

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 92

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Reader Friends, Warm Greetings in the Name of Jesus.

We thank all those who have communicated with us during the past month and hope for the welfare of all. I had the pleasure of visiting our Sister May Lockett on the 8th June and found her as usual cheerful but not too well, she sends her love to the brethren and sisters and her thanks to those who have written to her and is sorry she cannot now write letters but is delighted to receive them.

From 'Our Own Correspondent' (Radio 4) for 30-5-87 our attention was drawn to the then coming visit of the Pope to his homeland Poland. This is the third visit in the last 8 years, 1979, 1983 and 1987, could there be any significance in his visit? The political power of Communism and the Religious power of the Papacy - see page 14 of the March Circular Letter for 1984.

During June 1967, 20 years ago Israel took Jerusalem and vowed never again would she give it up. Of all the religious sites most of which have no positive evidence of being authentic with the claims; the only certain piece of Old Jerusalem is the so called Wailing Wall where Jews for centuries have bewailed the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, in view of the fact that Israel now holds all of the City it has been suggested that the name Wailing Wall now be dropped.

In this month's issue we have a short article on 'The Book of Proverbs' by the late Bro. Janes Hembling; and the first instalment of a work by A. L. Wilson 'From Eden to Gethsemane'; 'Thoughts on the Plagues of Egypt' by Edward Turney, also an exhortation by Bro. Leo Dreifuss 'Signs and Wonders' We pray the blessing of God upon you all.

With Sincere Love in the Master's Service. Harvey and Evelyn Linggood.

Let's forget the things we haven't got,
And appreciate the more,
The blessings we enjoy each day
In ever greater store.

The most of them we didn't earn,
But someone did for sure,
And other hands have toiled, and left
Their bounty at our door.

So may we nevermore forget
God's providence and care,
And the fruits of love and sacrifice
It is our lot to share.

Selected.

The Book Of Proverbs.

There has been scarcely any dispute concerning either the author or Divine authority of this book, either in the Jewish or Christian church, all allow it to have been written by Solomon, and the general belief that he wrote it by Divine Inspiration (for whatever of truth is found among men, came originally from God), and if He employed a man to collect those 'Rays of Light' recording them for the use of His people. He had a right to do so and to claim his own wheresoever found and by giving it a new authentication, to render it more useful in reference to the end for which it was originally communicated. God is the father of lights and from Him comes all True Wisdom.

That true Light which lightens every man that cometh into the world first taught men to acknowledge Him as the Fountain and giver of all good; and then by short maxims conveyed in terse energetic words, taught them to regulate their conduct in life in respect to the dispensation of Providence and in reference to each other in domestic, social and civil life; this was done by such proverbs as we find collected in this book. The different changes that take place in society, new relations which in process of time men bear to each other, the invention of arts and sciences and the experience of those who had particularly considered the Ways of the Lord and marked the operation of His hands; would give place to many maxims, differing from the original stock in their application of these new relations and varying circumstances.

The term PROVERB: 'proverbium', compounded of, 'pro', 'for', and 'verbum', a word, speech or saying, lead us to an original meaning of the thing itself, it was an allegorical saying where 'more is meant than meets the eye' - a short saying that stood for a whole discourse, the words of which are metaphorical; the Psalmist uses the word lamp as a metaphor for Divine Revelation as can be seen in Psalm 119 vs 104-106.

The Hebrew 'Meshalum' from 'Mashal', to rule or govern a set or collection of weighty wise and therefore authoritative sayings whereby a mans whole conduct, civil and religious is to be governed. See Proverbs chapter 1 verses 1-4 "...To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding and to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice and judgment and equity. To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion."

Of the 5,000 proverbs which Solomon spoke, we have only those contained in this book and Ecclesiastes, along with 1,005 songs in the Song of Solomon; wherein all his numerous works in divinity, philosophy, moral and natural history are in the Sacred Cannon. His natural history of trees, plant, beasts, fowls and fish are apparently lost. So says Dr. A. Clarke.

Let us now look at a few verses in the first chapter which we may regard as an introduction to what may be attained by a consideration of Solomon's meditation and experiences of his life. Solomon is the first of the Sacred Writers whose name stands at the head of his works.

Verse 2. To know wisdom and instruction. This is the design of parabolic writing in general, to discover the best ends and peruse it by the most proper means: that heavenly teaching which shows us, both ourselves and God directs us into all truth, forms the whole of true religion, the teaching that discovers all its parts, to comprehend the words or doctrine in order that we may become wise unto salvation.

Verse 3. To receive the instruction (haskel). The deliberately weighing of the points contained in the teaching, so as to find out their importance. The purpose is to receive wisdom and instruction; the words of wisdom and understanding, justice and judgment, so perfectly as to excel in all. Wisdom itself personified is the teacher, when God's wisdom teaches there is no delay in learning.

