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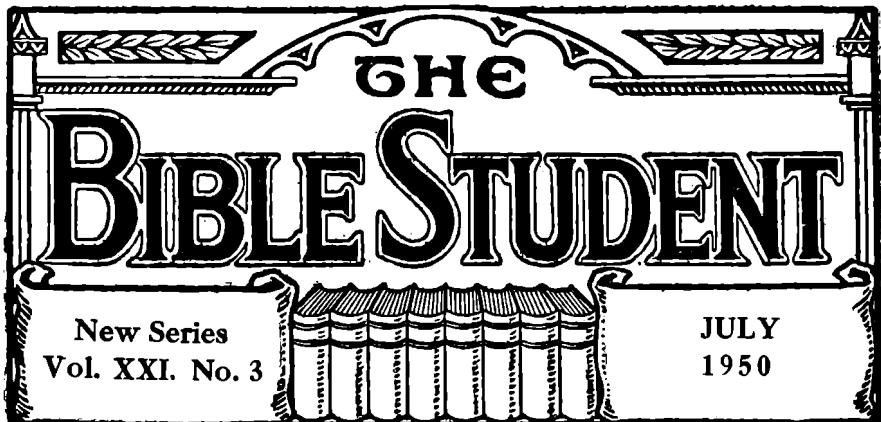
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"The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light"

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Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

In closing do not forget to note carefully the "magnificent array of Gospel 'alls,'" as Charles Fox calls them, ten in number, found in this first chapter. The "all" of spiritual blessings (v. 3); of Divine Wisdom (v. 8); of worlds seen and unseen, headed up in Him (v. 10); the "all" of His purposes and will (v. 11); the "all" of divine inclusion (v. 15); the "all" over which the Son is exalted (v. 21); the "all" of things subjugated (v. 22); the "all" of the church (v. 22); the "all" of the dual Fulness—the church the fulness of Christ and Christ the fulness of the church, "which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (v. 23).

CHRIST IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

BY A. NAISMITH, M.A.

IV. The Purpose of the Writers

It has been observed earlier in this series that each of the Four Evangelists whose narratives of our Lord's life on earth appear in the first books of the New Testament portrays Jesus from a different viewpoint. Matthew tells us *what He said*; Mark tells us *what He did*; Luke tells us *what He felt*; and John tells us *what He is*. Accordingly, we expect to find the special purpose Matthew had before him to be apparent in the discourses He records, while Mark's presentation of our Lord and Master will be reflected in His activities rather than in His words. Every detail Luke gives us will unveil the heart of Jesus and show how He was "touched with a feeling of our infirmities". John's selection from the numerous incidents He might have described,—for he tells us the world itself could not contain all the books that might be written about his Lord,—will comprise those that emphasize His Deity.

IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL the main divisions are clearly indicated by the recurrence of some such words as "When Jesus had ended these sayings"—or "words"—or "parables"—found in 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1 and 26:1. These punctuating clauses mark the conclusion of the five main discourses in the Gospel. These five sections, from Ch. 5:1 to Ch. 25:56, are preceded by an all-important narrative section and followed by an equally important narrative section. This Gospel might therefore be divided as follows:

1. ch. 1:1 to 4:25.—Birth, Baptism and Beginning of Ministry.
2. ch. 5:1 to 7:27.—Sermon on the Mount: Laws of the Kingdom.
3. ch. 7:28 to 10:42.—The Kingdom in the Making.
4. ch. 11:1 to 13:52.—The Kingdom in Mystery.
5. ch. 13:53 to 18:35.—The Kingdom in Miniature.
6. ch. 19:1 to 25:46.—The Kingdom in Manifestation.
7. ch. 26:1 to 28:20.—Betrayal, Death and Resurrection of the King.

It will be noted that each of the five central sections of the Gospel concludes with a lengthy didactic discourse. Matthew's narrative of our Lord's life and teaching is the most eschatological of the four accounts: it is full of *Prophecies* fulfilled in the Messiah: *Predictions* made by the Messiah.

Most of the parables that Matthew records are prophetic, and nearly all are similitudes of the Kingdom of Heaven. Matthew's view of the gospel unmistakably has to do with a King and His Kingdom. The key to the understanding of this presentation of Jesus Christ is found in Chapter 2:2,—“Where is He that is born King of the Jews?” In his early chapters the converted tax-gatherer sets forth in three sets of evidence the credentials of the Babe of Bethlehem.

