

EARTH TALKING  
LAW OF GOD

*Sample Copy*

P. 24 *The*

# DAWN

CHRISTIAN GROWTH and OVERCOMING  
COMING BACK FROM HELL SOON  
THE CALL OF BETHLEHEM

DECEMBER

1935

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C O N T E N T S

The Religious Outlook .....	3
Universalism versus The Divine Plan ...	5
Coming Back from Hell Soon .....	8
Christian Growth and Overcoming .....	11
The Call of Bethlehem .....	16
The Day of Vengeance .....	18
Uncle Eb's Story: "The Coming of Jesus" ..	20
International Sunday School Lessons ....	24
Talking Things Over	
Good-Bye, Brother Hoever	
"Heart Appeals" Not a Safe Guide ....	28
"Good Hopes" Report .....	31

CONVENTIONS

**Saginaw, Michigan, December 1st.** This gathering will be held in the Women's Club Auditorium, 311 North Jefferson Street. For further information, address the secretary, Mr. C. A. Sundbom, 3418 Sheridan Road, R. 4, Saginaw, Michigan. It is expected that Brother C. E. Schiller of Chicago will address this convention as the visiting speaker.

**Portland, Oregon, December 28 and 29.** This gathering will be held in the W. O. W. Hall, 528 S. W. Eleventh Avenue—the regular meeting place of the class. For further information, address the secretary, Mr. E. E. Morehead, 4326 S. E. 73rd Avenue, Portland, Oregon.

**Dayton, Ohio, January 5.** This is the regular district convention, in which the friends of Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton, O., and Richmond, Ind. cooperate. The services will all be held in the Industries Building, Third and Ludlow Streets—opening session at 9:45 A. M. For further details, address the secretary, Mrs. R. R. Hollister, 1013 Superior Avenue, Dayton, Ohio.

**St. Petersburg, Florida.** We have been requested to announce for the information of any readers of *The Dawn* who expect to be in St. Petersburg this winter, that meetings are held at 1096 Sixteenth Avenue North, Sundays at 3 P. M. and Wednesdays at 7:30 P. M.

HOLIDAY GIFTS, CARDS, ETC.

There is no better gift to your friends than to put the truth message in some form in their hands. The cloth bound "*God and Reason*" book is excellent for this purpose—50 cents post paid to any address. A new edition of the paper bound "*God and Reason*" book is now ready—20 cents the single copy, 7 copies for \$1. "*Evolutionists at the Crossroads*"—25 cents the single copy, 6 copies for \$1.00. "*The Plan of God in Brief*"—15 cents the single copy.

2 Cards for 5c., Postpaid

The following cards picture landscapes, with flowers alone, with the following verses:

John 10:27; 1 John 1:7; Psalm 46:1; John 14:6;  
 Rom. 10:9; Prov. 3:6; Acts 4:12; Prov. 17:17;  
 Psalm 103:2; Matt. 7:7; Deut. 33:27; Psalm  
 121:2; Matt. 24:44.

The following cards are beautifully colored, depicting various scenes of our Lord's life and ministry:

Christ blessing little children  
 On the way to Emmaus  
 Christ Stilling the tempest  
 Peter walking on the sea to Jesus  
 The Good Shepherd  
 Jesus, Mary and Martha  
 Christ knocking at the door

3 Cards for 10c., Postpaid

We have a very extensive line of beautiful cards from England. No doubt these cards are very familiar to the friends in this country, but if not, there is a treat in store.

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

BROTHER C. P. BRIDGES	Dec. 8	BROTHER GEORGE KENDALL	Dec 1	Rockford, Ill.	13
Boston, Mass.		Pittsburgh, Pa.,		Aurora, Ill.	14, 15
BROTHER JOHN E. DAWSON	Dec. 22	BROTHER J. G. KUEHN	Dec. 22	Chicago, Ill.	15
New Bedford, Mass.		Springfield, Mass.		Grand Rapids, Mich.	16
BROTHER A. C. FREY	Dec. 7	BROTHER WM. MacALISTER	Dec. 1	Jackson, Mich.	17
Chester, Pa.,		Duquesne, Pa.		Ypsilanti, Mich.	18
Wilmington, Del.	8	BROTHER EDW. MAURER	Dec. 8	Detroit, Mich.	19
BROTHER W. F. HUDGINGS	Dec, 1	East Liverpool, Ohio		Flint, Mich.	20
Jamaica, L. I., N. Y.		BROTHER C. W. McCOY	Dec. 8	Saginaw, Mich.	22
Passaic, N. J.	15	Cheney, Wash.		Port Huron, Mich.	23
BROTHER J. T. JOHNSON	Dec. 15	BROTHER A. L. MUIR	Dec. 1	BROTHER C. E. SCHILLER	Dec. 1
Beaver, Pa.		Oklahoma City, Okla.		Saginaw, Mich.	
East Liverpool, Pa.	22	Lincoln, Nebr.	3	BROTHER J. I. VAN HORN	Dec. 15
BROTHER J. C. JORDAN	Dec. 8	Hastings, Nebr.	4	BROTHER W. N. WOODWORTH	Dec 8
Duquesne, Pa.		Minneapolis, Minn.	7, 8		
		Wausau, Wisc.	9		



