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“Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever.”

IN meditating upon the words, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever,” taken from Paul’s letter to the Hebrews in chapter 13:8, we surely feel a sense of stability, security and enduring faithfulness is conveyed to us by the Apostle with respect to our dear Redeemer, who, at the time these words were written had been exalted to the Father’s right hand, and had gained — “All power in heaven and in earth,” — as our Lord Himself declared in Matt. 28:18.

Reading the context in Heb. 13, from the Revised Standard Version, is most encouraging. “Let brotherly love continue . . . Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, I will never fail you nor forsake you. Hence we can confidently say, The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid; what can man do to me. Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.” (Heb. 13:1, 5-8.)

It seems evident that the Apostle was seeking to confirm the Hebrew Christians in their faith and hope for the future, by impressing the fact that their Lord, their great anti-typical High Priest, having taken over the office of their typical high priest, was able to support, sustain and comfort them in their walk as Christians *for all time*. The wonderful exhortation by the same Apostle, in Heb. 3:1, to those Hebrew Christians, and to us today, links so beautifully with the words of our text — “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.”

Let us, then, seek to earnestly consider the Great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, in the three aspects—yesterday, today and forever.

Yesterday, to the mind of the Apostle who wrote it, would likely refer to our Lord’s first advent. And how much we really have to consider about Him in regard to His condescension in coming to this earth, to a fallen human family, to be the Redeemer of mankind! As the same apostle so beautifully expresses it in 2 Cor. 8:9, “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” Also, have we ever considered the waiting time of 30 years which our Lord experienced in growing up to manhood’s estate from the Babe of Bethlehem—30 years of sacrificing the glory He had with the Father before the world was? Then, the further all-important 31 years of laying down His life, in teaching, guiding and preparing His little band of disciples who were favored with the privilege of carrying on His ministry, and finally the consummation of His sacrifice on the cross. This was of course the Father’s will for Him, and so it was our Lord’s delight to carry out his Father’s will in all things, *as* He declared, — “I am come that they might have life, and that

they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” (John 10:10, 11.)

Connected also with the Yesterday aspect of our great High Priest, at His first advent, was His teaching and preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, and His miracles of various kinds, including the raising of the dead to life. “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” (Matt. 9:35). We note that teaching and preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom was our Lord’s main work, and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people, would be *as a* witness that He was the true Messiah; especially would this be manifest when our Lord actually raised the dead! Not that our Lord healed all the sick and all the diseased, but rather that He “healed every (kind of) sickness, and every (kind of) disease.” In other words, no sickness or disease could withstand our Lord, because He had the Father’s mighty power at His disposal, to show how completely He will heal all the afflicted, and restore all that are in the death condition, in His wonderful kingdom to come.

Let us now consider the Today aspect of the Apostle’s words respecting our Lord. This could be taken, we would think, to refer to the whole of the Gospel Age, including Paul’s own day. Jesus’ promise to His disciples, just as He was about to ascend to the Heavenly Father, is appropriate in this connection,—“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Those to whom Jesus spoke would represent His true followers right down the Gospel Age to its close, and our Lord’s promise to be with those who were following Him has surely been fulfilled, and would confirm the hearts and minds of the Lord’s true people that He is the same today as He was yesterday—the

same sympathetic and merciful High Priest—of whom Paul declared —“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.” (See Heb. 4:14-16.)

We now refer to a claim that is rather prevalent today amongst certain people by the name of revivalists. They maintain that the words of our text—“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever,”—are to be understood as implying that as our Lord healed all manner of sicknesses and diseases when He was here on earth, He is continuing to do this through certain people on earth today. We feel that these claims are very deceptive to people who do not understand the wonderful Plan of the Ages which God is working out for the ultimate blessing of all mankind, not for a few years by working temporary relief from sickness, etc., but rather relief that will last for ever, for those who obey the laws of the kingdom in due time.