Verse 4. To give subtilty to the simple. The word simple from Simplex, compounded of sine, without, and plica, a fold, properly signifies plain and honest, one that has no by-ends in view, who is what he appears to be, and is opposed to complex, from 'complico', to fold together, to make one rope or

cord out of many strands, but because honest and fair dealings are so rare in the world and none but the truly religious man will practice them further than the fear of the law obliges him, hence, simple has sunk into a state of progressive deterioration. At first it signified as above, without fold, unmixed, uncompounded. This was its radical meaning; then as applied to men it signified, innocent, harmless without disguise; but it sunk in its meaning to homely, mean, ordinary. As worldly men who are seeking their portion in this life and have little to do with religion, supposed that wisdom, wit, and understanding, given to make the best of this life. so the meaning sunk yet lower, to silly, foolish, and then to the dishonour of our language and morals (Martin Johnson). Simplicity, Plain dealing. Downright honesty, is now degraded to weakness, foolishness. There are 2 Hebrew words which generally are supposed to come from the same root, as rendered simple:- ‘peltrain’ and ‘peltrayin’; the former comes from ‘patha’, to be rash, hasty, the latter from ‘paltah’, to draw aside, to seduce, entice, the first can apply to youth from want of knowledge and experience, who may act precipitately. The young man grows up boy or lad, giddy and inexperienced, needs wisdom and discretion in both the good and bad sense.

Verse 5, Will increase learning. Not only the inexperienced but also the wise, they will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding attain to wise counsel. The apostle draws our attention to such in I Cor. ii. 6-8.

Verse 6. The words of the wise and their dark sayings. ‘Chidoth’; enigmas or riddles. I believe parables such as delivered by our Lord expresses the meaning of the original.

Verse 7. The fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord in the proceeding verses, Solomon shows the advantage of acting according to the dictates of wisdom, in the following verse he shows the danger of acting contrary to them. Reverence every intelligent being owes his Creator, Love of God, without it no obedience, without reverence, no caution; consistent conduct; perseverance in righteousness. Fear the missing principle, the moving influence (God first). Fools despise wisdom and instruction, such men are of bad hearts, bad heads and bad ways.

Verse 8. My son hear... forsake not the law... Begotten of wisdom yoked with understanding, knowledge and discretion, the result of which is shown in verse 9. Chains about thy neck (adding grace) chains of rulership and office (of Truth). -

Taken from a notebook of our late Bro.Hembling.

Thoughts On The Plagues Of Egypt.

The mode of proceeding chosen by the Almighty for the deliverance of Israel by Moses suggests this inference; that it is needful to display miraculous power in order to convince mankind of divine interposition in their behalf. Pharaoh took this view, and his request was provided for by Jehovah. “When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, shew a miracle for you: then shall thou say unto Aaron, take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent”. (Exodus 7:9) Any occurrence which is beyond human skill to bring about may be regarded as miraculous from the fact of its being unusual and not miraculous from the fact of its being common. If Moses could have performed no greater things than the Egyptian magicians, or wise men, neither Pharaoh nor Israel would have been convinced of “the finger of God” in their work. While the magi were able to imitate Moses’ wonders, no progress was made; but it was after all their arts had been completely exhausted, and proved to be only so many clever, or scientific feats, or tricks of jugglery, that the authority of Moses and Aaron grew into a grand motive power for the achievement of their claims. Pharaoh was reluctantly compelled to admit the superiority of their deeds to those of his wizards and begged for Moses to intercede for him to the God of the Hebrews.

The design of Omnipotence was now developing itself to the most ordinary intelligence: “against all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment: I am the Lord”. (Exodus 12:12). Jehovah was determined to convince the worshippers of the gods of Egypt that they were no gods; that they could neither see, nor

hear, nor walk; and that there was no breath in them. The father-in-law of Moses was evidently convinced of the infinite power of that God from whom his son-in-law declared he had a mission. "And Jethro said. Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly. He was above them". (Exodus 18:11). In this manner the Almighty commands the acknowledgement of Himself on the part of His most stubborn and rebellious creatures. The confession of the king of Babylon, after he returned from herding with the beasts of the field, furnished another striking proof of this view. "And at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me; and I blessed the Most High; and I praised and Honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation". (Daniel 4:34).

