

Exposition of Genesis 49

THE BLESSINGS OF JACOB

This series of articles comes as the result of a special request on the part of brethren of South Africa who, having listened to a brief exposition of the subject expressed a desire to receive it more in detail. There are two ways in which we could present the matter: (1) By brief verse by verse comments by which we would probably cover the chapter in a single article in Logos; (2) By detailed exposition in a series of articles. We have decided on the latter method because of an additional request from English readers for such an exposition. This series, in which we plan to treat each of the blessings in detail and as exhaustively as possible, should satisfy the readers of both countries.

We suggest that the Reader (from whatever country he might be) follow us in a detailed study of this important chapter of the Word. If he desires to comment upon the matter presented, or to ask any questions relating to it, we shall be happy to hear from him.

— Editor



INTRODUCTION

The forty-ninth chapter of Genesis must surely rank as one of the most intriguing and interesting chapters of the Word!

Firstly, it is full of mystery.

What are we to understand, for example, by the statements of vv. 10-12?

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes; his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk."

What is the connection between Issachar and the "strong ass couching down between two burdens?"

Why is Naphtali likened to "a hind let loose who giveth goodly words?"

Many other questions present themselves to us as we read through the enigmatical language of the chapter.

Secondly, it is full of drama.

What vast changes are required to bring about the condition outlined in v. 8:

"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall

be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee."

What a grand picture of right triumphing over might is expressed in vv. 23-24:

"The archers have sorely grieved Joseph, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."

Thirdly, it is a chapter rich in the language of imagery as only the Scriptures can present it.

Consider the expression of such a verse as v. 27:

"Benjamin shall ravine as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil."

But the interest of every Christadelphian in this chapter will not be merely academic but real and personal. Having embraced the Hope of Israel, his status is that of a true Israelite, a member of the Commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2: 12), one who has been spiritually begotten in Zion (Ps. 87: 5), who is intensely interested in the past and future history of his adopted nation:

"For Thy servants take pleasure in her stones,
And favour the dust thereof" (Ps. 102: 14).

We propose, therefore, to mentally gather with the twelve sons of Jacob around the aged patriarch, as he unfolds the Divine revelation that he received concerning their future destiny.

What a remarkable history this old man upon the bed has had!

He has not merely heard the Divine purpose expounded in words, but has actually dramatised it in the events of his own life.

At birth he was named Jacob, the Supplanter, and through life he lived up to this his title. At manhood, he was driven from his father's home to a strange land through the hatred of Esau: that carnal man of the flesh who typifies the Gentiles. For many years he remained a wanderer in a strange land, succeeding where others would have failed even as the nation that sprang from him has done since. But also like Jewry after the flesh, he ultimately returned back home to receive the blessing of God.

The significance of his wanderings and return was graphically enacted in the remarkable incident that occurred at Mahanaim. Full of fear and anxiety for what Esau might do, he was returning home when he was met by an angel. Jacob wrestled with this angel, and refused to let go until he had received a blessing. He did not come out of the struggle unscathed. He "halted upon his thigh" as a

result of it. The angel had the power to destroy Jacob if he desired, but was unable to do so because of the Covenant of Protection and Promise that had been granted the patriarch. Thus Jacob received the blessing he sought.

This incident demonstrated the power that was with Jacob because of the covenant of Promise. Truly the angel could say of him: "He who strives with God and prevails, shall certainly prevail with man" (Gen. 32: 28 — alternative translation). These words explain the immortality of Israel as a nation. If God is not going to destroy that nation because of what it did to His son and His truth, man will certainly not do so! During the night of Gentile power, Jewry has striven with God, as Jacob did with the angel, and yet, though it might figuratively "halt upon its thigh," it has not been destroyed. Where is the secret of its power? It is found in the Covenants of Promise. Because of these Jacob is preserved and will ultimately attain unto the blessing.

Jacob was taught that because he prevailed against the angel, he need not fear the wrath of Esau.

Jewry, likewise, will be preserved as a nation despite the opposition of the Gentiles, and will ultimately attain unto a changed state and status in the Kingdom of God.

There seems to be a complete link between the incident of Genesis 32 which left Jacob halting upon his thigh, and the prophecy of Zephaniah 3: 19:

"Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee; and I will save her that HALTETH, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame."

The incidents of Jacob's life continued to illustrate this. After being humbled by his struggle with the angel, his name was changed to Israel — a Prince with God. Next morning (typically answering to the approaching Day of Yahweh) found him respected and honoured by his brother Esau, saw him entering upon his inheritance in the land as a prosperous man, witnessed him "coming in peace to Shechem"* where

*The A.V. reads: "He came to Shalem a city of Shechem." This translation is obviously incorrect. Shechem was a city, not a district. Shalem signifies "peace." Jacob thus came in peace, unmolested to Shechem. Shechem signifies "burden-bearer," and later became a city of Refuge. It thus points to the Lord Jesus, our Burden-bearer and City of Refuge. Jacob, now called Israel, thus came in peace to the Burden-bearer, and recognising the need of his help, built the Altar and worshipped the Strength of the Powerful ones of Israel, who is seen in sacrificial manifestation in the Lord Jesus. Thus Jacob dramatised that which Jewry shall yet do. See Brother Thomas' comments on this incident in the life of Jacob, in "Phanerosis" — H.P.M.

he built an altar unto the Strength of the Mighty Ones of Israel, and worshipped Yahweh.

What a complete type of Israel after the flesh. When they will have been completely restored to the land, they will find the age-old hostility of the Gentiles at an end; they will discover a peace they have found nowhere else; they will be caused to worship at the Altar of Yahweh — the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 13: 10).

The typical foreshadowings expressed in the life of Jacob comprise a most profitable source of study.

It does not end in this incident that found him restored to the promised inheritance; the family life of this patriarch which then unfolds is also typical of the Divine purpose.

Yahweh saw fit to record Jacob's subsequent life in detail because it clearly foreshadows the work of redemption in Christ Jesus.

It mainly concerns incidents relating to Joseph his son. Undoubtedly Joseph is a type of Christ, and in his remarkable life-history there is outlined the sufferings and glory of the Lord.

Jacob must have pondered the meaning of these things. These men of God had a far greater grasp of the Divine purpose than we are sometimes prepared to give them credit for.

For example, it is said of Abraham: "He saw my (Christ's) day and was glad."

He saw not merely the crucifixion of the Lord, but his coming glory.

Jacob undoubtedly saw the same as he pondered the meaning of his strange, God-guided life.

That is undoubtedly indicated in the heartfelt ejaculation that burst from his lips after he had outlined the blessing on Dan: "I have waited for thy salvation, O Yahweh!"

"THE LAST DAYS"

And now his sons gather around his bed that he might outline to them the revelation of future things that had been granted him.

"Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days," he commanded them.

What are the "last days" thus referred to?

It has been suggested that they relate exclusively to the last days of Judah's commonwealth, and that the term "latter

days" concern the "time of the end" in which we today live.

But a close analysis of the evidence does not appear to sustain this thought.

The "last days" of Genesis 49: 1 are rendered in the Revised Version as the "latter days," so that the terms are used interchangeably in the versions. In the Hebrew, it is the same expression as is found in Micah 4: 1: "In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of Yahweh shall be established in the top of the mountains."

The times referred to by Micah undoubtedly relate to the "last days" of Gentile times.

On the other hand, the term "latter days" is used in such passages as Numbers 24: 14 and Deut. 4: 30 in connection with events that also relate to the end of Gentile times.

In short, the phrases "latter days" and "last days" are used interchangeably in Scripture, and the context alone determines whether it be the "last days" of Judah's commonwealth or the "last days" of Gentile times that are referred to.

This is shown by the use of the term in Hebrews 1: 2. There we read that God hath "in these last days" spoken through a son.

The "last days" were those of 1900 years ago, the time of the end for the commonwealth of Judah as it was then constituted.

Notice that it is the same term as is used to define the "last times" of the Gentile constitution of things as outlined in Micah 4: 1.

The times referred to in Hebrews 1: 2 brought an end to the Jewish world of that age. Thus in Hebrews 9: 26 we read that Christ "now in the end of the world hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

According to this reference, the "end of the world" came about 1900 years ago. It saw the dissolution of the Jewish state, the overthrow of Judaism, the scattering of Jewry into all parts of the world.

It was "the last days" of the Jewish constitution of things.

Today, the Gentile world exists at a similar period of crisis. The rising influence of Jerusalem warns that the "times of the Gentiles are almost fulfilled" (Luke 21: 24).

The Scriptures thus speak specifically of two periods alike designated "the last days." The first was fulfilled 1900 years ago in the overthrow of Jewry; the second will be

fulfilled in the near future in the overthrow of Gentilism.

Further; the overthrow of Jewry is typical of the overthrow of Gentilism. The closer this aspect of the subject is studied, the more completely it will be seen. Within the city of Jerusalem and the State of Judea when the Roman legions converged upon it in A.D. 70, there was enacted the same terrible drama that is being enacted today within the compass of Babylon the great. Civil war, violence, bloodshed, Godlessness, a state of suicidal madness grips the nations today as it gripped Jewry 1900 years ago. "The nations are mad," declared the prophet Jeremiah, and in his 25th chapter he tells how the nations will be forced to drink from the same cup as did the people of Jerusalem in the day of its destruction. "Lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith Yahweh of hosts" (v. 29). The prophet is told to take the same wine cup of fury out of which Jerusalem will be made to drink, and make all nations drink thereof (Jer. 25: 15-16).

Read the history of the destruction of Jerusalem 1900 years ago, and you have a type of the impending destruction of Babylon the Great today.

That is the reason why so many prophetic statements that have primary application to what happened in A.D. 70 are strangely applicable to conditions today. They have a secondary application to modern times, for the events of A.D. 70 foreshadowed those of today.

Thus, when Jacob used the term "the last days," he was using a term that has a double application: firstly to Israel, and secondly to the Gentiles.

His prophecy concerns both epochs.

THE PARABLE OF THE TRIBES

His twelve sons appeared before Jacob in the order of their birth. There are frequent enumerations of the tribes in Scripture, but usually the order in which the names are given is slightly varied.

This is important.

The names of the sons of Jacob are expressive of the Divine purpose, and each variation gives a different aspect of this purpose.

Names in Scripture have a vital significance. They were not bestowed as they are given today — as a pleasing appel-

lative to identify one child from another. They were then given as descriptive of the child. If the child had some relation to the Divine purpose, a special name was often given, such as Jesus, or John, or the names of some of the prophets of Israel. Frequently names were changed to conform to the Divine purpose. We have examples of that in Abram whose name was changed to Abraham; in Jacob whose name was changed to Israel; in other "men of sign" throughout Scripture.

The man who troubled Israel (Josh. 7: 18) was called Achan because "Achan" means "Troubler."

The husband of Abigail was called Nabal because, as she herself declared: "Nabal is his name, and folly is with him" (1 Sam. 25: 25). Nabal means "foolish," and he was a man of stupidity as the record shows.

The names of Jacob's sons were selected because of the circumstances surrounding their birth, circumstances which God superintended. They are therefore significant names.

Here are the names with their various meanings: Reuben (See a son), Simeon (Hearing), Levi (Joining), Judah (Praise), Zebulun (Dwelling), Issachar (Reward), Dan (Judgment), Gad (Company), Asher (Blessed, Happy), Naphthali (Wrestling), Joseph (Adding), Benjamin (Son of My Right Hand).

A paraphrase of the meaning of these names, provides the following sentence:

See a Son! Hear him, Join him, Praise him, Dwell with him, he will Reward, at the Judgment, with a Company of Blessed ones, who after Wrestling, will Add to the Son of My right hand.

These names, set in the order Jacob used in Genesis 49, express the purpose of God in the Gospel. They speak of His intention of calling out a people, to see the Lord Jesus as Son of God, to embrace the hope in him, to wrestle against the flesh, so that ultimately there will be revealed a multitudinous Christ where once there existed but the man Christ Jesus!

Thus, as these sons were called one by one before Jacob, there was expressed in their names the purpose of Yahweh with all those who embrace the hope of Israel.

That is the parable of the Tribes.

— H.P.M.

An impending change for Israel — "As ye were a curse among the nations, O house of Israel and house of Judah: so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing" (Zech. 8: 13).

others, trying in meekness and in love to win them back to the right path.

But some claim that they fight for principle. Are they sure their claim is valid. May it not be for self? Men who fight for principle (if the fight is to count in the Divine reckoning) are, as the Scriptures enjoin them to be, large-hearted and large-minded. They do not grow angry over trifles. They are not quarrelsome. They are willing to overlook much. They also lay themselves out to please. When the feeling of selfishness and obstinacy takes possession of us, let us see to it that we do not give way to it, but conquer it. And perhaps there is nothing more helpful in this direction than recalling our duty as set forth in the following precepts: "Live in peace" (2 Cor. 13: 11); "Be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thess. 5: 13); "Follow after the things which make for peace" (Rom. 14: 19). There is no selfishness and no wicked doggedness where these precepts are allowed to rule.

— E.P.

The Blessings of Jacob (Genesis 49)

REUBEN
The Natural Firstborn Deposed

"Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power; unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch" (Gen. 49: 3-4).

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" Reuben, thou art my firstborn!"

There is a note of pride in this exclamation of Jacob. It is reflected in the name he gave his firstborn: Reuben. Reuben signifies: "See a son!" And in that exclamation, made in relation to a firstborn, all the joy of fatherhood was expressed.

But how completely were the expectations of Jacob disappointed in the subsequent actions of his son.

Reuben proved to be but a man of flesh, and Jacob's exclamation of joy turned into sorrow because of that fact.

Reuben was a son of Leah. He was a son of promise granted to her by Yahweh in order to compensate for the lesser love that Jacob bore towards her. The record states:

"Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah . . . and when Yahweh saw that Leah was hated", He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived, and bore a son, and called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely Yahweh hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me . . ."

She had great hopes in the birth of her eldest boy. She saw in him her triumph over Rachel, and saw in him the means that would unite her husband to herself more completely.

And Jacob also rejoiced. He saw in the little boy the symbol of "his might, the beginning of his strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power" (Gen. 49: 3).

Thus there was great joy in the tents of Jacob at the birth of this his firstborn.

And in Reuben there is clearly seen a parable of Yahweh's firstborn son in whom He rejoiced. Moses was instructed to go into Pharaoh with the mandate, "See! Here is a son!"

"Thus saith Yahweh, Israel is My son, even My firstborn; and I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me; and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn" (Exod. 4: 22-23).

In Israel, there was seen the manifestation of Yahweh's might in the earth, "the beginning of His strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of His power."

But the words of Jacob to Reuben proved true of Israel after the flesh: "Unstable as water thou shalt not prevail."

Privileges of the Firstborn

Jacob declared that Reuben symbolised his "might." The birth of this son showed that the family name would not die out, his father's name would continue in him.† Because of

*This is a Hebrewism expressing that one is loved less than the other, not that Leah was hated as we understand the term. Christ called upon us to "hate father, mother," etc. if need be. This is the language of emphasis, to describe the greater love we should have for God than any other consideration (Luke 14: 26). In other places love of family is inculcated.

†Note the comment of Psalm 72: 17 (mg.): "He shall be as a son to continue his Father's name for ever." Christ does this because he is constituted legal firstborn in preference to the natural seed.

this, as firstborn, there was due to him special threefold privileges. It is expressed in the words of Jacob:

The beginning of my strength;
The excellency of dignity;
The excellency of power.

1. The first has relation to the birthright. This conferred upon the firstborn a legal privilege or right. To the firstborn was granted a "double portion of the inheritance" (Deut. 21: 15-17).

2. The second has relation to priesthood. The firstborn was consecrated to God (Exod. 13:2), and therefore acted as priest or mediator for the rest of the family. Other sons or daughters should defer to the firstborn as chief, and see in him the representation of the father of the family.

All the firstborn of Israel had this privilege, until it was taken away from them through the folly of the nation, and given to the tribe of Levi. This act of folly is recorded in Exodus 32. During the absence of Moses on the mount, the people defiled themselves by making a golden calf and worshipping it. This gross sin could only be expiated in blood, and it was the tribe of Levi that answered the summons of Moses, "Who is on Yahweh's side? Let him come unto me!" Setting aside considerations of kith or kin, the Levites went through the host of Israel destroying three thousand of the most flagrant sinners (Exod. 32).

- Because of this loyalty for Yahweh over family considerations, the natural firstborn of Israel was deposed and Levi conducted the priestly functions. Moses made reference to this in his blessings on the tribe recorded in Deuteronomy 1-33: 8-9. It is also incorporated into the ordinance of the Law:

"I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn . . . therefore the Levites shall be Mine; because all the firstborn are Mine" (Num. 3: 12-13, see also vv. 40-51).

From thence afterwards the priestly functions were performed by this tribe, whilst previously it was the "young men of the children of Israel" who "offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto Yahweh" (Exod. 24: 5).

3. The third privilege in relation to the firstborn concerned authority. The firstborn was held in honour next to his parents. "Thou art my might, the beginning of my strength."

The firstborn in Israel succeeded in the government of the family or kingdom. An example of this is found in 2 Chronicles 21: 3. Whilst king Jehoshaphat gave "great gifts of silver, of gold, of precious things, of fenced cities" to his

other sons, he gave the kingdom to Jehoram "because he was the firstborn."

The Firstborn Could be Deposed

This threefold privilege of inheritance, priesthood and authority was vested in Reuben as the natural firstborn of Jacob.

But through his stupidity he threw it away.

And that demonstrates an all-important feature of the Law of the firstborn as expressed in Scripture.

The natural firstborn could forfeit his position through misconduct or incompetency, and his position be granted to a younger son.

We have seen that this was done when Levi assumed the position originally held by the natural firstborn of the families of Israel.

It expresses a most important feature of this significant law, and provides the answer to one of the so-called "difficult" quotations relating to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is styled the "firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1: 18). Many draw on this reference to prove his pre-existence, but the Law of the Firstborn shows otherwise. Under it a younger son could assume the privileges and status that belonged in right to his elder brother, if the latter was deposed therefrom through misconduct or incompetency.

