



Volume LIV No. 5 MELBOURNE, OCTOBER — NOVEMBER, 1971

God Dwells Not in Temples Made With Hands

“God that made the earth and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.” (Acts 17: 24.)

BEFORE reviewing the Apostle’s words in the above verse, spoken to the Athenians in the early days of this Gospel Age, it is well to view God’s dealings with His covenant people Israel in former times, when God’s presence was manifested in a particular building, first of all in the Tabernacle which God instructed Moses to build, and later in the Temple which Solomon erected to the glory of the Lord. There are always good reasons for the Lord making changes in His dealings with His human family, and it is most important that we, as Christians, note well the particular changes in God’s plan and the lessons He wishes us to learn from those changes.

When God delivered Israel out of the land of Egypt, we have a record in Exod. 25 giving us a description of the Tabernacle which God desired Israel to build under the direction of Moses. In verse 8 we read—”And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” God desired a special sanctuary in Israel, that His presence might be manifested among them. In verses 9 and 40 we find the Lord impressing the need that His sanctuary be constructed strictly in accord with His instructions. It was apparently very important that Moses carry out the instructions in detail, not only in respect of the building, but also with the furnishings and instruments used in the services Israel performed as God’s covenant people. In the following verses descriptions for the making of the ark, the mercy seat and the cherubims are given. Verse 22 reads—”And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony.”

God was going to meet with Moses in this sanctuary which He instructed the Israelites to build, and a supernatural light which appeared between the cherubims represented the presence of God. Thus, God’s presence was manifested in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple which Solomon built as a house for the Lord. God’s presence is also pictured in the words of Psa. 80: 1,—”Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel . . . thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.” And in the prayer of Hezekiah in Isa. 37: 16, we read—”O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.”

Down the centuries to the Lord’s first advent God’s presence with Israel continued to be manifested in the worship in the Temple and the synagogues, and it is of importance to note that Jesus acknowledged the Temple as His Father’s house, when He had cause to rebuke those who were using the precincts of the Temple as a place of merchandise, as recorded in John 2: 13-16. The Lord knew they were not only using the precincts of the Temple as a place of merchandise, but were robbing the people who came to exchange their money for the animals to sacrifice at the time of the Passover. “Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise,” He declared.

However, in John 4 our Lord’s words to the woman of Samaria reveal that a change of dispensations was at hand, and with that, a change in God’s dealings with Israel, and those who became followers of Jesus, who were then also God’s special people. Read John 4: 3-15. Then Jesus *revealed* Himself as a prophet to this woman. We note in verse 20 the Samaritans worshipped in a mountain, a particular mountain called Gerizim which dated back to Jacob. The woman said, “Jacob’s well was there.” A temple had been built on this mountain and the Samaritans felt it was really holy ground, just as the Jews thought of Jerusalem. But how enlightening are the words

of Jesus—"Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship rather . . . for they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." shortly there would be no special place for worshipping the Heavenly Father, neither for the Samaritans in the mountain, nor for the Jews in Jerusalem.

During our Lord's ministry His actions foreshadowed the outcome of His words to the woman of Samaria. He had no special building or location in which to worship or teach the people. We read in Matt. 5: 1, 2—"And seeing the multitude he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him; and he taught them." There, amidst the natural setting on the mountains side He taught them the lovely Beatitudes of this 5th chapter of Matthew. Again in Matt. 13: 1 -3 we have another example of our Lord teaching—"Jesus sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spoke many things unto them in parables." It was a lovely natural setting, the multitude on the shore would rise up from the water and it would be almost like a little amphitheatre. They could all hear His teaching in these peaceful surroundings of nature.

