

The DAWN

VOLUME NO. LXIII, NUMBER 11
(USPS 149-380), NOVEMBER 1995

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Second-class postage paid at Rutherford, NJ. Published monthly by The Dawn Bible Students Association, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. \$3.00 a year: Great Britain £2. Write to foreign addresses for other prices.

CANADA: P.O. Box 175, Elmwood Postal Outlet, Winnipeg, Man. R2L 1M0

BRITISH ISLES: Associated Bible Students, P.O. Box 136, Chesham, Bucks. HP5 3EB

AUSTRALIA: Berean Bible Institute, 1 Springfield Street, Briar Hill, Victoria 3088

FRANCE: Association des Etudiants de la Bible-Publications Aurore, B.P. 3066, 68062 Mulhouse CEDEX

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y
Padre Bruzzone 1166, Espeleta 1882, Buenos Aires, Argentina

SPAIN: El Alba, Via S. Leonardo

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THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS

A recent news article entitled, "Billions Suffering Needlessly," said:

"In spite of a few notable health gains, billions of people worldwide suffer needlessly from disease and preventable illnesses because of poverty and a lack of access to health services," the World Health Organization said today.

In its first annual survey of global health, the organization said that more than two billion people, about 40 percent of the world's population, suffered varying degrees of sickness at any one time. Much of this disease and illness, the report said, is preventable and tied to widening gaps in health, education and access to care between the rich and poor.

Officials said poverty was the greatest underlying cause of disease, suffering and death, with more than one-fifth of the world's 5.6 billion people living under conditions that provide little or no resources for preventing or treating their illnesses. More than half the world's people cannot get the most essential drugs and about a third of the world's children are undernourished, the organization said.

The report, released simultaneously in Geneva at the 48th World Health Assembly and at a briefing here, noted that life expectancy around the world had increased to 65 years from 61 years in the last 25 years. In other promising news, infant mortality has fallen by 25 percent in the last 15 years and polio

has been eradicated in the Western Hemisphere in the last three years. But such gains could easily be reversed, officials said.

"For many millions of people for whom survival is a daily battle, the prospect of a longer life may seem more like a punishment than a prize," Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, the W.H.O. Director General, said.

Dr. David Brandling-Bennett, deputy director of the Pan-American Health Organization, part of the world health agency, said in an interview that increased life expectancy through past health gains was now presenting new problems.

"The millions of lives that have been saved and the better chance of survival have led to an increase in the number of older persons throughout the world, many of whom develop heart disease, diabetes, cancer and other chronic diseases," he said. "Unfortunately, developing countries are poorly equipped to deal with these new diseases."

FROM THE TIME he was created and placed on this planet, Earth, man's abiding concern has been to stay alive as long as he could, and do so with as much comfort as conditions might permit. Indeed, it was the Creator's plan that man should live forever on this wonderful planet, which in course of time would be transformed into a veritable worldwide Garden of Eden, wherein man's every need would be bountifully supplied, and where he might dwell in peace and happiness with all his fellows.

Sickness, sorrow, sin, strife and death—these words would never have found their way into man's vocabulary, for the conditions they represent would have had no place in that lovely global paradise. All mankind would have enjoyed perfect health. There would have been no need for doctors, for hospitals, nor healing medicines; there would have been no heart-rending partings caused by death, no funeral processions, no cemeteries.—Gen. 2:8-17

How very sad that a single untoward act of disobedience should have changed all this, and brought such tragic

consequences upon the entire human race! Deprived of fellowship and communion with his Creator, and shorn of access to the fruit of the trees in the Garden, mental, moral, and physical deterioration gradually but inevitably changed man from the image of God in which he had been created, to a pitiful, dying creature. (Gen. 3:17, 22-29) And the intervening centuries have brought forth a race that, at best, has enjoyed a measure of health for a season; or, at worst, has been subjected to blindness, palsy, and heart disease; to malaria, tuberculosis, and cancer; but which, whether at best or at worst, has ended for all in the grave.

MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE INCREASES

To his credit, it must be said that man has used as best he can what remains of his God-given intellectual and moral qualities to relieve the physical sufferings of his fellows, to cure diseases, and to extend life. Medical colleges are presently producing outstanding physicians and surgeons. Finely equipped hospitals with the latest diagnostic and therapeutic devices and comforts dot the land. Modern medical practice has surely come a long way from Zipporah's use of a "sharp stone" (Ex. 4:25) to perform a circumcision on her son, or Job's employing a broken pot fragment to obtain relief from his boils! And imperfect though it still is, modern medicine has achieved some eminently creditable results.

One of the most beneficial accomplishments of present-day medicine has been the development of anesthesia, which mercifully renders the patient unconscious to pain so that delicate major operations may be performed. Prior to the use of anesthesia as we know it today, the consumption of quantities of alcohol or of addictive opiates provided some small amount of relief from the terrible pain of surgery. Even the drawing of decayed teeth was an agonizing experience, to be put off until absolutely unavoidable.

A system of anesthesia called acupuncture, which has been employed by the Chinese for some three thousand

years, has lately arrived in the United States. In preparing the patient for operation, the anesthetist inserts a varying number of needles in selected parts of the patient's body. To produce the desired anesthetic effect the operator then either twirls the needles rapidly between his fingers, or applies a slight electrical current to the needles.

VACCINES ARRIVE

It was not until 1798 that the first successful vaccine was developed, specifically for use in the fight against smallpox. Prior to that time there had been no effective weapon against this disease, and it periodically ran rampant in many parts of the world, reaping a horrible harvest of victims. Today, thanks to the vaccine, smallpox is rather effectively controlled. Since that time, numerous other vaccines have been produced which have significantly reduced the ravages incident to other serious ailments, such as polio, influenza, tuberculosis, typhoid, whooping cough, and rabies. But constant vigilance is required to keep diseases in check. At one time, polio and tuberculosis had been thought to have been virtually defeated; but overconfidence subsequently led to carelessness, and each of these diseases has lately served notice that, in fact, they are not entirely dead.

The influenza germ seems continually to be altering its composition, requiring the constant development of new vaccines to reestablish control. A widespread and fatal outbreak of cholera can occur at any time and has occurred, occasioned by the contamination of seafood by sewage. And in spite of intensive efforts to come to grips with that elusive scourge—cancer—little real progress has been made to date to banish it.

"THAT I MIGHT RECEIVE MY SIGHT"

In the field of surgery, some remarkable advances have been made to bring relief to man from the sufferings and ailments resulting from his fall. Perhaps one of the most burdensome disabilities for man to endure is blindness.