We believe that the true understanding of the “gifts of the spirit” is presented so clearly and helpfully by the same Apostle who declared to the Hebrew Christians that Jesus Christ was the same yesterday, today and forever. This explanation is found in 1 Cor. 12:27-31, and chapter 13. Quoting from **verse 29** in chapter 12, we read—“Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.” The *more excellent way* is wonderfully revealed in chapter 13, and we advise all readers to carefully review this beautiful passage of Scripture.

Undoubtedly the Apostle’s object in this presentation to the church at Corinth was to wean them away from the “gifts” of the spirit which, however, up till that time had been a means of much help in the early church, when no New Testament was available, and the scrolls of the Old Testament would be scarce and few people were even able to read. The *more excellent way* than even the best of the gifts of the spirit, we see to be the development of the *fruits of the spirit*.

Let us now examine verse 8 in some detail. “Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies *they*

shall fail.” What kind of prophecies did the Apostle have in mind? Undoubtedly, *the gift of prophecy.* “Whether there be tongues, *they shall cease.*” What kind of tongues? Without doubt, *the gift of tongues.* We may question,—Did Jesus speak in tongues, and if not, why not? Surely if speaking in tongues was a sign of God’s favor, our Lord would have used that means of preaching. But not so! Our Lord was sent only “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” and they all understood the words which proceeded out of His mouth. How different it *was* on the day of Pentecost when many people of various languages were present to hear the gospel, and the Lord gave them His truth through the tongues of the Apostles. As our Lord did not use tongues at His first advent to make an outward show, is it reasonable to expect that He would use tongues today for demonstration purposes? Certainly not! Later we shall examine the source of this deception which captivates those looking for outward show in their religious life.

Continuing in verse 8 of 1 Cor. 13, we read,—“Whether there be knowledge *it shall vanish away.*” What kind of knowledge is implied here? Surely not the knowledge of knowing God and His truth, and understanding all the wonderful things in this world. No, but *the gift of knowledge,* given only to the early church.

The following verses 9 and 10 are stated in some circles to refer to the time when the gifts of the spirit would cease, the claim being that “when that which is perfect is come,” refers to our Lord’s second advent, and that the gifts of the spirit would continue until that time. How strange it would seem, if almost 2,000 years must pass before the “more excellent way” was to begin. Surely the Apostle’s advice was intended to apply there and then for the Corinthians in advocating the development of the fruits of the spirit, as *more excellent* than the best gifts of the spirit. Examining the context of this presentation given by the Apostle, we see no indication at all that he had the return of Christ in mind in this passage. Rather, he is giving a helpful illustration of the progress which will be gained by all the faithful followers of the Master when they become perfect beyond the veil—having gained immortality in the heavenly kingdom.

Those who have made some good development with the fruits of the spirit, having followed Paul’s good advice in this “more excellent way,” would still “know in part” in comparison with the perfection of the first resurrection. And this illustration of verses 9 and 10 of the progress from the “in part” to the “perfect” state beyond the veil is used to impress the Apostle’s teaching that progress should be made at that time in the Corinthian church from the “gifts” to the “fruits” of the spirit.

Verses 11 and 12 bear out this interpretation—“When I was a child, I spake as a child; I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things.” Could anything be clearer than that Paul was stating that he had already “become a man” in Christ, by cultivating the fruits of the spirit, and so he had put away childish things, even the gifts of the spirit, and was seeking to wean the Corinthians from childish desires also, that they may become men in Christ. It will be seen also that having become a man, after putting away childish things,

Paul still “saw through a glass darkly,” (dimly), he still “knew in part” only, in comparison with the “face to face” state beyond the veil. As verse 12 declares — “For now we see through a glass darkly (or dimly) ; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known.”

The closing verse of this lovely chapter seems to climax the Apostle’s teaching so clearly and beautifully, — “And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Indeed, these lovely fruits of the spirit must be manifest in the hearts and minds of all God’s people as they progress along the Christian way, and these are attained only by the indwelling of God’s holy spirit in good measure.