As previously noted, our Lord did not shun the Temple, which was still accounted as the Father's house, for He preached and taught wherever there were ears to hear and appreciate His message of the kingdom. One occasion at the Temple is of special significance at the time of the Jews' feast of tabernacles, recorded in John 7. See verses 14-16—"The Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" He had never learned in their theological colleges, and they felt He was not qualified to teach, which is often the sentiments also towards the Lord's people today. From verse 37 we read—"In the last day, that great day of the feast (the day of the water offering) Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." This was a timely opportunity to declare if any man thirst for the higher, spiritual truths which Jesus preached, he could come unto the Lord at that time. Verses 38 and 39 show the outcome when the holy spirit was given to such thirsty ones who would come to Him.

Our Lord's reference to the spirit that they who believed on Him would receive after He was glorified was a further unfolding or revealing of the meaning of His words to the woman of Samaria, that those who worshipped the Father must worship Him in spirit and in truth. When those who believed in Jesus had received the holy spirit, worshipping "in spirit and in truth" was then possible. While Jesus was still with His disciples they were unable to rise to great heights of understanding because the holy spirit was not given to them until His sacrifice was completed and He had ascended on high to the Heavenly Father. That is why the minds of the disciples were working as expressed in the words of Matt. 24: 1—"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple." They were proud of that Temple; it was still the house of God, and probably they had the idea that even Jesus may have it as His headquarters when He set up the kingdom which **He** preached. Probably there was an attachment to that Temple which corresponds to the attachment which many people today have towards their cathedrals and churches, with stained-glass windows or statues of one kind or another. Can we imagine the surprise of the Lord's disciples at the answer the Lord gave to them? Verse 2 reads—"And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." This lovely, glorious Temple! Our Lord's words were actually fulfilled about forty years after Jesus' death and resurrection. Why did God permit such destruction of the Temple? Did its destruction interfere with the true worship of God? No, not at all! Supposing the same thing happened to the great cathedrals or churches today. Would it hinder the true worship of God? No, not at all!

When Jesus had completed His sacrifice for the sins of the whole world on the cross, we read in Matt. 27: 51—"And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." That was the veil that separated the Holy from the Most Holy in the Temple. The Most Holy was the place that represented the very presence of God. The veil being rent from the top to the bottom showed that it was a judgment from heaven. Jesus' sacrifice had been consummated; He was the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. Henceforth there would be no more Temple services acknowledged by God at all, now that the anti-type had come. There would be no more animal sacrifices typically cleansing Israel that could be accepted by the Heavenly Father. The Temple now was outside God's jurisdiction, and was no more acknowledged as the place where He dwelt with Israel. From that time forward God dwelt not in temples made with hands. Those who worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The Apostle Paul having been brought into God's service after our Lord's death and resurrection, it is quite understandable that he would be fully informed by God's spirit respecting the change in worship which God desired from His servants. So it is no surprise that when the Apostle came to Athens and found a great number of altars erected to various gods, and one specially dedicated "To the unknown God," that he very diplomatically declared, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." It has been estimated there were hundreds of

altars erected to various gods at Athens; in case any had been overlooked, they had one "To the unknown God." After declaring in verse 24 that the "Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands," the Apostle continues—"Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.

. . . Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.- The second commandment in Exod. 4-6 given to at the time of the Tabernacle services was a definite law which is very good for us today, just as it was for Israel and was clearly in Paul's mind when he spoke to the Athenians the main part of the second commandment reads—"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God." There was an instruction given to Israel, and if it had been carried out down the centuries how much better would the human family be today!

The Apostle continued in verse 30 of Acts 17—"The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." God "winked" at the various kinds of ignorance, at the idols and altars erected down to the time of our Lord's great sacrifice. He ignored the nations generally, excepting Israel, as they were a typical nation. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," God declared through the prophet—Amos 3: 2. They were a people set apart, and the Lord gave them His law through Moses as a "schoolmaster to bring them to Christ" if possible. Few were able to benefit by the instructions of the Law Covenant, so few received the Messiah when He came. But from our Lord's first advent was the beginning of the time when God "commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Three thousand years have been allotted in God's plan for repentance of the human family—two thousand years of this Gospel Age, when "as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2: 39) have this privilege of repentance and coming into God's family for the heavenly kingdom, and one thousand years of the Millennial Age when all the remainder of mankind will be required to repent to inherit the earthly kingdom. This will include all who have gone down into the death condition, for all shall be resurrected and be instructed in the Millennial Age to "know the Lord from the least unto the greatest." That the Apostle included the Millennial Age in the period when all men are required to repent is clearly stated in verse 31 of Acts 17,—"Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