There are still many forms of blindness which even today cannot be helped by medicine or surgery; but for other forms, new techniques have had remarkable success, restoring sight to many who, not too many decades ago, would have gone to their graves in darkness.

Even a victim of damage to the cornea of the eye can today be the fortunate recipient of a healthy, donated natural cornea which may have been stored as long as a year in liquid nitrogen at a temperature of minus 190 degrees centigrade, awaiting transplant to a grateful new owner. To such as these, how sweet must be the sight of a loved one, the glory of the cloud-flecked sky, the flowers, the ability to read one's Bible!

Also, for a particular hearing defect, operating procedures have lately been devised by which it is possible to remove certain mechanical 'roadblocks' to the transmission of sound waves, providing the former sufferer with the joy of newly hearing the human voice, the song of the birds, the wind in the trees, the beating on the sands of the ocean's waves.

In recent years surgeons all over the world have successfully engaged in efforts to transplant vital human organs such as the lung, liver, kidney, and pancreas; and even the human heart. Cosmetic surgery has also come into its own. Professional people to whom appearance is important may have their faces reshaped, and noses or chins made more beautiful. Victims of automobile accidents, or mishaps at the workbench, may have features restored or reconstructed out of plastic. Then for those suffering from less serious disabilities and imperfections there are countless helps in the form of eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, and even hair transplants.

However, these are minor improvements. When it comes to serious diseases there is less optimism today. The matter is well stated when, concerning the newly published book entitled, "*Evolutionary Medicine: Rethinking the Origins*

of Disease," the book reviewer said: "Gone is the heady optimism of the 1960's and 70's, when public health communiques predicted triumphs over one disease after another. At that time, infection in general seemed to be in retreat; applying the familiar weapons of pesticides, antibiotics, and vaccines with overwhelming force promised victory over pathogens; and rapid advances in molecular biology were expected to unravel cancer in short order.

"But malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, and yellow fever came back. The emergence of Legionnaires' disease, toxic shock syndrome, Venezuelan hemorrhagic fever, new kinds of diarrhea, nastier forms of familiar bacterial infections, and AIDS, refuted the presumption that, in principle, infection had been licked. Increases in the incidence of breast cancer, asthma, and autoimmune diseases, showed the problem was not limited to infectious diseases."

The conclusions reached by this book reviewer were echoed recently in a *New York Times* article on "*Malaria's Genetic Game of Cloak and Dagger*." We quote: "The most frightening things in life are not the unknown, but the familiar demons that refuse to leave. Among the greatest forces shaping the course of human history, sometimes scooping entire populations off the map, is infectious disease; after a brief, charming fantasy that the age of infectious diseases was behind us, the entire medieval bestiary of scourges has returned with teeth bared and claws extended: tuberculosis, cholera, typhus, virulent pneumonia and that festering tropical fever with the singsong, Latinate name, malaria.

"Not long ago, there was heady talk of eradicating malaria through a one-two punch of DDT, to control the mosquitoes that transmit the disease; and of the drug chloroquine, to treat patients already infected with the malarial parasite. Now mosquitoes throughout the tropics are immune to most insecticides, while chloroquine-resistant strains of the most lethal malaria parasite, *Plasmodium falciparum*, are sweeping across sub-Saharan Africa and

parts of Asia and Latin America. Each year, nearly half a billion people develop malaria, and one million to two million die of the disease, most of them young children."

The article then tells how recent studies have revealed that the parasite causes malaria to switch proteins and fools the immune system of the human body. Many research laboratories are working on this problem. In spite of their hard work and efforts, the strains of this deadly disease continue to outrace the body's immune system's battle against it and science.

Truly, the increase of knowledge that has come about in the latter days, and which has catapulted the industrial nations of the world into unprecedented growth and affluence, has also manifested itself in the medical world. But, in spite of everything the medical profession can do to alleviate the distresses and pains of a suffering world, it amounts, in the end, to but a temporary relief; for, ultimately and inevitably, all mankind go down to their graves. The funeral processions never cease, the cemeteries require ever more ground.

"NO BALM IN GILEAD?"

Is this the most that a suffering world may hope for? Can man expect but a few short years of intermittent joy and sorrow, and then death? "Is there no balm in Gilead?" (Jer. 8:22) Joyously, the Bible proclaims that indeed there is! Whereas man brought suffering and death upon himself by disobedience, yet the loving Creator has not abandoned his original purpose that man should live happily and everlastingly upon this earth.

And that is the glorious theme and blessed promise of God's Word from beginning to end. It is referred to in the Bible by the Apostle Peter as "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:21) This wonderful prospect is opened to view by reason of the offering for sin which was made by Jesus on behalf of all mankind. "For

since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."—I Cor. 15:21,22

At his First Advent, Jesus wrought many miracles on behalf of the afflicted among whom he found himself. On one occasion, a blind beggar sitting by the side of the road learned that Jesus was about to pass by. He had no doubt heard of this one who had healed so many sufferers—but perhaps had entertained no hope of ever coming into contact with him—and we can easily imagine with what excitement he tried to attract Jesus' attention, calling out to him.

Jesus approached him, and asked, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" The blind man said, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." How Jesus' heart must have been touched by the blind man's plight! And Jesus said unto him, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus.—Mark 10:46-52

On another occasion Jesus was told of the illness of the servant of a centurion who sought Jesus' aid on behalf of his ailing servant. As Jesus was approaching the home of the centurion, the man sought to restrain him, saying he was unworthy to have Jesus enter his home. 'Merely say the word', said the centurion, 'and my servant shall be healed!' "For I also am a man set under authority, . . . and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; . . . and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth." Jesus marveled at the man's humility and his faith. Jesus said unto the people, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." And when they returned to the house, they found him whole, that had been sick.—Luke 7:1-10

"WHERE ARE THE NINE?"

Then there was the time our Lord found the impotent man lying near the pool called Bethesda, whose waters were supposed to have healing powers. In answer to Jesus' in-

quiry, the man explained that he had no friend to place him in the pool, for others stepped in before he could be placed in the waters. Pitying the man, Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." And we read that, "Immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked; and on the same day was the Sabbath."—John 5:1-9

He cured the man with palsy; he restored to life the son of the widow of Nain, he raised his very dear friend Lazarus from the dead. And he cured ten lepers, of whom but one returned to offer him thanks. "Where are the nine?" (Luke 17:17) Jesus asked; and surely there must have been a touch of sadness in his voice.

This loving, compassionate man had come from the heavenly realms and the fellowship of his Heavenly Father in order to redeem mankind from sin and death. And how the sorrow and suffering of those about him must have appalled and saddened him! How he must have yearned for the time when his sacrificial work here on earth would be finished, and for the day when the fruits of that work would bring the blessings of life and health to the people!

"THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL ARISE . . ."

All those whom Jesus healed, and those whom he restored to life, eventually found their way to the grave. Jesus knew this would happen. In performing those miraculous cures and restorations to life, Jesus was merely presenting to his followers and to the world some simple but forceful foreviews of those greater and everlasting miracles of restitution that would be performed in the kingdom. And to his disciples, who had witnessed many of these works, he said, "Greater works than these shall [ye] do; because I go unto my Father." (John 14:12) Jesus' faith in that glorious outcome was firmly rooted in the promises of God.

And how glorious are those promises, which God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets! "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," God had said to

Abraham. (Gen. 22:18) Jesus knew he was that 'seed' of promise; and the Apostle Paul confirms it, adding that wonderful statement that all who are Christ's are counted in as part of that seed of blessing! (Gal. 3:16,29) "Greater works" (John 14:12) than those which were done by Jesus shall be the privileged lot of all who are faithful to death. 'Greater' works because they shall include *all* who have gone down into death, and shall be brought forth from the grave to be given an opportunity for everlasting, perfect life.

The Prophet Daniel foretold that the dead would be raised, after Michael should stand up. He wrote, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." Jesus knew that he was the Michael here spoken of, and in quoting from this prophecy of Daniel he made it clear that "all that are in the graves" would hear his voice, and come forth. ---Dan. 12:1,2; John 5:28,29

The Prophet Isaiah described the Edenic beauties and abundance that shall exist during the kingdom reign of Christ and the church, when the work of restitution is undertaken. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God. . . . Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. . . . And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. . . . And the ransomed of the LORD shall return [from their graves], and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." ---Isa. 35:1,2,5,6,8,10

"WITH HEALING IN HIS WINGS"

The raising of the dead foretold by the Prophet Daniel will not be for but a few short years as it was with Lazarus; nor will the healing of the blind, the deaf, and the lame which Isaiah so beautifully describes be but a temporary blessing. All who hear and heed the voice of "that Prophet" in the kingdom will be restored to healthy, happy, everlasting life. For in that day "shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." (Mal. 4:2) In that glorious thousand-year day the work of restitution shall go forward, healing all who will, even as when Jesus healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath back there in Israel.

And not only will the people be given whole bodies in the kingdom, but more importantly, and necessarily, will their hearts be healed; for everlasting life will be gained only by those whose hearts are brought into full harmony with the righteous laws of the kingdom; only by those who love the LORD and their fellows. The LORD said he would "make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah"---which covenant shall be shared in by the whole world--- when he would put his law "in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer. 31:31-33) In that happy kingdom "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."---Isa. 33:24

These are the precious blessings that, so long ago, were promised should come through the 'seed' of blessing, of which 'seed' the faithful overcoming followers of Jesus, the bride of Christ, are a part.

"THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS"

The revelator tells us that the Heavenly Father himself will be an interested and loving observer of the kingdom work. "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the

Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” (Rev. 22:1,2) The blessings of life which were lost by Adam when he disobeyed, and the tree of life which was withdrawn from his reach, will be graciously restored for the benefit of the entire resurrected race.

Yes, the people of all nations of earth will be truly and everlastingly healed! And when “the Spirit and the bride say, Come. . . . And let him that is athirst come,” (Rev. 22:17) how joyously will the nine lepers, along with the whole world of mankind, then raise their voices in rapturous praise and thanksgiving to the Heavenly Father, and to their Lord Jesus! With what gladness will the blind man pass among the people, telling all that Jesus had restored his sight! And can we not see the centurion going about proclaiming Jesus’ wonderful power to heal! Then will the whole world unite in singing that song of grateful praise that was composed so long ago by the Psalmist David:

“Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” ~~~Ps. 103:1-5 ■

“Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people”:

“The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.” ~~~Isaiah 34:1; 33:24

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 5

A GOSPEL FOR EVERYONE

KEY VERSE: *"On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."—Acts 14:27, New International Version*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Acts 13:1-5; 14:1-7,24-27

THE NEW CHURCH at Antioch selected elders to teach them, using guidelines described later by the Apostle Paul in Titus 1:5-9 and I Timothy 3:1-7. There were five who taught the church, all having diverse backgrounds and coming from other lands to Antioch. Barnabas and Saul were among them.

The Antioch church was composed of both Jews and Gentiles. As a church, they were eager to find more of the LORD's people in other lands. Being moved by the Holy Spirit to this activity, they selected Saul (or Paul) and Barnabas to perform it.

Their strategy was to go to the homeland of Barnabas first, and then to continue toward the home territory of Paul. Their plan made sense, since both brethren were familiar with their respective home territories. Another part of their course of action was to go first to the synagogues (Acts 13:5), for the Jews were familiar with God's Word, and the Gentiles were not.

The Adversary tried to hinder the work by using Elymas, a sorcerer, but Paul withstood him, and blinded him, which made a lasting impression upon Sergius Paulus—the proconsul of the area—and he believed, being astonished at the

teaching of God's Word. ~~~
Acts 13:6-12

Paul and Barnabas left Cyprus to sail toward Pamphylia, and went their way toward another city named Antioch, in the province of Pisidia, part of Galatia. As was their custom, they went to the synagogue on the Sabbath, and were asked to speak by the rulers of the synagogue.

This gave Paul the opportunity he sought, and he delivered a powerful historical oration concerning God's dealings with the nation of Israel, and leading up to Jesus. Many Jews and proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas. When the next Sabbath arrived, almost the whole city came out to hear Paul. But, out of envy, the Jews opposed him, and eventually drove them out of the area.

They next went to Iconium, where again they first went to the synagogue, and where their message was accepted by both Jews and Greeks. But the unbelieving Jews enlisted the aid of Gentiles to oppose them, and plotted to mistreat and

stone them. They fled to Lycaonia, and the cities of Lystra and Derbe. "There they preached the Gospel." ~~~Acts 14:7

Eventually, in Lystra, Paul was stoned and left for dead, but miraculously survived. He was taken to Derbe where he recovered from his wounds.

Being concerned about the new brethren they had found, they decided to return using the same route by which they had come, stopping in every city to organize and strengthen the brethren. We read, "When they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the LORD, on whom they believed." (Acts 14:23) The word 'ordained' is a translation of a Greek word, which means 'to elect by stretching forth the hand'.