Vol. 4, No. 3

DECEMBER, 1935

One Dollar a Year

## News *and* Views

### **The Religious Outlook**



THE following interesting statement is taken from the Adventist magazine, "*Signs of the Times*": "For the first time in history, the rulers of one whole nation of over 100,000,000 souls have set themselves to stamp out the knowledge of God from its midst. Nothing less than the complete abolition of religion is the program of the Russian Government, and every agency that contributes to this end is officially encouraged. 'Societies for the godless' abound, while atheism is definitely taught in the schools."

The same magazine also quotes Yaroslavsky, the reputed leader of the forces of irreligion in Russia, as saying, according to statements published by Modern Books, Ltd.:

"The Five-Year Plan which marks our economic construction, is riveted to another and concurrent Five-Year Plan designed to tear up the roots of religion. The vast army of exploiters and priests of all the religious creeds all over the world realize that the day when the earth will tremble beneath their feet is drawing near. That is why the rise of the mass-atheist movement imposes upon the Communist parties the task of increasing anti-religious struggle.

"During the first year all religious schools are to be closed, and preliminary measures taken for the closing of churches in the capital. During the second year, all religious-minded persons are to be expelled from state undertakings and offices. All religious literature will be prohibited, and there will be made one hundred and fifty anti-religious films, to be shown throughout the Soviet Union, principally in the schools. The third year will be devoted to the 'activation of the godless cells,' and it is proposed to expel from the Soviet Union all clergymen, of whatever religion, who refuse to abandon their clerical orders.

"In the fourth year all churches, chapels and synagogues are to be surrendered to the local soviet, in order that they may be used for cinemas, clubs, and other places of 'intelligent pastime.' The last year is to be devoted to strengthening the gains along the front of the fight against religion; and it is intended by May 1st, 1937, not to leave a single house of worship in the territory of the U. S. S. R., and to extinguish in the minds of the people the very notion of God."

If the program set forth in the foregoing paragraphs, as outlined by Yaroslavsky, goes fully into effect, it will certainly signify the "darkening of the sun" in Russia. All persons familiar with the Scriptures will remember the words of Jesus, that in the "last days" the sun (the gospel light) would be darkened; that the moon (the Jewish Law) would be turned into blood—that is, be regarded merely as a thing of bloody sacrifices; and that the stars (apostolic luminaries, or bright ones) would fall from heaven. In the Bible the gospel is called the sun. (Rev. 12:1.) But Satan counterfeits everything that is of God; hence he has introduced a false sun, a false "gospel," which teaches that hundreds of millions of the unsaved go to a hell of endless torture; and leads people to deny that God has ever had a plan for the uplift of the fallen world. It is little wonder that people turn against such a gospel as this.

The people of Russia have never heard the true gospel. All that they ever have heard has maligned and misrepresented God and His glorious program of the ages. Is it any wonder then that they have become disgusted with the Satanic theories that have been foisted upon them, and are now completely discrediting the Bible and throwing religion to the winds? The reason is that their eyes simply have become opened to the deception that has been practiced upon them so long. And how will it be with the rest of mankind when their eyes are also opened to the

great fallacies that have been handed out to the millions as Bible teachings? Will they too react in like manner to Soviet Russia? At the 1935 annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Lord Wolmer referred to Germany and its anti-Christian elements. He said:

"Germany is not the only place in Europe where paganism is raising its head. Christendom today is threatened with one of the great crises of its history. The history of the Christian church reveals that it has moved from crisis to crisis. The battle has never stopped. The devil is never idle. The Christian church is menaced in different generations in different manners, but in this generation we see paganism rising at home and abroad in a manner which our fathers and grandfathers would not have believed possible. The elementary tenets of religion are being publicly flouted and derided. . . . Let us not be under any delusion that we are less menaced than the people of Germany or any other country by the challenge to Christianity now being presented."

Lord Wolmer's cry of alarm concerning the rising tide of paganism is somewhat a belated one. Actually that which has passed for Christ's church hasn't been much else but pagan since shortly after the death of the apostles. A critical comparison of the imposing religious institutions of the earth, to which the name of Christ has been improperly attached, will reveal that there is practically nothing about them that is Christian, except the name. Actually then, the challenge is not to true Christianity at all, but to so-called Christendom, which is a very different thing.