The necessity for miracles being established, their adaptedness to particular circumstances would appear to follow. The manifestation of power must be governed, so to speak, by the object to be attained. The Divine purpose on Egypt was to bring their gods and those who trusted in them into contempt in the eyes of enslaved Israel. The Hebrew, in hard bondage, might retain some faint recollection of the God of Abraham; but he had seen no display of His mighty power, whereas of the seeming magnitude of the strength of the gods of Pharaoh he was only too cognizant. Now when Moses and Aaron, in the name of the God of Israel, should be able to exhibit signs and wonders, which not only exceeded those performed by the magicians in the name of their gods, but actually destroyed what they produced, the conviction that strength belongeth unto God would of necessity ensue. Jehovah did not think proper to show forth His infinite power at one stroke. He proceeded, with His accustomed deliberation and dignity, step by step, to afford ample opportunity for His enemies to put forth all their energies, and also for repentance on the part of such as might be convinced before the final shaft was hurled. The wisdom, patience, and goodness, of God is clearly seen in these trials of strength against the gods of the heathen. At length the day arrived for the Almighty's Deputy and his brother Aaron, whom Jehovah had appointed to be his prophet, to go into the presence of the King of Egypt. We easily picture these simple venerable messengers, standing on the pavement of one of these gigantic palaces for which Egypt was celebrated. Having delivered their message, the monarch demands their credentials. He knew not the God of Israel. Who was He that he, the great king of Egypt, should obey Him? "Shew a miracle for you"; (Exodus 5:2) that I may believe the truth of your story. Then Moses turned to his brother, and bid him throw down the rod he held in his hand at the foot of Pharaoh, and immediately the rod became a serpent. This must convince the king that his visitors were no impostors. No, he called for the magicians, who imitated this miracle by casting down their rods, which to all appearances became serpents. But we know it is not in man's power to create; he can kill, but he cannot make alive. The rods of the magi were probably trained serpents. For a moment Moses would appear defeated, and the incredulity of Pharaoh would be increased. His heart was hardened. But instantly, "Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods" (Exodus 7:12).

This was not enough; other trials must be made. Nevertheless, to an observant mind a great blow had been struck against one of the gods of Egypt. Serpents were worshipped by the Egyptians, and the instantaneous devouring of them by that which just before was a mere staff of wood, might have intimated to the most hardened idolater that his serpent-god had no power to deliver either himself or those who put their trust in him. The need for other proofs only evidences the unutterable degradation to which this great people of antiquity were sunk. Jehovah then said to Moses, "Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning: lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shall stand by the river's brink against he come, and the rod which was turned to a serpent shall thou take in thine hand" (v 15). The Nile was one of the principal deities of Egypt, the inhabitants regarded it with a profound religious reverence. As the Ganges is to this day held sacred by the Hindoos, so the river Nile, and the fish in its waters were objects of devotion. The king had most likely gone to the river to worship and to bathe, the water was also drunk by the inhabitants, who believed that it possessed great powers to heal diseases of the body. The Nile was believed to have the power of watering the whole valley on both its banks, without any aid from the elements. To pollute the whole river and its tributaries, by transmuting their waters into blood, making them totally undrinkable, was therefore a heavy blow aimed at one of their supreme objects of worship. The following interesting paragraph is from Boothroyd's notes. "According to Maillet and other travellers, the water of the Nile, when pure, is commonly pleasant and wholesome; while that found in the wells is detestable. It is common on the rising of the river for the Nile-water to run red, and become

unwholesome; hence Michaelis, Dathe, and others, contend that its waters were not really turned into blood, but became of a blood-red colour; and that the miracle consisted in the circumstances of the river rising at an unusual season of the year at the command of Moses. If the miracle consisted in this unusual overflow of the Nile, from rains descending... from Abyssinia, when the rains ceased the water would gradually become pure; this is not improbable, as we do not read of any application from Pharaoh to remove this plague. Whether the waters were turned into real blood or not, they were corrupted so that they could not be drunk. This plague on the river which the Egyptians worshipped... was designed to show the folly of their worship, and to punish them for their past cruelty, for it was into the Nile the Hebrew male children were thrown, if one should accept the natural discolouring of the waters we still have to account for the destruction of its fish, and for the smell emitted by it". (Ex. 7:21) The plague of frogs confirmed the first stroke of vengeance, and ought to have been to the minds of the witnesses another evidence against the wickedness of worshipping 'the Nile. The power of the true God polluted their idol. and made it a source of pollution and distress to its votaries. The plague of lice was still more revolting than that of the frogs. Swarming in myriads everywhere; upon the persons of all alike, young and old, rich and poor, the king and the meanest slave. Decent humanity shudders at the presence of one of these - the very dust of the land of Egypt became a living, creeping mass, covering man and beast. The magicians essayed to produce the like, "but they could not"; and such was the severity of the scourge that even they were forced to confess unto Pharaoh, "this is the finger of God". (Exodus 8:19)

Upon this plague Greig remarks:- "Now, if it be remembered that no one could approach the altars of Egypt upon whom so impure an insect harboured, and that the priests, to guard against the slightest risk of contamination, wore only linen garments, and shaved their heads and bodies every day, the severity of this miracle as a judgment on Egyptian idolatry may be imagined".

The wizards were now eclipsed, exposed, disgraced, and forced to cry for help to the despised representatives of the slaves of their proud and hardened master; but the plague increased in severity as they increased in number. Morning by morning Pharaoh went down to the Nile to wash and worship. Moses was waiting on the bank with another fearful curse, as soon as his message from heaven had been repeated. Pharaoh was still obstinate. The word went forth, and immediately the land swarmed with more noisome insects. Our version says "swarms of flies". (Ex. 8:21). Beelzebub, or the Fly-god, was an Egyptian deity, and this plague would seem to have been sent to destroy all faith in that object of religious worship. Some critics contend that a very ferocious kind of beetle is meant in this passage. A powerful insect with jaws and teeth that not only bites the human race, but also devours books, plants and whatever it comes in contact with. The English version of the Psalms says, "He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them". (Psalm 78:45).

