was He (Jesus) who, like Joseph, when asked by His Father to leave the comfort of His Father's house to be sent unto His brethren, replied, "Here I am." If Jacob hoped to hear a good report of the children of Israel he was to be bitterly disappointed. The appearance of Joseph brought forth the worst response from his brethren who planned how to be rid of him. Gladly they turned him over to the hands of strangers, and the events that followed closely paralleled the life of servitude by that One Who came as bond slave to this earth. When Joseph exchanged his father's house for the bonds of a slave he did not spend his time lamenting his great misfortune. Instead, he excelled as a slave. What a beautiful lesson we have here! We who are "nothings" in this world's eyes, let us excel as being "nothings."

Ten long years Joseph endured that situation, yet in all he did he had the blessing of the Lord. His trustworthiness became known and earned him the honour of some, though that same faithfulness and loyalty was to prove to much for others, in the shape of Potiphar's wife. She would have him fit into her shameful ways of adultery. "Ye wicked and adulterous generation.." That was the Master's description of those who despised Him for His unwavering faithfulness to the ways of His God. Jesus, like Joseph, was to be condemned for the sins, not of Himself, but of others. Joseph was incarcerated in prison, Jesus in the prison-house of death. For Joseph it was to be early in the third year that he was to emerge from that prison-house, for Jesus, three days. These sufferings were spoken of in Psalm 105:18, where, speaking of Joseph, we read, "Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:" Little could better express the bands of death, yet both the tasting of that prison and the afflictions that led to it combined to the great strengthening of this servant's character. An alternative and better rendering of the last part of that verse might read.. "And iron entered his soul." Thus was Joseph and Jesus prepared for the great exaltation that would follow. First the sufferings, then the glory to follow. Jesus said.. "Ought not these things be so..?" and the word "ought" implied a dire and certain need. Can any less thorough preparation be possible for those who are to share the Saviour's throne?

Joseph then swiftly experienced a wondrous change in his circumstance to correspond with the great exaltation of Our Lord as He ascended up on high. And it was here that we commenced our thoughts, for we read here of the plight of mankind, their desperate need for a plan of salvation and a Captain of salvation. Without such a programme man would be swallowed up in death. In Rev.5:4, the quest for such a man and the recognition of this desperate need causes John to burst into tears, until the comforting voice of an elder assures him that such a one has been found. "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the spirit of God?" The words of Pharaoh, echoed before the throne of God, find total answer and satisfaction in that one ordained of God, the little lamb as it had been slain. Worthy indeed was such a one to receive honour and glory and blessing, power, wisdom, riches, and strength. The words of Pharaoh so aptly portray that worthiness of Jesus for this position so high and so critical for the execution of the plan of salvation for mankind. Gen 41:39 'And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:" Jesus is the epitome of heavenly Wisdom, described in words of great beauty in Proverbs 8. His Father was His delight, and He was the Father's delight, but His delight was also with the children of men. Gen 41:40 "Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou." How wonderful that such a history should be written with so great a promise of that One

Who would come! Gen 41:42 'And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand,' That ring by which Pharaoh himself impressed his mark of authority upon every seal, was taken from his own hand and placed upon that of Joseph. How remarkable that one so great should be ready to pass over to a one-time Hebrew slave and prisoner such authority and power, indeed all the power of the throne! Only complete confidence and trust could allow an act as this. God has given all authority to His Son because He trusts Him so. He has total confidence in Jesus, having been obedient unto death, to fulfil all His good pleasure. Is it not an awing thought to us, dear brethren, that before our course is done the Lord will also have such confidence in US?

Vestures of fine linen, the robe of a royal prince and priest, were then arrayed upon Joseph, and a gold chain, or perhaps better, a gold deep band of many interlocking parts, was placed around his neck. In the case of Jesus, all the glories of the divine nature would now endow all the fullness of God. All power in heaven and in earth is His. No other name is higher, and to Him will every knee bow in reverent worship and praise that would ever redound to the glory of His father. At this point, corresponding to the ascension in glory of God's Lamb, Joseph was given a new name. Gen. 41:45. In Rev. 3:12, Jesus speaks of His new name. It is a promise to the overcomers that they too will share this new name when themselves proved worthy. What is this new name of Jesus? The Rabbis thought they could identify part only of the name given to Joseph by Pharaoh. They assumed it was a Hebrew name part of which would then mean "hidden." The rest they had to guess! Hence the name added in the margin of Bibles, "Revealer of secrets." However, there seems little doubt that this name given by Pharaoh was Egyptian, and this is even more in keeping with the new title given to Jesus only after His death and resurrection and ascension on high. For as an Egyptian word it means either "abundant life", or "Saviour of the word" Jesus needed to release the price before He could fulfil this wondrous role. The promise to the overcomer of Rev. 3:12, to share His new name is thus a precious promise to His Bride one day to share that blessed privilege with Jesus of bringing to this sad only earth that life abundant when the Spirit and the Bride say "Come," and "saviours come up on Mount Zion."

A similar curious situation arises with the expression translated in Gen. 41:43, "Bow the knee." Here the margin has "Tender father." This is because again it was supposed the expression was a Hebrew word. It was, of course, Egyptian, not Hebrew, being the cry made by Egyptians and to Egyptians before the chariot of Joseph. While Joseph refers to his position later in Gen. 45:8, as "a father to Pharaoh", that is in the sense of a counsellor or advisor, and while it is also true that one of the titles of Jesus in Isa.916, is "everlasting father", or "father of everlasting Life," a concept repeated by Our Lord in John 17:2, "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give

eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.." nevertheless, the cry before the chariot was better rendered by the words in our translation.. "Bow the knee." This was a call to all to prostrate themselves before their Lord. In fact the thought is that of kissing the ground, and this is the alternative rendering of Psalm 2;12. "Kiss the ground that is, prostrate yourself before the king that the Lord has set upon Zion's hill.

Next in sequence of events following Our Lord's exaltation in glory at His ascension was the process of taking a wife. This wife would be taken largely, as we know, from the Gentiles and this is beautifully depicted in the Moabitess Ruth, taken by Boaz, and other cases of Gentile wives being incorporated into the seed of promise include Rahab, and Bathsheba the Hittite. In the case of Moses it was the daughter of a priest or prince of Midian, Jethro. Here, in the Joseph account, it is Asenath, daughter of a priest or prince (the Hebrew word is the same for either) of the city of On, centre of learning in the Egyptian world of that day.

The name Asenath, if her original Egyptian name, would refer to her belonging to a different world to that of Joseph, and once worshipper of a different god, steeped in the wisdom of this world. From this the church has been called to forget her own people and her father's house. Ruth 2:10-13, fits so well. "Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" And Boaz answered and said unto her, "It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." Then she said, "Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens."

However, if the name , Asenath, be a Hebrew name given to his wife by Joseph, then we have reference to a deep spiritual truth therein, for then it means "a Storehouse." To explain the significance of this to the plan of God we need to take note now of the special sequence of history predicted in Pharaoh's dream and interpreted by Joseph. This was that there would be seven years of great famine, but that this would be preceded by seven years of abundance. The plan was that during these plentiful years provision should be made and stored for the needs of the people to come. The abundant years commenced shortly after the time of Joseph's exaltation, which we see to correspond with the exaltation of Jesus at the beginning of the Gospel age. How does this compare with the facts? How often it helps brethren, when we ask the right question! Let us ask.. Has the Lord made any provision for the needs of mankind in the future age under the rule of the greater Joseph? Has this provision been stored up during preceding years of fullness? The answer then is clear.. Indeed from Pentecost onwards the Lord has been engaged in such a programme of preparation for all man's future needs in the kingdom age. The abundance of this period has been for the saints in course of their development for that future work of ministry. These He has blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. These blessings have far exceeded those of each previous age, and as result, the completed Christ is all but ready for the work ahead. These are His treasure houses in which are stored all the benefits of heavenly grace and that wisdom from above to make them able ministers. Sensitively aware of all human need,

sympathetic with human failure, acquainted with the endless resources of divine providence, and with inside experience, just as their Head Himself, with the need and process of being saved. In another picture, this age has been set aside for the engraving of the stones with the ways of God high in the mount in the hands of the Greater Moses. Then does He descend from heaven, the work of the age in His hands, His finished church, in whom the principles of divine righteousness, the standards on which the new covenant ministry will be based, are indelibly engraved, a witness forever to the power and grace of the Lord. In the Joseph picture language, the church is the storehouse of divine grace, and this makes the Hebrew meaning of his bride's name so meaningful Asenath, "Storehouse." All the saints can testify that the Lord spared no good thing. All that they needed His hand hath provided, He has in no wise stinted His work. Gen.41:48, speaks of Joseph actively engaged in the filling of them with his fullness, abundantly beyond all they could think or ask, as the text states, "for it was without number,"

Thus already did Joseph see fruit for all that he had suffered which to him, far outweighed the afflictions he had endured, and that is to us a precious thought, that even during this age, before the grand kingdom work for the world proceeds, the Saviour can look at the travail of His soul and be satisfied, that satisfaction being in His church, these blessed first-fruits to His Father's praise. This appears in the choice of names for Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, "forgetfulness" and fruit- fullness," "For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." Gen. 4:52. This satisfaction came as result of his union with his wife, Asenath.

The years of fullness draw to an end, The storehouse Is full pressed down and brimming over. Now come the years of dire distress for mankind. It might well be said that from man's fall such days have ever been. The fact remains that this world is to close with a time of trouble such as never before. This is a time of great trial for mankind, yet, in the words of Ecc. 3:10. "I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it." There is point and purpose in those ultimate of all trials which will bring home to man the nature of his deepest needs and draw them to the Source, the only Source, of satisfaction for those needs, the Source of Life, and that life, life with God, abundant life indeed.

Man needs such experience. He needs the breaking of the arrogant spirit of self-sufficiency regardless of his Maker. When man's river Nile of sinful pleasure and transient material toys, when that river of man's pleasure dries up, as it indeed will, then will man begin to thirst for the river of God's pleasure from which all will be invited to drink. Gen 41:55 'And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, "Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.'" Many years later Mary used these very words of instruction to those whose resources had run out.. and a miracle resulted, as indeed the same has been proven over and over again throughout time. How we look forward to that message spreading throughout this earth.. "Have all your resources failed you..? Go to Jesus; what He saith to you, do!"

So many lessons in the language of the history of Joseph, and each with meaning and significance, like those 'handfuls of purpose' left in the path of Ruth for her to find when gleaning in the fields of Boaz. The money the people brought at first to Joseph in exchange for the bread of life represented

their time and effort demanded to receive the first blessings of the age of salvation. They came to recognise that life was indeed more precious to them than their goods, and these too were relinquished. At last, as with the church before them, they come to realise that "love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all." And the people yield themselves, as in the language of Psalm 110:3, as willing offerings, free-will offerings to the Lord. These Joseph accepts on behalf of his lord Pharaoh, and in turn comes to a most satisfactory arrangement in the which man is made steward of all God's creation, man, wiser for his sins and their results, humble now under the mighty hand of God, and instruments of that mighty hand.

But early in this time that the Saviour operates we find a special work progressing of bringing Israel, Joseph's own brethren, to the state of heart required for them to become fitted for the part Divine Wisdom and Grace has designed for them to play, first witnesses to the saving power and mercy of God. "Ye are My witnesses," saith the Lord.' Thus do we find in these next few chapters of Genesis 42 to 45, the enthralling account of just where we are this moment in the stream of time and in the progression of the plan. We are watching with deep interest a process of the work of Joseph, or Jesus, with His people Israel to bring them to Himself. Their attitude and spirit has to be reversed from that which brought about the Saviour's rejection and death to one prepared for the highest form of self-sacrifice in order now to please their father whose heart they were once so ready to break. Amos 6:6, Woe unto them that "are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."

How wonderful that the Lord can undertake such a programme with those who so hated and despised Him, thus piercing the very hand that gave so precious a gift of a Father's great love. How wonderful to us too that He can undertake this process with the full confidence of His ability to complete what He begins, perfect is His work always and this is true of His work with Israel that they might be to all mankind a blessed evidence and witness of divine skill and power, and the abundance of heavenly grace.

If we ever think that Jesus is beyond all feeling corresponding to human emotion in this work, then let us remember His tears over Jerusalem, and remember again the tears of Joseph during the needful process of opening first his brethren's hearts, and then their eyes. Seven times is it recorded that Joseph wept in this process. These have to be most touching moments for Our dear Master. What is it that first causes the children of Israel to start that journey in the direction of their salvation? The Joseph account associates it with the same period of human extremity that will ultimately also bring the world to His feet. Israel are to be brought to recognise a need they themselves are powerless to fill. Nor will any money or support from Gentile powers avail. Gen 42:7, says that when 'Joseph saw his brethren,' he 'made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them;' Now this part of the account may sound strange, yet how aptly does it describe the needful experiences to bring this people to the Lord. In Isaiah 40:2 we read, "speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.." and we know that this means, in the Hebrew, "speak to the heart" of this people. How does He do that?

How does the Lord break through those barriers of hearts of stone, thus far impervious to the truth, unyielding to the spirit of their Messiah? How interesting, brethren, that in peering into the days just opening before us we find ourselves looking back to this first book of God's word for indications of both His purpose and His ways of bringing that purpose to fruition.

The overall picture is quite clear. The new ruler brings about situations and circumstances that prove a great trial to his brethren, yet with the most merciful intent, that needful change of heart. Terrible choices are laid before them, and all the while they know him not who is their saviour. Strange mixture of events, some so perplexing, like that money.. They have blessings they have not earned, are not worthy of in any way, yet interwoven with grievous trials that cause great searching of heart. The apparently unjust accusations, yet all the time that stirring within of conscience. Oh Israel, it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks of conscience! Judah is brought at last to the point of offering himself in the place of one whose loss would break his father's heart. And the work is then all but complete, the spirit of self-sacrificing love has triumphed, and the scales fall from their eyes. The Joseph/Jesus that they persecuted stands before them with arms outstretched to save. Gen 45:4, 'And Joseph said unto his brethren, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near.' It was a time of deep emotion for Joseph, and he wept. What meaning in those tears! What wonder in the eyes now opened to behold their kinsman and their King! The words of that Jew so long resistant to the light of truth will doubtless speak for them all.. "Lord, what shall I do?" (Acts 22:10.)

Yes, they are a chosen vessel to the Lord. They shall yet bring forth His praise, and it will be the wonder of the age, blessed herald to more wonders yet to be when all the world will bow the knee, prostrate themselves, in heart receive and welcome their King, and bring the tribute due to His great Name. As they add their tithes, all their living, all that they are and have, to fill the storehouse of their God, heaven's windows open and earth cannot contain the blessings then that freely flow from love's domain above to love's domain below.

"I Will Make It Again"

Standing at the house of the potter at the direction of the Lord, Jeremiah witnesses the Divine Sermon in clay. It was a time of great turmoil, and the prophet's heart ached with the burden of

the Lord's judgments to be poured upon a faithless people. Israel lay in the midst of a battle of political giants, Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, and her position was vulnerable. She had forsaken the Lord, her true Rock and Fortress, and now had to decide with which of the world powers she should side, and the result was total disaster for Israel.

It was at this time, with the end so near, and captivity in Babylon impending, that Jeremiah was directed by the Lord to go to the house of the potter. "There", said the Lord, "I will give you My message." It was to be a most remarkable sermon, given at a very special point of time in the great history of God's plan of the ages. Wondering what this special message was to be, Jeremiah approached the house of the potter, and entering, stood there watching the potter at work. The potter worked on a double wheel, which could be of wood or stone. The lower one was the larger, and this he spun treading it with his feet round its spindle which in turn operated the upper smaller wheel on which he threw the clay. Two wheels, one large, one small.. Together they both revolved in unison for the working of the clay, one for treading, one for moulding. The clay had first to be kneaded to remove bubbles of air, and as the wheels turned the potter deftly threw the mass at the very centre of the wheel. The whole purpose of both wheels centred in that clay now spinning and yielding to the varied pressures laid upon it by the potter's hand.

At first little seemed to happen, and then gradually the vessel rose in response to the master's touch. It was fascinating to watch that formless mass take shape through countless revolutions, and rise upward in symmetry of ever changing stages of growth. And THEN it HAPPENED! After working on the vessel some hidden flaw began to show in resistance to the potter's hand, and to the prophet's consternation, the vessel crumpled and fell about the wheel, some thrown to the lower treading wheel. The clay was scattered. One could almost hear the prophet groan in sympathy with the potter at the wasted time and effort. Surely he would now lose interest in that particular piece and take fresh clay to prepare something totally new. But, to the prophet's surprise, he saw the potter stoop and deftly scoop up that wasted clay scattered around the treading wheel, and, kneading it again to remove the flaw, he threw it again upon the wheel... "He made it again." This time he achieved his design, and a vessel was completed that would withstand trial by fire, a fire that would only serve to perpetuate that beauty which came from the potter's hand. It would show forth his praise.

A sermon in clay for at this point Jeremiah heard the word of the Lord, saying, (Jer 18:6) "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." As the wonder of this statement filters into our hearts, we begin to perceive something of the scope of the lesson before us. We note the precise timeliness which gives it such great impact. Two wheels, one large for treading, one smaller for moulding, together they both revolve in unison for the working of the clay. [In the O.T. the Hebrew word for Creator is the same as the word for Potter!]

The Lord is working His purpose out. To the tiny mind of His creatures 'born but for one brief day' The time cycles of the plan of God seem enormous, yet, from the moment of man's fall into sin the great irreversible process of salvation vibrated into action. The greatest time cycle alluded to in the Word of God is the year of years multiplied by the Sabbath cycle of seven, the "seven times", or 2520 years. The precise occasion that this sermon was given to Jeremiah by the Lord was immediately before the great seven times of the Gentiles commenced. Around the time, Daniel, captive in Babylon, found himself called to consider a dream of Nebuchadnezzar, which the Spirit of the Lord enabled him to explain in terms of the forthcoming experiences of the great king. Like a tree he was to be cut down, brought low. His kingdom was to become depraved, and his appetite and ways and whole life was to become like that of the beasts. The condition is recognised by medical science as Zoanthropy, and there have been similar well authenticated cases. What is not so well acknowledged is that the proud kingdoms of earth, the great Gentile powers, have all suffered this same malady, and while they have all been acting like beasts the Lord's people have been trodden down. Such is the language used in the Word to describe the course of history leading up to this day in which we live.

When the great cycle of "seven times" ran out in 1914, the time became due for the truth to slowly dawn upon the minds of men, as yet it will, that "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.." (Dan. 4:32.) A new era had been reached in the out-working of the divine purpose. The description of Nebuchadrezzar's kingdom in Daniel 4:11,12., and the downward fall, so aptly sums up the story of the world powers that were to develop. Like the writing of history before its time, it looks forward. It also looks back and describes a situation bearing remarkable resemblance to what had already been.

The first man, Adam, like Nebuchadnezzar, had been given a wonderful dominion. Genesis 1:26 & 28, depict for us the extent of that dominion, and the psalmist in Psalm 8 expresses the wonder of it all in language full of praise for that Creator Who condescended, having completed the myriads of orbs in space, to make a little tiny being called "man", and to entrust him with the dominion of this earth. Ps 8:6 "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." It was to be a wonderful kingdom arrangement, with man, God's prince on earth, ruling with God over the whole of earth's domain. A wise ruler, a caring prince, watchful over the welfare of every living thing on this earth. But something happened to apparently thwart this great design. A flaw appeared, and the vessel collapsed! The mind made like unto that of its Creator became degraded to that of the common beast, reacting more to the lower instincts of self-preservation and self-interest rather than the nobler qualities of God-likeness. Man had fallen from the position God had graciously given. Would the great potter now turn away from His original purpose with disgust? Would He abandon His original clay and turn to another creation to fulfil His design?

Parallels frequently occur in the Word of God. Oh what a study they are! We know that in Jeremiah 18 the subject of the sermon in clay is Israel, yet so many things true of Israel we find to be symbolic of a wider truth involving the whole human race. Even the land of Israel at times seems to depict this whole earth, and the people of Israel represent mankind. In the Word we have many direct statements, but Our Heavenly Father, greatest Teacher of all, adds so many illustrations from His dealings with the lives of men, and we love looking at the picture!

When Adam fell he became a captive. Sin now reigned where man should have reigned, and man became a subject under sin's dominion. Long centuries he was to be a slave trodden under sin's ruthless taskmasters, with no prospect of deliverance save that word of promise given by his Creator at the fall. And SEVEN TIMES PASSED OVER MANKIND! Yes, from the fall of Adam, seven times passed over mankind, and sin reigned from Adam to Moses. It is at the very least a curious fact that if we count the years from Adam's fall, accepting with the Pastor that this probably occurred about two years after his creation, seven times, i.e. 2520 years, ran out at a most interesting time in the Divine Plan. God's special dealings by now had centred in one people, who became a picture, and illustration or sample of the whole world of mankind. The people of Israel came to the end of this long seven times from Adam's fall emerging from years of servitude as slaves in Egypt. The seven times from man's fall into captivity ran out to find them on the march from Egypt to Canaan, their deliverer, Moses, already present at his second advent.

To be absolutely precise, as you each may check for yourselves, the first seven times ran out exactly 31 years prior to passing from the wilderness state and entering the land of promise. We at first were puzzled about this 31 years, but we could not fault it, and will return to this later. At this point we would note, however, that this was precisely 49 years, a jubilee period, from the time at the "first advent" of Moses that he was condemned to death and left the scene, corresponding to the death and eventual ascension of Christ. [In the intervening period between his two "advents" Moses seeks and takes a bride.] Then a matter of further interest. This precise point of time at the end of seven times from Adam's fall was to mark the commencement of exactly one thousand years, a millennium in which would take place all the various stages of a developing kingdom arrangement. The greater wheel or cycle of seven times continued its momentum in the lesser wheel, 1000 years, these great cycles working in harmony for the preparing and moulding of the clay, turning worthless things of dust to something that will bring eternal praise to the Great Potter. This thousand years of the typical kingdom development process will be considered later in this

treatise, but overall we recognise at once that, while it foreshadowed the ultimate kingdom age, it could not be the very image. It could be only a vague shadowy outline, but not without important lessons and implications which are becoming more meaningful to us at this late point of time. So much about that 1000 year age was typical. Sin had not immediately been removed. The people were marching from Egypt, but sin marched with them. Deliverance was a process, and was even then figurative, not actual. So it is that at the end of that 1000 years, at their season of testing, the whole nation of Israel failed every test. It was THERE, at the sad end of the shadowy Hebrew kingdom millennium, exactly as the end of that 1000 years approached, that Jeremiah stood in the house of the potter watching that sermon in clay, watching the spinning of those wheels. What a long process had brought them to that point of time. Surely the clay had been well kneaded, trodden down to remove the proud spirit of man, in the long seven times of bondage until the Exodus. Surely the introduction of the Divine Law to one chosen sample family of mankind and the teaching of the holy ways of God, surely a thousand years of such an influence could not end like this!

If the heart of the prophet was heavy at such a time, what of the heart of God! Yet, as the vessel collapsed in a heap of worthless clay, and scattered upon the treading wheel below, the wonder of it all! The potter stoops to scoop up that clay and throwing it again in the centre of the upper wheel, he returns to his purpose.. "he made it again." "Cannot I do with you as this potter?" It was at the TURNING POINT of the whole plan of God, this very point of redemption history, that the Lord revealed through Jeremiah some of the reasons why the next time round the prospect of success was so much greater. Then it was that the Lord spoke of a NEW covenant, a writing again of the Law of God, but this time, not on tables of stone, but the fleshly tables of the hearts of men. Man will be touched by the Spirit of God... the motivating power and influence that prompts in the Divine Mind every expression of holiness, righteousness, and love, that same power is to permeate the mind of man, to motivate him and express through him that same delight in the things that are lovely, and pure, and beautiful. The Spirit will be poured out from on high.

We believe that it was around and concerning this same turning point of redemptive history that Habakkuk was prompted of God to plead.. (Hab 3:2) "O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, (he repeats again,) in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." And that is just what the Lord was about to demonstrate in so remarkable a way, the mercy and pity of a Father Who knows and understands the frailty of His child, knows we are but dust. God is not taken by surprise by human behaviour. He knew well those hidden flaws. The Lord expressly foretold through Moses the whole course of events that would mark that first millennium from Exodus. When all the people shouted, "All these things we will do.." the Great Potter knew that the enthusiasm of that moment was not to be depended upon. The clay was not yet ready for the firing. The only hope for salvation lies in the total trust of the clay in the skill and power of the hands of the Potter. Salvation depends upon the Lord's ability to fulfil His promise in the clay. It is also dependent upon the readiness of that clay to yield to that power, to sensitively respond to every touch of the Potter. What a lesson there for you and for me!

The hidden flaw in human hearts is that resistance to the Potter's hand, that rejection of the way of the Lord. The "I will," of man stubbornly refuses the "I will," of the Lord. "How often would I... but ye would not.." So we read in Leviticus 26:18, as Israel stood on the threshold of her millennium, "And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times MORE for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power." How well this fitted into the great lesson both Israel and all mankind must learn. That FIRST seven times from Adam, then that subsequent thousand year work of shaping up a kingdom, the terrible failure at the end of man's preferment of his own will to the will of his God. What a sobering result, what heart-searching it should bring! The clay, crumbling and scattered on the treading wheel must at last be gathered together and kneaded again. All the spirit of personal pride must be trodden out of it before the Potter begins to shape it to His purpose.

Yet, even there in Leviticus 26, the promise is written of Divine intent. After this "seven times

more" of chastening comes the process of restoration. Lev 26:44-45 "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God:" To this wonderful statement He adds His signature, "I am the LORD."

The Lord also signs His great promise of this new arrangement in Jeremiah 31, with His oath. Jer 31:35-37 "Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD."

The new arrangement of Jeremiah 31 is full of the "I WILL"s of the Lord. The work of the wheels, both the greater and the smaller, is to bring the heart to realise what a wonderful will it is that wills so much blessing, so much joy for all His creatures, so much fulfilment in the abundances of their living. And the Lord knows both how to will and how to perform.

What a wonderful time we live in! The times of that greater cycle, the wheel that He works with His feet, the treading wheel, has run out. Man has had his first seven times, Israel her seven times more. Both are past. The great momentum of that cycle continues now in that other wheel, the cycle of progressive kingdom shaping and development that each time follows the running out of the seven times. It is the overall picture and resemblance that most impresses us, covering the whole of man's history on earth since the fall. That there should be this sequence, and then again the sequence repeated, seven times, then a thousand years, the point of change being marked on each occasion by a period of change in the fortunes of the nation of Israel, the last sequence of events marking the time of her deliverance.

Think of that first millennium from Exodus. The clay, Israel, at centre stage, centre of the Potter's wheel. The process of kingdom development started from the wilderness march with little to show that resembled a kingdom. Then through the early conquests and possessing of the land of promise the process was to extend for many long years through the time of the Judges, until at last, under David and Solomon, the kingdom reached its height in terms of visible unity and kingdom blessings. We see how THAT 1000 years consisted of an evening-morning sequence. Half of the thousand years progressed before the full kingdom development was seen. What dramatic events marked that opening period! The fighting of the enemies both without and within was to take the first half of that millennium until the kingdom found the state of rest from all that opposed its inception. Then the second half of that millennium was to test, to thoroughly prove, the durability of that kingdom in the hearts of all its subjects. There, as we know, in the matter of faithfulness, the failure rate was shown to be total. That evening time was one of darkness, the evening of this new thousand years now before us will be light.

It seems that here we have a most remarkable pointer to the present process of bringing in the kingdom. The process of fragmentation has confirmed the striking of the image by the stone in 1914. We have the strongest possible evidence that we have passed the point of great transition. The seven times have run out, and what do we see? Israel at the centre stage position at the centre of the wheel once more. You will remember that we noted with surprise that the first seven times from the fall ran out precisely 31 years before Israel emerged from her wilderness experience. Another notable point is that while still in that wilderness state a great tragedy overtook Israel on the very threshold of entering into the land. No less than 24000 Israelites were to die. the account is written in Numbers 25, particularly verse 9. It is too sad to read. The time was so near, yet so many were to die on the eve of pouring into the land of promise. Yet AGAIN the account has been written afresh in our own day. This time six million Jews to die, and to die so near to that hour, that time of Israel's emergence from her wilderness state.

The times of the Gentiles ran out in 1914. It is a matter of simple arithmetic confirmed by the indisputable evidences of our day. Thirty-one years after the seven times ran out in 1914, the year 1945, was to see the emergence of the Jews from their wilderness experiences, yes, those last days stained with the blood of so many of their number. 1945, 31 years after 1914, brought an end to their trying wilderness experience. For years the Jews had their hopes raised, their faces turned towards Zion. There was already a movement afoot that strengthened her desires to one day possess again the land of Israel, yet still a hindrance stood in the way. 40 years before, in 1905, the first Jewish settlements appeared in Judea. They were there, as it were, to spy out the land, but the progress.. how slow it seemed! It was as though that long dusty march of foot-weary travellers under Moses was to be repeated. days so full of promise were to be days also of tears, and testing of the true earnestness of those desires. Then, in 1945, the concentration camps were opened and nothing now could turn back the tide. As in Joshua's day, the children of Israel had passed through their wilderness and their Jordan experiences and were infiltrating their land, only to find, of course, the mustering of opposition against them. The moment of change had come, however, and the weary wandering Jew became a fighting Jew, fighting for his land and his life. As in those days of Joshua, notwithstanding all the odds of those gathered against the Jew of our day, within a handful of years the land was theirs.

Notice the parallels! How precisely the events and their timing match at the running out of each seven times period. Surely the Lord is saying something to us in this remarkable correspondence. We have lived long enough to see that the battle did not end with the declaration of the sovereign State of Israel. That was only a stage, a very significant stage, indeed the **FIRST VISIBLE AND TANGIBLE SIGN OF THE INCOMING KINGDOM OF GOD**. A long process lies still ahead, but the clay is there centre stage, in the middle of the wheel.

Finally, in Joshua 5:13 we have a stirring glimpse of the invisible presence of the Lord, there describing Himself as the "Captain of the Lord's hosts." The enquiry of Joshua at this dramatic penetration into spirit realm echoes in our ears today.. "Are you for us or against?" Oh what poignancy lies in those words! How many parallels speak of this time of mingled blessing and trial for Israel! Already we have mentioned Jacob at Jabbok fearing the approach of Esau, wrestling there with God. We also saw Joseph speaking roughly with his brethren to bring about that needful and wonderful change of heart. Moses, at his "second advent" to deliver his people furnishes a further example. There things got so bad even in the days of the presence of their deliverer that Moses himself cried out to God, Exod 5:22-23 "And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all." Things had got worse during the very advent of their deliverer! At the time of Esther too we shall see a further parallel in time and experience to the trials of the Jew in our day. There is no smooth passage for Israel, yet in these stirring correspondences we have many infallible proofs of the presence and activities of Israel's Messiah, our blessed Lord Jesus. Joshua's eyes were blessed indeed to see what he saw. Blessed too are our eyes to see what we see. Israel have yet to share this blessed truth. Believing Jews in the nation are greatly perplexed at what is taking place today. They KNOW that THESE are the WORKS OF MESSIAH, but they cannot see their Messiah, hence their confusion. How long their eyes will be holden we cannot tell, but this we know, that when blindness is removed from Israel, when they look upon their Messiah with recognition and amazement, as the brothers of Joseph, there will be tears all round (Joseph wept too!), but by then, the "fullness of the Gentiles" will be "come in.." the Church complete beyond the veil.

SUMMARY.

We believe that these patterns in the history of the ages with their remarkable counterparts

- 1) CONFIRM the 6000 years chronology adopted by Brother Russell based upon the Hebrew Bible. [It seems not without significance to note that the Septuagint ends the 6000 years at the time of the rise of the "man of sin", the Papacy! Does this not suggest who was behind that

variation of text! What apparent support this would give to the early church in the concept that the kingdom had then come!]

2) CONFIRM our understanding that the "new covenant" arrangements apply to the age of kingdom development and NOT any previous age. This was true in the parallel in the typical Law covenant under Moses.

3) FORESHADOW the gradual nature of the progression of events leading (oh so slowly!) to the full kingdom development and time of blessing.

4) CONFIRM our understanding of the present out-working of God's plan for Israel in whom He is fulfilling His age-old promise of restoration. He has NOT cast them away! He said He would not, and He has not!

5) HELP UNDERSTANDING that now, as then, Israel gains her land "little by little", a long period of time elapsing before the whole land is theirs. This in itself is suggestive of the gradual spread also of the kingdom influence throughout the earth. The "stone" grows to fill the earth. Within "the days of these kings" the kingdom development progresses.

6) THE COUNTDOWN TO THE KINGDOM HAS BEGUN!

7) Brethren, the time for us is short! May we each TODAY be vessels of honour on which the Great Master Potter may be able to stamp His mark, sign His Name... "Holiness to the Lord." Amen.