In Jeremiah's prophecy the Lord says, "I begin to bring evil on a city, which is called by My name"; and it is very clear to students of the Bible that the city referred to is 'Christendom.' But the fact is also very clear that 'Christendom' is not Christ's domain or Kingdom at all. It has never really represented Christ at any time. It is at one with the world, having embraced and utilized all the ways, plans, policies and schemes of the world. Its spirit is not the spirit of Christ: His spirit is one of sacrifice and love, whereas 'Christendom's' spirit is one of avarice and pride.

Those who would really find the Lord today must do as the apostle said—"go unto Him without the camp (outside the pale of the nominal religious systems), bearing His reproach." Those who do so will find out that in a religious sense the world is now in a dark time, that Christendom has failed and is going down in defeat, that the real members of Christ's church are nearly all selected to become His "bride," that the greatest time of trouble ever known will soon strike upon humanity, and that then the new age will be ushered in and the great principles of truth, justice, mercy, peace and love will be disseminated throughout the earth as promised.

Then the people, learning how they have been mis-

taught in the past, will be glad to turn to the glorious truth; which none will be able to conceal from them. Then, says the Revelator, the books (of divine revelation) will be opened, and the eyes of the blind shall "see out of obscurity and out of darkness." The true religion will then become unspeakably precious, and hundreds of millions will worship the loving God of the Bible, and will not be taught to dread an eternal torment deity. (Isa. 29:9-24.) And what joy there will be when the people find that they are being lifted up to happiness and eternal life by the divine Millennial reign of Christ, which His love has provided for them!

### **Thoughts for Russian Atheists—and Others**

That any human being should fail to acknowledge a great supreme intelligent Head of the universe, is something extremely hard for some people to understand. There is nothing on this planet so marvelously constructed as man himself. Just think of the human brain with its twelve billion cells! Dr. Alexis Carrel says:

"Cells can now be filmed and magnified to such an extent that, when thrown on the screen, they are larger than a man. All their organs are then visible to us. In the middle of their body floats a kind of a void, elastic-walled balloon, the nucleus, which appears to be full of an inert and transparent jelly. In this jelly are seen two nucleoli, which slowly and unceasingly change their shape. Around the nucleus there is a great agitation of small particles."

Regarding man himself the *New York American* quotes from Dr. Carrel's book, "Man, the Unknown," which says:

"The human body is placed, on the scale of magnitudes, halfway between the atom and the star. According to the size of the objects selected for comparison, it appears either large or small. Its length is equivalent to that of two hundred thousand tissue cells, or of two millions of ordinary microbes, or of two billions of albumin molecules placed end to end. The mind is hidden within the living matter, completely neglected by physiologists and economists, almost unnoticed by physicians."

And to suppose that such a thing as this could possibly create itself, or would come into being by mere chance, through a blind law of evolution! The idea is too preposterous to have a moment's consideration. Yet those who eliminate God from their theory of life do away with the only intelligent, rational account of man's creation that is available—the one that is found in the Bible. How simple and convincing is the Bible's plain statement that "God made man in His own image. In the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Who else but the Designer and Creator of the whole universe could place twelve billion cells in the human cranium, and have them function as marvelously as they did in the perfect man? Man in his fallen state is a wonderful creation; what will he be like when restored to perfection?

**THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL**

15 ¶ And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,  
16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:  
17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.  
18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.  
Gen. 22:15-18 Gal. 3:6  
8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.  
Lu. 2:10  
10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.  
Gal. 3:26,29  
20 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.  
20 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.  
2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.  
3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.  
4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.  
5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.  
Rev. 21:2-5  
20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:  
21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.  
Acts 3:20,21  
8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.  
9 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.  
10 For he looked for a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.  
Heb. 11:8,10  
Lu. 3:6

## UNIVERSALISM VERSUS THE DIVINE PLAN

### Part III



Is man a free moral agent? This is a question that has been debated for ages. Our Reconciliationist friends deny that God ever implanted this part of His moral likeness in Adam; but insist instead that Adam was under necessity to do as his Creator should will, thus demonstrating God's "sovereignty."

No one deliberately chooses anything that he knows to be utterly beyond his reach. Liberty means power in anyone to do or to forebear any particular action, according to the determination or thought of the mind, whereby one course is preferred and adopted over the other. We choose between alternatives, or between conflicting values. Therefore if in any action one has power to will or not to will what he does, in that action he is free. But if, in every voluntary action, the determination of his will is the necessary consequence of something involuntary in the state of his mind, or of something in his external circumstances that compels him so to act, he is not free.

But in making even a voluntary choice, it may not be an entirely free act if the actor has a false perspective; or is inexperienced in the matter before him; or is ignorant of the means involved; or if there is an element of doubt in the result to be attained. In this view, one's will, in its freedom, is itself the possibility of sin.

