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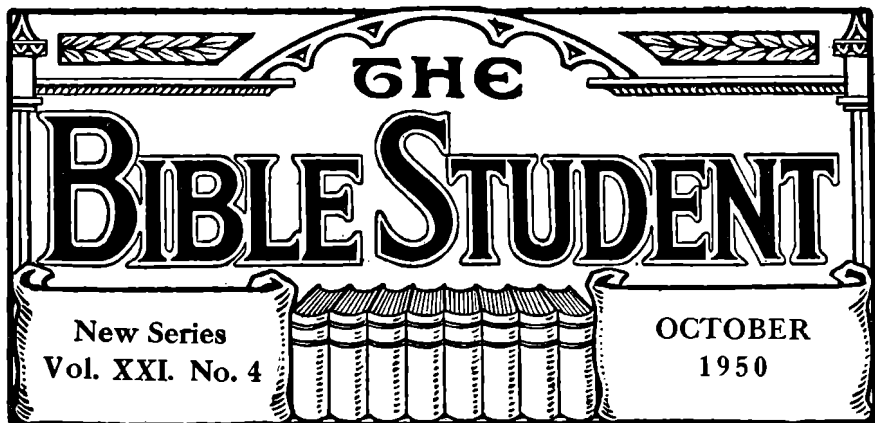
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“ The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light ”

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Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

(3) The *Exercise* of this thought-surpassing Power is "*to us-ward who believe.*" The outflow of this celestial dynamic is toward us and for us. We are not merely to gaze upon it in wonderment, we are to *experience* it in ourselves. In fact, not merely the power, but the hope and the glory previously mentioned are for us. "His calling" reminds us of the *past* when we turned to Him at conversion and there was created within us a "hope that maketh not ashamed". "His inheritance" directs our eyes to the glorious *future* when "He shall be manifested" and we also shall be manifested with Him. "His power" is the *present* guarantee of victory and blessing. At the same time all three are both present and future.

We shall lose the whole purport of this great petition if we fail to see that all is for us and *to-day*. The secret lies in that little word "believe". Faith relies and receives. It puts us in contact with the Source of blessing, and in union with Him we shall find spiritual illumination, insight, experience, and power that shall all be to His praise and glory.

THE TENT DOOR

BY ALEX SOUTTER

The Tent Door episode in Abraham's life is one of richest charm. Its homeliness warms the heart. Its simplicity has a direct message for the soul. Its practical import brings a present-day challenge to all God's pilgrim people.

Behind him lay years of sweet communion with God. Around him there were placed tangible tokens of his pilgrimage—the altar, the tent, and the well. The future was lit up with God's sure word of promise: the glory of God would most surely be his portion, since he was the chosen friend of the God of glory.

His life had not been free from failure. Witness the downward trek to Egypt, and Pharaoh's word of censure—and Hagar. Perhaps young Ishmael would be within ear shot as Abraham sat there in quiet contemplation, and Ishmael was an ever present reminder of the frustration that follows every form of fleshly activity. But despite this failure, the repose he now enjoyed by the tent door was but the fruit of a life of communion with the One Who had called him from "beyond the River".

Abraham's solitariness is to be noted. He no longer had Lot with him; Lot was now in distant Sodom. Sarah does not seem to have been capable of sharing with him his wonted wealth of spiritual experience. Probably he had fellowship with the trusted servant mentioned in chapter 24. But, to a large extent, Abraham was a solitary man.

He, however, turned his solitariness to good account. He made it the vehicle of a friendship which no saint, in this same fashion, had known before. He became the Friend of God. Solitude has been called the mother country of the strong. This was true of Abraham. He became strong by reason of the life he lived alone with God.

On a later day Jacob was left alone. That experience meant much to him; it sent him forward on his way with a new conception of his obligation Godward and manward, and with new strength to fulfil it. But Abraham's aloneness with his Lord was not the experience of a single night; it was spread along the whole tenor of his pilgrim way. Hence his stability and strength, his faith and patience, and his place of honour as the father of the faithful.

Twentieth century hustle leaves little time for solitariness. Yet if we are to rise in spiritual poise and power, the quiet hour is most essential. Our Lord's example is before us. Morning by morning His ear was open to hear His Father's voice. Thus was He ever ready to speak a word in season to the weary. And as we enjoy the quiet season alone with God we shall find it becomes more and more easy to carry its serenity into our workaday lives with all their bustle and preoccupation. We shall find, too, that solitude need not always be conditioned by environment. It may become our portion in a scene of din and noise, and amid an ocean of wheels. As we walk along the road to our Emmaus, we may, betimes, feel that no other mortal is on that highway—so near is our Master's presence and so dear His companionship.