The Shout of a King.

The words come from a somewhat unlikely mouthpiece of the the Lord, yet in them we have a remarkable confirmation of our faith in these days of the parousia of the Son of Man. The mouth is that of Balaam. He is speaking forth words he has no wish to utter. Indeed, he has been offered substantial gain to bring a curse upon Israel, but finds himself powerless to perform that task, and instead, now finds himself doing the very opposite, pronouncing the Lord's blessing upon the race.. Numbers 23:21. "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them."

Israel is again centre of His wheel.. visible evidence of the patient perseverance and ability of those skillful hands of the Lord. Israel is the first visible evidence of a new phase of the divine programme, the age of an emerging and gradually developing kingdom of God.

The various points of comparison with the previous thousand-year age of gradual development of the shadowy typical kingdom are of great interest. They help us to understand the apparently drawn-out nature of the sequence of events in our day. The interval between the ending of the Gentile Times (1914) and the infiltration of the land by the Jew (1945), and the appearance of the sovereign State of Israel. It is all there in that shadowy previous kingdom age, even to the tragic deaths of so many Jews at the very threshold of deliverance, under Hitler. Between 24000 and

25000 died there in the wilderness at that similar time just before entry of the Land of Promise. This was the result of a particular testing time for the Jew in both ages, and the nature of the test is also revealing. Marriage with the daughters of Moab, marriage with this world, leading to indifference towards the pursuit of the divine purpose. The same test applied in the last days of the first wilderness march and again in this our time prior to 1945. There is, of course, a lesson here too for the church. The breaking of covenant vows that separate us to the Lord, like the cutting of Sampson's hair, lead to our spiritual loss and demise. But we are centring our focus on Israel, and it was in those days parallel to the attempts of Hitler and others to wipe out the Jew that Balak, king of Moab, sort to do exactly the same thing in his own day. The sight of that great army appearing out of the wilderness brought fear to his heart. He felt his time was up if he did not do everything within his power to eliminate this threat, to exterminate the people of the God of Israel. It requires little imagination to recognise the fear of the god of this world at the coming of Christ on 1874. Why so much hatred centred in the Jew? We know why! The time has come for the kingdoms of this world to be overthrown, for Israel to be restored, and for the Lord to achieve in her His wondrous purpose as the earthly representatives of His kingdom of righteousness and light. Now we know that nothing will thwart that purpose, but Satan has an arrogant blind-spot on such matters. Drunk with power, he, like Pharaoh of old, and like the king of Moab, attempts the impossible. Why? Romans 9:17, "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My Name might be declared throughout all the earth." We have noted that 31 years after the seven times from Adam's fall ran out in Moses's day the Israelites

ended their wandering and began to pour into the land of Canaan. Exactly parallel was the period of 31 years from the ending of the Gentile Times in 1914 which saw the ending of the wandering Jew in 1945 and the pouring of the Jews into their land. Within a similar brief period to that of Joshua a tangible kingdom of Israel was to be seen in that land. Let us just glance back that 40 years leading up to 1945 and note the remarkable points of comparison with those former times of Moses in modern Jewish history.

It is interesting to note first, however, that the precise point of time those seven times ran out in the days of Moses completed a jubilee cycle of 49 years from the first advent of Moses when he left his exalted and high abode to visit and to become identified with his people, then slaves in Egypt. As Stephen later explained (Acts 7:25,) "He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not." (vse 27) but "thrust him away, saying Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" Moses there came under the death sentence and went away, to return, in God's due time for the people's deliverance by his hand. We cannot help but see a graphic depiction of that wondrous link between the rejection and death of Our Lord Jesus when He came to His own and His own received Him not, and His return at God's due time, not again to die a sacrifice for sin, but to deliver.

What we see taking place concerning Israel is part of the restoration process promised by all the prophets to which Peter referred in Acts 3:21. These are the days of Jubilee, the freeing of a captive people from a Gentile yoke of bondage, like Jacob from Laban, first stage in a process that will achieve salvation both for them and for all mankind from the real enemy of sin itself. The two events are wondrously linked.. the rejection and the death of Christ, and the events now in these our days of His return to set up His kingdom. This link is shown too in that 49 years Jubilee cycle link between those two events in the days of Moses.

Now 40 years before 1945 would correspond to the time the people were led forth from Egypt accompanied by various incidents and situations. That would be 1905. Let us remember that the hope of deliverance was already high in many Hebrew minds in Egypt in those days of the second advent of Moses. This was very true in the period before 1905. Up to then the concept of a Jewish state was dreamlike. In his book, "The Jewish State", Theodore Hertzl, a Jewish lawyer, who had become deeply affected by the "death to the Jews" cry he had heard from the crowds in Paris, left the Jews with a vision in his words.. "The Jews who wish it will have their own state. We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, die peacefully in our own homes. The world will be freed by our liberty, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness." It was a beautiful dream.

Hertzl died in 1904. "With his death, the first stage of the Jewish revolution ended and the second stage began." So writes the historian of that time. 1905 saw the beginning of a new stage in the process leading up to the State of Israel. The concept had been formulated, now the ideas began to germinate into motivation! The Jews who shared this hope were on the move. In the days of Moses the Jews moved in mass, their faces towards Zion. From 1905, what was know as the Zionist revolution took practical steps towards realisation of their vision. Ben Gurion, in 1906, arrived in Palestine as a farm-worker, like those spies of the land of Moses' day. He was not there just to grow oranges. He came away with much practical knowledge of what lay before them. Chaim Weizmann was appointed lecturer of biological chemistry in England, later to

become director of the British Admiralty Chemical laboratories. The first president of Israel and its first prime-minister were being prepared for their future role. And they were not alone. Others were now actively planning the practicalities of finance, and the fighting power for their future land.

45 years later Weizmann was to recall those days.. "Zionism (he said) was at the crossroads.. I had to take a decisive step.. A new start had to be made." He spoke of the first chapter of Zionism closing at the point of Herzl's death, 1904, and 1905 a new chapter beginning. Certainly it was so in the days of Moses. The time for dreams of the promised land were now demanding action and commitment. The dream became a live movement. In both cases this was to mark the beginning of 40 arduous years before that dream would begin to be realised.

But the thousands of Jews following Moses out of Egypt were by no means ready for claiming the promises of God. It was at the people's instigation that the Lord agreed to them sending spies to spy the land. The result we know well. The Jews lacked faith. They were daunted by the giant obstacle in the way. Many were faint-hearted and ready to go back into Egypt. Then, when they were shamed for their lack of trust in God they decided to go up after all, and when the Lord said He would not now go with them, then they decided to go it alone.. to achieve themselves by human strategy what they had felt beyond divine power to do for them. How like dear Jacob of old! At the parallel time to this in the years from 1905 a somewhat similar situation was developing. The new-found energy and determination was in contrast to the attitudes of a small number of ultra-orthodox

Jews to whom the notion of a Jewish state was little short of blasphemous. For them, the Jews could return home and establish a Jewish state only when Messiah comes. They failed, of course, to recognise their Messiah in their midst, fulfilling His great task of deliverance just as did the people of Moses' day. The authority and power, even the identity of the deliverer sent of God was frequently questioned., and this not only by individuals, such as Korah, and even Miriam, his own flesh, but also by all the people. They murmured against Moses, and in doing so, against the Lord Who had sent him.

Of our own times Dimont wrote of the godless Jew.. "that dared to shift the mission of leading a return to Palestine from the shoulders of the Messiah to the shoulders of the Jews themselves." The Hasids and Talmudists at first opposed any such move. They opposed Zionism. Dimont continues.. "they cursed it, vilified it, spat on it, but in the end joined it." However, those Jews we know of today, who are deeply puzzled by what is taking place, what is happening even now around them, the things they know to be the works of Messiah, though they recognise not the One Who stands amongst them, give interesting witness by their very perplexity to the presence of the Lord. The people murmured against their deliverer saying, (Numbers 14:2) "Would God we had died in this wilderness." And verse 28, "As truly as I live, said the Lord, as ye have spoken in Mine ears so will I do to you."

A whole generation would pass and fall before the land was taken. Verses 33,34.. "And your children shall wander in the wilderness 40 years.. after the days in which ye searched the land, even 40 days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even 40 years." There follow most striking words which have caused no small concern amongst expositors.. "and ye shall know my breach of promise." Had God changed His purpose? Would He break a promise? Attention is drawn in such words to the conditional basis of the covenant God had entered with Israel, and which they now had broken. They were to taste the consequences of rejection of God's enabling power. As the NIV reads.. "you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have Me against you." The Syriac version of Lamsa reads.. "Then you shall know that it is because you have murmured against Me."

It is interesting to look back over the 40 years preceding 1945 and ask, what parallel situation we have found concerning the Jews in their quest for the independent State of Israel? Was the 40 years of very mixed "wilderness" experience again related to their unreadiness of heart at the time of their visitation? Without recognising that they live in the days of Messiah's presence, the Jews, nevertheless, decided to do it themselves, and to face the enemy without the help of divine presence

and favour. Nevertheless, the Lord had mercy in the days of Moses and still achieved His purpose in terms of the typical kingdom of Israel. And we in our day see the same evidence of divine mercy, notwithstanding the unbelief in which they return, and their pride in self-achievement. Are we beginning to glimpse some meaning in the very difficult circumstances and frequent failure of this wayward tribe in our own days leading up to and beyond the 1945 turning point in their history? Why the holocaust? Why so much Jewish blood to spill before the land was entered? Perhaps the visible parallel with the days of Moses help us to glimpse something of the underlying significance of the event of so many Jewish deaths at the very threshold of their entry to claim the land. Certainly Joshua did not give them that promised rest, and we must confess that the people of Israel still are far from entering into rest. It will not be brought about by war-plane or fiendish modern weaponry. And if it depends upon Israel's continual vigilance of her great spy net-work, then "rest" it is not!

Now this background, both in the days of Moses and the 40 years wilderness wandering, and in the parallel times up to 1945, serves to bring home the wonder of the words of Balaam's unwilling blessing upon the Jewish race. The Balaam episode came at the end of those years, but prior to their entry into the land. The strength and intensity of anti-semitism had reached a critical stage. The Jew was seen as a threat, and this provoked such hatred as wished their extermination as a race. The weapon to be used to this end was the curse of Balaam. He was the heathen prophet of such unquestioned prestige that it was believed that nothing could resist the effect of a curse laid by him. It would be a death sentence that could not be revoked.

The political aims of Hitler in the parallel period closing these 40 years were, like Balaam, to destroy the Jews, to wipe them out as a race, and at the same time to make gain for himself. The Jews were by no means the only victims, of course. As many million "Christians" were to die under Hitler as well as Jews. But "whereas the Germans exterminated Pole, Russian, Ukranian and other Slavs for their presumed intellectual inferiority, they killed the Jews for their intellectual superiority." So writes the historian of our day. We see reflected there not only human fear, but that of the god of this world.

It would seem that this again was the hour of Satan, and the power of darkness. And yet it was the shock of this very same nightmare experience and its effect upon the nations of earth that paved the way for the birth of the nation and their re-entry to the land of Palestine, to be established forevermore as the State of Israel. The very would-be curse turned to blessing. The spasm of

greatest travail brought forth in one day what all human effort had failed to achieve before.. the birth of a nation.

And so, with such a stirring background in mind, both of the encounter of Moses with Balaam, and with the more recent encounter of the Jews with Hitler and fascism, that ruthless power beyond the ability of its victims to defeat, let us look more carefully at the way the Lord causes human wrath to praise Him, makes the curse of the satanic spirit in man to turn to blessing, the triumph of divine purpose, notwithstanding the threat of every evil force. Let us look at the prophetic utterances of Balaam, and view them in the light of our times.

It is not without interest that the name "Moab" contains the word, "father", as well as implying "progeny" or "race", thus crudely portraying the self-proclaimed "father race" of our time. The name Balak, king of Moab, means "wasting, destroying," and not only characterises the ruthless mind of Hitler, but behind him the Satanic spirit of enmity with the seed of divine promise, both the natural seed and the spiritual. But the purpose of these evil powers being raised up is to declare throughout the earth the power and Name of God, the Name of a faithful and everlasting love. This day is this word being once more fulfilled, and we, sheltering in the Rock of Ages, have the inestimable privilege of a blessed preview of what Israel and the world of mankind are yet to behold, the result of which will be that the knowledge of His glory will fill this earth as the waters cover the great deep.

To the meaning of the name Moab, "father race", we may add that of Midian, also involved, meaning "strife, contention," while the name Balaam means "treader down of the people." Those jack-boots of the German armies so aptly represent this attitude of Satan to all who would oppose his evil ways. The word Balaam has an equivalent in the Greek, "Nikolaos", and from this word we get the reference to the Nicolaitans in Revelation 2:6 & 15, the latter verse following an allusion to the sin of Balaam. Spiritual Israel has already felt the power of such an enemy that in these last days plays so fierce a role in Israel's experience. All these names speak of the release of Satanic hatred against the people of God. Yet the Satanic purpose to devour and destroy that seed is thwarted by the power of God, though not without cost to that seed. This was true of Jesus. It was true of the church, and again of Israel, each in turn to know the fury of the powers of darkness. In this last phase concerning Israel, as with the others, whatever evil powers the Adversary uses, the end turns out far from Satan's design, but in total alignment with the purpose of God. Balaam utters four prophecies concerning Israel. In these he describes their separation, their justification, their sanctification, and their exaltation. The Spirit of God prompts Balaam's words, and in Numbers 23:7, 18 & 24:3, 15, 20, 21, & 23, the word "parable" is used in our AV. The Hebrew word "mashal" (4912) has often the sense of an extended parable, something which becomes proverbial. It is the same word translated in Deut. 28:37 and Psalm 44:14, etc, as "byword", and is spoken of Israel made a byword among the nations. In the Theological Wordbook of the O.T. we read on this word.. "Much more is involved than simply scorn or derision. The point is that God has made Israel a public example, an object lesson for others to observe and learn from." He did the same of Job (17:6).. "He hath made me also a byword of the people, and aforetime I was a tabret (a drum)" to the sound and warning of which the people gave heed. In His work in Israel today God is calling the earth. Sooner or later men will hear, and

recognise herein the voice and Name of a mighty God, able and willing to fulfil His Word, regardless of the utter unworthiness of the clay, and every power of Satan that has opposed. Before Balaam's pronouncement there was a great holocaust. Not one fire, but sevenfold the flames that consume the sacrifices on seven altars. This holocaust continues throughout the subsequent prophetic statements making a remarkable background to these words. Three different sites were chosen in order to survey more of the extent of the great Israelite throng below. These sites were high-places linked with pagan worship. In 1896, Geikie, in his series, "Hours with the Bible", describes the work of Condor in visiting these sites and discovering there still seven ancient stone monuments at one site, and circles in each place with central cubical stone, all speaking of the idolatrous worship of ancient time. From each height a different view was gained of the teeming thousands of Israel in the valleys below, camped and waiting for the moment of entry into the land. What follows is to demonstrate that all the material gods of earthly might and power worshipped by man can in no way influence the outworking of the Divine Purpose.

In the first parable, recorded in Numbers 23:7 to 10, we have the first great prophetic utterance since the promise to the fathers, and that promise is repeated now.

Num 23:7-10

7 And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.

8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?

9 For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

How shall I curse, and God hath not cursed? God had said to him.. "Thou shalt not curse this people, for they are blessed." What was first told in private must now be made plainly public. "If God be for.. who can be against?" "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." Those who think that God, having broken off the branches, has cursed Israel forever, will have much to open their eyes in the days before us. "I shall not cast them away."

From his vantage point high up, Balaam now sees Israel as a nation outstanding from all nations. It is one on its own. This is because God has made it so. When Moses spoke in Exodus 33:16, "so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.", he was speaking of a nation walking in the presence of God. Even when the visible tokens of His presence were removed and the glory rose up and departed from the Temple, the eyes of the Lord were still upon them. During its long period of adversity and treading-down, though scattered far among the nations, the Jew retained his identity, just as during the two centuries of Israel in Egypt. This is surely one of the miracles of time, and wondrous attestation to the certainty of the Word of God. Not only so, but Israel is uniquely chosen for the manifestation before all mankind of the manifold wisdom and grace of God.

Next to their separateness the prophet notes their increase.. "Who hath counted the dust of Jacob?" What a sight it must have been, those two men standing beside their smoking altar, wishing Israel's doom. The smoke that rose from the incinerators of the gas chambers produced its sickening stench, but could not obscure the future of that race. The plotters look before them at the vast multitude, tent after tent, gathered there below. Yet these were only a part, a quarter of the whole. Gen 28:14 "And thy seed (Jacob) shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The generations of that race today are yet to be joined by those future hosts of resurrected Israelites spoken of in Dan 12:2.

When Balaam prays that his death be as theirs, he is speaking not so much of his death, we feel, but of that glorious end or goal which lies before Israel.. something to be greatly esteemed and prized. Balaam would have wished to meet the end of this present life with such a resurrection prospect as that of the Jew. How such men as Hitler would have loved to be in the position decreed of God for His people!

All this took place from the heights of Baal worship. Baal, means Lord, and the whole world has lain under the lordship and dominion of Satan and sin, cruel taskmaster of the human race. From this time that marks the ultimate of human degradation, the outcome of sin's sad course, the vision is granted of a people resting under every divine blessing. How vexed would Hitler be to see the outcome of his wicked plan for the Jew.. the pricking of the world's conscience that paved the way for the emergence of the nation of Israel, like the Phoenix from the flames, as something rising from the grave. What of Satan's response too? Num 23:11, 'And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether.' Was it that he had not sufficiently impressed the powers that be as to the potential danger to them of these developments of Israel's prosperity?

So the man that fearful king was trying to use to bring about the destruction of the Jew was hurried to another situation.. verse 14, "the top of Pisgah." The holocaust continues with its seven-fold heat. The sacrifices, in these our days, were Jews. This was Satan's ironic offering to God of a people consumed in his hatred, as if to taunt the Lord.

Num 23:18 And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor:

19 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

20 Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.

22 God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.

23 Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!

24 Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

Balak was determined to use every situation to his evil ends. But the Word of God stands and cannot be changed, for God is not man. Every word He utters is a word of total TRUTH. His every command becomes incontrovertible law. The Lord does not change His mind or go back on His purpose.

Zechariah 3, speaks of this very same hour in Israel's end-of-age experiences, as pre-figured in the days subsequent to the coming of Cyrus. Her deliverer had come, yet still her state seemed so incongruous with her hopes, and Satan stood there ready to resist and accuse, to discourage and destroy.. pointing to the filthy garments on Joshua the high priest, Israel's representative. The word of the Lord cuts through that of the Adversary. With awful command He says, through then prophet, "Balak, stand up and listen!" All powers of earth, all kings and great ones, principalities and powers, will yet rise up and close their mouths at Him Who stands at Israel's side today. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Sadly, many Christians are amongst those needing such salutary reminders of Paul's words.

To think that Israel have fallen so far, have been in need of such discipline under the mighty hand of God, have proved so unworthy of such great love, and yet He loves them still. Jer 31:3, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Hosea 2:19 "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. (20) I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD."

What wonderful words now follow. How can they possibly be understood? Num 23:21 "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel:" Do we see here the tender forgiving love of a father pitying his child, knowing that he is but dust, not dealing with him according to his iniquities, but putting them from him as far as the east is from the west? Jer 31:37 "Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD." Zech 3:4 "..Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." The language of the Lord's love is so touching to our hearts, as so beautifully expressed in the last three verses of Micah 7:18 "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in lovingkindness. (19) He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. (20) Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, (and) the lovingkindness to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." (ASV) We are looking ahead with the eyes of God towards that New Covenant blessing.. "I will remember their sin no more."

Then come the words we have chosen for our theme text. "the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them."

Did Balaam's prophetic eye pierce that cloudy pillar resting in their midst? Could he see down the stream of time this day of all days of which the Spirit in him spoke, that angel of His presence which is Christ, standing in their midst today, though they know Him not?

HE is the great and wonderful CAUSE of all that is happening to Israel today.. He, the great and mighty arm of the LORD. "The shout of a king is in their midst." As often happens, the Hebrew here is delightful for its variety of meaningful thought. The word for "shout" (Strong 8643, Harris 2135b) carries the meaning of sound or signal. It is used to mean the sound of trumpet, that is the silver trumpets or the curved horn shofar. In Leviticus 25:9, it is translated "jubilee.." Elsewhere it is translated "alarm", and most frequently a jubilant and triumph-ant shout. Here the shout of the King in the midst of His people Israel is a beautiful reminder to us of the shout of triumph with which our Lord descended from heaven at His return. This is the trumpet signal the Lord's people now hear and recognise, and indeed, the same word is used in Psalm 89:15, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound.." They recognise the triumphant shout of their King. It is the time of gathering of the church to Himself, gathering too of Israel, first to her land, then to her Lord.. the Saviour out of Zion, Who will turn away iniquity from His people.

Here He stands up as Michael, God's representative or arm, standing up for the children of Daniel's people in the midst of the ensuing trouble that marks the winding up of Gentile Times. It is His shout of triumph in the face of certain victory that thrills the hearts of God's people today, as He rides forth prosperously in glory and in majesty on behalf of truth, meekness, and righteousness. (Psalm 45:3 & 4.)

At this very special moment of God's plan of the ages only the Lord's spiritual people are blessed with recognition of the meaning of the trumpet-like signal of their King's royal presence. We long for the moment of truth for Israel, when the shout of the king will become echoed by a jubilant shout of every heart FOR their King. Like the brethren of Joseph, they already receive blessing at His hand without realising who He is, though with those blessings, strange and trying experiences that will yet produce that essential change of heart to one of unselfish protective and sacrificial love, and deep respect for the things that please their Father. All of this is aptly illustrated in Joseph's work within his brethren while they still knew him not. What a wonderful demonstration of divine mercy and skill is taking place, centre of the Potter's wheel, before the eyes of angels and men! Are you watching world? You will behold and marvel.. for in Israel is a great and wonderful example that will become the byword for every child of Adam.

The prophet continues to utter what the Spirit dictates. The God Who brought them thus far, Who brought them out of Egypt, the God Who has brought Israel today so far along the road towards Zion, is stronger than all. There is no power that can resist His Will. "In its time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, "What hath God wrought?" It is His mighty power invested in His Son and through Him in His people, that guarantees their victory be it spiritual or natural seed.

Remember that these are words of assurance and vision before Israel ever entered to take their land. They are uttered at a time when, in antitype, Israel's hopes would seem to have very little ground. At the approach of the last war British and Arab resistance hardened to bring down Jewish immigration to the merest trickle, and with a total end in view. The door was closed and barred. How wonderful that at such a time such hope was given in these words of God's Spirit through Balaam. But in the midst of Hitler's attempts to destroy it required faith to perceive such a wonderful outcome to their veil of tears. This faith they lacked. That was why they were there under Hitler's domain.

The worst thing that could happen to a Jew would be to become a Gentile. That means, to become married to the people of this world, in attitude, spirit, hopes, and goal.. losing the vision.. "next year in Jerusalem.." The same applies to the spiritual seed. This was to be the most crucial test for Israel in the desert, and again for Israel in recent times. What Balaam could not achieve by direct opposition he would attempt by alluring them away from their hope. The daughters of Moab, the

attractions of this world, and the worship of its gods, what a test this would prove in both parallel periods! In this way thousands would die without reaching the land.

Sadly, this seemed to be true of many Jews in Europe.. Jews who had lost their way, regarding themselves as true citizens of whichever nation they adopted rather than a separated people unto God. The Gentilised Jew, known as "reform Jews", have a history dating back to the days of the Babylonian empire, followed by that of Persia. It is too large an issue to discuss here, but again at the end of the age, just as in Ezra's day, there were to be those who clung to this world, and who needed such experiences as would cause them to stand up to be counted among the people of God. The reform Jews strongly resisted and resented the Zionist movement. They were happy in Babylon, at home in Egypt, very comfortable thank you in the U.S.A. or wherever. There are 300,000 Jews in the United Kingdom today. The Jewish people were divided into three parts. One part were to pass through fire, to die in Europe. Another part would find its way to Zion, and the last part would remain scattered in the world. The British Government viewed the Balfour declaration as a means of winning over the American Jewish public opinion. They needed allies to influence the U.S.A. to enter the war on the side of Britain. But they badly misjudged the position. Many influential Jews in America, as in Europe, were opposed to Zionism. They feared that the concept of a Jewish homeland would threaten their position in the world.

It was against this background situation that we find Balaam now viewing the children of Israel from the top of Peor, which was again a site of Baal worship. Peor means "opening". The Adversary is indeed expert at looking for any opening, any way to attempt to thwart the purpose of God. It was the matter of Baal Peor, an opening for the Adversary, that formed the last crucial test for Israel in her wilderness days, and many thousands were to fall.. in that day 24,000, but in total 600,000 died in the whole wilderness journey without entering the land. The 6000,000 who died in Europe under Hitler bear a remarkable resemblance to this figure. But here it was that, at the instigation of the frustrated Balak, Balaam once more fell under the power of God's Spirit and failed again to effect the curse Balak so desperately sought to invoke upon the Jew.

Num 24:3-9

3 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:

4 He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:

5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!

6 As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters.
7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.
8 God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows.
9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up?

Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.

Rather than curse he now proclaims instead the total victory of this nation of destiny, and the supreme power of its glorious King. Perhaps in those opening lines Balaam had in mind the time when even his ass could see more than he could of the things of the Lord. Now his eyes were opened too, and the vision was glorious. As valleys verdent, fruitful and widely extending; luxuriant gardens on the banks of a river of living waters; and his people would be as aromatic trees diffusing fragrance as the plantation of God on the river banks. Goodly tents, beautiful tabernacles spread forth as valley, waters of life abundant, every vessel or bucket overflowing with abundant life for all his seed. The Jews still chant these very words each feast day.. "How goodly are thy tents O Jacob, thy tabernacles O Israel."

In two lines Balaam then speaks of the King and His kingdom, a king higher than Agag. Agag could well have been the name or title of a whole succession of kings of Amalek, or this could be a reference, like that of Isaiah to Cyrus, of prophetic anticipation of that named king to one day be spared by Saul but slain by Samuel. Agag, king of the Amelekites.. This tribe so epitomised the great invincible enemy of "doubt", that which, as the name implies, robs the strength of those whose faith grows weak. Agag's name means "to blaze as a fire", and this is indeed the effect of doubt once it takes hold. We must not, like Saul, at the end of battle give place to doubt. It is a ruthless enemy of the soul and must be ruthlessly dealt with. Here is a King greater than all our fears and all our doubts, a King of Love, Faithful and True, Who will defeat this cruel enemy, and forever destroy this close-girding sin.

Under His domain the people, once hesitant, become willing, and are brought to the state of perfect trust and trustworthiness. It is with this very context that Isaiah 26:1-4 speaks..

1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city;
salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.
2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.
3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.
4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:
(a Rock of Ages.)

Here is the rest Israel will at last enter.

Again Balaam refers (verse 8) to the mighty power of God that brought them out of Egypt. Jeremiah gives us the up-date on "Egypt" in Jer 16:14-15

14 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;
15 But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.

The God Who can bring them out can also bring them in. Leaving Egypt was but a stage. The

conquering of every obstacle, and the overcoming of every enemy of human happiness lies ahead, all within the power with which He endues His people. The "unicorn" of verse 8 is probably the "rhino", and the strength of a rhino in its charge is here used to depict the unchallengeable and unstoppable course of this victorious King. He pierces His enemies through with His arrows.. Truths that go right home to the heart of the King's enemies.. the realities of disarming love that will capture the heart, dismissing all enmity, and bringing every thought into the obedience of Christ. He is Lion of the tribe of Judah, glorious in majesty. He Who is willing to die for His people as a little lamb on the altar of sacrifice, was raised to triumph over every foe.. as lion, undisputed King over the whole creation.

"Blessed is he that blesseth thee.." the subjects of so great a King, "and cursed is he that curseth thee." (Verse 9) Do we see Balak wincing at those dreadful words? If his face grows pale it is with very rage. The Adversary does not enjoy his frustration. He does not enjoy having to flee before the superior armoury of faith and light of the Lord's people. Balak is now jumping up and down in fury and frustration. He had sought a mouthpiece for his wrath upon the seed, an instrument he could use to destroy them. Instead a blessing results beyond all dreams. He wants it all to stop right there. "Go away!", he screams. "Go home!" But Balaam has one more message to deliver. The Spirit of God respects no human dictator. It speaks the knowledge of the Most High Who sees the end from the beginning.

Num 24:15-24

15 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:

16 He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:

17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

18 And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.

19 Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

20 And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever.

21 And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock.

22 Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.

23 And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!

24 And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever.

"Star out of Jacob.. a sceptre risen out of Israel.." What glories of majesty will yet appear before the wondering eyes of all mankind. Star of Hope, and sceptre of righteousness, a perfect rule able to put everything right that is wrong in this earth. Human arrogance and pride, what enemies these have been to human happiness. The mighty men of Moab. We see their portraits hanging in the corridors of time. The Nimrods, Caesars, Napolians, Hitlers of our day..

But something of this spirit of Satan lurks in every heart that is yet untouched by the Lord's Spirit, and from every heart it will be destroyed with all other enemies of the soul. Edom, that old Adam in man that ever resists the things and ways of God, this too will come under the accepted Lordship of the King of kings when all are gathered under the headship of Christ. It is difficult for us to imagine a world in which these elements of the human nature are removed, where no-one will say to his neighbour, "Do you know the Lord?" They will not need to for all will know Him from the least to the greatest. Everyone will be in the Truth! The going down and weakening of these enemies will concur with the growth and strengthening of His people.. "Israel shall do valiantly..

Israel shall grow in strength.

Is Amalek standing outside the gates of the City forbidding entrance, as doubt always does, to all the riches of that dwellingplace of God? As verse 20 shows, "Amalek was first of the nations.." Skepticism concerning the things of the Lord has been a most notable feature of all peoples of earth. Like a thick veil it has lain over all nations lest the light of the knowledge of divine glory should shine in. "But its latter end shall be that it perish forever." What wonderful words! The Kenites lived mainly in the rocky heights beyond the reach of others. The name means "a nest". (verse 21) "Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock." How impregnable seems the place of those inner thoughts of the mind. No one knows, no one can reach to explore those innermost recesses. How true it is that while we may not be able to prevent birds flying over our heads we can stop them building a nest in our hair. How wonderful when the King of Righteousness and Prince of Peace brings into subjection every thought, and sees the satisfaction of His desire.. "Truth in the inward parts." No evil thought will make its nest in the mind. No unkind attitude, no bitter resentment, no unworthy feeling will attempt to cohabit when the Lord's throne is found in every heart. For He must reign until all enemies are subdued. Verse 23 "And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!" He speaks of the Kenites, the enemies, all enemies, of the human mind, whose days are now numbered, as the progress of this little Sovereign State in the midst of the nations today now declares.

Hitler's obsession with Jews was publicly expressed in a speech at the Sportpalast. "I do not want to even speak of Jews," he said, "They are simply our old enemies.. We realise that this war can only end either in the wiping out of the Germanic nations, or by the disappearance of the Jews from Europe." He reminded his audience.. of his 1939 prophecy that the Jews would be destroyed. Only later did Goebbels himself learn the exact meaning of Final Solution. Then Hitler told him flatly that Europe must be cleansed of Jews, if necessary by applying the most brutal methods." The Fuhrer was so explicit that Goebbels could now write in his diary; "A judgment is being visited upon the Jews that, while barbaric, id fully deserved... One must not be sentimental in these matters. If we did not fight the Jew they would destroy us. It's a life-and-death struggle between the Aryan race and the Jewish bacillus. No other government and no other regime would have the strength for such a global solution of this question."

The Conquest of Death.

Life is a great mystery. It may be described and defined in various terms without explaining it. It is so wonderful that were we not already each endowed with life any description of what a living creature is and what it can enjoy would be dismissed as a thing incredible. To take the dust of the earth, and with those same constituents to make a living sentient being reveals a wisdom and skill beyond human imagination.

The reproduction of man continues the miracle. One cell, to naked eye invisible, containing complex computer mechanism and monitoring device to produce in perfect sequence and order the wide variety of specialist cells combining delicately and precisely together to form that great metropolis organism we call the human body. Such knowledge is too wonderful. And that is but the body, the vehicle of something even more mysterious that we call the mind.

Not even the wildest attempts of worldly science can produce life from the elements, nor can man dismiss the fixed eternal law, that life can only be begotten of life. Attempts to show the possibility of spontaneous life on this earth have served to completely confirm that law. We are told that for the humblest living cell to form requires the formation and combination of 239 protein molecules.

The minimum number of amino acids in a protein is 410. The odds against the accidental formation of even the smallest part of this process are ultra-astronomical, by which we mean that it would be a chance in 4000 times the number of atoms in the whole universe. Yet here we are, not merely one living cell, but living beings, fearfully and wonderfully made.