On the other hand, *necessity* of action is opposed to free-will. If we are prevented from doing what is in our power when we desire and will to do it, or if we are compelled to do it when we desire and will not to do it, we are not free.

This general explanation of freedom applies equally to bodily freedom, mental freedom and moral freedom. We have *bodily* freedom when our body is not subjected to restraint or compulsion; *mental* freedom when no impediment or violence prevents us from duly exercising our powers of mind; and *moral* freedom when our moral principles and feelings are allowed to operate within the sphere which has been assigned to them. All of this has to do with freedom as an attribute of a creature who possesses a moral nature, and who exerts the active power which belongs to him, in the light of reason and under a sense of responsibility.

### What Say The Scriptures?

The assertion is sometimes made that the Bible does not teach such a thing as free-will moral agency. Let us glance at a few Scriptures on the subject.

Jehovah exercises this freedom of choice:

"What is man, that Thou shouldst magnify him? And that Thou shouldst set Thine heart upon him?"—Job 7:17.

"But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. . . I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I said not unto the seed of Jacob, seek ye Me in vain; I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right."—Isa. 45:17-19.

Christ emphasized creature free-will:

"Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell: and great was the fall of it."—Matt. 7:24-27.

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."—Matt. 12:37.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."—Matt. 23:37.

The Apostle Paul similarly concurs in this thought:

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."—Romans 6:12.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done

in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."—2 Cor. 5:10.

The human creature is also to exercise choice:

"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."—Gen. 4:7.

"And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart."—Jer. 29:13.

The Jewish Law also emphasized moral freedom:

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil."—Deut. 30:15.

These are but a few texts selected at random, as examples of the principle that man has the faculty of choice, and that upon his decision hangs the result, either good or bad. There are three acts of the will, shown in Gen. 3:8. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise (this is the consent of the indolent will), she took thereof (this is the intention), and did eat (this is the fruition)." There are three acts of the mind, viz., *consent*, approving of means; *election*, choosing the most fit; and *application*, use or employing them.

### **"Choose Life, That Ye May Live"**

Under the reign of sin and death there is now a "broad road," in which—under the tendency of the world, the flesh and the devil—almost all mankind are walking in a greater or less degree of selfishness and gratification of the desires of the flesh. Its grade is downward and away from God. Its end is death, in just harmony with the original sentence of sin in Eden. On it none can retrace his steps so as to return to God. He may stop for a time, or even attempt to return, but the grade is too steep, and the influence or pressure of the crowd is irresistible; and soon he is on the downward course again—moving either slowly or swiftly.

But there is a way of Life, into which the pilgrim may turn. Of it our Lord said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." Consequently there is only one way of return, viz., through acceptance of Christ and obedience testifying thereto. Its gate is faith; and at present it is a very difficult road to travel, even after it has been found. Why does the God of love make the gate to the way of Life so obscure that only a small portion of the human race have any opportunity of even knowing it? From the world's standpoint there is no reasonable answer to this question. But from the standpoint of the divine plan of the ages, as revealed in the Scriptures, there is a very satisfactory answer.

God's purpose of mercy respecting the world is to deal with it as a whole; to let all have an experience with the "wages of sin"; and then, through Christ, to end the reign of sin and death under Satan, and inaugurate a reign of righteousness and life under Christ. The "narrow way," therefore, is not meant to be the way of life for the race in general, but it is provided for a special class.

This special class is called variously in Scripture, "The Church of Christ," "The Bride," "The Elect,"

"Temple of the Living God," "The Body of Christ," "The Little Flock." The gate of Faith is made obscure, to insure that those who enter shall be faithful; and the way is difficult, so that they may be tried in the furnace of affliction that they may be found "vessels unto honor" and "meet for the Master's use," when His time shall come for them.

We do not feel it is necessary to take time to prove to the careful student of the Scriptures that the above mentioned terms designate the selfsame class—the Church of the First Borns. Only an ingenious system of philosophical reasoning would require a distinction to be made in these common terms. Those properly instructed in the way of the Lord already know, both through knowledge received and by experience, that the saints of this Gospel age have been selected from both Jews and Gentiles, and that they are heirs to all the promises of God, because they are *one* in Him.

### **The Kingdom**

Let us now pass on to a discussion of the Kingdom under the Messianic reign, and consider the conditions then to prevail, that we might learn whether or not all men will be recovered unconditionally from the Adamic condemnation, as claimed by some.

When our Redeemer shall have taken unto Himself His great power and established His Kingdom; when the last member of the Church shall have been perfected and glorified with the Head upon the throne; when the great time of trouble, such as was not since there was a nation, shall have swept away present institutions, humbled the pride of man in the dust, and brought the world into a teachable attitude; *then* the "broad road" to death will be abolished.

