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JUDAH.

Some little time after the preceding portion of this booklet was placed with the printers, the Rev. E. C. Howe, B.A., delivered a sermon on Sunday evening, March 6th 1949, in the Wretham Road New Church, Handsworth, Birmingham, 19, and he was good enough to allow me to read his notes afterwards. His novel method of dealing with the subject appeared commendably simple and so very interesting that his permission was asked, and granted, for the sermon to be printed to illustrate a portion of this work and to serve as a conclusion to it. The sermon deals with a small section only of the wonderful blessing of Judah by the patriarch Jacob, and is calculated to whet the appetite for more on the part of those readers who have found pleasure, profit, and enlightenment in this work. It is recommended to such readers that they should register their names and addresses with

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Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall
praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies;
thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son,
thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion,
and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

Genesis 49, 8, 9.

So long as our attention is not focussed upon
anything in particular our mental eyes wander in an
aimless way over the general scene of our thoughts.
If a number of people are waiting together for something
which they are expecting to happen, the mental scene may
be much the same with them all, but they will be
looking at different parts of it. That is what you
will be doing now. Two verses have just been read out
from the Word of God. They are from Genesis, and Judah
is their subject. Unless we happen to know them pretty
well, they might refer to Judah the man, one of the sons
of Jacob, or to the tribe of Judah, named after him, or
to the kingdom of Judah, established after Solomon's
death. We do not yet know what they mean. They are
poetic; they do not tell a story. Therefore our thoughts
about them are vague. It is as though we are looking at
the scene from a long way off, and the details are
indistinct.

Let us then focus our attention, as a desert hawk
might do, on a number of black dots in the distant scene,
and when we have them directly in the line of vision, travel
towards them, as the hawk, would ~~be~~ or as the eye of the

film camera very often does as it brings our attention to one character in the story. Very swiftly the black dots on the broken pattern of the ground resolve themselves into a number of people, ~~some~~^{and} animals, and a few tents. The largest dot becomes the largest tent. Children are running about near the other tents, but there are none near this one. The circle of our attention narrows very quickly to a flat space before the doorway of the tent. It is very quiet there in the sunshine. Just occasionally a fold of the tent ~~would~~ flaps as a slight puff of wind from the desert passes and dies out. Occasionally the lowing of cattle or the bleating of a sheep would be heard in the distance.

A slight movement takes our attention away from the open space to the door of the tent itself, by contrast a dark cavern of shade inside the wide square opening. There in absolute silence is ~~sitting~~ a circle of men, nearly all middle-aged. In the centre half-lying, half-sitting on a pile of skin rugs, is a very old man. If it were possible to see him very clearly, we might find that he had strong-looking, very forbidding features with grey hair and beard, and a dark complexion. Slowly he raises himself on the shapeless-looking couch, and begins to address one of the men in a flowing foreign tongue. The man acknowledges the mention of his name.

The patriarch Jacob has called his sons together at the end of his life to give them his blessing. At long intervals he faces three of the men in turn, and speaks a

few words to each. The second and third he sometimes seems to address together. We watch as he prepares to bless the fourth man. The blessing is a longer one. What we have of that blessing has come down to us in the words of the 49th Chapter of Genesis which have already been quoted.

Let us hold that scene very clearly in our imagination, giving it colour and sound as a great dramatist or actor-producer of the calibre of Laurence Olivier would be able to do, drawing upon our own knowledge to make it as vivid and real as we can. The more vivid the better it will serve our purpose, for we must now draw a contrast between that picture and the words of Genesis. The scene before us is built up from our imagination, but the words of Genesis are not a product of our own minds, to be changed at our will, a detail to be added here and another taken away as we think fit. They stand for all time. They are part of the Word of God. They should be printed very clearly over that imaginative picture. They should stand out in front of that scene, which should nevertheless remain distinct and vivid, and which may be changed to suit our purposes as a background to the unchanging truth of the Divine Word.

We know little about this man Judah, who now stands before Jacob to receive his blessing. He was

certainly a leader among his brothers, and quite often took the place which would naturally fall to his eldest brother Reuben. For example it was he who pleaded with Joseph in Egypt for the release of Benjamin. You may have noticed too that this blessing is full of praise, whereas the first three were highly critical. Indeed they were more like curses than blessings. Perhaps, then, the man who now stands before Jacob is better looking, stronger, with more character than the others, and his father, even in his infirmity, shows his approval by his words and by his attitude.