And wondrously equipped! From our first baby breath to this moment we have been able to resist and conquer an untold multitude of hostile and injurious threats to life. This body has a built-in system of defence, and facilities for the on-going repair and replacement of most of the body tissues so that within a matter of a few years we are largely renewed.

The evidence lies within each one of us that we are built for everlasting life. Man was made to live, not to die. So why do we die? And how can we die? What happens to us, short of catastrophic accident, that causes that life to cease? What is it that, at some point in our existence, acts like a spanner in the works, that brings about the process of dying, and grinds the whole machine to a halt? What lack or aberration in our genes, common to the entire race, was missing in the first human pair that each offspring should inherit life with such potential, yet, with that life, a built-in

timer to self-destruct?

The Creator was pleased to solve in part this mystery for us by means of the most ancient records in our hands, the Holy scripture account of Eden. We thereby learn of the entrance of sin into the heart of man, and the great wisdom of Our Creator in thus enabling free-willed man to experience

the dire consequences of rebellion from the very Source of life in His God. We there have the basic truth as it affects mankind.

Free wills have the capacity to conflict with other free wills, and this is demonstrated to this hour as throughout the whole course of human history. So long as there is but one free will there is no conflict, but introduce another free will and the possibilities arise. When God was alone there was concord, for the attributes of God work only in the closest harmony with each other. When the Creator brought into existence the Logos He created something so beautiful, a mind that could reason and think for itself yet remain in deepest closest harmony with the Creator. The glimpse of this blessed union in Proverbs 8 is one of the most precious portions of the Word. Yet Christ, the wisdom of God, as Logos so perfectly fulfilling every wish of the Creator, was a being still capable of destruction, or, in human terms, of death. As He had power to bring the Logos into being so it remained within the Creator's power to terminate his existence. But the Lord had a most wonderful purpose planned for that being so like Himself in spirit and in mind.

The creation of other beings at the hand of this Logos progressed, angels and powers of a spirit realm each with wondrous ability. The continued existence of each remained in the Creator's hands. Then the creation of the material universe. When, in the course of the great ages of time, the earth was ready for man, death, we must recognise, was already an important part of the process of life in this planet. From the earliest forms of cellular life in plant and animal world the great cycles of generation, growth, reproduction, and death, have maintained perfect balance and order in this tiny oasis of life in what appears to be a vast but lifeless universe. From the tiniest crustation on the ocean bed to the giant redwood of the forest, from amoeba to mud-eating dinosaur, long before man was made upon this earth death had been an important part of the system of living organisms. Every piece of chalk confirms this, and so does our oil, and other fossil fuels.

Yet the evidence of the human frame concurs with that of Holy scripture, that man was created to live, not die. Human death was the result of sin, not part of the creative act of man. Furthermore, that same Holy Word of Our Creator reveals His purpose, that death should be but a transient part of human experience. When man rebelled against His Creator, in Adam's death Justice was satisfied, but, by Divine provision, the sacrifice of Jesus to correspond with the life Adam forfeited, unbalanced Divine Justice. Two perfect lives to pay the price of one. That balance can now only be restored by return of life to Adam, and with it the return of life to each of his descendants.

In the acceptance of the Saviour's sacrifice, as evidenced in His resurrection from the dead, assurance has been given to every man and woman who has ever existed on this earth. That word "assurance" in Acts 17:31, is the very same translated "faith", but here used as a figure of speech, the word for faith being used for the solid ground on which that faith may be based, hence, "assurance, guarantee, security and pledge." Now the undisputable ability of the Lord to fill this earth with human beings is a matter of history. Acts 26:8 "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

We also recall the words of Paul in 1 Cor 15:35-38. "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it

may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."

We have never been nearer to the time of resurrection of mankind from the grave, yet not one of us can do more than conjecture as to exactly how this great programme will commence and progress. The case of Lazarus and others is of little guidance to us, as such was resuscitation rather than resurrection of a being the elements of whose body has been dispersed.

The Creator has, thus far, demonstrated His ability to produce living beings

- (1), by direct formation from the elements of the dust of the earth as in the case of Adam, and
- (2), as with Eve, by using a duplication of part of a human frame, from which He produced another being, and
- (3) since that time by human procreation similar to the animals.

The Lord Jesus on occasions demonstrated ability to produce a multitude of fish by an instantaneous process unknown to man. When feeding the multitude, having produced the fleshly bodies of fish, it would, if required, be well within His power to bring them to life... indeed on two occasions it is at least possible that He did just that, when the fishers of Galilee, having toiled for nothing in empty waters, were amazed at the sudden swarm of fish in their nets. He may, of course, have used other means to draw those fish from elsewhere in the lake. The examples Paul used in 1 Corinthians 15, to depict divine ability to produce whatever body was pleasing to Him, were drawn from the present natural order, the development of plant growth from seed, a process involving time, but illustrating well that the Lord is not restricted by the form of that which falls into the ground when producing that new life that will emerge.

It seems to us a reasonable concept that the deformed will not be raised with the same impairment, but it might be inappropriate to take Paul's illustration to teach that. He goes on to say, in 1 Cor 15:44, "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." Much of Paul's language seems to relate more to the church's hope rather than to the general resurrection of mankind, although that is also undoubtedly mentioned in the chapter. Concerning the identity of the individual in the resurrection, since the 'phonograph' illustration, to which may be added the 'micro-dot' illustration, and the perfect reproduction of masses of written material, for example, from invisible and minute messages on 'floppy disk', we now have some knowledge of what man calls the genes... the beginners or generators. ..Human character and ways, even predisposition to certain illnesses, a whole life all printed there in the chromosomes in a cell too small to see.

The lives of identical twins which have been parted since birth reveal, at times, an uncanny closeness of pattern, which suggests to some degree a previous marking out of the path in terms of the motivation and the character of reaction to given circumstance. Ps 139:1-4 "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether."

The more we learn of human life the more can we believe the Creator's ability to reproduce the individual in resurrection in such a way that both identity and memory are preserved, enabling recognition of loved ones, and value of past experience, good or bad, in the future life. The Scriptures leave much room for trust regarding the mechanics of resurrection. They leave no room for doubt that in only a matter of time the resurrection process will be as commonplace on this earth as is the present process of reproduction of the race. Perhaps it is hard for us to imagine that not far hence the present miracle of child-birth will be replaced by the miracle of regeneration, and by fact of repetition, man will accept this miracle just as he today accepts the miracle of the birth of a babe. What matters far more to our understanding is the information provided of the even greater miracle to be achieved following man's emergence from the state of death. We have thus been enabled to see that coming forth from the grave is but a beginning. That will be but the first stage of a process, in fact, as the Pastor taught, the first part of the anastasis, the restanding to that which Adam lost, a restanding with the Lord God Himself. Until that relationship is achieved and sealed, a permanent bond, full restanding will not be complete. We are filled with wonder at His promise to natural Israel, that rebellious people the Lord chose to demonstrate His wondrous ability and skill. Hosea 2:19-20 "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD." Such is the purpose the Lord has in mind in bringing both Israel and all mankind from the grave. It fills the heart with deepest joy to know He is able to fulfil this purpose even in me.

But this will not be achieved by wave of magic wand. How long it took the Lord to actually make the first man we are not told, but it was to take 7000 years to complete the work of bringing the free-will human mind into perfect oneness with its Creator's Mind. Man has had life-time experience with sin and its terrible effects. Now a further age of training is involved, and an education programme such as this earth has never seen. 2 Cor 3:7-11, " But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious."

Paul makes a direct comparison between the age of kingdom development under the Law given by Moses, and the ministry of the Spirit, the age of kingdom development under Christ and the saints. There were also examples there, Paul showed, for ourselves today, but it is not difficult to recognise that what was illustrated in the shadows and types of that age have bearing on this future age of kingdom development for mankind on earth.

A period of exactly one thousand years commenced in the days of Moses and terminated in the days of Jeremiah and the judgment of Israel under Babylon.. since when the Gentile Times have marked out the period to the coming in of the age of kingdom development. There is a direct and clear link between those two ages. One was an age of shadows, of typical experiences of one

nation, Israel, in the process of taking possession of their land, overcoming the giants, and driving out those enemies to future prospects, the iniquitous people of the land. The age before us is the reality those events foreshadowed. Here it is the whole world of mankind involved in the possessing of the promised new earth... The passing through death and the rise again, the overcoming of sin in every human heart, the establishment of a kingdom of peace, it is all there, told in the language of the history of one nation, Israel.

Within the framework of a thousand years we may recognise an evening-morning sequence. Five hundred years would elapse until the period of Judges gave way before the tangible signs of a full kingdom of blessing, when, in the days of David and Solomon, rest was at last given with the nations round about. We know that "rest" was but temporary, but it served as a marker for us of the probable division of the kingdom age before us from the first stages of overcoming of sin, to the realisation of full kingdom blessing.

The prophet Isaiah testifies of a similar sequence. The joys are described in Isa 35: Verse 10 reads, "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." It is important to note, however, that this chapter is preceded by Isaiah 34, where in most lurid terms is described the overthrow and destruction of Edom.

Isa 34:1-6 "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea."

Isa 63:1 alludes to this slaughter. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

Edom, or Adam, (the Hebrew is closely linked,) represents in so many places that old Adam in man, that in the human make-up which has ever resisted the ways of God. The King's Highway, leading to the promised land and their future kingdom hopes, was blocked by Edom so that the Israelites had to make a detour to get round this obstacle. Even in the womb of Rebekah there was conflict. Gen 25:21-27 "And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder

shall serve the younger. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them. And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents." Paul takes up the account when, to the Galatians, he wrote.. (Gal 5:17) "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Again in Rom 7:23 "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

The old Edom, or old Adam, in man, is due for complete and utter destruction, just as the were peoples of the land of Canaan. Until this great opposer of the things of God is overcome, man will not know the full blessings of the kingdom age... the songs of joy of the Lord's redeemed people will result from their deliverance from this old enemy within each heart. So the vanquishing of Edom, of Isaiah 34, must precede the rejoicing of Isaiah 35.

The message to Dumah, Isa 21:11-12, refers to the same entity, here under the name of Dumah, a form of Idumea. "The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir,(the territory occupied by Edom,) Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come." The reply of the watchman is twofold, good news, and bad news. For those awaiting deliverance, the coming of the morning is the best possible news for which the groaning creation waits. But for the enemies of human happiness and hope, that adverse spirit lurking in the hearts of men, the heralding of dawn of the new day speaks doom. The message is of life unto life, or death unto death. We speak not of individuals, but of the spirit operating within, prey to the Adversary's vail upon the hearts of men, blinding them to the glory of God, and the blessing of truth.

Rev 14:6 "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," This proclamation pertains not to the Gospel age, but to the new age of kingdom development. Isa 25:6-9 "And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

This blessed assurance comes in a sequence of Isaiah from chapter 13 to 27. Chapters 13 to 23 draw attention to ten nations and their judgments, nations which have been identified with various traits of character in the human race in antagonism with the the Lord's people and ways. This is rather like an elaboration of the Edom, or old Adam spirit. Chapter 24 of Isaiah sums up the desolation of this whole system of evil that makes up this present world order, and the following

chapter, 25, describes the aftermath of the Lord's judgments in the earth, with the bringing down of human pride, (Moab,) and the entrance of the light of truth. The next chapters follow through with both Israel, and the whole world that they represent, learning righteousness. Isa 26:9 "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." The blessed result is seen in chapter 27,. when that former vineyard of the Lord at last responds to His great love and care. Nothing now can withhold.. The "briars and thorns" that before betokened a spiritual desert give way before the Lord, and the whole earth becomes filled with fruit.

The Book of Jesus.

This prophetic sequence in Isaiah gives us the Scriptural authority and clue to the understanding of the shadowy sequence of events relating to the typical kingdom development age of Israel, from Moses onward. We have in our Old Testament a remarkable historical account called the book of

Jesus, or in the Hebrew, the book of Joshua. That Joshua was a type of the Lord Jesus whose very name he shared becomes quickly evident. Joshua's conquest of the land and driving out of the enemies is paralleled by the work of the Christ in this kingdom-development age opening now before us.

Josh 1:1-6 (vse1) "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them."

The conquest of death involves a sequence of events illustrated for us in this book of Jesus. First we note that statement that Moses was dead. The Law of salvation by works given under Moses could not bring the people into the possession of the land or new earth of the promises. Man cannot achieve the perfect utopia of his dreams.

Joshua, or Jesus, is described as servant of Moses, and indeed he was able to fulfil all that the Law required, and this He did perfectly. Num 27:18 And the LORD said unto Moses, "Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him;" Josh 1:3, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." (All the promises of kingdom blessing are now claimed by Jesus for mankind. They will be achieved in steps, progressing towards full kingdom development.) From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast." The land of Canaan was representative of the whole earth, and this promise speaks of universal domain. Mal 1:11 "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the

Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts." Ps 72:8 "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." Joshua 1:5, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

Under this Captain of salvation victory is assured for every man, yet every inch of ground was won by battle, and so will be the conquest of sin and death. Verse 6, "Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. (7) Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. (8) This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Isa 42:4-6 "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;"

Joshua 1:9-11, "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.(16) And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. (17) According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses." The people come to acknowledge the authority and command of Joshua.

Of Christ it was written in Deut 18:18 &19, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

This was interpreted by Stephen in Acts 3:22-23 "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." Joshua 1:18 "Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage."

But before the conquest can begin the people must pass through the Jordan. The Jordan is the greatest river in Israel which acts as a drain, collecting by gravity the waters of life of the northern mountains, to drop them over 1500 feet into the lowest sea on earth 1290 feet below sea level, appropriately named, the Dead Sea. Jordan represents death. Its serpent-like course meanders 300 miles to cover the distance of 100 miles, but the end is the lifeless waste of the dead Sea. Nothing lives in that sea, yet we are given a vision in Ezek 47:8-10 of the effect of the waters flowing from beneath the great doors of the Sanctuary and issuing into that place of death. "Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many." Before the people can experience the kingdom conquests and blessings, man must taste of death, must pass through Jordan. The sequence is shown again when Jesus feeds the multitude. The account there is of interest to us. First two illustrations seem to be afforded us of the end of the earthly walk of the Lord's people. The ministry of the twelve preaching the gospel of the kingdom comes to an end and they gather to be with the Lord. The news is received of the death of the Baptist around this same time, and Jesus takes them into rest, with the words Mark 6:31-32 "And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. [Rev 14:13 "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."]

But the departure of the church over that sea of Galilee, which is part of the Jordan, symbol of death, becomes the sign for a fresh seeking after the Lord on the part of the people. The people are on foot, that is on the earth, and to be where Jesus is they needed to travel two miles to where there was a place suitable for them to cross the Jordan by fording through its waters. Here again is shown the death of the world, and their rising the other side of death's dark waters, where they find and gather round the One they will shortly come to acclaim as King. And Jesus, from an elevated position on the side of the mountain, type of the kingdom, speaks them about the kingdom of God. It must have been a wonderful talk, one of the most wonderful human ears had ever heard, and it was followed by something no less wonderful, the feeding of that multitude, the giving of the bread of life, the satisfying of the hunger of mankind. All four gospel writers speak of that wonderful day, and John continues the account beyond the others to show its significance in the mind of Jesus with His later reflective words about the Bread of life, the flesh that He must give for the life of the world. Wonderful to us too, the fact that the satisfying of the world's hunger was by the instrumentality of the church. Jesus said to the disciples... "Give them to eat." That simple instruction brought amazement and some concern to the friends of Jesus, as indeed it does now to us, until we realise that the power behind the miracle is of the Lord, but what a blessing that the instrumentality will be by these vessels of grace He has prepared.

Back in the days of Joshua we see the church again depicted, for it is the feet of the priests carrying the ark of God, symbol of divine presence, fellowship, and favour, that we have to watch. It is from the feet of the priests that the waters of Jordan begin to recede. The Jordan was in flood at that time, its waters swelling and overflowing its banks to their highest reaches because of the spring-time thawing of the winter snow and ice in the hills beyond. Yet as the priests placed their feet in that river, in what so beautifully typifies their obedience unto death, that moment becomes the signal for a dramatic change to take place. Way back up the river, at a place, can you believe it (?), a place called "Adam", the Lord had intervened in the course of that river of death. From the feet of the priests those waters began to recede, and the process continued until a wide road was made through that river of death through which all who needed to enter it could pass and rise again on the opposite bank. But the Priests were the first.

Brethren, we are living at that very hour. This day is this scripture fulfilled. The passing into death of the last members of the church is taking place today, and this is the signal, for the time of resurrection has come. It begins at the Lord's descent from heaven with that triumphant shout, and blessed are the people that know that joyful sound, for theirs is the first resurrection. These are the firstfruits, and in their rising is the promise of that great harvest of all mankind. The price for Adam's sin is at last fully applied, and with the resurrection of the last of the church the way becomes possible for the rest of the dead to begin that long process of salvation and restanding until they know that abundant life of fellowship with God. But the conquest over death is only begun by their passing over Jordan to reach that other side. Coming forth from the grave is but a first step of many steps before full kingdom blessings can be known.

The conquering of death involves the conquering of sin the erasing of its effects in every human heart. This process is, we believe, represented in the battles that were to follow as the people reached the other side of Jordan. Those enemies of the land were a wicked people, representing the worst in a pagan and evil society from which the Lord had determined to cleanse His land. Long before He had spoken to Abraham of the iniquity of the Amorites, in Abraham's day not yet full. The idolatry and evil practices that filled that land, typical of the earth, vividly portray those evils in the hearts of mankind that are totally incompatible with the kingdom of God and with life. Even in this our day, when man fondly imagines we are at the height of civilisation, we almost daily receive grim reminders of depths of evil in human minds and characters.

Again we are reminded of the gospel accounts, the man of Gadara. Mark 5:1-9. "And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many."

There is no chain, no fetter of iron, no law, no system of social order, that can restrain or counter the power of evil and its influence and possession of the human mind. Only the Lord can do that, and the cleansing involved takes place within, for it is in the inward parts that He seeks truth. The Lord will remove all things that offend from His kingdom, just as He did those swine. He only has the power, and with it the dedication, and He will not fail until He has set judgment in the earth, until He has put everything right, and the poor human race sits at His feet, healed, and in their right mind.

But the process is a long one, as depicted back there in the days described of that shadowy age of kingdom development in the days of the book of Jesus, or Joshua. Many battles will be fought, giant obstacles faced and overcome, many victories won. And time will be involved, because the teeming billions of earth will be involved, and the evils are many, as the evil spirit in the man confessed.. "My name is legion, for we are many."

First there had to be the willingness to acknowledge the need of a Captain of salvation, and then the recognition of Joshua, or Jesus as their Saviour. A bond of this agreement lay in the sincerity of the circumcision of their hearts, depicted there in the circumcision of Gilgal. The whole nation needed to be circumcised, the whole world. The name Gilgal means the rolling away, Josh 5:9 "And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day." "From my heart that burden rolled away, happy day..."

So many pointers rush in now to fill the picture in that book of Jesus. The days of healing and contemplation that followed as the people gathered strength for what lay before them. From the taking of Jericho onwards, so many lessons to be learned, and often relearned again. An age was involved in all that went into that kingdom development, and even when the blessings poured forth and they at last entered into rest from all their enemies round about and within, even then the durability of this state was to be developed under trial. Achieving righteousness in the heart is one thing. Fixing it there, so that it would endure eternity without change or shadow of turning, that is the other part of the miracle that the Christ must and will accomplish during this age before us. When the people crossed safely over Jordan twelve men were chosen to raise up stones from beneath the place where the priests had stood, and to set these up as a memorial at Gilgal. These stones spoke of the power of God unto salvation through Christ. The Passover remembrance which they then celebrated at Gilgal took the mind back to the blood of that Lamb of God which was the basis of their deliverance, when that "ransom for all" became testified in due time. And the final sealing came when the last of those priests descended into the Jordan, bearing that ark of God. The fate of death was now complete.

1 Cor 15:51-56

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall
sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. . . .
54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have
put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is
swallowed up in victory.
55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

Sin, those enemies of the land, unless dealt with, unless removed forever from man's heart and inclination, would yet defeat salvation's cause, the Saviour of the world would have died in vain. If salvation was to take place in this past age, then could we echo that Servant's cry of Isa 49:4, "Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain:" for so would it seem. But such is not the case, as the Servant continues.."yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God." There we have another "surely" of the Word.

The message the spies brought back from Rahab is one of great cheer to us now, as it was to the people then, and will be to the world. The enemies of the land were quaking and trembling. They recognised the superiority of the greatness of the power of that God Whose purpose would not be defeated, come what may. They trembled before the coming of Joshua, as trembles now the god of this world before the coming of Jesus.

Those stones of Gilgal corresponded with a further memorial in the upper reaches of the swollen Jordan at the place those feet of the priests had stood. These two memorials, one speaking of death, the other of life beyond the grave, were solid ground for faith and comfort of those who under Joshua now claimed that land, and fulfilment of every promise of God. "If God be for us." . . . But what deep lessons must yet be learned. The craving after those things forbidden, what a deep change must take place to eradicate that from the human heart. That was the lesson of the battle of Ai, Joshua 7. Everything of the condemned city of Jericho had to be destroyed, save that which could be turned to the treasury of the sanctuary of God. Nothing could be clung to, nothing preserved for man's material use, nor could that city be ever built again. The same applied to every victory. There could be no holding back of some little thing to treasure, some transient pleasure of that former life of sin. This was the story of the defeat of the people at the battle over the town of Ai. And Achin, whose name meant "troubler" (Joshua 7), was to be discovered and destroyed as warning to the people of the seriousness of this failure to obey their Captain.

Nor will this foe be easily overcome, as 1 Sam 15:13-14 "And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" The Lord will deal effectively with this natural tendency of human frailty, or death will not be vanquished at the end.

We see then how many factors are involved in the work of this age before us of kingdom development. For many of the world, whose hearts have never been in sin, that way of holiness we feel will soon be reached and progress made. For these, as for the saints in present days, a work of many years is yet involved before that holiness is perfected within. But some in whose hearts are deeply etched the evil course of years will find it hard. Isa 26:10 "Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD." For any who had misjudged the vast scale of the work

ahead, or had supposed a simple wave of the Master's hand would swift achieve complete transforming of the mind of evil men, these warnings of the Word would soon correct.

We have not space to tell in detail here all that is portrayed in that ancient yet so up-to-date book of Jesus. It seems to us that in the account of Joshua we have, as it were, a cameo of the whole work of the Christ before us now.. The various campaigns against the causes of human ill... The cities of refuge, Oh what need for those, as we today have found (Heb 6:18) who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: The sharing out, without dispute, to mutual profit and delight, all the facilities and resources of the land, this wonderful earth, man's eternal home. Establishing the spirit of mutual helpfulness and sensitivity to each other's needs, helping each other in the battles against self, against doubt, against lust of the flesh and eyes, and pride of life, against every feature of this present life which has been the cause of so much misery and pain. Building that covenant relationship with God that will endure the eternal ages to come. Dealing with every appearance of evil, even though it be made to look like an altar to the Lord. It is all there in the book of Jesus... and more.

The very mention of these truths as blessed principles and aims of the kingdom progress give us delight. Yet do we wonder that so many glimpses of that kingdom prospect are spoken in the Word in the language of poetry... for poetry in so few words conveys to the heart what our heads are not yet ready to comprehend.

What lies before us is no simple task, and it is well for us to grasp what God has shown, that process yet involved of loosening sin's hold from every soul. Like the Niagra, sin comprehends each missing of the mark, ten million drops each moment of man's day, a mighty fall indeed. Vast energy is wasted, countless ages lost, the total of innumerable lives away from God, as blinded minds forsake Creation's Source, and plunge to that abyss, oblivious of all meaning to life's course, for they deny its Cause, and in their swift descent, without relent, pursue their flight from things above, and yet cannot escape redeeming love.

When we survey the scene, that darkness try to probe that shrouds this earth, we fail to sum the tears, asses the weight, the total burden tell of human grief, the legacy of sickness, pain, and loss, but man's Creator knows, and man's Redeemer took that load.

Can it be turned, this tide? Can earth be cleansed of sin? Can countless myriads like the sand . . . be washed? Can any change of heart thus wrought in man by any programme teaching of righteous ways, or course of holiness, the reaching of of those deep emotions of man's heart, can any change of mind achieved change also that deceit of heart, that fickleness of loyalty and love, that trend to infidelity so deep engrained within the human soul? Can this as well be changed?

We see no profit though a thousand years be spent transforming guilty ways of man to innocence, unless each step along that upward path of holiness be one of permanence. The trend to sin that now controls man's path, a prison for man's ways, impossible to break those iron bars, those walls. At times the soul may glimpse another world beside it cannot reach, and, powerless to attain, falls back. As gravity decides the downward pull upon each body so does sin, and from its hold none can break free. Yet greater far the heavenly force the sun exerts upon this earth controlling in its course each planet, never letting go that hold without which each would make its headlong plunge

through depths of space. Such is the Greater Power than sin that from its mighty Source above will grip this earth, and draw each heart, each intellect, to influence every thought, and overwhelm with love divine. When stars that turn to righteousness shall shine, and all their holy power combine to beam into this darkness with their light of grace, reflected from a Father's face, to captivate and thus forever hold each human mind, and reach the blind, the deaf, the tongues now tied that cannot tell His praise... Oh may that joy be mine!

Shall I those deepest needs of man so understand? And will I be equipped to deal with leprosy of soul, each wound of sin to heal, each broken heart console? How well the Master Craftsman first designs, prepares, and then refines with great precision for each future role the instruments of His peace, the tools that He will use to shape mankind, to reach the deepest corners of the mind, to peel the scales from eyes now blind to heavenly love. These weapons He will use so wisely to defeat the giants of doubt, and darkness, and despair that have so long forbidden man's approach to claim his heritage of promised rest.

The Christ equipped for that great work now stand, poised, waiting, ready for command, the signal that will change the scene from darkness, dying, death, despair. "Let there be LIGHT, NOW, everywhere!"

Oh brethren, how we haste that hour! How earnestly we long to lift that veil that hides now from each heart of man that light of life that is the Lord. To watch those eyes then in surprise wide open to that feast prepared of God...wine of the Spirit gladdening hearts of men...the fatnesses of abundant living satisfy each soul's desire. Within each heart a holy fire to testify each walk with God, and His with men. Sorrow and sin NO MORE! Death will be conquered then!

CYRUS AND CHRIST.

Jer 50:5-8

5 They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.

6 My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace.

7 All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers.

8 Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks.

The Spirit of the Lord was transporting the mind of His prophet Jeremiah to a period of time beyond his day. Jeremiah was witnessing the rise of Babylon, that great power with roots way back in history, yet in his day to rise to a new pinnacle, a new position in which it was to dominate the nations around it. The ways of Babylon were foreign to the people of the covenant, or rather, they should have been if they had remained alert and faithful to that covenant. Sadly, in every other sense than name, they had forsaken the God Who had brought them forth. Now, having abandoned their Rock, they had in effect asked Him to release them from their covenant, and the Lord was about to allow them to learn the full implications of the course they had chosen. Their long captivity was about to begin.

It was a time of deep grief to the prophet of the Lord. The pathos of the scene was not lost to Jeremiah, and it saddened him to witness such resistance to those outstretched arms of the Lord's abiding faithfulness and love. It was an act of national suicide and self-destruction. Yet it would take more than the foolishness of human hearts to thwart the purpose of God, and the Lord granted Jeremiah a vision that was to lift his mind beyond the immediate darkness of that sad hour of Israel's history. At the time the prophet received the divine message Babylon was rising and Israel going down. He was given a glimpse of the time when this process would be reversed, when Israel would be rising as Babylon was going down. Israel and Babylon are the two principle actors of the two chapters Jeremiah 50 & 51.

A century before a similar message had been received by Isaiah, a message then even more remarkable in that Babylon was at Isaiah's time quite a different entity and no obvious threat to Israel. In Isaiah chapters 13 & 14, the Spirit prompts some of the most beautiful and elegant language to describe the same events. In speaking of the downfall of literal Babylon of old we know that the Lord was depicting something more far-reaching in time and consequence. In this way does the Lord sow light for the righteous one day to discover, like the handfuls of corn left in the fields of Boaz for Ruth to find. The clues are there in the text, for as the prophet speaks of the defeat of Babylon he finds himself describing the shaking of the whole earth. Isa 13:11 & 13 "And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger."

Verse 14 tells us that Babylon was to become like a hunted gazelle completely powerless before its enemy, like a sheep with no shepherd to defend it. "Behold", the Lord says in verse 17, "I will stir up the Medes against them. What a remarkable prophecy, for at the time of these words the Medes were themselves a subject people under the Assyrians. Thus, with such detailed precision did the Lord depict the events that were to bring an end to the seventy years captivity of Israel in Babylon. Isaiah was even used to name the man, a man not then born, who was yet to rise as the king of the Medes, the man who would be used to fulfil the Lord's pleasure. It was to be the coming of Cyrus that was to result in the downfall of Babylon and the rising up of Israel. Again in Isaiah 45,

the prophet is prompted to speak of Cyrus as the Lord's "Anointed", His "Messiah", or in the Greek version of the Scriptures, His "Christ."

Isa 45:1-4

1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

To loosen the girdle means to make feeble, the girdle being drawn tight represents preparedness for action and is a symbol thus of strength and readiness. When this prophecy was shown to Cyrus in due time we may well wonder what his response would be. Here was the God of the Jews calling him His shepherd, and promising him victory over Babylon and deliverance of Israel, but the Lord was, of course, using Cyrus to demonstrate His Own great wisdom, foresight and power over the kings of the earth. The Lord was also using Cyrus as part of a sequence of events that would foreshadow in the language of type events of even greater import that would take place at a later stage of the divine programme. The ending of the captivity and the coming forth from Babylon and return to their own land was a remarkable period in the history of Israel, yet not half so remarkable as the greater deliverance it prefigured, a deliverance in process now in this our day. Only the rubble walls of Babylon remained in the days of the apostle John on Patmos, yet in vision he saw Babylon rise again, and as he watched, a further captivity took place with an ultimate wonderful reversal of both these events under the direction of another "Anointed" of Jehovah, the

"Christ", of Whom Cyrus was but a figure. As Jeremiah saw the new rise of that ancient power of Babylon in more formidable array, so the John class of this age, the Church, have seen the rise of this same old system of religious and temporal power only in a new, more formidable form. Hyslop, in his "The Two Babylons" demonstrated just how apt the title of "Babylon" has been to describe the great church-state system of this age. Portending to be the kingdom of Christ, the great Papal system has made war against the saints and overcome them, just as did Nebuchadnezzar against the Jews of old.

When we use the term "papal", we all know at once to what we refer. The church system itself owns the name. It is intriguing to discover in a modern book, a dictionary of Archeology of the Bible, the remarkable link between this word and the Babylon of old. There it is pointed out that the most ancient traceable name for what the Jews later called Babel was that used by the ancient Euphratean people themselves. This was the name "Papel", or "Papal", which the Jews, it is claimed, misheard and mistook the name for "Babel." So the name "Papal" has been around for quite a long time, shared by and linking the ancient and the more modern power.

Now neither the Babylon of Jeremiah's day nor the Babylon of this age rose overnight. They each rose in stages. Papacy's rise took place over centuries, from the first Christianised Pagan emperor, Constantine, to the later paganised Christian fathers or popes. There were outstanding dates, just as there were in the captivity of Judah under Babylon of old, but the process occupied a period of time. This was also to be an important factor when the great reversal took place. The fall of Babylon of Ezra and Nehemiah's day and the return and restoration of Israel were both to occupy a period of time, Babylon's destruction and Israel's recovery, each process spread over many years. **BOTH PROCESSES WERE SET IN MOTION BY THE COMING OF CYRUS!**

Take Babylon first. The four years leading up to 536 BC and the proclamation of Cyrus then for the captives freedom to begin to return to their land, these years were critical in the fatal events leading to Babylon's inevitable slide towards destruction. First the subduing of the provinces of the empire of Babylon began. The outlying districts became influenced by the fame of Cyrus. At the same time they had become dissatisfied with their king Nabonidus because of his bringing of various foreign gods into Babylon. This led to open uprisings against Nabonidus and in favour of Cyrus for whom they had more respect. Then, in 538 BC Cyrus marched in, and Babylon was taken.