The next judgment was inflicted upon the cattle and beasts of the field. When we call to mind the popularity of religious devotion paid to various kinds of beasts and birds in Egypt, it is plain that the wrath of this vial was directed against that brutalizing custom. But even after this the Israelites had not lost their affection for the brute gods of their taskmasters. Moses had no sooner gone up to Sinai than they remembered their old idol, the sacred bull, Apis, and freely stripped off their jewels from which Aaron cast a calf, and, when rebuked by Moses, he replied in the style of an idolater. They gave the gold to me, and I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. The bull, ram, heifer, goat, hawk, crocodile, and many other animals were worshipped by the Egyptians, and the worship of these beasts had the effect of lowering the habits of their devotees to the level of their own. The fitness of the plagues to the Almighty's design in sending them becomes no less apparent as we proceed with their consideration. The horrifying practice of propitiating the gods by the sacrifice of human victims was in vogue among the Egyptians. Milton's lines to Moloch are appropriate to the Evil Principle, or Typhon, worshipped by the Egyptians:-

"Moloch, horrid king:
Besmeared with blood of human sacrifice
and parents' tears".

On several altars human victims were burnt alive, and the practice was to take a handful of the burnt ashes and cast them into the air, so that the wrath of the Evil Principle might be appeased in every quarter

where ashes might be wafted by the winds. "And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh, and it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast". (Exodus 9:8 and 9). The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boil was upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians. Thus the means by which these idolaters sought to avert calamity were turned into weapons for tormenting them beyond description. What a terrible denunciation of their inhuman rites:

Next follows the fiery-hail. In Egypt rain is seldom seen; the over-flow of the Nile is the grand substitute. The sky is generally clear, and the atmosphere calm. We, with whom hail is quite common, can form no just conception of the effect on the Egyptians at the sight of such a phenomenon @ - large hail mingled with fire, probably lightning, sweeping before it man and beast, and blasting the produce of the soil.. This plague, like the rest, was strictly confined to the lands occupied by the Egyptians, while the land of Goshen, where Israel dwelt, was entirely exempt. But Pharaoh's heart was still hardened; and "When he saw that the rain, and the hail, and thunders were ceased he sinned yet more, he and his servants". Ex. 9:34, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over all the land of Egypt for the locust" Exodus 10:12 and 13. And soon was heard on the wings of the night wind a sound like the rushing of waters, and like myriads of horsemen hurrying to battle. God's army was on the march towards the devoted land. When the morning broke, clouds of locusts obscured the sun; and as the invaders slackened their pace to alight upon the trees and the ground, they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; very grievous were they "before them there was no such locusts as they, neither after them shall there be such". As they browsed upon the herbs, and shrubs, and trees, their noise would resemble the noise of an army foraging. At their aspect Pharaoh was seized with consternation, and "called for Moses and Aaron in haste". It would seem that this blow was aimed at the Egyptian god Serapis, whose province it was to rid the country of this frightful scourge. But Serapis, like Baal, was perhaps asleep, or meditating, or on a journey, at any rate "there was no voice, nor any that answered". It was at the command of Moses that locusts came, and only at his command they departed. Serapis was no god. Pharaoh still rebelled when he saw there was breathing time; "and the anger of the Lord was not turned away, but his hand was stretched out still". Now fell on the land, except Goshen, total darkness for three days. (Exodus 10:22) What could be the significance of this strange condition of the elements? The Egyptians were worshippers of Isis and Osiris, the supposed representatives of the sun and moon. The business of these gods, therefore, was to see to day and night; and to these was attributed the light of the sun, moon and stars. The thick darkness which brooded over all the three days and nights was demonstrative proof that Isis and Osiris had no power to send one single ray through the deep and universal gloom; like all the gods previously challenged they were proved, beyond the possibility of a doubt, to be utterly helpless, and consequently unworthy of any attention. People who hold tolerably clear views of the true God, and who have not known idolatry, cannot realise to themselves the impression this miracle would make on the senses of the Egyptians and the Israelites. The fear and dread of the one people could only be equalled by the hope and confidence of the other. The vail of night was lifted; the light returned; and Pharaoh's heart was not changed. Now came the final calamity, save that which sank them all like lead to the bottom of the sea. Life was now to go for life. The Egyptians tried to hinder the increase of Israel by slaying their male children at birth; and now the God of Israel was about to mete out righteous retribution. Having directed Moses to protect the Israelites by drops of blood sprinkled on their door posts - what a striking picture would this present! - He the angel of death in the stillness of the night, when all the land was wrapped in sleep, to breathe a mortal blast on every first-born child, "from the first-born of Pharaoh, to the first-born child of the maid-servant that was behind the mill, and the first-born of beasts. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead". (Exodus 11:4 and 5). Poet and painter have vied in depicting the horrors of that night, but our minds are incapable of rising to an adequate sense of the woeful scene. Such then, appears to be the adaptation of the plagues of Egypt, in which we not only observe the burning wrath of jealous Omnipotence, but we may also trace the justice, mercy, and long suffering of our heavenly Father.