How, then, shall we account for the claims made in some circles, particularly in these last days of the age, that there are healings and tongues used in some assemblies today? In answer to this question, Have we ever wondered why the Apostle Paul was the only Apostle to mention the gifts of the spirit in the Epistles

of the whole of the New Testament, and why his reference is made only to the church at Corinth? This should make us think, for we find in his Epistles to the Romans, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians and the Thessalonians, also to Timothy,

Titus and the Hebrews, not one mention is made of the gifts of the spirit, but much is said in all these epistles about the fruits of the spirit. Surely Paul would have failed greatly in his ministry by so much omission, if the gifts of the spirit were to continue down the Gospel Age to the Lord's second advent.

Then we think of the Epistles of Peter, James and John, and the wonderful Revelation, and we find in these no reference to the gifts of the spirit, but much in all these Scriptures exhorting all Christians to seek to put on the fruits of the spirit — *giving* heed to what the spirit saith unto the churches.

Is there any reason then, why Paul selected the Corinthian church to refer to the gifts, and exhort them to seek the more excellent way of gaining the fruits of the spirit? His words in 1 Cor. 3 seem to supply the answer,—“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For *ye are* yet carnal.” (1 Cor. 3:1-3.) Apparently there were a number in this church who had not progressed spiritually, and so the outward show of the gifts of the spirit would have more appeal than was good for their development as followers of the Master, and Paul took the occasion to impress the “more excellent way,” for their highest good.

In his second epistle to the Corinthian church Paul reveals the deception which was prevalent in his day, and which applies also down to our own time. In 2 Cor. 11:10-15, we read from the Revised Standard Version,—“As the truth of Christ is in me, this boast of mine shall not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! And what I do I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.” The fact that Satan brought all the trouble, sorrow, pain and death upon the human family by deceiving our first parents, and now would disguise himself as an angel of light in the boasted healings of today, surely reveals the subtilty of the deceptions in these days.

Our Lord's warning in Matt. 24:24 is surely very timely in this connection, — “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders ; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” But it is not possible to deceive the very elect, because our Lord is still the great overseer of His people, and is keeping the true-hearted from all deceptions of every kind; He is still the same—yesterday, today, and forever. We have a lovely example of our Lord's watch-care over Peter in Luke 22:31, 32, and the Today aspect is shown again in Rev. 1:12, 13, where we have revealed in the visions of this prophecy our risen Lord “in the midst of the seven candlesticks”—amidst the churches of the Gospel Age—keeping, protecting, reproving where necessary, and blessing all His dear followers who are walking in His steps of sacrifice.

The question may arise as to why the Lord permits certain great signs and wonders to deceive people, especially in these closing days of the Gospel Age. The Apostle Paul answers this matter very well, showing that some of mankind are not worthy of being protected, and that God would even send a strong delusion that such should believe a lie. His words are found in 2 Thes. 2:9-12—“The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (R.S.V.)

Our Lord Jesus is also the same Forever. In Rev. 3:21 we read respecting the over-comers of this Gospel Age—”To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” This shows the eternal inheritance of the Church, the Bride of Christ, all the members of which will rejoice in the work of co-operating with Christ in the grand restoration of all mankind who may gain the benefit from Christ’s sacrifice, when raised from the dead, by becoming His obedient earthly subjects under the administration of the earthly phase of the kingdom. The prophet Isaiah also reveals this wonderful Forever aspect of our text as follows — “The government shall be upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, 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.” (Isa. 9:6, 7.)

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord’s Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

Gloomy View of U.N. by Delegates

NEW YORK, October 25—"We are witnessing the decline and fall of the United Nations . . . it's our gloomiest day." That was the view expressed by a number of seasoned diplomats as the United Nations observed its 16th anniversary yesterday, the New York "Herald Tribune" said.

The gloom and cynicism which settled over the world organisation from the very outset of the current General Assembly could not be dispersed even during the brief interlude set aside yesterday for the anniversary celebration at U.N. headquarters, the newspaper's U.N. correspondent wrote.

While the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's symphony orchestra was playing the Brahms' First Symphony, one veteran diplomat whispered: "We will last only one or two more years." His companion, the correspondent said, protested: "You are being pessimistic." "Not at all," replied the first. "I am being optimistic. If it lasts longer, it will be a catastrophe for humanity."