In Daniel 5, we have record of the great feast of Belshazzar, eldest son of Nabonidus who shared his father's throne. Following his defeat at Accad, Belshazzar, who was commander in chief of the army, had retreated to Babylon, and fancied himself safe within its mighty walls, notwithstanding the recent disasters. Any lingering fear he now sought to drown in the wild revelry of a sacrificial feast to his gods. A thousand nobles sat down to the banquet headed by the king and a dazzling array of princes. The feast described by Daniel brings before us a scene of luxury and splendour only to be found in the greatest of Oriental courts. An extravagant display was made of pomp and grandeur, the table laid with gold and silver vessels plundered from half a world, the vessels of the Temple of Jehovah among them. Then, in the midst of all the revelry, many being in a drunken state of stupor from which they were never to rise in accordance with the word of the Lord to Jeremiah (51:39), then it was that strange and awing apparition suddenly hushed the revelry as

there came forth fingers of a man's hand over against one of the many branched candlesticks or lamps which filled the hall with light, and the hand wrote on the smooth stucco surface of the wall. The message spelt Babylon's downfall. All present could see it was a bad omen, but only Daniel, the Lord's servant, was able to interpret and recognise the full significance of those solemn words. It was to mark the beginning of the end for Babylon, but understood at first only by "the wise." "In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain." (Daniel 5:30. Cyrus had entered the scene, taken that great city, and placed a prince of the Medes, Darius, as its king. Two years later, as the 70 years of the predicted captivity of Israel ran out, Cyrus himself took over as sole king, and gave forth the declaration that was to commence the long process of Israel's restoration. Babylon had been stripped of its temporal power. No longer could it appoint kings and princes throughout its once vast domain. Yet, notwithstanding this conquest, Babylon of old continued as a large and important part of the world of that day, a great city, a religious centre, and a seat of trade. It remained the capital city of the plain watered by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. For many years in Babylon life went on. Its temples were repaired, and it became evident that the final state of utter desolation predicted in such passages as Jeremiah 50:39, was yet to be realised. This destruction was fulfilled not immediately, but by degrees.

Cyrus first took away Babylon's supremacy and temporal power at his coming. Twenty years later Babylon was revolting, and Darius Hystaspes squashed the rebellion and deprived it of fortifications, removing its great gates of brass and iron. Many years later Seleucus Nicandor removed its citizens and wealth to Seleucia which he founded in the neighbourhood. In the course of time the Parthians removed all that was left to Ctesiphon. Eventually only its walls remained, and they in turn crumbled into decay until it required the excavations of archeologists to discover the site. Babylon, the great city, had become the domain of the wild creatures of the desert as predicted in God's Word, but what a long period of time was involved to completely fulfil that Word.

As with the type, so with the antitype. As Mystic Babylon came up in stages, a long drawn-out process of development, so she submits to the judgment that sits to take away her riches, her temporal power, eventually her religious influence already undermined by the civil powers that once supported her, and by defecting bishops and disputing priests, something once unheard of, until she is no more.

Babylon of old had for years heard of Cyrus and his great power, but had failed to recognise the threat to her security. She remembered her great walls and huge gates capable of withstanding any invader. She had her history, a history of conquests and glories, a line of despotic kings. Babylon felt insolently secure in her heart. So it was with the Babylon of John's vision. As God's representative on earth there was no thought in the mind of popes of coming destruction. She had her two great walls, ignorance, and superstition, and her illustrious past and heritage and the security of her many earthly treasures.

Papacy had not been without her problems any more than Babylon of old in that period leading up to the advent of Cyrus. From about 556 BC Nabonidus had reigned. He entrusted the care of the army to his son Belshazzar. Meanwhile, after some skirmishes with various enemies, Nabonidus

desperately tried to carry out some of the needed work of restoration in Babylon. His main task was to restore the Babylonian temples, temples of the moon, of the sun, and the temple of Anunitum, the "lady who walks before the gods." Eventually it seems some progress was achieved and sacrifices were again being offered to Babylon's old gods. Nabonidus arranged that all the images of the gods were taken in grand procession around Babylon, and there is in existence a kind of newspaper clipping in the form of a clay tablet depicting the event. After describing this parade the tablet states, "In the month Tammuz (June,) Cyrus made battle.. the men of Akkad made revolt.. The soldiers took Sippara on the 14th day (June 14th) without fighting, and Nabonidus fled away. On the 16th day.. the army of Cyrus came to Babylon without any opposition.." The army of Babylon of old would not go out to fight the army of Cyrus, just as the Lord foretold through Jeremiah Jer 51:30 "The mighty men of Babylon have forborn to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed; they became as women: they have burned her dwellingplaces; her bars are broken."

The correspondences with the Babylon of this age are of interest here. From the time of reformation one half of Christendom has been in revolt with the other half. Satan's house has been divided. Efforts were made to restore some of the esteem for the gods of Papacy, and for those things once counted sacred, such as Papal infallibility and divine authority of popes, together with that old system of worship of the woman god, "the lady who walks before the gods.." the virgin Mary, mother of God, these things were once more acclaimed. But the soldiers of Babylon, the civil powers so long made to jump at her command, were losing heart, their allegiance costing too much.

There is not space here to recount all the events leading up to the Papal fall. It is in the light of these happenings that we perceive the enormity of what has taken place in this earth concerning this doomed system. Let us just remind ourselves of the ultimate most striking scene when Pope Pius 9th, who had become Pope in 1846, turned from his first attempts at liberal reform with which he might have regained some support of the masses, and pursued instead the tyrannical course of his predecessors. He re-opened the dungeons of the inquisition, and deliberately set himself to reorganise Europe on the model of the darkest days of the dark ages. "On his own sole authority, without the concurrence even of a council, a thing that no pope had done before, he added a new dogma, "the immaculate conception..", which all men were required on pain of death to receive. "He reorganised a Roman Catholic hierarchy for Protestant England, canonised saints, and gathered around him in Rome imposing bodies of dignitaries and bishops from every part of the world. "He enforced in Rome a law prohibiting Protestant worship, except at the embassies. "He persecutes those who dared to read the scriptures in their homes. "He gathered his great Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, and so managed it that the assembled archbishops, princes, cardinals, patriarchs, bishops, abbots, generals of orders, etc, had no liberty even to discuss the great question brought before them but were fraudulently forced to pronounce in favour of the dogma of papal infallibility. "This new canon was decreed July 1870"

All the old gods of Babylon were thus taken and paraded before the people. Yet on that same day, 18th July 1870, "on which the pope read .. the decree which marked the climax of papal pretension, the announcement of his own infallibility," a great storm shook the place, and Napoleon III dispatched his challenge to Germany. The writing was on the wall! The domino effect of

Napoleon's act was within weeks to result in the fall of Rome and the final irreversible loss of the Papacy's temporal power.

We had a "newspaper clipping" in the shape of a tablet of clay recording the similar events in the days of Nabonidus.. Today we have a witness, a Roman Catholic at that, in Cardinal Manning. He records, "There is one point in which the present crisis of the Holy See and of the Christian Church differs from all that has gone before it. Always in ages past, when one or more of the European powers were in conflict with the Holy See, one or more of the other powers were friendly and gave it protection. Now not one stands in its defence; they have all with one accord hid their faces from the Vicar of Our Lord; they are all consenting to the deed. The princes and rulers of Christendom have forsaken their Master, and their silence in the hour of danger is flight. Never until now have all the nations of Europe consented in the deed of the nations who have usurped Rome. Never till now has the public law of Europe been changed to sanction the usurpation. For the first time the Head of Christendom is excluded from the senate of Christian sovereigns, though the temporal sovereignty of the supreme pontiff is of divine institution.!" The mighty men of Babylon, the civil powers that once supported her, have forborn to fight. They have remained in their holds. (Jer. 51:30.)

In Jer 51:31, we read, "One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end." So immense was the great city of Babylon that it took days to walk right through. When Cyrus diverted the waters to march in under the great gates at one end of the city there were parts of the city that did not get to hear for up to three days. They knew the city was besieged, but had such confidence in the enormous walls they would laugh off the thought of genuine threat. Those two walls are reported to have been nearly as high as St Paul's cathedral, and not eight but eighty-seven feet thick, and surrounded by a great ditch filled with water. One might understand their complacency! It was in this false sense of confidence that Belshazzar's feast took place. The city had been taken, they knew not the hour of their visitation, but cavorted in drunken stupor until they fell exhausted in sleep which was to become the sleep of death. Jer 51:57, "And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts." After that great event Papacy would never regain temporal power.

Let us turn to the other great event of our day depicted by Jeremiah and Isaiah as SUBSEQUENT TO THE COMING OF CYRUS type of Christ... the long process of Israel's restoration. When Cyrus gave the signal one might have expected a rush of captives to get back to their land and to freedom. Such was not the case. Why was that? What had happened? At the outset of their captivity it is reported that the iron of slavery had entered deeply into the souls of the Israelites. Contempt and hatred seem to have been lavished upon the race, culminating not infrequently in the dungeon, even in death. They are spoken of, as previously warned in the Word of God, as a people robbed and spoiled, snared in pits, hidden away in prisons. Pitiless cruelty, unrestrained by law, crushed their spirits, till despair settled widely on the various communities. Ps 137:1 "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion." Gradually, however, matters improved. After a while many were allowed to even live in the capital itself where a happier lot was afforded. Bitterness gradually subsided, and the Israelites began to fall into their place as a recognised portion of the general community. The language of Babylon,

moreover, was so closely related to Hebrew, its use being so easy, that it ultimately supplanted Hebrew. Once again the long unused dialect of Abraham, once of Ur of the Chaldees, became adopted by his seed, but not, alas, his faith!

Oh yes! some clung to the faith of Israel. Some realised the cause of their captivity, and sought a life of closer conformity to the requirements of their God, but by no means all. It was these more zealous ones with vision in their hearts that were first to gather together and muster that first company that were to ask the way to Zion. Jer 50:5 "They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." Out of the whole nation little more than forty thousand formed that band, one tenth of these being priests. Yet out of 24 courses of priests only four courses were here represented, and the defection of twenty courses from the faith of their fathers is here testified. The Levites response was even worse. By far outnumbering priests as a people, yet now only 74 Levites cared to leave Babylon. Even so in our day the return and restoration of Israel began in a similar small way.

More were to leave to join them in dribs and drabs from time to time as things got a little easier in the desolate land across the desert, but it was in troublous times and with many setbacks that the temple, and later, the city of Jerusalem was rebuilt. Some of those who remained in Babylon, including the richer Jews, though contented with their position, and faint-hearted when it came to the thought of forsaking their gains to face the desert and what lay beyond, nevertheless felt rather proud of the braver spirits who, having little to lose, more readily joined that movement. These liberally contributed whatever might be useful on the way or in the land. We do not need to detail further that typical return to illustrate how forceful and various are the points of comparison with what is taking place before our eyes in this our day. The work then took many years just as the return and restoration of Israel today. It was not to be the work of a moment. Lives were to be spent, many tears shed, before even the first-fruits of their endeavours were to be realised, and this applies to both events. There were moments in Israel's first return when it seemed their position was almost untenable, their hope for progress doomed. So again has it been in this our day. A long trail of events has led to the present stage of Israel's restoration. From the first revival of Jewish hope, the work of Zionists, the first little bands that set out to settle in the cherished land, through events of two world wars, the shaking of nations and international tension that was to mark the end of the Gentile Times, her have been conflicts without and conflicts within, yet again Israel returns, and again in troublous times. We live in the time depicted by the Lord through His prophets of old and portrayed in the history of His people, the time when Babylon is on the way down, and Israel, the people scattered and peeled, is on the way up. So it is written, and so inevitably will it be, and we are witnesses of these things. As in the type, Babylon still exists, a great religious power, but stripped of her old temporal sovereignty. Her decline and doom is sealed. Her daughter systems too show the signs of a grievous sore of spiritual lifelessness. Jer 51:55-56 "Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered: Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompenses shall surely requite."

These two long processes, the downfall of Babylon and the uprising of Israel both trace back to one event that precipitated and caused and began each process.. This was the coming of Cyrus, the Lord's "Anointed." We cannot help but see the counterpart today in the coming of the Christ of God. What more can He say than to us He hath said!

There is, of course, a spiritual aspect that runs alongside both of these events. Spiritual Israel too are much involved. To them the cry has gone forth, "Come out of her My people that ye partake not of her plagues." We are in fellowship today because over a century ago scores of telegraph boys were deployed outside the churches of Christendom with the message "Food for thinking Christians". Some believe to day that the message was untimely and inappropriate. We believe it was exactly on time and truly pertinent to the hour, and this the great signs both in Babylon and in Israel confirm. During this harvest period two gatherings are in process. One a visible gathering of the natural seed back to their land. The other is an invisible gathering to the Lord of His saints which cannot be seen. The fact of the one which can be seen is indication of the other beyond our natural senses. The restoration and gathering of Israel is taking place before our eyes and requires no stretch of imagination to perceive. Likewise the going down of Babylon. Anyone who has knowledge of the power of that great system prior to 1870 cannot but realise the dramatic changes already evident in her undoubted decline. The two take place alongside. According to the Word of God both are precipitated by the same event, the coming of Cyrus. They confirm to us that a greater than Cyrus is here, the One Cyrus was used to prefigure.. The Shepherd and Christ of God. The drawn-out time periods involved in the out-working of the divine programme have proved a test of faith to many of the Lord's people. Nevertheless, that such long periods would be involved is testified in type just as it is today confirmed by undeniable history. Prior to 1914 Bible students were still expecting a fairly rapid winding-up of the pilgrimage of the last of the church on earth. From the time of Peter brethren have been "hasting the day." With the test of time some views of the Truth movement became reviewed, and gradually views of others outside the Truth movement became adopted with regard to the matter of the Lord's return. Today we have learned to share a charitable view and attitude towards those, our brethren in Christ, who no longer share our own views of truth. It seems that, in the Lord's wisdom, such a situation was needful for the final proving and rounding off of the Christian character as the last of the little flock finish their course. That first step out of Babylon was by no means the end of the matter, the quest goes on. We too, like Israel, are asking our way to Zion, our faces turned thitherward.

Israel still have much to learn about leaving the ways and attitudes of the Gentile way of life behind. The Lord will see to it that they receive those needful experiences, painful though some may be, that will clear their vision, and help them to define their highest and most satisfying goal. They must be the first to realise, after the church have gone, the divine blessing of truth. They must be seen to be the people the Lord has blessed. Israel will then be used in turn to bless all the families of earth under the higher direction of spiritual Zion, the saints in glory with the Lord. Both natural and spiritual Zion are sharing parallel experiences in this respect. For each the way is turning out to be not quite what was once expected, a long and somewhat difficult way, not without tests. Yet with each pitfall there is a lesson to be learned. The same Lord is behind the work with each of these chosen peoples of God. The last days of the preparation both of the natural and the spiritual seed is to reveal something of the depths of divine wisdom and love.

None of us are worthy for such things. Israel proved her unworthiness long ago. We never knew any sense of worthiness even from the start. Certainly the state of the Truth movement today does nothing to fill our hearts with pride or satisfaction. We think of the sadness of heart of Nehemiah many years after the coming of Cyrus, the Lord's Christ. How much real building work of the walls of Zion is taking place today? Sadly our history of the Truth movement these years, like that of Israel then, has been at times a history of factions and divisions, undermining of faith rather than building up. In spite of this He continues His work in us, and He perseveres with Israel too, a people also known for her factions and lack of unity. When at the end His work is finished in both peoples, when He presents to the Father and to the world this new government in heaven and in earth, His workmanship, then the work of grace in each will shine out.

Out of Zion, Zion in heaven, Zion on earth, Zion the perfection of beauty, God will shine, and Zion will become the joy of the Father and the joy of the Lord Jesus, and the joy of the whole earth.

Esther and our times.

We have noted interesting aspects of comparison between the sequence of events following the coming of Cyrus and those following the coming of Christ around 1874. These include the fact that his coming brought about the process of downfall for Babylon and of restoration for Israel. Both, we have seen, were to prove long procedures in fact occupying well over a hundred years. Neither process could commence before the coming of Cyrus. We have thus seen underlined in pattern the fact that any indication of these two processes in progress today constitute infallible proofs that the Greater Cyrus, Jesus, has returned.

Yet there is more! The pattern of events in those days subsequent to the coming of Cyrus bear a remarkable correspondency with the sequence of events these last days since the parousia of Christ commenced. In fact, if we lay the two periods alongside it becomes apparent that there are correspondences in terms of time to some marked events where both periods concur. This will be developed further in "Arise and Build". Our present subject centres on the Lord's dealings with Israel and world Jewry in these last days.

The coming of Cyrus marked the turning point in Israel's sad history as a captive people banished from their land. Now many prophets had spoken by inspiration of Israel's restoration. In the early days of the captivity some of these visions and assurances must have seemed almost as idle dreams. Those first oppressive years in Babylon were accompanied by the expectation that the Lord would very quickly intervene, and the Lord sent a special message by Jeremiah to tell them that this would not be so. A long period of desolation would intervene. It was as though the Lord intended to air thoroughly both the land and its people to give time for the noxious vapours of sin and false worship to be eradicated. Yet through their sorrows and privations, scattered and peeled, strangers in Gentile lands, the Lord's eye was upon them. Hosea 13:9-10 "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?" Again in Hosea 14:4 "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him." Hosea 14:1 "O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God;"

But what a long drawn-out process is involved of bringing Israel to that state of heart of full return to their Lord! We watch the process today. We strain our eyes to see what is happening to the heart of this people. The outward signs we see. Israel is to us an unmistakable evidence of the presence of the Lord Whose coming was the signal for their long captivity in Gentile lands to end. When the Jews were turned out of Spain some centuries ago we might have expected them to turn their eyes towards the promised land, but they did not entertain such hope, because they knew that their Messiah had not yet come. Today, against their belief that such times of restoration must await the Messiah, we find them back in their land. This is still a mystery to many religious Jews aware of their Scriptures (eg Isaiah 49:6.). How can the works of Messiah be taking place apparently without Him? Only AFTER the coming of Cyrus could the cry go forth, Isa 52:11, "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD." Then would they ask their way to Zion, their faces turned thitherward. It could not happen before the event. All Jews who had any faith in their Scriptures knew that. Peter knew it, as did the other disciples. The restoration of Israel was the work of Messiah. As the Master prepared to leave them the question was uppermost in their minds.. Acts 1:6 "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

So what is happening to Israel now? Just as in the days after the coming of Cyrus with that proclamation so stirring to the heart of faithful Jews, a long process is involved with developing stages, hurdles to be overcome, apparent set-backs, and various trials of faith. Isaiah 52:6-12, and many other passages of the Word would be in the mind of the Jews as they began to return to their land. The Lord had turned again their captivity and they were like them that dreamed. The opening verses of Isaiah 52 called for a great awakening in Zion, and a loosening of the captive bands from around her neck. Isa 52:1-2 "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem:

loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." Then in verse 7, the joy of the occasion is expressed in memorable words. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Verse 8 continues, "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye ("they will see it with their own eyes."NIV), when the LORD shall bring again Zion." In the mind of the returning Jews of that day they were living in the time of fulfilment of those promises of restoration of Israel, and they would be full of expectation.

Yet not all Jews were ready to return to the land. Some had become settled and comfortable on foreign soil and wished only to stay put and not to be disturbed. The parallels to our days are obvious. Those returning to the land were in for a hard time. Much of the enthusiasm of the first band of pilgrims must have somewhat dampened at the first glimpse of the desolate land before them. They were soon to learn that there were also enemies, both without and within. The attitude of the people all around that land were hostile, and things seemed not to go according to the rosy concept of restoration they may once have entertained. There were to be periods when the work seemed to go backwards rather than forwards, and the Lord sent them three prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, with messages relevant to their needs during that long-drawn period of restoration process. The lessons of flagging zeal, of wrong direction of their activities, of apathy over what was happening, the feeling that this was not the time after all.. these are well known object lessons to us all in the Truth movement today which somewhat parallels some of these experiences of the natural seed both then and now.

What of those Jews who wished not to return to their land? We have mentioned this reluctance in a previous chapter (Shout of a King). The story of Esther comes to mind set here in a different sequence of typical background yet teaching afresh similar lessons and warnings of a covenant people losing their identity in the world.

The period covered by the account of Esther was, we are told, from BC 478 to 464. If we take the time of the proclamation of Cyrus in his first sole-king year, 536 BC, to correspond with 1874, time of the Lord's return, then the period of Esther would parallel the period from 1932/3 to 1946/7 AD. This period, as we know, covered a most distressing time for the Jews in Europe, from the rise of Adolph Hitler. After years of struggle for power, in 1932 Hitler's Nazi party gained the largest party vote in Germany. By 1933 he was Chancellor. His first act was to demand an election. The Nazi party gained 42% of the votes. However, their allies, the Nationalists polled 8%. Added together this gave them half share they needed to rule Germany. This new Reichstag decided to abolish parliamentary government. From that moment until 1945 Germany was ruled by the Enabling Law which gave Hitler law-making powers independent of the Reichstag. Before long other parties were banned and opposition became unknown. Arrest, imprisonment, torture and death without trial became commonplace.

Jews were particularly ill-treated. From 1935 the Nuremberg laws deprived them of all rights as citizens. They could not marry non-Jews, could not leave their jobs, in some cases could not even buy food. Soon thousands were leaving Germany, some for the U.S.A., some for Israel.

Meanwhile in Italy Mussolini was becoming increasingly impressed by the Nazi party. After a visit to Germany in 1937 he came away so intoxicated with the regime that he introduced goose-stepping to his troops and started a campaign against the Jews. In Russia also persecutions were underway, and likewise in Hungary and other European countries. The stage was set for the attempt to wipe out the Jews of Europe. (Compare the attempt of Laban in "Jacob at Jabbok.)

In the days of Esther a similar situation was developing. We find Esther first mentioned in chapter 2 verse 7, where we find her name is given as Hadassah, which means "myrtle." There is often an aptness in Old Testament names, and the name Myrtle reminds us at once of the opening vision granted to Zechariah some years before. There he saw a vision of the invisibly present Lord riding upon a red horse, Zech 1:8 "I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood

among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; (the shady valley).. " a place of lowness and disesteem. This well represented the position of the Jews at that time. They were a chastised people, slow to recover from their self-brought captive state, and lowly regarded in the eyes of the world. Yet there, invisible to natural sight, in their midst stands the Lord, "the messenger or angel of Jehovah," of verse 11 being undoubtedly the Lord Jesus Himself. This vision of an invisible Lord in the midst applies in parallel to this day in which we live. He sits upon a red horse, symbol of blood, of vengeance, of judgment, and of war. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro continuously assessing the situation throughout the earth, and they note with displeasure the nations at ease, or indifferent to the plight of His people. The vision is given to encourage, and they certainly needed encouragement at that time.

Daniel had been afforded a glimpse (recorded in Daniel 10:13 ,) of wicked spirits in high places endeavouring to turn the heart of the Persian rulers against the Jews. This began early in the restoration period, as evidenced in Daniel 6, where we find much envy and rivalry becoming evident among the presidents and princes of Persia against Daniel. As a result of their conniving Daniel found himself in the midst of a den of lions, and how significant that was of the antagonism of Satanic source against the Jews. But the mouths of the lions were stopped by an invisible hand. Michael their Prince was watching over His people. This same watch-care we discern today as Israel passes through a similar time of trial, and Jews throughout the world share the brunt of the anti-semitic spirit now evident. It was not inappropriate that this Jewess was called Myrtle, representative of a lowly disesteemed race.

A remarkable sequence of events brought about the situation of the days from 1932, the rise of Hitler. Quite a strange chain of history also led to the situation under Haman. The story opens with a sumptuous banquet given by the Persian king Xerxes in the palace at Shushan. This grand building, or what remains, has been excavated, and its marble pillar and pavements restored to view. We are not in Israel in this account but among Jews outside the land, still dwelling amongst the Gentiles. Background history is enlightening as to the probable cause of the banquet. The king is planning to extend his domain by an expedition into Greece. He now has in view the idea of taking Europe! However a similar attempt by his predecessor one generation before had resulted in total defeat and disaster. That had been called the battle of marathons, and its magnitude in terms of arms and men make it one of the outstanding wars of all time, like the Great War in our times which preceded Hitler's later designs on Europe.

Hitler was caught up in the backwash of just such a similar great war, that of 1914, which resulted in the disastrous Versailles peace treaty which paved the way for so much unrest in Germany. Xerxes gathered together all his generals and military advisors in what turned out to be a six months convocation, and to boost morale a most sumptuous feast was laid on to conclude the preparations. Here it was, however, that something happened which was to alter history for the Jews of that time. At first it appeared to be just a domestic upset. Everyone was enjoying the feast and the king's heart was merry with wine. In this drunken condition he rashly sent his chamberlain to bring Vashti, the queen, his wife, with instructions to wear her royal apparel, crown and tiara, and to unveil her beauty before this half-drunken all-male party. Sensing the situation, Vashti's dignity was offended and she declined the invitation. This put the king on the spot, for he was a despotic ruler and no one could disobey any whim of his without the gravest consequences. Furthermore, this was a very public occasion and the slight was quickly seen by some present as an open invitation to other wives to assert their preferences over their husbands, thus leading to a very unhappy state of affairs throughout the empire. Counsel was therefore given to the king that he should dismiss his wife and forbid her ever again entering the king's presence. This the king did, and the decree was made.

Of course, when the hang-over had passed after this event the king began to think twice about what he had done and began missing his queen, but there was nothing he could do about getting her back for the decree was made and remained inviolate according to Persian law. It was therefore decided that a beauty contest should be organised with a view to finding a suitable replacement for the very beautiful queen Vashti. The winner would take her place at the side of the king with the

royal estate of his queen. The rest of the story we know, how one of the men who had a post about the palace decided to put his cousin in for the contest. This man was Mordecai, and the young woman was his charge, for he had looked after her since the death of her parents. The beauty of Esther was such that she won the heart of the king and was made queen in place of Vashti. A great Persian king to marry a Jewess? Well, somehow Esther failed to mention that she was a Jewess! Thus the stage was set for a situation that, while it had not yet arisen, was clearly known beforehand by the Lord. What a lesson of providence!

We might well ask, could not the Lord equally simply have overruled what was to follow and avoided the whole ugly situation developing? Equally we may ask today, could He not have prevented Hitler ever rising to power, or Saddam Hussain, or any other evil man? Certainly if the Lord so wished He could have prevented Haman ever gaining the king's confidence in the way that he did, rising to a position where he could cause a decree to go forth to exterminate the whole Jewish race. Yet the story continues and this unthinkable eventuality was the very thing that did in fact take place, yes, even so long after the coming of their promised "Messiah", marking the time of deliverance. Why does God permit evil? Never because He cannot help it! Always because He has a wise and loving purpose in mind.

Not long after Esther became queen Haman became appointed as prime minister. Now it is important to note that Haman was not an ordinary man. He was, in fact, an Amalekite, and descended from a former king of that nation, Agag. King Saul had encounter with an Agag. In 1 Samuel 15 Saul was commanded to slay utterly all the Amalekites. Why? Because Amalek was a ruthless tribe which came up against the Israelites in the wilderness. 1 Sam 15:2-3 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." In Exodus 17:1-7, we are told of a particular trial which came upon the Israelites. They were in the desert, and they could find no water. Israel today is also desperately in need of water, both the natural substance of life and the spiritual counterpart! The situation at that time seemed quite hopeless, faith collapsed, and they were found murmuring against Moses saying, "Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" And they began to pick up stones to stone Moses. The Lord provided the water. He was going to anyway, but He does it now not as a response to faith but in spite of unbelief and lack of trust. Yet in His mercy He saved them. The people had failed in the fight with the enemy within, the enemy of doubt. Now they find themselves confronted with the enemy without, for there Amalek lies in wait. Thus is established a link between anti-semitism and lack of faith by the natural people of God. The great object lesson was then taught, for in the battle with Amalek that ensued it was clearly demonstrated that the Israelites prevailed not by force of arms, but by the maintenance of the outstretched arms of Moses reaching towards heaven. When Moses held up his hand Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed. With the help of Aaron and Hur victory was thus achieved for Israel (as indeed it will be shortly with the help of the church and ancient worthies.) and Moses built there an altar, and called it Jehovah-nissi, "the Lord my Banner." "For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." (Exod 17:16) So did the antagonism between Israel and Amalek become as a running sore.

In 1 Samuel 15, Israel's first king, Saul, a Benjamite, son of Kish, is directed by the Lord to go and smite Amalek, for, said the Lord, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. For Amalek read "doubt"! This was the beginning of a new stage of Israel's history, the kingdom with a visible king! How important to get things straight so far as Amalek was concerned, for Amalek represents one of the greatest enemies of the Lord's people, the close-girding sin of Israel. He must be wiped out from the start. Not one scrap of this enemy nor anything pertaining to him must be allowed to cohabit. All to do with Amalek must be destroyed in the most deliberate and final manner! Victory over doubt must be conclusive.

We all know what happened, and Saul's hesitancy in obeying this command was to cost him the kingdom. Saul failed to slay Agag, king of the Amalekites, and he failed also to dispose of all the things of Agag, the sheep, cattle, and all he considered worth keeping. In dismay and disgust Samuel turned away from Saul and refused to accompany him any further. Saul had forfeited the help and ministry of the Lord's priest and prophet, and this was their last meeting until Samuel's death. Doubt and disobedience, how ruthlessly must the Lord's anointed deal with these enemies of the soul to maintain a walk with the Lord. As Samuel turned to leave, Saul, in great consternation, seized his robe to stop him, and the robe tore in his hands. "So" said Samuel "hath the Lord rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and has given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou." That neighbour turned out to be David.

Was David any better than Saul? Has the David class of this age learned well the things written in men's lives for their admonition? The end of the book of Samuel describes how David went after Amalek who had made great spoil of the city of Ziklag and carried away the wives and children captive before burning down the houses. We read in 1 Sam 30:17-19 "And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all." Oh brethren, the victory of faith, for David went in the Name of the God of Israel.

This gives us a glimpse of the implication in the book of Esther when it states that Haman was an Amalekite of the line of a king Agag, and that Mordecai was a Benjamite of the line of Kish, the name reminding us of the lineage of Saul, although this "Kish" was probably a more recent ancestor. There is much that is suggestive in the recording of these details in the account. "Light is sown for the righteous..."

The beauty of Esther was to be proved to be more than skin deep. It would lie in her readiness, when put to test, to lay down her own life in the interests of her people. [The eventual Judah to Benjamin attitude of the 'Story of Joseph' chapter comes here to mind.] It was not an easy task that lay before her. When the plot was laid to wipe out the entire race of Jews throughout the Persian world Esther was urged by Mordecai that she use her influence upon the king. This involved three great elements of genuine risk. First she had to gain the king's attention by entering his presence without his prior invitation, something unheard of and which might rouse his great anger at such affront to his dignity. This alone could cost Esther's life. On top of this affront she would have to reveal that she, the queen, was a Jewess, a matter thus far concealed from her husband. What would be his shocked reaction at this news? Finally, her requirement would seem to flout the unalterable nature of Persian Law. How could the king be asked to go back on his word? Oh what great faith was required of Esther!

Because of the hatred he had developed for Mordecai, Haman, by his mischievous influence on the king, had caused the slaughter of Jews throughout the realm to be set for a certain day. The lord, Who overruled the whole matter, was now to demonstrate His "way of escape." [This expression in 1 Cor 10:13, is literally "a way through.."] But why was the whole situation allowed to arise? The old enemy, Amalek, had reared his head again in Israel. With the coming of Cyrus the decree went forth and the signal was given to the people of God to leave Babylon, leave the world, and set their faces towards Zion, go back to the land of promise. They were to depart from all that Babylon meant, and in cleanness of heart were to bear the vessels of the Lord, the instruments of divine service and worship, back to their rightful place. The failure of so many Jews to return revealed that same old pull of flesh for tangible comforts, the demand for visible blessing, something immediate being preferred to the hope, a mess of pottage meeting desire more than birthright.

Their faith was lacking. It was not up to the challenge of a desolate land surrounded by enemies, nor ready to make the effort and sacrifice involved in its recovery. Much to be preferred were their

present comforts, and they stayed where they were, as do many Jews in this day. Their very life as a covenant people of God was here at stake. Would they now merge into their surroundings adopting more and more of the ways of those around them? Already they were talking like the people of Babylon. So did the grim spectre arise of the old enemy, Amalek. The days of Moses were also typical of these days of Christ, and the parallel of this test is clearly before us in this day of antitype. The visible and physical threat now brought home the deeper spiritual crisis. Amalek had to be defeated, all that this enemy represented, lack of faith, mistrust of the Lord and His ability to achieve His purpose in His people. His miraculous power lies latent for those who fully believe. The "measure" is "according to your faith..."

Esther, by throwing herself completely on the Lord in full submission, total resignation to whatever the consequences might be, demonstrated the attitude of faith essential to salvation. Natural reasoning would say to her, "Why should I? I am comfortable. I am alright. Why risk so much? It should be noted that getting the message through to her was no easy task for Mordecai. It is your life that is at stake! The lesson remains for this day. It applies to all covenant people of God. This is the victory that overcometh the world.