When they returned home to Antioch, they "reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." ~~~Acts 14:27, NIV ■

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 12

GRACE ON TRIAL

KEY VERSE: *"We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."*—Acts 15:11

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Acts 15:1,2,6-18

AS MORE GENTILES started to come into the church, some who were of Israel believed that the Gentiles should observe the Mosaic Law. After Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from their first missionary journey, the church at Antioch was visited by brethren from Judea. These were teaching, "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved."—Acts 15:1, *New International Version*

Paul and Barnabas not only disagreed with this thought, but disputed with the visiting teachers. The church at Antioch decided that the best way to settle the dispute would be to hold a conference in Jerusalem

with the apostles and elders regarding the matter.

Paul and Barnabas were selected to be part of the delegation sent to Jerusalem for this conference. They were welcomed warmly in Jerusalem, and reported on their trip, telling how Gentiles had been converted. However, some members of the church, who had formerly been Pharisees, said concerning the Gentiles, that "it is necessary to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the Law of Moses."—Acts 15:5, RSV

The formal conference about this matter took place later. As anticipated there was much discussion and many debates on the subject. Finally Peter stood up to address the conference.

He said, "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the Gospel and believe." (Acts 15:7, NIV) Peter alluded to God's instructions to him, and the events that followed his visit to Cornelius, his family and his friends, who became the first Gentile converts. Finally he said they should not put a yoke on these disciples, for "we believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." ~vs. 11

There was then an opportunity for Paul and Barnabas to tell about the miraculous signs and wonders God was performing through them among the Gentiles. When they finished, the Apostle James, who was serving as chairman for the conference, spoke, saying: "Simeon [Peter] has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." (Acts 15:14, RSV) He also quoted from an Old Testament prophecy (Amos 9:11,12) to show

that God had planned to include the Gentiles in his call.

He followed this observation with the suggestion that the Gentiles be asked to observe four items from the Law, and no others. This was agreeable to the apostles, the elders, and the whole church, and they sent two of their members ~ Judas and Silas ~ back with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. They carried with them a letter addressed specifically to the Gentiles in the churches of Antioch, Syria and Cilicia, apologizing for those who had come earlier and troubled them. ~ Acts 15:28,29

It would seem that the matter was settled. But like many other doctrinal disputes that arose later in the church, this one would not 'go away'. The Apostle Paul wrote on a number of occasions to prove to the brethren that no one could be justified or gain eternal life by keeping the Law. (Gal. 3:11) He emphasized that Jesus 'nailed' the Law to his cross. ~ Eph. 2:5 ■

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 19

HELP WANTED

KEY VERSE: "After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the Gospel to them."—Acts 16:10, *New International Version*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Acts 16:9,10,13-15,25-34

AFTER THE CONFERENCE in Jerusalem, Paul suggested to Barnabas that they visit the brethren they had found on their first journey, and deliver the letter sent from the apostles and elders in Jerusalem concerning the obligations Gentile converts had concerning the Mosaic Law. Barnabas thought well of the suggestion, and wanted to take John Mark with them. Paul did not think it was good to do so, and the contention between them became so strong that they decided to separate. Surely this was directed by God so more territory would be covered in the work.

After visiting all the churches in Syria and Cilicia, Paul and Silas arrived

at Derbe, then Lystra—the furthest point reached on their first journey. They visited the family of Timothy again, and found that he had grown to manhood, and was active in serving the brethren. So they invited him to join them on their journey.

Having delivered the letters from the apostles in Jerusalem to the Christian churches in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia—all cities in Galatia—they wanted to visit new territories in Asia and Bithynia. But, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they were forbidden to go there. At that time they did not know there was an urgent need for them to go

into still more far distant lands. But this was made clear when Paul reached the port city of Troas, and saw in a vision a man of Macedonia, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us. After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the Gospel to them." (Acts 16:10, NIV) We note that Luke, who was the author of the Book of Acts, switched at this point from using the third person (they) in describing events, to the first person (we), indicating that he had joined Paul's party, to travel with them.

They sailed from Troas to Macedonia, and went to Philippi—a principal city of Macedonia. There was no synagogue in Philippi, but the Jews of that city congregated by the river—a natural amphitheater—to worship. On the Sabbath, Paul and his companions also went there, and spoke to the women, among whom was Lydia, "whose heart the LORD opened, that she attended unto the things

which were spoken of Paul." (Acts 16:14) After she and her household were baptized into the body of Christ, she insisted that Paul and his group stay at her home.

As Paul and Silas continued their ministry, an incident involving a slave girl brought them before the magistrate, with accusations of disturbing the city. The judge had them beaten with rods, and cast them into prison. In prison Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns. Although they were injured and secured in stocks, they spoke with the other prisoners. Suddenly a violent earthquake caused the doors of the prison to open, and their chains to come loose. When the jailer awoke, he saw the open doors, and expected that all those in his charge would have escaped. He was ready to commit suicide, when Paul called to him to tell him that none had run away. Because of this miracle, the jailer and his household became believers, after Paul explained God's wonderful plan to them. ■

THE GOSPEL'S POWER TO OVERCOME

KEY VERSE: *"So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed."*—Acts 19:20

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Acts 19:1-6, 11-20

PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY came to a conclusion when he went to Jerusalem to keep a vow he had made. See Acts 18:18. Leaving Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla sailed with him as far as Ephesus, their new home. Paul visited the synagogue there, to reason on the Scriptures. The Jews wanted him to stay, but he continued on his journey because of his vow.

He discharged his obligations to the church at Jerusalem, and went to his home congregation in Antioch. There he stayed awhile—perhaps several months. (Acts 18:19-23) Both Silas and Timothy remained in Corinth to help build up the faith of the church there. Luke remained in Philippi.

Then Paul began his third journey. He took the same route as he had for his second journey, and visited brethren in Galatia and Phrygia, as well as those in some new territory he had not visited before. Finally he arrived at Ephesus where he met twelve disciples, who, though they had knowledge of Jesus, had not yet received the Holy Spirit. Upon further questioning, Paul discovered that they had been baptized with John's baptism to repentance. Paul explained the purposes of both John's ministry, and of Jesus' ministry. And so they were baptized again—this time in the name of the Lord Jesus. They received the Holy

Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit as well.

While Paul had been away in Jerusalem and Antioch before beginning his third journey, Aquila and Priscilla continued to go to the synagogue in Ephesus, and encountered Apollos there. They "expounded to him the way of God more accurately." (Acts 18:26-29, RSV) Up to this time, no church had been established in Ephesus. Now Paul joined them, and for three months preached in the synagogue on the kingdom of God. When some opposed Paul, he withdrew from the synagogue, taking disciples with him.