There are seven great *evidences of His Royalty*: Genealogical (1:1-16); Angelic (1:20, 23); Astronomical (2:2); Prophetic (3:3); Divine (3:17); Spiritual (4:1-11) and Miraculous (4:18-25).

Seven great *prophecies concerning Messiah* are seen to be fulfilled in Jesus:

Isaiah's—1:22-23; Micah's—2:6; Hosea's—2:15;
 Jeremiah's—2:18; An unrecorded writer's—2:23;
 Other two of Isaiah's—3:3; 4:14-16.

A *sevenfold witness* is borne to *His Deity* by the Holy Spirit;—(through the pen of Matthew): The angelic hosts; the Gentiles represented by the wise men from the East; the prophets, in the proclamation of John the Baptist; God the Father in the voice from heaven; by Satan; and by the Christian church represented by the fishermen of Galilee.

As we read this Gospel, we are convinced of the fact that the child of Bethlehem, the Legislator, on the mountain top, the

wonder-working Prophet, the authoritative Teacher, the crucified and risen Saviour, was indeed "born King of the Jews".

The structure of MARK'S GOSPEL is much more difficult than that of Matthew, but there is no doubt as to the main theme. God the Father uses Mark's pen to call the world's attention to His Son, saying "Behold My Servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth": and Mark underlines these words, adding, "Isn't He wonderful? He has done all things well"! The key verse of the Gospel is 10:45,—“For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (*Revised Standard Version*). It indicates that Christ came, like the symbolic ox, for service and sacrifice. Mark vividly describes His life of strenuous service, punctuated by repeated retirements which were frequently interrupted. This Gospel begins and ends with the Lord Jesus Christ at work (cf. 1:9, 14 and 16:20), with “signs following” in every case. Of the Lord's many miracles some are clearly defined and described singly, but others are grouped together. Unlike Matthew, Mark makes a very small selection from Christ's parables because he emphasizes what Jesus did rather than what He said, and records few of the great Preacher's wonderful discourses. There are only about six well-defined parables in this Gospel, all of them stories of activity, namely:—

1. ch. 3:23-29.—The conquest of the strong man by the stronger.
2. ch. 4:2-8.—The Sower, the Seed and the Soil.
3. ch. 4:26-29.—The secret growth of the seed sown.
4. ch. 4:20-34.—The grain of mustard seed.
5. ch. 12:1-9.—The wicked husbandmen.
6. ch. 13:28-29.—The fig tree putting forth its leaves.

Every Bible student knows the keyword to the Gospel record of Mark,—“straightway”, the Greek word for which, “εὐθέως”, occurs forty times in Mark out of a total of eighty times in the New Testament.

Again and again the reader's attention is directed by the writer to the looks and gestures of Jesus, His *eyes* (3:5, 34; 5:32; 9:8; 10; 23; 11:11), and His *hands* (7:33, 34; 10:16).

LUKE'S is the Gospel of parables, but not parables of the kingdom like the Gospel of Matthew. In many of our Lord's stories

in Luke's Gospel "a man" or "a certain man" is described, and Alexander Pope's familiar line might be written over most of the parables of our Lord recorded by Luke: "*To err is human; to forgive Divine.*"

The Gospel written by the "beloved physician" contains the word "sinners" more frequently than all the other Gospels together, and is the only account that refers to Jesus as "a friend of publicans and sinners". To be the friend of the outcastes of human society the Lord of glory must become truly man, so Luke tells us of His perfect, unsullied, impeccable Manhood, yet shows Him to be one in suffering with suffering humanity. "Despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief", the Lord Jesus has a bond of friendship with the Samaritan and the outcaste, the pauper and the mourner, the afflicted and the tempted. Mark and John give us no account of Christ's pedigree. Matthew traces His genealogy to Abraham; but Luke, writing of "the Man, Christ Jesus", traces it to Adam, the first man. Incidents in the babyhood and boyhood of Jesus, unnoticed by Matthew, Mark or John, find a place in Luke's narrative. It is Luke who records in detail the terms of Christ's mission to men (4:17-20). Certain aspects of our Lord's life as Man on earth are given prominence by Luke, though we cannot analyse the Gospel by assigning each of those aspects to a special division of chapters and verses. In Luke are emphasized—

1. Jesus' early life—the Submissive Man.
2. His prayer life—the Dependent Man.
3. His simple life—the Suffering Man.
4. His Social life—the Gracious Man.
5. His spotless life—the Sinless Man.
6. His yielded life—the Crucified Man.
7. His victorious life—the Risen Man.

