

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 66

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, Greetings with fraternal Love,

We wish to thank all who have sent letters and messages during the past month; Sister Myrtle James of Ontario Canada has written to say she is still feeling the loss of her husband Bro. Les and now there are only herself and daughters and brother in law left of the group who used to meet together, her brother in law is now in a nursing Home and cannot get to meetings. Our sister May Lockett who is 96 next month was feeling better when we last heard, but sad to say her sight is failing and she has great difficulty in reading the Circular Letter, she sends her love to all.

Our brother Phil Parry sent us a newspaper cutting concerning the Bishop of Durham under the heading "Christ's Body Stolen" "Christ's disciples could have been body snatchers, the Bishop of Durham says in an Easter message. Dr. David Jenkins repeats his claim that Christ's tomb may not have been empty, and says that even if it was it could have been because the disciples stole the body."

Has he never considered the position of the grave clothes, how they lay there undisturbed showing that the spirit energised body of Jesus was able to pass through the grave clothes in the same way as He passed through the closed doors (John 20.26). And so it is plain to see how this man who has been ordained an Elder of the Church of England limits the power of God in all his theological thinking and is an unfit person for his office

In this issue is a letter by our late sister E. Houlston and an article "The raising of Pharaoh and the hardening of his heart." "The nature of man" sent by bro. A. Speed which is an extract by Dr. Thomas from 'The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to come' which shows that at that time he believed man was created corruptible, not made so on account of Sin which is believed today by the Christadelphian body.

We pray for the welfare of you all and send our sincere love in the Masters Service.

Harvey and Evelyn Linggood,

The Nature Of Man

An extract from the Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come. Dated Feb. 1858 by the Editor

In regard to Adam's position anterior to the fall, we would remark, that there are two natures, the animal and the spiritual. We call the animal human, because it comes from humus, the ground, and returns thither. The other nature is called "Spirit of Holiness," or spirit of a holy state, which is exactly opposite to the human. Spirit in a holy state is an incorruptible, glorious, powerful body - dust, organized by, and combined with spirit, so intensely as to become spirit, as it is written, "that which is born of the spirit is spirit." "Spirit of Holiness," or Holy Spirit Nature, covered by the name of 'EHYEH.' Now, human nature, or ground soul, is terminable, that is to say, left to itself, will wear out and return again to its original elements. This is inseparable from its constitution. Hence all ground souls of the animal kingdom all die at earlier or later periods, although they none of them sinned. It is then, the nature of ground soul, at some time or other, cease to be.

If therefore Adam, whose nature was not Holy Spirit nature (for if it had been he could not have sinned, for the Divine Nature does not sin, and cannot sin against Divine Power,) had been left to himself in paradise, as he was from the day he was created to the day he sinned; if he never had sinned, he would someday or other have wasted out of life. Under the hypothesis, therefore, of not having sinned, we may say that if he had not been permitted to eat of the Tree of Lives, he would have died. But it is not to be inferred from this supposition that he was mortal, in the sense of being certain to die. His future state was conditional. If he ate of the forbidden tree he should surely die. The certainty was made consequent upon the eating. We may therefore, say that the certainty of his condition was not established until he sinned, and that, in this view, Eve could not have said to Adam, "We are not mortal" or, "We are immortal." Their horizon being bounded by the Eden Law, nevertheless, abstractly from this, they could each have put the other to death, as far as the dying quality of their nature was concerned.

"But," asks an inquirer, "Suppose Adam and Eve had not transgressed, what then?" Then one of two things must have resulted. If they had been left to themselves, they would still have died; if they had not been left to themselves, they would have lived. In the latter event, something must have been done to enable them to live for ever; in the former event nothing required to be done.

