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When will God Pour Out His Spirit upon All Flesh?

IN view of the claims being made by certain preachers at the present time that we are now living when God is pouring out His spirit upon all flesh, this subject is considered quite an important one. These claims are often based on the passage of Scripture found in Acts 2:16-18, which is a quotation from the Prophet Joel, chapter 2. Acts 2:17,18 reads —"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit; and they shall prophesy."

The fact that this prophecy, quoted from Joel, mentions firstly that God would "pour out his spirit upon all flesh," does not necessarily imply that this promise was fulfilled first, in point of time, when Peter quoted it. Rather, verse 18— "And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit,"—was definitely fulfilled first, beginning there on the Day of Pentecost, when Peter spoke.

We do well to keep in mind that the outpouring of God's spirit on the Day of Pentecost was a very special occasion, revealing God's acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ, not on behalf of all mankind, but rather on behalf of the household of faith—"for himself and his house"—as stated in the type, when the blood of the Day of Atonement bullock was sprinkled on the mercyseat in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle, and described by the Apostle Paul, in the antitype, in Hebrews 9:24 — "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

So, the outpouring of the holy spirit on the Day of Pentecost was upon God's "servants and handmaidens" only, just as the spirit was poured out upon our Lord at the time of His consecration and baptism at the beginning of His ministry. (See Matt. 3:16,17.). And as those who received the outpouring of the spirit on the Day of Pentecost were Jews (Acts 2:5), it was fitting that when the time came for Gentile Christians to receive the spirit there was another manifestation, or outpouring from God, recorded in Acts 10:44,45. See also Acts 11:15-18.

Throughout all his epistles the Apostle Paul shows how the Lord's people, His "servants and handmaidens," come in under the anointing of the holy spirit when they consecrate their lives to the service of God, fully and completely. How clearly this is shown in Eph. 1:13,14—"In whom (Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." Again, to the same church, Paul wrote—"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh . . . that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ For through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father." (Eph. 2:11-13, 18.)

We see, further, the great purpose of the granting the spirit to the followers of our Lord Jesus in such texts as Rom. 8:11—"If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you." And again—"As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. 8:14,29.)

The true followers of the Master—"the servants and handmaidens"— have their lives transformed by the spirit in preparation for the heavenly inheritance, as Paul declares in 2 Cor. 5:17—"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a

new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Here we see how the new heart condition, the new outlook, is developed by Christ’s spirit within. Former hopes, aims and ambitions, or pleasures of this world, etc., are forsaken, and counted as nothing in comparison with the spiritual hopes and aims of the new creature in Christ Jesus.

How beautifully did the Apostle Paul give us the true assessment of values when he declared —”What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:7, 8, 13, 14.)

It does us good, at times, to ask ourselves, What things that were gain to us (before we became Christians) have we counted loss for Christ? In other words—What are we sacrificing, as “servants and handmaidens” of the Lord, that would be quite right for worldly people to have and enjoy? Are we truly—’forgetting those things which are behind’; are we really “setting our affections on things above,” or do some things or pleasures of the world crowd in upon us in our associations with relatives or friends? Our Lord’s words help us in all such circumstances, and happy are we if we follow His admonition, as presented in Matt. 10:37,38—”He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”

From the Apostle Paul we read further, in Eph. 5:15,16—”See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” “Redeeming the time”—buying back the time from earthly things for the service of the Lord, so far as possible. The point being impressed is, that the invitation to the “servants and handmaidens” of the Lord, during this Gospel Age, is to a “narrow way” of sacrifice, separate from the world in every respect, even as James tells us “The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.” (James 4:4.)

It is very clear from the Scriptures as a whole that to none others than the “servants and handmaidens” has God’s spirit been poured out during this Gospel Age, for we read in 1 John 5:19—”We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.” There has surely been no change in the world of mankind since John’s day; “lieth in wickedness” describes the world perfectly at the present time.