The most familiar portion of the third Gospel is the supremely human story of the "Prodigal Son" (Ch. 15). The key verse to the whole of the Gospel narrative is 19:11,—"*The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*".

Coming to the FOURTH GOSPEL, we find that, in spirit as in purpose, it occupies a place by itself. Nothing can be clearer than John's own statement of his purpose in 20:31,—"*that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name*". In every chapter, miracle,

incident and discourse the Deity of Christ is prominent, and there is never a verse that does not evoke from the heart of the sincere seeker after truth the confession,

"Thou art the everlasting Word,
The Father's only Son,
God manifestly seen and heard
And Heaven's beloved One".

The "Word" of John 1 is the prophetic "Wisdom" of Prov. 8 and 9. With this transcendent theme before him, John furnishes us with no genealogical table, writes no account of the birth of Jesus, gives no description of His baptism, makes no reference to His temptation or transfiguration, includes no prediction of His second advent as Son of Man, narrates no "Kingdom parables" and omits entirely the circumstances and details of the institution of the Lord's Supper and of His agony in the Garden. He makes no reference to Christ's ascension either, because the Lord Jesus has in Ch. 3 spoken of Himself as the "Son of Man which is in heaven".

The writer of the Fourth Gospel does record seven of the most miraculous acts of Jesus, six of which are not found elsewhere, and usually calls them "signs" rather than "miracles", because they proved our Lord's Divine power and glory. Never in this Gospel do we read that people marvelled or were astonished at what the Lord did; and this is the only Gospel in which we have the admission freely made even by the subordinates of His enemies, "Never man spake like this man". In the course of the narrative there are no less than seven testimonies to His *deity* by those who were brought into touch with Him:

by John the Baptist—1:26-34;

by Andrew—1:41;

by the Samaritan woman—4:19, 29;

by Nathanael—1:49;

by Peter—6:68;

by Nicodemus—3:2;

by Thomas—20:28.

"Believing" is the keyword: for, where reason hesitates, faith boldly lays hold of the Divine revelation as seen in Jesus. For the true believer the discourse in the upper room contains some of the most convincing, comforting and constraining evidences that He Who thus addressed His own was more than a man,—was none other than God manifest in the flesh, the great "mystery

of godliness". Who but He could make the stupendous claim, "I and my Father are one", or "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"?

The Gospel has been very beautifully analysed with reference to its three main themes—Life, Light and Love—in that order, and it is not necessary to make this analysis again. The Pre-eminence of the Lord Jesus Christ is so clear that we might venture to suggest a *fourfold division* of the Gospel with reference to four occurrences in the Scriptures of the word "*higher*" applied to the Lord Jesus. He is—

1. "The Rock that is higher than I" (Ps. 61:1)—for the *individual*. Chaps. 1 to 9; where individuals are in view.
2. "Higher than the Highest" (Eccl. 5:8)—in the Jewish *nation*. Chaps. 10 to 12; where the nation is in view.
3. "Higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26)—in *the Church*. Chaps. 13 to 17; where He is with His own.
4. "Higher than the kings of the earth" (Ps. 89:27)—in the world. Chaps. 18 to 21; where the application is *universal*.

FOUR "DAYS" OF SCRIPTURE

BY JAMES H. TODD

There are four special 'days' mentioned in relation to the second coming of the Lord which call for study on the part of every Bible student. As used in Scripture the word 'day' often refers to a period of time, longer or shorter, and not merely of twenty-four hours. Day is thus used in contrast to night, implying the characteristics of activity, manifestation, or display, as well as of opportunity: In the day-light things are clearly seen and cognisable, while in the night there is darkness and obscurity, inability to see correctly. The Biblical significance and usage is well illustrated in Romans 13:12 and 1 Thess. 5:4-6. The present for believers is spoken of as "the night", with its "works of darkness", but they themselves "are all sons of light; sons of the day" and "not in darkness", in the spiritual sense. Then in