



Writings & Studies of
Bro. R.G. Holland
While Serving as Pastor Of
Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Church
1968-1974

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Compiled from Weekly Church Bulletins



Bro. R.G. Holland was the first pastor I can recall. He came to our church when I was 3 years old and left when I was 8. Bro. Holland, if you knew him, left a very big impact on ones life being such a small man in stature.

His knowledge of the Bible, his love and devotion for his Lord Jesus Christ made him a giant. He was loved and respected by not only the members of his church, but by the entire surrounding communities.

He and "Mama" Holland were the perfect fit. With his poor eyesight and her poor hearing, both complimented and depended on each other.

Complied here are many of his writings scanned directly from the original Sunday morning church bulletins, collected and saved by my mother for over 40 years.

I did not want to change one thing about them. Included are all the errors, typo's and corrections that makes them more special.

Bro. Holland was a brilliant man of God. He was self-educated and a true and devoted student of God's Word. That is evident in these writings.

It is my wish that you enjoy and receive a blessing from these treasured writings from a special man of God.

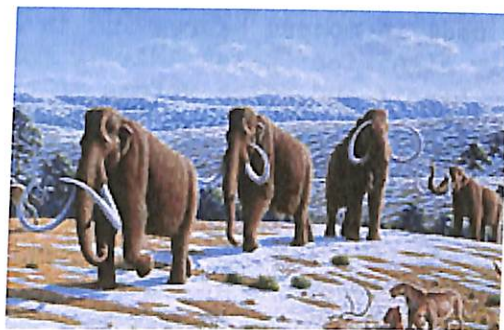
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Chapter 1 Animals In the Bible

April 12 - May 17, 1970



ANIMALS IN THE BIBLE

A great many different animals are named and identified in the Bible. In addition to these there are some which we cannot positively identify, or which we know little about. Some of these are mentioned a number of times and others seldom. Even a firsthand knowledge of Bible lands cannot clear up the problem relating to some of these creatures. They may have once abounded in that part, but they are no longer found there.

THE BEHEMOTH

When the Lord revealed Himself to the patriarch Job in His great power and sovereignty, one of the things He said was: "Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass like an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar... His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron... He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow;... Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not; he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth... His nose pierceth through snares" Job. 40:15-18, 21-24. What animal is this see next week my idea.

RARE ANIMALS OF THE BIBLE CONTINUED.

THE BEHEMOTH

The name "behemoth" does not help us to identify this animal because the Hebrew word BEHEMOTH, as now commonly used, does not designate any specific animal. As used in modern Hebrew and in Arabic this word simply signifies "beast." It is commonly used of domestic beasts and often refers to cattle or livestock in general. Hence, we are left to the description in Job 40 to deduce exactly what animal is meant.

Many Bible dictionaries and commentaries take the behemoth to be the hippopotamus. The two chief arguments for this are the great weight and the great strength alluded to in the Book of Job, as well as the animal's love of rivers and water.

My opinion is that the Bible behemoth is the elephant. The Book of Job makes special mention of the tail (v. 17), and since the elephant has a much larger tail than the hippo, it fits the description better. The repeated mention of ivory in the Bible indicates the presence of elephants and the practice of elephant hunting. Solomon built his throne in the great Jerusalem temple of solid ivory (1. Kgs. 10:18; 22:39; 11. Chron. 9:17). (Cont. on page 4)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

In the Book of Ezekiel "horns of ivory" are referred to and obviously mean the tusks of the elephant (Ezek. 27:15). We know that the Arabs (Ishmaelites) did an extensive trade in ivory long before the time of Christ, perhaps as early as the days of Joseph. The manner in which the elephant visibly consumes large quantities of water further points to him rather than the hippo as the behemoth of Job 40:23. And although the hippo is admittedly a very heavy animal a large elephant far outweighs him. In the description given in the Book of Job, the behemoth's great strength is referred to, and this seems to fit the elephant better than a hippopotamus. The reference to his nose piercing through snares well describes the elephant's use of his trunk when trapped in the great nets used for capturing him.

THE UNICORN

The word "unicorn" is of Latin origin. Its literal meaning is "one horn," indicating a creature thus endowed by nature. In ancient mythology such an animal is visualized as having a body and head like a horse, the hind legs of a stag, the tail of a lion, and a single pretentious horn protruding from the middle of the forehead.

However, only in the King James Version of the Bible is the word "unicorn" found. Elsewhere it is often rendered "wild ox." The Hebrew word REEM does not signify a one-horned beast at all. More properly it indicates the animal now known as the wild ox. This creature, technically known as the "aurqch," was once plentiful in both Europe and Palestine.

(continued next week)

BIBLE ANIMALS*UNICORN (Cont.)

It is a huge animal, standing up to 6 feet high at the shoulders, a voracious eater and exceptionally powerful. It has a pair of powerful horns which, when seen in profile, appear to be but a single horn. This may be the origin of the name "unicorn."

This animal was well known to the people of Old Testament lands, but was untamable and impossible to use for agriculture. Note the questions in Job: "Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?" (39:9-12). In several other passages the horns and the strength of the unicorn are referred to (Num. 23:22; 24:8; Deut. 33:17).

In light of these comments, the endeavor to mythologize the Book of Job by an undue emphasis on the name "unicorn" is obviously invalid.

LEVIATHAN

The creature named "leviathan" in the Old Testament is mentioned in four places: Job 41:1; Psa. 74:14; 104:26; Isa. 27:1. Note that in all these instances the word is used without the article, indicating that it was likely used as a kind of proper name rather than as a mere noun. This would indicate that the animal implied had a prominent place in the thinking of the people in Old Testament times. "Leviathan" may have been a kind of household word to them. The Hebrew word Livyathan signifies a huge water animal. Job 41 indicates that the leviathan referred to inhabits the water. (be Continued)

BIBLE ANIMALS-LEVIATHAN (Cont.)

" Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook (Job 41:1). In Psalm 104, leviathan is described as traveling with ships, further indicating a creature of the water. Together, the clues given in the four passages where "leviathan" is mentioned suggest that this creature is the crocodile.

THE CONEY

Conies are referred to four times in the Old Testament (Lev. 11:5; Deut. 14:7; Psa. 104:18; and Prov. 30:26). Together, these passages indicate that the coney is a small animal which chews the cud and is a rock dweller. In Deut. 14:7 conies are described as being distinct from the rabbit though definitely like it in certain respects. Unlike the rabbit they have short legs and ears and no tail.

In various ways, these little animals may be compared to the prairie dogs of the midwestern states, although they have very different feet. The coney's feet have been described as being "tiny, but elephant like"; therefore, conies have been called "little cousins of the elephant." However, such descriptions can be very misleading, and it is with caution that I even cite them.

The coney is a rather timid but extremely active little animal, making his home in rocky territory and particularly in rocky knolls or hills. He is strictly a vegetarian and has teeth similar to those of the rhinoceros. While his jaw action resembles cud chewing, he does not have the kind of digestive tract that cud chewing animals normally have, (be cont.)

BIBLE ANIMALS-CONEY (continued)

and therefore he should not really be classed among them.

Solomon drew a wise practical lesson from this little creature when he said, "The conies are but a feeble folk; yet they make their houses in the rocks." (Prov. 30:26). In the spiritual realm, this reminds us of the words of Jesus in Matt. 7:24,25. Here He compared those who heard and obeyed His words to a man who built his house on the rock instead of on the sand.

THE HART

This animal is a small variety of the deer like the little red deer now found in Syria and in parts of Africa and Europe. It is quite similar to the American deer but it is much smaller. The name "hart" is usually applied to the male animal after it has passed five years of age. At this time it has six-pronged antlers which are shed annually like those of American deer. The meat of the hart and of the hind, the female, is highly prized among those who live in the Middle East.

"Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isa. 35:6). This simile indicates the fleet-footedness and the capacity this slight animal has for making long jumps. (Cont.)

BIBLE ANIMALS-THE HART (Continued)

The Psalmist's statement, "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places" (Psa. 18:33), bears out the same idea, as does Habakuk 3:19.

The most striking reference to the hart is Psalm 42:1,2: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Though the hart is a small animal, it requires a great amount of water. The two things it always seeks are good pastures and streams of fresh water from which it can drink many times a day.

The two spiritual lessons for us from the hart are that God satisfies our constant spiritual thirst and that He enables our feet to be swift to do His will.

THE DRAGON

There are about 35 occurrences of the word "dragon" in the King James version. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word signifies a long, serpentlike creature. In some instances, at least, it probably indicates a member of the crocodile family. The reference in Jeremiah 51:34, "He hath swallowed me up like a dragon," strongly suggests a crocodile's actions.