After Paul's conversion it was understandable that Ananias was suspicious of him, inasmuch as Paul had gone on a mission to Damascus to persecute the saints, but the Lord assured Ananias that this opposer of His cause had now become "a chosen vessel to bear the Lord's name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." Therefore Ananias was sent by the Lord to encourage Paul in the words of Acts 9: 17,—"Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, and sent me, that thou might receive thy sight, and be filled with the holy spirit." This is the important point "filled with the holy spirit."—come the time of our Lord's ascension to heaven and the outpouring of the holy spirit on the Day of Pentecost, Christ's true followers who have consecrated their lives to God's service have received the begetting and enlightenment of the holy spirit. There has been no more temple worship for people thus enlightened with the holy spirit. They worship God in their own homes, at their work, wherever they are, seven days a week; all their waking hours they are able to worship God. We do not need any special building; there is no particular location required. God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but in the hearts of people.

With reference to the Apostle Paul as he had been begotten of the holy spirit for the heavenly calling, henceforth all his words and writings were directed to encouraging other believers to enjoy the same blessing and enlightenment by the indwelling of God's spirit, thus making them New Creatures in Christ Jesus. Throughout Paul's epistles we have numerous texts impressing the great privilege and favour of being members of Christ's church. These are a called-out people, growing up into Christ, worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

In Ephesians 2 the Apostle tells us about the Jewish and Gentile Christians being united in gaining access to the Heavenly Father through the indwelling of the holy spirit. "At that time ye were without Christ.... But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Those "far off" were the Gentile Christians, those "nigh" were the Jewish Christians. "Therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit." This is the **temple** in which God dwells, builded together for an **habitation** of God through the spirit. Isn't it wonderful, that God gives His people here on earth the privilege of being His **temple**, that they may by His spirit be developed into vessels of honour, transformed from very imperfect beings into vessels for His use. They are used

in service in this life to some extent, but more so up above, when they have the spirit nature and are with Christ to reign with Him a thousand years to accomplish the “restitution of all things.” We notice the word “habitation” which means dwelling place. God’s true people are a dwelling place, a temple in which He dwells by His spirit, transforming them in preparation for the heavenly kingdom, to His praise.

In writing to the Corinthian church, the Apostle presents a stirring exhortation when he declared in 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20—“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the holy spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.” Here Paul presents the individual aspect of this wonderful relationship between the Lord and the members of His body. As there is the collective body as the temple of God, there are also the individual temples—each member in Christ is a temple of God’s holy spirit. How it humbles the followers of the Master to know that God is dwelling in them as individuals, to develop, fit and shape them for a place in His wonderful composite temple in heaven. “Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God.”

This favour and privilege is also shown in 1 Cor. 3: 16—“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?” Here again the individual aspect is shown to us—God’s true people are His temples. Then we have a lovely reference to the overcoming members of Christ’s body on the other side of the veil in Rev. 3: 12, which reads—“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out. . . .” A pillar pictures strength and support. These “pillars” in the spiritual temple will be there with Christ to support and bless all the obedient of the families of the earth through the Millennial Age. This text in Rev. 3: 12 also reminds us of the words of Jesus to His chosen disciples near the end of His earthly ministry in Luke 22: 28-30,—“Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” We know what thrones represent; not literal thrones, but places of authority, pillars in the temple of the Lord; places of authority to administer the laws of the kingdom. “The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem”,—Zion is the heavenly kingdom, and Jerusalem will be the earthly centre of administration.