No longer will the way to life be narrow, but instead the way to death then will be hedged about and made narrow and difficult, by reason of the speedy and just retribution which will promptly follow every attempted violation of Messiah's laws. Then Satan will be bound; and the world will be forced to respect at least outwardly, the laws of God's Kingdom. The weaknesses that men all shall labor under as the result of the fall will alone stand between them and perfect happiness; and full arrangements will then be provided by the Mediator for their assistance back to full human perfection. "Whosoever will" may take of the water of life freely; but whosoever will not, will not be forced to partake against their wills.

When Satan no longer has power to deceive men and to put good for evil and evil for good; when the eyes of their understanding have been opened to see and appreciate the "true light"; when the knowledge of the Lord fills the whole earth as the waters cover the sea; when there shall no longer be necessity to teach each other, saying, "Know the Lord"; when the Lord's Kingdom shall have come and His will is done on earth as it is done in heaven; then instead of the message of the Gospel being limited to a few, *all* will know the plan of God, "from the least even unto the greatest"; and the evidences of its truth will be so clear and convincing that none will have excuse for disbelief; for the conditions will be such that doubt would be more difficult than is belief at present. Never-

theless, a personal acceptance of Christ and of the conditions of the New Covenant will be required of each individual thus enlightened.—2 Cor. 4:6; John 1:9; 1 Tim. 2:6; Jer. 31:34.

Not only will men learn unquestionably that Christ died for our sins, "the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God"; but more, they will see and feel the restitution work begun in themselves and their fellows. They will see righteousness ruling the world unto life; instead of, as now, sin reigning unto death. They will see great changes in the climate of the earth and the resultant blessing of the earth, through restraint of microbes of destruction and disease which are now rampant.—Acts 3:19-21; Ezek. 16:48-50; Heb. 2:14; Eph. 2:2; Isa. 35; and Isa. 11:9.

Sickness, pain and all diseases will yield to the power of the Great Physician, and He will not permit death to befall any except those who shall intelligently and wilfully refuse His offers of full restitution, by rejecting the terms of obedience required by the New Covenant. Accordingly, while all will be forced to "bow" in at least outward recognition of that Kingdom, and to "confess" it a blessed improvement over the former reign of sin and death, yet their will must remain their own; and their individual progress in restitution, beyond the common advantages, will depend upon their willingness or unwillingness to come into accord with that Kingdom and its righteous arrangements.—Rom. 5:21; 1 Cor. 15:26; Isa. 65:20.

### **God's Law Changes Not**

But although the condition of things in the Millennial Age will differ greatly from present conditions, so as to be almost the reverse, yet the laws of God, like God Himself, change not; it is merely the conditions that will have changed. God's law, when exercised by our Lord Jesus and the Church, and tempered with mercy, will be the same law in every particular that it always has been. It cannot change, for the same reason that God cannot change; because it is perfect, and to change it in any degree would be to make it imperfect. At the beginning of that new era the world in general will be loveless as at present—controlled by selfishness. When present day selfishness shall have blossomed and gone to seed in the great time of trouble now upon us, it will become apparent to all that, however selfish their hearts may be, their deeds must thereafter conform more closely to the principle of love—doing to others as they would have others do to them—or they will be cut off in death at a hundred years. (Isa. 65:20) It will thus be with a practical lesson that the new King will introduce the laws of His Kingdom. Then loving deeds and words will be made compulsory upon all, though their wills may still be tainted with selfishness; for God does not now, and never will, coerce the wills of His creatures.

In that day an *intellectual* unbelief in Christ and the offer of salvation will be an impossibility. But belief, in the sense of acceptance of Christ as Lord, and hearty *obedience* to the letter and spirit of His requirements, will be the condition upon which "whosoever will" may obtain everlasting life; for such life is provided and intended only for those who love God; which

implies a love of His character and also His plan. (1 John 3:16; Isa. 45:14-21). But perfect love and obedience, in letter and spirit, will not be realized by the world when on trial, until the *end* of the Millennial age; for perfection of being is necessary to the full restitution or bringing back of such as accept the Son, to the perfection and Divine fellowship lost six thousand years ago.

### **Life Attained Gradually**

From the very moment of the death sentence Adam and the race were no longer fully alive, but dying. So, even though the reign of life will continue during the entire Messianic age to lift the obedient out of death toward life, yet perfect life will not be attained until the end of the process of restitution; and none will get that grand gift of God except such as are perfected in *love*, in the very deepest thoughts and intents of their hearts. But, while the giving of everlasting life to the worthy ones of the world will be at the close of the Millennial age, and in the nature of a reward of obedience, yet that everlasting life will be temporarily *reckoned* to each one who accepts Christ and comes to and degree of heart harmony with the requirements of the New Covenant, though some of these may fail in the final test.