The Bible provides many instances of this being done. Ishmael, Esau, Manasseh were all elder sons who were superseded by younger brothers. David was the youngest of the family of Jesse, but was granted the privilege of firstborn. So common was this practise that the Law guarded against abuse in the matter. A father was not qualified to elevate a younger son to the position of firstborn merely on the whim of personal preference (see Deut. 21: 15-16). The fact that the law spake thus showed that it was legitimate for him to do so for other, more weighty, reasons.

It was on this basis that Christ, as the younger Son of God (Luke 1: 33), has been granted the privilege and status that Adam the first Son of God (Luke 3: 38) lost through misconduct and inability. Psalm 89: 27 expresses this thus:

"Also I will make him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth."

Notice the future tense used. No need for this if the Lord was natural firstborn, if he had pre-existed from all time!

Privileges of Firstborn Taken from Reuben

Reuben illustrates the point outlined in the section above. He threw away his privileges and status through his misconduct. Jacob pronounced the indictment thus:

"Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it; he went up to my couch" (Gen. 49: 4).

The circumstances are recorded in Genesis 35: 22, and the result is outlined in 1 Chronicles 5: 1:

"Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn; but forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright, for Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler, but the birthright was Joseph's)."

The threefold privilege of firstborn was taken from Reuben and given to others.

Joseph received the birthright — the double portion of inheritance. He had two tribes in Israel (Ephraim and Manasseh) instead of one as in the case of all the other sons of Jacob. He, therefore, received the "beginning of strength."

Levi obtained the priestly status, or the "excellency of dignity."

Judah received government, or the "excellency of power."

In type, Reuben represents Israel after the flesh. Israel was Yahweh's natural firstborn, but like his prototype he became guilty of adultery (cp. Ezek. 16: 15 with James 4: 4). Because of this, as the prophets reminded the nation, Israel after the flesh would be deposed from its high position, and, in the words of the Lord, the "kingdom would be given to a people bringing forth the fruits thereof." He was referring to Israel after the spirit (Rom. 2: 29). The chief of this spiritual nation is the Lord Jesus. To him, and those "in him" have been granted all the privileges of the firstborn. He is chief among firstborns, and they are "firstfruits of Yahweh's creatures" (James 1: 17-18; Rev. 14: 4). They have come "unto the Ecclesia of firstborns" (Heb. 12: 23 — Diag.), and to them pertain all the privileges of their high position.

They with Christ will inherit a double portion of the inheritance, for they will not only enter the Kingdom, as many mortals will also, but will do so as immortals, "possessing" it.

They with Christ will have the privilege of priesthood: he as high priest after the order of Melchizedek and they as his assistants.

They with Christ will exercise the excellency of power: he as King of kings and they as subordinate rulers.

Thus all the privileges of the natural seed will be given into the hands of the spiritual seed: true Israelites drawn from every age.

Reuben Shall Not Excel

Having indicted Reuben, Jacob pronounced his destiny: "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel."

In Hebrew, the word "unstable" literally signifies: "flowing down." Those who rely on the flesh morally descend; they become "weak as water" (Ezek. 7: 17), tending in a downward path. It was, for example, the princes of Reuben that assisted Korah in the great rebellion against the authority of Moses (Num. 16).

It applied to Reuben numerically as well as morally. In that way also Reuben "flowed down like water" and "did not excel." The tribe became fewer in number than other tribes even though it sprang from the firstborn (Num. 1: 21). During the wilderness wanderings, the camp of Reuben (comprising the tribes of Reuben, Simeon and Gad) decreased by 45,020 (cp. Num. 2: 16 with Num. 26: 7). Later, when the Assyrians oppressed the people, Reuben was among the first taken into captivity (1 Chron. 5: 26).

Thus the tribe "did not excel." And Israel after the flesh has likewise not excelled because it has been guilty of sins similar to that of Reuben and so lost its privileged position. Not until he returns whom his "brethren shall praise," and to whom there shall be the "gathering of the people" will Israel after the flesh reach anything like its former greatness.

As Reuben's head must have been bowed in shame as his wickedness was openly proclaimed by his father in the hearing of his brethren, so Israel after the flesh will yet be forced to hear its own folly recorded (see Ezek. 43: 6-11, 23), and will "mourn" because of their past blindness (Zech. 12: 10). But then, having been humbled they will be "lifted up." And in the disciplined, restored, regenerated tribes there will be seen again God's firstborn nation, and of it it shall be declared: See a Son!

— H.P.M.

Character is without value till it has gone through the fire: a person who is altogether in agreeable circumstances cannot have that hearty appreciation of the truth which adversity engenders.

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

**SIMEON and LEVI :
Instruments of Cruelty**

"Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour be not thou united; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

— Genesis 49: 5-7



Brethren in Crime

Having spoken of Reuben, Jacob's eyes now rested upon Simeon and Levi. They stood together before him, next to Reuben, their elder brother. They were apparently noted for their mutual affection, for Jacob described them as "brethren," even though all were members of the one family.

Simeon means "hearing." He was a son of Leah, and the answer to her prayer (Gen. 29: 33). Looking for a means to supplant Rachel in Jacob's affections, she felt she could do so in the birth of children, and therefore besought God that He would grant her that blessing. Thus she called her second son, Simeon, for she said, "God hath heard me!"

Levi means "joining." He was so called because of the hopes that Leah placed upon his birth. Whilst Rachel remained barren, Leah had born Jacob three sons. Three sons must surely set the seal to her supremacy over her barren though more-loved rival, and forever join her and Jacob in an unbreakable bond of affection. Therefore she called this child Levi.

The record implies that their births followed closely one upon another (Gen. 29: 33-34). Perhaps they were united in age more than any of the other sons of Jacob, and thus in that sense also were "brethren."

But whatever close associations they may have had in age, there is no doubt about them becoming brethren in crime. The circumstances are recorded in Genesis 34. Shechem, the son of Hamor, aspired to the hand of Dinah the daughter of Jacob. Shechem readily agreed to the conditions, namely, to enter into covenant relationship by the rite of circumcision, and persuaded the men of the city to

do likewise. But in an act of base treachery, Simeon and Levi, taking advantage of the weakened state of the menfolk of Shechem, entered the city sword in hand, and slew all the males. This, as Jacob remarked at the time, "made his name to stink among the inhabitants of the land" (Gen. 34: 30).

But, as the horrified Jacob now foresaw, this all became typical of a worse act of treachery to take place in the then distant future, which would cause the name of "Jew" to "stink among the inhabitants" of the world.

Conspiracy Against Christ

Thus Jacob spake:

"O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall!"

The historical foundation for this exclamation is recorded in Genesis 34; but these words form part of Jacob's prophecy of the "last days," and their fulfilment is seen in the crucifixion of the Lord.

In this, Simeon stands as a type of the Jew of Christ's day.

Notice that Jacob declared: "Instruments of cruelty are in their habitation (Gen. 49: 5).

The habitations of Simeon, his inheritance in the land, was established within the borders of Judah. Therefore, in this prophecy, Simeon represents those Jews in occupation of the land in the "last days" of Judah's Commonwealth, which synchronised with the first advent of Messiah.

Levi, of course, represents the priestly class in the prophecy.

It was the leaders of Israel, together with the priests and Levites who entered into a conspiracy to destroy the Lord.

This was the "assembly" which Jacob prophetically viewed with horror. The Spirit in David likewise spake of it. Psalm 22: 16 declares:

"For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet" (Ps. 22: 16).

The incident is historically recorded in Matthew 26: 3-4:

"Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest who was called Calaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill him."

Moved with jealousy and anger, the Jews of Christ's day "slew a man." "They took hold on Jesus and led him away to Calaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders

were assembled . . . and all the counsel sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death" (Mat. 26: 57, 59).

The leaders of Jewry together with the priestly class thus assembled together in secret, and filled with jealous anger against the Lord, conspired to slay him.

They Digged Down a Wall

But in their selfwill they "digged down a wall." To destroy a wall is to overthrow that which protects a city. It is obvious that the translators are obsessed with the treachery of Simeon and Levi and their slaughter of the men of Shechem. They "digged down a wall" in destroying that city.

The Jews of Christ's day, however, were guilty of the same crime. Their treachery, their murder of the Lord, resulted in the overthrow of the city of Jerusalem. Christ, himself, showed this, in his parable of the marriage of the King's son, recorded in Matthew 22. In outlining the punishment that would fall upon the Jewish nation because of its rejection of his Messianic claim, he declared:

"But when the King heard thereof, he was wroth, and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city" (v. 7).

Thus Jewish selfwill resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem. The Divine protection — that "wall of fire round about her" (Zech. 2: 5) — was withdrawn, the city was breached and the nation destroyed.

So much for the Authorised Version translation. But there is an alternate rendering of Genesis 49: 6 which the margin suggests: "they houghed oxen." The Revised Version has taken this into the text, thus: "they houghed an ox." The Concordant Version renders it: "they felled a chief," i.e., a bull.

This is an appropriate designation for the Lord who is the Chief, or if the literal "bull" is preferred, is the anti-typical Bullock slain as the sin-offering (Lev. 8: 17; Heb. 13: 11-13).

If this alternate, more literal, rendering is preferred, Jacob saw something more wonderful than the destruction of Jerusalem. He foresaw the murder of his illustrious son, but he saw what Deity would accomplish in that murder. Peter spake of it on the day of Pentecost:

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2: 23).

The death of Christ was criminal as far as the Jewish

people were concerned, but it accomplished the predeterminate counsel of God in providing for the antitypical sin-offering, which was a bullock. This was the sacrifice referred to in Hebrews 13: 11, which in the next verse the writer identifies with the Lord Jesus.

How appropriate, therefore, are the words of Jacob: "They shall hough (destroy) an ox."

Divided and Scattered

Because of their crime they were divided and scattered among the nations. As typical of that, these two tribes were divided and scattered among the other tribes. Jacob declared:

"Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel" (v. 7).

In apportioning the tribal inheritance, Levi received no land grant. As the priestly tribe, cities were given it throughout the other tribes.

Nor was Simeon given independent land grant; the tribe was settled within Judah's territory. This is stated in Joshua 19: 1, 9:

"Simeon's inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah" . . . "Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon."

Thus their inheritance formed part of Judea which rose in rebellion against its King, 1900 years ago.

Both the tribes were submerged among the other tribes, as Jewry has been submerged among the nations since.

Jacob saw it all; he saw the cause of the scattering; thus his expression of horror.

In describing their wrath, he called it "cruel." The word is sometimes rendered "obstinate." And Jewry was obstinate. The extent of the blindness of the leaders of the people is reflected in the words of Nicodemus: "We (leaders) KNOW that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3: 2).

Blinded by an unreasoning wrath, and cursed by their fierce anger against the Son of God, the Jews of Christ's day were led to perpetuate the crime permitted by Simeon and Levi when they overthrew Shechem,* and received their

*Shechem means "Burden-bearer." It became a city of refuge (Josh. 21: 21). It was strategically situated between the Mounts of Blessing and Cursing (Josh. 8: 30). It was a rallying place for Israel (Josh. 24: 1). There Abraham received confirmation of the promise (Gen. 13: 6-7). As a city, therefore, Shechem pointed forward to Christ, our Burden-bearer,

father's rebuke.

They did this despite their realisation that Christ was a teacher come from God." Their wrath was "obstinate," and blinded them to reason.

Upon them rested the punishment they deserved. Divided and scattered among the nations, they will remain as such until the appearance of Him unto whom "shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49: 10).

And that introduces us to Jacob's prophecy of Judah (Gen. 49: 8-12).

— H.P.M.

Beautiful in its Simplicity,
Yet Profound in its Significance.

The Parable of the Sower

Living close to the land, as did many Jews of Christ's day, those who had "ears to hear," would readily understand the significance of this parable. We, too, can greatly profit by this parable, for we live in times when the perils of those days are greatly intensified (2 Tim. 3: 1-5).

The choice of soil to portray humanity is a clever one. For man comes from the soil (Gen. 2: 7), and there are many different types of soil as there are different types of character. Some have the capacity to produce abundantly; others are so limited they can produce almost nothing.

Even average soil can be made to produce so prolifically that the face of the earth is turned green, the colour of life! Yet even the best soil is dead if left to itself; it needs the introduction of a living seed to produce life.

It is the same with man! The natural capacity of individuals varies greatly. Yet, no matter how talented, educated, cultured, "learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians" a man may be, unless the seed of life (the Word) is present, he is dead (Matt. 8: 22; 1 Pet. 1: 23; Jer. 10: 23).

In the parable, the Lord declared that some of the seed fell by the "wayside." This was a path that divided the fields, and which was made hard by continual use. As a result, it produced nothing. Yet it consisted of the same material as

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

THE LION OF JUDAH

"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion who shall rouse him up?" (Gen. 49: 8-9).



Judah the Praised

After sadly recounting the failings of Reuben, Simeon and Levi, and predicting how these foreshadowed events to come, Jacob's eyes must have turned with pleasure towards Judah, to proclaim the prophecy the Spirit now dictated.

It commences with a note of contrast and joy: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise."

Judah, itself, signifies "praise," so that there is a play on words in this statement.

As Jacob uttered them, did he recall the great excitement and anticipations of Leah at the birth of this son? The record states that when she gave birth to this boy, she said: "Now will I praise Yahweh; therefore she called his name Judah."

The birth of this boy caused his mother to turn to Yahweh in praise. So it will be with the one who is the subject of this prophecy, for it is obvious that reference is made to an individual rather than the tribe as a whole. This is clearly shown by the repetition of such personal pronouns as "thou," "he," "thy," "thine," etc. The individual referred to is the Chief and Representative of the tribe, the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5: 5), the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he will yet cause his spiritual mother, Israel, to praise Yahweh.

The only time that Judah, as a tribe, received the praise of its fellow-tribes was during the brief period of the golden reign of Israel's history, when David and Solomon ruled in Jerusalem. At that time the kingdom was widely acknowledged as the Kingdom of Yahweh (1 Chron. 28: 5; 29: 23; 1 Kings 5: 7; 10: 9). David and Solomon both typified Christ in different aspects of his coming reign: the former as the

mighty God*, the latter as the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9: 6).

And Christ comes to restore the Kingdom. Amos prophesied:

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD" (Amos 9: 11).

This is the "restoration" spoken of by Peter in Acts 3: 19-21. The Kingdom of God, as Christ will establish, will be a glorification of that existing under David and Solomon. He shall receive the praise of men, and Israel (like Judah among the tribes) will have the pre-eminence among the nations.

It is interesting and significant to recognise how completely the past foreshadows the future, as far as the Kingdom of God is concerned. Here is the contrast:

PAST

A time of war ending in peace (1 Kgs. 4: 24; 5: 4)
 Israel secure and powerful (1 Kgs. 4: 25)
 Israel the chief among nations (1 Kgs. 4: 21)
 Tyre (Tarshish) a friend of Israel (1 Kgs 5: 1)
 Israel a third with Egypt and the North (2 Chr. 9: 26)
 Jerusalem the throne of Yahweh (1 Chron. 29: 23; 28: 5)
 One king over a united Israel (1 Kgs. 4: 20)
 Israel a multitudinous and powerful nation (1 Kgs. 4: 20)
 Israel the mart of nations (2 Chron. 1: 17)
 The wealth of nations flows to Jerusalem (2 Chron. 9: 23-24)
 Surrounding nations submit to Israel (1 Kgs. 4: 21)
 Great fertility throughout the land (1 Kgs. 4: 22-28)
 Worldwide pilgrimage to Jerusalem to hear the wisdom of its king (2 Chron 9: 23)
 Its king acknowledged as the Prince of Peace (1 Kgs. 5: 12)
 Its king noted for wisdom and enlightenment (1 Kgs. 4: 29-34)
 Jerusalem noted for fabulous wealth (2 Chr. 1: 15)
 The Prince of Peace builds a Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kgs. 6)
 Temple built from Divine plans (1 Chr 23: 11-19)
 Gentiles assist to build the Temple (2 Chr. 2: 17)

FUTURE

Ps. 110: 2; Isa. 9: 6-7
 Mic. 4: 4; Zeph. 3: 19-20
 Mic. 4: 8
 Ps. 45: 12; Isa. 60: 9
 Isa. 19: 25
 Jer. 3: 17
 Ezek. 37: 22
 Mic. 4: 7
 Isa. 23: 18
 Isa. 60: 11; Ps. 72: 10
 Ps. 72: 10
 Isa. 35: 1-2
 Isa. 2: 2-4; Zech. 14: 16
 Isa. 9: 6
 Isa. 32: 4; 33: 6
 Hag. 2: 8; Isa. 60: 17
 Zech. 6: 13; Isa. 56: 7
 Ezek. chps. 40-48
 Isa. 60: 10, 13

*The Hebrew "El Gibbor" rendered "mighty God" signifies Warrior of Pot. cr. or Warrior of God

Intense building activity throughout the land
(1 Kgs. 9: 10-20)

Isa. 65: 21-22

Zadok elevated as high priest (1 Kgs. 2: 35)

Heb. 7

Subordinate priests serve day and night, thus
figuratively are immortal (Ps. 134; Isa. 40:
28-31)

Rev. 5: 9-10

Satan bound (1 Kgs. 5: 4)

Rev. 20: 2

Many other similarities will doubtless occur to the reader. Even the internal ordering of the kingdom will be similar. For example, there were twelve princes established over the kingdom by Solomon, and the territory was divided into twelve sections that differed from the normal tribal borders as established through Moses. So it will be in the future (cp. 1 Kings 4: 7 with Matt. 19: 28. Ezek. 48).

Judah the Warrior

The Kingdom of the future will be established by the "zeal of Yahweh of Armies" (Isa. 9: 7), by mighty manifestations of power that will crush the enemy. In graphic language Jacob described this. "Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies," he declared concerning him whom his brethren shall praise. There is a note of triumph in the words he used. He saw his illustrious son, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, victorious over his enemies. He saw them prostrate before him, helpless in the face of his power, with his hand at the back of their necks and their faces in the dust.

David saw the same vision. In glorious language he describes the coming triumph of his great Son. The Spirit in him spake the words of Christ:

"I will pursue my enemies, and overtake them;
neither will I turn again till they be consumed.
I will wound them that they will not be able to rise;
they will fall under my feet.

For Thou (Yahweh) wilt gird me with strength unto the war;

Thou wilt subdue under me those that rise up against me;

Thou wilt give me the necks of mine enemies;

that I might destroy them that hate me.