When the signal was given at this end of the age for the Jews to return to the land of promise there was very little stirring throughout the world. Only the most zealous were ready to be uprooted from their homes and businesses and life in Gentile lands. The majority were comfortable where they were and felt no compulsion to leave all those comforts for an arduous existence in a desolate land. May we not be first to cast a scornful stone! The Lord sent hunters to hunt them out. The real enemy was depicted by Amalek, that lack of reverential fear of the Lord, and indifference towards that covenant relationship with Him. We read in Deut 25:17-19 "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it." Amalek feared not God, had no belief, no respect, for His great might. Such an attitude we find in world Jewry today.

There are noble exceptions, but in large the conscience is satisfied by donation, or general good-will towards those that have returned, rather than personal involvement, personal return to the land marked out for them by the Lord. As in the days of Esther, so it is now. There is meaning behind the ugly threat of anti-semitism throughout so many lands today. It is not just an accident, but, as with the rise of Amalek in the past, it is a reminder to a covenant people of God of the blessed privileges of this hour in Israel's history, privileges designed to demand a true and living faith in the Lord. The enemy within must be fought of which that enemy without is but a symbol. [Compare 'Jacob at Jabbok.']

The Lord rewarded Esther's faith. he overruled the matter so that the king responded favourably to her request. The attack on the Jews could not be cancelled, but the Jews would be allowed to fight back against their enemies. And so it was. And so it is today! The rise of anti-semitism headed by the Amalekite Haman of this end of the age, Adolph Hitler, is but an outward tangible witness to the enemy within, the Amalek spirit of lack of reverential fear of the Lord, lack of trust in the God of Jacob, Who said, Gen 28:15, "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." This enemy of doubt each Jew must fight. That is the battle. It is a most personal battle for each one, and on its conquest will depend the fulfilment of the great promises and privileges belonging to the natural people of God. The Lord brings about the circumstances that will achieve this result.

Some have wondered about the lack of reference in the account of Esther to the Name of the Lord. It has been noted in the Companion Bible, however, that the Name is secretly hidden in the book in no less than five places, each of which contains the Name in acrostic form, that is spelled out by the first letter of sequences of words in the Hebrew text. There is, indeed, a special pattern in the sequence, indicating that this is by no means accidental. The Lord is there, but secretly present, working with unseen hand in the affairs of His natural people.

Upon receiving the new decree of the king that the Jews might defend themselves against their enemy it was arranged for riders to go forth throughout the whole realm proclaiming that the Jews everywhere "stand for their life" and make complete destruction of every vestige of enemy power and goods, that is, of all influenced by this spirit of Haman, or of the Amalekite against them. The thoroughness of the victory is a message both of stimulation and cheer to the Jews of our day. Seventy five thousand of the enemy fell that day. To make sure of full extermination a further day was granted at Esther's request. This may seem to have been rather vindictive on her part, but the fact that three hundred thousand more of the enemy were then slain shows her fears were well-grounded that the Amalek spirit may have survived the first battle. The conquest is most significant. Here lay the root of the downfall of Saul's reign and the whole kingdom of Israel, as predicted by Jesus in Matthew 24. The root of unbelief has to be eradicated from the hearts of all His people.

We have not mentioned yet what happened to Haman, and the story is not unfamiliar to Bible students, the end being that the very gallows he had prepared for the hated Mordecai were used for his own execution. Psalm 9:16 "The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." Furthermore, his ten sons were also slain, thus eradicating further threat. This is an important aspect, indicating the finality of the battle. In the

process Mordecai was made prime minister in Haman's place. By a wonderful turn round of events, before his death Haman was made to take the king's apparel that he thought he was going to wear and put it upon Mordecai, setting the royal crown upon his head, and bringing him in triumphal procession on the king's horse through the city, proclaiming before him.. "Thus shall be done to the man the king delights to honour." How beautifully significant! This is a theme worthy of your private meditation. So far as the Jew is concerned, there will be a complete reversal of his position in the world when he fulfils the Lord's requirements of him. No longer will he be the tail but the head. It all hangs upon this battle with the enemy within. This grand reversal will be when the battle with Amalek is decisive and he is shamed forever beneath the feet of the people of God.

In Esther 9:16, we read "But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, but they laid not their hands on the prey.(ie., the spoil they did not touch.)" Nothing was to be preserved of Amalek in their lives, not even one little keepsake. All to do with that ancient enemy was to be forever detested and forbidden. Only deep true faith in God will make the present-day Jew victorious and clean vessels for the Lord's use in the kingdom age before us. The enemy is not without but within, nevertheless the outer enemy, anti-semitism, is permitted to bring home the true nature of the problem and to define the battle. What witness this will be to all mankind! The book of Esther is most relevant to this very day in which we have a part. Like the first Purim, this day will be memorialised forever in the new heart of His chosen people. Through the ages to come will men talk of the this our day and the Lord's victory in a weak-willed and irresolute people.

In Esther 4:16, we read her proclamation before her ordeal, "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." A period of denial of self and its interests and earnest prayer to the Lord, how important this was to the whole issue.. the upwards-reaching of both arms towards the Lord. It was there, in communion with the Lord, that the battle was won. The result could not be more wonderful for the Jew. Esth 8:15-17 "And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them."

This, we note, was even before the battle was fought, for indeed, in fasting and prayer was the battle already won. In a collection of tablets from this period and subsequent days more than a hundred Jewish names occur in connection with important positions in the realm, including the position of governors of administrative districts. The ancient people of God, once endowed with the faith of the people of God thus become part of the divine arrangement of world government in association with those worthy ones of old whose faith was so attested. The material is there for the princes of this earth. Thus we find here depicted the further stages of more tangible kingdom blessings of all families of earth, through the Jew.

We are watching with deepest interest all that is happening to the Jew at this remarkable hour of their history of which the past speaks today in such graphic terms. If this is wonderful to us, and it is, what shall we now say should we go back to the beginning of this same lesson and recognise the corresponding message to the spiritual seed too. As the people of God we need, like the Jew, to stand and be counted. Nor would we cling thus trembling to the things of time in face of realisation of such hope sublime. The test upon the Jew is paralleled by similar tests of the Lord's spiritual people that will result in demonstrating their complete separation in heart from the things of this earth. Are we a people that the Lord delights to honour? Then do we with fervency of zeal and love endeavour to honour Him with our whole being..

In closing, how the sad story of Isaiah 5, the vineyard disaster, finds a wonderful counterpart and outcome in Isaiah 27:2-6 when the same song is sung, but this time the Husbandman rewarded for His great patience. "In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

ARISE AND BUILD. Nehemiah 2:20

Neh 2:20 "Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build:"

"The Divine Plan of the Ages' suggests a progression in the Divine arrangement, foreknown to our God and orderly. We believe the teachings of divine revelation can be seen to be both beautiful and harmonious from this standpoint and from no other..."

We offer no prizes for guessing of what book, published more than a century ago, these are the first lines... those first beautiful chords of the golden harp of God. Here was someone who first turned away in disgust from the Bible, assuming that the God-dishonouring teachings of the churches were synonymous with the teachings of that Word. When he died, dear Brother Russell left ample heart-satisfying testimony as to why he had been compelled to change his mind from that viewpoint. As brother himself remarked, if it had not been his eyes that the Lord had opened it would have been someone else. The time was due. The very stones were ready to cry out. It is not inappropriate that we pause today to look back over the intervening years since the Pastor's death, and indeed before that year to the whole period of what we have come to term the "Truth movement". We review the call out of Babylon, the re-establishment of the true worship of a God of love and justice, wisdom and power. This was a remarkable epoch in the building up of the New Creation, God's holy sanctuary, with the whole edifice of truth, What a blessed feast was to mark these days, with which nothing has compared since the beginning of the age. It has wonderfully marked the time of the return of Christ, and the commencement of the Second Advent programme. There have been other aspects of that programme also in evidence since the time of His return.. events connected with the winding up of the whole present order, and the bringing in of a new order upon this earth. Great prophecies of the Word have waited long ages, panting for this hour of fulfilment before our eyes in this our day.

Chapters 50 and 51 of Jeremiah illustrate. Babylon was rising up when Jeremiah received this vision, and Israel was going down. Yet in the midst of such scenes of gloom the Lord revealed to the eyes of the faithful prophet a wonderful time of reversal of both of these trends, when Babylon would be going down, and Israel rising up. Both events were due for a preliminary fulfilment on a miniature scale at the the end of the seventy years captivity in Babylon. It was like an earnest, a promise of greater things, when the Lord thus used what is now history as a type shadowing forth the events of the end of this age. By this means the word of prophecy is illustrated and its message given colour and enlarged to impress the heart of the truth-seeker. Both works, the going down of Babylon and the rising up and return of Israel, proved to be not single events confined to a moment of time, but long drawn out processes occupying many years. This is of special interest to us today in the time of the greater fulfilment of both these processes.

For example, even after the stripping of temporal power, Babylon of old continued as a great religious centre and seat of trade. It remained the capital of the plain watered by the Tigris and Euphrates. For many years in Babylon life went on. Even its temples were repaired and given a new lease of life! The final stage of the destruction promised was to take many years to realise, but by slow inevitable steps it came as the Lord had foretold, but what a long drawn-out process of time! Israel too, her progress was erratic and slow. The joyful anticipation of the fulfilment of the new kingdom promises that had grown in the hearts of the captives became somewhat dampened by the difficulties and trials as that new little nation emerged from entombment. Both processes were taking place side by side, and both taking many years. Both developments were triggered off by one great event, **THE COMING OF CYRUS!**

To talk about those times is like talking about **THESE** times. They were in many ways the shadowing forth of the days in which we now live. Today we are in a better position than at any previous day to look back now over many harvest years, to notice the pattern of events, and to detect the lessons for our day that spill over from those difficult yet stirring years subsequent to the coming of Cyrus. Babylon is falling, Israel rising, both, we now realise, long processes, both triggered off by the coming of the greater Cyrus, the Lord's true Anointed, **THE COMING OF CHRIST!** Both of these long processes are absorbing to us as great confirmatory **SIGNS OF THE LORD'S PRESENCE**. They are each **VISIBLE** signs of enormous dimension, and of great meaningfulness.

However, absorbing as these signs are, our first attention is to the third great work of this end of age period, the gathering home of saints, and the various factors of the work of God in His people at this wonderful harvest period of the age of grace. The first thing we notice again is that this too has been thus far a long drawn-out process. Earlier kingdom expectations of Christians before the time of the Lord's return were usually of somewhat dramatic nature, a swift change of scene, an overnight visible transformation from the kingdoms of this world to the visible kingdom of Christ. The wish being father to the thought, Peter spoke of "hasting unto the coming of the day of God," and the Lord's people were very ready to do that! Yet, like the other two great processes of Babylon's fall and Israel's rise, the coming in of the kingdom and the final work among the saints on earth was to require time, and with time testing of faith, even unto the end.

If we were to take the period of time with its events after Babylon was invaded in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah and lay that period alongside the period this end of the age since 1874, time of the Lord's return, we would a situation among the Lord's people causing no little distress to Nehemiah. He recognised a need for a change of heart among some of his brethren before they could realise the blessings of the promises. How well this fits into the scene of natural Israel today. Great reform is there needed before they are fit for any part in the blessing of mankind. Does Israel mirror in any way also needs among the spiritual seed? Is there a spiritual parallel to the work of Nehemiah. How fares the "Truth movement" today? Does there remain there too a work for the Lord to achieve before we each are ready for the kingdom? Has the truth movement followed the pattern of other movements of the past,... the questioners, the "hold fasts", free-thinkers, sects, etc? If these things have indeed developed it is because such is the way of man as history repeatedly shows, but the Lord is not taken by surprise at any such development. He has a plan, and that means, as the Pastor said, "a progression in the divine arrangements foreknown to our God, and orderly..." (See the appended chart.)

The unsettled state of Israel today with its human-mindedness, its factions and divisiveness, all will work out as the Lord has planned. It is His work. When His work in Israel is finished He will have the kind of people He can use, a people that will show forth His praise. So will it be with spiritual Zion. There is even at this hour a work going on known best to the Lord, but we cannot help but notice with interest some of the principles involved. How remarkably the situation in Nehemiah's day seems to illustrate the things that today belong to our peace. There is space here only to glance at few comparisons between Nehemiah's day and the day in which we live as the people of the Lord at this end of the age. There are more there for the seeking!

At the proclamation of the message that should have led forth from Babylon a great band of captives, a comparatively very small number responded. The others were too comfortable in Babylon and did not want to be disturbed. Of those who came out, of twenty four courses of priests only four courses were represented. A great apostasy was thus revealed, a falling away from the true faith of those regarded as ministers of God, dedicated to His worship. Does that bear resemblance to the early harvest days? Those who were their chief helpers in the churches, were seen depicted by the Levites. Of those even fewer were represented, both in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and again in the early days of this harvest time. The message would attract only those for whom it was designed. "Come out of her MY people.."

For those who passed that first test and came out the Lord had a great and most searching programme of purifying as silver. The first work was to build the altar of God. This was one of the important primary works of the early harvest days, clearing away the debris of confused human concepts and the building up of the true knowledge of the RANSOM sacrifice of Jesus. This was seen to be the basis of the privilege of sacrifice that was then recognised, and the very centre of worship of the True God, in spirit and in truth. If it is true, as tradition states, that the Jews built an altar twice the size of the original one, they were but anticipating the great importance that would be given in these our days to the great redemptive purpose of God and the work of Atonement. Before much progress could be made, however, the rubble and ruins of the old one had to be painstakingly cleared away. (Compare original format of "Day Dawn" where the errors were first demolished then the truth reared in their place.) At last the foundation of the Temple was laid, amid the blasts of silver trumpets, and the singing of psalms. Ezra 3:10-13 "And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off." Ps 126:1-3 "When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

Much debris of the old creeds and ideas that stood in the place of the edifice of truth had to be cleared away for the foundation of the house of God, but it was a time of great rejoicing. "Every error, old and hoary, fled".. before the builders of Zion. [Hose-pipe turned on "hell", and Satan's lie placed under the searchlight of truth, etc.] "Gladness had come to stay.

"Tell me about the old days when fellowship was grand. So many who with fervour united as a band. The brothers and the sisters who in the Lord rejoiced. How sweet and warm the spirit that linked both heart and voice. Tell me of the good days of distant memory. Each night a homely meeting of holy revelry. Each Sabbath day a gathering of brethren by the score. A church alive with praises. What heart could wish for more!" [It would have seemed a good moment for the church to have departed. They would have gone out on a high-note. Some of them did, but this was not to be for the majority of those alive yet remaining.] "Tell me of the storm clouds that then began to rise, the wolves, and hidden dangers, that caught them by surprise, when shepherdless they scattered before the coming foe. They stumbled in the darkness, and knew not where to go. In the days of gladness, who could have foretold zeal could change to hardness, Christian love grow cold? When Truth's hour of triumph erased the grove of Baal, who could know what darkness would again prevail? Watchman, is faith yielding to the realm of sight? Pilgrim, dawn approaches, also comes the night! Faithful servants fleeing Satan's wrath again, come at last to Horeb, safely to remain hidden in the mountain as the rocks are rent. Wind and flame and

earthquake soon will all be spent. Think what precious vessels then to Him we'll be. Furnace tried, and holy for eternity."

Some of those who wanted to play a part in the 'building programme' were a mixed company just as on the days of Zerubbabel and of Nehemiah, and lacked the spirit of the covenant people of God. When their work was not welcomed they became enemies of the Lord's people. Assyrian settlers had intermarried with Israelite women to produce a mongrel race which went under the name of Samaritans. There was, therefore, in their worship an appearance of the Jewish faith, but mingled with ideas which found no basis in the Word of God. The situation that brought forth the words of our text in Nehemiah 2:20 related to the scorn of outsiders when the walls of Jerusalem were being built. Neh 2:20 "Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem."

Very similar response had come from Zerubbabel and Joshua earlier when the Samaritans made their offer of help, as recorded in Ezra 4:3, "But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us." An element of compromise would have been implied and corruption was to be avoided at all cost, even of giving offence. Not only did they have the commission of king Cyrus, but it was he who stated how the Temple should be built, of what materials, and to what dimensions. [Ezra 6:3-4, "In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expences be given out of the king's house:"] What a remarkable type of Christ at His

second advent! The building is HIS! What a lesson was thus illustrated! No other spirit than that of Christ must influence in any way the work of Christ at this hour.

After the Pastor's death the lesson was impressed once more, the need of vigilance, the price of our liberty in Christ. Ezra 4:4, "Then the people of the land (people of earth, same Hebrew word, or the earthly-minded,) weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building," Geikie writes of the situation.. "The results of this exclusiveness were momentous." (Views were very strong, it seems, as to how the Lord wanted the work to proceed. "Two parties rose among the Jews themselves: Puritans, and Broad Churchmen. Old jealousies and hatreds were rekindled." This may seem unimaginable considering their deliverance from Babylon, but history repeats the same lessons. Meanwhile the Samaritans were actively plotting to stop the building work progressing any further. There were fightings without and fightings within! The result of those inner factions and outside pressures was that progress ground to a halt, and a stalemate arose. Are there lessons for our day in these parallel experiences of those once loosed from Babylon? Three kinds of building work are described in the accounts of those times. 1) Building of the Temple of God. 2) Building of the walls of Zion. 3) Building of private dwellingplaces. The walls of Zion were to be its beauty and its defence against the enemies of the people of God. They fitly represent the building of truth and our most holy faith, a wonderful edifice that speaks of salvation to all those that trust therein. (Song 8:9, speaks of "a palace of silver:" - truth.) Building up the walls of Zion means building up one another in our Most Holy Faith, in the Truth, and in its Spirit, the edifying of the Body of Christ. Ps 122:3, "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:" [compact together, 2266 "chabar- to unite, to join, to bind together, to be coupled, to be in league, to have fellowship with, to be compact,"]

The Temple building which precedes this work is the very framework of the spiritual life which fits the heart to become a sanctuary of God. It is the edifice of truth itself, His dwelling place, beautified by the Lord Himself with gold, silver, and precious stones, those blessed truths dear to His heart which He has made precious also to our hearts. The first glimpse of the Divine Plan of the Ages was its beginning, foundations truly laid on which the whole building could grow a holy temple to the Lord. The inner walls are of gold, a sense of divine holiness pervading the mind of those who walk with him. It is a vision of His glory, not ours, but by it we are gradually changed to bear and reflect the blessed eternal things that fully absorb the mind. In such a dwelling is the Lord at home, and His holy presence consumes all that is unworthy of it.

The last kind of building mentioned is the building of one's own dwelling place, the panelled houses and home comforts that pertain to the satisfying of the flesh. The difficulties encountered in progressing with the Temple tended to produce apathy. As it was so hard-going it soon became a platitude that obviously it was not the time for building the house of God. The flesh soon finds excuse for its own indulgences, and that is the simply clear lesson here, but it is also noteworthy that the passing of time with so little to show for it in terms of the progress of the promised kingdom blessings began to produce serious doubts in the mind. The earlier expectations were perhaps mistaken. Is this really the time of the programme of deliverance long promised by God's holy prophets? Things were hardly going as anticipated, The "day of small things" dampened the fervour, enfeebled the feet, and caused the hands to hang down. "All things continue as they were.." We can hear the same cry echoing in our day, for again, expectations and events do not

appear to match in some eyes. The process is so slow. "The time is not yet!" To this the Lord retorts, Hag 1:4, "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?" Their own houses bore all the signs of luxury and bodily comfort, to the impoverishment of the House of God. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon!

Yet there was another kind of building implied in the accounts which is also detrimental to the work of God. The walls of Zion are those that surround the whole city of God. They unite and strengthen all the Lord's true people, fusing them together in a bonding which will endure eternity. Every stone fits into its place in that composite building. Other walls have appeared today as they did in the days of Nehemiah, walls of division, walls of faction and party spirit, petty differences, some of these, personality problems lying at the root of many of them. Be it noted that none of these walls are directed by the Lord. 1 Cor 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (verse 13) "Is Christ divided?"

We are not unmindful that the time of harvest is a time of judgment. The sickle is meant to divide, according to acceptance or rejection of the message AND THE SPIRIT of the Truth. The issues that divided the people of Israel were not issues of life, but by them their very life was threatened. They tended to emphasise the superficial rather than the stimulating realisation of eternal truth, those things which deeply satisfy the heart of those who treasure most the better things. Brother Russell emphasised that the basis of our relationship with one another is the closeness of our individual walk with God. Phil 2:17-18, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me." How good to be poured out in the strengthening of each other's relationship with Christ. Could it be that as the end approaches we might expect to find today, as in the days of Nehemiah, increasing pressures to discourage, to distract, to divert the energy of the Lord's people into the building of walls of division not of God, and to bring the building of the walls of Zion to an end? Are these the means of separating and proving those that are His in the last days of harvest, the temptation to sow discord rather than to strengthen the bond of the Spirit among fully consecrated brethren? Weary years of strife within lowered the spirit and cooled the zeal of the Jewish colony, and the lesson is there for us today, for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are come. There is much that is opposed to the work of God today. There are enemies that would frustrate all the work of building up and detract from the edifying of the whole church of God. It happened in Nehemiah's day. Not only was the work stopped, but what had been built up was torn down. It seemed that the enemy was winning the struggle, and the servant of God grieved and prayed earnestly to the Lord. How important that enlisting of the Lord's direction and help!

Other things grieved him too. Even in the latter days of that period more than one reform was needed among the people of God before they became acceptable to their Lord. The prophets sent by Him in that period, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, each had a message reflecting not only the needs of the Lord's people then but also similar needs of His people today. The matter of mixed marriages, the people failing to separate themselves from the ways of the people of the land. Worldly ways and ideas were permeating the movement then just as they would threaten to do today. The demands of some of our young people to offer a counselling service similar to that of

the cast off church systems perhaps illustrates but one aspect of this pressure to conform to our surrounds rather than to the Lord, but there are various ways in which this pressure is manifest. There was also the matter of laxity in the priesthood, the treating of things holy as though they were common, the sin of irreverence. There was the matter of tithes, paying to the Lord fully all that we owe Him, ALL our love and ALL our trust, essential prerequisite for the claiming of the promises He waits to open the windows of heaven to abundantly bestow. Malachi takes up each one of these grievances of the Lord with His people at that late stage of the harvest work. Yet, in the midst of such a sad downward drift of the movement that had begun with such promise and joy there were those then who feared the Lord, as there are such today, and these the Lord noted. Those words of Malachi 3:16 were given to the Lord's people at the time that exactly parallels the hour in which we live. This is the hour for the making up of jewel like characters that reflect that beauty of true holiness and glory of God in which they are absorbed. The book of remembrance is all but full. The words to the heart of His own are "Set Me as a seal upon thy heart." The foundation of God stands sure having this seal. In the book of Nehemiah we find a list of those that set the great seal. Neh 10:1 "Now those that sealed were..." In this day does my name now appear? Chapter 9 describes the attitude of this class, an attitude of deep humility before the Lord, an earnest desire to recognise hard and true facts against themselves, those things that the proud at once dismiss and do not want to hear. "I have somewhat against thee..." The account continues in Neh 10:28-29 "And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding; They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes;"

The Laws and ways of God had been made known to them in a fresh and powerful way, with understanding and the imbibing of the spirit of those ways. They were ready to apply them to their own hearts and lives, to allow the Word to search the very motives of their inmost being. They recognised the nature of the laxity and attitudes that had led to their fathers becoming captives in Babylon at the first, and they vowed a solemn vow before the Lord, a vow of heart allegiance to Him and to Him alone. They set Him as a seal upon their hearts. To seek and keep His ways, to resist and overcome the encroachments of the spirit of the world around them, and to watch with great vigilance against its permeation into their fellowship and worship of the Lord.. this was their solemn pledge. They would pay the Lord's dues in full, all that His love and great mercy could demand of them as "reasonable service."

Nor would they shun the more humble privileges of service. Wood was needed to be gathered and brought to keep the altar fires alight. This had once been the work of a very lowly class, the Nethinims, whose origin is not very clear though they compare with the Gibeonites of Joshua's day, doomed to a life of perpetual bondage to become "hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation", and particularly "for the altar of the Lord." (Joshua 9:21,27.) It seemed that not enough of the Nethinim had accompanied the colony, so these earnest and contrite hearts volunteered their services to perform this menial task. Neh 10:34 "And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD

our God, as it is written in the law:" They humbled themselves to the lowest forms of servitude, thus providing the fuel for the fire of sacrifice. The zeal of the Lord indeed consumes the heart in which it is kindled. Have we a portion there? Is it our lot to fuel the flames of the fire of the altar of the Lord?

The Lord was to be first in every aspect of their lives, and their sincerity and zeal depicts in every particular the attitude of those today whose one desire to please the Lord through all their actions run. These delight to be poured-out in the service of their brethren. We are laying up tithes in the treasury of the house of God. All that we owe the Lord for all His goodness and mercy towards us, this prompts a continual offering of praise. "Prove Me now, herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts.." When that attitude of deepest response to the Lord's goodness and love completely fills our hearts, then we are advised to stand back! We think we hear a window opening in heaven.

The walls of Zion represent those eternal principles and divine laws written in the hearts of the Lord's saints that will form the basis of salvation and hope for all mankind. The walls are built of jewel-like characters, each "having the glory of God." This is the city of God, longed for and looked for by faithful ones of all generations, and we are living in the final days of its preparation! Ps 48:12-13, carries our mind to that final heart-thrilling inspection of this New Jerusalem in its perfection of beauty. The descriptions of this psalm far exceed anything that could be said of the natural city of that name, whose original walls have long since crumbled away.

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her:" Think of that finished work of perfection and beauty when the Lord puts His last touch to that masterpiece. Here is the full expression of the choice and the desires of God. God shines out of every part, and it becomes the joy of the whole earth. "Tell the towers thereof..." each saint is likened to a turret, a tower, a look-out. From each a different viewpoint, yet each complimenting, not diminishing each other's vantage point. 13) "Mark ye well her bulwarks," the great strength of Zion lies in her being the building of God. Every wall rises by the plummet of truth and righteousness. Every plane aligns with the topmost stone. Herein lies the strength of the "Rock of Ages", and the perfect and full expression of His most holy Will.

"Consider (roam around) her palaces;" the silver palaces of truth (SS 7:9) wherein are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom of Christ. God is known in her palaces for a refuge. He is the refuge of Truth, and of all those who thirst for and seek truth with all their being. ("They shall be filled...")

"That ye may tell it to the generation following.." the teeming millions coming forth from the tombs, to be greeted, embraced, and led upwards along that highway of holiness, through those gates of praise, and into that haven of their desires.

What joy it is even to know of these things! How priceless the privilege of having some part to play as instruments in the hand of our God in the building up of that beautiful edifice. Surely it is enough.. "This my joy is fulfilled!" Yet there is a place for one more stone. "Ye have not chosen Me but I have chosen you.. and ordained you.." (same word for "lay down" in John 15:13.)

Neh 4:6-21 6

So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work

7 But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth,

8 And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to

hinder it.

9 Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

10 And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.

11 And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.

12 And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.

13 Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.

15 And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.

16 And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.

17 They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.

18 For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.

19 And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another.

20 In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us.

21 So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

Brethren, the time is short! The moment approaches when we can say and do no more for the Lord's saints here on earth. Privileges are ours today which will never be repeated.. the finishing of the work of the Lord, the last acts of completing the building of God as coworkers with Him, workmen that need not to be ashamed... the strengthening of the things that remain. Neh 9:38 "And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and ... seal unto it." This is a stirring illustration, intended to move His people in this latter day who have made that firm and final commitment of their all the the Lord. They stand alongside their brethren with trowel in hand and armour and trumpet at their side. Individually they stand before God. Together they build up one another in the Most Holy faith. From the heart of the contrite rises one prayer.. Ps 51:18 "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

Neh 2:20

"Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build:"

Dear brother, dear sister, keep faith with the Lord, with the truth, with its spirit, with His people, and in His work abound, and the Lord will bless.

Prov 31:26-29

26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

APPENDED CHART

BIBLE STUDY NOTES COMPARING SIMILAR PERIODS
FOLLOWING (events common to both periods)

THE ADVENT OF CYRUS & the ADVENT OF CHRIST

BC			AD	
Provinces yield without battle Cyrus anticipated Enters Babylon Captives freed.	540 536	Babylon's support fails as the as the Deliverer approaches. <hr/> ADVENT OF LORD'S "ANOINTED" and "SHEPHERD" Isaiah 44:26 to 45:1 ..	1870 1874	Papal power stripped. Support fails. Watcher's hopes are raised. "The Bridegroom!"
Advent of Cyrus results in some dramatic changes.		Long process commences of 1) Downfall of Babylon 2) Rise of Israel & Zion		Infallible proofs of Lord's coming cry out unnoticed.
DANIEL 5:14,26f,6:1. ("Judgment of God")		"Wise" correctly interpret events Fierce opposition follows. <hr/>		Daniel 12:10. "Shall he find faith?"
ZERUBBABEL ("seed out of Babylon")		CALL OUT OF BABYLON of royal "seed". Some response		True seed respond and leave systems.

of royal lineage.	Most "priests" reject call.	Clergy reject call.
JOSHUA leads.	Leader directs operations.	"Gather My wheat."
Ezra 3:2ff	The ALTAR first to be rebuilt.	"RANSOM for ALL"
Ezra 3:10 - 13.	basis for acceptable offerings. Foundations of temple laid.	"Plan of the Ages."
Ministry of Word. HAGGAI ("relating to a feast.") and ZECHARIAH ("the Lord remembers")	Lord's servants exhort to the building of the Temple. "present truth" expounded and the Lord's watch over Zion. work of two advents explained. Restoration of Israel assured.	Feast of Truth & Joy prompts spiritual growth of "Zion". Soon after 1874 as many Jews in their land as 536 BC.
THEIR SPECIAL MINISTRY ENDS 494/486		1916/1924 CHANGES!
Second phase sinister developments. ESTHER her Jewish name- Hadasah, ("Myrtle")	Lull in original drive to build up. The Lord still with His people notwithstanding the contrary appearances (Zech. 1:8) Sinister developments arise. Wiping out of Jews is being planned. Eventually the executioner is slain. Esther 8:11. The fight is on!	"The Society" takes new form. Attack on spiritual Zion. Her "new life" threatened. [Meanwhile, rise of Hitler. Six million Jews die before he falls."day shortened"] The "fight of faith."
PHASE TWO		
	464/458	1945/1952
Condition of Jews lamented. EZRA ("help") leads new drive.	Efforts made to rebuild the walls of Zion, faced now by opposition from without and factions from within.	Truth movement fragmented. Earnest efforts to build up in the "Most Holy faith." Harvest message and "parousia" refuted.
PHASE THREE	Walls destroyed as soon as as built. Faith is on trial.	Jew's aims thwarted.
Determined effort under NEHEMIAH ("comfort of God") & MALACHI ("one with message.")	Walls at last built, though heart purifying is still needed. Message of the Lord directs to true spiritual devotion. THE GREAT SEAL IS SET.	State of Israel arises! Determined effort is needed to build up the Walls round Zion not dividing walls!
END of 414/5 work of Nehemiah & Malachi	"THEY SHALL BE MINE"	1994/5 End of 120 years from 1974 Be faithful unto DEATH.

While the sequence of events from the advent of Cyrus, type of Christ, to the point that the record fades was about 120 years, we have learned not to be distracted by human speculation over the "day and the hour" of our personal change, but to see that now, ten years hence, and ten thousand, we are the Lord's. For me to LIVE is CHRIST, and to die is gain. This is a no-lose situation in which we rejoice with joy unspeakable. There is point and purpose in every day both this side and beyond that last veil. May any lessons of the comparisons above strengthen faith and desire to be pleasing unto the Lord to Whose service we have set the GREAT SEAL.

PAST HARVESTS AND THE PRESENT. - 'Handfuls of purpose' for harvest saints.

120 years have passed since 1874. What does it mean? Already this harvest period has extended three times the length of the harvest at the end of the Jewish age which ended AD 70, parallel to 1914. At both harvests the Lord's people were given a foresight glimpse of the catastrophe that would terminate the work, yet the precise timing of that end was kept from them. This was a moment which was not for them to know, though signs were given for which they were to watch, to recognise, and act upon. "When ye see Jerusalem compassed by armies, then know that her desolation is nigh." For many years we have watched the progression of events marking the running out of the Gentile Times, watched the fragmentation of empires, the dissolution of monarchies, watched Israel come into being as a nation, sovereign state in her own land. With benefit of hindsight we have perceived how much of world events thus far relate in some way to that nation. We have watched the steady going down of Mystery Babylon the Great. With the passage of time, patterns have emerged with interesting correspondences to apparently parallel periods in the history of God's people, with reassuring confirmation of faith. Yet that same passage of time has proved a test to some of the Lord's people resulting in change of opinion regarding certain features of truth regarding this remarkable and wonderful time in which we are living.

