



THE COVENANT VISION

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**“Heaven and earth shall pass away:
but My words shall not pass away.”**

THE COVENANT VISION.

Editor: F.W.Dowsett.

In presenting this little magazine, it is not our intention to start up another organisation. Our only purpose is to present the Word of God in its fullness as we feel God has revealed it to us, in order that the God of our Fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob may be glorified.

It is our firm conviction that we are living in the very last days prior to the return and appearing of our Great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are also convinced that never before in the history of our nation and people has there been such a need for the "Watchmen in Israel" to 'sound the alarm' in order to awaken God's People to the urgent need to repent, and to return to God with all their hearts, and with all their minds, and with all their strength.

Denominational doctrines and differences are not our concern, and it is not our intention to enter into such arguments. There is not enough time left that we can afford to waste it on such unproductive, and indeed destructive exercises. We are concerned ONLY with what the Word of God says and teaches.

We proclaim the absolute necessity for all people to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour as the only means to Eternal Life.

We proclaim the absolute necessity for the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic people to recognise their inheritance, and their responsibility, as the literal descendants of God's people Israel.

We proclaim the absolute necessity for all who would faithfully serve God to 'receive the Power from on high'

(continued on inside back cover.)

Editorial

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given."

"And the government shall be upon His shoulder."

"And His name shall be called WONDERFUL,
COUNCELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING
FATHER,"

"THE PRINCE OF PEACE."

"Of the increase of His government and peace,
there shall be no end, upon the Throne of David, and
upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with
judgment and with justice from henceforth even for
ever."

"THE ZEAL OF THE LORD OF HOSTS WILL
PERFORM THIS."

There never was a time nor will there ever be a time, when man or any of his agencies could offer such a policy of blessings as that which we have just read. But the sad truth is that this coming Christmas, as with all previous Christmases, the whole emphasis of this profound and world-shattering message will be virtually restricted to the first line only.

The supreme miracle and wonder of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ into the sphere of His earthly people is not questioned. The importance of this event can never be over-emphasised. But what does come into question is the fact that the childhood of Christ has been made to supplant, or overshadow, His Kingship. And I am not talking about the reign of Christ in our hearts. This is NOT the Kingship spoken of in this and other similar passages. The Throne of David is not now, not will it ever be, in your heart or mine. When we

study the above verses, it is completely apparent that God is speaking of a Kingship and a form of government as real and actual as the ground beneath our feet. He is speaking of the supreme excellence of His form of Government, which by contrast shows the present forms of earthly government to be exactly what they are; shams, counterfeits, the products of evil powers, evil men, and evil desires.

And the inclusion of this promise within the overall statement made, indicates quite clearly that the coming and the fulfillment of Christ's Kingship and rulership is absolutely as certain as His first coming and childhood.

What is mostly overlooked is the full significance of Christ's birth. When the question is asked as to why He came at all, the standard, and indeed the only answer given is that He came to save sinners. Quite so! But never let us overlook the fact that this was only ONE of the reasons. Luke 1:68 tells us that He came TO REDEEM HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL. He came to 'buy back' His people from the curse of the law under which they were divorced from their husband, God, and under which they had been made subject to national death. It was the first step in the rehabilitation of His chosen witnesses so that they could fulfil their God-ordained destiny of being God's servant nation through whom He intends to bring blessing to all the nations and families of the earth.

The very nature of the promises recorded in our reading make it imperative that we understand their significance.

Christmas is NOT a season for looking back. It is a LOOKING FORWARD season when we look for the return of this WONDERFUL COUNCELLOR, this PRINCE OF PEACE, this MIGHTY KING who will in the very near future rule over us in complete justice and righteousness.



THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

by F.W.DOWSETT.

PART 1.

INTRODUCTION.

There can surely be no doubt but that the most important subject in the entire Bible is THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Some may immediately react to this statement by claiming that the most important subject is personal salvation. But a moment's thought should clarify this position. Personal salvation, or being 'born again', is the qualification needed to gain access into the Kingdom of God. Jesus said to Nicodemus, in John 3:3 and 5, that 'except a man be born again,' and 'is born of water and the spirit', he cannot see, or enter, the Kingdom of God. It must then be obvious that if personal salvation is necessary to gain access into the Kingdom, then it must hold a position of lesser overall importance than the Kingdom itself, simply because the conditions of qualification cannot be greater than the thing to which it qualifies us, just as the university is much greater than the examination that qualifies entry into it. It is a most unfortunate fact that most Christians view the Kingdom of God as merely a 'spiritual condition' within their own hearts, and thus have absolutely no concept whatsoever of the scope and the majesty and the extent of God's Kingdom. This erroneous view has obviously arisen from the unfortunate translation of Luke 17:21 which is given as;

"...for behold, the Kingdom of God is within you."

The word translated "within", if you check the marginal reference, means not "inside" you, but "among" you, i.e., "in the midst of you".

Lest there be any misunderstanding at this point, let me state quite emphatically that to each and every individual, personal salvation is of prime and absolute importance. Without this fundamental and basic qualification, all the head knowledge of the Kingdom of God, and all the technical knowledge of Theology and the Bible will be of absolutely no avail. We are saved by the grace of God through faith, not by knowledge or works, as God's Word tells us in Ephesians 2:8-9. But this is only the first step. Thus are we born. Thus do we become 'babes' in Christ. But one of the saddest aspects of the Christian Faith is to see the countless millions of 'babes in Christ' who are still in their cots and prams, and still feeding on 'the milk of the Word', and still playing with their 'spiritual rattles'. How few there are who go on to maturity, and grow up into manhood, into the full stature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It doesn't take much study, as the reader will discover, to realise that the Kingdom of God covers every aspect of the Bible. There is not one subject, or one teaching in the entire Word of God which does not relate to this overall grand theme. In fact it becomes apparent that the Bible is in reality THE HISTORY BOOK OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. It relates its formation, its past, its present, and its future. It relates every aspect of its operation and its purpose. But it deals not only with the Kingdom itself as an entity, but also with the people who make up that Kingdom. It reveals both their strengths and their weaknesses, their successes and their failures, their good points and their bad points. It conceals nothing. But it reveals everything that we need to know in order that we might understand the Mind of God, and His glorious purposes for us here on this earth and beyond.

Thus there is no excuse for ignorance in respect of God's Will and Purposes. For everything that He intends us to know is revealed through the teachings which He has given to us relative to His Kingdom. It is the most important thing in God's plan. He formed it, He died for it, He redeemed it, He is going to return to it,

He is going to reign over it, He is going to perfect it, and finally, as we read in I Cor.15:24, He will hand it over to the Father as a completed work, made ready for the future plans and intentions of God of which we can not even begin to imagine or dream of. The glory and the wonder of it is that you and I have been given the opportunity of being a part of it all. No wonder Paul was led to exclaim in Romans 11:33;

"O the depth of the riches both of the
wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are His judgments, and
His ways past finding out!

For who hath known the mind of the
Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?
Or who hath first given to Him, and it
shall be recompensed unto him again?

For of Him, and through Him, and to Him,
are all things.
To whom be glory for ever. Amen."

DEFINING THE KINGDOM.

It doesn't matter what field of study or endeavour in which we are engaged, there are always rules and basic principles which must be adhered to if we are to be successful. The main problem seems to be that people are either too lazy, or else too impatient, to learn them. There appears to be an attitude that we can go straight into the 'heavy stuff' without any appropriate training or tuition in the basic fundamentals. In other words, everyone wants to be an expert, and alas, all too many project themselves as experts, without being prepared to spend the necessary time and care in becoming conversant with the basic principles. In human terms it is said, "If it feels good, do it." Unfortunately this is all too often transposed into the theological field as "If it sounds good, teach it." I'm sorry, but this is just not on. God's Word teaches us to 'grow in knowledge.' And in

order to 'grow', you don't start off being an expert. You start off with the simple things, the basics, and then, as you apply these principles to the Word, you become more and more proficient, and more and more knowledgeable. You learn to 'rightly divide the Word of Truth.' The important thing is that you end up with a knowledge of 'The Truth of God', and not of just 'the traditions of men.'