Edward Turney.

The Eastern Plough

The plough is fastened to the neck of the oxen by a yoke – they “pass under it” (see Jeremiah 28 vss 8-11), and the weight of the yoke naturally makes the animal stoop, hence the force of God’s allusion to the deliverance from Egyptian bondage - “I made you to go upright” (Leviticus 26 v 15). The yoke is often used as a figure of speech to express bondage, e.g. Genesis 27 v 40: I Kings 12 v 4: Isaiah 47 v 6 etc. When a very grievous bondage was referred to no stronger expression could be used than “a yoke of iron”, (Deuteronomy 28 v 48: Jeremiah 28 v 14) yokes of iron are not used the words are a figure of speech. Some yokes fit better than others which cause chafing, the “yoke” which Our Lord imposes on His Servants is ‘easy’ to wear (Matthew 11 v 50) and so the burden is light.

Signs And Wonders.

Suggested reading - Acts 2.

Exhortation by Bro. G.L. Dreifuss

In the chapter just read, Peter refers to Christ as “a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you.” Miracles, and wonders, and signs: these have been God’s means employed from Moses to the time of the apostles, to manifest to the people who were His chosen servants. We find that the greater the prophet, the more important his mission, the more spectacular were the miracles wrought by him. Bible history shows that God never expected a blind faith. But the miracles performed by his prophets were wrought for the purpose of showing the people that there was a real power at work, a power to be reckoned with. The greatest of all Bible personalities is Jesus Christ. We would not do Him justice to call Him merely a prophet. He was “much more than a prophet.” And accordingly. His miracles were the most numerous, and the most spectacular, so many in fact that we are told in the last verse of John’s Gospel that they are not even all recorded. But what is recorded, surely, should have convinced any unbeliever of His generation. Indeed it did convince the ordinary people, at least until the Pharisees and the leaders in their jealousy turned the people against Him. When John the Baptist sent his disciples to Jesus to inquire whether he was the promised Messiah, He did not answer with a direct ‘yes’, or ‘no’. Had he done so, the disciples would have gone back to John with the answer, but their conviction was not very strong. So when John’s disciples visited Christ, He wrought special miracles. And He sent them away not with a mere “Yes, I am He that was promised,” but “the lepers are cleansed, the lame walk, the blind see -- the dead are raised -- and blessed is he who shall not be offended in me.” John’s disciples thus had truly a message and impressions that could not easily fade from their memory. To the unbelieving Jews He said later on: “If ye believe not me, believe the works.” Just think of it! Put yourselves for a moment into the position of those inquirers sent by John the Baptist. Think on those astounding miracles they have seen on their visit to Jesus! They have seen the dead raised to life, people with incurable diseases healed, and that not just a temporarily successful job, not merely making people think they are healed, but a hundred percent, permanent cure. I think as we go through our daily readings, often as a matter of routine, often tired last thing at night, we are apt to overlook the tremendousness of these miracles. Dead raised, incurable diseases healed, and that not once or twice, but so many times that all cases are not even mentioned. Had it only happened once, it might have caused a temporary sensation, some people sneeringly disbelieving it, and like all sensations, would eventually have worn off to give place to another. But Jesus did these miracles throughout His ministry, in all places He visited. There was no possibility of it being done at one place, and then the news of it spreading through hear-say up and down the country. No! By the time Christ’s ministry came to an end He had travelled up and down the Holy Land and left His testimony everywhere with healed and revived people.

Whatever damage the Pharisees tried to do to cause Christ to sink in the estimation of the people, there was still the testimony of those who were healed and raised from the dead. How hard they tried to

put Lazarus to death! It shows how low people in high authority will sink to keep their influence over people. Christ raised Lazarus, and the leaders wanted to kill him again. Or, take the case of the one who was born blind. The proud, unbelieving leaders thrust him out of the Temple. The testimony of signs and wonders which God wrought in Christ was there for all to see. But the leaders had not the humble disposition to accept it. The one who was given his sight, on the other hand, had the right attitude towards God. So when he met Christ again afterwards, he was told plainly that the one who opened his eyes was the Son of God. And in his case, Christ's miracle of healing had its intended effect, and another believer was gained.

