

The Egyptian Succoth seems to have been a kind of gateway to Egypt, and marked the first stopping point of the Exodus march. The name would have provided a happy reminder of the wonderful promises God had made to Israel's ancestor.

8. **v. 37 six hundred thousand.** This figure is the basis for the estimate that approximately two million Israelites left Egypt (*cf.* Num. 11:21): 600,000 men on foot, 600,000 women, and perhaps around 800,000 children. (The population would have been young, given the explosive growth of the Israelites as depicted in Exodus 1 and 2, meaning that a relatively high number of children is a reasonable assumption.) Historians have disputed that so many Israelites could have sojourned in Egypt and camped in the wilderness, but this seems to be the natural

way of reading the text. In Exodus 38:26 and Numbers 3:39 the number of males is spelled out more precisely as 625,550.

9. **v. 38 mixed multitude.** One word in Hebrew, the one from which the word 'Arab' is derived, used previously to describe the 'swarm' of the fourth plague. The term also has this meaning of 'ethnic mixture' in Nehemiah 13:3 and Jeremiah 50:37 (compare Psalm 106:35, where a related verb is used). The multitude may have comprised some Egyptians, but was probably predominantly made up of other nationalities who worked in the Egyptian labour gangs. The deliverance God wrought for Israel would forever change the lives of these other slaves too, and, by association with Israel, they too obtained their freedom. Their lives would never be the same.



Reviews

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A new life of our Lord*

John Nicholls

THERE HAVE not been many books written in the Brotherhood on the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. The reviewer is aware of *Nazareth Revisited* by Brother Robert Roberts, *A Life of Jesus* by Brother Melva Purkis, *The Life of Jesus Christ* by Brother W. R. Mitchell (not related to the author of the book under review), and *The Story of the Bible* volumes 8–12 by Brother H. P. Mansfield. These all offer different perspectives on the life of our Master and emphasise particular aspects of his deeds and sayings. It is no small undertaking in terms of time, research and study to write such a book, especially in view of the comment by the Apostle John at the end of his Gospel (21:25).

Brother John Mitchell is to be thanked, therefore, for writing a devotional study of the life of our Lord and Saviour. The study was originally published as a series of articles in the Devotional (now Exhortation) section of *The Testimony*,¹ and is now being published by the author in two parts. This review deals with the first volume, which is subtitled *From Bethlehem to Bethany*. It

is not a complete and exhaustive life, but comprises seventy chapters dealing in chronological sequence with the major incidents and episodes in the Lord's life. The sequence followed is that of W. J. Herschel's *Four Gospels in Parallel*.

* *The Pilgrimage of Jesus: A Devotional Study. Part 1: From Bethlehem to Bethany.* John Mitchell. Published by Penrhyn Books, 6 Traeth Penrhyn, Penrhyn Bay, Llandudno, LL30 3RN; email penriteuk@yahoo.co.uk. £8.00 per copy, including UK postage, payable to Penrhyn Books. **Overseas orders**, please pay in Sterling and add £2 per copy to cover postage. Copies are available in Australia from Brother Graham Kennedy, 17 Shakespeare Avenue, Plympton Park, Adelaide, NSW 5038, Australia; email grahamkennedy@ozemail.com.au; and in the USA from Brother Tom Graham, 2621 Riata Court, Camarillo, CA 93012, USA; email tom@bigbrand.com.

1. The series commenced in March 1956.

The author calls the book “a devotional study”, and this is indeed the case, though much diligent study has been carried out into the historical, geographical and Scriptural background to Jesus’s life and ministry, and some examples will be cited later in this review. The book is also beautifully written. The author’s excellent English makes it a very pleasurable book to read. We have to endure so much poor grammar and limited vocabulary these days, and it is fitting that, for a subject of such paramount importance, our brother has produced a book of this class.

The author’s style is also heavily impregnated with Scriptural allusions and language. Although he makes much use of E. V. Rieu’s translation of the Gospels, the text abounds with phrases and expressions from the Authorised Version. When the reviewer began to read the book, he wanted to see the Scriptural references, but on proceeding it was clear that the book would have become very cluttered if all the references were given, halting the flow of the text.

It is, above all, a devotional study because, mingled with the sketching of background and the exposition of Scripture, the author brings out the lessons for us and the ideals and principles which should govern our lives as “strangers and pilgrims”, striving to walk in the steps of the Master. We only have to see the beautiful character of Jesus brought to life in this study to realise our own shortcomings and what we must try to do to be more acceptable to our heavenly Father.