"Everyone is blaming everyone else for the sorry state of affairs and the tragic-comedy which is being played on the world stage in the glass house alongside the (New York) East River," the "Herald Tribune" reporter said.

"The smaller countries blame the great Powers, and the great Powers blame each other or the 'neutrals' of Africa and Asia for standing by and 'fiddling' while the world is threatened with fire. With the two great Powers of East and West deadlocked on all major issues, it has been hoped that the smaller countries, now holding the balance, would have seized the opportunity to uphold the ideals and aims of the U.N. Charter.

"But the smaller countries, notably those of Africa and Asia, have shown themselves unprepared or unwilling to fill the vacuum and have engaged in the favorite U.N. pastime of filling the halls of the U.N. with speeches leading nowhere," the "Herald Tribune" report said.

The above news report which appeared in the Melbourne "Age" reveals an outstanding fulfilment of Bible prophecy which states that as the end of this Gospel Age approaches all the efforts of mankind to bring peace and security to the world will become more and more confused, until finally, the great "earthquake" condition will result in the complete overthrow of this present order of things, to make way for the Kingdom of Christ. The following quotation from "The Divine Plan of the Ages" seems to sum up this matter so clearly and helpfully :—

"The trouble of this day will be in spasms. It will be a series of convulsions more frequent and severe as the day draws on, until the final one. The Apostle so indicates when he says—"as *travail* upon a woman." (1 Thes. 5:2,3.) The relief will come only with the birth of the NEW ORDER of things—a new heavens (the spiritual control of Christ) and a new earth (re-organized society) wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Pet. 3:10,13) — in which justice and love, instead of power and selfishness, will be the law.

"Each time these labor pangs of the new era come upon the present body politic, her strength and courage will be found less, and the pains severer. All that society's physicians (political economists) can do for her relief will be to help, and wisely direct the course of the inevitable birth — to prepare gradually the way for the event. They cannot avert it if they would; for God has decreed that it shall come to pass. Many of society's physicians will, however, be totally ignorant of the real ailment and of the necessities and urgency of the case, These will undertake repressive measures; and as each paroxysm of trouble passes away, they will take advantage of it to fortify the resistive appliances, and will thereby increase the anguish; and while they will not long delay the birth, their malpractice will hasten the death of their patient; for the old order of things will die in the labor of bringing forth the new."

Melbourne Christmas Convention.

The brethren of the Melbourne Class wish to announce that their Annual Convention will be held this year (D.V.) on December 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond.

CHILDREN'S HYMNS

A selection of hymns suitable for children, 52 in number, has been compiled by one of our friends, and copies of these in booklet form have been duplicated in our office. These are available at 1/- each, to cover cost of materials, etc., postage extra.

The Law of Love

THE Law of Love says: For shame that the weaknesses and shortcomings of our brethren or of others should be exposed before the world ;—for shame that pity and sympathy did not at once advance to speak a word in their defense, if too late to spread over their faults a mantle of charity to hide them entirely! As our noble, loving Master declared on one occasion, when asked to condemn a sinner : “Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone.” The person without frailties of his own might be to some extent excusable for assuming unbidden of the Lord the position of executioner of Justice—taking vengeance on wrong-doers, exposing them, etc.; but we find that our Master, who knew no sin, had so much Love in His heart that He was disposed rather to condone and forgive than to punish and expose and berate. And so it will doubtless be with all begotten of His spirit; in proportion as they grow up into His likeness they will be the last to pray for vengeance,—the last to execute punishments by tongue or otherwise, until so commanded by the Great Judge. He now, on the contrary, instructs us, “Judge nothing before the time,” and declares, “Vengeance is mine.”