They will cry, but there will be none to save them;

to Yahweh, but He will answer them not.

Then will I beat them small as the dust before the wind;

I will cast them out as the dirt in the streets.

Thou wilt deliver me from the strivings of the people;

Thou wilt make me to be the head of the heathen;

a people I have not known shall serve me" (Ps. 18: 39-43).

That this is a Messianic Psalm is shown by the concluding verse:

"Great deliverance giveth He to His king;
and sheweth mercy to His Christ,
to David, and to his seed for evermore."

*The Hebrew suggests the future tense, and this Psalm has been so rendered in the Revised Version

David's seed is thus described as the Christ (the "anointed") and King.

The Psalm not only describes how Christ shall gain the ascendancy over the heathen, but over his own people as well. Verse 43 declares: "Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people." But in the parallel place where this Psalm appears (2 Sam. 22), this is rendered "my people" (v. 44).

Israel, as well as the Gentiles, will be forced to submit to the Lord. And Jacob saw this. He declared: "Thy father's children shall bow before thee" (Gen. 49). In vision, he saw the tribes bowing before the Lion of Judah, looking on him whom they have pierced, and mourning for him (Zech. 12).

This will be the great drama of the age. The world will witness a people which has openly and vigorously denied the Lord for 1900 years, humbled before him, accepting him as king. The very city that previously re-echoed with the clamour of the mob, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" will resound with anthems of praise to his honour. The proud leaders of the nation whose representatives 1900 years ago rebuked the people for acclaiming the Lord will themselves proclaim, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Yahweh" (Matt. 23: 39). The Lord shall receive honour and praise where previously he was defamed.

It is appropriate that in the prophecy of Jacob, the blessing of Judah should follow that of Simeon and Levi, for the former speaks of the sufferings and rejection of Christ; the latter of his glory and the praise that awaits him in Zion.

Judah as the Lion

In his prophecy, Jacob three times describes the Chief of Judah as a lion. This is significant. Both the city of Jerusalem and the great King who will rule therefrom are given this title.

"Woe to Ariel," pronounced Isaiah speaking of Jerusalem (Ch. 29: 1). The word signifies "Lion of God." It was applied to Jerusalem because the altar was set up there, and is described in this fashion. In Ezekiel 43: 16 (see margin), the same word is used to describe the great altar to be erected in Jerusalem in the Age to come.

Why should the altar be likened to a Lion? Because it devoured the burnt offering as the Lion does the prey. Because the altar is emblematic of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 13: 10) who is the Lion of God as well as the Lion of Judah.

"Our God," says Paul, "is a devouring fire" (Heb. 12: 29). He consumes His enemies as the fire on the altar consumes the sacrifices. "Now consider this, ye that forget the Mighty One," Yahweh declared through the Psalmist (Ps. 50: 22), "lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

The Lord Jesus will manifest these Lion characteristics of Yahweh. There will be a tearing in pieces and devouring of the enemy at his return. He shall "roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem," declared Joel (Ch. 3: 16).

This lion-like roar will be a warning to the world that the Lion of Judah is about to stalk its prey. And that he is capable of doing it effectively is shown by the descriptive words of Jacob.

He described the Chief of Judah as a "lion's whelp," "a full grown lion," and an "old lion." Here is youth, strength and experience combined, and the Lord will reveal all three aspects. Jacob saw him revealing himself belligerently, crouching in threatening and challenging aspect. So fierce and capable did he look, that the patriarch exclaimed: "Who shall rouse him!" The expression signifies: "Who dare rouse him up!" What man is hardy enough to dare antagonise a ferocious and virile lion which is seen crouching ready to leap!

That is the figurative aspect of the Lord the world is destined to witness.

"The nations shall see and be confounded at their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth; they shall be afraid of Yahweh our God, and shall fear because of thee" (Mic. 7: 16-17).

The Hebrew word rendered "old lion," is translated "lionesse" in the Revised Version. The word does not imply a decrepit lion as is sometimes supposed, but one noted for ferocity. The same word occurs in the following places:

"Behold the people shall rise up as a great lion" (Num. 23: 24).

"He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion; who shall stir him up?" (Num. 24: 9).

"Blessed be He that enlargeth Gad: He dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head. And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of Yahweh, and His judgments with Israel" (Deut. 33: 20-21).

In Genesis 49: 9 the word rendered "old lion" is in the feminine gender. It is said that the lionesse when roused is fiercer and noisier than the lion.

Be that as it may, in the verse before us, we are shown

a family of lions. There is the lion, the lioness, the lion's whelp.

And all are expressive of Him whom His brethren shall praise, even the Lord Jesus.

He is the Lion, because he is apocalyptically described as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5: 5).

He is the Lioness, because he is also described in Scripture as a multiple Christ — his bride.

He is the Lion's whelp, because he will bring about a rejuvenated Judah which will find "strength in Yahweh Sabaoth their Elohim" (Zech. 12: 5), in consequence of which the tribe will "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" (v. 6).

The Lion, the Lioness, the Lion's whelp all thus united together will be sufficient to deter any foe.

Who will dare antagonise that Lion!

So Jacob, peering into the future, saw the glory of this family of lions, saw fear and terror strike at the hearts of men when they witness this manifestation of glory and might, saw praise rendered to the Chief of the tribe by his "father's children," saw the faces of his enemies prostrate in the dust with the hand of the conqueror pressing on their necks.

With this grand vision of the future, he, too, could praise Yahweh. But even more wonderful predictions now poured from his lips.

— H.P.M.

THE EIGHT SIGNS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Reports from Sydney speak of great enthusiasm created by the Yagoona effort, conducted by Brother John Ullman of Perth. It is hoped to reproduce some of his study notes in printed form. Attendances have been very good, that for the first Public Address being a record for Yagoona, and included some 33 friends. A number of applications for booklets has likewise been received from the distribution of Lecture Brochures, etc.

Above all, the brethren have experienced an excellent "lift" from the study nights. It was also encouraging to find some interested friends attending these. After the first night, one friend stood up and confessed that though he had been studying the Gospel of John for the past months in the Church of England Study Group, he had learned more in five minutes at the Yagoona night than in all that time!

☆ ☆

Evil is here by divine ordination, and God alone can rid the world of it. His children are called on to battle with it on Scripture lines. The exercise tends to spiritual development.

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

"UNTIL SHILOH COME!"

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49: 10).



Judah Supplants Reuben

One of the prerogatives of the firstborn was that of government or authority, symbolised by the sceptre. In the family of Jacob, this naturally belonged to Reuben the firstborn. But Reuben had disgraced his father's name (v. 4), and the threefold blessing of priesthood, authority and inheritance which normally would have been his was distributed to Levi, Judah and Joseph.

And now Jacob spoke of how the government would be delivered into the hands of Judah. His words show that this having been taken from him who claimed the right by fleshly descent (Reuben, typical of Israel after the flesh), it would never revert to him again.

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah," he declared, "nor a lawgiver from between his feet."

As far as the sceptre is concerned, it passed into the hands of Judah when David was taken from the sheepcote to become ruler in Israel; and it became permanently identified with that tribe by the Covenant made with David, the man after God's own heart. Yahweh declared: "David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel" (Jer. 33: 17), and when through iniquity the throne was overturned, Zedekiah, the last king to sit thereon, was told that it would remain thus "until he come whose right it is, and I (Yahweh) will give it him" (Ezek. 21).

In Christ, the line of David continues, and will never cease. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, for he will return to "build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and build again the ruins thereof, and set it up" (Acts 15: 16).

He will do so as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5).

Judah the Lawgiver

The Lion of Judah is also the Lawgiver. He will cause

"the law to go forth from Zion, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2: 2). Isaiah predicts:

"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law" (Isa. 42: 4).

How different this is from Gentile rulers and lawgivers! They inevitably become discouraged as they see the failure of their policies and laws. Not so the Son of God, however. The Lion of Judah possesses both the power and authority to accomplish his purpose.

As Lawgiver, he is the antitype of Moses the Lawgiver. Moses was told:

"I (Yahweh) 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 shall not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18: 18-19).

Here the Lion becomes the Lawgiver, and in Christ, Psalm 60 has its fulfilment, for it states: "Judah is My lawgiver."

Jacob saw all this and more. He saw not only the One whom his brethren shall praise, elevated among them as Ruler and Lawgiver, but he saw him as chief of a family of Rulers and Administrators of the Law. This is expressed by the phrase he used, "nor a lawgiver from between his feet." This is a Hebraism for children, and expresses the idea that the Lawgiver has children who administer his law.

Who are the children of Christ the Lawgiver? Isaiah made reference to them when he declared, that "he shall see his seed" (Isa. 53: 10). Christ who had no family, is yet to be revealed as the father of a numerous progeny.

And we can comprise part of the seed.

For Christ is not only represented in Scripture as the elder brother of the saints, but the very "author of the life" they will manifest (Acts 3: 15 mg.). In that capacity he begets us unto eternal life as a father begets children. Some find it difficult to comprehend how Christ can be both a Father and a Brother, but this dual relationship is quite commonly expressed in the Word. Paul, for example, addressed his Galatian brethren as "my little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4: 19). He constantly referred to Timothy and others as his "sons" whom he had begotten in the Truth.

Yet these "children" were also his brethren.

In like manner, the Ecclesia constitutes the seed of Christ, the "children who Yahweh hath given him," as it is expressed in Hebrews 2: 13.

Thus Jacob saw this Ruler and Lawgiver with a numerous progeny; he saw him as the head of a family, the members of which will dispense his authority and law throughout the world; he saw in vision the company of king-priests whose song of rejoicing in the redemption wrought is expressed in Revelation 5: 9-10: "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests."

Who is the "Thou" of this song? It is the Lamb they surround, who in the same prophecy, is also styled the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5: 5).

Until?

But according to the Authorised Version the wielding of the sceptre, and the giving of the law, was only to be the prerogative of Judah "until Shiloh come," when, presumably, these functions would cease, or pass to another.

But that is not in accordance with the facts.

Judah was never a lawgiver until Shiloh did come, nor is the sceptre ever to depart from Judah, for Christ is to reign over the house of Jacob "for ever" (Luke 1: 32).

In the "Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come," vol. 8, p. 103, Brother Thomas provides an alternate translation. He renders the verse:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet FOR THAT SHILOH SHALL COME, and unto him shall be the gathering of the people."

Concerning this alternative translation, he comments as follows:

"The text . . . namely *ad kl* 'for that,' is equivalent to 'because.' The passage is easy enough, and teaches, that the reason why the staff or sceptre shall not depart from Judah is 'because Shiloh shall come.'"

This translation makes the verse consistent with the facts. It shows that the coming of Shiloh was necessary for the continuance of the sceptre in the hand of Judah, and the issuing of a Law from the same source. Jacob saw not the limiting of these matters, but the perpetuity of them "for that Shiloh shall come." His presence alone could make the prophecy possible.

But Who is Shiloh?

The word "Shiloh" comes from a Hebrew root signifying "peace," "tranquillity." As a proper noun it can signify the Bringer of Peace or Tranquillity. This the Lord will bring about at his second advent. When he appeared among men 1900 years ago, he declared: "Think not that I am come to bring peace . . . I am come to bring a sword." In that sense

he appeared not in the capacity of Shiloh, as he will when he is universally acclaimed as the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9: 6). But individually he was the Bringer of Peace, for to his disciples, he declared:

"Peace. I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (Jhn. 14: 27).

And in Christ we can discover peace and tranquillity even now, if we truly seek it.

There appears to be a natural connection between the word Shiloh and Siloam, the pool in Jerusalem. The waters of Siloam "went softly" (Isa. 8: 6). They proceeded out from the Temple area to the pool in the midst of the city, and therefore, were expressive of the Divine water of life. Christ used this pool as symbolic of his teaching (cp. Jhn. 7: 37; 9: 4-7). The word "siloam" means "sent," and the pool was called Siloam because the water that filled it was sent from out of the Temple area.

And because Christ "proceeded forth and came from God," he is called the "great Apostle," for the word "apostle" means "sent." He is, in fact, the "anointed Apostle" (Luke 4: 18), the Apostle of salvation (Matt. 15: 24; John 17: 3), the chief Apostle (John 20: 21), the Priestly Apostle (Heb. 3: 1). He is all this because he was "sent of God," as the waters of Siloam were sent from out of the Temple area.

Israel, in the days of Ahaz, refused the "waters of Siloam that went softly," refused the sign of Immanuel, and received instead the inundation of the rushing, turbulent Euphratean flood that swamped their land, ruining it with erosion, bringing destruction. This was the Assyrian horde.

In modern times, and for Immanuel's sake, the waters of the Euphratean flood are "drying up" (Rev. 16: 12), and will continue to do so until tranquillity (Shiloh) reigns.

"The Gathering of the Peoples"

In the A.V. the word "people" is in the singular number, but the R.V. renders it in the plural. It does this also in Isaiah 63: 3 where we read: "Of the peoples there was none with me."

In both cases, the "peoples" relate to the Gentile nations. In Isaiah 63: 3 they are not with Christ, but in Genesis 49: 10 they are gathered to him.

They are gathered to him because his power has been extended to humble them. Before he is manifested as the Prince of Peace, he will be mighty in war, and the nations shall be compelled to bow before him.

Among the first to do so will be Israel. He will "save the

tents of Judah first" (Zech. 12: 7), complete the regathering of the tribes (Ezek. 37: 21-22), and restore them to their land (Ezek. 48). They will be grafted in again upon a basis of belief (Rom. 11: 23), so that "all Israel (i.e., all the tribes) shall be saved; as it is written: There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom. 11: 26).

This is the restitution, or restoration, spoken of by Peter (Acts 3: 19-21). The present regathering of a few Jews back to the land is not the restoration; it is but a token of that which Yahweh intends to do through Shiloh. He will restore not only the people, but the monarchy, the worship, the organisation of David's house "as in the days of old" (Amos 9: 11). We must not mistake that! Many speak and write as though what is seen in the land today is the complete fulfilment of the prophecies relating to the restoration. Actually, there are but few references in the Word that speak of the present regathering. The majority of prophecies relate to that which shall be done after Christ appears.

The restoration of the tribes shall be accomplished on the basis of a repudiation of the flesh, and a declaration of loyalty to the royal house of David, through Christ its chief. This demands an acceptance of the Truth, the removal of the veil that is over the nation.

The restoration of Israel will provide the pattern whereby Gentile nations will be likewise incorporated into the Kingdom of Christ. They too will be grafted in on a basis of belief. By this means will be fulfilled the promise to Abraham: "I have made thee a father of many nations." To Shiloh they will gather, to find in him the tranquillity and rest of the Age of Peace.

Thus in this verse, so pregnant with significance and meaning, Jacob saw deeply into the future. He saw the future glory of his race:

Judah as the ruling tribe;
Shiloh as the lawgiver;
The glorious company of his associates;
The promised Seed as Prince of Peace;
The restoration of the tribes under his authority;
All mankind drawn into one united family of nations.

But even the expression of that glorious vision of the future did not end the thrilling discourse of Jacob in relation to the coming Messiah. Further apocalyptic words of the greatest import continued to flow from his lips.

— H.P.M.

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

THE ASS AND THE VINE

"Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes; his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk" (Gen. 49: 11-12).

☆ ☆

This enigmatical portion of Jacob's prophetic blessing brings successively before our attention an ass, a vine, garments washed in the blood of grapes, eyes red with wine, and teeth white with milk.

They are all connected with Shiloh, the Christ. It is "his foal," "his garments," "his eyes," "his teeth" to which attention is directed.

And hidden in the symbology of these verses are some very beautiful truths.

The Ass's Colt

Why should the prophecy speak of Shiloh in connection with an ass? Why was the Lord so particular in selecting such an animal upon which to ride into Jerusalem?

This humble animal, so excellent a worker in the field, so patient a beast of burden, is used in Scripture as a symbol of Israel. It became so common in Israel that the nation was identified with it in the eyes of surrounding peoples, to the extent that it was rumoured that Israelites even worshipped an ass's head (see Josephus: "Against Apion," ch. 1: 7).

It is therefore interesting to notice the contrast between the ass and the horse in Scripture, for whereas the former is identifiable with Israel, the latter is associated with Egypt. The horse was a war animal, and symbolised fleshly pride and power (Josh. 11: 6; Ps. 33: 17). The Israelites were therefore commanded to hough, or destroy, them (teaching that no confidence should be placed in fleshly power or war), whereas towards the ass special privileges were provided.

These privileges are revealed in the law of the Firstborn. In commemoration of the saving of the firstborn in Egypt, the Law commanded that the firstborn of man and beast belonged to Yahweh. The firstborn of beasts was put to death; that of man was redeemed.

A notable exception was made in regard to the ass.

It, alone, among beasts, could be redeemed; and, significantly enough, it was redeemed by the sacrifice of a lamb. If it were not redeemed, its neck was broken as a mark of rejection and contempt (Exod. 13: 13).

In so legislating, God was not so much concerned with asses, of course, as with His people. The ass was their symbol. They can become patient plodders in His fields, working to his glory; or stubborn brutes displaying a stiff-necked attitude to His will. The former will be redeemed through the offering of the Christ-lamb; the latter will figuratively have its neck broken by being rejected at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The ass, if a high-bred animal, conferred a status on its owner. Abraham and Moses both used this animal (Gen. 22: 3-5; Exod. 4: 20), judges and kings adopted it as the ensignia of their rank (Judges 5: 10; 10: 4; 12: 14; 2 Sam. 16: 1-4). When David wanted the people to know that Solomon was the next appointed ruler, he commanded that he should ride upon the special animal reserved for his use (1 Kings 1: 38). Similarly, the Lord commanded his disciples to bring to him the ass's colt in order that he might ride into Jerusalem in suitable state. The people recognised in this action the symbol of royal dignity, and they spontaneously burst into acclamation: "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord," "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Luke 19: 38; Mark 11: 9-10).

There is therefore a striking connection between Jacob's prophecy and the Lord's action in so riding into Jerusalem. Both speak of an ass and a foal (Matt. 21: 5), and both imply royal dignity. But Jacob's prophecy makes reference to Shiloh "binding his ass to the vine," and in so doing showed that Christ's royal dignity is to be attached to a nation symbolised as a vine.