In the New Testament, "dragon" appears only in the Book of Revelation. The dragons seen in John's vision here are not necessarily real animals, for numerous creatures appear throughout the apocalyptic vision that are unlike any animals that have ever existed on this earth.

The dragon of Revelation is definitely associated with the Devil. In the Scriptures Satan is identified with the serpent (Gen. 3:1-15; Rev. 20:2), the dragon (Rev. 20:2), the lion (1. Pet. 5:8) and the dog (Psa. 22:20). In the mythology of several ancient pagan religions the dragon is used as a symbol of the Evil One who opposes all righteous deeds. The symbolism has doubtless been carried over from the spiritual knowledge their ancestors once possessed (Rom. 1:21-25).

THE BEAR

The bear referred to in the Bible (Cont. P. 4.)

THE BEAR Continued from P. 3
is the one now known as the Syrian brown bear. This beast still lives in Palestine—a hairy, shaggy creature, strong and cruel. It was used in prophetic Scripture to symbolize the great power and notorious cruelty of the Medo-Persian Empire which would conquer and devour Babylon (Dan. 7:5).

Syrian
Brown
Bear



Chapter 2 Trees & Fruits

January 21, 1973 - June 23, 1973

THE FIG TREE

You could not visit the land of Palestine long without observing the luxuriant fig tree. There this tree is very common. The majestic Olivet, so frequently the resort of Jesus and his disciples, was once famous for the great number of fig trees growing on it. The fig is a most grateful and nutritious fruit. The leaves of the tree are divided into lobes and are of considerable breadth. It differs from most other fruit-bearing in some particulars. (1) The fruit always precedes the leaves. (2) In some climates it produces a treble crop of fruit in one year. (3) The fruit is the enlargement of the common base or receptacle, on which the numerous small flowers stand. This receptacle forms a kind of urn, in the hollow of which the flowers are placed. (4) This tree flourishes most luxuriantly in barren and stony places, where little else would grow. The fig tree, which grew so plentifully in Palestine in Bible times, grows there today, and often to a large size. Figs are exported to England from Turkey, Italy, and Spain; but the best quality are those which are obtained from the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean. The fig from Palestine is second to none; where obtained. Figs are prepared for exportation by being dried in a furnace or in the sun, being previously dipped in a scalding preparation made from the ashes of the fig tree. The fig tree is very fruitful; some producing 280 pounds of figs. (be continued)

THE FIG TREE CONTINUED

The first crop of the season is the most abundant and the most valuable. This tree has in it a milky or fat oily liquor, through the defect or superabundance of which it becomes barren. The husbandmen ^{REMEDY} of the former by supplying abundance of manure and sweet water; the latter by causing the tree to extravasate.

Biblical references to this tree and its fruit are numerous, and varied in their application. The first recorded use of it is in connection with the fall, of our first parents, who, we are told, made use of its leaves to hide their nakedness. Isaiah gave orders that a poultice composed of figs should be applied to a boil with which King Hezekiah was afflicted. Some physicians of our own day think that figs are often employed successfully in bringing imposthumes to ripeness, in healing ulcers, quinsies, and sore throats. In the North of England, figs when dipped in boiling or scalding milk are frequently applied for neuralgic affections.

As a proof of the tranquility of the times in which Solomon reigned, the scared artist has drawn a beautiful picture of his subjects sitting every one under his vine and under his fig tree. In the East fig trees grow so large as to afford the weary traveller a convenient shelter from the rays of a burning sun. Hasselquist, when travelling from Tiberias to Nazareth, refreshed himself beneath the shade of one of these trees, where a shepherd with his herd had his rendezvous, but without either tent or hut. Morison also says, "Coming to a little shade of figs trees, near Tripoli, in Syria, we rested there during the heat of the day, and fed upon such victuals as we had." The shade afforded by this beautiful tree is evidently referred to in Micah 4:4; Zech. 3:10; and John 1:48. Sennacherib seemed also to have an eye to this promise in 2. Kings 18:31; Isa. 36:16. To all who submit peaceably to his rule. (be continued)

THE FIG TREE CONTINUED

The Prophet Hosea seems to allude to the lusciousness of the first ripe ~~ripe~~ figs, which are yielded by the more vigorous trees some six weeks prior to the full season, when to the Israelites he says, "I saw your fathers as the first ripe fruit in the fig tree at her first time." Also by Isaiah, when speaking of the beauty and rapid declension of Samaria, he says, she "shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer which, when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up." Isa. 38:4. Hosea draws yet another comparison between this tree in its wasting appearance and the calamities threatened by God to the Jews. Chapt. 2:12.

Probably the most touching and impressive reference to the fig tree is that of the Great Teacher in the parable recorded by Luke, exemplifying the care bestowed by God upon the Jewish people, and His forbearance with them. The dresser of the vineyard pleaded with the owner for the preservation of a certain fig tree that had had already much care and labour bestowed upon it without having yielded any returns. The fig tree had produced abundance of leaves, but no fruit. So the Jews had the appearance of piety and religion, the green leaves of profession; but no sweet luscious fruit of practical goodness. Their green piety was not work-producing. Still they were the objects of God's peculiar care. Jesus came "to the Jew first," then to the "to the Gentile." It was only when they became incorrigible and hopelessly barren that He turned His attention to other trees in His vineyard. As it was then so it is today. God spares us; Jesus pleads for us; and if we show only leaves, and are not fruit producing, we shall be cut down. May we be saved from such an awful fate. God would rather we repent and live.

THE SYCAMORE TREE

The sycamore tree of the Bible is classed by naturalists amongst the fruit-bearing trees. This, to us, is an anomaly. The sycamore of our island (England) does not yield its quota of fruit to grace our desert or slate our thirst. It has one remarkable trait, it flourishes best near the sea, the spray not injuring it in the least. The tree seems to partake of the nature of two distinct species of trees, the mulberry and the fig tree, the former in its leaf; the latter in its fruit. Hence the derivation of its name SYKOMOROS, from SYKOS, a fig tree, and MOROS, a mulberry tree. Like the palm, it is a tree of the plain, and in Palestine it grew mostly on the plains of the sea coast, or in the hot valley of the Jordan. Many grew near Jericho, and as that city derived its name from the palms growing so abundantly and luxuriantly in its immediate locality, so did SYCAMINOPOLIS derive its name from the grove of sycamore in its neighborhood. It was anciently, and is still, a common tree in Egypt, Palestine, and Abyssinia. It is very wide-spreading, and attains a remarkable height, and occasionally exhibits a trunk of great thickness. Frequently some of these trees are found so large that three men joining hands cannot embrace them; and others of even thicker dimensions are sometimes met with. Nordin thus describes the Egyptian sycamore, "I shall remark that they have in Egypt divers sorts of figs, but if there is any difference between them, a particular kind differs still more. The sycamore is of the height of a beach, and bears its fruit quite different from other trees. It has them on the trunk itself, which shoots out little sprigs in the form of a grape stalk, at the end of which grows a bunch of grapes. The tree is most like the fruit, close to one another, always in the green, and bears fruit several times in the year without observing any certain seasons, for I have seen some sycamores which had fruit two months after others. (Cont.)

THE SYCAMORE TREE CONTINUED

The fruit has the figure and smell of real figs, but is inferior to them in taste, having a disgusting sweetness. Its colour is a yellow inclining to an ochre, shadowed by a flesh colour; in the inside it resembles the common fig, excepting that it has a blackish colouring with yellow spots. The people for the greater part live on its fruit, for they think themselves well regaled with a piece of bread, a couple of sycamore figs, and a jug of water from the Nile. Hassliquid was greatly pleased with the fruit, and after stating that it was soft, watery, and somewhat sweet says, "After I had once tasted it I could scarcely refrain from eating, and if I had thought the fresh fruit wholesome I should certainly have eaten a great deal of it."

The value of the tree to the Egyptians is further elucidated from the Biblical reference in Psalm 88:47, which was obviously a very heavy calamity. The sycamore furnished almost the only wood they had for general purposes; and though light and porous, the coffins, or cases of this wood, in which they enclosed their mummies two and three thousand years ago, are in complete preservation. From Isaiah 9:10 we find sycamore timber was used in the construction of buildings, and Dr. Shaw speaks of its extreme durability when thus applied.

Scriptural references in 1. Kgs 10:27; 1. Chron. 27:28; and 2. Chron. 1:15 go to prove that the tree was also common in Palestine; and from the circumstance of an officer being appointed by David to superintend plantations of it we presume the timber was valuable then as now; read Amos 7:14. Under the last clause of the verse, as Mr. Home suggests, "a sycamore tree dresser," and this translation would include the sacrifice and the gathering of the fruit. Sacrificat- ion consists in cutting or scraping, the fruit of sycamore either with the nail or iron before it will ripen; most probably when thus employed Amos was called to sustain the prophetic office. (cont.)