Our present study is no exception. So before we go any further, let us clearly define just what the phrase, and the words, THE KINGDOM OF GOD, really mean.

1. "THE." Most people probably wouldn't have worried about this word. But it is important to realise that we are not talking about 'any' kingdom. God is not referring to 'a' kingdom. If the phrase read, " 'a' kingdom of God" then it would imply that this was just one of many kingdoms and that we could take our pick as to which one He was referring. But it is clear that God is referring to a specific and particular Kingdom, and we need to recognise this basic fact.

2. "KINGDOM". In Hebrew, the word for 'kingdom' is pronounced 'mam-law-kaw', and means "dominion, estate, country, realm. The exercise of kingship over the realm."

In the Greek, the word is pronounced 'basileia', and means "the royal dominion, including the power and form of government, together with the territory."

In English it means "the dominion of a king."

3. "OF". The Greek word here translated 'of' means "belonging to, and coming from."

4. "GOD." Denotes and identifies both the origin and the Originator, and the Owner of the Kingdom, as distinct from the worldly succession of kingdoms as, for instance, described by the prophet Daniel.

6.

So putting all this together, we would say that THE KINGDOM OF GOD is a dominion which came from, and belongs to, God, and has a form of government, together with a country or territory, and is ruled over by a king. In other words, it is a LITERAL and PHYSICAL kingdom in the full sense of the word as we know it, and not just some spiritual condition, either in our hearts or anywhere else we might like to place it. Whilst it obviously has a spiritual aspect to it, as we shall see later, **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES CAN WE SPIRITUALISE THE KINGDOM OF GOD!!!** It is as literal a kingdom as any which have ever existed on this earth, and once we depart from this basic understanding of the Kingdom of God, we end up in all sorts of theological trouble. I think it would be safe to say that this one misunderstanding and misuse of God's Word has caused more division and disruption to the understanding of God's will and purposes than any other factor in the entire Bible.

There are at least seven different expressions used in the Bible in reference to the Kingdom of God, and I think we should examine these, as in total, they give us a very comprehensive insight into just about every aspect of this wonderful Kingdom.

The first reference to God's Kingdom in the New Testament is in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter three, and verse two. It is referred to as;

1. "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

It should be noted that this phrase is used only in Matthew's Gospel. It is not found in any other Gospel, nor in fact anywhere else in the entire Bible. The phrase literally means, "The dominion of the king, the sovereignty of which comes from heaven." (Dr. Bullinger in The Companion Bible).

It refers to the Kingdom in its state of development, as distinct from the Kingdom in its final state of perfection.

In other words, when the Kingdom is referred to as THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, it is being referred to in its developing phase. But when it is called THE KINGDOM OF GOD, it is being referred to in its perfected state.

Now I appreciate that this may be quite a new thought to some readers, so let us briefly examine it.

As already stated, the Kingdom of God is not some spiritual condition, but is a literal, physical kingdom. What is more, it is not situated somewhere in some nebulous place such as heaven. It is situated HERE ON EARTH, (which we will study later), and is just as literal as any other kingdom on this earth. The important difference is that it is NOT fashioned in the same way and under the same conditions as other earthly kingdoms. It is fashioned after the pattern of God's Heavenly Kingdom, the place in which He now abides. The same principle was used by God in instructing Moses as to the construction of the Tabernacle. In Hebrews 8:5 we read the quotation from Exodus 25:40;

"See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."

We also see how this 'pattern system' operates when we read Revelations 4:6-7;

"And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. The first living creature was LIKE A LION, and the second living creature was LIKE A CALF, and the third living creature HAD A FACE AS A MAN, and the fourth living creature was LIKE A FLYING EAGLE." (emphasis added).

Many students of the Bible have wondered just what these living creatures, or 'beasts' as expressed in

the Authorised Version, mean. If you turn to the second chapter of the Book of Numbers, you will read the deployment of the Nation of Israel as instructed by God. The nation was formed up in a square, with one of the four leading tribes on each side, together with two other tribes. Each of the leading tribes had their standard or ensign, so that there were FOUR standards flying, each with the ensign of the leading tribe of that particular section. The leading tribes were Judah on the east, Reuben on the south, Ephraim on the west, and Dan on the north. THE TABERNACLE OF GOD, with the tribe of Levi, WAS IN THE MIDDLE.

The ensigns of these leading tribes were;

JUDAH. A LION.

REUBEN. THE FACE OF A MAN,

EPHRAIM. A CALF OR OX.

DAN. AN EAGLE.

So we readily see that the description of the four beasts, or living creatures round the throne of God was the pattern of the formation of the Nation of Israel. In other words, the deployment and operation of God's Kingdom Israel was based on the pattern of the Kingdom in the heavens.

The fact that the phrase 'The Kingdom of Heaven' is used of the developing Kingdom, and not of the perfected Kingdom is brought out very distinctly in two of the Parables of the Kingdom. These are the parables of the dragnet, in which was contained both good and bad, (see Matt.13:47-50), and the parable of the wheat and tares, as given in Matt.13:24-30 and 36-43. Now we must ask ourselves this question. If the Kingdom of God is just a spiritual condition containing presumably only that which is good, or if it is God's literal and physical kingdom here on earth in its perfected condition, then how do the bad fish and the tares get into it??

*Send out of parable the
other fowls*

Matt.13:38 goes so far as to inform us that the tares are 'the children of the wicked one', i.e., Satan. How on earth do his children get into the Kingdom of God? Of course, the Bible doesn't say that they were in the Kingdom of God. It says that they were in the Kingdom of Heaven. (see Matt.13:24). Both parables are adamant that the bad or evil elements within the kingdom are to be removed from the kingdom at the end of the age. As Matt.13:41 puts it;

"The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity."

So we see that when the Bible refers to 'The Kingdom of Heaven', it is referring to the Kingdom of God in a stage of development prior to its perfection.

The sequence is quite enlightening. The 'children of the Kingdom' are in the world. Satan sows 'his children' among them. They grow together side by side until the time of the harvest, which is the end of this age. The tares, the children of Satan, are then gathered out of the Kingdom and destroyed. But the righteous, the children of the Kingdom, or THE SONS OF GOD, will then shine forth as the sun in 'the Kingdom of their Father'.

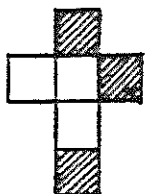
What a glorious destiny awaits those who truly love and serve Him. May this be the all-consuming goal of our lives as we wait for His appearing.

(to be continued).

ST. PAUL WAS RIGHT:

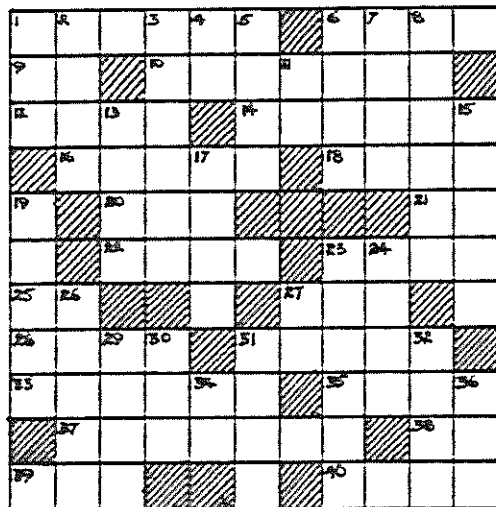
*'We wrestle against principalities, against powers,
against the rulers of the darkness of this world,
against spiritual wickedness in high places'.*

Bible



Words.

by F.W.D.



ACROSS.

1. Deut. 34:9.
6. Isa. 40:12-14.
9. Eph. 6:10-12.
10. Gen. 48:13-20.
12. Heb. 5:13-14.
14. II Kings 17:31.
16. Exodus 24:9-11.
18. Harp.
20. Prov. 19:12.
21. Covenant Vision (Init)
22. Gen. 35:21.
23. John 8:36.
25. Rev. 3:20.