Well has the Apostle delineated the spirit of Love, saying, “Love suffereth long and is kind” —to the wrong-doer. “Love envieth not” the success of others, seeks not to detract from their honor nor to pull them back from it. “Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,” and, consequently, never seeks to detract from the splendor of others to make self shine by contrast. It “doth not behave itself unbecomingly,” immoderately,—it has no extreme and selfish desires and avoids extreme methods. Love “seeketh not that which is not her own,” does not covet the honors or wealth or fame of others, but delights to see them blessed, and would rather add to than detract from these blessings. Love “is not easily provoked,” even to render just recompenses; remembering the present distress of the entire race through the fall, it is sympathetic rather than angry. Love “thinketh no evil”; it not only will not invent and imagine evil, but is so disposed to give the benefit of any doubt that “evil surmisings” are foreign to it. (Compare 1 Tim. 6:4.)

Love “rejoiceth not with iniquity, but rejoices with the Truth (rightness) ; hence, it would delight to uncover and make known noble words or acts, but would take no pleasure in, but avoid, exposing ignoble words or deeds. Love “covereth all things,” as with a mantle of sympathy—for nothing and nobody is perfect, so as to stand full inspection. Love anticipates and has her mantle of benevolence always ready. Love “believes all things,”—is not disposed to dispute claims of good intention, but rather to accept them. Love “hopes all things,” disputing the thought of total depravity so long as possible. Love “endures all things”; it is impossible to fix a limit where it would refuse the truly repentant one. “Love never faileth.” Other graces and gifts may serve their purposes and pass away; but Love is so elemental that, attained, it may always be ours,—throughout eternity. Love is the principal thing.—1 Cor. 13:4-13.

But if to tell uncomplimentary truth is to violate the Law of Love and the Golden Rule, what shall we say of the still more disreputable, still more unlovely, still more criminal habit so common, not only amongst

the worldly and nominally Christian, but also among true Christians that of telling about others disreputable things not positively known to be the truth. Oh shame! shame! that any of the Lord's people should so overlook the Lord's instruction, "speak evil of no man"; and that any but the merest babes and novices in the Law of Love should so misunderstand its message:— that any without the most indubitable proofs at the mouth of two or three witnesses, and then reluctantly, should even believe evil of a brother or neighbor, much less to repeat it—to slander him upon suspicion or hearsay evidence!

The Golden Rule would surely settle this disposition to "gossip" about others and their affairs. What slanderer wishes to be slandered? What gossip wishes to have his matters and difficulties and weaknesses discussed either publicly or confidentially? The "world" has little else to talk about than gossip and scandal, but the New Creation should preferably be dumb until the love and plan of God have furnished them with the great theme of which the angels sang—"Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, good will toward men." Then the "words of their mouths and the meditations of their hearts" will be acceptable to the Lord and a blessing to those with whom they come in contact. (From "The New Creation.")

TRACTS AVAILABLE

The article which appeared in last month's "Peoples Paper"—"Are You Fearful of World Conditions Today? Have You Heard of the Gospel of Hope?"—is now available in tract form. These are provided by the General Tract Fund, and friends who can use them to advantage where good may be done are invited to procure supplies.

"Israel in History and Prophecy" is the title of a very interesting and informative 64-page booklet now in stock, priced at 1/- per copy, 1/3 post paid.

A Study in Matthew 24:34

(Contributed Article).

TEN years ago an article appeared in a Truth journal drawing attention to some of the facts herein set forth, and this article as a whole is the result of further investigation and study. The facts supplied have been carefully pondered and checked with concordances and the Diaglott word for word translation, and should provoke thought.

To whom did Jesus refer **when He said**, “This generation”? The evidence seems to *suggest* that He had in mind the generation of His time—those living about Him as He spoke. The word translated “this” is “haute.” A few instances where it is used should help to convince how Jesus meant it to be applied here. Matt 22:20—“whose is *this image* and superscription”; Matt. 26:8 — “to what purpose is *this waste*”; Mark 8:12—“why doth *this generation* seek after a sign”; Luke 4:21—“*This day is this* scripture fulfilled in your ears.” It can be seen that the word definitely carries a *present* meaning—Jesus was not referring to a future generation.

In our Authorized Version more than one Greek word is often rendered by the same English word and the shades of meaning cannot be appreciated without recourse to a Bible concordance.