Let us have a look at some of the problems that have arisen because of the lengthening of the present harvest period far beyond the expectation of brethren before 1914. It would be fair to say that before 1874 the general expectation of those looking for the Lord was that at His return He would in a moment of time snatch away His elect from this earth. The concept of an extended period in which a harvest work would take place upon this earth under the direction of the returned Lord was something quite new and became a central belief in the movement that would thereafter use the expression "Harvest Truth". The apparent swift succession of events depicted in 1 Thessalonians 4, was now seen to be spread over a period of time. This is accommodated by good translation.. following the raising of the sleeping saints of verse 16, verse 17 continues, "Thereafter, they which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord." There is no indication in the word *epeta*,

'afterward,' or 'thereafter,' as to how long an interval may intervene between the events it links. Gal 1:18 "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days." Gal 2:1 "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also." 1 Cor 15:46 "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. (Here a matter of 4000 years is involved!) In 1Thess. 4:17 we believe that the raising of the sleeping saints must be immediately followed by the change, member by member, of those who subsequently end their course in death, but the whole process taking a non-specified period of time, until all the elect are gathered with their Lord, now present in this earth's atmosphere.

Now if one as near to the event as Brother Russell was not given to perceive just how long this whole process would take from the raising of the sleeping saints to that change of the last one alive and remaining into the parousia it would seem hardly likely that so long ago even the inspired Paul would be aware of this. Paul's object in these remarks was reassurance for the brethren at Thessalonica who had lost beloved believing friends and felt that somehow these would be missing out if they were not alive to greet the Lord at His parousia. They might be still waiting for resurrection day. Paul corrects this notion, but there would be little point in Paul stressing the details of the parousia even if he was made aware of them, beyond that needful for the brethren at that distance from the event. Paul's words allow the concept of our day even though they do not clearly state it, but we must look elsewhere to find support for the viewpoint we have adopted. It has been noted that each age, Jewish and Christian, and indeed, millennial age too, is wound up by a period of separation and judgment... a harvest. Even the world that was before the flood was given a message through Noah, preacher of righteousness, and it was their response to that message, that of complete indifference, that sealed their doom. 120 years on from the commencement of the harvest at the return of Christ, 1874, we may have some of the wisdom of retrospect. We can now look back over this considerable period and note the pattern of events, and the apparently slow progress towards the kingdom realisation anticipated by brethren prior to 1914. It is also possible from our present vantage point to note any comparisons that may exist between these harvest days and those of similar harvest type periods of the past. Our present purpose is to review our recent history and present state in the light of those previous records, with a view to our encouragement, and to confirm that we have not believed in vain that we are living in the most stirring period thus far of the whole plan of the ages. This is a subject far too great for full development in one short treatise, but we shall endeavour to cover the ground sufficiently to reveal enough features for our present purpose.

The periods we would like to consider commence with the days of Noah.

Days of NOAH.

Gen 4:22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: This is but one of a selection of scriptures giving glimpses of the conditions of the world before the flood during the period of the preaching of Noah and the construction of the ark. Industrialisation and commerce had taken place, and with it, the entertainment industry was underway. Gen 4:20-21 "And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." These were of the seed of Cain, and represented the downward course of the human race. Rapid advances in technology went hand-in-hand with the exploitation of man's lower sinful appetite. Some ancient relics appear to confirm the idea of a sophisticated pre-flood society. There was also a great increase in population.

Gen 6:1-6 "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants (Nephilim) in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men (notorious warriors,) which were of old, men of renown." It is Peter who helps us to identify these "sons of God" as fallen angels rather than members of the line of Seth. 2 Pet 2:4 "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, (Thayer.. to hold captive in Tartarus, the subterranean region, doleful and dark.) and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;" 1 Pet 3:19-20 ".. the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.." It would seem that here was the time that would give birth to the various ancient legends of the gods, later to be embellished in the days of Nimrod.

Certainly the Adversary was very active in the earth and greatly influencing the affairs of mankind, so that we read..Gen:6:5,6 "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." In the midst of this crooked and perverse world the Lord had His witness, Noah, who is described in 2Pet 2:5 as "a preacher of righteousness," when God determined, "bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;" In Luke 17:26-27, we have the well-known words of Jesus, "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." In Matt 24:37 "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming (parousia, presence,) of the Son of man be." vse 39 adds "And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away;" Here was a period of sorting out and separation.. a harvest work, for the Lord revealed His purpose to Noah. Heb 11:7 "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Noah's preaching of righteousness fell on deaf ears.

Gen 6:3 "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." This statement has interested some of the brethren in recent years, and as the harvest became extended beyond the first 40 years, 1914, and then the next 40 years, 1954, it natu_rally is queried whether we may have here an indication of a third 40 years, making 120 years in all since the Lord commenced the harvest work at His return in 1874. As the year would have commenced in the Autumn of 1994 and will end this coming

Autumn we still do not know the answer to that greatly desired possibility. Our experience of recent history makes us only too well aware of the suddenness and unpre_dictability of important events. But the Lord's people have learned to be cautious about any date anticipating the end of the Church's course on this earth. It has never been to the advantage of the saints to know the day or hour of their change, and, earlier in the age the prospect of so long a wait for that blessed hope may well have proved discouraging. Nevertheless, it would appear that Noah received a precise warning, not only of the judgment impending, but also the date of its arrival.

This was the first time prophecy of the Word, and to it was added, it seems, a sign. This sign, when it took place, would at once confirm the time prophecy. What was that sign? Methuselah. Enoch was a godly man, a preacher of righteousness and a prophet. Jude 1:14-15 "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all.." Enoch begat a son, and, it would appear, was prompted of the Lord in the choice of this child's name, for it was a remarkable name. Jones Dictionary of O.T. Proper Names gives the meaning.. "When he is dead it shall be sent. "to which Jones adds, "i.e. the deluge of waters." The name is made up of Meth, (part of the verb muth, to die.), and of the root shalakh, (to send,) More than once the Lord directs the naming of children to illustrate His purpose, e.g. Isaiah. Gen 5:27 "And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died."

This simple record completely verifies the Hebrew chronology of Genesis, at the same time that it disproves that of the Septuagint. (Indeed, one of the Septuagint versions if calculated would show Methuselah living beyond the flood.) The death of Methuselah was to be the sign. How many realised this is not known. If any did know, we would imagine the great interest that would be shown in this aged man's health in later years. But, it may be asked, why a sign in addition to a definite time prophecy? To which the history of the Lord's dealings replies that it often has pleased Him to give at least two witnesses to confirm to His servants what He is about.

The comparisons between the days of Noah and the days of the parousia of the Lord are striking to us today more than any previous age could have imagined. Man's technological advances have been enormous yet sadly have served to feed the lower appetite of fallen man. In an age of entertainment, immense industries and increase of human knowledge and skills, there is much evidence of that which is devilish in the direction of these advances, so that the heart of man is only evil continually. It would be depressing to speak even of the atrocities perpetrated this day, and of the state of extreme misery at this hour brought about by human depravity of mind. As evil increased before the flood it became apparent that there was no way out of that terrible state of affairs other than a complete cleansing of the earth.

This very same situation applies today. However well-meaning the leaders of men, the holding back of the immense evils that im_peril human society is far beyond their capability. We are this moment on the verge of the worst catastrophe in human history, as weapons of almost immeasurable destructive power fall into the hands of irresponsible and wicked men with wild imaginations of world conquest, while the further power of terrorism can dislocate society. There are indeed notorious 'warriors' in this earth controlled by demonic power, and capable of enormous harm to their fellow-men. The inevitability of man's downward course at a time of such great enlightenment is itself a paradox linking our day with that of Noah. We too have seen the running out of time prophecy and the confirmation of sign. The world that was before 1914 is no longer, and the death of that past order of so many centuries came so timely to mark the running out of the Gentile Times.

In considering the matter of the 120 years we are aware of the suggestion that possibly the Lord spoke of thus reducing the average age for man, and not the period from that time to the flood. It nevertheless seems to us unlikely that the Lord was proposing this as an additional solution to the problem of human sinfulness. In our day no one lives to such an age and it is well known even in youth what man can devise in terms of evil. The Lord was announcing here a more drastic solution in the removal of the race by the judgment determined. Only such a cleansing could afford hope

for a braver new world, though here we see the emphasis made on the typical significance of that cleansing. The flood now impending to truly cleanse this earth is that of the Holy Spirit to be poured out from on high, better described in the language of consuming fire.

We feel we should mention here two interesting periods of 120 years at this end of the age. It will be remembered that Noah was 600 years old when the flood came. This brings to mind the fact that 6000 years from man's fall ran out in 1874. This also brought to an end 120 years from the date 1754, a date well-marked in some Bible Students' minds as the beginning of the outpouring of the seven vials of wrath, commencing with the grievous sore of deepening and undermining doubt on all religious concepts. At that time Voltaire, by his writings, was deluging France with infidelity. The so-called 'age of reason' there set in to pave the way for the French revolution, while at the same time provoking a preaching of righteousness in defence of the authority of God's Word. This application draws attention to the 120 years from the work of Voltaire, the out-pouring of the first vial, to the coming of Him Whose presence in this earth's atmosphere spells doom for this present evil world. His coming is described in Revelation 11:14,15, as the ultimate woe for this condemned system.

A further 120 year link exists between 1793/4, the beginning of the 'reign of terror', at the time of the French revolution, and the running out of the Gentile Times in 1914. This 120 years also marked a period of preaching of righteousness, especially the 19th century, with its interesting developments of truth-understanding leading up to the 'feast' of the last 40 years of that period, 1874 to 1914. Close on the heels of the running out of the 1260 Papal years, at the beginning of the 19th century the Bible Societies emerged, to carry the gospel to the corners of earth. The work of Gesenius and others brought deeper perception of Scripture language, dispensational understanding became clarified, and intense interest in the matter of the Lord's return prepared the way for what was to come when the prophetic "knocks" were heard and the Lord came in to sup with His people. So 120 years has twice formed most interesting links in connection with our day. In the first 120 year application ending 1874, the flood of truth to stem from the coming of Christ was to spell doom for Satan's power of darkness and error. In the typical language of Elijah's triumph, the prophets of Baal were to be slain by the sword of truth and its Spirit. In the second 120 year application ending 1914, the flood of turmoil commencing 1914 was to rise and will ultimately engulf and sweep away the whole present order, or disorder, of Satan. Will there yet be a third application of the 120 years ending 1994/5? At this moment not one of us can know! What Our Master says to us is "Watch!."

The days of Noah were days of human attainment and advancement, but not along the ways of truth and righteousness. The harvest of that age saw very few responding to the message of salvation, eight souls only being caught up in the ark, eight, the number of a new life, corresponding to the promise in the church of a better age yet to come beyond the present trouble. From the time of the flood four centuries pass to the next glimpse of harvest judgment referred to by Jesus, the days of Lot in Sodom. There are various lessons which may be drawn from that situation. Perhaps they can be compressed into few words by saying that Lot well represented those who have a love of righteousness, and are continually disturbed by all that is sordid around them because of their essential involvement in this world.

2Pet 2:6-9 speaks of the Lord ..turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes and "condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:"

In Luke 17:28-37, Jesus, having spoken of the days of Noah, continues... "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which

shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Where_soever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."

Noah was in the midst of a crooked and perverse world, so was Lot, and so are we. Perhaps there is something to learn about Lot's choice of the cities of the plain for his livelihood. That is where the money is, in the thick of the world's commerce and industry. That is also where we find every form of worldly living and sin. Even in Lot's day, the city was synonymous with sin. The lessons are there, brethren, and we heed them well, but the fact remains that that is where the Lord's people are to be found, in the world though not of it, gaining their essential experience for the future work of social uplift for a groaning creation. However, that particular world of Lot's day, we feel, particularly speaks of the system of Babylon today. It is something that the Lord urgently warns His people must get out of without delay, and this is the special additional message of the days of Lot. Where to go? Not to another of the same on a smaller scale! That again was Lot's mistake. He saw a little town called Zoan, and said, this will surely do, for it is little. The logic was that the smaller the city the less the evil therein. It was not long before he was on the run again out of Zoan. The Lord's people in this harvest time have reason to remember well that lesson. What was once the Truth movement, a refuge from that great and evil system, became an_other Zoan, a little Babylon, and, like Elijah, they had once more to flee. It is well to note that if we equate the call of Lot out of Sodom with the call, "come out of her my people", then the flight of Lot would correspond to early in the harvest period, and the "same day" consuming of Sodom would refer to the gradual consuming work of Christ from the commencement of His advent of the working of Satan, the Antichrist. If we feel Lot's flight refers to the moment the last of the church passes beyond the veil, then the Lord's urgent warning for us, like Lot, to make that flight would seem to lose its point today.

The days of MOSES.

We pass on just over four centuries more to the time of Moses. This was the second advent of Moses, his return in the Lord's due time to deliver his people, and the Lord gave him signs, works that he would do, that would reveal to his people that they were indeed living in the days of the presence of their God-appointed deliverer. It may seem strange, at first, that his people needed such signs, but we today live in a parallel period and appreciate the value of the signs that His people may recognise, by many infallible proofs, the presence of their glorious Lord.

The signs were threefold, and Exod 4:1-9 shows that these signs were for his own people. "And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. (They would say, where is the sign of His presence?) And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land."

Likewise are there three significant signs in evidence today to confirm our faith that we are living in the harvest of the age, the time of the Lord's Parousia. We mention them briefly, they are already well-known and cherished by the watchers today.

Sign 1. The breaking of Satan's power.

Satan's masterpiece of the age, is the apostasy, the great and evil system of Christendom, Mystery Babylon the great. This system met its most notable blow with the fall of Papal temporal power in 1870, a blow from which it has never regained its ancient power. If we compare the days of literal Babylon's fall we will notice a remarkable coincidence of situation just prior to the entry of Babylon by Cyrus, type of Christ at His second advent. This was the beginning of the consummation of the Man of Sin described in II Th 2:8 "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:" This was the beginning of the consummation of Dan 7:26 "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." The going down of Babylon is an infallible sign that a greater than Moses, is here.

Sign 2. Restoration of Israel.

The natural seed of Israel are yet to fulfil the divine purpose in their being set apart from all

other nations. The Lord is yet to use them as instruments of His grace, but such an honour requires deep humility and holiness. Israel are yet to be cleansed from their sins and restored to that place of favour with their God. The first part restoration we are witnessing today, because their Redeemer has come from Zion. Rom 11:26-27 "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." We read in Ps 74:11 Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom. Ps 80:14-15 "Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself." Ps 80:17-19 "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.(elsewhere the word is translated courageous, stead_fastly minded.) So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name. Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved." Ezek 25:14 "And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD."

Edom, or the old Adam, represents that in the human make-up which is ever resistant to the ways of God. Before the full blessings of Isaiah 35 must come the downfall of that Edom in man's nature of Isaiah 34, and Israel will be as the Lord's hand in this earth to help achieve that wonderful transformation, once the Lord has made them strong for Himself...to be His instruments. It is the Edom within that Israel is yet to recognise as his great enemy rather than the seed of the Edom without, the Arab peoples. This will indeed be a wonderful experience for Israel, resulting in the fulfilment of that change of name from "Jacob," (usurper, deceiver, and one reliant on his own strength,) to that of "Israel," (God rules,) and thus and thus alone will they rule with God. The signs of even the first stages of Israel's restoration are signs infallible of the presence of Michael their prince. As Balaam was moved to prophecy at the time Israel's first entry of their land was due, Num 23:21 "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them."

Sign three. Truth's outpouring.

When Moses poured the water upon the ground it turned to blood, symbol of death. One deluge of truth in these our days upon the ground of Egypt, the ground of Satan's lies, has spelled death to those errors by which he has deceived for so many long centuries. The fires of hell hissed and spluttered, and died before the flood of truth. The long "immortal" souls of men were laid at last to sleep in death, the prisoners of hope. We know the cause for this blessed feast, and by Whose voice we each were called to sup with Him and taste the goodness of the Lord in truths so many centuries hid. The people of the Lord, these signs were each for them alone as unmistakable evidences that this is the day for which the church so long have prayed.

Furthermore, each sign has been doubly confirmed, for we remember how the wise men of Pharaoh reacted to each sign. Each one in turn they sought to contradict, and all significance they scorned. By duplication they sought to demonstrate each sign invalid. So today, each sign in turn has met this keen attention of the Evil One. Israel, we are told, has no future part to play in God's great kingdom purpose. The Anti-Christ is yet to come, a man who will appear when Israel's Temple is rebuilt, and then, and not before, will come the Lord to break his devilish power. Thirdly, all authority divine has been now stripped from this most holy Word of God. Far from the Source of Truth it represents so many legends, so many fables cunningly devised of poor mistaken minds of men. So say that "wisdom" not of God that would deny His power. Yet even in these counter-claims of Pharaoh's wise men at this hour the people of the Lord see a parallel to those of Moses' day, and thank Him for such infallible assurance of the Present Truth.

A thousand years now pass, the age of typical shadowy kingdom development, an evening-morning, for the first half of that age must pass before the full and brighter glimpse of kingdom blessings would be seen in the days of David and Solomon.

The days of David and Solomon.

Only for one moment will we pause to note again a parallel in time to this our day. I King 1:39-41 "And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon. And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them. And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar?"

This was a remarkable period. David's days, depictive of the days of the Christ on earth, were nearly over. Solomon was now already set upon the throne, depictive of the Christ beyond the veil. Yet must Solomon wait before he takes the fullness of that power to reign. How closely does this parallel our day, this period of transition, saints already raised in glory realm above await the saints below to end their course. Then, the Christ complete, what blessings of that reign will flow. So who does Adonijah represent? He was the usurper to the throne who thought he could by craft make subjects of the race. How alarmed was Satan when he heard the trumpet of Our Lord's descent to claim His own and set them at His side, for there was Satan's end completely sealed. Since that hour the chain more closely binds and bites his pride and arrogance. While every saint who passes through that veil adds one more link, another loop of chain, until at last the strong man will collapse, all power to hurt restrained.. though long his influence remain in minds distorted by His evil power. For so it was in later years long after vile Manasseh's end, that the evil of his reign remained within his people's hearts. Even after the good reign of Josiah, we read in II Ki 23:26

"Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal."

Even after Satan is removed from the scene will his works follow him and we believe it will require the full power of truth and light and the holy energy of the Spirit of God together with the ministry of saints, when Spirit and the Bride say "Come," to cleanse from every heart and oust from every mind of men those many devils that beset mankind. The man of Gadara portrayed that evil power, "my name is legion, for we are many." Those many evil powers, that no chain of law could

restrain, were cast out with the unclean swine and all that doth offend Our Saviour's love of right and hate of wrong.

The days of Jeremiah.

Another harvest came to end those 1000 years of kingdom there in type. God's servant Jeremiah speaks forth the truth, his ministry extending 40 years. Then came the end, the overthrow of sovereign state of Israel, and judgment falls upon the House of God. Harvest language then was used and pointed past that hour to this our day. We only need to read the text to realise its fitness to the harvest judgment of our time. Jer 8:8-20 "How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them? Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. I will surely consume them, saith the LORD: there shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and the things that I have given them shall pass away from them. Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD. We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble! The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein. For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the LORD. When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me. Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. We find these words particularly interesting not only for their immediate sense at the time but for the parallel situation during the harvest time in which we live today.

Days of Babylon's fall.

Again this further harvest was foreshadowed in a harvest time for Babylon predicted in Jer 51:33 "For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come." This first would relate to the winding up of literal Babylon especially from 538 BC with the coming of Cyrus, the one described by the Lord in Isaiah 45:1, as His Messiah or Anointed One, but the whole of that period too was to bear a parallel to the days in which we live, the harvest time of judgment upon Mystery Babylon of this age. Babylon (as we have seen in "Arise and Build",) did

not fall and disappear at the moment of the entry of the army of Cyrus. It took a long period of decline of well over a century before its final desolation was complete. How closely this corresponds with the harvest work of today. We have touched the remarkable portrayal of present harvest years so parallelled in the years subsequent to the coming of Cyrus. There we find much to confirm our faith, for they were faced as we with long and weary years to test and try a trust that would outlive the expectations of the earlier days.

Their very lives were threatened, as also in our days, both of the seeds, the Jews, the saints, in turn were made to flee from Satan's grasp. Yet in that very fire was proved the trait He seeks, the willingness to stand and to be counted for His Name, and their relationship to Him. Thus will He make Israel strong for Himself, and thus make strong His saints. The days of Esther when that wicked Haman tried to wipe the name of Jew from off the earth compares, in time from Cyrus, to the same number of years from 1874, when Hitler would succeed where Haman failed but for the shortening of his day. These very days would also test the saints, when Satan tried so hard to rob them of their spiritual life in Christ, and substitute a hope deformed by human mind. ...So many lessons in those years described that we have learned upon our harvest course.

The messages of those days are ours, Haggai, and Zechariah, encouraging the work of building for the Lord, a sanctuary worthy of His Name,..a "day of small things" blessed by work so great. And Malachi, last message of that harvest time, when heaven's truths are denied by many of that harvest class, but it is the Lord Who has the last word. Each message speaks so clearly for this hour at end of days, and we do well to heed.

Harvest of Jewish age.

Then half a millennium passes yet again, and Jesus, from Jordan, commenced a Jewish harvest time once more.. He preached a message that would do a work of separation between those whose hearts were right towards their God and those who, notwithstanding every claim of holiness of life, would prove unworthy, and like chaff, be fit for nothing, but the fire of AD 70., which destroyed God's House once more, the nation too. That harvest work, as ours, was spread through years of varying trial. As result, those worthy, hungering for truth, were blessed with strengthened faith that could withstand the disappointment of their earlier hopes. The many who resisted harvest truth included Paul himself, until he was overwhelmed by glory that outshone the sun and spread along his path. How we love to think some of our dear friends too, will come one day to realise the truth, and hail their King.

Was recognition of Messiah the test? Is it today? The "presence of the Lord," does this decide the one He takes, the one He leaves behind? Time would reveal not only this but more the Lord required both then and now, to make us meet for that inheritance of saints in light, and hence the need for siftings of each harvest time. For judgment of the House of God has now begun, as when the Master entered and looked round upon all the Temple then contained, so does He now survey the fruitage of His work within. The furnishment befitting God's Own Sanctuary, provided through the Word, for only He can beautify this House of God by His Own Holy presence in our hearts.

The knowing of this presence will decide, a gathering unto Him of eager hearts, a Bride made ready for her Lord. Song 4:16 "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." John 4:35-36. "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

DAVID and THE CHARTER FOR MANKIND.

The expression, "the charter for mankind," is a translation of the last phrase of 2Samuel 7:19. What is the precise meaning of the context? Four versions word the text a little differently.

2 Sam 7:19 And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also

of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?
(KJV)

2 Sam 7:19 And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD? (NIV)

2 Sam 7:19 And yet this was a small thing in thy eyes, O Lord GOD; thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast shown me future generations, O Lord GOD! (RSV)

2 Sam 7:19 And this was yet a small thing in thine eyes, O Lord Jehovah; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; and this (too) after the manner of men, O Lord Jehovah! (ASV)

Let us look at the whole chapter commencing verse 1, of 2Samuel 7. The reign of David over all the tribes of Israel had been victory after victory as he had led the people in the putting down of every enemy that had beset them. His reign had now reached that climax when all enemies were put down under his feet. Now, David's desire was to bring the whole of the tribes into one deep and full worship of God, and to this end he sought to build a house for the Lord. Through the prophet Nathan, however, he was told by the Lord that the fulfilment of David's dream was to be realised by another, a special son of David, concerning whom the Lord made great promises. David wished with all his heart to build that house for the Lord, but the Lord said, 'No David, I will build a house for YOU!' and in those wonderful verses we recognise the beautiful description of the Kingdom of God. 2 Sam 7:12-16, "When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." (NIV)

When Solomon came to the throne it would seem that this ideal kingdom had come as promised, but a greater than Solomon was to inherit this throne. In truth, certain features of this promise were never fulfilled in any sense under Solomon. 2 Sam 7:8-10, "Now then, tell my servant David,

"This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning." (NIV) Clearly this was a promise yet to be fulfilled under the glorious and everlasting Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

David is overwhelmed by the greatness of this promise. Surely this must be the "seed" of promise to father Abraham, through whom all the families of earth would be blessed! Surely this was the statement of intent given to Adam, the "seed" deliverer! 2 Sam 7:18-19 "Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?" (KJV)

The Hebrew word translated "manner" in the KJVersion is 'torah', from the verb 'yarah', to project, meaning a pointing out or showing forth of something.. hence, a projection, or project. The Torah contains God's instructions for His people, pointing out the them His Will. It has been compared with the thrusting forth of a javelin to reach a given target or mark a spot or course ahead. It can therefore refer to a purpose yet to be realised, a directing of thought towards some future prospect in the mind of God. David could well be saying, in view of what the Lord had told him, "Is this the course for man? is this the charter for mankind?" Equally, in the Hebrew, this could be a statement, "This is the charter for mankind!" for so it is!

In 1Chronicles 17 we have a parallel account of this whole portion, but with slight but interesting variations in the Hebrew text. Our English version reads the last part of verse 17, "..thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O LORD God." (KJV) Here we have a shortened version of the word 'torah', 'tor', translated in our English version, "estate". We have also the addition "of high degree" to the word "man". Young's literal translation is "..and Thou hast seen me as a type of the man who is on high, O Jehovah God!" ["a type" a projection forward, one thing pointing to another.] Another literal translation by J.P.Green uses similar wording.. "And have looked upon me as a type of the man who is on high." The Septuagint uses a Greek word in place of 'tor' meaning 'a vision', or 'glimpse', again bearing similar thought to a 'type' or 'preview'. In Heb 1:5, the words concerning David's son are directly applied to Jesus, "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? (KJV) William Wilson, Robert Young, Luther and others, see here a reference to David as a type of Christ, the epitome of that ideal "man" of Psalm 8, who is to have dominion over all the earth, ie, perfect mankind. The writer to the Hebrews uses that Psalm to speak of the divine purpose for mankind that has not yet been achieved. Heb 2:8, "..But now we see not yet all things put under him." verse 9, "But we see Jesus .." (KJV) In Jesus we have the surety or guarantee of this purpose being realised. In Jesus we have the pattern in righteous obedience and trust for what mankind will become under His reign.

Therefore, by putting together both versions of the phrase (2 Samuel 7:19, and 1Chronicles 17:17,) we recognize in David a type of Christ, and in the promises here we find the charter for mankind. To this the Scriptures add a whole series of references to David as a type of One Who was yet to come, One Who would have the key to the house of David (implying ownership and authority to all therein), and under Whose righteous rule would be fulfilled those mercies promised by the Lord to David and made sure by Christ. [Examples; Isaiah 9:7. 22:22. 55:4,5. Jeremiah 30:9. Hosea 3:4,5. Luke 1:32,33.]

David's Three Anointings.

Three times was David to be anointed. In truth, each subsequent anointing could be viewed as an extension of the first. The first anointing was by Samuel and represented the appointment of God Himself. Here there was no tribe, no group of men crying out for him to be their king. This was not the response to a popular cry, but something secret at first to the Lord, and to His instrument, the Lord's servant, the prophet Samuel. "I knew Him not.." said the Baptist, John. He had received his instructions from the Lord, and at his hand the Lord witnessed to John His divine choice. "Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He." (John 1:33.) In 1 Sam 16:13, we read, "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.." The expression "in the midst" should translate, we are told, "from among his brethren."

It seems there was an annual feast in Israel at that time, for we read in 1 Sam 16:2, "And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD." The literal Hebrew should read I am come to THE sacrifice.." We are not informed which feast this was, but we do understand that it would be about the Day of Atonement season that Our Lord Himself was anointed with the Spirit of God. This was just three and a half years before the Passover at which He died. In the case of David a period much longer was involved before the next anointing, for David was about 12 to 15 when Samuel came to him, but age 30 years when anointed king of Judah. The pattern is there, though the parallels lie not in the time periods but in the characteristics of each period thus marked by an anointing.

Following each anointing there came a change of situation corresponding with and featuring events and situations subsequent to each stage of the Spirit's outpouring at (1) Jordan, (2) Pentecost, and (3) the ultimate outpouring upon all flesh. We note that David's first anointing was recognised by very few, and was linked with the offering of a sacrifice by a priest. [Both Samuel and the Baptist were of the priestly stock.] David was anointed with the oil of gladness above [In Hebrews 1: 9, of Jesus, literally 'alongside'] his fellows. He was thereby appointed of God to be king ("My King.." Psalm 2.), but he had received no kingdom as yet. During the period that followed David fulfilled the role of a shepherd of the sheep and become their deliverer. Not only did David save the life of sheep. His conquest over bear and lion was followed by that of the Philistine giant, representing the undefeatable power of sin, so long an adversary to king Saul, who represented so

aply the age of attempt of the flesh to boast fulfilment of the Law of God, and whose failure to overcome sin was abysmal.

Upon the anointing of Jesus He was immediately confronted with the Adversary's taunts and boasts, but the Master used the pebbles from the brook with deadly aim.. "It is written..!" In due course He was to render powerless him that has the power of death, by the use of Goliath's own great sword, death itself.

David became the sweet singer of Israel, and in this role, so beautifully accompanied by the strings of the harp, he gave foretaste of those gracious words and that sweet message of redeeming love from the lips of Jesus. "Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

For those burdened by the taunts of Goliath, the oppression of sin, and its giant foreboding shadow in their lives, He brings from His Father, like David of old, sustaining food, gifts of bread and wine, an offering of "meat indeed". (1Samuel 17:17.) David reveals a close affinity with Jonathan (1Samuel 18.), representing in John the Baptist all those prophets and worthy ones of old who trusted God and looked for the consolation of Israel, the ancient worthies. As Jonathan was first to recognise and acknowledge in David God's chosen king, Messiah, so John the Baptist echoed those earlier acclamations of Simeon and Anna in the Temple, and all who looked for this great Deliverer throughout that past age. "This is He!" Nor was there any trace of jealousy in the much older Jonathan, who might have felt the kingdom appointment rightly his. "This my joy is fulfilled." "Now", said Simeon, "Lettest Thy servant depart in peace" .. And John, "He must increase, I decrease.."

At first David experienced a period of popularity, and a similar phase is shared by Jesus. The common people heard Him gladly . They came in their thousands. But it is not long before this very popularity causes jealousy, which turns to hatred, and the attempts and plotting for his death. The javelins were thrown by those of different spirit to that of David, but they miss their mark. His hour was not yet come. The details of comparisons are sometimes quite fascinating. On one occasion messengers were sent to take David, but instead they became influenced by the spirit of prophesy. (1Samuel 19:20.) We read in John 7:44-47 "And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?"

As the Lord's Anointed, or Christ, David took certain liberties with regard to sacred things, such as eating the shewbread which was lawful for only the priests to eat. As Lord of the Sabbath Jesus also acted in accordance with the spirit of truth rather than the dead letter of the Law. We read also that those who were discontented with their present state, or burdened with great debt they could not pay, gathered themselves to David. "Who think ye loved most?" the Master asked His host. "I suppose the one with most forgiven," came the reluctant reply. Jesus laid great stress on faith, and thus for many who close He defeated the enemy of fleshly-minded doubt, symbolised by Amalek, which enemy was roundly beaten by David. [See "Esther" article.]

So in many ways the life of David and that of Jesus from Jordan to Golgotha intertwined as shadow with substance, type with reality. The death of Saul, and with him Jonathan too, represented the end of an era. The Saul of fleshly works, and the Jonathan of the faith that led to recognition of Messiah, both ended together to bring in a new dispensation. "Your house", said Jesus, "is left to you desolate." The tears of David as he laments over the barren end of Saul even with the salt-like influence of Jonathan, blend with the tears of Jesus as He weeps over Jerusalem. Luke 19:41-42 "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

All this time only David had experienced that anointing of the Lord's Spirit. He was king in the eyes of God alone. Yet there was a strange appeal in the scornful cry of Pilate, "Behold your king!" A remarkable development now took place. Those who had gathered to David during his outlaw, rejection experiences, outside of the camp of Israel, continued with him, but now in a new deeper relationship. The anointing of David now embraced them. He became their king, their Head. A fresh expression of the Spirit's outpouring now sealed that bond.

David's second anointing took place at Hebron, and Hebron means fellowship.. How beautiful! It pointed so aptly to a very special sharing of that Spirit poured upon their Head by those who came into His body as prospective members of the kingdom class. These had become translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. As part of the Anointed, the Christ, or Messiah, they came under that one anointing of Jesus their Head. In the case of David this was represented by a second anointing making him king of Judah. In the case of Jesus and the church, again a second pouring forth of the same Spirit took place, or rather the overflowing of the Spirit of their Head descending to His Body members. The Christ (Anointed), not one but many; not many but one, was in process of forming. David thenceforth represents not one person only, Jesus, but all who come under that one anointing, come into the Anointed, the whole Christ during their present earthly experiences.