Find the word in the reading quoted. Authorised Version.

27. I Cor. 13:12.
28. Isa. 30:8-10.
31. II Sam. 22:2-3.
33. Rev. 21:4.
35. Ezek. 25:14.
37. Rom. 16:22.
38. Matt. 10:32.
39. Gal. 3:7.
40. Rom. 10:17.

DOWN.

1. James 5:11.
2. I Chron. 2:3.
3. Acts 8:6 + "ed"
4. Luke 21:28.
5. I Kings 16:33.
6. Acts 27:24.
7. Joel 2:17-18.
8. Deut. 22:19.
11. Revised Version (Init).
13. Matt. 16:12.
15. Rev. 5:6.
17. Rev. 21:4.
19. II Thess. 3:16.
23. Deut. 7:6-8.
24. Matt. 12:20.
26. Matt. 5:38.
27. John 3:16.
29. Rev. 2:7.
30. Isa. 35:8.
31. Ezek. 17:22 (sing.)
32. Rom. 1:7.
34. Old Testament (Init).
36. I Cor. 16:13.

Divine Obedience

JOHN LOVELL

(Courtesy 'Kingdom Digest')

Satan has two favorite tricks. One is to cause Christians to become side-tracked, and the other is to camouflage the really important things with the unimportant, where Christians and churches are concerned. Every businessman receiving merchandise is well acquainted with the disgusting practice of railroads to side-track freight cars and lose track of them, thus causing his freight to be delayed days and in some instances, weeks and months. True, this is disgusting, but not nearly as much as to see a Christian side-tracked, spending his time on the relatively unimportant things while he ignores the main things. During World War II the term camouflage came into general use. At that time we were pastoring churches in Southern California where we had some of the largest industrial and defense plants in the country. These places hired specialists at great expense to camouflage their sprawling plants, so that enemy fliers flying at high altitudes would think they were seeing pastures instead of tops of buildings. This same thing is being done by Christians and churches who, instead of engaging in the main things, are camouflaging so that their activities appear to be genuine, when so often, actually, they are not.

This thought then leads us to the main thought of this message, which is that divine obedience to God and His laws and commandments represents the main thing, where the Christians and the churches are concerned. In other words, it is absolutely impossible for us to please God unless we do it through strict obedience to His divine laws, statutes, commandments, and judgments. The truth is, such a statement as this is rarely ever heard from the lips of a clergyman or the leaders of organized religion. Too often this main thing is side-tracked and the emphasis is placed on rituals, socials, forms, ceremonies, organizations, and other such matters. Mind you, these things are all wonderful and important, but the point is, they don't represent the main thing. The truth is, we have magnified worship, singing, raising money, and the other matters mentioned above, failing to remember that it is not these things the Lord told us to stress, but obedience instead.

For Heaven's sake, please do not misunderstand us. We are not even remotely suggesting that we are saved by our good works and through obedience to God's divine laws. Having had a Baptist background for twenty

years, one would know such a teaching would not come from us! We want to emphasize the fact that we are saved solely and wholly through grace by faith accomplished through the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. This is the way and the only way we receive the gift of God, which is eternal life. However, once we are saved then the primary thing is to obey, not in order to be saved, but because we have been saved.

The text quoted below has puzzled many people. What does it actually teach? What is the true interpretation? We do not want to frighten people who have been born again, making them feel they have not been born again. As indicated, we are not trying to teach salvation by works. This text does not even begin to hint at such things, nor do we mean to even imply such things. However, we do want to help you and feel that we can by explaining these verses to the best of our ability. Matt. 7: 21, 22, 23: *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

(a) LORD, LORD. This part of our text plainly emphasizes the fact that there are many people who have a clerical voice, whose voice shakes, quivers, is mellow and deep, a voice that uses the name of deity with reverence and awe, yet who, because they have become sidetracked and are camouflaging, are not ready to enter the Kingdom of Heaven simply because, instead of doing the will of the Lord by obeying His teachings, they have spent their time performing rituals, ceremonies, using high-sounding phrases, engaging in religious activities, fervently preaching the social gospel, being wolves in sheep's clothing, being false prophets, and false shepherds, and perhaps even being communists or pro-communists, instead of giving themselves to the Lord in regeneration and in consecration.

(b) ENTRANCE. In this text notice that we do not gain an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven by simply saying Lord, Lord, or engaging in religious activities, however good and important they may be. Instead, this entrance is gained by doing the Will of our Heavenly Father. At the time this text was quoted, there was no New Testament, thus the will of the Father could only have had reference to the Old Testament teachings, and His will could only have had reference to the laws, statutes, commandments, and judgments which the Lord gave to His people Israel to abide by. Please note that this text is not talking about heaven. Instead, it is dealing with the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, thus this could not

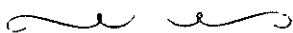
have reference to Israelites and their physical bodies who will still be on the earth and in the Kingdom after Christ arrives. So, then, this text could not have reference to this class of people being in the Kingdom. It has reference to non-Israel people who will be outside of the Kingdom during the millennium, in nations spoken of in the Bible as "outer darkness," and there will be many people in these outer darkness areas who have served under the Roman ecclesiastical system and other false religious systems, begging for admittance into the Kingdom of God on earth during Christ's reign. The Lord will remind them through His executives that they cannot enter by merely being religious, but must be willing to do the will of the Father, which is divine obedience to His simple teachings. This text also refers to our entrance into the Kingdom through the new birth, for Jesus told Nicodemus that before he could even see the Kingdom of God, he must be born again.

(c) OBEDIENCE. Please notice that this text stresses obedience, for the text declares, he that Doeth. Satan hates this expression. He does not want ministers or religious groups to connect obedience with their religious activities. Satan wants our religious leaders to emphasize the will of the Father as expressed only in terms of ritual, form, ceremony, organization, campaign, religious government, etc., etc. However, in this connection let us be reminded that the Lord declared to Israel that to obey is better than to sacrifice. In other words, the Lord had watched Israel as they let their sacrificial work become a mere form, a sham, and a ritual, if you please. He became disgusted with them, and told them that if that were the best they could do, then for heaven's sake to forget their sham and rituals and turn to divine obedience. Our clergymen and religious groups would do well to do this today, for we fully believe the Lord is utterly disgusted with our play-churches and with our emphasis on the relatively unimportant things, while we overlook the main thing.

(d) GOOD WORKS. The text reminds us that there will be people in the millennial age knocking at the door of the Kingdom of God on earth who have been with false religious groups where they have been carrying on intensive religious activities such as casting out devils, prophesying, and doing many other wonderful works. One would suppose that a religious-minded person engaged in such matters as these would have an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of God, but the Lord does not say so. We would do well, then, to examine our hearts and lives, and our church program now to see whether we are just playing church or obeying the Lord; whether our whole setup is based on mere sham, form, and ritual instead of obedience to the teachings of the Bible. In other words, instead of ministers trying

to impress the Lord by our clerical voices, our impressive buildings (mind you, there is nothing wrong in a beautiful building properly dedicated to the Lord and used for His glory), our complex organizations and financial powers, let us impress Him by obeying His divine laws, by giving up our consuming of filthy and unclean meats, by preaching sermons on the curse of charging interest on money, making bold the declaration that we are in favor of cancellation of debts every seventh year, and showing a genuine interest in the poor, the fatherless, the widow, and the orphan, which the Bible declares is pure and undefiled religion. These are only a few of the many things we could do in the way of divine obedience, which we honestly believe will impress the Lord far more than all the ritual and form in which organized religion engages today.