They did transgress and nothing more was necessary than an act of exclusion from the Tree of Lives. Their nature was left to itself, and they died like other ground souls. If they had not transgressed, the necessity in their case would have been a change of nature, a transformation of the human nature. To have "been the subject of this, it would have been necessary to eat of the Tree of Lives. If this had been permitted, they would have been changed in the twinkling of an eye and the terminable nature would have been, swallowed up of life. If Adam had been created immortal, there would have been no occasion for a Tree of Lives in Paradise. For if he had been placed under law, the object could only have been to abase him; for had he lived obedient, life could have been no reward, seeing that he already possessed it.

It is evident, then, that mortality and immortality were set before him as a matter of destiny, which he was allowed to determine for himself, according to certain specifications, as if it had been said, "Thy nature is human, and, therefore, terminable. If thou wilt obey my voice thy nature shall be changed into Holy Spirit nature, which lives for ever; but if thou wilt not obey, then thy human nature may take its course, and unto dust thou shall return." The Eden Law he transgressed, was given that he might live, for though the penalty of going back into the ground was attached to transgression, yet obedience to the same, would, doubtless, have resulted in commendation and permission to eat of the Tree of Life, that they might live for ever.

Dr Thomas

LOVE - SERVE - TELL

(Matt.5.16) (Luke 22.26) (I Cor.15.15)

Three people met to do God's will,
They sought to do it well.
They planned that each should do one thing-
One, Love; One, Serve; One, Tell.

They all went forth and with great zeal
One loved. One served. One told.
They met again to check results,
And see God's plan unfold.

The one who loved, reported first,
And found with great dismay:
"I could not love until I served,
God has no other way."

The one who served, then bared his heart
"I must confess 'tis true
I could not serve until I loved,
So I did both things too."

The one whose aim was to proclaim,
With wisdom did agree.
"You cannot separate each one,
For God combines all three."

"I tried to tell, but no one heard
Until God's love showed through
And both of you proclaim with deeds.
All three we each must do."

selected from the Mount Zion Reporter.

Letter from Sister Houlston:

Dear Brethren and Sisters, Sincere Greetings in the Name of Jesus the Christ.

In penning this letter, I wish firstly to say how greatly I appreciated the testimony set forth in the pages of Brother Edward Turney's book "The Two Sons Of God".

Whilst studying the same I was deeply impressed by its loving persuasion, by the note of supreme confidence in the truths which he expressed, and also by its kindly restraint from any personal judgment or condemnation of others, whilst so gravely refuting that God dishonouring dogma concerning the nature of our Lord's flesh still so widely preached and published by the Christadelphians. There could be no more perfect a solution of our Heavenly Fathers wisdom in the way He provided for the birth of His only begotten Son, Jesus the Christ, than that given to us on page 26 of Brother Turney's book. Truly a most glorious solution.

Though our Brother's work is a gold mine of the Truth as revealed in the Scriptures, I think he was slightly mistaken when dealing with that section of 'The Two Goats' on page 19, where he wrote: 'Although the goat bore the sins of the whole nation on his head, he was allowed to escape alive. Death followed at once on the first goat which fore-shadowed the death of the Great Sin Bearer; He also, like the scape-goat, took away the sins of the people into a land of separation,' That is, the grave, which effectually separates the living from the dead'. But this is not strictly true. The body of our Lord was borne to the grave by the hand of a fit man - even Joseph of, Arimathea, to sleep for a while the sleep of death in which there is no remembrance of anything whatsoever. Now, as both goats had to be without spot or blemish, and as both "were presented before the Lord," it is certain that both goats represented Christ: the Lord's lot in His death and the Scapegoat in His resurrection. It is here worthy of note that after the death of the first goat, the live goat was again presented before the Lord. Then, when the sins and iniquities of the people, for which the first goat had been slain, were transferred to the head of the scapegoat it was the Living Goat which bore them away into the "wilderness of forgetfulness;" into a land uninhabited by "any remembrance" of the same, and there is no mention of the death of the scapegoat. Hence, the gracious and glorious parallel. If, after having been buried with Christ in Baptism, we continue to walk in newness of life, then our past sins will be forgotten and will not be had

in remembrance against us by that One Who was made the Scapegoat for our offences, but who still lives to make intercession to God for us. Because, though we may not sin wilfully, the frailty of Human Nature still leaves us subject to faults and failings. For, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:8 and 9).