Paul taught for two years and had much success among the Ephesians. It is recorded that "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." (Acts 19:10) Paul also performed many miracles of healing which attracted people to listen to his message.

Paul was assisted by an event that became widely publicized throughout the

city. It seems that seven sons of a Jewish priest were practicing exorcism. They had noted Paul's success in casting out evil spirits, and tried to copy him. But they were severely beaten by a man whom they tried to exorcize. This became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Gentiles.

Ephesus was a large and important city, known as the gateway to Asia. It was the site of the Temple of Diana, whose many worshipers made pilgrimages to the city. It was a stronghold of Satan, and large numbers of residents were possessed by evil spirits; black magic and curious arts were common practice.

But Paul's Gospel message overcame the power of Satan! Many under this influence became believers, who divulged and confessed their former corrupt practices. They publicly burned their books on evil arts. "In this way the Word of the LORD spread widely and grew in power" (Acts 19:20, NIV), and "the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified." ~vs. 17 ■

LET US GIVE THANKS

*"I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and will call upon the name of the LORD."*

---Psalm 116:17

THROUGHOUT THE UNITED States on the fourth Thursday of November, millions of people will, for a few hours, turn away from the regular pursuits of life and, in a nominal way at least, give thanks to God for the blessings of the year. Among these will be sincere worshipers of God, those who at heart are desirous of doing his will in all that they think, say, and do. With many, Thanksgiving Day will be one of feasting and merry-making, and happy indeed will be those who remember that all the blessings of life which they enjoy from day to day come to them from the Giver of every good and perfect gift, even the LORD, the Creator of heaven and earth.

It is appropriate at all times to give thanks to the LORD, and the consecrated followers of the Master do not wait for special occasions to express their appreciation to their Heavenly Father for the spiritual and material blessings which are daily their portion. The Apostle Paul wrote that we should give thanks in everything, and if we follow this admonition, to us every day will be one of thanksgiving; yes, in every hour of the day there will be much for which our hearts will turn to the LORD in grateful appreciation.

It is also appropriate that we observe special occasions of thanksgiving. At such times we can recall in a more particular sense the many ways in which the LORD has blessed us throughout the year. Recalling these blessings we will renew our determination to show our appreciation to the LORD by more zealously paying our vows of consecration to him, rendering to him with our lips and by our lives the praise that is due his great and holy name. Yes, we are glad for a special occasion to "give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever."—Ps. 106:1

CAUSES FOR THANKFULNESS

There is never a time in the Christian life when the blessings received from the LORD are not more abundant than we could reasonably ask or expect. If we are not in the habit of noting from day to day the many ways in which the LORD manifests his blessings toward us, we will be surprised when we do note them to realize what he is continually doing for us. We cannot count all our blessings. If we attempted to do this, we would find, even as did the Psalmist David, that the wonderful works of God, and his thoughts toward us, "are more than can be numbered."—Ps. 40:5

Many of the LORD's blessings are common to all his people, differing only in the manner in which they apply to their individual experiences in life. Along material lines there are the blessings of the sunshine and the rain, the blessings of food, shelter, and raiment. To all of his people God gives spiritual strength and guidance. He fills them with his Spirit in proportion as they are emptied of self and devote themselves to the doing of his will. How thankful, indeed, we should be for the assurance that he is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him, than is an earthly parent to give good gifts to his children.—Luke 11:13

We can all be thankful for the LORD's grace that through another year he has kept us from falling; that we are still rejoicing in the truth, and in the privilege we have of laying

down our lives in his service. This is a great cause for thankfulness! True, we expected that our Heavenly Father would continue to hold us in the hollow of his hand, for we relied upon his grace to help in every time of need. But we recall the Apostle Peter's admonition in which he informs us that it is only if we "do these things" (II Pet. 1:10) pertaining to the cultivation of the graces of the Holy Spirit, that we have the assurance we shall "never fall." If, therefore, we have been kept from falling by the wayside it means that God has been pleased with our efforts to do his will, and consequently has blessed us with his sustaining grace.

Some of us have been 'in the truth' for many, many years, and how thankful we can be that throughout these years the LORD has become ever more precious to us, and that his glorious truth of the divine plan has continued to increase in brilliance as we have learned to understand it more fully. That we have maintained a clear vision of the great fundamentals of the divine plan is evidence of our Father's keeping power in the lives of those who have no will of their own, but are determined that his will shall rule supreme in their lives, regardless of what this might entail in the way of sacrificing the flesh and its interests.

Others of us have been blessed with a knowledge of the truth within more recent years. Some, indeed, have been blessed with this glorious vision during the present year. How we rejoice in this! It is impossible adequately to give thanks to our Creator for thus opening the eyes of our understanding to behold his glory---that glory of his character which is revealed through the truth of his Word. We know that where once we were spiritually blind, now we can see---and how glorious the vision that enables us to comprehend the divine plan for the blessing of both the church and the world. May our appreciation daily increase, and our thankfulness overflow more and more!

THE FEAR-FILLED WORLD

Today the world is filled with fear. The people see the gathering clouds of discontent which threaten anarchy. They know the probability of the frightful destruction that will be wrought as opposing forces of conflicting ideologies seek to conquer one another, or at least subdue one another by the use of the heart-sickening and fiendish modern methods of destruction. Poor world! It knows not that our present Lord, at the exact moment called for in the divine timetable, will intervene and set in motion the agencies of his Mediatorial Kingdom to bring peace and joy and life to all mankind.

But we know this! The revelator depicts our position in this time of world fear and chaos as standing on "a sea of glass," the sea representing the restless, discontented world of mankind as it passes through the prophetic "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." (Rev. 4:6; 15:2; Dan. 12:1) To us, however, the situation is transparent, understandable. Truth's vision enables us to see through and beyond the restless 'sea', and to know that soon there will be a great calm, when, by the administrative powers of the Messianic Kingdom, the people will be guided into their desired haven of security and peace. To have this assurance is truly great cause for thankfulness.

During the year many of us have been richly blessed through the privilege of fellowship with one another in our local ecclesias and at our convention gatherings. How spiritually stimulating this has been! And if our fellowship has been truly of the Spirit, it has meant much more than merely rejoicing together in the LORD, for we have had his presence with us. Of those who speak often together concerning the divine plan, the Bible informs us that God hearkens, and that a "book of remembrance" is written. (Mal. 3:16,17) Yes, even where as few as two or three join in fellowship, the LORD is in their midst; and how we should

praise him for the blessing he bestows upon those who gather in his name.~Matt. 18:20

THANKFULNESS FOR SERVICE

Our Father has continued to give his people opportunities to serve him by serving one another, and by bearing witness to the truth. Surely we should always be thankful for our privileges of ambassadorship. Many of these opportunities have been ours as individuals. Individually we have been able to speak a word for the Master, and for the truth~perhaps to a neighbor, or a friend, a relative, or perhaps to some we have met in our association with our co-workers in one way or another. It has been possible to give a tract or a booklet here or there. Some have enjoyed the privilege of distributing literature from door-to-door, conveying the kingdom message to many.