After the proclaimed desolation of the kingdom of Saul a brief period only elapsed until Judah came to David at Hebron to acknowledge him as their king. The next period of David's life aptly describes the Christ on earth during the Gospel age. During this whole period He continued to rule over and direct the lives of his people, and this notwithstanding the vicious enmity and attacks of their opponents. 2Samuel 2:12 to 32, describes the state of war that broke out between Judah and Israel (the rest of the tribes). A notable battle ensued, a battle so fierce that the place was called thereafter Helkath-Hazzurim, the field of the sword's edge. Twelve faithful men of David gave their lives in that fight, sword in hand, faithful unto death. In this age the message of the Gospel and ministry of the twelve (including Paul) was strongly resisted and they were denounced as heretics. Thus began a continuous struggle against foe both within and without. It was given to these to make war against the people of the Lord. Throughout this struggle David was with his people, directing the battle as Captain of their salvation, and by Him they gained the victory. Praise God! we can all see the force of this application to this age of the church's struggle with darkness.

Saul, as we have seen, represented the outward show of the flesh falsely claiming to be the people of God. A totally carnal form of religious worship was thus depicted in Israel up to the time of its fall. Now, although Saul was dead, his age being past, nevertheless his "house" remained, and in course of time became represented by the reign of the son of Saul, an appropriate title for the chief antagonist of the church during this age. 1Chronicles 8:33, and 9:39, tell us that his name at first was Esh-Baal, "fire of Baal". Later, because of the nature of his reign and character a more common name was given him by the people, "Ishbosheth," which means, "Man of shame." In fact the name given by the Lord through Paul was "man of sin," and it was under his tyranny that the saints were persecuted.

But the time was drawing near for David, in whom we see the composite Anointed, the Christ, to take over the whole kingdom. [Dan 7:22 "...and the time came that the saints possessed the

kingdom." This was the objective of that initial act of anointing, in Our Lord's case at Jordan, but the ensuing experiences were preparatory to that great end in the mind of God. During the present age, as in the case of David king over Judah, experience and proficiency was gained with God-given ability exercised in that very resistance of both the house of Saul, Ishbosheth, Man of sin, and of other enemies of the people of God, those hostile surrounding forces well representing that which is adverse to the kingdom of the Lord (eg. Philistines; sin, Amalek; doubt, etc.).

2 Sam 3:1, reads, "Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." This is an interesting and encouraging statement. Indeed from outward appearances looking down through this past age one may have felt that the true Christ in the flesh following close the footprints of God's Lamb, that it was the Church rather than the Anti-christ that was overcome by the continual warfare against it. Indeed Rev 13:7, makes such a statement. "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them:" Nevertheless, another side to this outward appearance is given in that same revelation showing who are the true overcomers of the age, even those faithful unto death. What a revelation this will be! The Lord seeth not as man seeth! As each overcomer finished the course the Christ was in process of formation. Tribulation was at work, and under great pressures were the jewels of Christ-like character created. Each saint thus approved of God brought nearer the moment of Satan's final overthrow, his power merely to bruise the heel, theirs to bruise Satan under their feet.

The first crown of Our Lord is, and forever will be, His precious saints of this age, but other crowns await Him as with David of old. Those who had been enemies, who had resisted and despised him, were to be led to a dramatic change of heart. No move was made by David to take the throne when Saul died. He waited, and so soon the people of Judah came to him. In like manner, when Ishbosheth failed, David still waits, but it is not long before the purpose of the Lord is realised. In 2Samuel 5:3, we read of a mediatorial work underway. The elders of Israel are making a remarkable request. They are asking him to become their king too! John 12:32 "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Why did those who had so long despised and resisted NOW make such a request? The answer is not too difficult. David's great achievements and victories on behalf of his people had become renowned. He had demonstrated the very abilities in a king that they so desperately needed themselves. They had enemies that they knew were too great for them. They needed a Captain of salvation. Only David could lead them to victory! However, before this further anointing could take place, David had a special work to do. David's first wife, Michal, daughter of Saul, had long ago been taken from him and married to another. She must return to him before the anointing over all the tribes would take place. We are reminded of the language of Hosea describing the defection of Israel, represented there as in marital relationship with the Lord God. Ultimately she returns to Him, and He graciously receives her to Himself. Her covenant bond, once broken by her, is renewed as they weep for the One they have pierced. Jehovah is her husband, but the way of return is through Jesus Who they must come to recognise and Whose arm they will accept to lead them out of their spiritual wilderness. He is the "ARM of Jehovah," on which she will learn to lean. However, Judaism on the one hand, and Gentile worldliness on the other, has a strong hold over the Jewish mind. They will not readily let her go. All attempts to "Christianise" the Jew are regarded as anathema. A "Christian" cannot remain a Jew, they claim, whatever the roots in the race, and the constitution of the State of Israel supports this view. In 2 Sam 3:16, we read, "And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned." The appeals of those influences that have long held the Jewish heart will ultimately be of no avail. They must let go their claims, let her return to her rightful Lord. Even the name of the place he was obliged to give up his calling after her is interesting. Bahurim is from the root Bahhar, "to prove, to choose, to love." What striking illustrations these are, and how touching to our hearts. What a wonderful statement of intent we find in Hosea 2:19-20, towards His unfaithful wife, "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD."

This is a wonderful time indeed.. the coming of all the tribes to David! They came to HEBRON, the state of fellowship with the Lord. Hebron is a strong word and implies fellowship in the deepest sense of conjunction, confederation, uniting together in a bond, joining as one. Israel's betrothal is thus seen to represent a similar state of union for all mankind with their Lord. All the people come to plead with Him to be their king, and to unite all the tribes, (all the long divided world,) under his headship, dominion and rule. It is now their turn to accept for themselves, to come under, his anointing, recognising his appointment of God and rightful place in their hearts. What we read of David we may repeat, word for word, on even more wonderful scale, of Christ. That anointing of the Lord now becomes their rule, that same Spirit filling their hearts, and by that anointing they now become subject, submissive, willing, translated into the Kingdom of God's Dear Son. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.." 1 Chr 12:38, "All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king."

What a sight indeed! For as the elders of the tribes (leaders of mankind,) make a covenant with David and anoint him king over every tribe, a great movement is afoot. The people are on the march! From every corner they come, and they come in their hundreds and in their thousands, even from the remotest parts, many bearing gifts of allegiance and homage. "From north and south mankind will meet to bear their homage at His feet." For these there awaits a great feast of welcome. Can you suspect who helps to prepare that feast of fat things? Can you guess who administers those blessings? Yes, the men of Judah, those who already are in full heart harmony and relationship, representing so aptly again the church of Christ. Together they taste the fat and drink the wine. Isa 25:6-9, "And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." 1 Chr 12:39-40, "And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking: for their brethren had prepared for them... for there was joy in Israel." What satisfaction there will be in the heart of that greater David, Jesus and the Church His Body, to welcome all into the family of God. ""Come!"

It does not happen all at once. Indeed the reign of this king of righteousness depicted in that of David is a reign of warfare and battles. Great fightings take place in which both David and his subjects are involved. The visible enemies against which they battled have their counterparts in all the enemies of human happiness which must be vanquished before the full kingdom blessings can be realised. [See article on Joshua.] Take stock of what must yet be overcome before the world know peace. So much evil, so much selfishness, greed, blind anger, feuds of many generations, materialism with its blinding effect upon the "I wants" of this world. The eternal realities of righteousness and truth seem so far away from human thought. Consider the great forces of evil at work this moment in the human mind. All the enemies of concord and peace with the Creator must be subdued under His feet. These enemies are giants, with gravity-like influence and hold far beyond man's power to escape. Like the Philistines, invincible and ruthless in opposition to any progress towards the kingdom of righteousness, yet to each will be dealt that final blow that will exterminate and will remove from His Kingdom, all things that offend. The Captain of Salvation is able to save to the uttermost those that come to Him. That means a perfect and permanent solution to all human discord and misery, not only dragging the feet out of the miry pit, but also setting them upon the Rock of Ages, writing in the hearts of men the eternal principles of the righteousness of their God, making every vessel "holiness to the Lord." Will men ever cease to wonder at such demonstrations of divine wisdom, and the mighty power of divine love?

One of David's first acts as king of all the tribes was the taking of Jerusalem in order to establish it as the centre and capital of government. The city had been called Jebus, which means "treading down", reminding us of the Saviour's words of Luke 21:24, "and Jerusalem shall be trodden down

of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This makes us think too of the words of Rev 11:2, "and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." reminding us of the time of Ishbosheth, Man of Sin, in which the Lord's people were trodden down in preparing them for the part they will play in this Zion world government. There was great wisdom in David's choice of Zion [though it was in fact the Lord Who chose Zion through David]. David's objective was to unite all the tribes together, so a place was chosen close to the boundary of both Judah and the other tribes. North and South meet at Mt Zion. Here we have a striking glimpse of that meeting place between the family of God in heaven (Judah) and His family on earth. Two planes of being are here united in the administration of the kingdom. The full array is described for us in Hebrews 12, from the Lord above to the spirit of just men made perfect below, the ancient worthies. Together these form earth's new government, a truly central government with deep personal experience both with the needs of man and with the ways and grace of the LORD. The story goes on, but we must leave it there. There is not time to tell it all. How, for example, David dealt with the taunts of scorn that came from the walls of Jebus that arrogantly trusted their undefeatable power to keep David out. There are such walls, and how the Lord will deal with them is a story yet to be told. 2 Sam 5:6-7, "And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the

Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither." The doors of world government seem stout against the Lord, and there is a familiar imagery even in the scornful cry, for only by the removal of man's lameness through sin and of his blindness through Satan's deceptions will that authority become effectively known. With what note of triumph may we close in the simple fact of history reported in the next verse. "Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David."

ARISE, O LORD, INTO THY REST.

"LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions:" Ps 132:1

So, with deeply touching feeling, does this beautiful song begin. "A man after God's own heart.." This was the description of David given by the Lord years before he was born. We know this because the words appear in Samuel's reproof of Saul in 1 Samuel 13:14, because of his foolishness in running before the Lord, lacking, as he was, in faith. That incident, we are told at the outset of the chapter in verse 1, occurred just two years into Saul's reign. Paul tells us that Saul reigned 40 years (Acts 13:21.), and in 2 Sam 5:4, we read, "David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years." So we see that David was not yet born when Saul showed his unworthiness and drew forth the reproof from the Lord through Samuel, including this description.. (1 Sam 13:14) "But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee."

The wonder of divine foreknowledge had brought melody into David's life as he sang in Psalm 132, verse 16, "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." These are wonderful words to the David class of this age, the members of the Lord's Anointed, His Christ. Everything that David sang in Psalm 139 was a confession based upon deep experience with his God. In verse 1, how intimately the Lord had known his every thought, and (verse 2) anticipated his responses before every circumstance. "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. (2) Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off." Verse 5 tells that David came to realise that every step of his way was beset by the Lord Whose hand was there in each experience. "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me." The nearness of the Lord became the central theme in David's life. Wherever he was, in the heights, in the depths, the Lord was always there, green pastures, still waters, dark valleys.. "Thou art with me.."

That wonderful mind of God, those precious overrulings, how great was the sum of them. These are the words of the Holy Spirit's prompting. They speak both of David in the flesh and of the greater David that he was used to foreshadow, Jesus, and the Church His Body. Here once more the Lord describes beforehand the experiences and testimonies of the saints during this Gospel age.. "It is written.." they were marked out beforehand "in the volume of the book." "when as yet there were none of them.." Another book has since been written.. a book of remembrance, written throughout the age, of those who fear His Name. So the request to remember David is a very touching one, as if the Lord Who has known all things from the beginning, and had beset before and behind each saint of God, and written each one in His memory, as if He COULD forget! What man remembers, how can God forget! He is not unrighteous to forget. Though a mother forget, yet will I not forget.. In reality, however, this remarkable plea is not a jogging of the Lord's memory so much as a clear statement of the relationship between the desire of David and the desire of Jehovah. It is a plea for a response already promised of the Lord. Therefore it is the claiming of a promise.

It is the claiming of a promise with great desire! This is a song about two vows, both pledged in love. (verses 2 & 11.) Ps 132:2, "How he swore unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob;" & 11, "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." The vow of David comprises the desires and endeavours of saints. The vow of the Lord reveals something wonderful about our God. These two vows form two sides of a bond, the most remarkable bond of all ages, a bond between the Lord and His people.

We do not know exactly when this song was written, nor for what occasion, but we can have no doubt whatever what the Spirit is saying to our hearts through these words. Solomon uttered what might be regarded as an echo of this psalm at the time of the dedication of the Temple. The psalm may not have been written then, but what Solomon said on that occasion certainly repeats the burden of the song. 2 Chr 6:41-42, "Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember

the mercies of David thy servant." That event foreshadowed the very special time in which we, of all the Lord's people, are privileged to live. The saints, the David class of this age, have all but finished their course. The Lord is, even now, making up His jewels. With what depth of satisfaction did He cause to be written.. "They shall be Mine.."! What great yearning lies behind those words!

What is it about these people of God that make them to Him such a peculiar treasure? We find, perhaps, a clue in those words, "LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions:" The afflictions of the saints throughout the age have been many. Some of these we may glimpse in snatches of church history preserved for us, and what the historian misses the Lord remembers. In a special sense has the death of His saints been precious in His sight. For each thus proved faithful unto death He has a crown of life, but the death that mattered was that which took place long before that last breath, when the heart became dead to all else than that single desire represented here in David's longing, to "find a place for the Lord." While it was true that many things David was called to suffer were because of the Lord's claim when He took him from the sheepfold, there is also a special sense in which David's afflictions were self-afflictions, the self-afflicting of his own soul, that is, the earnestness of the intense longing to build a beautiful and worthy and holy temple for his God. David vowed a vow, he made a solemn promise to his God which revealed that utter singleness of heart. Ps 132:3-5, "Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation (worthy) for the mighty God of Jacob."

"Habitation" here is plural, denoting a worthy dwelling place, for this is a Hebrew language device to add quality or majesty. Between the cherubim wings above the ark was that depicting the Lord's shekinah, the presence of a great and holy God, but the ark was clothed only with a tent, a flimsy structure of temporary fabric, and David longed to provide for it a more permanent abode truly worthy of his God. The ark had remained for years at Shiloh, in the area of Ephraim which some scriptures imply was called Ephratah, and this may be the reference in verse 6. "Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood." The fields of Jearim, or of Kiriath-Jearim, the city of the wood, was the place in particular referred to in the account. Here the ark was to be found in the early days of David.

It is curious to note that during the period of David's life the ark never resided in the Tabernacle in its appointed place, the Most Holy. Eli's sons had taken the ark to boost the morale of the Israelites, who were not doing well in fighting off the Philistines, but the Israelites were defeated, and the ark was taken by the enemy. Seven months later the Philistines were glad to get rid of it, for it brought a two-fold plague upon the Philistines, the details of which we will not go into, save to say that the Lord smote them where it hurt! Oh! what a wonderful moment when the reapers of the Bethshemesh fields looked up from their labours and saw the approach of that ark drawn on a cart by milking cows who, under divine compulsion, and directly against nature, had left their crying calves to bear their precious load back into the territory of the Lord's people. The ark was returned from the land of the enemy, and the Philistines who had followed afar off to see what would happen, watched in great awe this sign of God's power. Both in wonder and delight was this sign paralleled by the raising of Jesus from the dead, the land of the enemy, to triumph over principalities and powers, making of them an open show.

After a brief respite at that place the ark was taken to Kiriath-jearim, where it remained for at least 70 years, until David had taken Jerusalem and sought to convey the ark to Zion as its permanent abode. The road from Kiriath-jearim towards Jerusalem leads constantly upwards as the mountains become higher, and this makes for steep and rugged ascent travelling eastward towards the sunrise and Mount Zion. The first attempt to bring it to its permanent abode met with failure. It was not the Lord's way. It was, in fact, the way of the Philistines, for the ark was again placed upon a new cart, a man-made construction, with oxen to pull it along. This was a movement not of the Lord, but of the world and of Satan, and it would end in disaster. As the jolting of the cart threatened to off-load the precious contents, a human hand reached out to steady the ark of God, and Uzzah became a son of destruction. Oh how wary we are of human ways and human hands in

the things of God.

Papacy was such a movement, based upon the way of the Philistine with many human hands trying to control the things of God. Other similar examples were to follow. Why were such things allowed? If for no other reason it certainly brings home to the Lord's people the unspeakable privilege of that holy walk with God that was later depicted in the proper care of the Levites who, clothed in linen and in harmony with divine direction, bore the precious weight of God's glory upon their shoulders, treating with deep respect and awe this wonderful symbol of that holy presence. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." We who are perhaps the third generation in the Harvest Truth movement, it is not enough that our parents walked with God. The father of Uzzah for years had tended that ark and had known the blessing of the divine presence and favour, but that did not save his son. The walk with God is a holy walk as testified by saints of each generation. To us belongs the inestimable privilege of learning to live with the glory of God, a consuming fire of all unworthy, an overshadowing of the glory-cloud that envelopes and works its wondrous task within the heart of saint.

Remember David, and the way he afflicted his soul! It is our earnest vow, our chief concern above all other things of life, more than natural comfort or rest of body, to FIND OUT A PLACE WORTHY OF THE LORD. It is a life-time desire and work, yet what sense of immediacy it gives to set this as my goal TODAY. "Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the LORD.." Oh what priceless privilege it is to know the Lord, and to walk, to dwell, with that One Who inhabits Eternity, and Whose Name is Holy. Is MY heart a place WORTHY for such a Being? Can it EVER be? The Lord has provided the means of grace whereby the man of God may be "Thoroughly furnished.." furnished right through, in ways totally acceptable to the Lord of Glory. It is the Lord Himself Who beautifies His Sanctuary, but it is the fear of the Lord, that deepest reverential state of heart, that opens to Him the door. There are states and conditions even of the humblest human heart in which HE is exalted, in which He is given the highest place, given the honour and glory due to such a Being, and there He is happy to place His Name. David was a man after God's Own heart. In his walk with God for years he had been laying up the materials of the permanent abode. In 1 Chr 22:5, we read David's words.. "the house that is to be builded for the LORD must be exceeding magnificent (magnificent), of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore NOW make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death." 1 Chr 29:2.. "I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God.." 1 Chr 28:11-12, tells us that the holy Spirit filled David's mind with the pattern of the things holy to God, "Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things:" In accordance with this pattern David prepared the materials.. (1 Chr 29:2,) "Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance." The zeal of David was the motivation for the most thorough endeavour, (vse 3) "because I have set my affection to the house of my God."

When Jesus encourages us to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, and to lay up treasures in heaven as our heart's preoccupation and delight, he speaks to the David class of this age. This is "the building of God, an house not made with human hands, eternal in the heavens.." of which Paul speaks (2Cor. 5:1.) David was given a pattern of what was to be after his death, after the earthly house of David's tabernacle was dissolved, and in that ancient Temple of God itself lies a pattern of the greater and more perfect dwelling place of God. We search the accounts of that Temple of Solomon, that noble edifice which was the answer to all David's desires. We try to picture the huge quarries in the twin hills of Jerusalem, Mount Zion, quarries that exist to this day, out of

which the stones were wrought "in the lowest parts of the earth..". A labyrinth of chambers remain, propped up against the passage of time. To produce the level table of the top of the mount involved the raising across the southern part a wall of solid masonry equal in height to our English church spires, and longer than York Minster. What sense of awe to look up that wall towards the temple building on the top.. and what a glimpse is thus afforded of the wonderful high and Spiritual Temple it was to portray.

Water supply was stored in vast cisterns hewn out of the solid rock, one alone holding a million gallons. Greater still the Source of that living water that would yet flow from the even grander Sanctuary depicted in Ezekiel's vision, waters that issuing forth from the threshold of the House of God, would increase as they flowed to transform earth's wilderness and turn sea of death to ocean of life.

The great pillars of brass at the porch call to mind the promise to overcomers of Rev 3:12, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God.." One pillar was called Boaz, ("In him is strength..") "representing the Lord Jesus, as shown in the beautiful account and imagery of the book of Ruth, where the Moabite maid was received under the wings of the God of Israel and became the bride of Boaz. The call of the Gentile church to take her place at the side of her Lord in glory is there wondrously portrayed, a memorial to His grace and love and His ability to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with unspeakable joy. The second pillar had to be in all respects identical with the first, and the note of grace is en captured in its name, which means, "He will establish it."

The inner cedar walls were adorned throughout with cherubim, palms, carvings of lilies overlaid with gold and enriched with precious stones.. "the King's daughter.. all glorious within." Such was the house prepared by David and built at last by Solomon, a house of beauty designed by the Spirit of God and pattern of the eternal dwelling place of divine dimensions and celestial majesty and permanency. Such was the place to which, amid the shouts of rejoicing, the sounds of the music and singing, and amid the festive dancing bands of maidens, they bore the ark of God to its place of eternal rest. "And the glory of the Lord filled that place.."

Such is the setting of the psalm. Those strains of that distant spectacle of rejoicing have now long since died away. The scene lingers in the mind like flickering shadow, and such it was, just a shadow. Even the great glory of that Temple of Solomon was but a shadow, a pattern of something far greater and more perfect. Many years after its dedication the Lord said, through Isaiah, (Isa 66:1.) "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" The size of the Temple stones could not impress the Lord... "For My hand made all these materials, and I brought them into being." They are all part of a material creation, inanimate objects. "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." Contrition, humility, and holy awe of the things of God, these are the adornments of the shrine of the Lord in which He delights.. a heart that counts Him dear and precious, "more dear, more intimately nigh, than even the closest earthly tie."

1Peter 3:15. "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.." Some texts say "Christ", but in the deepest sense in both cases is the thought, "sanctify Him as Lord in your hearts and lives." Find for Him that place, that worthy place of love, the uppermost seat, the place of honour and esteem, the centre of delight.. before I close my eyes in sleep this day.

David gave a wonderful display of the sheer joy and exuberance of spirit of one whose chief desire centred in the ark, the presence of God. The joy of the Lord overflowed each step of that steep ascent towards the full realisation of those earnest longings of his heart. 2 Sam 6:14-15,

"And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet." After but few steps that joy poured forth in sacrifice, not

perfunctory act of duty, but the full free expression of delight in the Lord poured forth in praise... "Glorify Thy Name." What a blessed type! If such was but a shadow, what of the reality! If David's joy was sweet to the Lord what is His response today to the offerings of His spiritual people! It is with delight that He hearkens and hears the expressions of joy in Him of those who reverence Him and who exist to please their God. Complete absorption in the things of God. Such is holiness.. the continual ascent of an offering wholly consumed, totally the Lord's. The burnt offering is particularly sweet to the Lord. It reveals a heart in tune with its God, that whether it lives or dies is the Lord's. The last of such offerings of this age are now ascending, and in them a glimpse of those "whole bullocks" yet to be offered, when, as willing offerings, the people yield their all to their Creator and Redeemer in the age now opening up before us.

1 Chr 16:7-8 "Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren. Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people." Ps 132:7 "We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool." When the ark was brought to Mount Zion by David, and the offering of praise ascended, the time was come for the feast for all people, (1 Chr 16:3) "And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine." The harps and the cymbals and the trumpets filled the air with sounds of great jubilation.

Such was the atmosphere of joy and elation of the shadow. Today we live in the days of the reality. Ps 132:8, "Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; Thou, and the ark of thy strength." (9) Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy." At this wonderful moment of all moments of all eternity our minds turn towards the Lord Jehovah. What are His thoughts at this hour? "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest." Could we but fathom the depth of meaning of those words to the Lord God at this time. The Spirit now prompts this cry from the hearts of His people. It is for them to share something of the sacred wonder of what now transpires as the last stones of the Temple of God are slipped into place. How long has He waited for this hour! At what point in eternity past was it conceived? In divine timelessness the question is undoubtedly irrelevant, but it awes our minds to thus express the wonder of our babe-like minds. What is this REST of Jehovah God? Even in that very word He chooses is revealed the condescending heart of God, for He uses a term of meaning more to human frame than of divine. The word speaks of repose, cessation of activity, relaxation, as when God rested on the seventh day from His creative works, though weariness is not part of the divine being. That sense is what we add because of weakness of this human frame. Above all does the word "rest" speak of home, a place of love, where in its comforting warmth all is at ease, a blessed state of fulfilment. Such is the Sanctuary of God. In the psalm the symbol of the divine presence is called the "ark of Thy strength." It is an interesting expression found only in this place and in the parallel portion of Solomon's quotation of the psalm. There is, however, one reference to the ark as "his strength" in Ps 78:60-61, which appears to refer to the taking of the ark by the Philistines, and explains that this was because of the people's unfaithfulness. "So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand."

Christ, represented by that ark, is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Herein, in the ark of God, lies the basis of His covenant, the means of its accomplishment, the principles of its establishment for ever, the total authority of righteousness, and promise of life everlasting. The sole contents of the ark when the Temple was dedicated were the two stones engraved with the Law of God. The stones that the Lord has been preparing these past two millenia, the hearts of His saints in which He has been engraving the principles of divine righteousness, are to become the basis of peace and joy forever. The preparation of these stones is now all but completed. Just a little chiselling and engraving work remains in the heart of those still below, but in those that rise beyond that veil the work is completed for eternity.

These are the Lord's executors, who have been prepared for the enormous task ahead, to carry forward the great majestic purpose of God to its full fruition. Ps 132:8-10, "Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake.. " because of the Head and Body members of that Anointed, that Christ, the "beloved" of the Lord, those who have manifested the spirit that compelled David each day in seeking a place worthy of the Lord. ".. Turn not away the face of thine anointed." With what poignant language is the blessed truth conveyed with such words. Between these precious sons and the father so much love has passed. Every experience of the way has been designed to bring them to the glory of this end, this object of their call and their whole course. They know, and He, the Father, knows, that there is NO POSSIBILITY

WHATEVER, not even the remotest chance, having brought this Christ through the suffering of many things to glory, to now HOLD BACK from so wonderful a purpose for the rest of creation through this beloved elect. The Christ has been prepared to reign, to finish the work that the father has given them to do, and they will not fail nor be discouraged until they have set right all that is wrong in this earth.

The most dramatic moment thus far in all God's programme HAS ARRIVED! It is now with a great sense of inevitability that we enter this final phase of the redemptive programme. The Christ in glory stand poised for the blessed work and joy set before them. The ark of His strength now enters with the great God it enthrones into that last stage of union and most glorious oneness, and there is time no more. We have considered but the first half of this wonderful psalm which epitomises the heart attitude of saints at this hour of such great drama in the plan of God. The second half from verse 11 gives us the response of the Lord God to this cry of our hearts.

Verse 11, "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. {This is the oath-bound promise of a God Who cannot lie. "That holy thing" which His Spirit has been producing within His saints is of royal lineage, born to reign both Head and Body members upon the throne of God. Rev 3:21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

12 If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore. ["Ah, they are of a royal line, all children of a king.. and Lo, for joy they sing.."] These are the children of God, a God Who is faithful and true, Who never deviates or turns or backslides. It is His Own Spirit that has been at work in their hearts to produce in them the image of their Creator.]

13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.

14 This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.

15 I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.

16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

17 There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

18 His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.

Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.

"THIS IS THE DAY !" Psalm 118.

"Prophets of all ages saw its gleaming from afar.." NOW it is HERE! Like men waiting for their Lord faithful Peters and Johns have looked with expectancy and hastened the day of the One they loved. Now He has COME! To men impatient of hope's realisation the hand of the Divine Time-clock has seemed not to move. Yet it HAS moved, though to human eyes imperceptibly, and NOW is the HOUR! This is indeed the day prepared by the Lord, and the call to Zion, to Israel, and to the world, is "Let us be glad and rejoice in it."

Some of the psalms open with a call to praise the Lord. They go on to explain why such praise is due, and close again with a call to praise. Psalm 118, of our text, is one of those psalms. It is, in fact, the concluding Hallel psalm to be sung at Passover deliverance celebration, a song of deliverance and triumph. It is good to remember this when we recall that this was probably the last hymn to be sung by Jesus and the disciples when they left that upper room. It is indeed a hymn of Millennial Dawn. It looks beyond trial to victory, the overcoming of all enemies, and the salvation

of God. Whoever was prompted to write this psalm, whether David or someone else of later years, it doubtless testified to a personal sense of divine triumph in that person's life. But ultimately it was prophetic, and prophesy not merely of some passing time of prosperity of Israel's past, but of the final triumph by the hand of the Lord. We can know this with certainty, for part of the psalm was quoted by Jesus when He spoke of the time of His return and the eventual welcome He would receive from those who had once rejected Him. Matt 21:42, "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"

There is so much that the Lord has packed into this day, so much He has prepared that will bring forth His praise. We know that many of the signs of this day seem ominous. There is no hiding the fact that trouble means trouble, and this psalm refers to some of that trouble, but the fact also remains that sooner or later, when the trouble has done its work and the dark clouds lift, the gleams of that Sun of Righteousness will reach this tear-washed earth, and the blessed effects will be, like the love of God, forever. That is the supreme cause for praise in verse 1. "O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever." [.. his lovingkindness (endureth) for ever. (ASV) .. his steadfast love endures for ever! (RSV)] The Hebrew word for "mercy" in the AV text (*hesed*) is a very special word, with a beautiful depth of meaning still not fully fathomed by the experts, but with undoubted reference to the qualities of the Love of God, a faithful love, true always and unfading. A dear brother once told me how wonderful he was finding a study of this word. The more he looked into it the more absorbing it became to him.. and the Lord took him. What a lovely way to go, to become absorbed in the lovingkindness which dwarfs and outlives the eternal hills, until we are translated by the Lord with that vision in our hearts, to dwell forever at its Source. This is the day that, of all days, is to reveal the steadfastness of divine love in its fullness.

It is the day the Lord has prepared, and before its close those things His love has made ready will fill earth and heaven too with praise.. a feast of "fat things" indeed! A programme of events has been set in motion, and one by one in sequence they progress with unfaltering resolution. There is a sense of inevitability which marks their course, a sense of purpose and direction. It is the programme of "that day" in so many places of the Word described, the programme of the second advent of Christ. This is it! This is the day the Lord has prepared, and before its close the gladness of rejoicing and the singing of redeemed men on earth, the joy in heaven over every tear of repentance, the oil of joy for mourning, and the spirit of praise will replace the spirit of heaviness and fill this earth so that (Mal 1:11) "from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts."

Three groups are called upon in Psalm 118 (verses 2,3 & 4.) to acknowledge from their own experience the faithfulness of divine love. They are named in the order of the Lord's first dealings with them. First Israel, then the house of Aaron picturing the church, and finally all mankind when in turn they come into a relationship with God. Here the latter are described as "those who fear the Lord", yet not Israel nor the church. As proselytes or strangers of the land the gentile nations once without God and without hope in the world, and outside the covenant of promise, will be no more "afar off." The gates will be open, and they will walk in the light of the Lamb, that gentle persuasive warmth of the love of God that will draw all men until all come into that great family of God, a family to be one day complete in heaven and on earth. In the words of the Amplified version, all will reverently and worshipfully fear the Lord, and say, that His mercy and lovingkindness endures forever.

From each of these groups the testimony rises as one harmonious voice into a mighty chorus of praise. In fact the church are the first to give their witness to that unchanging love. Soon they will be joined in praise by Israel, and then mankind, a threefold sure witness the echoes of which will grace age upon age throughout eternity. What is that witness? That when the Lord loves His love is forever! Each individual member of His church testifies to the joy and peace this blessed

knowledge brings. So much about us has proved that love of God, proved it to love's uttermost.. Our desperate need as members of a sinful race.. Love's patience, gentleness and intimate understanding of the needs of each child through every stage of growing up into Christ. How persistent has been that love in our lives! How much it has endured! All those blessed qualities described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, were of a great love he had experienced, had proved in his own relationship with God. We are each in the centre of that love and have each tasted the grace of the Lord. How long has love suffered in our lives the clumsiness of infant weakness, the persistence of childish faults even into maturer years. With great patience does the Husbandman wait for the fruitage that will glorify His Name, and prove a worthy harvest to a love so great. The walk on earth is one of increasing awareness of this love, and the response in our hearts is one of grateful praise, while as the saints gather beyond the veil "they will be still praising thee." (Ps 84:4.)

O what rich incense of praise now rises to the Lord! The testimony that follows in verses 5 to 14 contains the framework of so many testimonies of God's people of every age.