A man ascends the tree for this purpose, and Amos is generally thought to have been so employed when the call was given him. Jerome commenting upon Amos says, "that without this management the fruit cannot be eaten because of their intolerable bitterness." Pliny observes that the fruit does not grow ripe until rubbed with iron combs, after which rubbing it ripens in four days.

The last peculiarly of this beautiful and useful tree which we shall mention is the great depth its large diverging roots are stuck into the soil. Paxton thinks our Lord alludes to this tree as being the most difficult to be rooted up and transplanted in another situation. The extreme difficulty of this transference gives a peculiar force and beauty to the words of the great teacher when he said to the disciples, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed ye might say unto this sycamore tree, be thou plucked up by the root and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you." The stronger and more diverging the root of a tree, the more difficult it is to pluck up, and plant again, so as to make it strike root and grow; but a far more difficult task is to plant it in the sea, where the soil is so far beneath the surface, and where the white crested billows would be perpetually tossing it from side to side. Yet Jesus says (and what he says may be and can be done) a task no less difficult than this can be achieved by the man of genuine faith. We must ever remember that with God nothing is impossible, nothing difficult, nothing laborious." Removing our Lord's great difficulties. In this sense our Lord's words are to be understood. He says that faith will get through every difficulty and faith before him. This saying of the Masters or plains shall become mole hills or perplexity; mountains shall become mole hills or plains. This saying of the Masters, nor is it to be taken in its literal sense, nor is it to be taken in its literal sense, nor is it to be taken in its literal sense. This page on The Sycamore tree.

THE SYCAMORE TREE CONTINUED

it is a proverbial form of speech which no Jew could misunderstand, and with which no Christian should be puzzled." Dr. Clarke.

It was up a sycamore tree that Zaccheus climbed to see the Saviour. He was little and could not see Christ as he passed on account of the throng. Are there not many Christians who are so little of spiritual stature that they cannot see Jesus for the press of business, or other things that mar their spiritual sight? Are we among that number? Are we like Peter, "following afar off?" If so, let us climb to the tree top of simple faith, and view Jesus now as the fairest among thousands—the altogether lovely.



THE POMEGRANATE

The pomegranate is of a rich crimson colour, and is one of the most beautiful of those very beautiful flowers growing in tropical climates, where vegetation assumes such a variety of brilliant hues, grows in such luxuriance, and of such magnificent proportions. Dr. Woodville describes the tree thus: "It rises several feet in height, is covered with a brownish bark, and divided into many small branches, which are armed with spines; the leaves are oblong, or lance-shaped, pointed, veined, of a deep green colour and placed upon short foot stalks. The flowers are large, of a rich scarlet colour, and stand at the end of young branches. The fruit is about the size of an orange, and crowned with thick fine teeth of the calyx; the rind is thick and tough, externally reddish, internally yellowish, filled with a red succulent pulp, contained in transparent cellular membranes, and included in nine cells, within which numerous oblong angular are also lodged. Some of the trees rise to the height of twenty feet."

In Bible times it was one of the most delicate fruit-bearing trees of the east; and the value attached to it is manifest from the frequent allusions to it in the sacred writings. It is still very common in Palestine. Its native soil is Africa, especially the neighborhood of Carthage. It grows in two European countries, Spain and Italy. It is found in a wild state in the North of India and Persia. In Barbary the fruit ripens in part month of August. There is scarcely a part of the tree that is not found useful. In all parts of the east they mingle the grains of it in wine and use them as medicine as they are much esteemed for their astringency, being useful in cases of dysentery, diarrhoea, and lientery. The rind also is much preferred for tanning the fine morocco leather. (To be continued)

THE POMEGRANATE CONTINUED

The beautiful form of the leaves, flowers, and fruit was, no doubt, why they were selected by the Almighty as objects of imitation for the adornment of the ephod of the high priest. "And beneath, upon the hem of it, thou shalt make pomegranates. A golden bell and a pomegranate upon the hem of the robe round about." Solomon also adorned the chapiters of the two pillars of brass, Boaz and Joachim, which he made before the house of the Lord. Parkhurst says that "the Hebrew and Greek names of this tree, being expressive of the shiny projection and reflection of light, either from the fruit or from the star like flower at its extremity, caused Solomon to place these brazen pomegranates to represent the stars strongly reflecting light on the earth and planets. See 1. Kings 7:18, 20, 42; 2. Chron. 4:13; Jer. 3:22, 23. So the artificial pomegranates ordered to be fixed on the skirt of Aaron's robe, Ex. 28:33, 34, were to represent those spiritual stars, even the children of God who, by a light derived from their great High Priest, shine as lights or luminaries in the world, Phil. 2:15; compare Matt. 5:14, 16; Eph. 5:8; 1. Thess. 5:5; Rev. 1:16-20, and who, like the bells which accompanied the pomegranates, are continually to proclaim the perfections of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light, 1. Pet. 2:2.

The intrinsic value of this tree may further be inferred from the words of Joel 1:12. The withering of the pomegranate tree was one of the declared judgments of God to fall on His peculiar people, the Jews. It is classed among the common necessities of life to that people. Perhaps a lack of the fruit of the pomegranate was to them what a lack of refreshing beverages would be to us during the present bright sunny month of June and its twin sister July. If the Jews had not broken the covenant He made with their pregenitors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God would not have thus prophesied. (Continued)

THE POMEGRANATE CONTINUED

The Almighty would never have sent his judgments amongst them had they but remained faithful to Him. He is the same now as He was when Joel, the son of Bethuel 800, B.C., gave utterance to this prophecy. He lives to bless even us. All our time is a time of need to us to embrace the Lord fully; to be drawing on the bank of heaven. If we acknowledge Him, He will direct our paths. Our poverty is only a cord to draw us to our Omnipotent Father, and our wealthy elder brother. The continual necessities are so numerous that we can never lack a reason for applying to the Blessed Trinity for our supplies. Let us suffer no corner of our little hearts to be unoccupied by the fulness of Jesus. Let us be covetous after the riches which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and which thieves can not break through and steal.

THE VINE

There are more than sixty references to this valuable fruit tree in Scripture. It is venerable with age. Noah having cultivated it after the deluge. Some of the Rabbins hold that though the vine had been cultivated before the deluge, Noah was the first to conduct the cultivation methodically, and set the vine together as a vineyard. It grew very plentifully throughout Palestine, and in some districts particularly fine. Sacred writers celebrate the vines of Sorek, Sabinah, Jazer, and Atel; whilst profane authors mention those of Gaza, Sarepta, Libanus, Sharon, Ascelon, and Tyre. The grapes of Egypt were very particularly small; so the surprise manifested by Moses and the Israelites may be easily conceived when that large bunch of grapes was brought to them by the spies from Eshcol. This account of Moses is confirmed by several travellers. Doudan saw bunches of grapes in the valley of Eschol weighing of grapes from ten to twelve pounds. Forster tells us there were twelve bunches of grapes growing in the valley of Hebron that two men could scarcely carry one of them. (continued)

THE VINE CONTINUED

The vintage was always a festive season. In all Oriental climes grapes figure largely among the provisions of an entertainment. Hence many Europeans have been courteously regaled with excellent coffee and superb grapes. This fact will help to explain the promise of Jacob to Judah respecting the abundance of vines in the land which should fall to his lot in Canaan (Gen. 49:11). The vineyards of Judah, as seated on their terraces, and marked by their walls and watch-towers, were the earliest and latest symbols of that land (see Isa. 5). A vineyard was the national figure of Judah, both in prophetic and evangelistic records; it was the emblem of the nation in that colossal cluster of golden grapes which overhung the porch of the second temple at Jerusalem. The branches, tendrills, and leaves were of the finest gold; the stalks of the bunches were from four to six feet long, and the bunches of grapes were of costly jewels. Herod first placed it there, and from time to time rich and patriotic Jews added to its embellishment, one contributing a grape, another a leaf, and a third a bunch of precious materials. An American estimates its value at 12,000,000 dollars. This may be an exaggeration, nevertheless it must have been valuable. One of the most interesting and sublime episodes in the short career of our Saviour and his disciples is supposed by Rosemuller to have been connected with this majestic vine. He thinks that the whole of that beautiful discourse, or discourses, contained in John 13 to 18, was not delivered in one place, nor in an unbroken connection. Chapters 13 and 14 were delivered when Jesus had celebrated the Passover feast; that later on in the evening. After the feast, He and His disciples again betook themselves to the temple, and as they wandered too and fro, above everythig else this vine, blazing with gold and jewels, illuminated with tapers, would attract their attention. (cont.)