Still others have been blessed in their experiences of calling on those who have written for literature in response to the radio or television witness, or responding to an advertisement in a magazine. How thankful these have been for such opportunities! In many cases, deep interest in the truth is found, and a genuine desire to know the way of the LORD more perfectly is satisfied. Those who have enjoyed these opportunities of service know that there is no time when the LORD seems so near to them, and when his truth is a greater inspirational power in their lives than when they are explaining it to others, especially to those who earnestly want to know, and give evidence that God has blessed them with "ears to hear" and understanding hearts.~Matt. 11:15

We should not forget that these opportunities in which the 'follow-up' workers are joyfully engaged have been made possible because all of us have sacrificed together to make the general witness work possible on radio~television~placing ads in magazines, distribution of tracts, and booklets~by securing in our small, neighborhood newspapers advertisements of the local radio station carrying

"*Frank and Ernest*" or *The Bible Answers* TV programs—by mailing out consolation cards to the bereaved—by holding public meetings in our local areas, by 'direct mail' advertising from lists of names obtained covering our city or town, and other sorts of witnessing activities. Still another method of bearing witness to the Gospel of the kingdom is by exhibiting truth literature at fairs, or sometimes there is occasion to do this at neighborhood malls. These are also efforts of the local ecclesias to a large extent.

One 'individual' or group method of witnessing which has opened up to us just within our lifetime is the use of E-mail to communicate to many people. Small advertisements, or entire books or booklets, including the volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, can be word-processed into the computer and made available to thousands who subscribe to E-mail. The recipients can either make printouts, or simply read the material from their computer screens.

In these several diverse ways we can all share the joy resulting from the knowledge that here and there throughout the world, the light of truth is shining into the hearts and lives of those to whom the LORD has given the ability to see. How much would we take for our knowledge of the truth? We know that it is priceless—that it means more to us than life itself! How thankful we should be, then, that our sacrifices are being used by God to witness this precious treasure to others. The blessings received by those utilizing these means of service have been many and rich, whether the efforts have been local or general. Here, also, is a great cause for thankfulness. It is our hope that these methods of service will expand through the coming years. Truly the LORD is good to his people in pointing out to them any additional means of making known the glad tidings!

We "stand all astonished with wonder" (Hymn #128, "*Hymns of Dawn*"), as we contemplate what the LORD is accomplishing by the sacrifices of his people—a people so small in number, and so unknown to the world. Yes, the evidence is irrefutable that God is with his truth-inspired,

consecrated people today, even as he was with his servants in ancient times.

We are awe-inspired when we read the experience of Moses at the burning bush. "A miracle!" we say, and truly it was! But was the setting on fire of a bush more of a miracle than the proclaiming of the message of the kingdom by methods which convey it into millions of homes every week? We think not! Even though modern methods of communication, such as radio, television, the printed page, the mails, and computer networking may have become commonplace and accepted as normal in this modern age, the fact that the LORD has, through the cooperative efforts of his consecrated people, made possible their use for disseminating the Gospel of the Kingdom, is in itself a miracle!

When the LORD spoke to Moses at the burning bush he was bidden to take off his shoes, with the explanation that the place where he was standing was holy ground. Should we not feel the same concerning the 'ground' on which we are standing today—the 'higher ground' of opportunity and honor to which the LORD has now led his people?

Realizing the sacredness of the position which is now ours of being the LORD's ambassadors, let us give attentive ears to his voice, and respond loyally as he makes clear the various ways in which he wants us to lay down our lives for him. Surely we can do no less at this Thanksgiving time of the year than to echo the sentiments of the psalmist when he wrote: "I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people."—Ps. 116:17,18 ■

PRAISE YE THE LORD: FOR IT IS GOOD TO SING
PRAISES UNTO OUR GOD; FOR IT IS PLEASANT;
AND PRAISE IS COMELY.

—PSALM 147:1

"KNOW YE NOT?"

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

—I Corinthians 9:24-27

OUTSTANDING REMARKS IN this passage of the apostle are: 'So run', and so 'obtain'. These are prefaced with the telling phrase so often used by Paul, 'Know ye not?' Here are a few instances, and all are very impressive:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" —Rom. 6:3

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" —Rom. 6:16

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" —I Cor. 3:16

"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" —I Cor. 5:6

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" —I Cor. 6:9

"Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"—II Cor. 13:5

And the Apostle James adds: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?"—James 4:4

Do you really not know that they which run in a race run all? Or, as *Ferrar Fenton* says: "The runners on the track all run, but one carries off the prize." Therefore, as the apostle emphasizes, so run that you may win. 'So' run, that is, with diligence, perseverance, constancy, and care, that you will gain the reward.

To do this implies concentration of purpose. Not one thing is ever achieved without a conviction of its being right, and a growing enthusiasm to accomplish it. The apostle assures us of this great principle when he says: "This one thing I do." (Phil. 3:13) And again, "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air."—I Cor. 9:26

When Paul journeyed from Ephesus to Jerusalem, he was assured by the Holy Spirit that bonds and afflictions awaited him, and he said: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."—Acts 20:24

Let us seek to follow the apostle as he followed Christ, and so run in the race of life and immortality, not uncertainly, thoughtlessly, but with a clear, definite objective in view, as did Paul. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."—Phil. 3:7

OLYMPIC GAMES

In the Olympic games to which Paul so often refers, there were prescribed regulations for each competitor to observe and obey in order to become eligible to race or to play in the games. These were:

- (1) Freemen only were eligible.
- (2) Ten months' training under a professional trainer or tutor were necessary.

(3) Particular attention to one's diet and special discipline to one's habits was required.

(4) Repeated and continual exercise and practice in the field of endeavor was mandatory.