We remember, also, that in concluding each of the messages to the churches of Revelation, in chapters 2 and 3, we have the words—”He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches”; that is, to the “servants and handmaidens” in the Lord’s churches, including the Laodicean church period, in which we are living today.

How, then, are we to understand the words of Acts 2:17, already quoted—”It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh”? It will be noticed that the words — “in the last days” — are intended as a guide to a correct understanding just as the term—”in those days” is used in connection with the outpouring of the spirit upon the “servants and handmaidens” in verse 18. We enquire, What is meant by “in the last days”? In Micah 4:1,2 we read—”In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it For the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (See also Isa. 2:2,3.) When shall these prophecies be fulfilled? When shall “the law go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem”? Undoubtedly this takes place in the Kingdom Age, and as it is definitely cited as being “in the last days,” we see that the “last days when God’s spirit is poured out upon all flesh” must also be in the Kingdom Age, the Millennial Age.

We are assisted further in this matter, from the Scriptures, to find that the Lord will deliver Israel out of their Armageddon troubles, and bless them with His spirit in advance of the nations at large, as shown from Zech. 12:9,10 —”And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications.” From Ezekiel’s prophecy, chapter 37, we are given a wonderful insight into the restoration of Israel to Palestine from other lands, and also from the death condition, when the new age comes in. Quoting briefly from this chapter we read—”And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live and I shall place you in your own land.; then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.” (Ezek. 37:13, 14.) “Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.”

(See Ezek. 39:23-29.) That these prophecies are not yet fulfilled is very evident to all thinking people, but what a wonderful prospect is in store for Israel in the time of Christ’s Kingdom, and not only for Israel, but for all nations of the earth.

This is clearly manifest from Isaiah's prophecy—Isa. 59:20,21; 60:1-5, where we see that the light of the Lord received by Israel will be passed on to all nations, — “The Lord shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen

upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising thy sons shall come

from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side; [‘And I will give them (Sodom and Samaria) unto thee for daughters’ — Ezek. 16:61], then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.” And again — “Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends, of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” (Isa. 52:9,10; 40:5.)

It may be asked, Why is it that certain claims are made today that the Lord is pouring out His spirit now upon all flesh? These claims are usually from those who are desiring and expecting a revival in conversions, and in some cases with signs and wonders in the way of healings, etc. While it is always good to find those who are desirous of turning to the Lord and receiving His truth, we find from God's Word that there will not be any great revival in true Christianity at this end of the age, but rather the reverse, and what is claimed as God pouring out His spirit on all flesh, is often a very deceptive manifestation, not from the Lord, but from Satan, working — “as an angel of light” — as the Apostle warned. (2 Cor. 11:14, 15.)

We do well to always remember that the Pentecostal blessing was upon God's “servants and handmaidens” only, and not until the new age comes in, after the time of trouble has humbled mankind in all nations, will His spirit be poured out upon all flesh, to bless and uplift, as they obey the laws of Christ's Kingdom. (See Psa. 72:1-6.) “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth.”

In the meantime, how favored are the “servants and handmaidens” of the Lord, who have been blessed with the holy spirit in their hearts, being prepared now for the wonderful inheritance with Christ. What a privilege is in store for all these faithful who overcome, who become the Bride class, by the Lord's grace, and look forward to the fulfilment of that glorious promise—”And the spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17.)

Adelaide Easter Convention.

The Adelaide brethren wish to advise that their Easter Convention is to be held this year (D.V.), from Good Friday to Easter Monday, March 27th to 30th, in the Master Builders' Rooms, 17 Waymouth Street, Adelaide. They extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend these gatherings in the Lord's name. Further particulars from the secretary, Mrs. H. Bartel, 1.0 Winston Avenue, Clarence Gardens, South Australia.

Passover Memorial, 1959

The anniversary of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on the evening of Tuesday, 21st April. This date will therefore be the appropriate time to observe the celebration in accord with our Lord's request—”This do in remembrance of me.”