THE VINE CONTINUED

Their eyes were rivetted by its gorgeous magnificence, and while thus absorbed, Jesus said to His disciples, I AM THE TRUE VINE! How correct and forcible must His words then have appeared! To the Jews the vine was the tree of all that was excellent, fruitful, and fortunate. Therefore the prophets shew comparisons between the Jewish nation and the church, and a great vine adorned with beautiful fruit, carefully planted, lovingly nursed, and faithfully guarded by God. He was the dresser of the vineyard; Israel—the vineyard and vine, and all true Israelites were the branches.

Grapes were and still are dried into raisins. One hundred clusters of raisins formed part of Abigail's present to David, 1. Sam. 25:18; and when Ziba met David his present contained a similar quantity, 2. Sam. 16:1; 1. Sam. 30:12; and 1. Chron. 12:40. The poor of the Jews were allowed to glean grapes, as well as corn, Lev. 19:10; Deut. 24:21; Isa. 3:14; Micah 7:1. The poor were kindly recognised and provided for under the Levitical law, as they also are by the Gospel. Are we doing all we can today to alleviate distress and relieve the poor? "Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me."

THE OLIVE TREE

With one exception, that of the fig tree, the Olive is the first specially mentioned in the Bible, and its mention is peculiarly beautiful. After the partial subsidence of the waters of the Nochin deluge, Noah opened the window of the ark and sent forth a dove, the bird of all others fitted for swift and long-sustained flight, and resting only on dry places. At quiet even-time she returned, and lo; in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off. "Not a loose leaf, or floating twig." What a convincing sign to Noah of the abatement of water, and a symbol of peace between heaven and earth, sent by the hand of unerring Omnipotence. (Cont.)

THE OLIVE CONTINUED

Thirty-nine times throughout the Bible is this tree brought before our notice. No tree is so frequently mentioned by ancient authors, nor was any tree more highly valued by ancient nations; and today, in Eastern lands, and amongst us, the tree in many respects is highly valuable. It is always enumerated among the valued trees of Palestine, the theatre of so many grand events in connection with sacred history, and which to all Christians has so many dear associations. To illustrate its fruitfulness and beauty, the sacred historian described it as "a land of oil, olives, and honey."

The olive tree is of a moderate height, has a knotty trunk, a smooth ash colored bark, the wood being solid, and of a yellowish color. The leaves are oblong, resembling those of the willow, of a green color, dark on the upper side, and white underneath. Its flowers, which appear in June, are white, and grow in bunches. Each flower is of one piece, widening upwards and dividing into four parts. The fruit is oblong, yet plump, first green, then pale, and when quite ripe black, bearing a resemblance to the damson, with a soft oboaginous pulp, and a hard nut in the centre. The olive was consecrated to Minerva by the Athenians, who regarded its culture and protection as religious duties. In Italy, Spain, and France the inhabitants eat the berries of the olive with their bread, and find them as agreeable and wholesome condiment. Generally they require a little preparation in brine or hot water to dissipate the bitter principle contained in them, and to render them more wholesome as they are not generally considered so, especially to persons of delicate habits. Olive oil ranks A-1 among vegetable oils, having always been extensively used for culinary purposes, and it also forms the menstruum, or vehicle, for the most celebrated perfumes. (Cont.)

THE OLIVE TREE CONTINUED
Palestine may still be called the land of the olives. Possibly its hardness and its longevity may have contributed to its preservation; but the olives growing in Palestine remain to this day equal to any growing in the Levant. In addition to the regularly cultivated grounds of Judea and Galilee, clumps of many thousands of these trees are there to be met with, probably the remains of ancient plantations. The Jews anciently traded with their olive oil in the great mart of Tyre (Ezek. 27:17), and sent it to Egypt (Hosea 12:1). King Solomon gave annually twenty thousand baths of this oil to the Tyrian hewers of wood in Lebanon (2 Chron. 2:10 and a like quantity to their king, 1 Kgs 5:11). This wood was used and decorated in some of the most tasteful and decorative parts of the temple. It is still regarded as a fancy wood in the east. Olive boughs were by Moses commanded to be used by the Israelites when they prepared the booths for use during during the "Feast of Tabernacles."

The methods of gathering the olive are varied. Sometimes the fruits are plucked or shaken by the hand. The Scripture method was by beating them or shaking them off the trees. To the former method Moses doubtless alludes in his law concerning charity; and to the latter Isaiah refers when prophesying of the judgments of God on Syria and Judea. The Scriptural method of extracting the oil from the olive-berries appears to have been by treading them with the feet, see Deut 33:24 and Micah 6:15. In our days mills are used for the purpose.

The Scriptural emblems of the olive are peace and prosperity, and from the earliest times it has been an emblem of peace among civilised nations. The beauty of the olive consists in the magnificent spread of its branches. Hosea refers to the beauty of the olive alluding to the prosperity of the good man. None are so prosperous or enjoy so much peace as those who are trusting and believing in Jesus. (Cont.)

THE PALM TREE

Noble as is the appearance of trees in general, none excels the palm tree in this respect. Amid a forest the eye will at once recognise it, towering high above its competitors, while they lose their individuality in the beautiful confusion of tint and form. Palms have been reckoned the "princesses" in the vegetable world, being so simply majestic in their growth, and as "banners of the climate" in those beautiful tropical. How deliciously sweet to rest under their shadow, especially to those of our kindred and countrymen who are not acclimatised to the tropical heat. The palm is an evergreen—compare John 10:22 with 12:13. It is also much dependent upon moisture; near the palm tree water is sure to be found. La Borde says, "The palm tree presents itself to the eye of the thirsty traveller like a friendly light house, pointing out to him where water is to be found to quench his thirst." There are 500 different species, and all of them useful. There is the oil palm, from which palm oil is obtained. It is extensively used by us in the manufacture of soap and candles. The cocoa nut palm is very useful and valuable. The wine palm yields a refreshing drink to the weary traveller in many a region of burning Africa. Tradition says that "Palms sprang from the residue of clay from which Adam was made." Its name is derived from PALMA hand, from the shape of its leaves; and its fruit dates, from DACTYLUS, a finger, the bunches being spread out like fingers of a hand. The trees grow to a great height, sometimes rising to a hundred feet, and are very upright (Jer. 10:5). The leaves are tufted and feathery, which explains the beautiful allusion Mrs. Hemans:—
"It is where the feathery palm trees rise,
And the date grows ripe under sunny skies?"
Their fruit is called dates, and grows in clusters; it is very sweet and agreeable.
(be continued)

THE PALM TREE CONTINUED

A considerable part of the inhabitants of Egypt, Arabia, and Persia subsist almost entirely on dates. They are also thought to be medicinal. Camels feed on the date stone. An Arab proverb runs thus: "A good housewife may furnish her husband every day for a month with a dish of dates differently prepared." From one tree annually they fequently obtain a hundred-weight of dates. The palm leaf is made into couches, baskets, bags, mats, and brushes; the branches into cages for poultry and garden fencing; the fibres are used for boughs, threads, ropes, and rigging; and the body of the tree furnishes fuel. The tree is irrepressible, it cannot be bound downwards or grow crooked; a living comment on Psa. 92: 7-12. The righteous man does not grovel in earthly scenes, is not oppressed by persecution or affliction, is not bound downwards by trial; but like the palm tree presses upward, onward, homeward, heavenward, and an also an endogen, or grows within, and an unbrageous tree. Mohammed says on this feature of the tree, "Honour the date tree; she is your mother." Probably the last characteristic of the palm tree will slucidate Judges 4: 5. Calmet thinks that under a little grove of this kind, rather than under one palm tree, the prophetess Deborah sat between Bamah and Bethel, and to this multiplication of the tree rather than to its towering height does the comparison refer in Psa. 1:3. Another very singular fact is that the palm is sexual, particularly the date palm. The male tree bears no fruit, and the female is rendered fruitful by the flowers of the male. Dr. Kitto says: "This distinction has been known and acted upon from the most ancient times in Africa and the south-west of Asia," and from the neglect of this he supposes the reason to exist why Indian palm trees do not bear fruit. (be continued)