While our Lord was still with His disciples He also gave a wonderful promise to all His true followers throughout this Gospel Age when He declared in John 14: 23,—“If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” To think of the Father and the Lord Jesus making their **abode** with those who have yielded their lives fully to their service, is gracious indeed. No wonder Jesus said, “Neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father; but they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” And in the very small gatherings of the Lord’s people we have the promise—“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” How lovely! We do not need multitudes. Where two or three are met together in His name—in any building, in any location, out by the wayside, on the hills, in the home, there the Lord will be in the midst. “God dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”

The circumstances surrounding the members of the early Church are also of much interest and encouragement to us, as it is likely that similar conditions may yet exist at this end of the age as were experienced in the beginning of the Gospel Age. The words of Paul in Rom. 16: 3-5 which indicate the faithfulness of some members at that time are stimulating to us, as also the message—“Greet the church that is in their house.” That is very lovely. How often the Lord taught in the homes of the people. What a blessed sanctuary it must have been at Bethany, with Martha, Mary and Lazarus and Jesus’ disciples. There was no cathedral there, no elaborate church building of any kind.

Again in Col. 4: 15 Paul says to the Colossians, “Salute the brethren . . . and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.” Here is the church gathered together in this brother’s home. God dwells not in temples made with hands. They that worship God will worship Him in spirit and in truth. What a privilege to worship God wherever we are, in all circumstances and conditions. If we must have special buildings, special ceremonies and services, we have not yet experienced the indwelling of God’s holy spirit without which no one shall prove an overcomer. How true it is that God dwells in the hearts and minds of His people, working in them to will and to do of His good pleasure. No temple or edifice of mankind is required for the true worship of God, who dwells not in temples made with hands.

Bible Stories for Children

A BOOK of Bible Stories for children, containing 173 large pages, entitled "Pictures from the Past" has been duplicated in our office, and will be ready quite soon. Compiled by the late Sister Poole of Canada, the author of "The Ten Camels" and "Son of the Highest," these stories told to "Linnet" by her mother are undoubtedly helpful and instructive for adults as well as children. One of our interstate brethren has read the copy of the stories and his report is as follows.

"I have just finished reading the copy of the stories which Sister Poole has put together for children. They are very beautiful indeed, and we do thank our Heavenly Father for the blessing we have received in reading the lovely stories. We will be very pleased to have the completed book, as I am looking forward to reading it again in the handy form.

"The story of Joseph and his brothers is perhaps one of the finest stories that has ever been written, apart of course from the New Testament stories of Christ and His wonderful words and teachings. And the manner in which the lovely stories are recounted—the winsome way the mother unfolds the story to her little daughter is very engaging. Sister and myself have enjoyed them immensely; we hope the books will be available before Christmas, as they will make fine Christmas gifts. We would like to order at least 10 copies."

The cost of the book, to be determined shortly, will be to cover the outlay for materials only, as the labor of typing the stencils and making over 23,000 prints on the duplicator has been a pleasure, also the assistance of others in checking the stencils, etc., has been greatly appreciated as a labor of love.

Orders for this book may be placed right away, and the price will be quoted before the books are despatched so that all friends may be fully satisfied. As the number of this first print is limited, requests for copies will be supplied in the order in which they are received. Postage costs can be greatly reduced if friends desiring copies combine their orders and have the books posted together.

"**The Creator's Grand Design**" is the title of a 240 page cloth bound book, from the "Dawn" brethren. It is a helpful study covering the plan of God as a whole. Supplied at \$1.25, post paid.