Friends desiring the unleavened bread and wine may procure these from this office. Early application should be made, preferably by early April, and please state the number of persons to be served.

Memorial Services.

Melbourne.—Tuesday, 21st April, at 7.30 p.m., at Church of Christ, 277 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn. (Not far from Glenferrie Station; a few doors south of Burwood Road.)

Perth.—Tuesday, 21st April, at 7.45 p.m., at 240 Shepparton Road, East Victoria Park, W.A.

Adelaide.—Sunday, 19th April, at 6.45 p.m., at Master Builders' Rooms, 17 Waymouth Street, Adelaide.

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

“Songs in the Night.”

WHILE the perplexities and difficulties of recent years are deepening the world over, causing much travail of mind amongst statesmen of all lands, and with mankind in general greatly concerned as to the outcome of this period of gloom, it may be asked how the Lord's people can at this time truly sing “songs in the night.”

The year past has surely witnessed a continuation of the night of weeping. Sickness, sorrow, sighing and dying continue, but those Who have been brought to know the Lord and His plan of salvation realise that these conditions, under the reign of “the prince of this world,” exist only for a limited time—until the glorious morning of Messiah's Kingdom—and so they have great cause to rejoice that while “Weeping may endure for the night, joy cometh in the morning.” (Ps. 30:5.) How glad we are that we have learned from God's Word that, then, the glorious change will come to earth! St. Paul confirms this truth when he declares, “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:22.)

At present these sons of God are comparatively little known or recognised amongst men; frequently they are considered “peculiar people,” because of their zeal for righteousness and truth and for God. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” Soon the Lord will establish His kingdom under the whole heaven. Soon the Church class, the saintly, “the elect,” will be glorified, and then the time will come for the blessing of the non-elect — for their restitution to human perfection and to a world-wide Paradise which Messiah's kingdom and power will produce. “He must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Death will be destroyed; sheol, hades, the grave, will be destroyed, by the resurrection of the dead therefrom—’Everyone in his own order.”

While the whole creation groans under its load of sin and sorrow, the saintly few may sing, may rejoice, even in the midst of all the sorrows of life, and even though they share the results of sin as fully or even more fully than do others. The secret of their joy is twofold: (1) They have experienced reconciliation to God. (2) They have submitted their wills to His will. They obtained this new relationship by the way of faith in the Redeemer—faith in His blood of Atonement. They entered by the “strait gate” and “narrow way” of consecration to God — surrendering their own wills and covenanting to do the Divine will to the best of their ability.

This submission of the will to God and the realisation that all their life's affairs are in God's keeping, and under His supervision gives rest to the heart. They have a rest and peace in this surrendered condition which they never knew when they sought to gratify self-will and ignored the right of their Creator to the homage of their hearts and the obedience of their lives.

Similarly, these have joy and peace and songs of thankfulness to God because to them He grants a knowledge of

His Divine purposes, and shows them things to come. These see beyond the trials and tribulations of the present time—they see the glories that will follow the present time of suffering. These see that the Church, the saintly few from all denominations and of all nationalities, are prospective heirs of God—heirs of glory, honour and immortality and association with the Redeemer in His glorious Kingdom. This encourages them. They see also the outlines of the Divine Programme for the blessing of all the families of the earth. When they thus perceive that God is interested in their dear ones who are not saints, and interested in the whole human family, very few of whom are saints, it causes them rejoicing. When they perceive that God has arranged that through Christ and the glorified Church all the families of the earth shall be blessed, it makes them “joyful in the house of their pilgrimage”—while pressing on in the narrow way, and fully realising how light are their own afflictions in comparison with the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

A very good Oxford Bible, with References. India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocca binding, is now available at 60/-. Same Bible with Concordance and Subject Index at 70/-.

Revised Standard Version.—A new edition of this Bible is now available in strong cloth binding at 19/9, plus 1/3 postage.