Historical background

The historical research in the study is evident throughout the book. Thus, in chapter 1, “The Fulness of The Time”, the ritual of offering the incense at the time of prayer is described in detail: “Along with 50 or so priests who were on duty for the day, Zacharias stood in the Hall of Polished Stones while the fateful lot was cast. It fell upon him . . . Reverently, Zacharias spread incense upon the coals, worshipped and prepared also to retire. But as the scented clouds rose from off the altar, he realised he was not alone. Between the altar and the golden candlestick there stood a form which could not be that of man, and fear clutched at the old man’s heart” (p. 3).

In the same dramatic style, in the third chapter, “A Light to Lighten the Gentiles”, the author portrays the offering in the temple by Mary the mother of baby Jesus: “What a foreshadowing,

in the limp white bird, of the price that would be paid for our sins by him upon whom the Spirit descended in the form of a dove! Mary, however, could not have the faintest inkling of these things at that time—she would offer her prayers of thankfulness for her preservation in childbirth, and her joy at being freed from Levitical defilement” (pp. 18-19).

Chapter 5 gives a brief character assessment of Archelaus and his brother Herod Antipas, the slayer of John the Baptist. There is more background to the rulers of the places where Jesus travelled in Chapter 7, “Reeds Shaken by the Wind”.

Chapter 13, “The Zeal of Thine House”, is a vivid account, first of the area of Capernaum which became the centre of the Lord’s work, and second of the scene in the temple at the time of the Passover, when our Master overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and drove out those who sold doves. Here is part of his description: “It was the resident priestly officials at the Temple, and in particular the family of Annas, the High Priest, who benefited most. They collected the rents for the stalls; they permitted, even encouraged, the traffic; it was from the dove-cotes of Annas upon the Mount of Olives that the birds came that were sold, sometimes at exorbitant prices to poor women such as Mary of Nazareth, who had been excused the offering of a lamb because of their poverty” (p. 70).

But, as Brother Mitchell observes, “Wickedness cannot stand before the face of truth. ‘Resist the devil and he will flee from you’. As when, three years later, those who arrested Jesus went backwards, so now the greedy merchants gave way before him, self-condemned by their own consciences, while the populace no doubt looked on with a certain satisfaction and certainly no desire to stay the judgement of God’s Son. Fume as they might, the Temple officials could only stand by helplessly and store up their hatred in their hearts” (pp. 71-2).

Chapter 20, “A Leper Cleansed”, and Chapter 69, “If any man Thirst . . .”, are also chapters that provide much interesting background information to the episodes in the Lord’s life.

Exposition of Scripture

Besides the historical and scenic background, Brother Mitchell also gives much Scriptural exposition. Chapter 8, “Baptism in the Jordan”, gives some splendid links between the baptism of our obedient Saviour and several Old Testa-

ment incidents. This chapter is full of good exposition. If you enjoy seeing why and how Scriptural types and symbols are used, you will get great pleasure from this chapter. The next two chapters, about the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, are also splendid exposition, and the reviewer felt there were echoes of Brother Thomas's seminal treatment of the subject in *Elpis Israel*. Chapter 12, "Water into Wine", is another fine exposition, made memorable for the reviewer by the description, "those cracked old Pharisee bottles" (p. 66).

Perhaps one of the best expositions in the book (it is hard to pick out the best when so many of these chapters give one a lovely sense of satisfaction on the completion of reading them) is chapter 18, "Fishers of Men". When the reviewer had read this chapter his notes went as follows: "Superb treatment of symbols and figurative meanings as well as the scenery in the background, and catches all the drama of the incidents".

There were two other chapters which stood out as being really helpful expositions. Chapter 27, "The Light of the World", gives a grand sketch of the theme of light from Creation to the day of Christ, ending with the exhortation to us today to shine forth as lights in the dark world of sin in which we live. Chapter 37, "The Sign of the Prophet Jonah", was excellent, bringing out points the reviewer had not noticed before. Brother Mitchell writes: "It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that the sign of the resurrection of Jesus was limited to those rascally Jews who tried continually to entrap him. It became the great sign to all generations that Jesus Christ is the saviour and the judge of all the world. It is the God-given guarantee of the restoration of all things to the state of paradise before the fall, and more than that, of the exaltation of the faithful to immortality after the pattern of the resurrection of Jesus" (p. 190).

Sound exhortation from Scripture

In a work which is essentially a devotional one, however, we look for exhortation. The apostle says we should "exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2), and all true exhortation comes from example and sound teaching from the Scriptures. Our brother's book certainly provides the latter.