Paul reminds us that the carcasses of the animals slain were conveyed outside the camp and utterly burnt. True; but this was not all. The consumption of the Lord's lot by fire was to show that the sacrifice was complete; that God's own dear Lamb would only be slain (or smitten) ONCE, after which there would be no more sacrifice for sin, This is where Moses failed when leading the Israelites through the wilderness. When the people had pitched in Rephidim there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, what shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. "And the Lord said unto Moses, go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go, behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shall smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may Drink." (Exodus 17:1-6).

Here was typified the Shadow of the Cross, that our Saviour would be smitten for the sins of the people and not for Himself. Now the Apostle reminds us saying: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea... and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ." (I Cor. 1:4). But when the people thirsted and complained again, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth the water... and Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them. Hear now, ye rebels; must WE fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, because ye believed me not, to sanctify (glorify) me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." (Numbers 20:1 - 12). Moses truly spake unadvisedly with his lips when he attributed to him-self that power which belonged to God only, a presumption God would not overlook, for, "I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another." (Isaiah 42:8). Thus when Moses afterwards pleaded with God and said, "I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond, Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me; and the Lord said unto me. Let it suffice thee, speak no more unto me of that matter; get thee up into the top of Pisgah... and behold it with thine eyes; for thou shall not go over this Jordan."

As all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, this should remind us of Paul's warning: "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:8).

This should also deter us from proclaiming our own judgment or condemnation of others in any unseemly way which might be displeasing to our Heavenly Father, whose name is Love. Lest, like Moses, we forfeit the honour of bringing those whom we may denounce as rebels into the Promised Land. There was also a "shadow of things to come" in the smiting of the Rock a second time by Moses. There would be those who, having already partaken of the water of life, would deny that Christ, our Passover, was smitten for US; that He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, and by this denial would crucify their Lord afresh.

But please understand I am in no way inferring that so faithful a servant of God, as Moses undoubtedly was, will not be there when the second Joshua, Christ, will have gathered and settled Israel the second time in their own Land. Further, the blood of the sacrificed animals was not carried outside the camp, for we read, "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon

the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat; and he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness... and he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.” (Read Leviticus 16) Neither was the blood of Christ borne with His body to the grave, but was poured out on the Cross, the altar of His sacrifice, as the price of our redemption, by and through which we are cleansed while still sojourning in this, our earthy tabernacles. As Peter reminds us, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (I Peter 1:18 and 19). Yes, without blemish and without spot, since none other could have been either a fitting or an acceptable sin-offering. May we not see SEVEN drops of blood in our dear Lord’s atoning sacrifice? from His agonising sweat, from the cruel crown of thorns, from the nail-prints in both His hands and in His feet, and from His sword-pierced side. Surely, yes.

Hath He marks to lead me to Him,
if He be my Guide?
In His feet and hands are wound-prints,
and His side.
Is there a diadem of splendour that His brow adorns?
Yea, a Crown, in very surety, but of thorns”.

The foregoing thoughts are I believe a few of the hidden truths to be seen in the ceremony of the Two Goats, which was only enacted on the Great Day of Atonement, There may be others since much of God’s truth is sometimes hidden beneath the surface, where,

“Deep in unfathomable mines
of never-failing skill
He treasures up His great designs
and works His sovereign will.”

But first the natural, afterwards that which is spiritual; the diviners rod may detect the presence of water beneath the surface, but he has to bore and sometimes dig to a considerable depth before he finds that clear spring which will provide him with the natural water of life. The same applies to our Heavenly Father’s purpose in His plan of Salvation and Redemption in Christ. Thus, if through earnest prayer and patience, we seek with the mind of the spirit, we shall be enabled to understand the meaning of His marvellous designs, and gather those priceless treasures of His will, which otherwise would have remained for ever hidden beneath the surface.