(e) DEPART. This text declares that the Lord will say emphatically and clearly to religious-minded people who know not the Lord, "*Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*" We believe this is one of the saddest passages in the Bible. Someone may feel that this Scripture has reference to somebody who was saved and then became lost. Not so, for in this verse the Lord declares that these who are asked to depart from Him, being workers of iniquity, He had never known, showing they had never been born again. We believe the Bible clearly teaches that when one has been born again, he is given eternal life. It is a gift from God. However, there are many people engaged in religious work through the world who have never experienced this new birth. So, it behooves us to examine our hearts, first of all to see that we have been born again; secondly to see that we are deeply and fully consecrated to God; and thirdly, that we are active and fervent in our efforts to proclaim and spread this gospel of the Kingdom in this crucial hour. The Lord has declared, if you love me you Will keep my Commandments. These verses should inspire us not to despise the commandments of God, but rather to Obey them. We are told to "*Occupy till He comes.*" Again we are told. "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do with all thy might.*" Again we are told "*Feed my sheep.*" These commandments should inspire us to become more active and zealous to give of our best, that this gospel of the Kingdom may be proclaimed more widely and effectively, and it will be if you do your part.



OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST SAID:

'If they hear not Moses and the Prophets neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead...' (Luke 16).

'Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me. But if ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe My Words?' (John 5).

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PART I.

As one studies the life and ministry of the prophet Elijah, it becomes apparent that we are concerned with more than just the account of the incidents in the life of this one man. In fact, the more we study, the more obvious it becomes that the various incidents in the life of this remarkable prophet were prophetic of future events and circumstances in the life of the very nation of Israel to whom he was sent. This prophetic application is the subject of this work.

But before we go into the details, it would be of considerable advantage to have some knowledge of the man himself, the circumstances of his times, and more especially, the times which led up to his ministry, the circumstances of which made his ministry so necessary.

There is some difference of opinion as to the dating of Elijah's ministry. Some put it down as early as 910 B.C., but most, including Dr. Bullinger, use the later period of about 822 B.C.. For our present purposes, the ninth century B.C., i.e. 900-801 B.C. would appear to be near enough. He was contemporary with King Ahab of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, King Jehoshaphat of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and prior to the writers of the prophetic books of the Bible.

A most striking feature is the fact that no parentage whatsoever is given of this great prophet. He is first mentioned in 1 Kings 17:1 where we read;

"And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab,
As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

He is not referred to as "Elijah, the son of so-and-so", as is the normal practice. The manner of his introduction is dramatic to say the least, as we will realise as our study progresses, and quite in keeping with the circumstances of his later departure, and still future return. In fact, the entire circumstances attending the appearances, disappearances, and reappearances of this prophet can lead us to no other conclusion than that Elijah was a very special, and especially chosen, servant of God. Yet he was a man just like us, and not some form of Angelic Being. This is attested to in James 5:17;

"Elias (Elijah) was a man subject to like passions as we are"

The word 'Tishbite' does not refer to the geographical or racial origin of the prophet. It means literally 'a sojourner, or priest.' So we find that this defines the prophet as "Elijah the Priest."

He wrote no books as did later prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, etc.. There is no reference to anything written by Elijah other than a letter referred to in II Chronicles 21:12.

Considering the importance of his ministry and message, it seems rather strange that it should be restricted to such a comparatively short portion of the Scriptures, in comparison with the space devoted to other prophets. But this should not surprise us, as some of the greatest truths in God's Word are notable for their brevity.

Even the word "Elijah" has quite remarkable features, which in itself marks the very special nature of this great prophet. We find that many of the famous men of the Bible had names which included the name "EL", which in Hebrew is the Name of God, and meant that the word GOD was included in the meaning of their respective names. Those of Dani-EL, Samu-EL, and EL-i come readily to mind. But the name ELIJAH is composed

of two of God's names. They are "EL" and "JAH" or JEHOVAH. Thus the name ELIJAH literally means "GOD IS JEHOVAH", or "JEHOVAH IS GOD." Truly a most remarkable name.

The name itself occurs 66 times in the Old Testament, or once for every book in the Bible. The Greek equivalent is "ELIAS", and this word occurs 30 times in the New Testament, giving a total of 96 references to Elijah in the entire Bible. The significance of this will not escape those who study and understand Bible numerics, being the product of 12 and 8. The number 12 is always associated with PERFECTION IN GOVERNMENT, for example, the TWELVE tribes of Israel, the TWELVE disciples who are to sit on TWELVE thrones ruling over Christ's Kingdom, the TWELVE foundations and TWELVE gates of the New Jerusalem, etc., whilst the number EIGHT is always associated with RESTORATION and RESURRECTION, for example, the EIGHTH day, being the first day of the new week, the EIGHT people saved in the ark. It is also the number of the Greek word for "JESUS", which is 888.

It is clear that God has left us in no doubt as to the importance of this great prophet in Israel, upon whom He has set His divine seal for those 'who have eyes to see and ears to hear.'

From secular sources, such as Josephus, it would appear that Elijah was the head of the School of the Prophets, formed many years previously by the prophet Samuel. This would equate in a general sense with the present-day Theological Colleges, although we can be thankful that it did not have the divisions and often God-dishonouring diversities of opinions and teachings which plague its present-day counterpart.

Elijah is one of the only two people in the Bible indicated as having not seen death. This subject is dealt with more fully in the booklet "THE RETURN OF ELIJAH" by the same author, so we will only look at the basic facts here. In II Kings 2:9 we read;

"And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, 'Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be TAKEN away from thee.' "

The Hebrew word here translated 'taken' is exactly the same word translated 'took' in Gen. 5:24, where we read;

"And Enoch walked with God. And he was not, for God TOOK him."

This same incident is referred to in Hebrews 11:5 which says;

"By faith, Enoch was TRANSLATED that he SHOULD NOT SEE DEATH; and was not found, because God had TRANSLATED him."

As a matter of general interest, the Apocrypha makes reference to Esdras (the prophet Ezra) also being similarly translated, but the acceptance or rejection of this is left to the reader.

It is significant that when Elijah suddenly exploded, as it were, into the Biblical account, he was already held in high repute, if not esteem. In I Kings chapter eighteen we read of how Elijah met the prophet Obadiah and instructed him to go to King Ahab and tell him that Elijah was there and wanted to see him. We will deal with this episode in detail later, but the point to be noted here is that the king went to meet Elijah! Elijah didn't have to make an appointment to see the king. This fact alone must surely indicate the reputation which Elijah already enjoyed.

But the questions which we must ask are these. Why was Elijah's ministry necessary at that time? Why did God cause Elijah to appear on the scene so suddenly and dramatically? Why was it necessary for the King of Israel to stand before Elijah? To fully understand these questions, and the answers to them, it will be necessary

for us to go back in Israel's history and trace what transpired. As we do this, take very careful note of the parallel conditions which are so obvious between Israel at that time, and modern-day Israel, i.e., the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples today, with special reference to the present British Commonwealth of Nations, and the United States of America.

We will go back to the time of King David, who ruled over the whole twelve tribed House, or Nation, of Israel. He ultimately abdicated in favour of his son Solomon, who also reigned over the entire twelve tribes of Israel. The people over whom he reigned were God's, and the Throne which he occupied was God's. We read in I Chronicles 29:23;

"Then Solomon sat on THE THRONE OF THE LORD as King, instead of David his father."

The Throne of Israel was no ordinary throne. It was THE THRONE OF THE LORD.

The king who occupied it was no ordinary king. He was THE REPRESENTATIVE, or VICE-REGENT, OF GOD.

The responsibility with which this king was charged was no ordinary responsibility. His was the responsibility to see THAT ISRAEL OBEYED GOD'S LAWS. He had no parliament to tell him what to do. The responsibility belonged solely to the king.

And this law for which he was responsible was no ordinary law. IT WAS THE LAW OF GOD. It had not been given to any other nation but the nation of Israel.

The rulership and government of Israel under the direct control of Almighty God, through His Divine Laws, was no ordinary matter at all. In fact, IT WAS COMPLETELY EXTRAORDINARY. There had never been to that time, nor has there been since, anything to equal this situation. In the entire Bible you will not find any

reference contrary to this fact, or any statement by God to the effect that He ever intends to change this fact. This Law was the very blood-stream of Israel, and just as the life is in the blood, so it became Israel's life-blood. The nation's health, as a nation, depended entirely on the preservation of the purity of this blood-stream. Just as we as individuals become ill, and suffer the ravages of sickness and disease when our blood-stream becomes contaminated, so Israel as a nation declined into sickness and disease of every kind imaginable when she allowed her blood-stream, **THE LAW OF GOD**, to become contaminated through disobedience.