1. Freeman: To be a freeman implies that all encumbrances and hindrances would need to be disposed of. Engagement in other contracts taking one's interest and time would prevent one from holding a position as a competitor for the prize. As children of Adam, and therefore as children of disobedience, and as men of the world fulfilling the desires of the flesh, none could hope to enter upon the race for life in Christ and for immortality and the divine nature, as promised.---I Pet. 1:4; II Pet. 1:4

One must first be delivered from Adam's condemnation and freed from the burden of sin in his heart. Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, demonstrated by a full consecration, are the steps necessary to attain this freedom. Being made free through Christ, we are eligible to enter the race for "the prize of the high calling of God" (Phil. 3:14); and then we should remember that "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life."---II Tim. 2:4

This being our happy heart experience, we can say with the apostle, and with all who accept this great honor, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (I John 3:21) After we learn the first principles of truth, we must go on to perfection---not, of course, forgetting them, but continuing to increase our faith, building upon the elementary principles in full appreciation of God's Word.

The giving up of oneself in consecration to do the LORD's commands is a glorious experience, and the outworking of Romans 12:2: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." A calling to seek for this

(Cont'd on page 36)

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KEST 1450 3:30 p.m.

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Pittsburgh WPLW 1590
8:00 a.m.
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(Cont'd from page 31) goal is the greatest privilege and the highest honor ever conferred upon anyone. It is the most noble effort toward which man can possibly strive. It is right here in our experience of Christian life that the race set before us actually starts. Those who have devoted themselves to run for this high goal could never make an offering great enough to deserve the reward; or as the poet has expressed it:

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
Shall have my soul, my life, my all.”

2. Training: The ten-months' training period compares well with our early experiences, just before we begin the Christian way, and prior to our making a definite consecration to the LORD. Consecration—coming to a decision to take up the cross, to deny ourselves, and to follow Jesus—marks the time of actually entering the race.

The Scriptures suggest that our trainer and tutor is Christ Jesus our Lord. In his experiences he became our Forerunner and Captain, and as we concentrate on the hope set before us, looking to that which is beyond the veil, “the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10), we shall be inspired by the instructions imparted to us through his Word. Jesus said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”—John 6:63

In Hebrews 12:2 we read: “Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” We can ‘see’ Jesus, crowned with glory and honor, by faith, and therefore we can follow his example. “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their

salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:10) "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Heb. 3:1) To follow the instruction of our Trainer, Jesus, we 'look' to him; we 'see' him; we 'consider' him. We are to be copies at heart of God's dear Son, and be conformed to his image.---Rom. 8:29

Just as a professional tutor in the Olympic races would furnish all competitors with a knowledge of the dangers and ensnarements during the actual race, so our 'tutor' in the Christian race encourages and exhorts us to perseverance and to endurance. He makes us aware of every pitfall before and during the running of the race.

There are sure to be pitfalls in the racecourse. Sometimes there may be disappointments at the position given to start off the race. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have." (Heb. 13:5) "Godliness with contentment is great gain." (I Tim. 6:6) Do not complain or compare yourself to others with greater advantages and less disability. Through "much tribulation [we] enter into the kingdom of God."---Acts 14:22

Some run because their friends do, rather than for personal eagerness to gain the prize. But we should run individually for the prize. Paul wrote, "Being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."---Phil. 3:10,11

There may be faintness and fatigue resulting from depending upon our own strength, our own self-effort. We should always remember that "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13) "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." (Isa. 40:29) Let us, then, lay "aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before

us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith."—Heb. 12:1,2

There is a tendency with some to be careless. "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 1:13) Others are self-reliant, proud of strength and form. These easily miss the way. They keep running, but never arrive. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."—James 4:6

Some runners are too self-centered and vain. They give too much attention to externals: how they shine; whether or not spectators are taking note of all their salient points. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but IF ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. 8:13) "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." (John 6:27) Jesus assured his disciples: "The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." (Luke 12:23) "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."—Gal. 5:1

All these blemishes are pitfalls in the way of those taking their place as runners in the race for the crown of life, and will be encountered as the race proceeds. As the tutors warn the Olympic contenders, so our Heavenly Tutor warns and admonishes us to watch out for these pitfalls. In the heavenly race, all these possibilities have to be accounted for, and even greater temptations than these can confront us.

The apostle brings to our attention the devices of our terrible Adversary. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood [merely], but against principalities, against powers, . . . spiritual wickedness in high places," and against "the rulers of the darkness of this world." For this reason, since these are more powerful than ourselves, we are exhorted to take every precaution in fortifying our hearts and minds with the

whole armor of truth provided for our security in Christ. (Eph. 6:11,12) "Beware," says the apostle, "lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." ~Col. 2:8

Since God's Word says that the human heart is deceitful and "desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9) we are not surprised that it often responds to the Adversary's enticements. Often Satan's method of operation is to use strategy, rather than open violence. Therefore we must be aware of his trickery and watch not to be deceived. We must strongly adhere to the principles of truth and love.

3. Temperance in Our Diets and Our Habits: "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." (I Cor. 9:25) We may be called upon during this race to sacrifice our prospects for human attainments to fulfill the will of God in our lives. We must readily and joyfully acquiesce when it becomes apparent to us what God desires of us. As we learn to rest in God's will rather than our own will we attain rest from difficult experiences, peaceful amid confusion, resigned to each experience, whether it be sweet or bitter. We become equipped even for greater trials of our faith. We learn to count it a joy when we "fall into divers temptations." (James 1:2) We well know that "God is able to make all grace abound" toward us, that we have "all sufficiency in all things," and that we can "abound to every good work." (II Cor. 9:8) By resting in the will of God we can continue on with a humble spirit, a stout heart full of confidence, with the assurance that we will so run that we will obtain the prize.

All who hold fast to the conviction of faith, strong and unwavering, embrace confidently the promises of God and become victors before God. Think of Moses who, by faith, when he came to years, "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction

with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." (Heb. 11:24-26) Abraham went out from his own country, "not knowing whither he went," and was among those who "died in faith, not having received the promises, but . . . were persuaded of them," and looked for a city prepared of God.---Heb. 11:8-16

As those who preceded us reached their goal by faith and endurance, so must we reach our goal. These things are recorded for our benefit, to supply us with food for thought and meditation, that we might take comfort in the Scriptures. (Rom. 15:4) Let us take a lesson from these noble ones of the past and note their severe discipline, the intensity of their struggles, and their reward in comparison with our own privilege of being called to a throne. (I Cor. 1:26) "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, . . . and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."---Heb. 12:1

Every man that strives is temperate, and neither agonizes nor indulges self in any way whatever, but 'bruises' the body, keeps it in subjection. (I Cor. 9:27) He fulfils not only some, but all conditions relating to the race. He does it for a corruptible crown, "But we an incorruptible." (I Cor. 9:25) If men show such extraordinary devotion to self-sacrifice for a perishable crown, what should be the devotion and sacrifice of those for whom an imperishable crown is certain! (II Tim. 4:8) What an encouragement to mount up in the spirit of Christ with "wings as eagles"; to run, and not be weary; to walk, and not to faint.---Isa. 40:31

4. Continual Practice and Exercise: In the Olympic races and games there is continual practice thirty days prior to the race. So we should give greater diligence. No day should be allowed to pass without meditation, prayer, ear-

nestness in righteousness, unity and love, and in fellowship and communion with God.