I have not expressed my thoughts without some fear that their meaning may be misunderstood. I lay no claim to their being perfect, the brethren and sisters can judge for themselves. I love to paint my pictures as I see them with the eye of Faith, whilst ploughing a lonely furrow through this wilderness of isolation towards the Promised Land. May it please our Heavenly Father to grant us, one and all, not only a distant view of its goodly landscape, but also an abundant entrance through its gate into the Beautiful City.

With love and joy in the Service of the Master. Sister E. Houlston.

(1952)

The Raising Up Of Pharaoh And The Hardening Of His Heart

“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, 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”. Romans 9:17.

It will be allowed that this passage is one of those in Paul’s writings “hard to be understood”. That mode of interpretation which borders on fatalism, is thought to have a strong support in the above words; and to a superficial reader the arbitrary action of the Almighty, regardless of the will of man, does appear to be inculcated. If an objection be made, we are reminded of the Apostle’s other language, in which he teaches that we are the clay, and God is the potter; that for us to find fault is as unreasonable as for the vessel to say to him that made it, why hast thou made me thus? But, while reverently acknowledging the creative power of God, and His perfect right to make such use as seems good to Him of the works of His hands, we feel bound to demur to the doctrine that man is absolutely of no more account than literal clay in the hand of the potter, which may be fashioned and marred to suit God’s taste. We are sure that whatever God does is done in accordance with wisdom and kindness. To act despotically, without any consideration for the senses of man, is undoubtedly to abolish his responsibility. This is utterly incompatible with God’s invitation to man: “Come now, and let us reason together saith the Lord.” We have never been able to satisfy our judgment that the raising up of Pharaoh signifies that God brought him into the world for the express purpose of making him an execrable monster, and that for the sole object of displaying His mighty power. However, there is nothing incorrect or uncharitable in saying that such a sense has often been put upon the text. If the case really stood thus, would not all that solemn entreaty, all those dreadful threatenings by Moses be made a mockery? Would not the Creator be presented to us in the aspect of infinite cruelty? An affirmative answer is the only answer we can rationally and conscientiously make.

The sense of the passage seems to turn upon the words raised thee up. The Greek word used by Paul does not require us to believe that Pharaoh was raised up from birth to be a cruel tyrant. It may be taken in a very different sense. We believe that the Almighty raised up Alexander, Nebuchadnezzar, Attila, Napoleon, and such-like characters; that is, that He raised them up to power. He does not create wicked men, but finding such always at hand, He exalts them to the position necessary for the accomplishment of His purposes, and protects them till their work is done. The words used in the Septuagint signifies ‘thou hast been preserved.’ In some instances this seems strikingly manifest. Napoleon, for example, took poison at the time of the Russian campaign, but it was found to have lost its strength; and again on the plains of Waterloo he purposely exposed himself to the hottest fire, but no shot touched him. For this same purpose have “I raised thee up,” is also suggestive of the idea that this particular Pharaoh might not be of the regular royal line, or the blood royal, but like Napoleon, God raised him to the throne of Egypt, seeing he was the right sort of instrument to bring about the necessary state of mind, on the part of the Hebrews, to cast off the yoke of bondage. We are not able to give positive proof of this, but there are some facts which seem to admit of the inference. The word Pharaoh is said to be the title of office common to the Kings of Egypt, and that the scriptures speak of several Pharaohs, cannot be doubted. We may distinguish four; the first of whom flourished in the days of Abraham; the second, he whose dreams were interpreted by Joseph; the third “he who knew not Joseph,” and gave command for the destruction of the Hebrew male children; the fourth, that Pharaoh before whom Moses stood, when 80 years old, to demand the release of Israel. It appears to be the daughter of the third, of whom Josephus speaks, informing us that her name was Thermutis. Possibly her father had no male issue, as she adopted Moses to be her son. Josephus indeed states that she presented Moses to her father, as one that should succeed him in his kingdom. The same historian also says, that, previous to the birth of Moses, the royalty had been transferred to another family. (Antiq. c.v.)