Thoughts from a Shipwreck

(Acts 27 and 28.)

(Convention Address)

FROM the Scripture quoted as the basis of this talk, it will be gathered that the shipwreck was that experienced by Paul, while a prisoner, on his journey to be tried before Caesar. The journey throughout suggests some interesting thoughts that relate to our Christian journeys over the “sea” of this life.

From verses 2 to 7 in chapter 27, we find that many times they meant to sail by a certain course, but were compelled to keep altering it; they meant to sail by the coasts of Asia; in those days of travel the safest route, no doubt, was to hug the coast lines, but they finished up sailing by two islands, Cyprus and Crete, well out in the open sea. Contrary winds changed their course. Man proposes—God disposes; how true in many affairs of our life. It is good to have determination in the course we take, provided we are sure it is the way God wants us to go. For the Christian, the proper course at all times is—if God will, we shall do this or that. (See James 4:13-15.)

The next point is gathered from verse 9 onwards. Because of their stormy passage it became manifest to Paul that the wisest thing to do was to wait a while for more favorable weather. He warned the captain and the centurion, into whose charge he had been committed as a prisoner. It would seem that he tried to persuade the centurion not to continue, with the result — read verse 11. From verse 12 it seems that personal comfort entered into the thoughts of the captain — the place was not desirable in which to spend winter. Paul had the wisdom of a spirit-guided mind, but how often is the advice of those who live close to God spurned by the worldly wise. It is a good thing to be able to listen to good advice.

So they decided to go on—read verse 13. We can imagine them scoffing at Paul; what a poor weather prophet he was after all. So in life with the self-willed, ridiculing the advice of the saner minded; they have their own way and it often prospers early, and they sometimes like to rub it in—”See, I knew best after all.” But it is the long view that counts how the self-willed finish up; often they learn their lessons from bitter experiences that might have been softened much had they listened to wiser ones. Despite the early, favoring breeze the journey finished up as Paul warned it would—read verse 14. They ran into a cyclone.

Verses 17-21 describe the storm, and what a terrific one it was as they never saw the sun or stars for many days. Can we imagine what they endured in a storm like that in a craft of sea travel in those days? One thing after another they tossed overboard to try and ride the storm.

Read verse 21. Paul reminds them that it would have been better to have taken his advice. The captain’s action had gotten Paul into the trouble, too. How like it is on life’s journey—the high handed, self-opinionated actions and plans of the unruly often lead the Lord’s people into situations that they would not themselves have gotten into. But there is a nice lesson for us here. Paul was gracious; he did not sit down and say, “Well, you got yourself into this, now you will have to get out of it the best way you can,” but he continued to render all the help he could.

Read verses 22-25. He speaks words of good hope and cheer from his God. Paul lets all know exactly where he stands; he is not ashamed to admit himself as God’s representative, allowing no thought that he himself is any great one. Note the reason in verse 24 why Paul was not to lose his life—he must appear before Caesar. Jesus made known that one of the purposes for which He called His apostles was that they appear “before kings and rulers for my name’s sake”; i.e., to bear a testimony to the truth in this way. This being a purpose of God in Paul, God would look after him. Here is another little reminder for us — that God’s saints are immortal till their work is done.

We note that all who were with Paul were graciously spared from death by the goodness of God. This reminds us, somewhat, of Sodom’s destruction. In response to Abraham’s questioning, the Lord made it known that Sodom would be spared, despite her gross iniquity, if so many as ten righteous men could be found in her. On other occasions wholesale calamities were withheld for the sake of one righteous person.

However, it was by no miraculous method, that all in Paul’s company were spared on this occasion, but by a way of much hardship. In the extreme experiences Paul’s faith never wavered as he sought to encourage the others. “Fear not, for I believe God that it shall be even as he has told me”; then read verse 26. They would be saved, but certain experiences had to be faced during which they were going to lose everything. For how many of us has our salvation required “being cast upon a certain island”—certain experiences of hardship during which we lost earthly status or possessions? Paul lost much in this way, but in another place he said he counted it all as refuse in order to win Christ.