We will now consider God's greatest prophet, so great that God manifested Himself to him not in visions and dreams, but face to face: Moses. He comes after Christ in greatness, and so the miracles wrought by him are also the most mighty and numerous, apart from Christ's miracles. Moses was actually the first human person used by God for the showing forth of signs and wonders. It was for the purpose of making God known among His own people and among the Egyptians, and later among all nations of the then known world. We are all well acquainted with the ten plagues, and the many miracles wrought in the wilderness. One should have thought that these together should have convinced any unbeliever. But the unconverted mind is hard to convince. Pharaoh not merely refused to accept the testimony of Moses, he even fumed defiant; God could have slain him in a moment. But God does not always deal with sinners in this abrupt way. He shows mercy with the twofold purpose of giving the sinner a chance to repent, and to show that real greatness comes not from a constant unfettered wielding of the destructive power at one's disposal, but from a patient wielding of justice tempered with mercy. God wants the sinner to realise the wrong he has done, to realise his dependence upon God for every breath of his life, God's greatness, and having been convinced He wants the sinner to change his ways and to repent. But that was not Pharaoh's attitude. He took unfair advantage of God's patience, tried how far he could go, and when after the last and worst plague he still showed no sign of repentance, not even when he saw how God let the children of Israel pass through the Red Sea, then there was nothing left for him, but the full effect of God's anger to the defiant. Of the children of Israel it can be said that apart from Korah's rebellion they accepted the fact that Moses was God's servant, even if their faith was not always very strong. To this day Moses is held in great reverence among the Jews. The laws he passed on from God to the Israelites form the pattern of the laws of all civilised communities, and though the Jewish leaders by their tradition attached too much importance to the letter of the law, and too little to the spirit, yet all writings of Jewish tradition recognise what is written in the five books of Moses as the absolute authority.

God wrought not as many miracles by Moses' successor, yet among those mentioned there is the most drastic of all times: God actually prolonged a day in a decisive battle, by which; act God secured an important victory for Israel. One miracle we have not mentioned up to now, it is perhaps not as spectacular as raising a dead body, or intervention in the course of the sun and the moon. But it is happening at the present, and therefore of more immediate concern to us than all the other miracles mentioned so far. It is prophecy being fulfilled before our very eyes. After the last apostle fell asleep, the Church, or should I say the assemblies who claim to be the Church, went astray from God. And so God, according to His prophecy, forsook the people and left them to their own devices and superstitions and false doctrines. Direct revelation through prophets came to an end. But before John wrote the last inspired verse of the Book of the Revelation, long before God's inspired prophets told us exactly what to expect after the cessation of prophecy.

1. They told us that the Jews would never be destroyed but would be God's witnesses to all people to the end of this age.
2. They foretold a time when prophecy would cease because of men's negligence of God.
3. They told of Israel's dispersion and re-gathering, and finally we learn from Christ Himself that this last event is the sign of the end of the Gentile age.

Here is the great miracle of prophecy fulfilled in our days! What a privilege to be born in this age; after generations of absence of signs, we have this sign and the comforting thought that goes with it, that

the dark ages of human misrule are about to end. What are our reactions? Let us not be as faithless and indifferent as some people we read about in the Bible: I think as we read year by year about all those extraordinary miracles, dead raised, walls fallen down flat, days prolonged, we are apt to neglect this less spectacular miracle of our own day:- prophecy being fulfilled, and the prophecy leading to the final climax at that. But we must not allow ourselves to ignore this greatest of all signs of the times. If we are to learn from the lessons of Pharaoh on whom these mighty miracles wrought by God through Moses made no impression, but who turned defiant, or the lesson of the Israelites who saw the signs of Christ and believed not; or if we condemn the Pharisees for their hard-heartedness when they wanted to kill Lazarus, and demanded of Pilate to crucify the Messiah, then let us beware and appreciate the greatest sign given to us of this generation: the re-gathering of Israel. Failure to appreciate it amounts to a lack of faith. And lack of faith will not get our names into the Book of Life. Yes, we are given a sign, something that has not been given to any generation since the apostle John fell asleep. Let us live accordingly! Let us realise the nearness of Christ's coming! Increased knowledge in divine matters brings increased responsibility. Of Pharaoh it can at least be said that to start with he was entirely unenlightened concerning God's ways. Even the Pharisees of Christ's day had not the enlightenment that we have. The New Testament did not exist then. Many prophecies were mysteries, even the prophets themselves searched diligently into the meaning of some, and did not always succeed, because they were not all intended to be understood by their generation. The meaning of many prophecies has come to light since then, and in our day, most of what was then a prophecy is now written history. With all this enlightenment and knowledge, let us not dare to neglect this greatest sign of the times. We must not. Those who ignore it are of the world, not of God's household. The critics sneer at it. They say some of Daniel's prophecy was written after the event by someone under the pen name of Daniel. They deny any divine inspiration. They try to make out the ancient prophets as sensitive persons given to unusual imagination. Very well then, let them explain, if they can how we come to read our present day events foretold thousands of years ago. Anybody trying to write this prophecy after the event would not be born yet.

As we said earlier, God never expects blind faith. We often read that a prophet said to God: "Whereby shall I know this?" and God in answer gave him a sign, and the prophet's faith was to be based on the fulfilment of that sign. Sometimes God even let the man He spoke to himself choose a sign. But when king Ahaz was indifferent to choose a sign, God gave the greatest sign of all: He promised Christ. "He was set (as foretold when as a child He was presented in the Temple) for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against."