Threescore Years and Ten

HOW often do we hear people say, on reaching the age of seventy years that they have reached the "allotted span" of life, and that thereafter they are living on "borrowed time". The translation of Psa. 90 from the Amplified Version, with footnote on verse 10 is of much interest, and is worthy of attentive examination. The verses and quotation are as follows:

"LORD, You have been our dwelling place and our refuge in all generations (says Moses). Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed and given birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting You are God. You turn man back to dust and corruption, and say, Return O sons of the earthborn (to the earth)! For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. (2 Pet. 3: 8.) You carry away (these disobedient people, doomed to die within forty years) as with a flood; they are as a sleep (vague and forgotten as soon as gone). In the morning they are like grass which grows up: In the morning it flourishes and springs up; in the evening it is mown down and withers. For we (the Israelites in the wilderness) are consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath are we troubled, overwhelmed and frightened away. Our iniquities, our secret heart and its sins (which we would so like to conceal even from ourselves) You have set in the (revealing) light of Your countenance. For all our days (out here in this wilderness, says Moses) are passed away in Your wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told (for we adults know we are doomed to die soon, without reaching Canaan). (Num. 14: 26-35.) The days of our years are threescore years and ten, or even if by reason of strength fourscore years, yet is their pride (in additional years) only labor and sorrow; for it is soon gone, and we fly away."

The quotation on verse 10 reads,—This Psalm is credited to Moses, who is interceding with God to remove the curse which made it necessary for every Israelite over twenty years of age (when they rebelled against God at Kadesh-barnea) to die before reaching the Promised Land (Num. 14: 26-35.) Moses says most of them are dying at **seventy years**. This number has often been mistaken as a set span of life for all mankind. It was not intended to refer to any one except those Israelites under the curse during that particular forty years. Seventy years never has been the average span of life for humanity. When Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes had reached 130 years (Gen. 47: 9), he complained that he had not attained to the years of his immediate ancestors. In fact, Moses

himself lived to be 120, Aaron 123, Miriam several years older, and Joshua 110; while in the Millennium a person dying at 100 will still be a child (Isa. 65: 20).

Oxford Teachers' Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocco binding, with Oxford Helps, Subject Index and Concordance, \$12.50.

Israel Today

AN INTERESTING report from Israel by one of our brethren living in that land had been sent to a Convention in U.S.A. some months ago, and has been forwarded on for our benefit. No doubt our readers will appreciate this review of events in the Land of Promise, as follows.

During Passover Week we took a 3-day trip through the Sinai peninsula. Near Sharm-el-Shech, children played on the guns that once threatened to sink Israeli ships if they tried to pass the Straits of Tiran. On the beach at Sharm-el-Shech we slept peacefully under the stars in what could be made into a beautiful resort area: a place that the powers of this world want returned to the Egyptians, whose only purpose in occupying it would be to harass Israeli shipping. The next night we slept in a tent on the west coast overlooking Egypt across the Gulf of Suez. Then we returned through Mitla Pass and northern Sinai, where the Egyptian army was destroyed in 1967 and much of the billions of dollars worth of Russian equipment taken intact.

But interesting as the trip was from the standpoint of current history, the real fascination came from the realization that in our circuit around the peninsula we must have crossed at least twice the path of Moses and the Children of Israel and that in places our route may have coincided with theirs. The desert and the mountains that we were looking at were the same as they saw while they made their way toward Kadesh-Barnea.

Incidentally, a month or two earlier, we had taken a trip to Kadesh-Barnea, the place where the Children of Israel abode many days. It was from there that the twelve spies went out, to there that they returned with a huge bunch of grapes from Hebron. There the people murmured, and God proposed to destroy them and make a new nation from Moses; but Moses protested, and God spared the people, but told them that they must wander in the wilderness for forty years until all who were twenty years old and older, except Joshua and Caleb, had died. Even Moses displeased the Lord there and was told that he would not enter the promised land. There Miriam died and was buried. But even though Moses lost his temper and struck the rock instead of speaking to it, yet the water came out abundantly and continues to flow to this day, making Kadesh-Barnea the largest oasis in Sinai.