As we in imagination see him face to face with Jacob, we realise that ignorant, brutal and unscrupulous though he and his brothers are, as their father himself had been in his younger days, yet they are the actors who represent for us the reality of the words that are printed over the scene, irrespective of their character.

"Thou, Judah, art he whom thy brethren shall praise".

The very name "Judah" is a word meaning "praised".

Such a verdict would not be welcome to the brothers sitting at the tent door, but it tells us that Judah represents the very highest and best of all human states of mind, namely, love to the Lord Himself. It is one which is so rare today that it is hardly ever considered, but even though it is rare, it still remains the best and the highest.

c/ Love to the Lord is a state of character described in the Doctrines of the New Church as "celestial". As it is the best and the highest, it was said that all Judah's brothers should bow down to him. We do not know if the prophecy was fulfilled in their life-time, but long afterwards the tribe which bore ~~his~~ ^{Judah's} name became the most important of all the tribes of Israel. Perhaps it seems inevitable that all the brothers should bow down to Judah, as is plain from the character of the man as he receives the blessing from his father. It is equally inevitable in the inner sense of the narrative. The brothers, in this historical story with a heavenly meaning, personify all the truths of the Word, as did the Lord's disciples later on, and it is right and natural that all the truths that can be seen in the Word should submit themselves to the rule of the greatest of all loves, the love of God Himself.

The hand of Judah is to be in the neck of his enemies. As his father ^{is saying} ~~says~~ those words, we can in imagination see the look of satisfaction on the faces of all the brothers, for fierce primitive rivalry of clan against clan and tribe against tribe was the natural order of things in their life. A guarantee against enemies was the best sort of security to them. In the ^{spiritual} ~~inner~~ sense the words cannot speak of anything primitive or fierce, for such characteristics are foreign to it, but they certainly speak of the security possessed

against the strongest spiritual enemies, "the foes of a man's own household", if the love of the Lord is present in that man's life.

Perhaps Jacob pauses before he delivers the second part of the blessing, for it contains a different idea. Judah is like a lion cub, yet a cub with the strength of a full-grown lion, plus the experience of an old lion. Judah himself would appreciate that as the best kind of compliment; to have all the virtues of each age of the greatest of beasts. In accepting the compliment he accepts, as it were, the compliment in the inner sense paid to the celestial characteristic of love to the Lord. It has the power of the lion, yet it has with it an innocence, symbolised by the lion cub's playfulness. It has the vigour, and the courage to escape in its own strength from the hunting ground; it is able to free itself from all the dangers of evil passions and desires from hell. "From the prey, my son, thou art gone up". Like an old lion in the security of its lair in the mountains, it is couched down, at rest, and in safety. It is in safety because no one dares to disturb an old lion in his lair; so also in the spiritual world the celestial cannot be approached by the evil.

Thus the wording of the second verse of the blessing of Jacob on his son Judah, together with that of the first verse, now stands out clearly before us, printed over the picture of our imaginary scene.

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These colourful verses of the letter of the Divine Word possess a wonderful glory in the inner sense, and we have seen something of it as we have been thinking of Judah, the son of Jacob, representing the celestial state, the celestial church in a man's mind. But what does it all amount to in terms of daily life and experience? Not very much? It does not seem to be very practical, does it? Perhaps not, but a single example will prove that it is a matter of the greatest moment. A radio speaker was discussing recently the increase in crime among young people. He is a humane man, with wide sympathies. So far as I know, he knows nothing of the New Church, and would not understand the term celestial, but he let slip ^{a significant} ~~an~~ thought born of a long and varied experience of young people in trouble. He said something to the effect that so many people today do in fact consider whether their actions will do harm to others; but just because this is their only basis of judgment they are uncertain in their moral attitude towards the many border-line cases where actions may or may not do direct harm. No longer, he said, do many people refuse to do certain things simply because they are wrong. Young people are not taught to keep to their principles and to do good because it is right, but only because it may be good for another person. Morality has, therefore, become vague and uncertain.

The celestial in man's heart, the motive of love to the Lord, wants to do what is good and right, because

it is good and right and is seen to be so, and because it is the Lord's Will. To do good for others is a splendid ideal too; it is taught in one of the two great commandments, but in the second of those commandments, Judah, who represents the first of all commandments, "love to the Lord", is more powerful, more secure, more certain, like a lion, couched down and at rest. The sons of Jacob, for very good reasons, as we have seen, were all, without exception, to bow down to Judah.

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