Before leaving this subject of signs and wonders, let us point out that all prophets were human, and with the one exception of Christ, their human weakness was apparent at times, and they sinned. Even Moses on one occasion failed to give God the glory, giving the impression that it was Moses himself who did the miracle. David who had so much of God's mind revealed sinned. And because Moses had such heavy responsibilities, his sin was grave in the sight of God, so grave that he was not allowed to enter the promised land. It comes back to the old lesson that the more given, the more is expected. On the day of judgment, the amount of enlightenment is as important as the sins committed. This brings us back to our position.

We have been given this great privilege of enlightenment. Enlightenment in matters of doctrine, in matters of prophecy, and understanding of the great sign of the times. Do we always reflect it in our lives? Let us bear in mind our increased responsibility. Let us go forward determined to show by our works and conduct that we are what we claim: God's ambassadors. Let us guard against behaviour that will cast a stumbling block into the path of the unbeliever. A small wrong, a small misdeed apparently harmless can do uncalculated harm to a professing believer's testimony in the eyes of the world.

Let us walk worthily of the love that God showed towards us.

From Eden To Gethsemane.

by A. L. WILSON.

This book was written about the turn of the last century (1800) or early in the present (1900), it being a review of "The Sacrifice of Christ" as put forward by one J. J. Hadley.

In a brief Preface we read :- The Lord Jesus lived unto God before He died unto Sin; we must die unto Sin before we live unto God.

We admire the spirit of the Editor of "The Fraternal Visitor" in the outset of his treatment of "The Sacrifice of Christ", and sincerely acquiesce in his denunciation of self-sufficient and arrogant dogmatism; and we think he justifies himself in attributing such to the zeal of those who are opposed in religious conviction. Thus he does his critics the justice of being sincere Godward as he is. We also endorse every rule he lays down by which all of us should be guided in the prosecution of truth; besides, there is much in the article, the merit of which we cannot, meantime, see our way to do it the justice it deserves. While, therefore, we grant all this, we are convinced that the Editor violates the very rules he has framed; draws deductions which are but those of his own fallible mind; and by repeated misrepresentation, which cannot otherwise than create prejudice in untrained minds, he thus creates obstacles against the faith he labours to destroy. We are therefore, satisfied that the Editor is not equal to the task he has undertaken; and we trust that he and his friends will do us the justice of scrutinising this defence as impartially as we have done his, the object being to know the will of God.

Without further apology therefore, we pass on to an examination of the Editor's treatment of "Adamic Condemnation". Here he shows that "Judgment came, not merely on Adam, but unto all men to condemnation". Regarding this point he receives a correspondence from Mr. Grant, Editor of "Glad Tidings", complaining of his not being explicit enough as to whether Adam's offspring are "Condemned in him", or whether they merely suffer the consequences of being the offspring of one who violated Divine Law. Does the Editor make himself explicit? Emphatically so, and then he reverses it. He says: "Resort to the original does not appear to help us, except to disclose a kind of alliterative emphasis in Paul's words". Then he defines the terms 'Krima,' and 'Katakrima.' The first he shows correctly to be "Judgment", though more frequently applied to "adverse judgment"; whereas the second is more emphatically literally "Down Judgment", and he adds: "The translation does not seem capable of being improved".

Could language be more explicit? Let us then examine his reply to Mr. Grant and those who follow up C.D. thought on this question must understand that Mr. Grant blankly denounces the idea of man's being individually doomed to death because of Adam's sin. "Fraternal Visitor," July 1889 Pp. 210,211). Notice the reply: "It seems a hard thing that judgment to condemnation should come upon all men, because of Adam's sin". Here then, the Editor is in a fix, and he must resort to some means of meeting Mr. Grant halfway. Observe then, his modification of Paul's words, he has just immediately informed us "cannot be improved". In order to remove this Hard Thing between himself and Mr. Grant, he now says: "The suggestion whereby we sought to remove the difficulty is the fact that all men do evil". But this is a direct reversal of Paul's words; an attempted improvement of what he has just told us "cannot be improved". We do not covet this licence, and so far as this part of his exposition is concerned, the question still remains. This double-dealing is altogether unsatisfactory, not only for the honest reader, but for the very theory the Editor advocates. Moreover, did not the Editor foresee that in spite of the fact that he is exhausting his literary powers to involve Jesus "as much under the curse as His brethren", he has already given his case away? If it were a hard thing for a man to be under condemnation because of Adam's sin, so much so that, to be at one with Mr. Grant, he was forced to remove the difficulty by saying man is under condemnation "because he does evil", did it not occur to the Editor that his cursing of Jesus would be an equally hard thing on Jesus? How then does the Editor remove the difficulty in his case, seeing he did no evil? Remove the difficulty! Did Paul remove the difficulty to formulate a theory of "No condemnation"? Nay, verily, read the latter half of the verse the Editor omits (Rom. 5:18) and Paul will be found there as always, pointing to one whom God appointed to remove the difficulty. How

did this One accomplish it? By passing through the jaws of all-devouring death for doomed man (Gal. 5:15). We pronounce the Editor's removal of the difficulty, a miserable failure.