Read verses 27-29. What an ordeal; fourteen nights of such an experience, and now the constant dread of smashing on

rocks. How helpless they were, unable to do a thing. They threw anchors overboard and “wished for the day”—nothing to do but wait. How like some of our experiences, our anxieties at “wits-endcorner.” We “wish for the day,” to be able to see a way out of the dilemmas that face us, and for the day of the kingdom.

From verse 30 we find that in the time of anxiety the shipmen (sailors in charge of the craft) were going to flee, and in verse 31 Paul warns the centurion that that would be disastrous for all concerned at that stage. Note Paul’s great leadership, and now the centurion was ready to listen to him and apparently he commanded his soldiers to halt the sailors, which they did by cutting the life boat adrift.

In verse 33 we sense the relief as daylight comes; their hopes are renewed, tension is eased. Apparently for the whole fourteen days of their frightening vigil they had been too tense to eat. Paul reminds them of their physical need; probably even after so long some of them could not find interest in food. The apostle gives thanks to God in the presence of them all. We don’t know what happened to his companions in the years afterwards (276 of them), but we can be assured none of them would ever forget the witness Paul gave to them during this journey. It would be nice to think that our witness before unbelievers in the storms of life is as pleasing, and that they will serve to assist men, if not now, at least in the day of their visitation.

In verses 39-41 we find that, even in sight of land, fresh disaster overtakes them. Everything at last seemed sure for their deliverance, and in confidence they hoist the mainsail, only to become foul of some kind of undertow which grounds and smashes their ship. This is like the Christian’s experience often—from one puzzling difficulty to another. In verses 43, 44 we see that now each one had to exert himself to the last ounce of strength, either by swimming or clutching broken pieces of the ship. There was no miraculous, divine help, just overruling of the various features of the mishap that none should lose his life; even a broken piece of the ship to cling to would be **regarded as** a Godsend by those unable to swim. Whatever of earthly belongings we lose in the storms encountered in our pilgrimage as strangers and foreigners upon earth, we are never left destitute—the “broken piece of the ship” is always at hand. Said the psalmist—“I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” (Psa. 37:25.)

Passing into the 28th chapter of Acts we note their further experiences. After escaping safely from their ordeal they found themselves amongst a barbarous people, with rain and cold. The word translated “barbarous” does not carry the meaning that our language generally conveys. It simply means that they were not of the same nationality as the shipwrecked ones, and could quite easily have proved hostile to them. After a storm of that kind at sea, and they on a small island, can we not conjure up in our minds the miserableness of that morning? Perhaps it was the extreme nature of their plight that banished any thoughts of hostility from the minds of the island’s natives. Likewise, sometimes we find that God so overrules our experiences that the extremity of our plight causes others to show us unexpected kindnesses.

Next we observe Paul gathering a bundle of sticks for the fire, always in the forefront when there was something to do. Like his Lord, he was not in this world to be ministered unto, but to minister, and he was ready on every occasion to do good to all men, as he had opportunity. The incident of verses 3-6 regarding the viper coming out of the sticks on the fire and fastening itself to Paul’s hand has a touch of humor. Said the natives—“There is no doubt that this man is a criminal alright, he escaped the sea, but now his judgment is upon him; he must surely die.” So, they watched Paul—a great while it says—likely all day, and when nothing happened, they changed their minds and concluded he must be a god. How like the judgments of men regarding the Lord and His people; opinions are formed and changed according to what meets the eye.

While in the instance of our story public opinion changed in a few hours in hailing Paul from murderer to god, it was similar with our Lord, though the order was reversed. One day they hailed Him as their King during a triumphant entry into Jerusalem, while a few hours later they were condemning Him of the grossest crime and crying — “Away with him.” We are aware how similarly it sometimes occurs in the lives of Christians. The Lord’s people may have many friends while there is hope of present advantage, but they soon find themselves deserted when others find that the Christian course is one of worldly disfavor.