THE PLAM TREE CONTINUED

The manner of proceedure is thus: In April, when the sheaths that respectively enclose the young clusters of the male flowers, and the female fruit begins to open, at which time the latter are formed and the former one nearly, they take a sprig or two of the male cluster and insert it into the sheath of the female; otherwise they take a whole cluster of the male tree and sprinkle the meal or fauna of it over several clusters of the female. The latter practice is common in Egypt, where the male tree abounds, but in Barbary the former method is pursued, one male being sufficient to render fruitful four hundred female trees. This also furnishes a reason why Tadmor, or Tamor, the Hebrew for palm, being used by the Hebrews as a proper name for females, beyond the mere grace of the form of the palm being an emblem of grace or beauty; and apparently a common reason, for of the few women whose names occur in Scripture two bear this name. The palm tree grows in most tropical climates, once very plentiful in Judea, hence it was used by Vespasian on his medal as an emblem of that country, as the rose is the emblem of England. In several parts of the Holy Land it abounded. Jericho is called the city of palm trees (Deut. 34:3). Bethany means the house of dates. There are many Scriptural comparisons or emblems of the righteous man to the palm tree, their progress (Psa. 92:12), their long fruitfulness (Psa. 92:14), their attachment to the house of God (1. Kgs. 6:20, Ezek. 12:19; Psa. 92:13). At the Feast of Tabernacles branches of palm were to be used as an emblem of joy and victory (Lev. 23:40). Palm branches were used at our Lord's triumph (John 12:13), and to this day in Catholic countries they are used in their festivities on Palm Sunday. As emblems of victory they have always been used by believers and idolaters. (Be continued)

THE PALM TREE CONTINUED

Believers by thus using them, mean to acknowledge the Supreme Author of their success and prosperity, and to carry on their thoughts to the Conqueror over sin and death. Let us each strive to be worthy to bear the palm of moral victory here and hereafter. This emblem in Rev. 7, 9, and 10, is to me the most sublime in all the Bible. The redeemed waved the palm branch of eternal triumph. The motto on Nelson's funeral car was, "The palm belongs to him who deserves it." Thus it will be awarded by the Great Father to the successful winners of life's battle among the sons and daughters of Adam.

THE CEDAR TREE

Of all trees mentioned in Scripture the cedar can claim an aristocratic pre-eminence. In this most royal vegetable production are combined beauty, strength, massive girth, and usefulness. The Psalmist compared the good man or woman to it. "He" or she "shall grow as the cedar in Lebanon." The soil of Lebanon is conducive to the growth of the cedar. Its growth on it is unparalleled; so it is with the Christian. There are places where he attains a more majestic growth, exhibits more attractive graces, and is more eminently useful. But in his case every place can become a Lebanon; every position of life can be made one of growth, of attraction, and usefulness by the unfolding of his inner spiritual life, and the right appropriation of all outward helps, assimilating everything legitimate to his use. The righteous man and woman will turn everything to their own formation of a true and perfect character. We give Buckhardt's description of the cedars as "he saw them on mount Lebanon." They stand on uneven ground and form a small wood. Of the oldest and best-looking trees I counted eleven or twelve-twenty-five very large ones—about fifty of middling size—more than three hundred smaller and younger ones. (Be continued)

THE CEDAR TREE CONTINUED

The oldest trees are distinguished by having the foliage and small branches at the top only, and by four, five, or even seven trunks springing from one base. The branches and foliage of the others were lower, and I saw none of those whose leaves touched the ground like the trees in Kew Gardens, The trunks of the old trees are covered with the names of travellers and other persons who have visited them. The trunks of the oldest trees seem quite dead; the wood is of a grey tint. This tree rises to the height of thirty or forty yards, and some are from thirty-five to forty feet in girth. It is a beautiful evergreen, possessing leaves similar to the rosemary and distills a kind of gum, to which various qualities are attributed. The leaves grow upward, and the fruit hangs downward, er, harder, and fuller, and not easily separated from the stalk. It contains a seed like the cypress cone. The wood is very valuable, possessing a strong aromatic smell, and is reported to be incorruptible. The ark of the covenant, many parts of the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the royal dwellings of David, Solomon, and others were of this tree. 2. Sam. 5:11; 7:7; 1. Kgs 5:6-10; 6:9-20; 7:2-12. Cedar wood was also used in naval architecture, Ezek. 27:5. As an instance of the adaptability of every thing created by God to its surroundings, a characteristic given by De La Rogue, obtained from the Maronites of Mount Libanus, is very forcible. "The branches grow in parallel rows round the tree, but lessen gradually from the bottom to the top, shooting out parallel to the horizon, so that the tree is, in appearance, similar to a cone. As the snows which fall in vast quantities on this mountain must necessarily, by their weight on such a vast surface, break down these branches, nature, or rather the God of nature, has so ordered it that at the approach of winter, (be continued)

THE CEDAR TREE CONTINUED
and during the snow season, the branches erect themselves and cling close to the body of the tree, and thus prevent any quantity of snow from lodging on them."

The cedar, great and grand as it is, partially derives its strength from the tiny dew drops which sparkle on its leaves, and the rough brown soil that feeds its roots, and to a large extent also, from the hurricane that tosses its boughs, the hail and snow that would batter its branches were it not for the imate power given to it by its great Creator. Adverse winds try, consolidate, and strengthen this massive vegetable; so in like manner do adverse providences and keen trials help the growth of the true soul. All hostile elements are really disguised blessings to the Christian. "Tribulation worketh patience."

The cedar is very frequently one of the natural images used by the prophets in their poetical style of writing to denote things great and high, such as kings, princes, and mighty potentates. Hosea, when denouncing the judgment of God on the proud and arrogant, says, "The day of the Lord and arrog-shall be upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan." 2:13. In a challenge between the Kings of Israel and Judah, the former, in his reply to the Judean King, says, "The thistle that was in Lebanon, saying, Give me the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife; and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle." 2. Kgs. 14:9. When David required a figure to express the awful majesty and infinite power of Jehovah, he writes: "The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty; the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon."

THE CYPRESS TREE

The stately cypress has not been selected by us on account of its frequent mention in Holy Writ. It is far otherwise, recurring only once in Isaiah 44:14; and some critics even differ as to whether the Hebrew word Terzeh here really denotes the cypress. Yet Dr. Kitto and others, think the cypress was more proper for the use specified by the prophet than either the wild oak or pine; more particularly so as it was commonly used by the ancients in the manufacture of their idols. Can we do better therefore, than accept our translation as correct?

The inspired writer very distinctly portrays the folly of the idol makers, and the vanity of all false gods. Parts of the same tree were used for cooking, for heat, and for making graven images. What a true simile is drawn by him in the 20th verse of the same chapter, "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he can not ~~not~~ deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?"

The tall fruit-bearing tree known as the cypress constitutes, along with the cedar, "The glory of Lebanon." It also grows in the islands of Cypress, Rhodes, and Cyprus. From this last it derives its name. It is cultivated with great difficulty. Its fruit is not edible; its leaves are bitter, and according to Pliny, the very smell and shade are highly dangerous. The Romans considered it a fatal tree. The wood is always green, very heavy, of an aromatic smell, very durable, a remarkable fine close grain, very eaten not subject to rot, nor liable to be eaten by worms, and of a beautiful reddish hue. The tree is sexual; those of the male incline horizontally; those of the female are perpendicular. Its fruit is round, olive colored, and of the size of nuts, growing in separate places, and containing small angular seeds. (be continued)

Chapter 3: Oil

June 7, 1970 - June 14, 1970

Oil is mentioned frequently in the Scriptures. It was a product that had many uses, most of which are foreign to our concept of "oil".

There are three different Hebrew words in the Old Testament for oil, none of them signifying petroleum oil. To interpret Deut. 33:24 as a prophecy about the petroleum resources of the Middle East is utterly farfetched and unsupported in the passage. The word "oil" here is the regular word used to signify olive oil.

Professor Arthur B. Fowler says, "Oil in the Bible almost always means olive oil, perhaps the only exception being Esther 2:12 where it is the "oil of myrrh." Even the sacred anointing oil, frequently translated "ointment," though it was compounded with a mixture of spices and perfumes, was basically the oil of the olive.

OIL AS A CLEANSING AGENT

What may have appeared to be a purely cosmetic use of oil in Bible times was actually more than just that. Oil was utilized to cleanse and purify the skin from filth and impurities. A missionary in Morocco said, "I used to work on my automobile and get grease on my hands. I discovered that I could not remove this or any other persistent dirt from my hands more readily than with olive oil, and nothing left my hands feeling more pleasant afterward."

The "soap" referred to in Jer. 2:22 signifies a mixture of potash and oil which was likely a standard type of soap in Bible times.

OIL AS A COURTESY

The statement in Luke 7:46, "My head with oil thou didst not anoint," indicates that such anointing was an act of great courtesy on the part of a host to his guest. It was a gesture of graciousness and signified the fondness of the host for the one whom he thus anointed.

OIL AS FOOD

When we went to North Africa to live, it seemed unusual to be using olive oil in all food preparations that required shortening. Even pie crusts had to be made with olive oil as the shortening ingredient. This is words of a missionary. Significantly in more recent years various types of cooking oils have been largely displacing the old fashioned use of lard and even butter. Of all the types of oil used as a food ingredient I feel that olive oil is the most healthful.