Israel as the Vine

The vine is frequently used in the Scriptures as a symbol for Israel, and the various applications are of the highest exhortatory value.

The 80th Psalm describes Israel as a vine taken out of Egypt and planted in Canaan after the land had been carefully cleared (vv. 8-9). Through the tender care of the Divine Husbandman, the hills and valleys became covered with the prolific growth of this vine (vv. 10-11). But the fruit produced became so meagre, that it became unprofitable to tend

it. Yahweh therefore neglected His vines. The protective hedges were broken down, and wild beasts allowed to roam unmolested throughout the vineyards destroying the vines. The Psalmist viewed the result with sorrow. He prayed that Yahweh will return and visit His vine; he asked that He may send "the man of His right hand, the Branch whom He would make strong for Himself" (v. 15).

It is common knowledge that vines may be produced by cutting a branch and transplanting it. It is to this that the psalmist makes reference, and what Yahweh actually did.

Thus Christ declared: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the Husbandman . . . I am the vine, and ye are the branches" (John 15: 1, 5). If Israel after the flesh comprises the "vine" of Genesis 49: 11, Israel after the spirit is the "choice vine" of the same verse. Over both the vine and the choice vine Christ is king.

The prophet Isaiah also spake of Israel as a vine. His 5th chapter records the Song of the Vineyard. It expresses the extreme care that Yahweh lavished upon His vineyard that He may obtain fruit therefrom. But when the time came to gather the grapes, "it brought forth wild grapes" (v. 2). Such a vine is useless. To prune and tend it is to waste time and energy. Yahweh therefore decided to break down the protective hedge and let the wild beasts in on it (v. 5).

Wild grapes are highly poisonous, bringing death to those who eat them. In Isaiah's parable, the nations are represented as wild beasts tearing to pieces the vineyard, and eating the vines. Though they perform God's will in so doing, their motives are by no means righteous, but the very reverse. Therefore they deserve the punishment that falls upon them when they consume these poisonous "wild grapes."

In a very powerful chapter (ch. 15), Ezekiel likewise warned Israel of what was expected of the people. He showed that the vine has but one use: to produce fruit. Apart from that it is useless. Its wood cannot be used for furniture or other useful purposes, and is invariably discarded and burnt. In the absence of fruit, the vine is torn up and destroyed. That would be Israel's fate if it did not produce fruit. And Israel was an "empty vine" as Hosea lamented (Ch. 10: 1).

The Lord added to this exhortation of Ezekiel when he pointed out that even when the vine did produce fruit, a wise husbandman prunes the vine in order that the fruit might be improved. He thus warned his disciples to expect tribulation and trouble that the fruit they would produce might be improved (John 15: 1-3).

And what of the fruit? From it there is derived wine, "which cheereth God and man" (Judges 9: 13). Why should wine be described as cheering God? Because it is a symbol of a life of sacrifice. To obtain it men used to tread the ripened grapes underfoot to crush out the juice. Fermentation then follows and wine is formed. Fermentation is the sign of a new life, formed in the "blood of the grape" that has been crushed underfoot. The lesson is obvious and powerful.

Reverting back to the blessing of Jacob, the patriarch, in his parable of the ass and the vine, saw the royal dignity of Shiloh attached to both Israel after the flesh and after the spirit.

Garments Sprinkled with Blood

He saw him, too, as the trader of the winepress, with "garments washed in wine," and "clothes washed in the blood of grapes." Revelation 14: 18 refers to the Lord in similar fashion. It describes how the sharp sickle will be used on the harvest of the earth, so that the fully-ripe clusters of grapes will be reaped. They will be reaped to be trodden in the winepress "without the city," and it will be as a result of this that the Lord's clothes are described as being "dipped in blood" (Rev. 19: 12).

This apocalyptic language describes the conquest of the nations by the Lord Jesus in company with his saints. Commencing at Armageddon, it will extend beyond the city until all nations are brought within the scope of his rule.

Isalah, in vision, saw this time and commented as follows:

"Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?"

"I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the nations (see R.V.) there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment" (Isa. 63: 1-3).

The person thus addressed is the multitudinous Christ

It is an apostolic command that we "be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12: 2), and this command can only be obeyed by being carried into all our relations, as regards the spirit in which we act, and the objects for which we live. This will decide many questions for which there is no specific answer in the Scriptures — forms of entertainment, as well as other things. James says, "Is any merry? let him sing psalms." This would be the last way of making merry the world would think of. Their merry-making is a mere rollick in which the animal spirits are given off and used up without any reference to God.

—R.R. (1887)

who single-handed engages the nations, trampling them in his fury. This Jacob also saw as his eyes rested on Judah, and he proclaimed the blessing relating to the Lion of the tribe.

Eyes Red with Wine — Teeth White with Milk

But he saw him not only exacting vengeance, but also instructing the people. He saw him with bloodshot eyes and teeth white with milk.

What did this descriptive language infer?

Both milk and wine are used symbolically in the Bible for doctrine: the former for the simple fundamental truths of the Divine revelation, the latter for the deeper application of that salient teaching.

In Isaiah 55: 1 the Spirit invites "every one that thirsteth" to buy "wine and milk without money and without price."

Later in the chapter this invitation is expressed in simpler language:

"Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David" (v. 3).

Milk is for children; wine is for adults. So Peter taught:

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2: 2).

Paul made use of the same symbol when he described "the first principles of the oracles of God" as the milk of the Word upon which all should feed who "lack experience" (see margin) in its deeper meaning. He stresses the need of developing beyond this stage to the strong meat of the Word.

In Genesis 49: 11, however, instead of illustrating the deeper truths of revelation as "strong meat," the symbol of wine is used. Shiloh is so skilled in the Word that the effect is seen in his very appearance: his eyes are red with wine.

We have already considered wine as a form of new life. In relation to teaching, it expresses the application of the things taught. The wine of Babylon will produce stupefying drunkenness; wisdom's wine (see Prov. 9: 5) will gladden the heart of the one receiving it (Psalm 104: 15).

Whereas "milk" is for the young; wine is for those "able to receive it." It must be put into bottles strong enough to hold it. So Christ taught in the parable he delivered to the disciples (Matt. 9: 17). The import of his words are sometimes not appreciated today when wine is stored in glass bottles, but in the days of the Master it was stored in skins which stretched as the wine fermented. A stretched skin was

useless for new wine, for it would break as the wine matured. Thus the container had to be strong enough for that which was poured into it. Wine is for those matured in the word.

Shiloh's eyes are described as "red with wine," his teeth "white with milk." Here is symbolised instruction adequate for all needs. After subduing the nations as expressed in the previous verse, he will teach them in righteousness. In the more literal language of the people of the coming age expressed in Isaiah 2:

"He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem."

At this point the thrilling and hopeful blessing on Judah ceased, and Jacob's eyes now turned to his next son: Zebulun.

— H.P.M.

Pondering the Psalms

The Suffering Messiah

"Christ has already personally passed through the waters (Psa. 68: 1, 2, 14) by which, however, he was not fatally submerged. He has individually passed through the fiery trial and come forth as gold. His people, from that time forth, have been in process of suffering the same experience. And nationally Israel has been going through fire and water for the last twenty centuries or more. What is to be the end of it all?"

—"Ministry of the Prophets"



We continue our study of Psalm 69 as applying to David himself; to all the "Davids" (those "Beloved of God" who follow David's example); and especially to God's beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We find the attitude of mind, the work, and the destiny of the Messiah revealed dramatically in this Psalm. From a consideration of these wonderful features, we can gain the strength to conquer as he did, by placing our trust and confidence in the One he sought.

A Plea For Help: vv. 1-3

The first two verses of Psalm 69 are the cries of a drowning man who realises his inability to save himself. (Jonah spoke similar words from the whale's belly, and his words,

teeth." It is better to listen to wisdom now in the day of her call. She stands at the door and knocks, saying, "Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than rubies; and all things that may be desired are not to be compared with it." The spirit tells us to hear: and the reason is beautiful: "Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her."

But if we turn away from her voice, a terrible retribution awaits: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regardeth; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord."

—Brother Roberts.

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

ZEBULUN : A Haven for Ships

"Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon"—v. 13.



A Prophecy of the Future

This portion of Jacob's blessing has been a puzzle to commentators because no evidence exists that Zebulun's borders ever conformed to the requirements stated. According to Josephus, Zebulun was never bounded by the sea, being cut off by the tribe of Asher (Jos. 19: 10, 16).

The commentators make the mistake of looking to the past for the fulfillment of the blessing, whereas they should look to the future.

Jacob's words regarding Zebulun should be combined with Moses' blessing of the tribe set forth in Deuteronomy 33: 18-19, and Ezekiel's re-arrangement of the tribal borders outlined in the last chapter of his prophecy.

When these three prophecies are drawn together, it will be seen that not only are they complementary one to the other, but, in addition, they provide a glorious picture of the

future for those who will dwell with Messiah in the Age to Come.

For the word Zebulun means dwelling, and there is a play on words in the significant statement of the patriarch: "Zebulun (dwelling) shall dwell at the haven of the sea."

The Parable of Zebulun's Birth

This play on words implies that as Jacob's eyes rested upon his son, his mind reverted to the circumstances of his birth.

He was the sixth son born unto Leah (Gen. 30: 20). To Leah that was propitious. "God hath endued me with a good dowry," she declared. Six sons was a rich present with which to attract the affection of her husband. As a faithful wife, she had contributed her part to building up the house and glory of Jacob. She had been fruitful, and therefore had a claim on her husband. "Now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun" (or dwelling).

What did she mean?

For an answer to that, we must go back to the promise of redemption contained in Genesis 3: 15. After the proclamation that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, Eve was told:

"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3: 16).

In the Hebrew, however, the word rendered "desire" signifies "return," or "restoration," and the phrase can read: "By your husband is your restoration, and he shall rule over you."

Eve was originally on a status of equality with Adam, and at one with God (Gen. 1: 26-28).

Her presumption in obeying the voice of the serpent destroyed this unity, and by Divine decree she was brought into subjection to her husband.

Her restoration, or return, to her former status was now subject to the will of her husband. By submitting to him in love, he, in mutual love, would restore to her her former privilege.

And part of that submission was the providing him with a seed, for from this seed would come the Redeemer of mankind through whom both husband and wife would be restored to unity with God.

This was the foundation of Leah's comment on the birth of Zebulun. She saw the birth of six sons as a sound reason

for her personal triumph in her rivalry with Rachel. Surely, in thus producing fruit to the glory of Jacob's name, he would dwell with her.

In these incidents relating to Eve and Leah, there is a parable of the Ecclesia. As Eve was formed out of Adam, so the Ecclesia is formed out of Christ. As Eve was made subject to Adam, so the Ecclesia is made subject to Christ. As there was placed before Eve the ideal of restoration to equality with Adam, and of unity with God, so the same ideal is set before the Ecclesia. This is expressed in the prayer of Christ, the second Adam (1 Cor. 15: 45) on behalf of the Ecclesia, the second Eve (2 Cor. 11: 2), in which he prayed that "they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us" (John 17: 21).

Christ, the antitypical husband of Genesis 3: 16 can restore his bride to an equality such as existed before the Fall (see Gal. 3: 28; Heb. 2: 11); and he will do so when he comes to dwell with her (Rev. 19: 7-8).

Leah also sought that equality, hoped that Jacob would dwell with her because of her fruitfulness which was to the glory of his name.

Christ looks to the Ecclesia to produce fruit to the glory of his name (Gal. 5: 22; John 15: 16), that he might dwell with her.

Leah evidently understood the typical lessons of Genesis 3: 16, and looked forward to the time when the marriage of the Lamb shall come, and he will dwell with his bride because she hath borne him much fruit.

She evidently could see herself, equally with Eve, as a type of the same great event. If she did not understand these things, her words had a significance of which she was unaware but which was recorded by the Spirit because of their typical foreshadowing.

As Jacob's eyes now rested upon Zebulun, he recalled these things, saw that the "dwelling" which Zebulun's name signifies related to the glorious company that shall dwell with the Lord Jesus in the day of glory. His words of blessing thus embraced the future of both the tribe, and those who shall dwell with the Lord in the future age.

The Glory of the Tribal Inheritance

The time is coming when Zebulun will literally "dwell at the haven of the sea." We learn this from Ezekiel 48: 27, which, in the future re-adjustment of tribal inheritances, places Zebulun in the south of the land, instead of the north

as before. Her northern border will be Issachar, and her southern border Gad, and all will be south of Judah. According to the map drawn by Henry Sulley based on this chapter, the territory of Issachar and Zebulun will include a portion of the Gulf of Akaba, as well as extending to the Mediterranean. Zebulun will thus be able to provide a haven for ships, as the blessing of Jacob requires. It will also make possible the fulfilment of the blessing of Moses:

"And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and Issachar in thy tents. They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas . . ." (Deut. 33: 18-19).

This remarkable testimony implies that these two tribes will receive those worshippers who, in the Age to Come, will converge on Jerusalem for the purpose of worship (Zech. 14: 16). Isaiah speaks of this time, thus:

"I will bring them to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon Mine altar; for Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people" (Isa. 56: 7).

"Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2: 3).

"Thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the wealth of the Gentiles" (Isa. 60: 11).

These worshippers, this wealth, will apparently enter the land via the haven for ships provided in the territory of Zebulun and Issachar. These tribes will, by that means, "suck of the abundance of the seas."

In that sense, Zebulun will be representative of all Israel: the Dwelling place of the righteous, and a haven for those mortal nations who desire to serve the King. Men will turn to those whose spiritual dwelling place is today Zion (Ps. 87: 6) that they might find a haven of rest after the holocaust of Armagedden.

His Border Unto Zidon

Here, again, commentators are in a quandary, inasmuch as the border of Zebulun was never unto Zidon. Some have observed that the Hebrew word can be rendered 'towards' Zidon, and suggest that the ancient territory of Zebulun was like a dagger pointing at Zidon.

But there is a very remarkable way in which this portion of the blessing can be fulfilled in the Age to Come.

It should first be noted, that this is the only place in

the Bible where the word "yerekah" is translated "border." The word signifies the side or rear of a person, so that the picture that Jacob presented to his sons was that of Zebulun with his side or back turned from Zidon, whilst offering refuge to others.

Those who will be dwellers with the Lord, will have their faces averted from Zidon, whilst at the same time they will be ready to welcome others.

Why will they turn from Zidon?

Zidon, as a word, is from the Hebrew "Tsuwd" signifying, to "lie in wait," and from the idea of catching, or ensnaring, it came to mean a fishery. The Zidonians were among the original inhabitants of Canaan whom the Israelites failed to drive out (Jud. 1: 13), and who, in consequence, became a thorn to Israel (Jud. 10: 12).

At that time in Israel's history, the people had not turned the side or back to them, but were eagerly embracing them.

So much, indeed, that Ahab married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, King of Zidon (1 Kings 16: 31). Jezebel was determined to establish her religion in the land, and launched a reign of terror and persecution against the prophets of Yahweh, that caused even Elijah to flee to the refuge of Sinai.

All this is typical history, used by the Lord himself, as illustrative of that Apostate system of religion that has persecuted the Ecclesia, as Jezebel did the prophets (Rev. 2: 20-21). Of the antitypical Jezebel, the Lord declared: "I will kill her children with death, and all the Ecclesias shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

Jezebel was a Zidonian, a Canaanite, of whom it is said that "they will not dwell in the house of Yahweh" (Zech. 14: 21). Christ's face will be averted from Zidon with its Queen Jezebel, for he has decreed their destruction (2 Thess. 2: 8). The faces of all those who dwell with him will similarly be turned away from Zidon the ancient adversary of Israel; there will be no haven in Zebulun for her ships.

Thus in his vision of the future, Jacob saw a community of blessed ones, dwelling in the land, receiving the tribute and offerings of the nations, providing a haven for them, inviting their worship, accepting their friendship; but with side turned away from that system which has ensnared men in the past, offering it nothing but destruction.

In one short sentence, he gathered up the life history of Zebulun; his birth, his mother's joy, her anticipations therefrom, and with a play upon the name, he welded it all into one glorious glimpse of the future. Then he turned to the next son who stood expectantly before him: namely Issachar.

—H.P.M.

Exhortation at the Shaftesbury (N.S.W.) Ecclesia

What Does God's Love Mean to You ?

What It Accomplishes

In contradistinction to the complete failure of mankind to achieve the victory over sin and its effects, we have represented in the bread and wine upon the Table, the body given, the blood poured out, of a man who was able to say: "I have glorified Thee on earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." Thus he "led captivity captive" and "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

And in that he is unique.

The greatest problem we have to grapple with is the conquest of sin. But through the victory of the Son of God, we are enabled to wrestle with it effectively, for we have become related to him and the Father. Thus he is our great High Priest and Advocate, through whose mediation, the Father is willing to forgive us our trespasses.

The way to eternal life having been opened up through him, we are able to strive confidently, knowing that our efforts need not be in vain.

In this is seen the "love of God." The quality of that love is such that we cannot truly receive it without reciprocating it in some way:

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another . . ." (1 Jhn. 4: 8-11).

It is only to the extent that we realise what we have been saved from and called to, that we can fully appreciate

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

ISSACHAR'S HIRE

"Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens; and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute" (Gen. 49:14-15).



Remarkable Circumstances of His Birth

The word Issachar is compounded of two Hebrew words: "Yis" and "Sachar". The former signifies "there is", and the latter "a reward".

Issachar, therefore, spells out the thrilling message that "there is a reward".

Dr. Strong gives the meaning of the name as "He will bring a reward", which is even more significant, for it concentrates attention on the giver of the reward, even Messiah. The words of Jacob, in blessing Issachar, centres attention both on the reward and the means whereby it can be obtained.

Why was such a name bestowed upon this boy?

The answer takes us back to the remarkable rivalry between Leah and Rachel to secure the affection of Jacob (Genesis 29, 30). They sought to do this by bearing him children, each believing that by so doing she would secure the advantage over the other.

What was the foundation of this striving? Undoubtedly the promises made unto Jacob. This not only had relation to the Redeemer of mankind, but a numerous seed as well (Gen. 28: 14) upon whom the nation would be founded (Gen. 25:23). Thus the barrenness of Rachel caused her great perturbation. "Give me children, or else I die," she exclaimed in the extremity of her envy at her sister. But Jacob's answer was: "Am I in God's stead, Who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?"