But is this the only objection we have to the Editor's "Removal of the difficulty"? He modifies Paul's statement of man's condemnation, because of Adam's sin to individual "Evil-doing". But observe how he curses this evil-doing on man. He says: "We are not born with desires to disobey for disobedience' sake, but with desires which possess a strength out of proportion to our power of self-control". This eclipses Blatchford's "Not guilty", and furnishes Atheism with a powerful weapon against the justice of God.

To hold man guilty of evil-doing as the result of his being born with desires which possess a strength out of proportion to our power of self-control, is an abuse of reason, which sinks the advocate far below the line of sound judgment. It cripples all energy, paralyses all effort; it blasphemes the goodness of God, impugns His wisdom, and turns His mercy to gall; it changes the creature of His hand to a mere puppet, who is lashed for his inevitable movements.

The impression magnetises the man into the very obliquity he deplures, and invokes the tears and lamentations of a hypocrite; but by analytical examination it is shown to be the strongest of all delusions. Before we analyse this Philosophy, let us recapitulate. First, we have man under condemnation because of Adam's sin. But at this point the Editor found himself skating on thin ice, and to come into line with Mr. Grant he, ignoring the latter half of Paul's statement, by declaring man to be under condemnation because he "does evil". Next, this "evil-doing" is declared to be the result of being born with desires which possess a strength out of proportion to our power of self-control. Reader, does this commend itself to your judgment? Will it weigh in the balance? "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tried above that ye are able to bear, but will with the trial make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:15). Whether in your opinion, is the editor or Paul the more vindictive of the justice of God? Today if ye will hear His voice, make your eternal choice. We do not wish to be severe on the Editor; our aim is duty before God. What death did Adam incur? In regard to the threat: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shall surely die", the Editor says: "this means nothing else than what we call death". But instead of a "Thus saith the Lord", he submits as his strongest proof a mere "Dictionary Definition"; and as he observes that Adam did not expire for many years, he next declares: "Therefore the death was a 'spiritual and moral one". Here, again, we are left a variety of choice. We ask, therefore, was it simple, spiritual, or moral death? If simple death, then Jesus, in order to man's redemption, required to submit only to simple death; but as it was not possible to ransom man and escape the flaming sword, we are very sceptical of the "Dictionary Definition". Do not all the sacrifices, the only means of approach to God from Eden to Gethsemane, - strongly predicate legal death - i.e. Death by execution? Before we sift this question, we would transcribe the late J.J.Andrews' mind on the matter. In his pamphlet, "The Blood of the Covenant", p. 6, he says: "By disobeying they had incurred immediate death which would necessarily be death by slaying". Again, p. 7, "The slaying of the animals was an object-lesson in sacrifice. To teach them what? That as they had by sin incurred a violent death, a violent death was necessary to take away sin". Again, p. 8: Adam was sentenced with death on the day that he sinned; but God, by an exercise of mercy, provided an animal on which was inflicted the literal death incurred by Adam. What effect had this upon Adam? He died symbolically in the death of the animal slain; but to be of any service in the absolution of death, it required to be supplemented by sacrifice of a higher order". Could substitution be more explicitly stated? Lastly, p. 57: "The penalty for sin is a violent death; therefore, the taking away of sin requires a violent death. Moreover, it must be a violent death inflicted by God on one who is himself perfectly righteous, and these conditions can be found in Christ alone".

This is the essence of our faith, and we ask if it requires the pen of an abstruse disputer to harmonise this with the message of God? John expressly declares Jesus to be "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Why slay Jesus if simple death merely were incurred? Paul's testimony is: "Christ our Passover, is slain for us" (I Cor. 5:7). Shall we close our hearts to this gracious ransom god has provided which averts the blotting out of Adam and the prospective human race? What then, does God require of man? Simply that he leave the service of his old master and cleave unto the Lord. But while it is true that God hath provided for, and called to the great supper, the poor, the halt, the maimed

yea, many who beg to be excused - to benefit any one, it is imperative there shall be an individual response. God hath made an individual recognition of this fact an indispensable preliminary to our acceptance with Him. The natural existence of Adam's sons is, therefore, due to this special act of mercy of the loving Father. What then is their position? They are alienated until they individually lay hold on eternal life. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have not life (Greek - *zoe*) in yourselves" (John 6: 44-58). Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise; having no hope, and without God in the world; but in Christ, ye who were far off, are made nigh. How? In the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:12). All, are therefore, under an obligation of recognising, by symbol, that death by execution stands in the avenue of approach to God (Romans chapter 6). If the Editor will point out one human soul, except Jesus, who could approach God ignoring this, we will accept his "Dictionary Definition".

To be continued...