Concerning the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart, we find it impossible to concur in the arbitrary view previously referred to. In several verses it is said “Pharaoh hardened his heart,” and this must be reconciled with those other verses which say, God hardened the heart of Pharaoh. Having regard to the interviews of Pharaoh and Moses, we should not hesitate to cast all the blame on Pharaoh. The mind shrinks from the slightest admission that God was the author of such obstinacy and rebelliousness, which He afterwards punished. Boothroyd translates the text, “God suffered Pharaoh’s heart to be hardened.”

It would seem that this is the sense intended: "But when Pharaoh saw there was respite, he hardened his heart, and harkened not unto them; as the Lord had said." This hardening, therefore, appears to be not direct and arbitrary, but consequential and conditional. In this case, cause and effect look almost like one and the same operation; but there are other cases analogous, wherein we readily perceive the difference, and recognise the justice as well as the power of God. In Thessalonians Paul declares the fate of those who "received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie; that they might all be damned that believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Pharaoh had enquired who the God of Israel was; and by Moses and Aaron God had made His power known to Pharaoh. Pharaoh, therefore, occupied the position of those mentioned by Paul, in these words: "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God; neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness." As Paul further says, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." Romans 1:21-24,28. What the wicked choose to do after ample warning and remonstrance, God will not hinder; He suffers them to walk in their own ways, and in this sense He may be said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart. He could have destroyed him in a moment, but His purpose required such a wicked agent to oppress Israel, and turn their attention to the offered deliverance. This purpose was fulfilled by preserving Pharaoh's life, and giving him over to that "reprobate mind" which he preferred to the mind of God.

If these observations succeed in throwing any light on this difficult text, we shall feel glad. Any view of God's character which seems contrary to reason is very painful, and whatever goes to change such view for another in harmony with justice, brings relief to the mind.

Edward Turney - Editor, C. 13. "Lamp" 1874).

The Sword of The Spirit, Which is The Word of God

Of recent months many have been the attacks upon the Word of God by various correspondents and worse by well-known state theologians and other non-conformist religious leaders of the present generation and of previous generations, which when we read arouses our adrenalin. But how nice it was to read a recent article in defence of the Bible, in particular a defence of the New Testament, even though with many of the authors other doctrinal views we have nothing in common.

Below I have endeavoured to give the gist of what was written. Commencing the author asks, Why should the Christian Church start with Jews? The Apostle to the Gentiles gives us the answer in Romans 5:2. "because unto them were committed the oracles of God." We see from the Gospel records John the Baptist came upon the scene preaching repentance and 'baptism while preparing the way of the Lord; few could realize what great changes would be needed as the result of his preaching. Look at that which is written in Matthew 5:11:-

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire."

As a result of Him who came after John, the Secular and the Religious leaders, (the latter being the Scribes and Pharisees with their associates) made every effort to kill the spread of the preaching of the Kingdom of God, but whatever they did the adherents to the preaching of Jesus, His Disciples and Apostles, continued to grow. Especially after the resurrection with so many eyewitnesses existing.

The growth of believers is seen throughout the New Testament. In the early stages just after the disciples and others had witnessed Christ ascend to heaven we see assembled together 120, (Acts 1:15) from among whom one had to be chosen to take the place of Judas as a witness of events in the life of Jesus up to the time of his betrayal, the one chosen was Matthias; be it noted that he was one of those who had witnessed the ascension of Jesus. An eyewitness is usually a person who has literally seen an event in person, not by hearsay or in modern terms by circumstantial evidence. So the disciples and others set forth preaching the Gospel and with what conviction, helped by the promised comforter, just a few more recorded items from the Acts chapter 2 v 41 (3000 converts) chapter 4 v 4 (5000 converts) chapter 5 v 15 (multitudes both of men and women). These events were real and are recorded for us in the New Testament. The gospel message was first by oral records in the minds of men, you may say but surely as a tale is told there must have been a few items added or exaggerations from time to time, but no. They had received the Comforter which was promised them as seen in the Gospel record of John 14 v 26 where we received an assurance in the following words "But the Comforter which is the Holy Spirit... and bring all things to your remembrance... I have said unto you."