The various temperaments and varying degrees of degradation of fallen men guarantee that their hearty acceptance of Christ and His regulations for their blessing will differ, as is the case with those who now come to a knowledge of the truth. Some will respond quickly, some slowly, some not at all. But wherever there is any tendency to hold on, to appreciate and to make use of the Divine favors, if there is even a smouldering spark of love to God and righteousness, the Lord will not break off such an one, but will fan the spark if perchance it might become a flame of love which would purify the heart and eventually bring every thought into captivity to the will of God. Thus the measure of "light" sinned against in the present life determines not only the amount of heart-hardening but also the time and amount of difficulty the person will experience in getting the heart softened again.

Those who will be "cut off" during the Millennium will be such as, when given full opportunity to enter upon the highway of holiness, will refuse to "go up therson." Satan's "broad road" of the present time is a downward one, upon which men go downward to death with almost no effort; but to reach the prize of life at the end of the "highway of holiness" will require effort. While this highway will be less steep than is the "Narrow Way" of this Gospel age, nevertheless it must not be supposed that progress along that easy highway, with everything to aid in the development of character, and with nothing like opposition or temptation to test its strength, would be sufficient evidence of heart-loyalty to God and His laws to prove that all who will reach the end of that age are worthy of everlasting life.

### **Two Tests**

Hence there will be two important tests in the Millennial age; one at the beginning, as to who will start to go upward on it and keep on going; and one at

the end, by which the inward perfection of each individual will be tested. Bear in mind that the test at the end of the highway is not to manifest open or covert sinners, for none of them will be permitted to transgress God's laws—such evil doers will have been "cut off" long before.—Isa. 65: 20; 35: 8-10; 62: 10; 40: 4-5; 51: 11.

While some may have been outwardly obedient for centuries, but inwardly rebellious, they had corresponding rewards of blessings and enjoyments experienced during that time. They are still God's debtors. God does not owe them everlasting life. Everlasting life is a "gift of God" through Christ. It is one of the things, however that has been prepared for those who love God, and the test at the end of the Millennial age will be a test of love; to prove the degree of love and consecration that has been developed as character in those who have seen and enjoyed so many of God's favors. Some who will have reached outward perfection will not have developed the inward perfection of will, even with every favorable opportunity.—Rev. 20:9.

Thus it was with Adam in the beginning. He was perfect before his trial in Eden, but he had not developed a consecrated will that was fully submitted to the Lord. Satan was perfect as an angel of God, but he developed a will antagonistic to God's. And God's purpose is that the trial or judgment of both angels and men shall be so thorough that not a single creature who is not in absolute heart harmony with Him and His righteous laws shall receive everlasting life and pass into the ages of eternity beyond the Millennium.

In no other way could the Lord continue His creatures in His own likeness as free moral agents, and yet guarantee that when the Millennial reign of Christ shall have caused the "former things" of sin and death to pass away, "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain." Only those who under such a test would manifest heart

harmony with God are of the class for whom lasting life has been prepared as a gift from God. Such will be received and blessed after the test; but all others will be cut off in the second death.

### "Christ Dieth No More"

If, therefore, this opportunity for life was provided through the sacrifice of Jesus, upon what basis can those who fail in the final test *again* have the privilege of life offered to them? If Jesus "dieth no more," and each individual during the Kingdom reign "dieth for his own iniquity," upon what basis can God forgive such sin? Surely it can be seen that everlasting life on the earth is a gift of God conditioned upon obedience to certain rigid requirements, in which mankind will have the assistance of the Mediator. If any fail under the test, what further obligation rests on God? Have such not received their share of the atonement, yet failed to be properly amenable to the terms of the New Covenant?

Having thus illustrated the use of Christian common sense in the discussion of this matter of ultimate salvation, let us see to it that no cunning sophistry of the adversary succeeds in drawing us away from the faith, as St Paul warns us: "The spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils". (1 Tim 4: 1.) Well may we echo the same Apostle's triumphant expression, speaking of those who appreciate the great divine plan of the ages and who have caught a glimpse of its full fruition, when he says: "O, the depth of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or hath been His counselor? . . . Because out of Him, and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever."—Rom. 11: 34-36.

(To be Continued)

## COMING BACK FROM HELL SOON



NO period in the world's history has mankind been in such a state of perplexity as now. Is there any way out of this dilemma? As students of the Bible, we hold that the sacred Word of God contains the only practical solution for present world problems; yet thousands are kept from investigating what the Bible has to say because they suppose that it teaches all those crude misconceptions of religion that have been handed down to us from the dark ages.