Solomon began his reign in complete obedience to God. As a result, he was known far and wide for his wisdom, as was his kingdom for its prosperity. But Solomon eventually turned, not so much against God as from God. He committed the cardinal sin of fornication, which a close study of God's Word shows, is not the same as 'adultery'. He married strange wives of other nations, and by this act brought about the decline of the true and pure worship of God. These foreign wives were allowed to bring in with them their foreign beliefs and customs which contaminated the true worship of Jehovah. This led to the total corruption, not only of Israel's true worship and spiritual values, but of the very nation itself. The parallel with our present position in modern Anglo-Israel is astonishing to say the least.

Thus it was that on Solomon's death the nation of Israel was split into two sections, the northern ten-tribed House of Israel, and the southern two-tribed House of Judah.

Perhaps it would not be out of order to digress a little at this juncture to examine the actual composition of these two 'Houses.' The whole House of Israel was actually comprised of THIRTEEN tribes, not just twelve. This came about by the adoption by Jacob as his own sons, of Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. We read of this in Genesis 48:15-16;

"And Jacob 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 UPON THEM, AND THE NAMES OF MY FATHERS ABRAHAM AND ISAAC; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.' "

The tribe of Joseph was thus converted into TWO tribes, making a total of THIRTEEN in all. Of these, ELEVEN comprised the northern House of Israel, which constituted the DOMINION, whilst the other TWO tribes comprised the southern House of Judah, and constituted the SANCTUARY. As we read in Psalms 114:1-2;

"When Israel went out of Egypt, the House of Jacob from a people of a strange language; JUDAH was his SANCTUARY, and ISRAEL his DOMINION."

But for a very special purpose, God took one tribe from the northern House of Israel, the Tribe of Benjamin, and LOANED this tribe to the House of David which was contained within the southern House of Judah.

"And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen Me to put My Name there."
(I Kings 11:36.)

This left TEN tribes with the northern House of Israel, and THREE tribes with the southern House of Judah. However, these three tribes included the tribe of Levi, the Priestly tribe - or in modern terminology the 'Public Service' - which had no inheritance in the land, and consequently were not always reckoned in the numbering of the tribes. It is an interesting fact that whenever the tribes of Israel are listed in the Bible, only

TWELVE are ever named. And whenever the tribe of Levi is included, one of the other tribes is omitted for a particular reason. An excellent example of this principle is found in Revelations 7:4-8 where the names of the tribes that are sealed are listed. The tribe of Levi is named, together with those of Joseph (for Ephraim), and also Manasseh. This would have totalled THIRTEEN tribes, only for the fact that the tribe of DAN is omitted. And the reason for this omission is simply because Dan had no need of the protection of the 'sealing' at the time of the fulfilment of this prophecy. One section of the tribe of Dan had already migrated west, ultimately leaving their name in such places as the rivers DANube, DANestre, DON, etc., and the countries of Denmark (DANSMARK) and Sweden, (SVEDAN). The balance of Dan had migrated earlier to Ireland where the ancient Irish records refer to them as the 'Tuatha de Danaan', or literally, the Tribe of Dan.

The inclusion of the tribe of Benjamin within the southern House of Judah is most significant because it placed a representative 'Kingdom' or DOMINION tribe within the SANCTUARY House of Judah. It was thus that our Lord Jesus Christ could say in a very real sense many years later to the Jews that, "The Kingdom of God was among them, or in their midst." (see Luke 17:21). It should also be noted that with the exception of Judas Iscariot the traitor, who came from Judea, all the disciples, and even the great apostle Paul himself, were Benjamites or Galileans, and thus of the 'light bearing Tribe.' So in a very special and personal way, they were indeed 'the light of the world' as Christ informed them in Matthew 5:14.

From all this, we recognise the very special significance of the way in which God organised the various sections of His Kingdom here on earth after the division of the original nation of Israel following Solomon's death. The northern ten-tribed House of Israel was to constitute God's DOMINION, or the geographical domain of His Kingdom. The southern two-tribed House of Judah was to provide God's Throne, His SANCTUARY, occu-

pied by His representative or vice-regent, as the governing authority over His Kingdom, which in turn was served by Benjamin, the 'light-bearers' or watchmen in Israel, together with Levi, the custodians and teachers of God's Law.

All in all, a perfect set-up. No wonder that God stayed the hands of those who tried to prevent this division. It was all part of, and necessary to, God's plan and purposes. As we read in I Kings 12:21-24;

"And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the House of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the House of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. But the Word of the Lord came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 'Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, King of Judah, and to all the House of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying, Thus saith the Lord, ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Return every man to His house. FOR THIS THING IS OF ME.' "

But the plans of Almighty God have ever been the target for Satan. This was no exception, and Satan immediately moved in to sow the seeds of destruction in an attempt to thwart God's plans.

Upon Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam succeeded to the throne of Israel. Trouble started immediately, when he drastically increased the level of taxation, (there is nothing new under the sun), and the northern House of Israel seceded from the House and Throne of David and appointed the General in charge of their army, a man named Jeroboam, as their king. We have an almost identical occurrence in the descendants of the same people when the U.S.A. seceded from the British Throne and Empire, for virtually the same reasons.

Quite apart from the fact that this action removed them from the protection of the Throne of God, - a condition which continued until the two houses were re-united when James VI of Scotland became James I of Great Britain - they could not have chosen a worse king. Jeroboam was a truly evil man in the sight of God. In I Kings 14:9 we read of Jeroboam;

"But hast done evil above all that were before thee. For thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back."

Some of the sins of Jeroboam should be noted, as should their present-day parallels;

1. He rebelled against the Throne of David, which is the Throne of the Lord, and plotted to prevent Israel from coming under its influence and rulership.
2. He substituted false gods in place of the only True God, and allowed the introduction of heathen gods within Israel.
3. He removed from its proper place the true and proper worship of God and substituted false worship based on pagan and heathen customs.
4. He destroyed the proper operation of the Law of God within the nation by appointing ministers who were not of the sons of Levi, and who were thus unqualified and unacceptable to God.

Whilst all this was going on in the northern House of Israel, the southern House of Judah was also getting itself into a fine mess. As well as some of the above listed sins, I Kings 14:24 tells us;

"And there were also sodomites in the land. And they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel."

There would appear to be no reason to doubt that this particularly obnoxious sin, which today goes under the name of homosexuality, was also prevalent in the northern House of Israel, as the gross relaxation of obedience to God's Laws would offer a fertile breeding ground, just as it does today. The frightening contrast is that whereas Asa, a later King of Judah, removed these abominations from the land, we now have laws which prohibit us from discriminating in any way against them.

But Jeroboam eventually died, and was succeeded by his son Nadab. He in turn was assassinated by Baasha, who started another dynasty. He died, and was succeeded by his son Elah, who was in turn assassinated by Zimri, who tried to take the throne. But the people wouldn't accept him, and took a vote between two other men, Tibni and Omri. Omri won.

It should be noted that in the case of every one of the above succession of kings, the Bible stated that they all did evil in the sight of the Lord and made Israel to sin.

Omri came under the same category, with one notable addition. In I Kings 16:25 we read;

"But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him."

It was Omri who virtually re-wrote the laws of Israel, substituting his own laws for the Law of God. They became generally known as 'the statutes, or laws, of Omri.' God's condemnation of this is set out in Micah 6:10-16, (Moffat translation);

"Hard and harsh are the classes, deceitful
are the masses, with mouths full of falsehood.
Can I forget what rogues have hoarded, and
these accursed scant measures?
Can I condone wrong balances and short
weights in the traders bag?

Nay, Nay! I will be striking you with ruin for your sins. You may eat, but you shall never be satisfied, feeling an inward void.