One place we visited on the west coast was A-Tor. Up to the six-day war, this had been a base for pilgrimages: for Mohammedan pilgrimages to Mecca and for Christian pilgrimages to Mt. Sinai. It has two large compounds, one Moslem and the other Christian, with living quarters for hundreds, possibly thousands of pilgrims who gathered there before continuing their journey to the holy sites. Arab dhows are lined up out of the water near the shore. An idea of the size of the operation can be gained from the fact that a narrow gauge railway system connects all the hostel buildings to the big central laundry, though I would suspect that the locomotive was probably a donkey. As we drove through the Christian compound, our guide told us that it was customary for people to spend forty days in there. Catering to such a captive market must have been a very profitable business for someone; but since the six-day war not only Islam but also Babylon has chosen not to operate under Jewish rule. The merchants must be weeping and mourning over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more at A-Tor.

On this trip we did not go to the Mount Sinai where the Santa Catherine monastery is, though *we* saw in the distance two other mountains that also are thought to be possibly the mountain where Moses received the Law. The positive identification of which of the many mountains of Sinai is the one where the Law was given will require more research, or, after the resurrection has started, the testimony of those who were there. However, one feature that could be used in identification impressed me. The mountains of Sinai may be classified into two general types. First, there are mountains that rise up gradually from the surrounding countryside, in the usual manner; second, there are mountains that project abruptly from the plain like some of the rocks in Wyoming and Arizona. From the bus it appeared that it would be possible to walk up to such a mountain and touch it with your hand, just like standing on the sidewalk and touching a building. Mount Sinai is clearly a mountain of the second type, because the Lord gave Moses specific instructions against allowing anyone to touch the mountain. In Exod. 19: 13, He says, "There shall not a hand touch it." Hand—not foot.

What a fitting symbol such a mountain is of the Kingdom. We are not come unto the mount that might be touched (Heb. 12: 13), but we are come unto the same kind of mountain. Just as those mountains in the Sinai look as though they have been set down on the sand, so the heavenly Jerusalem to which we have come comes down

from God out of heaven. (Heb. 12: 22; Rev. 21: 2.)

All the “mountains” that will be carried into the “sea” are pictured by the first type of mountain, rising gradually from the surroundings; all are developments of the present evil world. But the new heaven and earth have no connection with the old. So it should not surprise us that Israel, the start of the new earth, has no connections with any other nation. It is not that Israelis would not like to be close friends with some other nations, but that such fellowship is just not possible. Many considered France an ally until De Gaulle did an abrupt about face in Israel’s hour of danger in 1967. Few, if any, have illusions about the United States. While they sincerely appreciate all the help they have been receiving from America, particularly the large quantities of modern armaments provided on easy terms during the past year, they realise that support from this direction results from a coincidence or interests and is able to be conditioned at any time in response to the wishes of Washington. An incident that every Israeli will remember for a long time happened in August, 1970. The White House was eager to arrange a cease-fire between Israel and Egypt. Israeli planes had been preventing the Egyptians from placing Russian SAM missile sites within range of the Suez Canal. Before agreeing to the cease-fire, Israel demanded and, it is generally understood here, received from the United States assurance that during the cease-fire no missile launching bases would be placed in the zone that Israel had been keeping clear. But on the same night that the cease-fire started, and continued for weeks, missile launching bases were placed in that zone until it was saturated. At first the Americans didn’t want to see; then they didn’t want to admit what they saw, and then didn’t want to do anything about it. As a result, Israel was given the privilege of buying sophisticated arms on credit, the missiles stayed in their places, and every Israeli considers an American guarantee as no more than a puff of wind. Any faith they may have had in United Nations guarantees has been shattered long ago. Of course, everyone is glad that there is a cease-fire.