Abraham's act of worship also calls for our closest attention. He worshipped with the clear vision of one who dwelt in the light. He worshipped with a warmth of love that well befitted his treasured friendship with God.

It was as if God had said: "It is now some time since I saw My friend Abraham face to face; I must go down to Mamre to see him today". And He did. The ground around Abraham's tent was hallowed with the very footprints of God. Three appeared

in human guise. One was the Lord of glory. The others were angelic messengers called to His side to do His bidding. With what alacrity did the tent dweller run to meet them! With what heart-felt joy he worshipped!

He "bowed himself" (v. 2). This word is identical with that found in 22:5 "I and the lad will go yonder and *worship*". Providing, as it does, the first mention of worship in the Scriptures, this passage in Gen. 18:2 is of first rate importance. The setting is significant. When is it that the outflow of worship is spontaneous and full? When heart and mind are filled with divine tranquillity and calm. Repose by the tent door fittingly preceded worship in the presence of the Lord from heaven.

With what precision Abraham performed this act of worship. He made no mistake in determining the One before Whom he must bow the knee and Whose Lordship he must needs acknowledge. No creature dare accept that homage; it was the divine right of the Creator alone to receive it. How was Abraham able to distinguish the Lord from the two angels? Was it with the natural eye or the "eyes of the heart" that he perceived his Lord's supremacy? We cannot tell. It is enough to know that he singled out the Central Figure of the Heavenly Trio—and worshipped Him. This, to us, is of supreme importance.

George Goodman has pointed out that of the three who thus visited Abraham, one is spoken of as "*the Lord*" (Jehovah, v. 13). Moreover He asks, "Is anything too hard for *the Lord*?" (Jehovah), and adds, "I will return unto thee and Sarah shall have a son". "Such a title and such language could not be assumed by one who was only a man. It is therefore clear that we have here one of the 'Theophanes' or pre-appearances of Christ as a man".

Moreover, the *munificence of Abraham's hospitality* adds lustre to his name. The hour of rest was over. His great act of worship had been performed. A haste that was hallowed by a holy solicitation for the welfare of his guests now marked the movements of the man of God. Abraham did the planning. Sarah saw to the cooking. With incredible speed and efficiency the meal was prepared. The menu was worthy of the occasion. Abraham's bounty fittingly reflected the bounty of God with which he had been furnished to the full for so many years. "Of Thine own have we given Thee" might well have come from his lips as he feasted his Friends so lavishly.

Can you picture a finer earthly scene? The outline of the

distant hills; the rolling plains; the well-fed flocks; the rows of tents that housed his disciplined young men; the busy scene in the back court; his own neatly kept tent; the spreading oaks beneath whose greenery the "men" from heaven ate, with Abraham standing by as the host who served and waited. Two milleniums later an inspired pen wrote these words: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers"; and in the first century the early Christians were so hearty in the display of this homely virtue that for 2000 years their hospitality has been remembered—it is still spoken of.

Seven divine visitations are set down in the life story of the patriarch. The first was in Ur when the God of glory said, "Get thee out of thy country" (Gen. 12:1; Acts 7:1); the second, near Bethel, when at God's call he lifted up his eyes to see his spacious heritage (Gen. 13:14); the third, when he believed in the Lord and it was counted to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:1); the fourth, in his 99th year when the rite of circumcision was instituted (17:10); the fifth, under the oaks of Mamre, the visitation we have just considered; the sixth, a year later, when the bondwoman and her son were cast out (21:10); and the last and most memorable of all, the scene that was enacted on Mount Moriah (22:1).

These heavenly visitations might well be likened to shafts of heavenly light falling on the path of God's pilgrim servant. But it is preeminently in the tent door episode that that light is softened and sweetened with the touch of Home.

CHRIST IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

BY A NAISMITH, M.A.

V. Immanuel as Revealer of the Father

All four Evangelists, and particularly the fourth, present the Lord Jesus Christ not only as the One sent from God but also as the Revealer of God the Creator of all, the Source of all blessing and the Father of His own. In this respect too, a different aspect is emphasized by each, and it is interesting to discover that He Who is the Eternal Son and the Eternal Word is viewed as exhibiting in all He says and does what is predicated of God the Father in the four titles of Fatherhood that occur in the New Testament epistles.