In our text the word “generation” is from “Genea” and it is practically always so rendered, but there are other Greek words rendered “generation” which have different shades of meaning. Examples where the same word is used as in our text are—Matt. 11:16, “But whereunto shall I liken this generation.” Matt. 12:41, “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it.” Mark 8:12 — Here the Greek text is exactly the same as in Matt. 24:34 and reads, “And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth *this generation* seek after a sign.” These are a few of many examples serving to show how difficult it is to make Jesus’ words fit any other generation than that of His day.

The 23rd, 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew are all related to our subject. The latter portion of the 23rd unquestionably is linked with the three questions asked Jesus by His disciples, while all chapters 24 and 25 are in answer to the questions asked in Matt. 24:3. Parable after parable Jesus gave in answer, which was not completed until “Jesus had finished all these sayings.” (Matt. 26:1.) He spoke of many things, — the destruction of Jerusalem, and the scattering of the people, wars and rumors of wars, persecution of the saints, nations and kingdoms arising against each other, tribulation upon earth such as never previously was experienced, the second coming and the manner in which He would come, and the effect it would have upon Christians and upon men generally, of returning favor to the dispersed Jews as they assembled together in their own land again, while even the parable of the sheep and goats from Matt. 25:31 would relate to *signs of His presence* in the Millennial Age.

As Bible students we know that these events cover thousands of years, therefore it **is manifest** that all these things were not fulfilled **before** the generation of Jesus’ day had **passed**. The translation of the latter part of the verse appears to be at fault. The Greek word “pleroo” means fulfilled, and is so translated to give that meaning on all occasions where it is used, but quite a different word is used in the verse of our study. Both Young and Strong verify in their concordances that the Greek word used by Jesus in our text was. “Genetai,” a derivative of the Greek “Ginomai.”

A Greek scholar says that the meaning of the word Jesus used is “to begin to be,” or “to come to be,” and in support of this Professor Young in his concordance shows the word to be translated 249 times with the meaning of the verb “to be,” and 82 times “come to pass.” Professor Strong also lists many places where the word is used indicative of *a present beginning*, but not the thought of the thing mentioned as being finalized.

An example of great interest showing where the Authorized Version translation errs in the use of the word “ginomai” is found in John 13:2. All Bible students know that supper was not then ended, but was just beginning. Young gives the word “to become” — and supper to become—that is, about to commence. The Revised Version and the Diaglott both bear out this thought, rendering it — “as supper was preparing.” As the translators erred in respect of the supper, giving the Greek word meaning of ended or fulfilled, so they appear to have done in our text. Two Greek scholars agree that what our Lord really said was—”This generation shall not pass till all these things begin to take place, or begin to happen.”

The long list of events tabulated by Jesus did indeed *begin* to happen to that generation. Within 40 years or so of Jesus speaking the words, Jerusalem was destroyed and the people’s “house” or home made desolate, and they were scattered throughout the earth. The further events continued to happen down through the age, (see Matt. 24:9, 10) and are still happening.

The words that Jesus spoke in relation to the questions of when the kingdom should come were intended to help all Christians right down the age, including those who addressed the questions to Him. To have referred to a generation hundreds of years hence would not have kept their interest alive, but to tell them that in the time in which they were living these things would *commence*, would surely make them thoughtful and WATCHFUL.

Could an event like the Olympic Games illustrate? A huge sports’ programme is drawn up which is to take several days or weeks to complete, and as the runners carry the lighted torch to the arena immediately prior to the commencement of the long programme, the official who opens the games might be heard to declare — Within the next hour all these things will begin to come to pass, or begin to happen. We would not expect the whole programme to begin in that hour, but only the *first* item timed for that hour; all the others listed would follow in order.