It was God who had promised the seed, He alone Who could provide it.

Leah bore Jacob four sons, and then "left off bearing" (Gen. 29:35). Rachel remained barren. Something had to be done to provide the necessary seed, and Rachel's case was urgent. At great sacrifice to her personal dignity, she followed the example of Sarah, and gave her maid Bilhah to Jacob to wife. Two sons were born who were named Dan and Naphtali. The first means "judge", and was so named because Rachel saw in

his birth the judgment of God endorsing her action. The second means "wrestling", and spake of the great wrestling she had with herself in her rivalry with her sister by giving Bilhah to Jacob the second time.

Meanwhile, Leah, remaining barren, sacrificed her own dignity in the same way as Rachel had done. She delivered her maid to Jacob to wife, and from Zilpah also there were born two sons: Gad and Asher.

But she did it at great cost to herself. The narrative implies that consequent upon this action, Jacob denied Leah her conjugal rights. Because of barrenness, she was apparently set aside by Jacob whose greater love was for Rachel.

To add to the wrong in Leah's eyes, Rachel requested that she be given certain mandrakes that Reuben had found in the field. These were lovefruits, supposed to induce conception, or to stimulate love. Rachel besought the mandrakes of Leah, hoping thereby that she might bear children on her own account.

Leah bargained with her. She would give some of the mandrakes to Rachel if Jacob restored to her her conjugal rights.

The bargain was made, and the fifth and sixth sons were born to Leah as a result. Their names were significant. When the fifth boy was born, Leah joyfully proclaimed: "There is a reward," and called him Issachar. Her bargaining with her sister was not without result. When Zebulun, the sixth son was born, she emphasised what that reward would be by saying: "My husband will dwell with me."

Leah partly attributed the cause of Issachar's birth to the giving of Zilpah to Jacob to wife. This is shown by her comment at the time, and the naming of her son. She declared: "God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband." She gave Zilpah to Jacob in order to fulfil the purpose of God in providing Jacob with the seed required to found the nation of Israel. But she also, apparently, hoped to stimulate her own fertility thereby. The narrative states, that "when Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her to Jacob to wife" (Gen. 30:9). She had followed Rachel in doing this, and soon afterwards both gave birth to children. This was a sound procedure, as modern psychology has revealed. The adoption of a child by an apparently barren woman sometimes results in her having one of her own. Rachel was driven to this expedient by her need. In view of the Divine purpose; she could not go outside the household of Jacob to adopt a son, and therefore humbled herself by giving her maid to Jacob, and adopting the child as her own.

Issachar was the hire, or reward, that Leah received for likewise humbling herself.

The Type

Leah, as a wife, is thus revealed in five different stages: (1) — bearing Jacob's children, (2) — barren, (3) — temporarily estranged from her husband, (4) — restored to him again, (5) — bearing him further children.

What is the purpose of the detailed narrative? I have been accused of straining at types, but apart from some such enigmatical significance, why should such chapters find a place in the Divine revelation?

Paul, in Galatians 4, shows that the similar circumstances of Sarah and Hagar are recorded because they are allegorical. Why not the jealousy and rivalry of Leah and Rachel also? It is not difficult to see in the above the five points, a foreshadowing of Israel after the flesh, who is likened to a wife temporarily estranged from her Husband (Isa. 54:5). Israel originally produced fruit, became barren, became estranged, will be restored to her former status, will produce fruit in the Age to come (Hos. 2:19-20).

Why did Leah bargain with Rachel? Was she not "provoked to jealousy"? Read, then, the words of Paul: "Through their fall (their barrenness) salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy" (Rom. 11:11). The time will come when Israel will be restored to favour, to again produce fruit to the glory of her husband.

And this fact demonstrates that "There is a reward," and "He will dwell with them."

In order to save myself from appearing to strain too much at types, I leave the matter here, that the interested reader might take it further if he is so disposed.

The Heavily-laden Ass

Did Jacob recall these incidents as his eyes turned towards Issachar? Certainly the blessing he pronounced seems intermixed with these typical foreshadowings of the past.

He likened Issachar to a strong ass couching down between two burdens.

Why an ass?

The answer is given in our last article (see p. 270), when expounding upon Genesis 49:11. The ass was a symbol of Israel. It had this distinction under the Law, that the firstling of an ass, alone among beasts, could be redeemed by the sacrifice of a lamb. Its owner had the choice of either redeeming it, or of breaking its neck, which is a symbol of rejection,

That is the significance of Jeremiah's indictment of the vile king, Jchoiakim: "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (Jer. 22:19).

But Jacob saw Issachar as a "strong" ass, well worth redeeming: an ass capable of good work.

He described him as "couching between two burdens." The word has been rendered "sheep-pens". Others have rendered it as "panniers", such as are suspended on either side of an ass to carry the burdens placed therein. Accepting this rendering (supported by the A.V.), the figure presented by the words of Jacob, is that of Issachar as a heavily-burdened ass at rest, but still stimulated to labour by the hope of reward.

Is not that the picture of Israel in the Kingdom? Will not the nation ultimately bow its shoulders to the burden to be imposed upon it by the Lord, and submit to servitude under him in the hope of gain?

Other renderings give a millennial flavour to the blessing. The Chaldee paraphrase of Genesis 49:14 is as follows:

"He saw his portion that it was good, and the land that it was fruitful, and he shall subdue the provinces of the people, and drive out their inhabitants, and those who are left shall be his servants and his tributaries."

The translators of the Septuagint Version likewise read this idea into Jacob's blessing. They rendered the passage:

"Issachar has desired that which is good; resting between the inheritances. And having seen the resting place that it was good, and the land that it was fertile, he subjected his shoulder to labour, and became a husbandman."

"The Rest That Remaineth"

But though the ass is heavily laden, it is at rest. "He saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant. . . ." Therefore he submitted to the servitude demanded of him.

The word "rest" is significant. In the Hebrew it is "menuchah", and signifies a "safe shelter". It is the word by which Hebrews describe a husband's house, which is a safe shelter for the bride. The word was used by Naomi when to Ruth she declared: "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?"

She was seeking a husband for her daughter-in-law.

Boaz provided the menuchah for Ruth.

The land will provide the menuchah for Israel.

"Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah: for Yahweh delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. . . ." (Isa. 62:4).

So, in Issachar, Jacob saw Israel restored, bearing its burden (Ezek. 44:10), but married to the land, and rejoicing in the prosperity this state will afford.

In passing, it is interesting to note, that the only information we have in Scripture of Issachar as a person, is the record of his birth. Out of the rivalry developed between Rachel and Leah, the nation of Israel was founded.

—H.P.M.

Exhortation at the Den Haag (Holland) Ecclesia

WHY DID THEY DO IT ?

The Scriptures present many examples of men who were given grand opportunities in the service of Yahweh but who threw them away by foolish actions. This writer asks the question: Why did they do it?



One of the wonders of the Truth that draws us together, is the glorious unity of the Word of God. It is not surprising, therefore, that very often when we consider the readings for the day, we see the golden thread of truth linking them together. This is so despite the fact that they are drawn from three separate places in the Scriptures, and separated in compilation by hundreds, sometimes thousands, of years in time.

Our readings this morning (Lev. 9/10; Ps. 108/109; 2 Cor. 1/2) are no exception. In each of them one great fact stands out clearly: the frailty, the foolishness, of man. We may have to carefully examine these Scriptures to "dig out" this common factor. But that is one of the wonders, one of the delights of the Word: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honor of kings (such as we hope to be) is to search out a matter" (Prov. 25:2).

Nadab and Abihu

Their tragic history is set out in our first reading. It is a well-known story, the story of Nadab and Abihu who took "strange fire" and offered it before Yahweh with disastrous results.

At long last, the Tabernacle had been erected in the wilderness, for the purpose declared by God: "Let them make Me a

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

DAN : THE JUDGE

"Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for Thy salvation, O Yahweh!" (Gen. 49:16-18).



Dan's Significant Tribal Position

The children of Israel left Egypt a rabble of slaves; they left Sinai a properly-organised nation. When they encamped, each tribe, under its individual standard, occupied its allotted place around the Tabernacle. But, in addition, they encamped in groups of three at different points of the compass, so that the nation as a whole was divided into four separate divisions, comprising (like the New Jerusalem of Rev. 21:16) a foursquare encampment. At the head of these divisions were the standards of the four principal tribes: Judah, Reuben, Ephraim and Dan (Num. 2).

These four divisions were still maintained when Israel was on the march. Judah occupied the place of honor at the head, and Dan took up the vitally important position leading the group at the rear (Num. 10). Thus Judah attacked and Dan defended. Israel had at its head the tribe that symbolised he whom his brethren shall praise, and at its rear the tribe that stood for he who shall be the judge.

When the tribes encamped, Judah at the head of its associate tribes, took up its position on the East, in the fore-front of the Tabernacle, and Dan with its associate tribes occupied the northern aspect.

Both positions were of the greatest significance.

The Hebrew word for "east" signifies "the sun's rising," and it is appropriate that Christ should be styled, "the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:1).

The Hebrew word for "north" suggests the place hidden from human eyes, and the Bible usage of the term suggests that it is used to symbolise God's dwelling place, the great Unseen. From the dwelling place of God will come the great Judge of all the earth.

Promotion From the North

The Psalmist declares:

"Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor

from the south. But God is the Judge; He putteth down one, and setteth up another (Ps. 75:6-7).

If promotion does not come from the east, west, or south, it must come from the north. The Psalmist excluded the north from his comment, but added: "God is the judge". Surely it is not mere coincidence that on the north of the Tabernacle was stationed the tribe whose name is Dan, or the Judge.

If, to the Hebrews, the north signified the great unknown, and Dan the Judge was stationed at that position, would it not be a continual reminder to them that He Who dwelleth in the great Unknown is their Judge?

The Hebrew word for north comes from a root signifying "hidden", "dark", "unknown". In Isaiah 14:13-14 the north is associated with the throne of Yahweh; in Job 26:7 it is described as the place where flesh has not penetrated; in Job 37:22 it is said to be the mysterious direction from whence comes fair weather (or gold — faith, mg.); in Ezekiel 1:4 the Cherubim of glory are represented as originating from the north; in Isaiah 41:25, he who "calls upon Yahweh's name", and who shall trample the kings of the earth in judgment, is said to be raised up from the north.

Obviously the north is used in a figurative sense in these passages. For example, the Cherubim (the saints in glory) will not be manifested from the north, but from Sinai. But if the north is considered figuratively as the great Unknown, the place Hidden from human eyes, the location of the Throne of Yahweh, then it can be said that they come from the north. As a community, the Cherubim will have been "born from above" (John 3:3 mg.), and in that sense will have "come down from God" (Rev. 21:2). These same words apply to the great Judge of Isaiah 41:25. No matter to whom this prophecy may have applied to primarily, it obviously has relation to the Lord Jesus. But how can it be said of him that he is "raised up from the north"? Only in the figurative sense as suggested above. In that sense, Christ as Judge, will come from the north.

Is it not appropriate then, that Dan, the Judge, should have been stationed on the northern side of the Tabernacle? It would constitute a reminder to Israel that the Judge of all the earth would be manifested from the hidden place of Deity.

Dan will retain the northern position even in the Millenium. In the allocation of the tribal inheritances outlined in Ezekiel 48, Dan is placed at the extreme north of the Land of Promise.

It ultimately occupied such a position under the Judges. Originally, the tribal inheritance of Dan was located to the north-west of Judah, but due to enemy pressure, the land became too confined, and Dan had to seek territory elsewhere. This forced

some of the tribe to the extreme north where it annexed a portion of territory by driving out the inhabitants. The term "from Dan to Beersheba" then became expressive of the extreme north to the extreme south of the land.

Israel's Future Judge.

Jacob saw in Dan the symbol of the coming judge. Dr. Thomas has rendered his words thus:

"Dan, as one of the tribes of Israel, shall avenge his people. There shall be a Judge, a serpent in the way, an adder in the path, biting the heels of the horse, so that its rider shall fall backwards."

As the serpent strikes suddenly and swiftly, as the adder in the path is overlooked by the rider on a horse because he is lifted high above it, so the Judge will suddenly and swiftly avenge his people in the Age to come, by striking at the "horse", and bringing its "rider" crashing to the ground.

Zechariah, visualising the same time, spoke of how Israel under the leadership of the Judge, shall be an instrument to that end. He declared:

"They shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle; and they shall fight, because Yahweh is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded" (Zech. 10:5).

In previous articles in this series, we have pointed out that the horse is used in Scripture as a symbol of war. "Riders on horses" are those who are set in authority to guide the affairs of nations, particularly in their schemes of conquest.

In their ambitious plans, the mighty men of the nations overlook the coming of the Judge, as a rider on a horse overlooks the serpent in the path that is so far beneath his notice. But the menace is there, and in this case the serpent will strike to mortally wound the mount, so that its rider will be without means of continuing his conquest.

Thus Jacob, in pronouncing the blessing on Dan, anticipated the conquest of Gentile power, and the avenging of his people by the Judge.

The tribal standard of Dan, standing at the north of the Tabernacle, suggested how this will be done. It was an Eagle (Ezek. 1:10). The eagle is also used as a symbol of the Spirit, and it will be through the Spirit that judgment will be poured out upon the nations. Zechariah saw this in his vision of the great mountain that was reduced to a plain. The vision symbolised the destruction of Gentile power, and the prophet was told how this will be accomplished:

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith Yahweh Sabaoth" (Zech. 4:6).

By the Eagle, by the Spirit, manifested through Dan the

Judge. By this means will Gentile might be reduced to nothing.

According to the Greek, the symbol of the Eagle is used also in Rev. 8:13, and Dr. Thomas suggests that the judgments threatened against the inhabitants of the earth in that verse, were announced by the saints as an element of the Cherubim. It was on their behalf, also, that these judgments were poured out. John wrote:

"I beheld, and heard an angel (Gr. Eagle) flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"

The judgments thus threatened by the eagle reach into the future and extend to the time when the Kingdoms of this earth become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ (Rev. 11: 14-15). He, as the Judge, will complete the work of avenging his people through the spirit he shall wield.

Did Jacob see into the millenium as on his bed of sickness he spake of his son Dan?

There is not the slightest doubt that he did.

Having completed the blessing, he offered up a short, ejaculatory prayer for its fulfilment:

"I have waited for thy salvation!" he declared unto Yahweh.

That salvation will come from the one whom Yahweh hath ordained to judge not only His people, but to avenge them by the judgments he will pour out upon the world. The resurrection of Christ is the assurance that he is to return to complete the work of judgment commenced 1900 years ago (Acts 17:31).

—H.P.M.

I have seen enough of the surface of our globe to satisfy me that when finished it will make a sufficiently splendid and magnificent inheritance for intelligences of the largest capacities and most scriptural aspirations — substitute righteousness for sin, and perfect what remains unfinished in its wastes and barrens, and no better heaven need be sought than our earth, when the Lord is there.

—J. Thomas.

To invest at least a portion of this life's exertions in the life to come, is not an extraordinary feat of wisdom, and yet it is what few are equal to; and the result is—the cemetery, which to mankind in general is the ignominious goal, while to the servants of God it is but a temporary resting place, in which their short sleep is over before they are aware they were put there.

—R. Roberts.

authority, and order it to be in the corner for a time every day, while he listens to the Maker and Possessor of heaven and earth. The man — poor or rich — who acts not thus, is a fool; for what does the struggle of life amount to, apart from the attainment of that good which shall not be taken away? To a complete vanity! The poor man sweats out his three-score and ten, and lies down to be no more remembered. The rich man, by much contrivance, draws the coin from his neighbour's pockets, and, having scraped much to his corner, comes to his weary end, closes his eyes in disappointment, and dies like the fool with his barns, with a fearful awakening in store, when God, whom he has cheated, will mete out his portion of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary.

But of us? Let us be wise, observe the example, use our time worthily, and seek the promise of everlasting joy at the hand of the Eternal Spirit.

—R. Roberts.

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

THREE SHORT BLESSINGS

Gad: The Conquering Company

Jacob passed quickly over the next three sons who stood before him, pronouncing the blessings in few words that are easily understood where the Truth is believed. If the Israelitish hope of the Gospel is not comprehended, however, the significance of these blessings becomes difficult or impossible to grasp.

Concerning Gad, the patriarch declared:

"Gad, a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last" (v.19).

Gad means "troop" or "company," so that there is a play on words in this blessing, as there is in them all. The statement speaks of the domination of Israel by the Gentiles, but also the ultimate triumph of Israel "at the last." It takes us into the future when Israel shall constitute the battle-axe of Yahweh with which He will subdue the nations.

In Deuteronomy 33:20, where Moses also pronounces a blessing on Gad, reference is made to the one who will enlarge him. He is likened to a Lion, tearing in pieces and devouring the enemy,

executing the justice and judgments of Yahweh with Israel.

That one is the Lord Jesus. Under him, Gad will develop into a warrior company which will subdue those who have previously dominated Israel.

Asher: Supplier of Royal Dainties

The influence of Christ as Israel's chief, is even more clearly implied in the blessing on Asher.

"Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties."

Royalty must be present before the dainties can be delivered up, so that in these words is implied the presence of the King. Asher, in company with all the tribes, shall offer its tribute to Christ in the day of his earthly glory. Ezekiel saw them doing so, saw the tribes bearing their oblation to the Prince of Israel as a "royal dainty" (Ezek. 45:16). This oblation, or portion, will find its place in the Temple of the Age to Come to provide portion of the "feast of fat things" to be enjoyed by the Assembled worshippers in that day.

Asher, whose name means "blessed," shall be blessed with plentuous harvest, so that his bread shall be fat, and he shall be in a position to freely offer up the royal dainties expected of him.

As Jacob's eyes rested on these sons, his mind was filled with the glories of the future; he heard, as it were, the "shout of a king among them," and his lips gave expression to the great joy that shall be manifested when the Divine ruler shall be in their midst.

Naphtali: The Spreading Oak

The language in which Naphtali's blessing is expressed is much more difficult to understand. Jacob is represented as saying:

"Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words" (v.21).