You may store, but you shall never save. And what you save, I let the sword sweep off.

You may sow, but you shall never reap.

You may crush olives, but you shall never get oil.

You may make vintage, but you shall drink no wine.

For you are following Omri's customs, and all the practices of Ahab's house, living by their policy.

So I make you a horror, and your folk a scorn, to bear the derision of pagans."

Need it be said that our nation today is following in the same precepts and statutes of Omri, and thereby reaping the same curse.

So exalted did Omri become in what he did that his fame spread to the surrounding nations, and Israel became known as 'Beth-Omri', or 'The House of Omri.' Clearly they were no longer 'Ruling with God', which is the meaning of the name 'Israel'. They could no longer be truly called "The House of Israel."

In due time Omri died, and was succeeded by his son Ahab, who ruled for 22 years. According to Dr. Bullinger, this number is always associated with disintegration and disorganisation. Never was a truer word spoken. If you think that Ahab's predecessors were a bad lot, just read I Kings 16:30-33;

"And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him.

And it came to pass, as if it were a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and wor-

shipped him. And he reared up an alter for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria; and Ahab made a grove.

And Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him."

Bad as Ahab was, he crowned all his wicked achievements with one evil act. He took to wife a woman named Jezebel. The full significance of this act is not apparent from the reading of the Scriptures alone, but when we examine the writings of the great historian Josephus, we find this comment;

"Now Ahab the king of Israel dwelt in Samaria, and held the government for twenty two years; and made no alteration in the conduct of the kings that were his predecessors, but only in such things as were of his own invention FOR THE WORSE, and in his most wickedness. He imitated them in their wicked courses, and in their injurious behaviour towards God, and more especially he imitated the transgressions of Jeroboam. For he worshipped the heifers that he had made, and he contrived other absurd objects of worship besides those heifers.

He also took to wife the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Tyrians and Sidonians, whose name was Jezebel, of whom he learned to worship her own gods. This woman was active and bold, and fell into so great a degree of impurity and madness that she built a temple to the god of the Tyrians, which they call Belus, and planted a grove of all sorts of trees. She also appointed priests and false prophets to this god.

The king also himself had many such about him, and so exceeded in madness and wickedness all the kings that went before him."

(Antiquities of the Jews. Book 8, chapter 13.)

Such was the sorry and sinful condition of Israel at that time. Tragically, every aspect of evil recorded above is present and active in our nation today!!

BUT GOD HAD HAD ENOUGH! Something had to happen, AND IT DID!!

Suddenly, and without warning, there came to the nation the great prophet ELIJAH. His very first pronouncement was directed against the government of Israel, through its king, Ahab, and virtually wrecked the entire economy of the nation. Not only that, but it placed the recovery of their economy completely in Elijah's own hands. We read the account in I Kings 17:1;

"And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab,
'As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

As we shall see as our studies progress, this act was highly prophetic of Elijah's later ministry, when, on his return, he will call the present government of Anglo-Israel to him, and utterly condemn them for their blatant disobedience to God's Laws.

(To be continued).

The Return Of Elijah.

By F. W. DOWSETT.

A new edition of one of the few books available today on this subject. It deals with Israel's great prophet both in the Old and the New Testaments, the ministry of John the Baptist, and whether we can expect only an 'Elijah-type' ministry or the actual return of the literal prophet Elijah.

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Law and Grace.

REV. JOHN W. SHENTON

Courtesy WAKE UP!

'WE ARE not under Law but under Grace.' Couched as it has been for a century or more, this has been a statement responsible for untold harm. Unfortunately, it is still repeated almost daily by the Church in general. Even a brief examination shows that it is a thoughtless utterance, for the manifest truth is that we are all under both Law and Grace from the moment of birth, or we could not even exist. Without Grace we would have no being. Without Law we could not have a world in which to exist. Of course, the inference is that there was no Grace in Old Testament times and that we are not now under the Law of the Lord as revealed in that dispensation.

It is a sad state of our times that so many of the clergymen who speak for religion via the mass media succeed only in revealing lamentable ignorance of the Book which they are ordained to present. The writer recently attended a church service in which the minister ruined his sermon by saying, 'When *Paul* wrote the book of Acts he knew what he was writing about.' I could not resist the thought, 'You, dear minister, do not know what you are talking about.' Nor is this uncommon. In a recent television religious discussion, the appointed minister went through the whole period with the mere mention of one very brief saying of Jesus. Think of it! Here we had a serious discussion about Christianity and no reference made to the Revelation Truths in the Word of God.

Let those who reject the Law of the Lord take notice of the company which today they are joining. The refusal to accept the authority of the Law of the Lord has played a significant part in the present parlous condition of our peoples. May God help us to take our stand, not

with the Lawless, the Law-deniers, or the Law-rejectors, but with Him Who declared boldly, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am come not to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.' We see the pass to which a Lawless religion has brought us. Thinking people are gripped by a gnawing sense of helplessness and futility. Like a blind man tapping his way, they are fumbling from one event to another, trying to discern a purposeful way of living.

Far from the Law being, as some suppose, something which God has discarded—something which does not really matter; something we can get on without—it is the positive expression of His Will. The universe in which we live is the outward and visible expression of the Will of God and He desires that we shall be at home in it. The sensible thing for us to do is, surely, to learn what it is and live by it. This means unquestioning obedience to Him as Lawmaker. This is where Israel emerges in the unfolding of the history of God's salvation.

The God of the Universe, the God of Israel and the God of the Christian Revelation are not three different Gods, but the same One, True, Living God. For the Universe, for Israel, for the Church in general and for mankind everywhere life will work happily in only one Way—that of the Lord. It will not do so in any other way. If human life does not work out according to His Law, it works to its ruin.

Among a number of special functions among the nations, Israel was to make clear the 'why' of the disastrous consequences and the 'how' of the blessed results, which

would accompany the breach or observance of the Law of the Lord. There is something both in the Universe and in Life with which we must come to terms—it is the Declared Purpose of the Living God, which involves us with every thought, act and choice, so that life becomes a decision between acceptance of God's Way as expressed in His Law or of rejection as lived out in our own self-will.

Nothing could better illustrate the importance of God's Law for Israel than to consider the awesome majesty with which it was given to the nation at Sinai. This ineffable display of the Divine Presence connoted weighty matters. Israel was to follow the true path of development—that there is much to learn. Not only does the Will of God operate for the single human being. It covers all human relationships; within the family, the nation

and the larger group of nations. There is much to learn; but learning the Will of God is man's first and highest duty. It was Israel's task to make this manifest. Christian character and conduct must be regulated in accordance with the Divine Revelation to Israel. This is the Kingdom of God on Earth, the perfection of *which was revealed to the world through His Son Jesus Christ.*

The Law given to Israel and confirmed emphatically by Jesus Christ is the standard of man as God intends him to be. Adam failed to keep just a small portion of it and his failure compelled Jesus, as the Second Adam, to become Israel's Redeemer and the world's Saviour. Thus, the Law is a Divine requirement, not for some inexplicable reason on God's part—for our obedience does not add anything to His perfection.



“The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts. I solemnly state this from the experience of fifty-four years. The first three years after conversion I neglected the Word of God. Since I began to search it diligently the blessing has been wonderful. I have read the Bible through one hundred times, and always with increasing delight. Each time it seems like a new book to me. Great has been the blessing from consecutive, diligent, daily study. I look upon it as a lost day when I have not had a good time over the Word of God.”

— George Muller

The Scourge of Sodom

(Courtesy WAKE UP!)

THIS MAGAZINE would not normally be joining the media in providing space for the purpose of discussing the nauseating shame of homosexuality. But we are driven to expostulation by the *laissez-faire* of Christian communities who so casually stand aside and by their silence and inaction give near-approval. We are faced by the foulest wave of sub-animal beastliness since the scourge of Sodom ended in the destruction of a degenerate community among whom not even a bare handful of non-perverts could be found.