Let us now look briefly at the word “pass.” Professor Young says that the meaning of the word here is “to come, or go along.” Literally, our text would read—”This generation shall not *go along* (*i.e.*, very far, shall not pass right away) till (until or before) all these things *begin* to happen.” It is further confirmatory of this translation to review the words “all these things.” There is not the slightest indication that Jesus meant that all the things of which He spoke, in answer to the questions, would be fulfilled in the generation to which He referred. Let us note some examples where the same word “all” is used, Young’s concordance being the reference. Matt. 6:33—”All these things shall be added unto you,”—as occasion demands or requires —the thought of progressive. Matt. 9:35— “Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching,”—progressively. Matt. 28:19—”Go ye and teach all nations,” — when or as you can, — progressively. So, in our text Jesus would not mean to suggest that one generation would see the fulfilment nor the beginning of *all* the things of which He spoke.

The question of greatest moment to His listeners at the time was the Jewish question. Jesus had just told them that while He longed to take Jerusalem to Himself and see it under His sheltering wing, it had refused to have anything to do with Him, and that this would result in its desolation. The disciple reminded Him of the magnificent temple, but Jesus explained that it would not escape either, that not one stone of it would be left upon another.

Jesus, *a Jew*, had kept the law perfectly and had taught His disciples to conform to the true essence of its teaching (Matt. 23:1-3) ; no wonder they wanted to know more about this foretold destruction. “Tell us when shall these things be?” That is the question the Lord answered principally for them—before this generation passes it will be so. (See Matt. 23:36.)

The accounts given by Mark and Luke in their gospels, in reference to the same three questions, are

interesting to compare, and it is a real study to do so. In Mark 13:30 the translators of the A.V. have given a thought of definiteness that is not justified,—“Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.” The word they have rendered “done” is the same “ginomai” which previously has been pointed out means more exactly “begin to come to pass.” Luke is translated—“This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.” Again it is exactly the same Greek word.

In Matt 24 we have to bear in mind that Jesus was answering three questions, and many other things He said during His discourses were in direct answer to the other two questions—“What shall be the sign of thy presence and of the end of the age?” The fulfilment of the answers He gave to these questions lay far in advance of the day of these first disciples, and Jesus did not infer that they would be fulfilled in that generation, indeed not in any ONE generation at all. In Matt. 24:23-27 and similar passages the intent is to stir up watchfulness. Verse 42,—“Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” As Bible students we know that proper watchfulness would reveal the presence of the Lord when the time came, but it would seem clear that it would not have anything to do with any time feature suggested by a generation. (Similarly also with the third question, — “What shall be the sign of the end of the age?” The answer here seems summed up in Matt. 24:33 —“When ye see all these things know that it is near.”

Let us think again of the Olympic Games illustration. Some days of the programme have gone by, and a newcomer may say to his friend, I have not been here before, nor taken any interest, but I am enjoying it; it *is* fine; how much longer does it last? His friend takes out the programme to consult it and they trace down the events to the one that they are watching, and behold, there are only a few events to follow ; thus they know it is all but over.

Jesus gave us a long programme in answer to the question, “What shall be the sign of the end of the age?”— Jerusalem sacked and the people scattered, nations rising against nations, tribulation upon earth never before known, tribes of the earth mourning over the clouds of trouble, messengers accomplishing a separating work in the “heavens,” a fig tree budding again, as well as other trees putting forth leaves, and concluded, — “When you see ALL these things come to pass, know it is near.”

Like the Olympic programme illustration, the events narrated seemed all but over. The Prime Minister of Australia, during an address a few months ago, said that some twenty or so new nations have sprung into being in very recent times and all demanding their “place in the sun.” He said that five years ago it could not possibly have been realised that this would occur in such magnitude, nor have we seen the end of it yet. He forecast that as many as 20 more will arise shortly. So, we see not only the “*fig tree*” but ALL the trees putting forth “leaves.”

Does it not seem that in our text Jesus intimated that the *initial events* in connection with the three questions asked of Him would take place during the generation then living, the other events would follow in proper time and sequence, and when they had ALL been fulfilled, the end of the age and the Kingdom of God would be right at hand. The verse following our text (Matt. 24:35) seems as if to say, Not one iota of all that I have said shall fail. All I have stated in connection with the whole three questions will come to pass. To all the interested ones who pay proper attention, I have given quite sufficient information. All that any have to do to understand and locate events on the great programme is to take sufficient cognisance of what I have told you—WATCH.