Let us read a few verses about Jesus in this connection—John 2:23-25. It seems to intimate that Jesus knew that the people’s interest lay in His miracles, rather than in His teaching and practice. The Lord’s people are to be as “wise as serpents and harmless as doves,” and it is a good thing to exercise proper wisdom and remember “what is in man,”—just how fickle they can be. Like Jesus, it may not always be wise to commit ourselves fully to every man first hailing us enthusiastically.

However, on the other hand, we find Paul laboring much in ministering to sick and diseased ones amongst the natives, and it is apparent that he won their high regard and in turn they lavished temporal good things upon the shipwrecked ones. Verse 11 tells us that they had to wait three months before they could continue their journey. How the 276 men

were accommodated during that time is left entirely to conjecture — hardships innumerable.

On their journey again, we find Paul contacting a few brethren. Possibly they in turn found a way of letting others know, and a small company came out quite a distance to meet and greet Paul as he neared Rome — “whom when he saw, he thanked God, and took courage.” What a treat it must have been to converse and commune with others of like precious faith after his ordeal. After all his experiences amongst unbelievers how he would appreciate the company and fellowship of fellow Christians. So with us, with experiences in the work-a-day world, though we meet some fine people, all are unable to appreciate with us the spiritual things. So our little assemblies, week by week, refresh us, and we thank God for these privileges we enjoy, for they encourage us. Likewise, isolated brethren find the convention seasons a refresher for them.

The chapter goes on to describe Paul before Caesar, and his noble witness, and the last two verses reveal that Paul was allowed to receive visitors and probably do much teaching for two years more in his own hired house. We leave him there, undaunted by any and every experience, in the words of the last verse—“Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.” With all our experiences, it is good if we continue doing the same.

“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.

“Hymns of Dawn Music Book.”—Containing the original 333 hymns, 27 additional in an Appendix, well bound in strong cloth, with silver lettering, this new edition is priced at 10/- post paid.

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He Lived Inside a Whale.

The following article by David Gunston appeared in the Melbourne "Young Sun" of January 22nd, 1959, and was passed to us by one of our brethren. Having obtained permission to reprint it, we believe this amazing account will prove of much interest to our readers, and will serve to show that the story of Jonah and the whale was not the only occasion when a human being was released from such an extraordinary predicament.

TO be swallowed alive by a giant sperm whale is hardly an appetising fate, yet it happened to many old-time whalers who attacked these oil-bearing monsters with handheld harpoons from the bows of frail rowboats. But one man who was swallowed lived to tell the tale.

He was James Bartley, whose well-authenticated story earned him an honored, if little-known, place in the annals of the sea, of natural history, and of high adventure.

Seaman Bartley had sailed the oceans on whaling trips and when the *Star of the East* sailed from England in 1890 he had no reason to believe that, dangerous though it always was in those primitive days, this voyage would hold any special terrors for him.

All went well until one day in February, 1891, when the ship was cruising off the Falklands Islands. The lookout suddenly spotted *a big sperm*. "Thar' she bloooows !" he cried, and two whale-boats, one containing Bartley, were lowered to close in on the quarry.

The first boat's marksman pierced the whale with his lance, and the enraged beast swung half out of the sea, its 15 ft. tail splintering the second boat and hurtling its little crew into the water.

One man was drowned, and when the first whaleboat checked the survivors it had rescued, Bartley was found to be missing. This sort of thing was the day-to-day risk of whaling, and Bartley's presumed loss by drowning was duly recorded in the ship's log.

The whale was finally killed and in a few hours its great limp carcass was lying alongside the *Star of the East*. The crew began *at once* the unsavory task of flensing it for blubber and flesh.