One of the earliest examples that struck the reviewer came in chapter 6, "The Hidden Years":

"... it seems likely that he [Joseph] lived long enough to teach Jesus his trade, and then he

died, leaving a widow and at least four sons and two daughters, besides Jesus. If this was so, then it would mean that Jesus became the principal breadwinner of the family, and in this way he would have full experience of the work and the responsibility that falls upon the head of the household. Thus, when in later years he denounced the Scribes and the Pharisees for their teaching that a man could dedicate money called 'Corban' to the Temple treasury rather than support his aged father or mother, he was speaking out of a clear conscience in his own case . . .

"... He did not say, 'I must be about my Father's business' to the end that he might rush off and leave Mary in her struggles. Not until his brothers and sisters were grown and able to look after her, did he leave home himself . . .

"... If what we have deduced is true, then Jesus was in business on his own account. Ah, harassed business and professional men, what lessons could this have for you! Human nature does not change. The people with whom Jesus had to deal were the same cross-section of the community whom we know today. There were the mean and the generous; the patient and the impatient; the good payers and the bad; those who always expected to be at the head of the queue because they were rich; and those who Christ knew from the beginning were too poor to pay and had to be forgiven their debts; and there were those, too, who always found fault when the bill was presented, who questioned the time and the cost. Our Master knew them all. And he, too, was in business to make it pay, for behind him stood Mary and the children with their daily needs" (pp. 32-4).

There are many powerful exhortations like this one, which comes out of an attempt to imagine the circumstances of our Lord and see how he would have coped. The chapter on the call of the twelve disciples, who became the twelve apostles, has some searching questions for us to confront, and likewise pages 94 and 95 of chapter 17, "The Woman of Samaria". Other notable chapters for the reviewer were chapter 21, "Four Faithful Friends", and the three chapters on the Beatitudes.

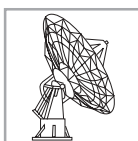
Conclusion

In conclusion, this book is a valuable addition to our appreciation of the life of our absent Lord. It

helps us to see him more vividly and to understand his life-saving words better. The reviewer found that reading perhaps up to three chapters a day (only one after a very hard day's work!) was about right, and best read at the end of the day. Those who are able to give the time may, of course, want to read more.

It is a very readable book, as stated earlier, and as has been demonstrated (we hope) by the

quotations in this article, and it has been nicely produced. It is unhesitatingly commended to all brothers and sisters and young people who wish to enter more fully into the mind of the altogether lovely one who is our saviour and our friend. If our Lord remains away, it will be good to have the second volume, which will deal with those momentous days leading to the crucifixion.



Science

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Science update

Recent news from the world of science

David Burges

The flight of butterflies

ONE OF THE most beautiful sights in nature is that of brightly coloured butterflies flitting among the flowers and settling to draw nectar. The writer well remembers viewing the spectacle of thousands of orange monarch butterflies arriving on the shore of Lake Ontario during their annual migration from Mexico.

It always seems incredible that these apparently fragile insects can fly with such power, some species over great distances. The fluttering of butterflies has the appearance of a random, erratic wandering, but research by scientists at Oxford University has established that their flight in fact results from the mastery of a wide array of aerodynamic mechanisms.¹ The researchers, who have spent twelve years studying insect aerodynamics, have designed a special wind tunnel in order to study butterfly flight. The wind tunnel used in the butterfly experiments took three years to construct and fine tune.

Red admirals (*Vanessa atalanta*) were trained to fly freely to and from artificial flowers in the tunnel. Wisps of smoke were blown over the insects' wings to see how they interacted with

the air, and the resulting visible turbulence was caught on an ultra-fast digital camera. The scientists identified six different ways the butterflies flapped and rotated their wings to stay airborne. They observed that the insects moved effortlessly through the different mechanisms "much like a horse might switch between walking, trotting and galloping depending on what it wanted to do". The red admirals could at times fly very efficiently, producing very little turbulence, whilst on other occasions their wings deliberately created vortices to achieve extra lift.

Clearly butterflies leave the world's leading aircraft designers far behind in their mastery of aerodynamics. For instance, it is known that insect wings produce ten times the amount of lift achieved by aircraft wings (per unit of area)! Yet how did they acquire these remarkable capabilities, which are preprogrammed in their genes and essential to their survival, without the benefit of advanced instruction at one of the leading universities? Significantly, engineers are today seeking to mimic the flight of insects in order to

1. "Butterflies point to micro machines", BBC On-Line Network, Sci/Tech. section, 16 Dec. 2002, reporting work published in *Nature*.