But even more demoralising for the soul of our nation than the tardiness of the churches to denounce this moral pestilence is the apparent glossing by religious dignitaries of those guilty of this degradation. There is a recent case of self-declared association on the part of a 'man of the cloth'.

But worse—even far worse—has transpired. A report prepared by a group led by an Anglican bishop will recommend that practising clergymen who are homosexuals shall be allowed to remain in office at the discretion of their bishop and that the Church should recognize as justified homosexual relationships 'involving the expression of sexual love'.

We ask if the Churches of Christ are so satisfied with their attitude to this crime against God and man that they are not prepared to stand up and condemn it? Will they soon be prepared also to regard man's ultimate shame of incest as a mere human aberration? Has the Gospel injunction that our bodies are the very temple of the Holy Spirit of God ceased to have any meaning?

We know well that many who call themselves Christians do not now have much regard for the Divine directives recited in

the Old Testament, on this or any other matter. But, if their claims to be Christ's followers are to bear any credence they are bound to acknowledge the authority of their Lord's accredited Apostles.

St. Paul's comments are trenchant enough. He calls a spade a spade. Speaking scathingly of the sodomites of Abraham's day he said: 'For this cause, God gave them up to their vile affections . . . Even their women did change the natural use in to that which was against nature . . . Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust, one towards another; men with men working that which is unseemly and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.'

If hierarchies will not take action of themselves, it must be the task of clergy and laity to urge them forward; for this uncleanness, self-imposed by man, not only defiles both personal and national character; it can be the means of transmitting unspeakable disease to those who practise it. Medical research is revealing that obscure ailments, of great virulence, can be thus communicated.

Of this, Christians can be certain. There will be no response to prayers for Divine relief from the perils which are threatening our land and nation until those who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ leave their 'broadminded' hidey holes, vigorously to indict and, by the power of God, finally to extinguish the putrefaction of human body and soul which has come down from the Hell that was Canaan.

The latest word from the hierarchy is that Christians should 'have compassion'. What compassion do the culprits show towards those whom they lead astray?

"If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them."

(Leviticus 20:13).

Studies In Hebrews.

By F.W.DOWSETT.

STUDY NO. 3.

THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST. "MELCHISEDEC."

"Wherefore holy brethren, partakers of the Heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. (Heb. 3:1.)

Before proceeding, I strongly suggest that the reader take their Bible and carefully, and prayerfully, read the third, fourth, fifth, and seventh chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as they form the basis of our present study.

As we turn to this subject we find that there is a two-fold application to the High Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is firstly OUR High Priest, and secondly He is GOD'S High Priest. So let us look at both of these important aspects of Christ's ministry.

1. OUR HIGH PRIEST.

The primary duty of a High Priest is to be a 'mediator', or advocate, between God and man. But let us fully realise this basic fact. No person can come to THE FATHER other than through this God-appointed 'mediator'. In the former days of Israel, i.e., in the Old Testament days, that mediator was Aaron, or one of his direct descent. (READ Exodus chapter 28.) But with the sacrifice made by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Aaronic Priesthood was done away with and superseded by the Melchisedecan Priesthood. As we read in Hebrews 7:11-12;

"...what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law."

Thus, in the latter days, i.e., this present Christian dispensation, the 'mediator' is Christ Jesus. He is, as we read in I Timothy 2:5, the "one and only mediator between God and man."

It is absolutely essential for us to realise the fact that when we approach the FATHER with either our praise or our petitions, that we both approach Him, and ask Him, THROUGH HIS APPOINTED MEDIATOR, JESUS CHRIST!!

We cannot, and dare not, by-pass this Mediator. That's why He is there. The point to be recognised is that whilst the actual approach to the Father is originated by us, it is our Lord Jesus Christ who does the actual asking, or confirms our approach, on our behalf.

So we find a very important and necessary principle.

1. In our prayers, we cannot approach the Father direct. If we do, He just does not, and in fact cannot, hear us, because to do so would be to violate His own rules. We must approach Him through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only One to whom He will listen. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

2. In our prayers, we do not pray directly to Jesus only. To do so is to ignore the Father, and in effect, to give the 'High Priest' the position and prerogative of the Father. Again, this is directly contrary to the expressed will of God.

Our prayers will be really heard and answered when we present them GOD'S WAY, and not in any haphazard way to suit our particular fancy at some point of time.

It is also important to note that Christ also fulfilled the requirement that the High Priest should be a descendant of Aaron. Luke 1:36 informs us that Jesus' mother Mary was related to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, whilst Luke 1:5 informs us that Elizabeth was descended from Aaron. Thus, even this particular requirement for Priesthood was fully met by our Lord. He was not only a direct descendant of David through the Tribe of Judah, but was also, through His mother, a direct descendant of Aaron of the Tribe of Levi.

So in relation to our Lord Jesus Christ, we are informed that;

- (a). He is OUR Great High Priest. (see 4:14).
- (b). He is now in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father. (see 1:3, 1:13, 4:14, 8:1, and 10:12). This means that He is in the seat of authority. "All power has been given unto Him."
- (c). He CAN be touched with sympathy for our weaknesses. (see 4:15). He is not above us, or removed from us. In fact, He became one of us in order that He might experience everything that we experience. He completely identified Himself with us, and because of this, He knows from actual experience just how we feel, and what we need for comfort and strength. He suffered more than any other man, and is therefore well qualified to sympathise with us.
- (d). Because of HIS victory over sin and weakness, WE can now approach the Throne of Grace with absolute confidence, and obtain all the mercy and grace that we need. (see 4:16).

(e). He is a merciful and faithful High Priest, able to make atonement for the sins of the people. (see 2:17).

(f). His salvation and intercession is continuously everlasting because of His Holiness and exalted position.

In regards to the last three items above, it is interesting to compare the ministry of Christ with that of Aaron. Under the Aaronic ministry, which operated in accordance with "the law of commandments contained in ordinances", (see Eph.2:15), the victory and extent of mercy depended on the animal sacrifices made on behalf of the people by Aaron. What is more, these sacrifices had to be continually offered each year in order to be effective. But when Jesus became the sin offering, the Lamb of God, the forgiveness and atonement was HIS. And being His, it became completely merciful, completely faithful, and praise His Name, completely everlasting. In the will of God, there is not now, nor will there ever be, any further or any other offering for the forgiveness and remission of sins. In this, Jesus Christ is the Father's final Word.

But it must be realised that the operation of His position as OUR High Priest is totally dependant upon another position which He holds, which is that of GOD'S HIGH PRIEST.

OUR High Priest approaches GOD on OUR behalf. But GOD'S High Priest approaches US on GOD'S behalf, which is something else again. It is a fact which proves that our God is a LIVING God, because a dead god cannot approach anyone. Man, in his human nature, is always in some way or other reaching up to something or someone which they look upon, or even make to be, a god. But the Living God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, reaches down to us in love and mercy. And He doesn't just listen to what we want. He offers us what we need. Therein do we really know that He is indeed the True and only God.

2. GOD'S HIGH PRIEST. "MELCHISEDEC."

The importance of recognising and understanding Christ's position as God's High Priest, MELCHISEDEC, cannot be overstated.

The word, or title, MELCHISEDEC, is used only eleven times in the entire Bible. (It is interesting to note that the number 'eleven' is usually associated in the Bible with 'instruction'). He is first referred to in Genesis 14:17-20 where we read;

"And the king of Sodom went out to meet him (Abraham) after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

And MELCHIZEDEK king of Salem brought forth bread and wine:

And He was the Priest of the Most High God.

And He blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth.

And blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all."

The second reference is found in Psalms 110:4;

"The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent,

Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

All the other nine references are found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. All these passages refer to Melchisedec either as a person or as an order, and leave us in no doubt as to the fact that this Melchisedec is THE PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD, that is, GOD'S HIGH PRIEST. A study of these same passages also reveals

that He was without any doubt no other than our Lord Jesus Christ. We read in Hebrews 7:1-3;

"For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;
To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;
Without father, without mother, without descent (or pedigree), having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually."