One of the most grotesque of theories ever promulgated in the name of the Bible and of Christianity is that one which claims that a very large portion of the human race must suffer eternally, physically and mentally, in a burning hell, simply because, through ignorance or otherwise, they failed to express their

belief in Jesus as their Savior before they died.

A book that is supposed to teach such fiendish notions of religion and of God could not inspire the confidence of the thinking public. Hence the Bible has been discounted, and today it is not being seriously considered by the majority in their search for a ray of light concerning the possible outcome of the present unsettled condition of men and nations. For this reason we wish to discuss briefly some of the outstanding teachings of the Bible concerning hell, in order to show that even on this subject, as well as in all other matters, the Bible is entirely reasonable when properly interpreted, and can be relied upon as a dependable source of information in all things.

Hell, as taught by the dark-age creeds,

is a place of everlasting, conscious torment; but the Bible does not agree with this idea of the creed-makers. The Old Testament Scriptures, which was the only written revelation from God that the people had throughout the centuries preceding Christ's first advent, was written originally in the Hebrew language; and there is but one Hebrew word used therein that is translated "hell" in our English Bible. That word is *sheol*. The Hebrew word *sheol* appears in the Old Testament 65 times. In our Common Version English Bible it is translated "grave" 31 times, "hell" 31 times and "pit" three times. That the word *sheol* is not used in the Bible to describe a place of torment is clearly shown by its use in Ecclesiastes 9:10, which reads: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work,

nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave (*sheol*), whither thou goest." Obviously, if there is no wisdom nor knowledge in *sheol*, there cannot be any suffering therein.

The dark-age mis-conception of hell pictures it as a place wherein God torments His wicked enemies; yet the very first time the word *sheol* (English "hell") appears in the Bible it is used to designate the death condition of two faithful servants of the Lord—Jacob and his son Joseph. Jacob supposed that Joseph had been slain by wild beasts; and in giving expression to his sorrow, he said: "For I will go down into the grave (*sheol*), unto my son, mourning." (Gen. 37:35.) By these words Jacob expressed his belief that his dear son Joseph was dead—hence in *sheol*, the Bible hell—and that he himself expected to go to *sheol* when he died. Thus it is seen that *sheol* (hell) is a condition into which good people as well as wicked people go when they die.

#### JOB PRAYS TO GO TO HELL.

The good Prophet Job was another faithful servant of the Lord. In fact he was so loyal to the Lord that it is said that he was "perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." (Job. 1:1.) A severe test had come upon Job, involving the loss of his family, his property and his health. When he lost his health, and his wife also finally turned against him, he felt that life was no longer worth living; so in his dilemma he asked the Lord to let him die and get out of his misery. In giving expression to this desire, faithful Job said: "O that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave (*sheol*), that Thou wouldest keep me secret, until Thy wrath be past." (Job 14:13.) Would it seem to be reasonable for Job, suffering as he was, both mentally and physically, to ask the Lord to hide him in a place where his torments would be increased many fold, and where there would be no possibility for a release from them forever—a place of eternal torture? What then did Job mean by asking the Lord to let him go to *sheol*? Simply this: He realized that *sheol* is the death condition, in which there is "no knowledge." and in which he would be free from his suffering; a place where the "wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest." Job was weary with his suffering, he wanted to be at rest; so he asked the Lord to let him die and go to *sheol*—the Bible hell.

#### COMING BACK FROM HELL

But Job did not want to remain in hell! No, he wanted to be hidden in hell only until God's wrath was past. Here again is a thought directly contrary to the dark-age creeds. They picture hell as a place where God visits His wrath upon the *sinner*; but Job, a faithful servant of the Lord, asked to go to hell to *escape* God's wrath! What did he mean? Simply that God's "wrath" is now being enforced against the whole world of mankind, in the death sentence; resulting in sorrow, suffering and distress on every hand, and which "wrath" Job was then experiencing. The Apostle Paul says, "by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."—Romans 5:12.

Job was undergoing more than the ordinary amount of human suffering; and being weary of it, he wanted to go down into death until the time would come when the curse of sin and death would be removed from the earth—as God had promised through the prophets. After asking the Lord to let him go to hell to escape misery, Job continues: "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait until my change come. Thou shalt call and I will answer Thee; Thou shalt have a desire unto the work of Thine hands."—Job 14:14, 15.

By these words Job pointed forward, prophetically, to a time when he would be called forth from *sheol*—when he would come back from hell—through the power of the great Lifegiver, the Messiah. The New Testament agrees with this. In John 5:28 Jesus is reported as saying, "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice (the voice of the Son of man) and shall come forth." When that time comes Job will hear His voice; and, in harmony with this prophecy, he will return from the death condition—from hell. That will be in the great resurrection.

