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Bible Study Number

# The Sunday School Times

Copyright, 1931, by The Sunday School Times Co. Entered as second class matter July 16, 1879, at the post-office at Philadelphia, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.  
Entered as second-class matter at the post-office department, Ottawa, Canada.

Published weekly by The Sunday School Times Co., 323-327 N. 13th St., Phila., Pa.

Philadelphia, January 24, 1931  
Volume Seventy-three. No. 4

\$2.00 a year; in clubs, \$1.50  
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## The Departed

By Annie Johnson Flint

To depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better. — Phil. 1:23.

WHAT are they seeing who are gone  
Beyond our darkness to the dawn?  
What are they doing who have left  
Our world and us forlorn, bereft?  
We cannot tell, we only know  
That all untouched by pain and woe,  
They are with Christ; oh, blessed rest!  
What fairer lot, what life more blest,  
Would we have chosen, if we could,  
From all most fair and all most good?  
They are with Christ; they see His face,  
The know the fullness of His grace,  
And they are learning, bright and clear,  
The truth we only grope for here.

But how do we our time employ?  
In mourning for our vanished joy?  
Or are we growing, day by day,  
In grace and wisdom, as are they?  
Shall we be worthy of their love  
When we shall meet once more, above?  
Will mind and heart be tuned to share  
Those pleasures pure, that finer air?  
Let us forget the little while  
Ere we shall see their welcome smile;  
Let us press onward, eager, bold,  
Until Christ's face we shall behold,  
And strive to make our lives more meet  
To fall adoring at His feet.

## EDITORIAL

### The Only Book

There is only one Book in the world written by God. Probably no one in this life can realize fully the miracle-wonder of the Bible. While its human writers were men, it "came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). Therefore there is no experience we can have here on earth that can be compared with the marvelous possibilities of Bible study. Undoubtedly one of the surprises we shall have when we get to Heaven will be the Bible, — we shall then know what a unique and marvelous Book it was. And perhaps one of the regrets we may have in Heaven will be our realization that we did not read and study this Book as we might have done down here, while we needed what only God's Scriptures could give us. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES is always glad to publish a special Bible Study Number, as in this week's issue. A glance through its pages will show what rich material has been prepared by those who love and reverence and study the Word. Six

leading Bible teachers answer the question "Has Inspiration Ceased?" and this brief symposium is notable for profound insight and crystal clear vision and reasoning. People often ask what Bible Schools are true to the faith today; it is cause for rejoicing that there are a great many, and a fairly comprehensive list of these is given. Another article tells, from practical experience, how Bible study can be stimulated in the country church; still another, how day-school children's lives are being changed by the Day School Gospel League in Canada. And, as always, the advertising columns in this issue are rich with information and guidance that could be had in no other way, keeping Christian people informed of the latest and best publications in Bible study, of useful editions of the Bible, of Bible Schools, and of books that are sound in the faith. With the apostasy deepening and spreading on every hand, let us thank God and take courage that there is such a world-wide revival of true Bible study today.

### The Night-Blooming Cereus

We do not understand the wonders of the natural world. It is filled with marvels utterly beyond our comprehension. *The Presbyterian* recently noted the refreshing contrast of the night-blooming cereus with the popularity of "mass production." A plant had been carefully tended for fifty years by a lady in Long Island. The other night it blossomed. A single bloom appeared; people came from all around to see it; a picture was taken; the flower lived for about three hours, and in the morning it was withered and dead. What symbolism has this parable of nature for us? It is God's creation and handiwork. What does it mean? It is difficult to say. It may suggest the brevity and helplessness of mere human character at its best, apart from Christ; appearing in the darkness of this world's night, and withered and dead in the light of God's morning. We can only conjecture as to a meaning, while we are reminded of the Lord's

word to Nicodemus: "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" But the eyes of all who receive Christ as Saviour and Lord are opened indeed to heavenly things, and are enlightened by the Holy Spirit to their eternal meaning and beauty. And we know that the time is coming when unknown meanings shall be revealed to us; "now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

### The Welcome Call

"Were you invited?" is a question we often ask one another about an important reception, or dinner, or wedding. There may be happiness or disappointment in the reply. We are likely to have accepted promptly if the invitation came. Are we as eager to accept the invitation to a certain great reception, or feast, before which all earthly affairs of a similar sort pale into insignificance? There will be an innumerable company of invited guests at this great reception, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself is to be the host. During his earthly lifetime he told a parable of "a certain man" who "made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready" (Luke 14:16, 17). A strange thing was that those to whom the great invitation was thus sent "began to make excuse." But others, from that day to this, have been accepting the invitation and are waiting for the call to come. In a recent personal letter from the beloved minister of God and ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, Dr. I. M. Haldeman, that "grand old man" who for so many years has been preaching faithfully the only Gospel and "that blessed hope" of our Lord's sure and imminent return, writes: "How comforting to know that—any time—the door in Heaven may open and He who is our Lord may say, 'Come up hither.' Are we ready for that welcome, thrilling call? We have been invited; have we accepted the invitation?"