The 'race' involves contemplation and activity; devotion and service. The exhortation is not only to "so run." The apostle also says, "so fight I." The illustration changes from running to boxing. 'So contend I', Paul wrote. He had an adversary to strike, and did not do so wildly or impotently, thus merely beating the air. There is a definite aim, a decided purpose. We should not wear out our strength with vain flourishes, but with a telling aim. "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you."—James 4:7

Positive action against the Adversary and his attempts to beguile us will enable us to avoid becoming slaves to sin. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" (Rom. 6:16) If there is anything we delight to do, we shall be found at every opportunity doing that thing. Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:23) The great objective of this race is that we might dwell with God and with Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us make it our delight.

Soon the clock of the ages will have struck, and the last members of that glorious priesthood will have completed their course. Then shall be heard once more, "It is finished," as another major phase of God's plan reaches completion. Then shall we enter into joys abundant forevermore, and we shall be with the Lord to express perfect praise to him and to our Father. This will be our happy ending! ■

"THE Kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."
—Daniel 7:27

WHO SHALL STAND?

"Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness."

---Malachi 3:2,3

WHO SHALL WITHSTAND this experience, at the time of the Lord's appearing? At the First Advent, Jesus came to his own---the Jewish people---but as a nation they rejected and crucified him. There were only a few who stood the test. John the Baptist had said of him: "He will thoroughly purge [or cleanse] his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner." (Matt. 3:12) Here was a testing and cleansing work.

Further, throughout the Gospel Age our Lord has been making himself known to those in the right condition of heart, that he might cleanse, test, purify and assist them in walking in his steps, and in being conformed to his image. And now, in the days in which we live, during our dear Lord's Second Presence, there are very definite testings. He is proving his people, individually. Each member of the true church is being tested, refined, and purified; who shall stand these experiences?

Here is clear evidence that before long the church will be completed and glorified with her Lord beyond the veil,

through which spiritual, heavenly structure, God's glorious kingdom in the earth will be fully established.

A DAY OF PREPARATION

We are today living in one of the greatest dispensational changes in the world's history, and a pressing question for us is, "Who may abide the day of his coming?" In Revelation 6:17, John asks this question, "Who shall be able to stand?" but here the context makes reference to the world in general, and to the climax of trouble toward which it is now rapidly approaching—the great collapse of present arrangements in the earth.

Our Lord, the apostles, and prophets also prophesied of this period, in which the old order is to pass away, and the glorious kingdom of God is to be ushered in, which kingdom will stand forever. We rejoice in the knowledge that we are living in the Lord's Second Presence, and in this connection the prophet Nahum (2:3) speaks of "the day of his preparation."

We see around us today "distress of nations, with perplexity [with no way out]." (Luke 21:25) Selfishness, hatred, pride, and the spirit of aggression have led to the mustering of vast armies, and the creation of cruel and powerful tyrannies. Sin, corruption, and injustice surely bring their legitimate awful consequences.

However, the human race will not be permitted to destroy itself. The Scriptures reveal that human selfishness would ultimately lead to this, if not restrained by divine intervention; and Jesus speaking of the climax of the period of distress toward which the world is now moving, said: "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." (Matt. 24:22) But to this he added that the days of trouble "shall be shortened." This will mean the rescuing of the human race from the result of its own madness.

All national and international problems will be solved by Christ's kingdom. We are promised over and over that

it will also entirely eliminate from the earth all sickness, sorrow, pain, and death.

Meanwhile, we are living in the "time of trouble" (Dan. 12:1) which is developing and coming upon the world as a thief, and as a snare. "Take heed to yourselves lest your hearts are overpowered by dissipation and drunkenness and worldly anxieties, and so that day catches you suddenly like a trap. For as a snare shall it come upon all dwellers on the face of all the earth. From hour to hour keep awake, praying that you may *succeed* in escaping all these things that shall come to pass, and in standing before the Son of Man."---Luke 21:34-36, *Moffatt Translation*

If we are to 'succeed' we must continue to be prayerful and watchful; meditating upon our Father's Word and will. Also, we must be on guard, so that this great worldwide trouble---which has not come upon the true church un-awares---does not so completely fill our mental horizon as to hide from us another kind of experience, which is especially for the church, and which must reach us, also test and prove us, individually.

ON TRIAL

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." (I Pet. 4:12) "Though now, for a little while [since it is necessary] you are distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being much more precious than that gold which perishes, though proved by fire, may be found to praise and glory and honor, at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 1:6,7, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) And who shall stand these experiences?

Our faith, indeed our whole being as individuals, is on trial. And we are exhorted: "Be thou faithful unto death." (Rev. 2:10) Faithfulness of the members of the church unto death means joint-heirship with Christ in glory and the privilege to bless all families of the earth. This is the greatest and grandest theme in life, and the grandest position we

could take in all the universe. It is well worth striving to attain, and to seek to be prepared for.

The LORD asks for faithful loyalty and character-likeness to himself. He desires to purge out of us everything in the nature of dross, including self-will and all the works of the flesh. As a refiner he wishes to purify us.

As we picture a refiner in olden times, we see him seated at his crucible of valuable ore positioned over an intensely hot fire. By means of bellows or blowpipe, the furnace was made sufficiently fierce to reduce the metal to a fluid state. The refiner, adding certain fluxing agents, and giving every attention to his work, watches the process very closely. It is his business to see to the separation and removal of the dross from the pure precious metal. 'For he is like a refiner's fire', and he wishes to refine, cleanse, and purify us individually.

And he is 'like fullers' soap'. There is in Mark 9:3 an indication respecting the trade of the fuller. Concerning the shining brightness and whiteness of our Lord's raiment on the Mount of Transfiguration, this verse reads: "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them." The work of the fuller, as he used a soap which had strong cleansing properties, consisted chiefly in cleaning garments and whitening cloth. 'For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap.'

In all this the LORD is able to read our heart; no human being is able to do this. He can discern our thoughts and intentions, also the extent of our faith and love. We may be able to deceive those very near and dear to us on the human plane, but we cannot deceive the LORD. And it is his will that we be cleansed, purified, refined. There are experiences which are especially needful for the church, and we are to be purged of pride, selfishness, bitterness, impatience, and all the works and deeds of the flesh.