Not only was oil used in the preparation of foods but also for the actual cooking or frying of foods. One of the delicacies of the Middle East is leavened bread dough fried in deep olive oil. In the preparation of foods, oil is still considered essential in making foods delicate and delicious. There was an abundant supply of oil in Canaan, a fact which demonstrated the richness of the land.

Throughout Scripture oil is symbolic of divine resources, especially as these relate to the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Bread of Life and the Living Water, but it is only as the Holy Spirit reveals Him that the hunger of the soul is satisfied. The honey and the meat of the Word must be mixed with faith and brought by the Spirit in order to profit those who hear it (Heb. 4:2). It is the Holy Spirit alone who serves the food of the divine Word to our minds and hearts.

OIL AS A CURATIVE

Jesus alluded to the use of oil for medicinal purposes in His parable of the Good Samaritan. When this man of compassion saw the victim of the robbers lying by the roadside, he "went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine" (Lu. 10:34). Shepherds habitually used oil to anoint the wounds and bruises which sheep acquired from thorns and rugged terrain (Continued)

OIL IN SCRIPTURE CONTINUED

or from sparring with friend or foe. Oil is also a fitting comparison to the divine resources of the gospel, particularly to the inner resources in the life of the believer. These are made effective by the Holy Spirit, whose activities are commonly symbolized in the Scriptures by oil.

OIL AS A COSMETIC

References to the use of oil as a cosmetic are fairly frequent in Scripture. Note such passages as 11. Chron. 28:15; Lu. 7:46 and John 12:3. The word for "oil" is sometimes translated "ointment" in the Old Testament, signifying a perfumed and spiced oil. In Psalm 104:15 we read about oil that makes the face shine, a significant reference to the use of oil as a cosmetic.

Oil was apparently used for several cosmetic purposes: as a perfume to produce fragrance; to cause a "glow"; and to soften the skin. Often after bathing, people would massage their entire bodies with olive oil for both health and cosmetic reasons.

The symbolic meaning of this use is clear. The Holy Spirit brings fragrance and radiance into the life of the man who allows Him to fill and use his life. There is a glow and a spiritual fragrance about the life of the man who is Spirit-filled that is unlike anything found in natural man. The beauty of divine holiness ought to be radiated from all believers. It is always seen in the lives of those who are truly controlled by the Spirit.

The symbolic lesson is quite obvious. The Holy Spirit sets the Believer's heart aflame with divine truth and love. Then He supplies all that is necessary to keep that flame alive in the life. Only as He is permitted to burn within us can any true light be diffused from our lives to the dark world around

us (Prov. 4:18). He alone can supply the illumination we need for ourselves and for directing the feet of others to Christ (Jno. 14:6).

OIL AS A SOURCE OF LIGHT

A very necessary and notable use of oil in Bible lands was as a fuel for lamps. Lamps were the prime source of light in dwelling places, as well as in the tabernacle and temple. Ordinary lamps consisted of little clay vessels so arranged that a wick lying in the oil and supported at one end in a sort of spout or trough consumed the oil and gave off, naturally, one candlepower of light. More sophisticated lamps for wealthier homes and for use in the tabernacle and temple were made of brass and were highly ornamental, yet the basic principle was the same.

OIL FOR ANOINTING

Perhaps the most significant use of oil in the Bible was in the anointing of notable men to specific high offices. Priests (Ex. 28:41; 29:7); prophets (1. Kgs. 19:16), and kings (1. Sam. 10:1; 16:12, 13; 1. Kgs. 1:39) were anointed before they began their sacred tasks.

Men chosen of God and appointed to these offices required the wisdom, guidance and power of God to equip them for the discharge of their duties. They were anointed with oil to symbolize the fact that they had already been chosen and anointed by the Spirit of the Lord for their work.

The word "Messiah" means literally "anointed one," and it was this title that indicated the fact that Jesus Christ was anointed by the Spirit for His earthly, redemptive ministry. He combines in Himself all the offices and functions of prophet, priest and king. He is greater than any of the priests of the Aaronic priesthood and greater than all the Old Testament prophets.

Chapter 4: George Washington's Vision

May 24, 1970 - May 31, 1970

(here is a remarkable vision in answer to prayer as to future of the nation)

The beautiful woman who appeared to George Washington at Valley Forge may have been a Ghost, or she may have been an angel, but her message was so reassuring to the great general that it may have had a lot to do with his winning the battle-and the country.

Although the story of Washington's ghostly vision may be apocryphal, his close friend Anthony Sherman, of Philadelphia, always told it as fact. Because some of the predictions, which were published in the last century, have come true since then, it is worthy of our attention.

The experience occurred during the agonizing winter of 1777, when Washington, after several reverses, was with his troops at Valley Forge. Sherman told the story to several people, and it was published in at least two newspapers. A Mormon periodical carried the account in 1856, and the National Tribune carried it in 1880.

One day Washington stayed in his quarters alone for hours. When he came out, he told Sherman and another officer who was there of the strange vision he'd just had.

"I do not know whether it is owing to the anxiety of my mind or what," he said, "but this afternoon, as I was sitting at the table engaged in preparing a dispatch, something seemed to disturb me. Looking up, I beheld standing opposite me a singularly beautiful female figure. So astonished was I that it was some moments before I found language to inquire the purpose of her presence."

Washington went on: "Gradually the surrounding atmosphere seemed filled with sensations and grew luminous. Everything about me seemed to rarify; the mysterious visitor herself became more airy and yet more distinct to my sight than ever."

Presently the general heard a voice saying, "Son of the Republic, look and learn!" A heavy white vapor seemed to rise, and as it dissipated he looked upon a strange scene. Before him lay spread out all the countries of the world, and there were billowing waves between Europe and America.

"Then," he said, "I beheld a dark showdy being, like an angel, standing, or rather, floating, in midair between Europe and America. Dipping water out of the ocean in the hollow of each hand, he sprinkled some upon America with his right hand, while with his left hand he cast some on Europe. Immediately a cloud arose from those countries, and joined in midocean. For awhile it remained stationary, and then it moved slowly westward, until it enveloped America in its murky folds.

"Sharp flashes of lightning gleamed through it at intervals; and I heard the smothered groans and cries of the American people. A second time the angel dipped water from the ocean and sprinkled it out as before. The dark cloud was then drawn back to the view, in whose heaving billows it sank from view. Again I heard the mysterious voice say, "Son of the Republic, look and learn. "I cast my eyes upon America and beheld villages and towns, and cities springing up, one after another, until the whole land, from the Atlantic to the Pacific was dotted with them.

"Another time I heard the mysterious voice say: "Son of the Republic, the end of the century cometh, look and learn." "And with this the dark shadowy figure turned its face southward, and from Africa I saw an ill-omened specter approaching our land. It flitted slowly over every town and city. The inhabitants presently set themselves in battle array against each other.

WASHINGTON'S VISION CONTINUED

"As I continued looking I saw a bright angel, on whose brow rested a crown of light on which was traced the word UNION, place an American flag between the divided nation, and say, 'Remember, ye are brethern.' Instantly, the inhabitants, casting from them their weapons, became friends once more, and united around the National Standard."

George Washington went on: "Then once more I beheld the villages, towns, and cities spring up where I had seen them before; while the bright angel planted the azure standard he brought in the midst of them, and cried with a loud voice, 'While the stars remain and the heavens send down dew upon the earth, so long shall the Union last.' And taking from his brow the crown on which was blazoned the word Union, he placed it upon the standard, while people, kneeling down, said 'Amen.'"

THESE PORTIONS of Washington's vision probably referred to the African origin of the Negro slaves, the division of sentiment among the people over the question of slavery, the Civil War, and the ultimate reunion under one flag. All this had come to pass before the date on which Sherman's story was published in the National Tribune.

But Washington's account had gone on, and now it involved predictions which no one in 1880 even so much as suspected would ever be fulfilled:

"But I received yet another vision and another prophecy. I saw rolling and tossing between Europe and America the billows of the Atlantic, and between Asia and America lay the Pacific... The dark angel put a trumpet to his mouth and blew three distinct blasts, and taking water from the ocean sprinkled it upon Europe, Asia, and Africa... Then my eyes looked upon a fearful scene. Clouds from these countries blended into one and soon enveloped

America... Through the ~~clouds~~ ^{clouds} gleamed a bright red light... I saw hordes of armed men marching by land and sailing by sea... Dimly I saw vast armies devastate whole countries, pillaging and burning great cities... I heard the thundering of cannon, and clashing of swords, and the combat's shouts and cries of millions in mortal

"Suddenly I saw the angel upon whose forehead still shone the word Union, and who bore our national flag in one hand and a sword in the other. She descended from Heaven attended by legions of bright spirits. Again amid the fearful noise of conflict, I heard a voice saying 'Son of the Republic, look and learn!' As the voice ceased the shadowy angel appeared and for the last time, sprinkled water from the ocean on all the countries of the world.