In regard to Christ's Priesthood of the Order of Melchisedec, we note the following important factors;

1. It pre-dated the Aaronic Priesthood having been made manifest to Abraham long before the time of Aaron. It is of the greatest interest to also note that in this incident, Christ spoke directly to Abram, whilst in the Epistle which we are studying, the same Christ has spoken directly to the same man's descendants, the Hebrews.

2. It appears to have been suspended during the entire period of the operation of the Aaronic Priesthood. This was the period when the laws or commandments contained in ordinances (to which we previously referred), were in operation. We will study this subject more fully later.

But at this stage in our study it would be appropriate to have a general understanding of the three different ministries of priesthood which God instituted. Firstly there was the LEVITICAL priesthood. This constituted what we might refer to today as 'the public service.' The duties of this priesthood was to assure that the laws contained in statutes, commandments, and

judgments were strictly understood, applied, and obeyed, and that the penalties applying to the breaking of any of these laws were exacted strictly in accordance with God's instructions. There were no such things as 'man made laws'. Or at least, that is how God intended it to be. The breaking of any of these laws was, and is, SIN.

Please understand this very carefully. "SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION (or breaking) OF THE LAW." (see I John 3:4). Every time we break any of God's Laws, even the smallest of them, we commit a sin, and the wages of sin is death! But we are not just talking about physical death, or the death of the body, because the sentence of death was far more serious than this and applied to our soul. God's Word distinctly tells us that "The SOUL that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4 and 20). Now as ALL have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God, so All souls, in accordance with God's sentence, would also die.

But this is not what God had planned for His people. He had planned LIFE for them, and ABUNDANT LIFE AT THAT. So how was God to get around this position. His Divine decision was that sin could only be forgiven by the shedding of blood, because the blood-stream was the carrier of sin, and its condition was the direct result of sin. So in His great mercy He introduced a system of substitution whereby the shedding of the blood of a specially chosen animal, mainly a lamb, would be acceptable to Him in lieu of the shedding of the blood of the individual person.

Thus was introduced the second order of Priesthood, the AARONIC. This Priesthood operated the ordinances of sacrifice by which the substitutionary blood was shed every year, thus preserving the life of the soul of the individual, as well as fulfilling God's requirements. But this was only a temporary measure. In the fulness of time, God sent His own Son to this earth to be His Lamb, THE LAMB OF GOD, the final sacrifice which only had to be offered once. This final sacrifice totally and forever removed the necessity for the

"commandments contained in ordinances" and made redundant the entire Aaronic Priesthood.

Christ, being the only and everlasting sacrifice, now operated as the Priest of the Most High God in the third order of Priesthood, that of MELCHISEDEC. The Levitical Priesthood, and with it the necessity to obey the laws and statutes and commandments of God was never done away with." These three orders of Priesthood are all mentioned in the same verse in Hebrews 7:11, and clearly shew that the Order of Melchisedec only replaced the Order of the Aaronic Priesthood, and not the Order of the Levitical Priesthood.

3. This replacement of the Aaronic Priesthood by the Melchisedecan Priesthood was ratified by and in the New Covenant, which will form the basis of our next study.

4. The ordinance of communion which we regularly celebrate was, and is, particularly and specifically associated with our Lord Jesus Christ in His position and title of MELCHISEDEC, PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD. When we read Genesis 14:18 which we previously quoted, we note that it was Melchisedec who offered the elements of the bread and wine to Abraham. Thus, when we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are not offering something to God. GOD IS OFFERING THESE ELEMENTS TO US! Our responsibility in the whole ceremony is to remember, or understand, and to celebrate what they mean.

Very few Christians realise that in fact we are partaking of the most Holy ceremony of the highest and most sacred order of priesthood that God ever formed, that of THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC.

5. The Aaronic priesthood operated "by virtue of a command imposed from outside." But the Melchisedecan Priesthood operated "from the power of indestructible life within." (see 7:16, Phillips Trans.). In other

words, the Aaronic Priesthood continued by virtue of lineal descent. Only literal descendants of Aaron were allowed by God to occupy this position, and the position could cease to exist should the line of Aaron die out. But the Melchisedecan Priesthood continues by virtue of God's Oath, and is therefore everlasting. As we read in Heb.7:21-22;

"For those priests (i.e. the Aaronic priests) were made without an oath. But this (i.e. the Melchisedecan priest) with an oath by Him that said unto Him, 'The Lord sware and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.'

By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant."

6. Having now obtained this 'more excellent ministry', Christ was now able to become the mediator of a more excellent covenant, i.e., THE NEW COVENANT.

7. As J.B.Phillips expresses it in his translation of Heb.7:26;

"HERE IS THE HIGH PRIEST WE NEED!

A man who is holy, faultless, unstained, separated from sinners, and lifted above the very heavens."

This is not just a statement of fact, but a statement of triumph!

Truly, with great confidence can we place our life and soul in His hands.

3. BEING PARTAKERS OF CHRIST.

Most Christians don't realise just what their inheritance in Christ really is. Heb. 3:14 tells us that "we

are partakers of Christ." Note that it says "of" Christ, not "with" Christ. This means that we are in 'association' with Christ. We share not only in what He has, but in what He IS. We become not what WE want to be, but what HE is. "It is not I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me" becomes the dominant theme and purpose of our lives. When Christ lives in us, we don't ask Him to do what we want to do, or to do things the way we want them to be done. We allow Him to do in us, and through us, the things HE wants to do, and in the way in which HE wants to do them. But there is a reciprocal requirement. If we wish Christ to dwell in us, then we must also dwell in Him. With this unsurpassed combination, we will find that;

Because He is obedient, in Him, we can be obedient.

Because He is Holy, in Him, we can be holy.

Because He is separate from sinners, in Him, we can be separate from sinners.

Because He is harmless and undefiled, in Him, we can be harmless and undefiled.

Because He is made perfect, in Him, we can be made perfect.

We can be complete in Him, BECAUSE HE IS COMPLETE.

But there are rules. God has no pleasure in fools. If we expect God to be faithful in sharing Himself with us, then we must accept that He expects us to also be faithful in committing ourselves to Him. Heb.4:14 puts it this way;

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

Here are five ways, as listed in Hebrews chapter three, by which we can do this;

1. We must hold fast our hope and confidence.
2. We must be prepared to hear His voice, and obey His laws.
3. We must not harden our hearts.
4. We must not have an evil heart of unbelief.
5. We must exhort one another daily. This is an absolute necessity in our Christian life and walk.

The more we follow these simple rules, and obey these simple requirements, then the more we will know, and the more we will share in, His Priesthood.

Let us never forget that the final and ultimate goal that God intends for us, and offers us, is that "we might become Priests of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ." (Rev.20:6).

Our heritage is that we should be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. When we see Him, **WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM!**

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises. That by those ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature."
(II Peter 1:4).

For I will restore
health unto thee...
saith the Lord.

JEREMIAH 30:17

which can only come through the infilling and ministry of the Holy Spirit within us.

We proclaim the absolute necessity for our nation to return to full obedience to the Law of God as the only way by which we can receive the full blessings of God.

We proclaim the absolute necessity for each and every individual Christian to prepare themselves for the greatest event yet to be witnessed on this earth, **THE RETURN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

The production, publication, and distribution of this magazine, **THE COVENANT VISION**, is being undertaken as a faith ministry. It is sent out without any charge, to all who wish to receive it. Naturally, it costs money to do this, and whilst we have dedicated our own personal resources to the continuation of this ministry, the support of those who read it, and are blessed by it, is vitally necessary for its continuance and growth. To this end we invite your prayerful consideration.

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It is our fervent prayer that you will be blessed and lifted to higher planes of joy and blessing as you study and learn of the wonders of God's Word, and of His boundless and merciful love for each of us.

With our Christian love, Frank and Betty Dowsett.

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King of the World

He came at first to Bethlehem
and He will come again—
Over this benighted earth to judge,
to rule, to reign . . .
Watch and pray, lest you unheeding
miss this glorious thing:
The enthronement of the Christ,
the world's undoubted King.

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