Ps 118:5-14

5 "Out of my distress I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me free.
6 With the LORD on my side I do not fear. What can man do to me?
7 The LORD is on my side to help me; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.
8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to put confidence in man.
9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.
10 All nations surrounded me; in the name of the LORD I cut them off!
11 They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side; in the name of the LORD I cut them off!
12 They surrounded me like bees, they blazed like a fire of thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them off!
13 I was pushed hard, so that I was falling, but the LORD helped me.
14 The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." (RSV)

We each of us know that "large place" of verse 5, AV. "the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place." This is the opposite to the confined, restricted, prison-like conditions of straightened circumstances, pressed from every side. The very design of such experience we now recognise to be the tasting of the divine power to save and to deliver. Ps 34:4 "I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." That freedom from fear may seem a somewhat precarious state of mind, but it is not dependent upon the visible and tangible circumstances and scenes of earthly life. This kind of deliverance enables song and praise when the feet are in the stocks in the darkness of the innermost prison. It is the sense of triumph in Christ that overwhelms natural fear and trepidation in the face of trial. It is the new mind that enjoys the safety of the secret place of the Most High when the plague draws near that dwelling. How near is "near"? It can be the flesh itself that is being consumed, yet is the mind secure in the stronghold of faith. The plight of David that drew forth the cry of fearfulness in Psalm 55, is representative of the needs of the David class of this age that cry out to the Lord.. (verse 6) "..Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest."

To this cry the Lord responds as with David of old.. Ps 18:6-19

6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.
7 Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.
8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet.
10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.
11 He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.
12 At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire.
13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire.
14 Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.
15 Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.
16 He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.
17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.
18 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.
19 He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

Rev 12:14 "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished .."

Israel too will yet echo the testimony of the saints. For the natural seed too this has been an age of trial, a fire to refine and prepare her for her future role. In the last days of Israel's testing just before us she will learn the song and join the chorus of praise to God for her deliverance. With Israel the Lord has dealt longer than with any people. They are His witnesses. They shall show forth His praise. Oh what enduring love the Lord reveals towards this obstinate and rebellious race! Jer 31:3, "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

Deut 7:7-9

"The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:
8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.
9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;"

The people of Israel have shared with the world of mankind a remarkable resilience in their resistance to the love of God. It is in view of this long history of rebellion that we ask with wonder how the Lord will achieve in them so great a change of heart and that with permanence (Hosea 2:19.20.) How will He produce within the next few years that responsive love that three and a half millennia have not brought forth? To contemplate the sufferings of the Jew these past many centuries is awing to the mind. The attempt of Hitler and others to wipe out the Jew from the face of Europe came at the end of an age of tribulation, massacres, and various other attempts throughout the long centuries to achieve that same objective. The bush seen by Moses that burned with fire yet was not consumed could well be taken as a symbol for the nation itself. Yet today, the generation that escaped the concentration camps and gas chambers has been largely replaced by a new generation that knew not the terrors of fifty years ago. Has that history produced in them a deep lasting love for the Lord and delight in His ways? Is the God of Israel the Lord of Hosts, or do they still trust in the sword, the power of arms? Yet the promise remains in Hosea 2:18-20

"And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of

heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.

19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

The sufferings of the treading down of Gentile Times have passed. We believe that these hard experiences will not be wasted, but the most crucial moments on which Israel's future hang lie just ahead. The Lord is at work, and His ways are wonderful. This is the day the Lord has prepared. The church are all but ready, complete, poised for the work before them, so are the ancient worthies, His cloud of faithful witnesses, who each have testified in dedication.. "My lips shall praise Thee.." because "Thy lovingkindness (steadfast love) is better than life itself.." This brings us to the moment for the final preparation of the nation of Israel. They too are to confess to the changeless love of God, that love that did not, does not, let them go. Ps 118:10-13 "All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the LORD I cut them off. (11) They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the LORD I cut them off. (12) They swarmed around me like bees, but they died out as quickly as burning thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them off. (13) I was pushed back and about to fall, but the LORD helped me." (NIV) How graphically is thus described Israel's dire straits in the midst of those last scenes of trial still before her. The "enemy" is described in Zech 14:2. "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." Here we see contingents of armies representative of many nations of earth gathered like vultures to the prey. Many students are watching Israel today with these prophecies in mind.

It has long been suggested that the language of Zechariah 12 and 14, and other places that seem to describe this last great battle are highly symbolic and may refer to past troubles of the nation of Israel, perhaps including her tribulation during the past two millennia at the hands of all the nations into which she has been scattered. This would require that the term, "in that day", repeated throughout the prophecy, must last from the time of the first advent at least and stretch onwards into the millennium. Brethren, we think not. We feel that, apart from other considerations, the frequent use of this expression identifies most clearly for us the day of which the Lord speaks through the prophet Zechariah as THIS DAY in which we live. Twenty times the expression "in that day" appears in the prophecies of Zechariah. Nineteen of these undoubtedly refer to the times after Israel's restoration. Let us look at the texts and ask, "Is this past, or future?" A strong metaphor is used in Zech 12:2. "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem." Here Unger comments, "This means that their attack of Jerusalem will be like men greedily draining a wine goblet in pleasure, but in the end finding themselves helplessly drunk and unable to take the coveted prize." The Lord will "have them in derision."

Zech 12:3-10

"And IN THAT DAY will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

4 ,IN THAT DAY saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.

6 IN THAT DAY will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about,

on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.

7 The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.

8 IN THAT DAY shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

9 And it shall come to pass IN THAT DAY, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

IN THAT DAY describes a state of complete hopelessness of Israel's situation in the face of so great a foe.[Chapter 14] They will be powerless, a nation on the brink of extinction. But, Zech 14:3 "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." Verse 4. "IN THAT DAY" His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, the day of the Lord's presence as God's representative, the One appointed of God to judge the earth. Verse 6 "And it shall come to pass IN THAT DAY, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark:" Verse 8, "IN THAT DAY" living waters shall flow. "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be." and verse 9, "IN THAT DAY" the Lord's sovereignty over every human heart shall be achieved and declared. "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one." Verse 13. " And it shall come to pass IN THAT DAY, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour." Verse 20, "IN THAT DAY shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar." This is THE DAY that the Lord has prepared for gladness and rejoicing.. once the introductory troubles have done their work. There can be no doubt in the mind that the day described is this day in which we live.

Isa 57:10-13 is of interest here too. "You were wearied by all your ways, but you would not say, 'It is hopeless.' You found renewal of your strength, and so you did not faint. Whom have you so dreaded and feared that you have been false to me, and have neither remembered me nor pondered this in your hearts? Is it not because I have long been silent that you do not fear me? I will expose your righteousness and your works, and they will not benefit you. When you cry out for help, let your collection save you! The wind will carry all of them off, a mere breath will blow them away. But the man who makes me his refuge will inherit the land and possess my holy mountain." Verse 16 "For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." (KJV)

Then, it is awing to think of, in the midst of that great deliverance of all times of the regathered people of Israel, at the culmination of so dramatic a victory, and revelation of the Lord's abiding faithfulness and love, the nation mourns. The message at last gets through. The spirit of contention gives way to the spirit of contrition as broken pride and broken hearts turn to the Lord. Isa 57:15 "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Verse 8, of Psalm 118, is, we are told, the middle verse of the Bible. As the verse arrangements are purely a human innovation of over four centuries ago, this can have little significance, yet what a central lesson it happens to express for both Israel and for all mankind. "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man." Three times, in verses 10, 11, & 12, is repeated the

statement against the might of all that come against Israel. "All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them. They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them." {margin "cut down".} Certainly the prestige and pride of the nations will be cut down to size in this final conflict of nations against the Lord and His appointed King. That Hebrew word for "destroy" is translated in most other places "circumcised", ie, "cut around." It is Rotherham who notes the possible implications of this word being used in this context. Beyond the thought of Israel using the sword of the Lord to cut down her enemies, he saw the possibility of the circumcising knife being turned by penitent Israel against herself, "in the way of cutting herself free from the entangling alliances which nearly strangle her on her return from captivity." Rotherham goes on to describe such an allusion as one "worthy of thus being embalmed in song" as Israel profits "by the chastening hand of God." It is interesting that such a student, writing as he did well before 1914, so well understood the situation that would be likely to develop upon Israel's return to the land, when she would heavily lean upon the power of flesh, the help of friends of the Gentile world, the help of USA and other nations. How deeply she must learn the lesson of verse 8. "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."

What mourning will there be in Israel when the truth dawns, as they look upon their Messiah, the One they had rejected, and Whose great love they have so long resisted. What an enduring lesson to all of how wrong one can be! What a lesson of the durability, notwithstanding all, of that steadfast love of the Lord. Ps 118:2 "Let Israel now say, that his mercy [his lovingkindness] endureth for ever." So will the sound of weeping turn to contrition and appreciation of His mercy and grace, leading to a deep-based return to the Lord with Whom bonding is made. Verse 15 "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous: The RIGHT HAND of Jehovah doeth valiantly." (ASV) ["has done mighty things!" (NIV)] The right hand of the Lord will then be recognised, Jesus, Messiah, that has done and will yet do mighty things for them. Ps 45:3-4, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness;" Ps 118:16-17 "The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. I shall not die,[Israel says then,] but live, and declare the works of the LORD." This is her future mission, the mission of the true witnesses of Jehovah of Isaiah 43, where the Lord is calling to those whose eyes and ears are dimmed and dull and blocked to truth.

Isa 43:9-11, 9

"Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.
10 YE ARE MY WITNESSES, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. (11) I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour."

In verse 19 of Psalm 118, we have the response of the chastened people of verse 18. "Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD:" We know that "Gate of righteousness" through which they must enter to know fellowship with God. "I am the Way, Truth, Life.." "No man comes to the Father but by Me.." Through that gate will they progress towards the blessings of everlasting life. So long as they continue to despise and reject that gate they will never enter into life. This moment of truth for Israel will but trigger many such moments of truth for the rest of mankind whom in many ways Israel seems to symbolise. What an awakening that will be, for all will eventually walk in the Light of the Lamb of God. Ps 118:22 "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." We even now can anticipate ahead of Israel and the world the joyous effects of of this realisation. Verses 23-24 "This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." This is indeed the work of the Lord, and all will wonder at the

wisdom, mercy, love and great skill therein revealed. THIS is the day so long foretold and so long prepared of the Lord, the cause at first of great trial, but ultimately everlasting joy.

Would we not love the results NOW! We have the evidences around us that the day is here. Our natural desire would be to now jump, as it were, to the end results of such happiness that this earth has never known. How much more those who did not have the privilege of living to see this day, but glimpsed through misty vision from afar, how much more did they desire and earnestly implore the blessings of divine salvation with the cry.. "Hossana! Save NOW..!" Verse 25, "Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity." The word "Hosanna" means just that, "save now!" We hear it in the cries of the multitude smarting under the Romans as Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem on the colt of the ass. Matt 21:9, "And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." Verse 10, "And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?" We remember the Master's tears over that city. How fickle their moods! How easily turned, their hearts, from the Lord! Matt 23:39, "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

So, verse 26, of Psalm 118. "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD." At last the light of recognition, the welcome without inhibition, without the question, "Who is He?" The full confession comes in verse 27. "God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light:" The light of truth is now in their eyes and hearts, Jesus, the Light of the world. It is the Lord Who achieves this opening of blind eyes and unstopping of deaf ears, for this is His day, the day prepared and set apart for the full culmination of the redemptive purpose. This is the day for the destruction, the eating up, of the veil on Israel's heart and the face of the covering from over all people. Verse 27 then describes the bringing of the praise-offerings unto the Lord, the acknowledgment of His glory. "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." This is the wonderful effect of the truth and its spirit upon the heart. The sacrifice is bound with cords, some put it, not to the horns of the altar, but in procession right up to the horns of the altar. "Make ready the festal sacrifice with garlands until (it is consummated at) the horns of the altar." (the altar.. the perfect Will of God to which it gladly submits.) Thus is symbolised the adoring worship of a responsive heart. Such will be the willing responses of many hearts in the kingdom of THIS DAY. The word for sacrifice here means strictly "a feast", by figure put for the offerings of a feast day. At the Passover feast it was the Lord Himself, at Pentecost, the Church. Now the final harvest ingathering, the feast of booths or tabernacles, signifying full heart reliance upon the Lord alone, "Thy people will be willing (willing offerings) in the day of Thy power." (Psa 110.)

The Tabernacle of God will be with men, and He will dwell among them and be their God, and they will be truly His people, the people of God, His very own peculiar possession, dedicated and devoted to Him forever. Each offering has been thus far an offering of love, Jesus, those who follow. This must and will be true of every offering yet to be made acceptable to the Lord. These are the bonds that will bind other hearts as they now bind our own hearts to the Lord. These are also the garlands that adorn the offering. The gates of the city, the entrance into every blessing of fellowship and relationship with the Lord, are named "Praise." Verses 28-29, "Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."

O sanctify the Lord with me, and every time we read these words of Psalm 118 and share the gladness and rejoicing of this His day, let us remember that Lamb of God leaving that upper room with the eleven, singing these words, seeing beyond the travail of His soul the glory of this day in which we now live knowing that in the darkness and the agony that awaited Him lay the way, the only way, that could lead to all the blessings of this day, and to that great chorus of praise to His Father.. In that He will indeed be satisfied!

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD..

Psalm 46:10

These words of God are full of majesty and power. They speak of ultimate total authority over all that He has made. They combine a sense of great peace and quiet assurance unmatched within the experience of mankind. ... And some have found that rest.

The context affords these words a particular place in the dispensational programme, yet how many believers of every age have found the measureless comfort latent in these words of divine command. At this word of supreme authority and might how many burdens have rolled away, how many mountain-like obstacles in the path collapsed and crumbled away, how many doors opened as of their own accord, how many giant enemies of the soul melted away into the shadows from which they came.

"Be STILL and KNOW that I AM GOD."

How wonderfully it calms our fears, meets every need, and dries our tears. In face of tragedy or loss, or bitter trial, perplexity or crisis in the life, what peace, what inward source of strength it brings, beneath those great eternal wings to hide, and in our God in simple trust confide and find repose. "It is your FAITH that is NOW on trial.." How often time these words recall in face of trial set to prove our total trust, explore the grace sufficient for the hour, and there to know His steadfast love and care. In face of turmoil, in the storms of life, we set compass not to earthly but celestial things, and new perspective find distinguishing at last the unimportant from those things belonging to our peace. These are the issues of life. Be still and know...!

Ps 46:4-5 "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early."

In ancient times the Jews divided the book of Psalms into five parts to correspond with the books of Moses. What their authority we do not know, but merely note the added interest to our text to realise that the sequence of psalms around Psalm 46 was allocated thus to the second book, "Exodus". The Exodus section commences at Psalm 42 and leads to 72. From ancient times in this sequence was a pattern perceived. Sufficient time is ours at present to confine attention to the first seven psalms of this Exodus book, and here a pattern is not hard to find. This pattern links both advents of Our Lord and leads to features of our present day and onward through the trouble yet to reach climax, like the raging of the sea, then falling back before the Rock. Thus far and no further shalt thou come.. or no flesh will be saved. Beyond that storm new vistas rise and earth responds in joyous praise, beholding now the might of God revealed in kingdom growth, as nations recognise and bow before their great Creator's call.. "Be still and know.." What panoramic view is here portrayed! What majesty revealed! What grand and stately steppings of our God!

Psalms 42 and 43 combine, perhaps one psalm, to tell in touching language, so it seems, the tearful

passage over Kidron's brook first of King David, when rejected by his own, then Jesus, when He walked that same sad path without the camp, rejected by the ones He came to save. "Behold your king!" "We have no king but Caesar.." .. And to this day the same response is heard. "Upon us be His blood and on our seed." Remarkable that cry that was to frame the age between the advents of that Lord. We find it echoed in the next psalm 44, a nation scattered and cast off. Thus Israel did her own prophetic call fulfil to bear the judgment she had brought when wicked hands destroyed the Prince of Life. And her sad course was paralleled by faithful church, who for sins not her own was also called to share the path of tears and shame her Master trod. Thus Paul quotes from this very psalm,(verse 22)"Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." The age of trial, both for faithless Jew and faithful church, provokes the cry (verse 23) "Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever." (verse 24) "Why do you hide your face.. ? (NIV) For so it seemed for saints and Jew alike. (See Isaiah 54, a promise framed in words alike of meaning to both seeds.)

Then time of blessedness arrives, Psalm 45, the heart now bubbles over with delight for here we see the end of age has come, and with it comes our King in glory clad, prepared in majesty to rise and to go forth with arrows sharp and sword upon His thigh. He takes to Him His Bride, with gown embroidered by sharp trials, His working in, our working out, salvation's end, once sown in tears, now reaped in joy unspeakable and full. New government is taking over earth, and saints are taking seat beside their Lord for ministry that excels in glory all before.

This perfect sequence follows with the next, Psalm 46. A time of global trouble must betray the hour of conflict for dominion of mankind. Defiant to the end, the Pharaoh keeps his slaves, and will resist the challenge, "Let them go!" though signs amass that show how impotent the gods his reign imposed on man. Meanwhile both wild and natural branches of the olive, church and Israel, claim attention of their God, as each He gathers home, to Canaan earthly, and to that of heaven, both ultimately to Himself. "Our Refuge and our Strength is God.." This truth so precious to His saints, is yet to find the heart of Israel too, and there eternally reside. Amid the scenes of gathering storm so graphically described in language of this psalm, a hand is glimpsed protecting from all harm that people chosen for His own, both Zion above, and Zion too below. The dawning of our morning has arrived, and with it Israel also now appears within her land, and neither shall be moved from that eternal purpose now to be fulfilled. The Jew, like Jacob, is the first to learn how bleak and fruitless is her fight against the Lord, and this the Gentile too must also learn. The headlines of the news today were written first in Genesis, for there were laid the deeds of the possession of the land. The promise of the Lord must be fulfilled, and in our time. Gen 28:15 "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." What stirring time to live and witness this contention of the Lord with nations gathered to dispute a Will beyond all human power to change. Behind their fury do we see Satanic effort to withstand at any cost the kingdom that approaches to his ruin.

The earth now trembles on the brink of doom, but Zion sees in these same scenes sure signs of progress of the kingdom age. They are not hard to find, those evidences of a mightier hand behind the news. They know they are secure, these saints of God, whatever happens cannot separate from Him, nor from His love so proved. The end of victory is sure! They do not fear the outcome of the strife, but watch from Horeb's mighty rock the great display, without dismay. Their confidence extends beyond themselves, to Israel, to mankind. Theirs is no selfish sense of peace, for each saint knows to what great end the Master works His mighty acts. We know that in completion of the Christ lies hope for every soul on earth. Our confidence is for mankind, and in the prospect of that blessed flood now waiting from Heaven's windows to descend when trouble's cleansing work is passed, and all that now offends removed, like swine of Gadara rushing to the sea. Zion's radiance and gladness now reflects from faces of the brethren here on earth, for they have caught those first warm rays of dawn that speak of blest new day begun. But now the nations rage indeed, the kingdoms move, great roaring of the sea breaks on the ear, as captives strain at prison doors, and break their chains, and turn upon their masters whose cruel powers must fall before the wave of discontent.

More graphic words are hard to find than in this psalm, the concise prose that sums what we are witnessing today. The Hebrew gives four statements in verse 6, like toll of bell that speaks with fateful sound. In Hebrew brevity of speech, "Raged nations, kingdoms moved, uttered His voice, melted the earth." In modern smoother language of the Living Bible.. "The nations rant and rage in anger, but when God speaks, the earth melts in submission and kingdoms totter in ruins." "When God speaks.." Will literal sound break through from heaven's realm? There have been such occasions in the Word described. Some have indeed heard that most awesome sound, while others thought it thundered yet perceived no message in its roar. Will this be something more? How will God speak? With what voice will He shake foundations of this earth and shatter power of spirit realm that rules this present evil world, and both remove? The psalm has a refrain. Verse 7 and 11 repeat.. "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah."

Repeatedly this message gives us clue to how the Lord will yet command this earth, "Be still..!" In course of time this echoing refrain will yet become the message of the hour compelling to man's ear, like trumpet growing louder every day, insistently to stir the hearts of men until the irresistible decree is heard with understanding and assent. "Be still..!" What message is it that will yet command such victory over human arrogance, break through the blindness brought by sin that veils man's heart from his Creator's sovereign Will? A mighty witness will impose on human minds a truth that cannot be ignored. Amid the crashing of all earthly powers, the mountains shaking, crumbling into sea with thunderous roar, all Satan's arts with earthly might combined in conflict with God's Lamb, yet failing crushed beneath a power exceeding all, while every kingdom fails, one yet endures on which He placed His name! A two-fold witness, like a still small voice, proclaims the triumph of right that seals the doom of darkness, sin, and every cause of heart-ache on the this earth. A Zion enthroned above, a Zion below on earth! Two witnesses.

The spirit heavens shake already at the sight of what is happening now above. "The sons of ignorance and night" by grace divine are changed to share the throne of Him Whose Name is high above all other names. Beyond the reach of all Satanic power the victors stand this precious moment all time, and in this glorious act the Lord God speaks a mighty sermon to each fallen demon's heart. "Be still, and cease from battle with the Truth, with Light, and know in Me alone the infinite might of the only God." Thus does He crown this age of grace in which the preparation of each living stone has, one by one, that coming doom ensured of all that would withstand His mighty love.

But what of man on earth? He does not know as yet of heaven's scenes of joy and victory for saints. What does man see that will compel him yet to stand and stare in awe, and will afford so powerful and so forceful a command? Whose God is it repeated in refrain? The God of Jacob? Israel's reappearance on this earth a sovereign state the saints have recognised long-since as sign of Israel's Messiah, His tell-tale work, Whose presence such a sight demands, for unto Jesus was entrusted such a task. Isa 49:6 "And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Yet somehow man has missed the meaning of this wondrous sign, and even Christian watchers fail to grasp the implications of this sight. Meanwhile in Israel to religious mind, these very facts of restoration seem a blasphemy to those who only know them as Messiah's act, yet fail to see His form. These thus decry as premature the very signs that say, "there standeth One among you now you do not know." As we have grown so used by touch of switch to flood a room with light, and daily view on screen an instant view of scene beyond our shores, so man accepts without a thought prophetic sign of Israel in her land once more, and few still pause to wonder why such miracle. A mightier witness yet that land shall be, as God has said, "Ye are My witnesses.."

The signature repeated in the psalm is that of Jacob's God, and God, with Jacob, will yet gain the full attention of this earth and all therein. As saints ascend to join that gathering on high, a sight for spirit eyes alone, Israel remains below, and Israel will yet endure amid the plotting of the Evil one, and centre of the bitter hate of men intoxicated with but one mad wish to drive the Jew into the

sea. But that, we know, shall never be! That tiny insolent state that dares to take its stand on alien ground, on every side surrounded, as the Word described, with perpetual hate. "Ye are My witnesses." The greatest powers of earth have laid her waste, Assyrian from Bagdad, then Babylon, and Greek, and Roman pagan, papal too, and fanatic warriors of the false prophet, Islam, largest empire of them all. Their power has come and gone, except the last reserved for final judgment now, YET ISRAEL STANDS within her land. She has no right to be, except as witness to the power and purpose of the Lord. Yet greater witness yet awaits this earth, for Israel will endure as all the might of demon and of men possessed will spend its fury on this hated race. A roaring wave will break in anger on that land, and yet will Israel stand as solid rock while every power against her falls away, and in dismay her enemies lie broken at her feet. A greater hand than man's decides the scene, and writes the script, and tells what end shall be.

To heaven's music was the drama set so long ago in these revealing psalms. Songs of deliverance divine, melodic themes to thrill believing hearts while three millennia waited for this day in which we stand, now to give way like star-light in night's darkness yields to dawn's more perfect light. Now does prophetic word unfold interpreted by events more perfectly than any could conceive before its day. Time now of blessed liberty for Jew to leave her alien lands, as gates are opened, once so stoutly barred. This is the hour of freedom to return to that fair land long promised by her God, and yet that very liberty lifts restraint allowing anti-semitic trends once more to make the Jew a scapegoat for all ills that now frustrate mankind. What stirring time indeed! and we have witnessed rousing times before.. as iron gates yielded to reveal in concentration camp a sight of bones and sinews moving from the mass of dead, half dead, and some but half awake. "Can these bones live?" How graphically portrayed prophetic vision in those scenes. Ezekiel 37 reenacted as in vision seen, yet still symbolic of the great awakening to progress to breathing of His life within, and that not 'till that servant's word went forth as instrument of God's almighty power. Will that be ours, the privilege to impart the Holy Spirit, as did Christ, when sacrifice is finished when from beyond that veil the Spirit and the Bride say "Come"?

Yes, even more compelling scenes await this earth. Amid the turmoil of the end of age, not that alone but end of evil world, the shouts of triumph that rise Zion above will yet find echo here in Zion below. Believing hearts in Israel yet will sing the song of triumph of Psalm 46. How often have the watchers searched the end-time prospect in such passages as Ezekiel 38 & 39, and Zechariah 12 & 14, and today we search again lest we have missed some vital detail of the scene. The language of the stone cut out without the aid of human hand or human army to invade.. The time of impact, not of man with man, but now of light with darkness, power of right and truth against the realm of Satan's evil hold upon the race as exercised through human rule of empire, government, and rule of kings. Infallible today those mighty signs that tell us that the stone HAS STRUCK! The earthquake has begun, the shaking of the power of kingdoms of this earth in whose day Heaven's rule begins. And we have seen enormous cracks appear that speak of mighty conflict in a realm beyond man's sight where wicked spirits cling so desperately to earth's domain. There lies the centre of the quake that threatens devastation here below of Satan's rule. Before our eyes (or of our parents) empires fell, and long established ruling houses ceased, disintegration's process now pursues relentless course. Within a score of years the mountains fell into the sea. Britain once "great", and U.S.A., alone lost forty fragments of their realms. More recently in Africa, released from gun-power fear of foreign lords, the winds of change have furiously wrought havoc nor yet spent, while age-old hatreds and blood feuds that tear apart the least important lands bring sense of impotence and fear to all the powers of earth combined in vain attempt to save this threatened world. The cry for help though faintly raised in China's vastly peopled land strikes fear, as one third population of this earth abide the hour when nothing will withhold the flood now ready to burst forth. Once the restraining power is shattered by that force no one can visualise the evil in its wake, already visible at communism's fall in Russia and in other blood-drained lands. Historians agree, that 1914 struck the hour of change since when nothing has been the same. "The wise shall understand.."

There, centre stage, on time, sign of the work of Son of Man, stands Israel, first evidence of kingdom age begun. Why does this little state exist? ..And why described in words so stirring at

this hour.. "a stone"? We read the word of Zechariah 12 (verses 1 to 6) translated from the Vulgate. "Burden of the Lord's doom, where falls it now? On Israel. Word from the Lord, Who spread heaven out, founded earth, fashions the life that beats in man! This is My decree, that Jerusalem's walls (ay and the whole of Juda shall man those ramparts) be offered to all the nations round about for a fatal cup; to all the world Jerusalem shall be A STONE immovable; lift it who will, shall be torn unmercifully. See where they muster to the attack, all the kingdoms of the world! Time NOW, the Lord says, to dazzle steed and craze the rider's wits; for Juda, the sunshine of My regard, the heathen must ride in darkness.. " (Verse 6) "chieftains of Juda themselves shall be My instruments then, fire-brand in the forest, spark among dry sheaves, to devour all nations right and left of them. JERUSALEM SHALL STAND, WHEN ALL IS OVER, WHERE JERUSALEM STOOD." What wonderful words. "The God of Jacob is our refuge."

As the dust dies away from the defeat of all the nations that unite against her, Israel, that first visible stone of the kingdom age, will be seen to endure and prosper, and what mighty witness this will be to the invincible power of the Lord of Hosts, the God of Jacob fighting for His people again, as in the days of old. Not far away, as Zechariah shows, will recognition of Messiah awaken in that race the deep emotions of a contrite heart so touchingly described in David's sad lament, Psalm 51.1-3 "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. (2) Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. (3) For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. (6-10) Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (13) Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. (16-19) For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar."

Again we see the tears shared by Joseph and his brethren. What of the Saviour's heart right now, Who, weeping at sight of Jerusalem, spoke with emotion of this hour when recognition would break through that veil and blind eyes would be opened, tongues unloosed long silent in His praise. "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." Up to this hour, as at the time when David came again after the flock had rejected their shepherd, it has been the priests (the church) who have recognised their Lord's return, but next comes Judah with her tears of mingled grief and joy to bring back her King. What wonder in the eyes of "Christian" tribes of earth when it is Jew who tells them that the Lord had come! Not word alone will testify this truth, but Israel's rock-like presence there when storm subsides and raging nations impotently fall like mighty waves spent at her feet. "Jerusalem shall stand, when all is over, where Jerusalem stood." She shall not be moved. With equal point the words of Ezekiel (from the Vulgate) state.. "My greatness, My holiness, shall then be displayed for a world of nations to see, and they will recognise my power at last.

The Vulgate version of Psalm 46 reads thus.. "God is our refuge and stronghold; bitter the trial that has overtaken us, but He can save. Not for us to be afraid, though the earth should tumble about us, and the hills be carried away into the depths of the sea. See how the waters rage and roar, how the hills tremble before His might! But the city of God, enriched with deeply flowing rivers, is the chosen sanctuary of the Most High, God dwells within her, and she stands unmoved; come dawn, He will grant her deliverance. Nations may tremble, and thrones totter, earth shrink away before His voice; but the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Come near, and see God's acts, His marvellous acts done on the earth; how He puts an end to wars all over the world, the bow shivered, the weapons shattered, the shields burnt to ashes! Wait quietly, and you shall have proof that I am God, claiming empire among the nations, claiming empire over the world. The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge."

We have mentioned how remarkably the previous psalms (42 to 45) led in perfect sequence to this point. One psalm answers another, the sorrowful and lonely experiences of the cast off Messiah being echoed in that of Israel throughout the age. "Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us. Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people." (Ps 44:13-14) In this essential sharing of the experiences of Messiah will the Jew one day learn the lessons of its history, "His blood.. upon us." While blood of saints has cried "How long?" the Jew has been scattered and peeled.. (Verse 23) "Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever." Then comes the Lord's response at His return, when girded sword upon His thigh, in faithfulness and truth He starts His grand yet awful work, and will not rest till all is right upon this earth.

Then (Psalm 46) a trouble that will break the hold of Satan from this earth, for thus He binds the strong man of the house. Isa 14:12 "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! " Now is it Israel's turn to yet become a witness to the power and faithful covenant love of God, while to the earth the cry goes forth, "Be still.." "Now cease from vain attempt to disregard or fight against the heart and hand that brought you forth."

Yet still the sequence flows, Psalm 47.. We hear the voice of Israel now..

- 1 "Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.
- 2 How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!
- 3 He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet.
- 4 He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah
- 5 God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.
- 6 Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.
- 7 For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.
- 8 God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.
- 9 The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted." (NIV)

From every corner of the earth mankind will yet applaud, a great clap-offering to the Lord!

Psalm 48, the seventh and the last of this grand sequence aptly pictures glorious Zion. Ps 48:1-3 "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge." (KJV) Now Zion reflects, as will the world of men, upon display of might that put to shame all human strife against the Lord. (Verses 4-8) "When the kings joined forces, when they advanced together, they saw and were astounded; they fled in terror. Trembling seized them there, pain like that of a woman in labor. You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish shattered by an east wind. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD Almighty, in the city of our God: God makes her secure forever. Selah." (NIV)

Well may the hill of Zion rejoice. (Verses 9-11) "Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love. Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness. Mount Zion rejoices, the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments." (NIV) In retrospect this triumph-psalm reviews her Saviour's works, looks back and traces grand design behind the trial and tears. Forever now His witness stands for every opened heart to view, a source of Light for all mankind in which they yet will walk. (Verses 12-14) "Walk about Zion, go around her, count her towers, consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next generation. For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end." (NIV) But there will be no end, except to sadness, pain and death, and every sorrow sin has brought, for these shall be "no more." Again so telling is this psalm translated thus.. "Here in this city of the Lord of Hosts, the city of our own God, we have proved the tale so long since, God has built her to endure for all eternity; sheltered in His temple, we sought

and found deliverance." This is the Word of The Lord.

Isa 14:7 "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing." a blessed rest indeed from all man's striving with the Lord.. "The whole earth now shrinks back into ease; listen to its cry of rejoicing." How long we for that rest that gladdens earth, a glorious rest indeed! Meanwhile we share that joy of peace with God as earnestly we strive that rest ourselves to fully know, in face of every circumstance of life that word so sweet brings comfort to the soul.. "Be still and know that I am God." "I will be exalted in YOUR heart, exalted in YOUR life." We live in such a restless world. Sometimes our busy Martha hands conflict with Mary's readiness to sit and listen at His feet, yet both are sisters Jesus loves, and both a part will play, harmonious duet. May we TODAY before Our God spend moments listening to His voice and practice stillness there, until deep hush subdues those words and works that drown the tender whisper of His call. So noiseless let His blessing fall as fell the manna down, and dewed mount Hermon's crown.

Here ends the series.. May the dear Lord bless, and by His Spirit fill the gaps and beautify the frailty of words that bare express the grandeur of the theme.

AMEN