"The angel said, 'Son of the Republic, what you have just seen is thus interpreted: Three great perils will come upon the Republic. The most fearful for her is the third; but the whole world united shall not prevail against her. Let every child of the republic learn to live for his God, his land, and his Union.'"

"With those words," concluded Washington, "the vision vanished. I started from my seat, and felt that I had seen a vision wherein had been shown to me the birth, progress, and destiny of the United States."

Anthony Sherman was so impressed with this incident that he wrote down every word of it with painstaking care right away, and he related the incident many times during his long life. (There is much food for thought in last of this vision for we are in the third peril and the worst in our nation's history. We

need to pray as never before for this nation.)
The loss of gold is great,
The loss of health is more,
But the loss of CHRIST is such a loss
As no man can restore!

Chapter 5: Our Church

Oak Grove - a true church

September 5, 1971 & April 28, 1974

OUR CHURCH

The church where you and I worship is OUR CHURCH. It does not belong to just one individual but it belongs to us all. Christ is the Head and we are the members.

As a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, so OUR CHURCH is no stronger than the individual members who make up our constituency. OUR CHURCH is a praying church only as we are a praying people; OUR CHURCH is a growing church only so long as we are willing to work and see it grow; OUR CHURCH is a spiritual church only so long as we are spiritual; OUR CHURCH is reaching the lost only as long as we let Lord use us as channels through which He can work. The Lord works through those who work.

When we criticise OUR CHURCH we are criticizing ourselves, and when we are praying for the church we are praying for ourselves. When we are boosting ourselves, OUR CHURCH will be only as strong, progressive, and spiritual as we are ourselves. By God's help let me determine to make OUR CHURCH the church we are proud to call our own, and what God would have it to be.

We could be honored with no greater privilege than to be a member—a worthy member of a local New Testament Church.

"Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen." Eph. 3:21.

OAK GROVE HISTORY

Since all True Baptist Churches in the South go back through the Philadelphia Association and that Association goes back to the churches in Wales let us go back with Oak Grove through Wales to Paul and the Apostles. A few years ago many facts were brought to the light about Hill Cliff Church. This church was organized about 600 A. D. While there was no record kept by the church because of persecution, there are records made in stone in the graveyard nearby. A few years ago the foundation of an old church with a baptistry was unearthed, showing that far beyond the written records this church has lived. Davis' History of Welsh Baptists says that in 300 A. D. Welsh Baptists suffered terrible persecution. They must have been there to suffer persecution. This goes back far beyond such a thing as the Catholic Church.

The origin of Welsh Baptists is accounted for by Davis in his history page 6 as follows: "In A. D. 63, while Paul was a prisoner at Rome, a Welsh lady and her husband, whose name was Pudens, visiting in Rome, were converted under Paul's preaching. They are referred to in Acts 28:30 and 11. Tim. 4:21. These people carried the gospel to Wales."

Thus, by the Welsh route which I have already used, we find Baptists go back to the Apostle Paul. Paul was received by the church at Jerusalem, later he was a member at Antioch, which church sent him out as a missionary. Since the Apostles were members of the Jerusalem church again Oak Grove goes back to the first church. Welsh Baptists have always been missionary Baptists. About A. D. 180 two prominent ministers, whose names were Maganus and Damicanus who were born in Wales, and converted in the city of Rome, were sent by their church at Rome as gospel ministers to their brethren in Wales. So I am proud to be a member of a church which goes back to Christ and the church which He established.

Chapter 5: The Jewish People

October 14, 1973 - November 4, 1973

WHAT JEWS BELIEVE

The Rabbies say, if a man rise early, says his prayers three times, and performs his rites and ceremonies, he has no need to fear evil spirits. They may hover around him, but they cannot touch him. But then the very moment he gets out of bed, and puts on some of his clothes, according to the prescribed rule, he must hasten and wash himself, in order to drive away all evil spirits. According to the doctrines of the wise, no one should walk the distance of four yards with unwashed hands, otherwise all manner of impurities lay hold on him. Indeed, the Cabalists write thus: "Whosoever walks the distance of four yards with unwashed hands, is worthy of death." Since the soul is absent all night, and an evil spirit occupies its place in the mean time, the Rabbies exhort and command that all pious persons have a vessel, filled with water, close by their bed-side, that they may be able, without delay, to wash their hands. Before a Jew has attended to this, he is not to touch any part of his face, for they declare it to be dangerous. The water also must be clean and fresh, and not have been previously used. It is also forbidden to take the water from the hands of any other person who has not himself previously washed them. Rings also, are to be taken off, otherwise the whole is looked upon as not performed. He is likewise forbidden to let the water run on the ground, but it is to be caught up in a vessel. He is further forbidden from throwing it in any place where people are accustomed to walk, as they say, it would be very dangerous.

As to the mode of washing; the Jew is to take the vessel, containing the water, in the right hand, and give it into the left; then to pour first upon the right; this is to be repeated three times; otherwise, they say, the evil spirit will not depart. This he is to pour three times, or the whole would be useless, although he should pour ever so much at once. (be continued)

WHAT JEWS BELIEVE

They are to rinse the mouth every morning, in order to pronounce the name of God with a clean mouth. If the Jew dips his hands into the water, and so wash them, this would be sufficient for saying his prayers, but then the evil spirit would not depart. And supposing for instance, that he hath even dipped his hands alternately into three vessels, containing water, it would still be doubtful whether the evil spirit would depart. The Rabbies, however say, that it is doubtful, whether a Jew, who has watched the whole night, is obliged in the morning to wash his hands, in order to drive away the evil spirit; but they do maintain that, at all events, he is bound to wash his hands without saying any blessing. Women are obliged to observe the same order of washing, namely, to pour water three times over their hands. The greater part of our food is prepared by them; but if they do this with unwashed hands, then the evil spirit will not depart from them, the food will become unclean, and the heart thereby defiled; especially of their husbands and their sons.

Now relate the way in which Jews proceed in the management of their dead. Just before a Jew is taken out of the house to be buried, the relations and children, and acquaintances of the deceased, stand round the coffin, when the feet are uncovered, and each in rotation lays hold of the two great toes, and begs pardon for any offence they may have given to the deceased during his life, and hopes he will forgive them; and likewise requests that he will speak in their behalf, in the next world, according as he may deem proper. This custom is very strictly adhered to, and seldom if ever omitted. It is a practice with them, that when a child dies, under twelve years of age, that all such as have been playmates with it, have by their parents, with a piece of worsted, the exact measure of their height and breadth taken, and afterwards made into a small ball, and put into the coffin with the dead infant. (be continued)

WHAT JEWS BELIEVE

The reason they assign for this practice is, that if this custom was not regarded, his playmates would long after, and lament the loss of the deceased; but this will operate as a charm against it.

If a female dies in child-bed, it is then a custom, and strictly adhered to, to make up the bed of the deceased every morning, for thirty one days; as they consider it would be dangerous for any one to lie in the same bed; inasmuch as the deceased is supposed to lie in it every night during that period.

In every place or situation where a Jew departs this life, three houses to the right, and three houses to the left of the house of the deceased, if any Jews should reside in them, all the water in their dwellings is thrown away, as it is considered defiled; for they believe, that when any Jew, who departs this life, the destroying angel takes a knife, cuts his throat, which is invisible to mortals, and the blood that adheres to this knife he washes off in the water of the six houses; that is, three to the right and three to the left.

After the corpse is carried out, the following ceremony is observed in reference to the spot where it had been placed before it was washed and shrouded. They take a saucer, filled with oil, and cotton wick, which they light, and then hang up a napkin, and set a basin of water. The light is kept burning thirty-one days, under the idea, that the spirit of the departed hovers about the light during that period of time, and they draw their conclusions as to the state the spirit is in, by the dimness or brightness of the light of this cotton wick. For the seven first mornings, the basin is replenished with clean water, under the impression that the deceased comes seven times to purify himself in this water.

MANNER IN WHICH JEWS EXPECT MESSIAH
The coming of their Messiah is the greatest comfort they find in this life. They look for their Messiah to come in this wise: that on one of these days the trumpet will sound at Jerusalem, and the sound will be so great, that the Jews living in different parts of the world, will hear the sound thereof; and the very moment they will be transformed into angels, and by the power of God, transferred to Jerusalem, where the Messiah will reign over them. (Bible not say they be angels but restored tribes.) They do not look for a spiritual reign-but a temporal one. But still they do not expect, after once they return to Jerusalem, there will be any more death; for Jerusalem they look upon as their paradise. And all the Jews who have died and been buried since the creation of the world will work their passage under ground the same as moles, and rise on the spot where the temple stood in the days of old. Then will the world at large cry and say, "O I have been undone! for now I find there is only one God, and he is the God of the Jews; and the Saviour who is now come, is the real Messiah, who was foretold in the Scriptures. Then as many of the world who will lay hold of the skirt of a garment of a Jew, and say, "I will go with you; for I can plainly see, you are a holy and chosen people; then those will be saved with the Jews." The Jews pray that all might be saved.