It has been suggested that there is no sense in the symbolism of this verse, and an alternate rendering must be sought. However, the picture of the graceful hind, so sure and fleet of foot, so greatly admired for its beauty and grace, is surely an apt symbol for those who will bear the gospel of truth. The hind is used as a symbol for the multitudinous Christ who are the gospel-bearers to the world today, who "giveth goodly words." Naphtali, as a hind let loose, could therefore foreshadow the time when those words shall be common knowledge throughout the world.

Naphtali itself means "wrestling," and it is the Word that will wrestle and conquer the world ultimately.

However, others have rendered the blessing differently. Bochart has translated it:

"Naphtali is a spreading oak, producing beautiful branches."

The Concordant Version (and others) render similarly:

"Naphtali is an oak stretched out; the giver of products that are seemly."

The Hebrew words for "hind" and for "oak" are very similar, thus the totally different words in these alternate English translations.

The Oak with its widespreading branches is also an apt symbol for Israel, and appropriate to the blessing on Naphtali. His very name suggests the strength of the Oak and its twisting, clutching branches. Abraham dwelt under an oak and built an altar unto Yahweh (Gen. 13:18; 18:3).^{*} The oak suggests strength and permanency. In fact, the word itself signifies "mighty one." The picture of the mighty tree with extended branches under which can be found shade and shelter, is a familiar symbol for the Kingdom. Christ used it in his parable of the mustard seed. He explained that though this was the smallest of all seeds, it grew into the largest of herbs, in whose branches fowls could shelter, and in whose shade beasts could rest.

This was his picture of the Kingdom of God which will be set up after the wrestling (Naphtali) with the flesh.

The blessing of Jacob on Naphtali should be compared with that of Moses in Deuteronomy 33:24. Here the tribe is promised a numerous progeny—the branches of Jacob's blessing.

It is interesting to notice, in passing, that Naphtali was established in Galilee, the district which witnessed some of the "wrestlings" of Christ with flesh 1900 years ago, and which, in the future, is destined to see the light of glory shine forth from the same source after wrestling with the nations (Isaiah 9:1).

These three short blessings are therefore pregnant with meaning. Combined they tell this story: That there will be a company (Gad) of blessed ones (Asher) after the wrestling (Naphtali).

—H.P.M.

Some endure steadfast under all circumstances; some disappear from the scene of duty after a time. The interest of the latter (never very strong) in Christ himself seems slowly to die under the friction of life, till some offence given or crotchet introduced sends them off the straight path, and as the years go by, they disappear from their place. It seems impossible that this could happen to those who by the power of the Word closely held by, are enabled to see God. Where man only is seen, stumbling is sure sooner or later to take place, because of human weakness inside, and outside all around.

—R. Roberts

* "Plain of Mamre" (Gen. 13:18) should be rendered "Oaks of Mamre,"

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

JOSEPH : The Fruitful Bough

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall" (v.22).



The Increaser

His name means the "Increaser," his life typified that of the Lord Jesus, he was the favourite son of the aged Jacob, the blessing conferred on him was outstanding among those proclaimed by his father.

We can imagine with what love the eyes of the patriarch would have rested upon Joseph, as he recalled to mind the circumstances of this beloved son whom he had thought dead, but who had been restored to him again. Mentally he would have recalled the life of Joseph: the opposition of his brothers, the adversity he had experienced in Egypt, his ultimate triumph before the very ones who had condemned him, their submission as they humbly bowed before him.

It provided the background of the blessing he now poured out upon his son.

"Joseph is a fruitful bough." In what way was this fulfilled? From a tribal point of view he was a fruitful bough because portion of the blessing of the firstborn rested on him instead of on Reuben. He received a "double portion of the inheritance," the right of the firstborn (Deut. 21:17), so that the Scriptures record: "his (Reuben's) birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel" (1 Chron. 5:1)

Thus Joseph was represented by two tribes in the land: Ephraim and Manasseh. In the inheritance of the latter, Joseph was also represented on both sides of the Jordan, for a half of the tribe remained east of the river.

So Joseph became a fruitful bough, and "increased" in Israel. His brothers thought they had seen the last of him when they sold him to the Merchant men going down into Egypt, but instead he ultimately increased into two tribes to each of their one.

And Christ also, whom the Jews imagine they will see no more, will likewise increase into two; spiritual and natural Israel.

The Fruitful Bough

He is described as the fruitful bough of the vine. This is a beautiful symbol, well repaying the close attention of the student

of Scripture. Jotham described the fruit of the vine as that "which cheereth God and man" (Judges 9:13). How can it be said that wine "cheereth God"? Only when its typical meaning is understood. What is wine? It is the fermented fruit of the grape. How is it made? By first treading underfoot the grape, and then allowing the juice to ferment. Fermentation is a sign of life. Thus fermented wine is a new form of life obtained by treading underfoot the fruit.

What a glorious symbol for the new life in Christ—obtained by treading underfoot the flesh! Certainly such wine "cheereth God and man"! "The life of the flesh is in the blood," declares Leviticus 17:11, and the Lord, handing the cup to his disciples, described the wine as "the blood of the new covenant." Only the blood of a righteous life, manifested by treading underfoot the flesh, was efficacious for such a purpose. Wine, as new life, was a fit symbol for that, and "cheered God and man."

Frequently the vine is used in Scripture as a symbol of Israel. Consider, for example, the apt illustrations of Isaiah 5:1-7. The prophet declared that every care had been lavished on this vine by the Divine Husbandman, but when, at the time that it should bring forth fruit as a reward of such care, Yahweh found thereon only "wild grapes" (v.5).

Such a vine was useless to Him. He would break down the protective hedge, and allow the wild beasts to come in and destroy the vine that He had planted and tended with such loving care.

The significance of the parable is clear, the fulfilment plain. The nations, as wild beasts, swarmed down through Israel, uprooting the vine, and carrying its branches away.

But in doing so, they ate the wild grapes, and as such fruit is poisonous the nations were punished as they disciplined Israel. Thus the words of Yahweh through Jeremiah were fulfilled: "Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee" (Jer. 30:11). No nation can lay unhallowed hands on God's people with impunity. Even though they perform God's will by so doing, their real intention is to gratify their personal desire.

For that they are punished.

Jeremiah reminded Babylon:

"Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of Yahweh of hosts, though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel" (Jer. 51:5).

Ezekiel likewise represented Israel under the symbol of a vine (Ch. 15). He showed that the vine was useful for one purpose only: to produce fruit. Its wood is useless for furniture; it is not of much value as fuel; if it does not produce fruit it is thrown as useless in the fire to be consumed in a moment of time.

Israel must produce fruit to the glory of its Maker, otherwise it will be cast away as useless.

That is the lesson of the vine as presented by Ezekiel.

It is the same lesson as presented by Christ. He likened the Ecclesia to a vine. In John 15 he declared that every branch that does not bear fruit is taken away, and even those branches that do bear fruit are pruned by the wise Husbandman that the fruit might be improved.

What a valuable lesson! Here is the reason why the righteous suffer. The tribulations they experience comprise "pruning" that the fruit they already are bearing might be improved.

In this parable, the Lord declared:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."

He is the branch taken from the Israeli vine and transplanted again to produce a new vine.

He is the fruitful bough of Jacob's prophecy.

This is beautifully expressed in Psalm 80.

The Psalm speaks of the vine, taken out of Egypt, planted in the Land of Promise, whose boughs spread forth on every side. But the hedges were broken down; the beasts of the field ravaged the vineyard; the once beautiful plantation was ruined. So the Psalmist prayed:

"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 . . . Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand, upon the son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself" (vv. 14-17).

Here is a prophetic reference to the "fruitful bough" of Genesis 49. The "branch" made strong for Yahweh is "the man of His Right hand, the son of man whom He made strong for Himself."

The first word rendered "man" is "ish" in Hebrew, the second word is Adam. The "ish" (great man) at Thy right hand, is the son of Adam, the branch made strong for Yahweh's purpose.

So the Lord Jesus declared: "I am the true vine and ye are the branches."

"By a Well"

The vine is well watered in the sense expressed in Psalm 1. The Psalm speaks of the happy lot of the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, but whose delight is in the law of Yahweh, in which he meditates day and night.

Christ alone of all humanity fits the character of the man there described.

The spirit-word is the well of water, for the Psalm goes on to declare:

"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season . . ."

The turning from ways of wickedness, the daily meditation in the Law, comprises a well of water that must produce fruit. It did so in the Lord Jesus. Of him it is written:

"The spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh; and shall make him of quick understanding . . ." (Isa. 11:1-2).

The spirit is symbolised in Scripture as a well of water (cp. John 4:14) so that when we partake of the spirit-word we are imbibing the water of life.

The Concordant Version renders the phrase in Genesis 49:22 as "the joy of my eye." for in the Hebrew the word for "eye" and "well" are the same. As the eye produces tears, so the well produces water.

Whatever rendition we accept the application is beautiful. The picture of Joseph/Jesus as a fruitful bough drawing water from Yahweh's well is applicable; the thought that Joseph was the "joy of Jacob's eye" is equally so of the Lord in relation to his Father, for at his baptism the Voice from heaven described him as "My beloved son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

Prolific Branches of the Vine.

"Ye are the branches," said the Lord to his disciples (John 15:2). The branches of the vine comprise the Ecclesia, or, to use another symbol, the "bride of Christ" (Rev. 19:7).

Jacob saw them as "a great multitude whom no man could number" (Rev. 7:9), for he described them as branching out from the stem of the vine and running over the wall. Here was the full increase of the "increaser"!

But there is a very beautiful thought not apparent in the English version. In the Hebrew, the term "fruitful bough" is in the masculine gender, but "branches" is in the feminine. This is shown by the margin where the alternative "daughters" is given in place of "branches."

In short, we have the union of Christ and his bride (Eph. 5:25-27).

The Ecclesia is severally represented in Scripture as the brethren, the seed (Isa. 53:12), and the bride of Christ.

His offspring thus become his bride, as Adam's offspring was his bride. There was a wonderful unity in the marriage of Adam

When the boundless resources of the earth are administered, in the hands of immortal and noble men, for the good of mankind and the glory of the Creator, it will be a day of joy. Well might the angels rejoice in the prospect—Luke 2:13-14.

—Brother Roberts.

and Eve, for both could acknowledge God as their father. The antitype will be seen in the glorious unity to be effected between Christ and the Ecclesia in the age to come, both of whom acknowledge God as their Father. Then the words of Christ's prayer will be fulfilled:

"That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me" (John 17:21).

In that day, the completed vine will be in evidence in the earth. Jacob will see the antitype of his beloved son as "a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall."

H.P.M.

A Bible Truth Restated.

Why the Spirit Gifts were Withdrawn

The Gifts are Granted.

Fifty days after the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, the disciples were gathered "with one accord," in the City of Jerusalem, and, in fulfilment of the promise of Christ they were "anointed with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:1-4). The effect was instantaneous: "They began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). The great concourse of Jews, assembled from all parts of the world to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, not only heard the Gospel proclaimed, but proclaimed in the various tongues of the countries from whence they came.

This was but the beginning of miracles performed by the disciples. As it was said of Jesus that he was "a man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him" (Acts 2:22), so it was now true of his followers: "God bear them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will" (Heb. 2:4). The sick were healed; the blind had their sight restored; the disciples spake in foreign tongues without having first learned them.

These miracles were performed by the "gifts of the Holy Spirit." They comprised the seal of God on the testimony of the Apostles. They demonstrated that God was with them, and that the doctrines they propounded were true.

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

JOSEPH : Hands Made Strong

"The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob" (vv.23-24).



Grieved, Hated, Shot At!

In the hatred and enmity that Joseph experienced from his brethren, he foreshadowed the life of Christ. His brethren were the fathers of the tribes, expressed in Hebrew as "baaley chit-sism," not mere "archers," but "chief archers." They typed the leaders of Jewry who hated and grieved the Lord.

This is graphically expressed in Psalm 64.

Therein we have the breathings of the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. 1:11) as expressed by David the king. His words provide a commentary on the blessing of Jacob:

*Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked (cp. Gen. 49:6);
From the insurrection of the workers of iniquity,
Who whet their tongues like swords,
And bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:
That they may shoot in secret at the perfect:
Suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not,
They encourage themselves in an evil matter:
They commune of laying snares privily;
They say, 'Who shall see them?
They search out iniquities they accomplish a diligent search:
But the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart is deep.*

These words prophetically express the very atmosphere of intrigue and conspiracy that led to the betrayal and murder of the Lord. In their heartless opposition, the leaders of the people "grieved him, shot at him, hated him." Their bitter words sped like arrows aimed to hurt: defaming, reviling, false'y accusing him.

And typically, Jacob saw it all.

He saw that the battle was not one-sided, however. The Lord was not without weapons of defence and offence. His enemies felt the power of his wise words. His mouth was like a "sharp sword" (Isa. 49:2), rebuking, confounding, refuting, revealing the hypocrisy of his revilers, verbally cutting them down before the people. When he spake, words of power issued forth such as they could not answer, and such as they came to fear.

Therefore, they slew him and thought themselves rid of him. But he was raised from the dead, and taken into heaven,

there to remain for a time, "like a polished shaft hidden in the quiver of Yahweh" (Isa. 49:2).

And as Yahweh's arrow, he is to be aimed against his enemies. Psalm 64 speaks of this also:

*But God shall shoot at them
With an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.
So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves:
All that see them shall flee away.
And all men shall fear,
And shall declare the work of God;
For they shall wisely consider of His doing.
The righteous shall be glad in Yahweh, and shall trust in Him;
And all the upright in heart shall glory.*

These words are true of both Joseph and Christ; the triumph of the former foreshadowing the coming triumph of the latter.

Strengthened by Yahweh.

Jacob saw Christ the antitypical Joseph as one "made strong by the mighty God." Isaiah 49 shows how this was done. Yahweh formed him from the womb, to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to him. So declares the prophet, and the type is revealed in Joseph. He explained this to his brothers:

"God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance" (Gen. 45:7).

Joseph's help extended even to Egypt; so also does that of the Lord:

"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" (Isa. 49:6).

To accomplish this, Christ was strengthened that he might successfully battle against the flesh. He became "the son of man whom Yahweh made strong for Himself" (Ps. 80:17), "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). Paul declares: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

Christ conquered because God strengthened him for the victory. Without that aid he would have failed; for flesh unaided cannot triumph. The flesh was weak, mortal, fallible; but God who inhabited the flesh is strong, immortal, infallible. And by the indwelling of the Father, Christ gained the victory.

It is difficult for some to appreciate this. They feel that it confers what they term an "unfair advantage" on the Lord. But in so speaking, they fail to grasp the purpose of the Lord's coming into the world. He "came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). That is the purpose of his birth, his ministry, his death, his resurrection, his mediatorship, his return, to that end he was "a body prepared," born of a virgin, that the spiritual proclivities of the Father might be revealed. These were developed by study, discipline, training and the effluence of the Holy Spirit

without measure. Thus he became "of quick understanding in the fear of Yahweh" (Isa. 11:3).

And so he overcame.

The work of redemption, therefore, is pre-eminently a work of love on the part of the Father. "What the law could not do inasmuch as it was weak through the flesh, GOD DID" (Rom. 8:3). That is the wonderful fact of Christ's victory. God did it through him. It was a work of co-operation; the Father and the Son working in unison to provide a basis of reconciliation for helpless humanity.

When any speak of "unfair advantage," let them bear in mind that "to whom much is given, much is required." Perfect sinlessness was required of the Lord; and he revealed it because he drew heavily upon the sources of strength that were made available to him. He leaned on the Father; he also allowed the word to dominate him; he sought communion in prayer.

Thus "his hands were made strong by the mighty God of Jacob."

That is the lesson of his life, the lesson we must learn. We can find strength from such a Source also. Though we sin, God has made available for us the forgiveness of sins; though we are weak, He has revealed for us sources of strength; though we are burdened with the flesh, He has provided the means for us to rise above it. Drawing upon these means of strength, we can re-echo the words of Paul: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

"The Mighty God of Jacob"

"Abhir" (Mighty) is one of the titles of Deity. It is a significant title inasmuch as it is used only in conjunction with the word Jacob, or Israel. Like all the titles of Deity, its usage and meaning is not only extremely interesting, but also most helpful in advancing our knowledge and understanding of the Most High.

The word comes from the root "abar," signifying "to soar," from which is derived the idea of the lofty One, the One elevated above all else, particularly in the manifestation of power.

But why is this Mighty One associated with Jacob? There are good reasons for this. Throughout his life, Jacob was conscious of the overshadowing power of God, guiding him through all the manifold experiences into which he was brought to the final triumph when his name was changed to Israel.

God had appeared to Jacob at Bethel, and confirmed to him the blessing of the promises which had been made to Abraham, adding:

"And behold, I am with 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 " (Gen. 28:15).

Jacob appended his vow to this declaration:

"If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go . . . so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall Yahweh be my God."

Upon this theme, the late John Carter wrote beautifully, as follows:

The God of Jacob, then, is One who has promised to be with His people in all their sojourn, never to leave them in all the days of trial during which they may be the victims of the evil thoughts of their fellows as Jacob was of Laban's. The God of Jacob is One who, fulfilling His word, will bring the heirs of the promise to the land covenanted, with life preserved through unending days.

The Psalms when read with this background, are found to have a fuller meaning. David says (20:1).

*"The Lord hear thee in the DAY OF TROUBLE;
The name of the God of Jacob defend thee.*

In the troubled days of Hezekiah, when the Assyrian cloud covered the land, but when men of faith believed the message that God would deliver them, one could say (46:7):

*The Lord of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.*

There were faithless men at the time, as Shebna; but in the assurance of the victory of the righteous, Asaph sang (75:9, 10):

*I will declare for ever;
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.
All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off;
But the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.*

The same writer uses the title when he bemoans Israel's failure to secure the blessing because they would not hearken to His voice (81:1). There was no failure with the God of Jacob.

Human promises with the best of efforts are bounded by the limits of frail human life. What a magnificent contrast is that of Psalm 146, where the Lord's irresistible might to accomplish is put over against human weakness!