The New Testament in the main was written (under Divine Inspiration) by 7 men, with short contributions by James and Jude. First Luke is considered, who wrote more than a quarter of the New Testament, his calling surely tells us he must have been fairly well educated (a physician) moreover we understand he used polished Greek and in his writings are 800 words that are not used elsewhere in the New Testament. During his educational training he would mix with many officials both secular and religious, so we have recorded in Luke 1:5,4.

"It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."

In like manner another writer in the New Testament speaking of the O.T, writings reminds his readers, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit". Another major writer of the New Testament was Paul. Yes he knew much concerning the Christian Church, having been brought up in complete opposition to it at the feet of Gamaliel, being instructed fully in the Law of Moses and to maintain the Law when Jesus was preached having obtained suitable authority he tells us, "and I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women." So what a shock the vision on the way to Damascus must have been when he was told he was persecuting Jesus. His conversion how marvellous. How Luke, Paul and Peter must have revelled in their reminiscences of their deliverances from time to time, especially Peter and Paul when they abode together for some 15 days as recorded in Gal. 1:18. Well over half of the N.T. was written by these two men.

Jesus appeared unto many after his resurrection as recorded in I Cor. ch. 15, and at v 7 we read "after that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles." James was a pillar of the church at Jerusalem and it appears on Paul's last visit to Jerusalem he went in to conference with James and all the elders. Peter another disciple of Jesus is mentioned 210 times in the New Testament moreover he was one of 3 who were privileged to witness an actual foretaste of the Kingdom of God, could he ever forget the transfiguration on the mount, he mentions it in both his epistles. (I Peter 5:1 and II Peter 1:6)

In his final message towards the end of his life he declared "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." (II Peter 1:16). John is the last apostle that the writer speaks of in his article. Throughout the Gospels it is very clear how close John was to Jesus, today we should say a bosom-friend; they saw and knew very intimate matters and shared them together; John was 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' says the scripture, part of a small inner circle. Indeed it was to the care of John that Jesus committed the care of His mother. (John 19: vs 26 and 27) Ponder John's words in ch. 20 vs 30 and 31.

As far as is known John wrote later in the first century than any other. He was to complete the apostolic testimony, the final book of the New Testament came through the pen of John. In some circles

today the myth persists that ‘we cannot know either what Jesus said or did. He taught a secret gospel’ we are told. What ignorance! In the early hours and days people knew what had happened; it was public knowledge, surely if there had been any falsehood in what was claimed by the various writers surely someone would have stood up and disputed that which they heard, but no, Peter on the day of Pentecost when speaking of things which had taken place reminds his hearers that miracles, wonders and signs were performed in their midst, as you yourselves also know. Did any contradict? and again years later Paul when before King Herod Agrippa says “For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things.” Acts 26:25-28. Confident appeal was made to the hearers as to the truth or otherwise of the facts stated. Surely any distortions would have been challenged immediately, yet nowhere in the N.T. does anyone question the truth of what was said. Enemies of the Christian church must have abounded among the Jewish leaders of whatever section they may have belonged for here was something being preached which was not in accord with their understanding as orthodox Jews how they looked upon the Law of Moses and the traditions of the Elders.

In conclusion the writer quotes from John’s Gospel Record ch. 19 v 35 “And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.” This was first-hand knowledge. This was and is truth. It has been preserved for us today. During what has been termed the ‘dark ages’ of all the numerous attempts to destroy the Bible all have failed. Why? Surely it is that which is revealed in II Timothy 5:14-17. John 5:59. There is only one source of knowledge of God.

E.H.Linggood

LOVE and SERVICE

Though Mary chose the better part
Following the yearnings of her heart;

And Martha let her daily care
Take in her life the larger share

The truest largest life is found
Where every step is holy ground;

When God-ward love and household ways
Are blended in harmonious days;

And two sisters one in mind,
In love and service fulness find.