Their love is so great for Jerusalem, that for centuries past, down to this time, many Jews, in different parts of the world, arrange matters, and go and settle in the holy land, to die and be buried there; for they are given to understand it will be a two-fold advantage. First, it will save them a tedious journey underground when the Messiah comes; and secondly, in their graves they will not feel the gnawing of the worms.

Chapter 6: Odds & Ends

1968 - 1974

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q. Would you explain the meaning of Zechariah 14:4,5.

A. The Book of Zechariah was written after Israel had returned from its Babylonian and Persian exile. The book's theme is that God will preserve His remnant from all the world powers which oppress it and threaten it with extinction (chapt. 1-8) and that this remnant's Messiah will come to establish His kingdom and will then rule over all the earth (chapt. 9-14). Chapter 14 deals in detail with the aspects of Christ's Second-Coming.

The first three verses of chapter 14 set the stage for the events of "that day," the Second Coming of the Lord (Isa. 2:12; Jer. 25:29; Mal. 3:17-4:6; Rev. 19:9). They reveal the drastic need of a deliverer for God's people who have been saved during the Tribulation on earth.

Verse 4 then tells of the place of the Messiah's Second-Coming- the Mount of Olives, directly East of Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley. This is also a fulfillment of Ezekiel 43:2, which says that the Lord's return, which will terminate the Times of the Gentiles, will be from the "way of the east."

The King James Version says "His feet will stand there" (Zech. 14:4). "Stand" is translated from the Hebrew word Amendhu. This word denotes "to rest firmly on or make physical contact with" a particular location. This, then, is a reference to a literal event including the visible, personal return to earth of the divine Person, Jesus Christ, in His risen and glorified body. (be Cont.)

It is interesting that He will return to the spot on the earth from which He left many centuries before- a literal fulfillment of the "so" of Acts 1:11. This is also in keeping with the words of Ezekiel (11:22,23), who said the Shekinah glory of the Lord left Jerusalem by the east, previous to the Babylonian captivity and the beginning of the "times of the Gentiles."

The second part of Zechariah 14:4 tells of a great earthquake which will split the Mount of Olives into two parts by an east-west cleavage. The north part of this great mountain will move northward and the south part, southward. Other prophets also refer to this earthquake (Mic. 1:4; Nah. 1:5; Hab. 3:6).

In the place of what was a mountain towering some 200 feet over Jerusalem will be a great valley through which God's people, who are trapped in the city, will escape from their enemies (v. 5). What a fitting reminder this will be of God's deliverance of His people, Israel, from Egypt through the Red Sea several thousand years before this fulfillment takes place.

Verse 5 explains that it will be during these cataclysmic events that the Lord will effect His Second Coming to earth with His saints. (Concluded next week)

QUESTION AND ANSWER CONCLUDED

Those accompanying the Lord in His return and referred to as His saints will be a group of angels and glorified saints with His Bride, the Church, Matt. 16:27; 24:30,31; Mk. 8:38; 1. Cor. 15:23; Col. 3:4; 1. Thess. 4:14. This group of glorified saints will be composed both of those who died and were raised at the time of the Rapture along with the living believers who were caught up and met them in the air. Plus the martyrs of The Tribulation who will be raised just before He returns to reign.

GOOD FRIDAY

The teaching that Jesus was crucified on "Good Friday" absolutely conflicts the plain teachings of the Bible, and the words of Jesus apply to this as He says, "Ye by your traditions, set at naught the law of God." Let me ask this question "How could Jesus be crucified on Good Friday and rise on Sunday and be in the grave three days and night?"

Now what is wrong about this Good Friday observance? Well it just makes a falsifier out of Christ. He said that He would be in the grave three days and three nights, and you are going to have to be a mathematical genius that makes Einstein ashamed of himself if you can figure three days and three nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning. You can't figure more than two nights to save your life. Eleven different times it is recorded in the New Testament that Jesus would be in the grave three days and three nights, and one type was involved. He used the type of Jonah.. for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the stomach of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." You can't believe the eleven times in the N.T. and believe in Good Friday. But they tell me a portion of a day or night was accounted a full day or night. I want to deny it, and remind you if that were true, it wouldn't work, for there are only two nights by the Good Friday myth. My God is a God of exactness. They want us to believe that the Lord just part-the-way, slap-hazardly, carelessly, sorta fulfilled the prediction concerning Christ being in the grave three full days and nights. Why do men contradict the words of Christ? Why do they wreck the type of Jonah? Why do they deny the accurate and literal fulfillment of the promise of Christ to be in the grave three days and three nights?. The answer is to uphold a tradition. They want to stay with the popular teaching of today. Let us stay with the Book. I hold that He was crucified on Wednesday not Friday.

THE BODY IN ECCLESIASTES 12

In verse 3, the house refers to our body. The keepers of the house are the hands which shake and tremble in old age. The grinders are the teeth which become fewer as the years pass by, while those that look out the windows are the eyes which grow dim toward the end of life. The doors in the streets are the ears which often lose their keenness in older years. The daughters of music are the vocal cords of those who sing. The almond tree may hint at the appearance of gray hair, the grasshopper may symbolize any trifling weight which to old people may seem heavy. The silver cord is the spinal cord, the golden bowl to the skull, the pitcher is the heart of the body which give way during failing years. Verse 7 then shall the dust return to earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." In last two verses we have the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep His commandments.

HERESIES REFUTED BY GENESIS 1:1

- "In the beginning God created the heavens and earth." These beliefs and philosophies are all wrong:
1. Materialism: Matter is not eternal-God created it.
 2. Atheism (No God) is wrong.
 3. Agnosticism (The theory which says, "We don't know if there is a God or not") is wrong.
 4. Polytheism (many gods) is wrong: "God."
 5. Pantheism (God is in all things) is wrong. God is distinct from His creation: God created.
 6. Unitarianism is wrong: "God" (Elohim is in the plural so suggesting the Trinity).
 7. Evolution is wrong: "God created."
 8. Idolatry is wrong: God is the Almighty Creator, idols are nothing at all. It is wrong to worship the sun, ect.
 9. Naturalism (worship of Nature, or created things or beings) is wrong.
 10. Astrology is wrong: the stars are simply His creation.

Chapter 7: Bro. R.G. Holland

A good steward.

August 25, 1974

MY RESIGNATION

After much thought, prayer I feel that it is best for the church that I resign to accept the call of Temple Church in Columbia. We want to be used of God and not hinder the growth of this church. I have lost many calls to preach lately because I would not be gone on Sundays. Many pastors have resigned so it will not be hard to get a good pastor.

MY STEWARDSHIP

I have tried to take care of the church property and home the best I could. Lord blessed wife and I to give an organ and new table to the church. I promised God some years ago to give at least 10% to Him. I have given above that to the church over 977.00 for church expense, S.S. and B.T.S. I have given to every project the church has went into. I have kept the pump running at own expense and outside the help from Sis. Wilemon paid for supplies for the bulletin. This and to God and you I give the credit. Every cent handed to me by any member has gone through the church. I will no doubt leave the big air conditioner as they had to take out a window and cut it. I want to help the church all that I can. Thanks to all. We will still need your prayers. We had house ceiling insulated at our expense.

THE BIBLE IS A-
Lamp for the feet that in by-ways have wandered;
Guide for the youth that would otherwise fall;
Hope for the sinner whose life has been squandered;
Staff of the aged, and best Book for all !

THE CONVERTED CHINAMAN
A converted Chinaman once described his experiences in seeking deliverance from sin, thus:- "I was once in the horrible pit of sin, and for years I cried to Buddha for help ; but he replied, ' You must deaden your consciousness and imagine that you are not in the pit.' "Then I sought help in Confucius, and his answer was, ' You should have followed my teaching, and then you would never have fallen into the pit.' "At last I turned to Christ, and with no word of rebuke, He descended into the pit, and with His pierced hands, brought me up out of it; and we have been walking together ever since !"

THERE'S A DIFFERENCE
Between being sorry for sin and being sorry you are "caught."
Between confessing your sins and confessing some other fellow's.
Between seeing your own faults and seeing some other person's.
Between conversion of the head and conversion of the heart.
Between being led by the Holy Spirit and led by your own imagination.
Between being persecuted for "righteousness sake." and being persecuted for "foolishness sake."

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