*Put not your trust in princes,—
Nor in the son of man,
In whom there is no help.
His breath goeth forth,
He returneth to his earth,
In that very day his thoughts perish.*

We quote these verses, and rightly quote them, to prove the mortality of man; but we miss the writer's object if we thus limit our meaning. We are not to put our trust in men; they are of small power and soon are dead. God knows no end to His years or failing of His powers. Therefore the Psalmist continues:

*Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help.
Whose hope is in the Lord his God;
Which made heaven and earth,
The sea and all that therein is,
Which keepeth truth for ever.*

The Creator is not a God afar off; He has come into close association with men; has revealed His truth which will not fail; and He has been proved in the experience of Jacob as a God Who neither leaves nor forsakes. If ours is the God of Jacob, the Beatitude of this Psalm is written of us. (The Christadelphian, 1940).

The references above are to the Elohim of Jacob, (except that of Ps. 146:5 where it is the El (Strength) of Jacob) that of Genesis 49 is to the Abhir of Jacob. But both titles reveal Him as One who has promised and will perform, as One who has revealed His truth and will not fail; as One who has power to redeem and will not leave nor forsake.

Jacob himself expressed this in an earlier blessing on Joseph:

"And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them . . ." (Gen. 48:15-16).

That was his experience of the "Abhir of Jacob."

The title occurs only a few times in Scripture. David was the next to use it. He did so in connection with the establishment of Zion as the place of Yahweh's rest. He spake of how he "swore unto Yahweh," and "vowed unto the Abhir of Jacob," that he would not rest until he found 'a place for Yahweh, a habitation (Heb. Mishkan—a dwelling place) for the Abhir of Jacob."

Both the Name of Yahweh and the title "Abhir of Jacob" are appropriate to the subject in hand. Yahweh is the covenant name of Deity; the name that guarantees the perpetuity of the seed of Jacob (Exod. 3:14). The "Abhir of Jacob" is appropriate to describe the One who would inhabit the Temple when it was built, for those who would come to worship would be the seed of Jacob. Whether Jews or Gentiles they are supplanters, and in constant need of the help of the Mighty One who is lifted up high above flesh.

Finally, Isaiah uses the title three times. In Isaiah 1:24 he joins it with the name of Israel. He makes reference to the future, and speaks of the Mighty One avenging Himself on His enemies and restoring Israel. Notice the beautiful language of v.27:

"Zion shall be redeemed with judgments and her CONVERTS with righteousness."

Zion's converts comprise the true Israel, the Jacobs of the flesh whose names are really changed!

In Isaiah 49:26 there is found the title: "I Yahweh thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob." Here the Mighty One is associated with the work of saving and redeeming.

Students of "Phanerosis" will bear in mind that the name Yahweh is prophetic. It is developed from the root Ehyeh, I will be, and points forward to what Yahweh "will be." In this place, Yahweh proclaims that He will be a Saviour and a near kinsman (or redeemer). He became both when He tabernacled in the flesh of the antitypical Joseph. The name Jesus is a fulfilment of this prophetic title, for it signifies Yah's Salvation. In Jesus, made in all points like we are, Yahweh becomes a near kinsman (Heb. Gail—Redeemer), with all the rights of redemption that are so beautifully brought out in the Law, and in the Book of Ruth.

Because the Lofty, Powerful One of Jacob is Saviour and Redeemer, Jacob shall be saved. Isaiah spake of this:

*Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles,
And shall suck the breast of kings;
Thou shalt know that I, Yahweh am Saviour.
And thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.*

Jacob's own lifetime revealed him as a supplanter because the Mighty One was with him. And the nation that stemmed from him shall supplant the Gentiles (as Isaiah declared) because the same Mighty One is with it.

The title thus used by Jacob might well be paraphrased: "The God whom I have found to be mighty above flesh, alike in His mercy and His faithfulness as also in His power to save and redeem, and whose overriding providence has caused me to successfully supplant my enemies, will enable the antitypical Joseph to likewise conquer over his enemies and bring succour to his brethren in need."

—H.P.M.

A Bible Truth Restated.

Why the Spirit Gifts were Withdrawn

(Continued from p. 74)

How the Spirit Gifts Were Bestowed

The modern world has become familiar with evangelists — men, women, and even children, claiming to possess miraculous gifts. Their stock-in-trade is usually a magnetic personality carefully groomed for the occasion, supported by a well-prepared background of music and oratory. Some time back, a ten-year-old child toured Australia from America, claiming to have the gift of God, and the power of miracle!

Such claims are blasphemous.

The Bible is quite specific as to the manner in which the gifts of the Holy Spirit were bestowed. The first essential was an understanding of the Truth. The idea of a man teaching the immortality of the soul and possessing spirit-gifts is quite foreign to the Word. The Jews of Peter's day had first to receive the Truth, and then the gift was later added (Acts 2:38). Secondly,

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

"From thence (the Mighty One of Jacob) is the shepherd of Israel" (Gen. 49: 24).



Christ's Parentage

Jacob saw the coming Redeemer of Israel as both Son of Man and Son of God. As the former, he made mention of him as the Shiloh, the Lawgiver of Judah, the great Ruler of the tribe whom his brethren shall praise (Gen. 49:8-10); as the latter, he saw him as the great antitypical Joseph, the Son of God. For in the course of his comments concerning the Mighty One of Jacob Who would sustain Joseph, he declared: "From thence (from Deity) is the shepherd, the stone of Israel" (v.24).

Jacob thus saw the Messiah as God manifest in the flesh.

As far as the Lord's fleshly descent is concerned, the words of Paul are to the point: "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah" (Heb. 7:14). As far as the Lord's heavenly origin is concerned, the words of Gabriel to Mary express the fact:

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1: 35).

This merging of spirit and flesh was necessary for the work Christ was to undertake. As Son of Man, he could sympathise with the limitations and infirmities of the flesh; as Son of God he derived the power to conquer the flesh. As both Son of Man and Son of God he was in a position to help and uplift suffering and sinning humanity.

Thus he became the ideal shepherd of Israel.

The Shepherd of Israel

The shepherd characteristics of Christ are a manifestation of the Divine characteristics of his Father, for God has revealed Himself as a Shepherd. Jacob well knew this for in blessing the sons of Joseph, he had declared:

"The God which fed (Heb. shepherded) me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads. . . ." (Gen. 48: 15).

The Psalmist, likewise, saw Yahweh as a Shepherd:

"Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (Ps. 77: 20).

"He made His own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock" (Ps. 78: 52).

"Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, Thou that ledest Jacob like a flock" (Ps. 80: 1. See also Jer. 31: 10; Micah 7: 14, etc.).

The tender care of a shepherd for his flock aptly illustrates the manner in which Yahweh overshadowed the affairs of His people. He guided them to pastures and fed them with His word; He protected them against the wild beasts (Gentiles) which would devour them; He disciplined them in love when such was needed; He taught them to hearken to His voice; He sent under-shepherds for their help who were capable of leading them along paths of peace to the still deep waters of life.

One of these under-shepherds was David, the shepherd-king of Israel:

"He chose David also His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the ewes great with young, He brought him to feed (Heb. shepherd) Jacob His people and Israel His inheritance. So he fed (shepherded) them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands" (Ps. 78: 70-72).

David the king knew the anxious care of the shepherd for the sheep; he knew how the shepherd had to anticipate the needs of the flock, how he had to watch over its welfare, guard it from danger, suffer privations for its benefit, risk his life in its defence, lead it with gentle caressing voice through rough and dangerous paths to the lush, grazing fields beyond.

He knew, too, how the sheep trusted him, came to rely upon him, recognised his voice and responded to it. The sheep is a defenceless animal, meek and submissive to guidance. It is the symbol of Israel.

Frequently in Scripture, the word "shepherd" has been translated "fed" or "feed." The feeding, of course, is with the knowledge of the word. Ecclesiastes 12:1 speaks of it as the "words of the wise . . . given from one Shepherd." Proverbs 10:21 declares: "The lips of the righteous feed (shepherd) many." In Jeremiah 3:15 there occur two words with the same meaning in Hebrew: "pastors" and "feed." "I will give you pastors (shepherds) according to Mine heart, which shall feed (shepherd) you with knowledge and understanding."

The King was expected to "shepherd" the flock in this and other ways. He was expected to "walk before the people" leading them to divine pastures (cp. 1 Sam. 12:2). And the people of Israel recognised this as the duty of their king. They praised David for the way he had manifested these characteristics:

"Thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel; and Yahweh said to thee, Thou shalt feed My people Israel . . ." (2 Sam. 5:2; 1 Chron. 11: 2).

In David we see the type of the "good shepherd" to whom Jacob referred in his prophecy. He leads the people, thinks for them, seeks their good, pleads their cause. David interceded in time of need. His plea is expressive: "These sheep, what have

they done?" he asked God. And he offered to lay down his life for the people: "Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, be against me . . ." (1 Sam. 24:17).

Yahweh My Shepherd

In Psalm 23, the title of Yahweh-Rohi (Yahweh my Shepherd) is applied to God. The name Yahweh comes from a Hebrew root signifying "to become." When it is used in conjunction with other words, such as in Psalm 23:1, it indicates what He is to become. He has always been the Shepherd of Israel, but the prophecy of Jacob, and the title found in the 23rd Psalm, proclaims that those Shepherd characteristics would become manifested in One who would reveal them to the full. That One is the Lord Jesus. The title is a promise that Yahweh will shepherd His people through this One. Of him Isaiah prophesied:

"He shall feed (shepherd) his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isa. 40: 11).

The shepherd had to endure much for the sheep, living frugally, accustoming himself to hardship, braving all weathers, giving first care to his flock. He knew little of the joys of companionship except the animals about him, which he guarded resolutely in time of danger, and for which he developed the greatest affection.

How beautifully the Lord manifested these shepherd-characteristics!

But there were other appointed shepherds who despised their honored calling. Against them the indictment of Yahweh thundered forth through the prophets. They are described as "greedy dogs, shepherds that cannot understand" (Isa. 56:11), shepherds who "destroyed and scattered the flock" (Jer. 23:1). The 34th Ezekiel lists their sins in detail. It is a strong reproof against the shepherds who "ate the fat, and clothed themselves with the wool," but fed not the flock (v. 3). They had not strengthened the diseased, nor healed the sick, nor bound up the broken, nor defended the flock, nor sought to bring back those who strayed (v.4). Instead, with "force and cruelty" they had ruled the flock, causing the sheep to become scattered.

The attitude of these shepherds was a denial of the great principles of God-manifestation as the Shepherd of Israel. Therefore, as Master of the flock, Yahweh proclaimed His intention of forcing them to make good His loss, and of punishing them for their negligence:

"Thus saith the Lord Yahweh: Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require My flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them" (Ezek. 34: 10).

But then follows the glorious promise:

"And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even My servant David (the Beloved—the Lord Jesus); he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd" (v. 23).

The Lord Jesus as Shepherd

The Lord drew largely upon the figure before us to illustrate his work among men. Time and again he referred to himself in his shepherd manifestations (Matt. 12:11; 18:12. Mark 14:27). He found the people as "sheep scattered because they had no shepherd" and he supplied that need by "teaching them" (Mark 6:34; Matt. 9:36).

In the glorious parable of the good shepherd, he described himself in terms which warrant much thought and constant meditation. "I am the door . . ." Often in the sheepholds the doorway was but an opening, and the shepherd slept in the doorway, thus forming a living barrier to any who would enter therein. "I give my life for the sheep . . ." This was the responsibility of the shepherd as David knew when he battled in faith with the lion and the bear when protecting his flock. "I know my sheep and am known by mine . . ." It is said that two flocks can be mixed together, but the individual sheep will answer immediately the voice of the shepherd, and separate themselves from the others and attach themselves to him.

Read the 10th John in the light of the following illuminating description from the pen of W. Thomson in "The Land and The Book":

"The shepherd goes before, not merely to point out the way, but to see that it is practicable and safe. He is armed in order to defend his charge; and in this he is very courageous. . . . Some sheep always keep near the shepherd, and are his special favorites. Each of them has a name, to which it answers joyfully; and the kind shepherd is ever distributing to such choice portions which he gathers for that purpose. These are the contented and happy ones. They are in no danger of getting lost or into mischief, nor do wild beasts or thieves come near them. The great body, however, are mere worldlings, intent upon their own pleasures or selfish interests. They run from hush to hush, searching for variety or delicacies, and only now and then lift their heads to see where the shepherd is, or, rather, where the general flock is, lest they get so far away as to occasion remark in their little community, or rebuke from their keeper. Others, again, are restless and discontented, jumping into everybody's field, climbing into bushes. These cost the good shepherd incessant trouble. Then there are others incurably reckless, who stray far away, and are often utterly lost. I have repeatedly seen a silly goat or sheep running hither and thither and bleating piteously after the lost flock, only to call forth from their dens the beasts of prey, or to bring up the lurking thief, who quickly quiets its cries in death."

Where are we among the flock of Christ? Do we keep closely to the shepherd hearkening to his voice? Do we recognise that safety is only sure under his protective care? Do we realise that we have no real defence of our own? Christ is still "the

great shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. 13:20), the "shepherd and overseer of your souls" (1 Pet. 2:25), the "chief shepherd" (1 Pet. 5:4), the one who can "shepherd us, and lead us unto living fountains of waters" and wipe away all tears from our eyes (Rev. 7:17). Let us ever remember that!

Shepherds of Today

In that pathetic scene recorded in John 21, where the Lord asked Peter: "Lovest thou me more than these?" (v. 15), two words constantly occur: "love," and "feed." The English translation obscures the fact that in Greek two different words are used for "love," and two different words for "feed."

In vv. 15, 17, the word used primarily signifies to "feed," but in v.16 the word means to "shepherd," involving the ideas of guidance, leading, disciplining, caring, protecting — all that a shepherd might do for the flock.

Thus Christ appointed Peter to shepherd the flock, and he, in turn, passed on similar instructions to others. In 1 Pet. 5:2, he wrote:

"Feed (Gr.—shepherd) the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

A responsibility rests upon shepherds and flock alike. The responsibility of the former is to truly shepherd the flock; the responsibility of the latter is to listen only to the voice of the Good Shepherd. If these other shepherds speak in different tongue, their call should be ignored. And how important it is for a true shepherd to warn when danger is about, and for the flock to heed the warning voice.

Only to the extent that we heed the voice of the Good Shepherd will we find a place in the flock he will gather together in one in the coming day of his manifestation.

All this is inherent in the title Jacob used. And Jacob the shepherd, who knew so much about sheep (see his striking words in Gen. 31:38-40), would appreciate what the title meant. He would understand that from Yahweh would come one who would lead Israel like a flock, would guide, protect, guard, even lay down his life for it, ultimately leading it to a safe refuge, to life-giving waters sweet and clear.

What breadth of meaning is condensed in a few words of Scripture!

H.P.M.

To teach the truth so as to receive the applause of pious sectarians would be to deprive it of all point, and to blunt the edge of the Spirit's sword.

—J.T.

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

THE STONE OF ISRAEL

The Vision of Beth-El

Jacob left the camp of Isaac fearful of the wrath of his brother, to endure the isolation of banishment for many years. He returned impressed with the power and mercy of God Almighty, greatly enriched materially and spiritually, to have his name significantly changed from Jacob to Israel (Gen. 32: 28).

Before he left the Land of Promise he had a remarkable and re-assuring dream.

He had reached the place called Luz. It was late at night, and he found the town gates closed against him. Tired and despondent, he lay down in the open field, resting his weary head on a stone which he selected for a pillow.

And then he dreamed.

He saw a ladder reaching from earth unto heaven. Angels were ascending and descending upon it, establishing a link between earth and heaven. He heard the Voice of God proclaiming a wonderful blessing:

"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 the east, to the north, and 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" (Gen. 28: 13-15).

What a message of encouragement for the lonely, despondent Jacob, driven from home by the hatred of his brother. No wonder he awoke refreshed, revitalised. The fears and anxieties of the night before had gone. He felt stimulated by the realisation that God was with him, and with renewed strength made ready to continue his journey, with the knowledge that he would assuredly return.

The stone upon which he had rested his weary head the night before, was now symbolic of the message of hope he had since received.

He set it up as a pillar, a memorial, and anointed it with oil. Such is symbolic of the outpouring of Divine spirit, and in so doing, Jacob testified that Yahweh would provide a stone as a Pillar, around which a spiritual Temple would be erected. As he set it up he declared:

"How dreadful (awe-inspiring) is this place! This is none other but

the house of God (Beth-el), and this is the gate of heaven . . . and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house . . . " (Gen. 28: 17, 22).

That Stone (emblematic of Christ) was the Stone of Jacob, surnamed Israel.

The Stone As A Symbol

Christ is the corner stone around which the spiritual Temple must be fitted, to provide the habitation of God through the spirit (Eph. 2: 22). He is the antitype of the Stone of Beth-el. He told Nathanael that in him will be seen the fulfilment of the prophetic vision: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and as the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John 1:51).

He came in that capacity, but flesh took no pleasure in the Stone of Yahweh's providing. It refused to conform to the pattern he laid down, and desiring to rid itself of the embarrassment of having such an example ever before it, flesh rejected his claims.

Christ became "the stone the builders rejected" (Ps. 118: 22). He thus appeared in a dual character. He was "a sanctuary" to those who recognised his true status; but "a stone of stumbling and rock of offence" to those who followed the folly of the builders (Isa. 8: 14).

But God is not mocked. If men set aside the Stone He has provided to form the pattern of His spiritual Temple, they do so at their own peril. In the words of Hebrews:

"There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10: 26, 27).

Christ expressed the matter thus:

"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? Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. 21: 42-44).

His words are true of both individuals and nations. He is the nucleus of the Stone that will smite the Image and reduce the nations to powder (Dan. 2), and which shall then grow into a mountain filling the whole earth.

He is the stone seen by Zechariah and associated with Joshua (Jesus) the high priest. Zechariah saw in vision Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor (both types of Christ in his different capacity), presiding over the building of the Temple, labouring in the face of trouble and opposition to establish a Divine place of worship.

They were, he declared, "men of sign" (Zech. 3: 8 -- mg). He described how that into the Foundation Stone were

engraven "seven eyes" emblematic of the multitude of the redeemed united as one with Christ. They constituted "the eyes of Yahweh which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. 4: 10).