## Remember Robert Raikes!

RAIKES is not forgotten in his own land. In the year of grace 1930 his third jubilee was celebrated in all parts of Great Britain by commemorative services, processions of witness, public meetings, and by the renderings of a Raikes Cantata or of pageants illustrating Sunday-school history, and the celebrations are being continued in 1931.

The position concerning him is clearly recognized. His was not the first Sunday-school formed; for, before his day, many isolated experiments had been made in the Christian instruction of children. He is being honored as the founder of the Sunday-school movement now world-wide in its sweep.

The crowning celebration was held a few weeks ago in his native city of Gloucester. Following the 127th Annual Convention of the (British) National Sunday School Union, the events of the celebration day were under the auspices of the "United Board" whose members are directly appointed representatives of the denominations, — Anglican and the Free Churches.

We mingle with the visitors who are walking through the ways and byways of the old city on the morning of this memorable day. Gloucester folk have made it a fête day. Flags and streamers adorn the streets. Groups of strangers are seen visiting places of interest. Many are found in the schoolroom of St. Mary-de-crypt Church where Raikes labored, and where, now, there is being held an exhibition of Raikes' relics. Others are gazing at the fine gabled house in which the Sunday-school pioneer dwelt, or

This valuable editorial was written for The Sunday School Times Family by the Rev. Carey Bonner, the widely known and much loved English Sunday-school leader who has been for many years General Secretary of the (British) National Sunday School Union, and who made the address of presentation at the unveiling of the statue of Robert Raikes in Gloucester, England, at the Raikes Sesquicentennial recently-observed there.

are inspecting the ancient cottages in a back lane where he started his first schools for boys and girls who were waifs of the streets.

Soon after noon we enter the Guildhall joining the guests, whom the worthy mayor has bidden to a banquet. Here are gathered dignitaries of the Anglican Church, leaders of the Free Churches, local celebrities, and Sunday-school people from all parts of England.

When luncheon is over His Worship submits the toast of "The King," and reads a telegram from His Majesty, George the Fifth, thanking the delegates for a loyal message received. The mayor (Alderman S. J. Gillett) — himself a Christian educationist — speaks words of welcome to his guests, and gives the toast "To the memory of Robert Raikes." "It is gratifying to us," he says, "to have in our midst members of the Raikes family whose presence here we warmly welcome. At this gathering we would all desire to stand in silence, remembering with great gratitude our townsman who started a wonderful movement that now has spread throughout the world."

In an impressive stillness the guests then stand for a few moments. The venerable Canon Francis Raikes — still hale and hearty, though more than eighty years old — then rises to respond. In the course of his address he states that for more than sixty years he has been a Sunday-school teacher. "Raikes," he says, "initiated a wondrous work, — the grandest work in which any man could be engaged. He began with six children, and today millions are being taught in the Sunday-schools of the world. We need now to make the Sunday-school a reality and a happy place in which the children's souls are trained Christward and Godward."

The second response is made by Mr. James R. Ogden, a Methodist leader from Yorkshire who is, this year, president of the National Sunday School Union. Mr. Ogden has generously rendered yeoman

by stereotyped answers, or become conscious of unsolved questions of transcendent moment. Of those who know much, more than those who know little, is there felt the need for explanation. . . .

"Then behind all these mysteries lies the all-embracing mystery—whence this universal transformation which has gone on unceasingly throughout a past eternity and will go on unceasingly throughout a future eternity? And along with this arises the paralyzing thought—what if, of all that is thus incomprehensible to us, there exists no comprehension anywhere? No wonder that men take refuge in authoritative dogma!

"So it is, too, with our own natures. No less inscrutable is this complex consciousness which, in other shapes, is manifested by animate beings at large—consciousness which, during the development of every creature, makes its appearance out of what seems unconscious matter; suggesting the thought that con-

sciousness, in some rudimentary form, is omnipresent?

"Lastly come the unsolvable questions concerning our own fate; the evidence seeming so strong that the relations of mind and nervous structure are such that cessation of one accompanies dissolution of the other; while simultaneously comes the thought, so strange and so difficult to realize, that with death there lapses both consciousness of existence and the consciousness of having existed.