Discussions about opening the Suez Canal seem to be accomplishing their dual purpose. The secondary purpose is apparently to provide Egypt’s president Sadat with an excuse for not carrying out the military action that he has been threatening for so long—action for which Israel is fully prepared, but which Egypt could not possibly survive without heavy, direct Russian involvement. The primary purpose of the talks, however, appears to be to give the United States and Egypt something to think about. The Egyptians have no use for the Russians as people, but only as means for wiping out Israel; and if they are not going to accomplish that task, then the Egyptians don’t want them around. But no country in modern times has been able to get the Russians out once they have come in. So Sadat needs to keep the Americans talking, and perhaps providing some money, in an effort to neutralize the Russians with their three or four Egyptian naval bases, which Russia intends to use in dominating the Mediterranean Sea. The question whether or not the Suez Canal will actually be opened is purely coincidental.

When speaking of peace, it is necessary to understand a Middle-Eastern custom in order to avoid being misled. We are all familiar with the method that Jesus set out in detail for settling differences. A feud between Arab families or tribes may last for days or for centuries, but it is only settled by means of a **sulha**. In a **sulha**, which is often arranged by a neutral third party, all interested parties to both sides of the dispute are seated at opposite sides of a long table, their declared purpose in coming together being to end the feud and to live in peace. All points of contention are thoroughly thrashed out and a money settlement made, after which they all eat bread and salt together. From then on every member of each family or tribe must treat everyone of the other as a friend. When Israel insists on direct negotiations, she is actually insisting on the national equivalent of a **sulha**.

It should not surprise us if Israel finds no wholehearted friends among the nations of this world, nor even if attitudes should gradually develop toward the eventual gathering of all nations against Jerusalem (Zech. 14:2). The forced separateness is, in fact, strong evidence that this nation of Israel is truly the beginning of the earthly phase of the Kingdom for which we pray, and not an outgrowth of the old world. The struggle to maintain the old order is epitomized in the attitude toward a Jewish Jerusalem, which the master of the old house knows signifies the end of his dominion. The official position of Israel’s best friend, America, was expressed by Secretary Rogers when he removed the Israeli pennant from his car before entering the Old City.

Anyone who thinks Israel will ever give up any part of Jerusalem is drunk; but the Lord said He would make all nations drunk. Even Sheshach is already beginning to show signs of intoxication on the subject of a Jewish Jerusalem as evidenced by Vatican support for a plan to put Lebanon in charge of the Christian parts of Jerusalem. (Jer. 25: 26, 27; 51:42.) All the people are finding Jerusalem a burdensome stone (Zech. 12: 3), but to Israel the City is a delight to be made into a thing of beauty and a joy forever. As Brother Russell pointed out that a horse represents a hobby, so the horses of Zech. 12: 4 would seem to picture the various plans to take Jerusalem away from Israel—the Rogers plan, the Jarring plan, the Lebanon plan, the Schumann plan, etc.—and the riders would be the promoters of the various plans. But the leaders of Israel can take a firm stand because they know very well that the whole nation, to a man, is solidly behind them in their determination to hold Jerusalem, as are all Jews all over the world whose hearts inhabit Jerusalem. They know in their hearts that the Lord has founded Zion and that

the poor of His people take refuge in it (Isa. 14: 32), while the rich support it from outside.

Notable among the Jews who find Israel a refuge and a source of strength are the three million Jews of the Soviet Union. The outcome of the six-day war inspired some of them to challenge giant Russia by openly demanding the right to emigrate to Israel. The results, while relatively only a trickle, are already miraculous. More than two thousand Jews came from Russia in 1970. In April, 1971, about two and a half thousand come, and two or three plane loads of Russian immigrants now come every week from Vienna, in addition to those who come on regular flights. Even these numbers are remarkable. But numbers are cold. The thrill of finally arriving in their Homeland after a long and desperate struggle against impossible odds, the feeling of being tree mingled with the yearning for those loved ones who have not yet been released; these and related emotions I will have to ask you to fill in from the warmth of your own souls, because I have no way of expressing them.