But Zechariah described the Lord not only as the foundation stone, but the headstone as well (cp. Zech. 3: 9 with 4: 7). He is the "author and finisher of our faith," the "alpha and omega" of the purpose of God. Without him there is no strength or beauty; with him there is both.

Peter saw him as "a chief corner stone, elect, precious" and "he that believeth in him shall not be confounded" (1 Pet. 2: 6). He saw the Ecclesia as living stones, built up together as a "spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." As the indwelling presence of the Divine glory gave significance to the Tabernacle and Temple, so the manifestation of Divine glory by saints shows that He also dwells with them. Peter emphasised the purpose of the Divine call: "That ye should shew forth the virtues of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2: 9).

This is "none other than the house of God," to use the words of Jacob.

The Lord Jesus is the anointed pillar of that house (Beth-El).

He is the Stone of Israel, of him who will be a Prince with El.

This was the vision of Jacob as he blessed his sons just prior to his death. He saw the Divine paternity of the Lord Jesus (from thence from the El of Israel is the Stone), he saw him as the antitype of the stone he had set up so many years before after having received the blessing from on high. And bearing that in mind, he launched into a dissertation upon that blessing, expressing in words the mercy he had received from God, and in prophetic language showing how that it would converge on the glorious antitype of Joseph, the Lord Jesus Christ. But we must reserve comment on that until a more convenient season.

—HPM.

THE END IS IN SIGHT!

Soon the fight will be over, and the race run; and who shall tell the consolation that awaits the victory of "him that overcometh"? Christ will confess him, the angels will rejoice with him, and a multitude of true brethren will give thanks to God for his triumph. Glory will rest upon him, honour will be poured upon him, and life granted him for length of endless days. A crown will be placed upon his head; the sceptre of righteous rule in his hands; and an exhaustless bounty of blessing placed at his command for those whom his iron rod shall rule. In the strength of immortal vigour, and the joy of the mantling spirit, and the possession of all divine excellence, he will forget the sorrows of this age of sin except as the background of his eternal joy; and will give thanks to God for evermore that he was privileged to know and do the will of God in the day of his dishonour and shame.

—R.R.

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

Abundance of Blessing for Joseph

"The God of thy father shall help thee; the Almighty shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren" (Gen. 49:25-26).



The Blessings of Shaddai

Blessings were showered upon Joseph, not merely because he was the favored son of Jacob, and righteous in his ways, but because he typified the great Increaser who should come, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The blessings were to flow from the "God (El or Strength) of Jacob," also styled the Almighty, or Shaddai.

Upon this title of Deity, Brother Thomas wrote powerfully and at length in "Phanerosis." Abraham, Isaac and Jacob worshipped God as El Shaddai (God Almighty), and not as Yahweh (Exod. 6:3). El Shaddai signifies "The Strength of the Powerful Ones," for Shaddai is plural in Hebrew. The patriarchs did not worship the Powerful Ones, the angels, however, but the Mighty One Whose strength was manifested in and through them.

Three of these Shaddai had appeared unto Abraham, and announced the impending judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, and two of them had executed it in an outpouring of destruction on the guilty cities.

But those same angels who overwhelmed those cities with terror and death, also overshadowed Abraham's life for good. To him they were "gracious, and abundant in goodness and truth"; to the Sodomites they would "by no means clear the guilty," but visited their iniquity upon them.

In both aspects they manifested attributes of Yahweh (Exod. 34:6-7).

Jacob had likewise experienced the goodness of Yahweh, manifested through His angel, who had "redeemed him from all evil" (Gen. 48:16).

Examples such as this illustrate the two sides of God's character. He is merciful and forgiving, but just, and will not overlook the guilty if they persist in their wickedness. We can

make Him what we like. If we are pliable to His requirements, and seek to please Him, He will be kindly disposed towards us, and His loving arms will encircle us for good, bringing us through all the vicissitudes and trials of life to ultimate victory.

But if we are rebellious, He will reveal Himself to us as stern and implacable. The Psalmist declared:

"Yahweh recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyesight. With the merciful Thou wilt shew Thyself merciful; with an upright man Thou wilt shew Thyself upright; with the pure Thou wilt shew Thyself pure; and with the forward Thou wilt shew Thyself forward. For Thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks" (Psa. 18:24-27).

The records of the Bible illustrate this truth time and again. The same God Who was merciful to some was stern and unyielding to others. He was merciful to those who sought Him in truth; He extended punishment to those who flouted His goodness.

This dual aspect of Yahweh's character is expressed in the title El Shaddai, for Shaddai is a plural noun, derived from a root signifying either Nourisher or Destroyer.

It can signify both, for He is both.

He is a Nourisher to such as Abraham; He is a Destroyer to such as the Sodomites.

In either case He is Powerful, and He manifests His power through His angelic agents who are the Shaddai.

And the blessing pronounced on Joseph, and through him to the antitypical Joseph was: "He (The Strength of Shaddai) shall help thee."

Both had access to a source of power of which most others are ignorant. Thus Christ could say: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" The Shaddai were at his command, and would have obeyed his call for help. For the sake of humanity he submitted to the cross.

Blessings of Heaven Above and The Deep Beneath

To Joseph was granted the blessings of the firstborn as far as inheritance was concerned. We discussed this in earlier articles. Thus he was represented among the tribes of Israel by two divisions (Ephraim and Manasseh) instead of one.

The blessings of heaven above and the deep beneath were also granted him. From the former comes the blessings of rain and dew; from the latter come the deep springs of water that are capable of sustaining life in drought.

Both symbolise the doctrines of Truth.

Moses declared:

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew,

as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass" (Deut. 32:2).

He was speaking of the refreshing and reviving influences of the doctrines of Truth; how they feed the tender grass which elsewhere is likened to flesh (Isa. 40:6). He showed that the time would come when Israel's rulers would so dispense helpful knowledge as to be likened to the gentle "dropping of dew" (Deut. 33:28). "They shall come down like rain upon the mown grass" declared the Psalmist (Ps. 72:6), speaking of how Christ shall send his teaching throughout the world through means of his elect, after flesh has been mown down by the disciplinary judgments of Armageddon.

In another place, the Psalmist spake of the righteous as a "tree planted by the rivers of water" (Ps. 1:3). Here is a reference to "the blessings of the deep that lieth under." The roots of the tree must dig deep into the soil to obtain the life-giving water. Christ used the same symbol; he spake of the doctrines that he delivered unto men as the thirst-quenching waters of a well that would spring up into everlasting life (John 4:14).

So, the blessings of heaven above, and the deep that lieth under, point to the way of life that is shut up in the doctrines of Truth. They come from above; we must dig deep to obtain them. But once obtained, no blessing is equal to what they provide.

They were conferred on Joseph, and as he was a type of Christ, so they are revealed in the Lord Jesus. To him we must go if we would drink deeply of the water of life.

Blessing of a Numerous Progeny

"Blessings of the breasts and womb," were promised to Joseph and his antitype. This implies a numerous and healthy progeny. As far as Joseph was concerned, the blessing was fulfilled in the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh whose combined descendants were more numerous than any of the other sons of Jacob (Num. 1).

But antitypically, the fulfilment is seen in the progeny of the Lord Jesus. The Ecclesia comprise the "children whom God hath given him" (Heb. 2: 11-14), and constitute him the Father of Eternity (Isa. 9:6), the "Author of life" (Acts 3:15 — mg). From him will come that "great cloud of witnesses," the "great multitude whom no man can number" (Rev. 7:9) who will pay homage to the Lamb for that he has redeemed them.

So, of him, it is prophetically declared: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days. . . ." (Isa. 53:10). Though "cut off in the midst of the years," though his murderous contemporaries boasted that he would not have generation or posterity (see Isa. 53:8), he is

the head of a numerous family, whom he has brought to the birth, and whom he nourishes.

The blessings of Joseph thus reach down to him.

Surpassing Blessings

The enthusiasm of Joseph on behalf of his favorite son, found expression in the glorious language of v.26. "The blessing of thy father hath prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors," he declared. Doubtless his mind went back to the fear-filled night at Peniel, when he had wrestled with the angel, and demanded and received a blessing. "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed," he was told. The words can be rendered: "He who strives with God and prevails will certainly prevail with men" (Gen. 32:28).

Jacob had striven with men, and prevailed, above his progenitors. He had striven with God and prevailed, also above his progenitors. And in the blessings now pronounced upon Joseph, there was an increase over those given to Abraham and Isaac. They "surpassed" the previous blessings, as the Hebrew word "gabar" (prevailed) is rendered in the "New-Old Testament." They were blessings that extended to eternity, to the "bounds of the everlasting hills."

They were to come down on "the head of the Increaser," on the "crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

The word "lether," rendered "separate" is used for both a Nazarite or a Prince. Both titles are significant; both have an application to the Lord. The Nazarite vow (see Num. 6) separated a person from the rest of the community, that he might devote himself exclusively to Yahweh. It made a priest of a layman during the time of his vow, and thus foreshadowed the priestly work of the layman, the Lord Jesus Christ (cp. Heb. 7:12-14).

But the word also denotes one separated for duty of rulership, so that bound up in the significance of this word is the title of king-priest. The Lord Jesus is yet to assume that role of honour; yet to be revealed before his brethren as the great King-Priest of the age to come. They know him only as the one from whom they separated; they shall yet see that the separation was for a purpose, and as the brethren of Joseph were forced to bow down to him, so will they be forced to bow down before him who was set at nought of them so long ago.

—H.P.M.

We will have no fellowship with men "who hold the truth in unrighteousness," and they are guilty of this "who preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, but of envy and strife;" and who do not live as citizens worthily of the gospel of Christ.

—J. Thomas.

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

BENJAMIN : The Wolf

"Benjamin shall raven as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil" (Gen. 49:27).



Rachel's Son of Sorrow

The youngest of Jacob's sons now stepped forward to receive the prophetic blessing of his father. Benjamin was the second and last son of Rachel, the greatly beloved wife of Jacob.

Tragic circumstances marked his birth. Jacob was travelling south from Beth-el to Ephrath, when the pangs of childbirth came suddenly and violently on Rachel. She travailed in hard labor, and notwithstanding the assurance of her midwife, she despaired of life as she gave birth to her second son.

As the expiring mother looked upon the new life to which she had given birth, she named her son Ben-oni.

And then she died.

Jacob had paid a heavy price for this, his twelfth son.

But the baby boy became the comfort and joy of his father, and he renamed him Benjamin.

Ben-oni signifies: *The son of my sorrow*; Benjamin signifies: *The son of my right hand*.

He proved the former to his mother; he was the latter to his father.

Typical of the Lord

In the drama of Benjamin's birth, there is foreshadowed that of the Messiah. In Matthew 2:18, Israel after the flesh is likened to Rachel, and Christ was "Ben-oni" to such. They saw him only as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." His very birth was accompanied by pain and travail to the nation, for the monstrous and inhuman Herod, ordered the massacre of the children of Bethlehem, and the "weeping of Rachel" was heard throughout the land.

It was but the beginning of sorrows for the nation.

The trouble and anguish of the times became the birth-pangs of Christianity, but they resulted in political death to the nation (Rom. 11:15).

Thus to Jewry, the Lord Jesus was only the Son of Sorrow, but to His Father in Heaven He became the Son of His right

hand. The Psalmist speaks of Him thus:

"Let thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand, upon the son of man, whom Thou madest strong for thyself" (Psa. 80:17).

Did Jacob see the significance of this type? We are not told. We are convinced, however, that the patriarchs comprehend much more than many are prepared to give them credence for. The very place-names, where the birth of Benjamin took place, are full of significance:

"And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath (fruit-bearing), which is Bethlehem (the House of Bread" (Gen. 35:19).

Some 1900 years later, in the House of Bread (Bethlehem) there was born Him who is the bread of life. The record continues that Jacob "spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar," or "the Watchtower of the Flocks." It was here that the shepherds saw the heavenly host when Christ was born, and heard them sing the song of praise because of the "fruit-bearing" that had taken place in the adjacent town (Luke 2:8).

The Wolf and The Prey

As Benjamin stood now before his aged father, who was soon to close his eyes in death, did thoughts of that time flash through the mind of Jacob? Did he see Benjamin as typical of the Son of God's Right Hand, to provide comfort and joy to his Father?

In the blessing that he now pronounced, he described him as a wolf, devouring the prey and dividing the spoil.

The wolf is noted for its ferocity, and as such became an apt emblem for the tribe of Benjamin, which became noted for its skill in war, and the ferocity with which it engaged in it (cp. Judges 3:15, 5:14, 20:16, 1 Sam. 8:20, 9:1, etc.). It is also an apt emblem for the antitypical Benjamin, for Christ at His coming will manifest the "fierce anger of Yahweh." He will devour the prey. Zephaniah declares:

"Therefore wait ye upon me, saith Yahweh, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy" (Zeph. 3:8).

Jacob saw the prey being devoured "in the morning," and the spoil being divided "at night," or in the evening. This could well represent the same time. The morning of Zion's day, when the Sun of Righteousness will arise (Mal. 4), will be the evening of Gentile ascendancy, when its sun will go down. In a secondary sense, the prophecy can take us to the end of the Millennium. At its beginning, "the morning," the prey shall be devoured,

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and at its end, "the evening," there will be an apportionment of booty to all who shall attain unto that age.

The prophecy thus anticipates the ultimate victory that shall come to the Son of Yahweh's Right Hand. Jacob was able to look beyond the time of trouble that he realised would come upon the nation which would develop from him, and see to the time when there would arise one, who would be the Son of His Father's Right Hand; who will arise to conquer and destroy the enemies of Israel; and who will divide the spoil among the favoured sons of Israel.

On this high note of hope, Jacob's blessings ceased, and he gave instructions to his sons concerning his impending death and burial.

—H.P.M.

Present Possession of Holy Spirit Gifts?

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

"The gift of 'discerning of spirits' refers to discerning of demons, of which there are many kinds. One girl had a 'spirit of divination' for example. It is foretold that in the last days 'some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons.' A study of the language of the New Testament makes it clear that the people of that day believed in demons, evil spirits which possessed people. The language of Jesus and the disciples being exactly the same likewise proves they also believed there were such things. People of the lands of Africa, India and many other places still believe it. The Bible emphatically upholds the fact of their existence. 'Demons fear and tremble.' Not demoniacs, as the Bible always called the possessed persons, but demons, the ones possessing."

From a Correspondent.



To the majority of our readers, the above question would appear to be more appropriate for inclusion in the "Herald of the Coming Age" rather than in "Logos." It would not appear here except for two reasons: 1—It is in answer to our articles on the Holy Spirit gifts; 2—It comes from the pen of a one-time Christadelphian.

In regard to the latter, it is a sad illustration of how a slight deviation from Truth can ultimately result in a total departure

Jacob's Prophecy of the Last Days (Gen. 49)

Concluding Comments

"All these are the twelve tribes of Israel; and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them" (Gen. 49:28).

A Play On Words

There is little more for us to say upon the theme of Jacob's blessing. It was preceded and followed by actions of the greatest significance — such as the bestowing of a stretch of territory from out of the Land of Promise to Joseph, who has never yet seen it, and has yet to inherit it (Gen. 48:21-22); and the explicit instructions concerning his own burial in the Land (Gen. 49:29-30).

We do not intend to expound upon these matters. They form part of the typical foreshadowings of the patriarchs of which Genesis is so full. Brother Thomas, in "Elpis Israel," has written in an interesting manner on these themes, and concerning these two incidents, and to his writings we direct the readers.

But in summarising the blessings of Jacob, we refer again to the remarkable play on words contained therein. The following epitomes illustrate this:

REUBEN (See a son) is shown that pride in the son of flesh is misplaced.

SIMEON (Hearing) and LEVI (Joining) are found hearing and joining in an ungodly conspiracy.

JUDAH (Praise) will receive praise for valor and rulership.

ZEBULUN (Dwelling) will dwell in peace with his enemies.

ISSACHAR (Reward) will receive the reward of a pleasant land.

Dan (Judge) shall judge the nations.

Gad (Troop) shall chase the enemy as a troop.

ASHER (Blessed) shall be blessed with luxuries.

NAPHTHALI (Wrestling) shall succeed and spread abroad as a twisted oak.

JOSEPH (Increaser) shall increase on all sides.

BENJAMIN (Son of My Right Hand) as the Son of the Right Hand shall apportion the loot.

These blessings foreshadow the purpose of God through Israel, as the verse quoted at the head of this article reminds us. But the term Israel comprehends more than the fleshly descendants of Abraham, for it includes the true seed of the patriarch as well (Gal. 3:29).

Jacob looked forward to that time, and saw beyond the trouble that would fall on his people, to the glory that shall ultimately be revealed. Paul describes him as a man of faith (Heb. 11:21), that is, a man who had a "confident anticipation of things hoped for" (v.1).

Like Moses, Jacob "saw the invisible" and "had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. 11:26, 27).

The Blessings Summarised

The blessings summarise the whole purpose of God in Christ. They show that the natural seed (Reuben) would be deposed because of the wickedness of the priests and leaders who would conspire against the Messiah (Simeon and Levi). He will, however, reign over them in due time (Judah), establishing peace (Zebulun). Then Israel after the flesh will attain unto the blessing of the land (Issachar), after the Judge has been manifested (Dan), and the enemy ejected therefrom (Gad). Thus they will be blessed with royal dainties (Asher), and shall spread their influence abroad like an oak (Naphtali).

But the greatest and richest blessings shall be reserved for the antitypical Joseph (both singular and multitudinous), even the Son of God's Right Hand (Benjamin) who shall prevail.

Conclusion

The blessings of Jacob should be considered side by side with those of Moses contained in Deuteronomy 33. The latter are even more interesting than the former in many regards, though one is the complement to the other. We may expound this 33rd chapter of Deuteronomy at a later date if sufficient readers express their desire for us to do so. In the meantime, we suggest that it be considered in the light of these articles, and Brother Thomas' comments in "Eureka," and elsewhere.

And may Yahweh bless the reading and study of His word.

—H.P.M.

We are living in the time of the end, when "the powers in the heavens" would be shaken, or the governments undermined; and when "the sea and the waves would roar," or the people become agitated with democratic swells and upheavings. The other part of the sign is a consequence: Men's hearts fail them for fear, looking for those things that are coming on the earth." The sequel will come at last. "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

—Brother Roberts