They worked all the day and part of the same night, and next morning laid bare the whale's vast stomach. Lifting tackle was fixed, and the whole organ hoisted on to the deck for cutting up—when one of the whale-men gave a shout. ALIVE!

He had noticed a slight spasmodic movement within. The flensers went to work with their scimitar blades. Perhaps there was a fish here still alive, they thought.

But curiosity turned to horror as the blades leapt back from the doubled up, drenched, but still living body of their missing comrade. Bartley was unconscious, but within seconds was being crudely but effectively doused with cold sea water.

Laid out on the deck, he began to show signs of life. Whale catching and flensing forgotten, the men put Bartley to bed in the captain's cabin, and gradually he regained consciousness. But he had lost his reason. All he could do was gibber and in spite of all the officers and crew could do for him, he stayed that way for two whole weeks, during which time he was kept under lock and key in the captain's quarters for his own, and the ship's safety.

But gradually Bartley began to recover. He became mentally normal again, and physically seemed none the worse for his unique ordeal except for one terrible thing.

Wherever his body had not been covered with clothes the merciless acid of the whale's gastric juices had eaten deep into his skin, bleaching his face, neck and hands a deadly white. His skin was dried, shrivelled and tautened like a piece of old parchment.

When he was able to talk coherently of his ordeal, Bartley said he clearly remembered being thrown into the sea. Then came a tremendous rushing sound he took to be the swirling of the sperm's tail through the water, and he was soon, as he himself put it, "encompassed by a great darkness."

He felt he was slipping swiftly along a smooth passage that itself seemed to carry him onward. Shortly after this, he realised the movement had stopped, and he had more room.

SLIMY WALLS

He groped about in the stench and the darkness to find the walls of his prison slimy and yielding.

Slowly the awful truth dawned in on him. He realised escape was impossible — that it was only a matter of time.

To add to his anguish there was the intense heat of the whale's inside, an oppressive heat which opened every pore in his body and sucked out all his vitality.

Inevitably, he passed out, chiefly from shock, and remembered nothing more until he came, round in the captain's cabin.

Bartley fully recovered, save for his disfigured skin, and in later years was said to be in "splendid spirits and enjoying life," as well he might, the luckiest man on earth.

The Bible.

The Bible is the torch of civilization and! liberty. Its influence for good in society has; been recognised by the greatest statesmen, even though they for the most part have, looked at it through the various glasses of conflicting creeds, which, while upholding the Bible, grievously misrepresent its teachings.. The grand old Book is unintentionally, but woefully misrepresented by its friends, many of whom would lay down life on its behalf and yet they do it more vital injury than its foes, by claiming its support to their long-revered misconceptions of its truth, received through traditions of their fathers. Would that such would' awake, re-examine their oracle, and put to confusion its enemies by disarming them of their. weapons !

Since the light of nature leads us to expect a fuller revelation of God than that which nature supplies, the reasonable, thinking mind will be prepared to examine the claims of anything purporting to be divine revelation, which bears a reasonable surface evidence of the truthfulness of such claims. The Bible claims to be such a revelation from God, and it does come to us with sufficient surface evidence as to the probable correctness of its claims, and gives us a reasonable hope that closer investigation will disclose more complete and positive evidence that it is indeed the Word of God.

The Bible is the oldest book in existence; it has outlived the storms of thirty centuries. Men have endeavoured by every means possible to banish it from the face of the earth; they have hidden it, burned it, made it a crime punishable with death to have it in possession, and the most bitter and relentless persecutions have been waged against those who had faith in it; but still the Book lives. To-day, while many of its foes slumber in death, and hundreds of volumes written to discredit it and to overthrow its influence, are long since forgotten, the Bible has found its way into every nation and language of earth, many hundreds of translations of it having been made. The fact that this book has survived so many centuries, notwithstanding such unparalleled efforts to banish and destroy it, is at least strong circumstantial evidence that the great Being whom it claims as its Author has also been its preserver.