You will recall that in my letter to your Convention last year I mentioned the openly expressed desire of some Russian Jews to come here. Those of you who joined with us in the prayer that our Heavenly Father fulfil His promise in Jer. 16: 14, 15, can rejoice with us in seeing such a generous beginning to the answer to that prayer. Here in Israel, that passage in Jeremiah was the subject of a special prayer during our Memorial Service both last year and this year, and the practice can be expected to continue until the promise has been completely fulfilled. But let us remember, not only at Memorial time, but throughout the year, that it was only while Moses' hands were held high that the battle went well for Israel. Let our eagerness to see the Lord fulfil His promise be the measure of the fervency and continuing of our prayer that He bring the Children of Israel from the land of the north into their land that He gave to their fathers.

Since the shooting at the Canal stopped in August 1970 and Jordan's internal troubles started shortly afterwards, things have been reasonably quiet on the borders; to which statement the ordinary Israeli would add, "blessed be the Lord". Terrorist activities have been confined almost exclusively to the Gaza Strip and occasionally the Hebron area, mainly in an attempt to discourage Arabs from co-operating with and working in Israel. On a construction job where I worked for nearly a year, a bus load of Arabs came in from Hebron every day. They worked alongside the Jews and were well accepted, being perfectly free to pray toward Mecca at the appointed times. On one occasion they sat down quietly and refused to work until assured of prompt payment just as any Israeli crew would do. When the money came through they went back to work with no penalties against them, because they were simply exercising their rights as workers in Israel.

Just in the past year quite a number of permanent buildings, some quite substantial looking, have sprung up along side the black tents in the Bedouin encampments visible from the highway between Arad and Beer Sheva. If you travel along the highway at the right time in the morning, you can see Bedouin youngsters trotting across the fields on their donkeys on the way to school. This will be a government subsidized the planting of wheat in the Negev, and the Bedouin plowed rind ranted. Because of a shortage of rain during the middle of the winter, the harvest, if any, will be meagre, but there will be a lot of excellent pasture land. It was a thrill when travelling to Beer Sheva through what has always been semi-desert to go thirty miles through green fields on both sides of the road, extending far off into the distance, much like approaching Lancaster Pennsylvania from the east.

May the days soon come when the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established in the top of the mountains, when many nations will come to it to learn God's ways, when the law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, when the nations shall not learn war any more.

Pilgrim Way Ended

On September 2nd our elderly Sister McDougall of Melbourne finished the earthly way rather suddenly after over thirty years in appreciation of God's wonderful plan of salvation. Our dear Sister truly loved the Lord and His truth, and sought to pass on the good news to others throughout the years in which she was comforted herself by the "glad tidings of great joy which shall yet be to all people." Having suffered much sorrow in her long life of over ninety years, with the passing of her husband and all five children, the knowledge of salvation for all loved ones, through the sacrifice of Christ, enabled her to give thanks to God for all His love and mercy bestowed upon us.

It was a pleasure to have our elderly Sister with us at the Melbourne Class throughout the years, and her readiness in reading the Scriptures at the Bible Studies showed her love and interest in the truths which were uppermost in her mind and heart. Becoming frail in recent times, she still wished to be present each Sunday, and only for a few weeks was this impossible, prior to the pilgrim way being ended. Sincere sympathy is extended to the members of our dear Sister's family, a number of whom also rejoice in the precious message of present truth. *We*

truly “sorrow not as those without hope” respecting our Sister McDougall being fully committed to God, by His grace she shall have entered into the joys of the Lord.

(Melbourne Christmas Convention

The brethren of the Melbourne Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Annual Convention to be held this year (D.V.) on December 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond. Further information from the Class Secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 16 Kennedy Street, South Oakleigh, Victoria, 3167.

Bible Student Manual, otherwise known as Berean Comments, are now in limited supply. With nice appearance, bound in strong cloth, with gold lettering, the price is \$4.00, plus postage of up to 70c interstate.

Poems of Dawn, 320 pages of original poems with additional choice Christian poems are now in stock. Excellent as gifts. Black simulated leather, handy size, price \$2.20, plus postage 25c.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS

Geelong, 3GL, 222 M. Sundays 10 a.m.