"Thus religious creeds, which in one way or another occupy the sphere that rational interpretation seeks to occupy and fails, and fails the more it seeks, I have come to regard with a sympathy based on community of need; feeling that dissent from them results from inability to accept the solutions offered, joined with the wish that a solution could be found."

(To be continued)

## Has Inspiration Ceased?

Answers from leading Bible teachers showing why they believe it ended with the completion of the Scriptures

One of the commonest statements of Modernism is that divine inspiration is not limited to the Bible, and that men can count confidently today on the same inspiration that writers of Scripture had. False religious cults make similar claims. A reader of the Times, whose letter is published on the second page of this issue, asks how to meet this argument from Mormons. The following statements from well-known students of God's Word are illuminating and conclusive.

By James M. Gray, D.D.

President, Moody Bible Institute

THAT endowment of the Holy Spirit which came upon the writers of the books of the Old and New Testament, and which came upon no other men, and which came upon those men at no other time and for no other purpose, enabling them to compose those books wholly without error, has forever ceased.

By J. Gresham Machen, D.D., Litt.D.

Professor of New Testament, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia

IN THE teaching of our Lord the Old Testament books are placed in a category sharply distinct from that to which all other books belong; they alone are treated by the Lord Jesus as authoritative "Scripture." But our Lord appointed apostles whom he invested with authority. It was by virtue of that authority that the apostles added to the Bible by publishing the New Testament books. Only those books rightly belong to the New Testament which were either actually written by apostles or else were written and published by immediate disciples of the apostles under the apostles' superintendence and approval. For the writing of such books, and such books only, the Holy Spirit vouchsafed that supernatural working that we call inspiration. Hence inspiration ceased when the apostolic age was over.

By Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D.

President, Evangelical Theological College, Dallas, Texas

THE accepted ground upon which the Canon of the New Testament was settled—i. e., that only and all writings of proved character were included—assumes that no God-breathed writings had been omitted. Acceptance of the doctrine of a God-breathed infallible book necessitates the acceptance of infallible care, both in construction and in preservation of that book. No later writings have ever assumed to be Scripture; at best they merely expound what has already been given. The enlightenment of the Spirit enabling men to understand the Bible since the Canon was closed is all that any man can now claim for himself, and is far removed from that special ministry of the Spirit through which men were used to write the Scripture. Jude implies the termination and completion of the Canon when stating the truth to be "once for all delivered."

By Leander S. Keyser, D.D.

Professor of Systematic Theology, Hanna Divinity School, Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio

THAT peculiar divine inspiration which produced the Holy Scriptures ceased when the Biblical Canon was complete, for the following reasons:

If the fundamental problems of creation, preservation, and redemption were to be made plain and sure for mankind, they had to be made known by a special divine revelation; for nature and human reason do not reveal them. The best way for God to give to the human family a special revelation was to see to it that a record of it was put in book form, so that it could be preserved in its integrity from generation

to generation throughout the centuries. Now, it is reasonable to believe that, when a sufficient revelation was given for man's enlightenment and guidance, God would see to it that the canon was closed. It was not necessary for him to continue to multiply special revelations. The Bible tells us everything that is needed for our best life and well-being in this world and for the attainment of an immortal destiny in the world to come. It would have been superfluous to give more. Through the guidance of God's Word man can discover whatever else is necessary by his own efforts, his mind being enlightened and regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

Besides, if God had continued to give special revelations throughout all time, we would today have such a vast library on hand that no one could study and master it all. Such a procedure would not have been a wise economy. As it is, the Bible is just large enough, but not too large. Just enough has been revealed, not too much. Less would have been insufficient, more would have been superfluous.

By William L. Pettingill, D.D.

Bible Teacher; Author of "God's Prophecies for Plain People," "Simple Studies in Daniel," "Israel—Jehovah's Covenant People," etc.

THE "inspiration of God" which produced the Word of God ceased to function when the Bible was finished, because God's message to man was finished and there was nothing more to be said.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake" through the Old Testament "unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken" through the New Testament "unto us by his Son." And in both Testaments there is a progressive manifestation of the Son, which finds its consummation in the last Book of the Bible, the true name of which is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

He is the Alpha and Omega, the A and the Z, the Beginning and the Ending. Nothing was before him, and nothing can be after him.

By H. A. Ironside, Litt.D.

Pastor of Moody Memorial Church, Chicago

THE question almost seems to imply subtly that further inspiration is needed, as though God's Word as now in our hands were incomplete. Three passages of Scripture, however, seem clearly to declare the contrary.

The apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 1:25 that it was given him "to fulfil the word of God"; that is, to make it full, and he it is who gives us the final doctrinal revelations. Jude tells us, in verse 3, that he was impelled to write exhorting the saints "that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." "Once" here has the force of "once for all,"—no repetition or additions contemplated. Then, so far as prophecy is concerned, the apostle John closes the Apocalypse (Revelation) with the solemn declaration: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." What room then for further inspiration down through the ages?

## Girls' Problems of Today

Discussed by Mother Ruth

Questions for answer, and other communications, may be addressed to Mother Ruth, The Sunday School Times, 323-327 North Thirteenth Street, Philadelphia. No names or addresses or identity will be published in The Sunday School Times; and if questions are too personal for an answer in these columns, Mother Ruth will be glad to reply individually if possible, if return postage is enclosed.

My dear Mother Ruth: Every time The Sunday School Times arrives, I look first of all for "Girls' Problems"; if there are none I am disappointed.

My problem might be similar to that of another surrendered child of God. Since I surrendered my life to Him, conditions have pressed in upon me that, in spite of constant prayer, are absolutely contrary to God's Word. Yet I am truly yielded; but when the load gets almost unbearable I often wonder if I am fully surrendered. When we give our all and put it on the altar, does He bring suffering instead of His peace? Is it Satan that tries me this way, or is there something wrong with my surrender? When I pray to be fully in His will, the wall is all the blacker. But I know I've gotten to the place where I can say, "Not my will but thine be done." Does the Lord permit sin in our daily walk when we yield to Him?

Sometimes I feel I should quit praying, but, Mother Ruth, I cannot, for the evil one is so shrewd these days that I don't want to give him a single thread of my life. I am criticized for these conditions in my life, yet I have done all human flesh can do to beat them out. I'd rather stop doing Christian work than be a stumbling block. God knows my heart, but people do not understand. I'd appreciate prayers from people who read this, yet I know that those who have no sorrow do not know how heavy these loads get. I am trying to serve Him, and Him only.

MY DEAR GIRL: I think you have given the secret of your trouble and problem when you say, "I have done all human flesh can do to beat them out." Stop trying to do this work yourself, and allow the Lord to do it all. Then it will be done right. It is strange how the evil one makes us believe we can help God do his part. "Let go and let God" is a good plan for you to adopt. Stop looking at self and "look away to Calvary"! Take the eighth chapter of Romans and read it through and through and then read it again, and linger on verses 26, 27, and 37. Stop questioning, and begin to trust the Lord. He is your Deliverer, and is able to make His grace abound toward you. Yield yourself to Him, and then believe He accepts you, and then whatever comes to you, you can know God will care for you and see you through! I do not care what conditions exist, or how circumstances darken, or how the foes of righteousness work, you are the Lord's and nothing can touch you without His permission.

Don't worry about what people think, just give your life and reputation into God's hands and trust Him for a solution of all that comes to you. Remember He is able and willing, and your part is to allow Him to work while you trust Him. Read this poem, which comes from the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, and the verse from Peter, and see if you cannot appropriate them for yourself.

"WHAT DOES IT MEAN?"

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. . . . Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Pet. 4:12, 19).

It does not matter what it means, poor heart; The dear Lord knows, to bear it is your part; Nor think some strange thing happens unto you Which He would not allow so if He knew. He does know. In His all-wise Fatherhood He knows it, and allows it for your good. He is not hard; you do not think He is When in the dark you find your hand in His. When it was light you tried to walk alone, And thought the strength He gave you all your own; You did not ask what that last blessing meant— Just smiled and took it, satisfied, content. You did not think it strange. You thought He knew, And planned the sweet surprise which came to you.

Then do you, tried one, take life's sweet and good, Yet cannot trust that tender Fatherhood, But think it makes mistakes whenever it sends Some hindrance which your eager haste offends? Or when He lets the wicked plot you harm, And stir a whirlwind when you seek a calm: You think it strange, this trial swift and keen, And in your weakness ask, "What does it mean?"

I think the language of God's heart would read: "I love My child, I note his slightest need; I long to prosper him in all his ways, To give him quiet nights and peaceful days; But if I do, he'll lose himself from Me, My outstretched hand he will not wait to see. I'll place a hindering wall before his feet, There he will wait, and there we two will meet.

"I do it not in wrath for broken laws Or willful disobedience, but because I want him nearer, and I cannot wait For him to come, for he might wander late. My child will wonder, will not understand,