The New Testament was written in the Greek language. Now the Greek word *hades* is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *sheol*. This word *hades* is translated "hell" in the New Testament. In Revelation 1:18 Jesus is represented as saying, "I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell (*hades*) and of death." It is because of

the fact that Jesus has the keys of hell that we know that those who have gone down into this great prison-house are to have an opportunity to return. Jesus purchased these "keys"—symbol of the legal authority to unlock—when He gave Himself in death as man's Redeemer. We read, "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living."—Romans 14:9.

#### UNLOCKING GATES OF HELL

Near the close of Jesus' ministry He enquired of His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ (the Messiah), the Son of the living God." Jesus was much pleased with this answer, for it proved that Peter had clear vision—he had properly identified his Master as the promised Messiah—the One whom the prophets had foretold would come and bring blessings of life and happiness to all the willing and obedient of mankind. Replying to Peter's enlightening answer, Jesus said, "Upon this rock (the great foundation fact of My Messiahship) I will build My church; and the gates of hell (*hades*) shall not prevail against it."—Matt. 16:15-18.

From this statement it is clear that the time is coming when the "gates of hell" are to be unlocked and the prisoners of death set free. The reason why the "church" of Christ figures so prominently in this future work of blessing, is because all the faithful followers of Jesus, according to the Scriptures, are to be joint-heirs with Him in all the work of His Messianic Kingdom. One of the original promises of coming blessings of life and happiness for the sin-cursed world is that which God made to Abraham, when He told that patriarch that through his seed "all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen. 12:1-3.) The Apostle Paul comments on this wonderful prophecy, and tells us that Jesus is the One referred to as the "seed" which is to do the blessing; and then he adds, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—Gal. 3:8,16, 27-29.

From the foregoing it is clear that the work of Christ since His first advent has been that of "building up" His church, getting it ready to be associated with Him in the future work of "blessing" all the families of the earth. When that work is complete it will mean that the time has come for the resurrection

of the dead to begin; and, as the church is to share with Jesus in this Kingdom work of restoring the dead world to life, it means that the "gates of hell (*hades*) shall not prevail against it"—the dead shall come back from hell.

#### HELL DELIVERS UP ITS DEAD

In the 20th chapter of Revelation the word *hades* appears in the Bible the last time. In the 13th verse of this chapter, we are told: "And death and hell (*hades*) delivered up the dead which were in them." There can be no excuse for misunderstanding these plain words, which clearly show that the time is coming when *hell* shall deliver up the *dead*. How different is this from the creedal theory that all who go to hell will remain there and be tormented forever! In the very next verse of this chapter the word *hades* appears again, and for the last time in the Bible. The text says, "And death and hell (*hades*) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the *second* death."

The "lake of fire" is one of the symbolisms of the Bible that has been misused to prove that hell is a place of eternal torture. But the passage quoted foregoing declares that "hell"—the supposed place of unending torture—is to be "cast into the lake of fire." Therefore "hell" and the "lake of fire" cannot be the same thing. Obviously there is something radically wrong with the creeds of the dark ages on this point. The meaning of this passage is clear. Fire is used in the Bible as a symbol of destruction, and the fact that hell is said to be cast into the lake of fire is a very vivid way of impressing upon our minds the fact that the hell condition is to be destroyed.—See Rev. 21:4.

That hell (*sheol, hades*) is to be destroyed is also prophetically stated in the Old Testament. In Hosea 13:14 we read, "I (the Lord) will ransom them (through the death of Jesus) from the power of the grave (*sheol*); I will redeem them from death: O death I will be thy plagues; O grave (*sheol*), I will be thy destruction." It is this "destruction" that is symbolized in Revelation 20:14, in the statement that *hades* is cast into the "lake of fire."

The Scriptural philosophy of this matter is simple. The whole world was condemned to death through the sin of our first parents; and they thereby lost life, as well as the perfect earthly paradise home represented in Eden. Jesus became the ransom, or substitute, for

the sin of the world; and by virtue of His death all are to be brought forth from the Bible hell and given an opportunity to enjoy life upon a perfected earth—the restored paradise. Meanwhile the church is being prepared, to share with Jesus in this great future work of restoration.—See Acts 3:19-21.

#### THE RESURRECTION IS NEAR

And one of the most encouraging features of this message of hope lies in the fact that this glad day of resurrection is now near at hand! This resurrection work is to be accomplished through the establishment of the long-prayed-for Kingdom of God, at the second presence of Christ. When Jesus was here at His first advent the disciples asked Him what would be the signs, or evidences, of His second advent, and of the end of the world—that is, the end of the present evil order of things. Jesus gave the disciples a large number of signs by which they would be able to discern the near approach of His Kingdom. Among other things, He said that there would come "distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring (a picture of the restless, discontented condition of the masses); men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."—Luke 21:25, 26.

No present-day writer or lecturer could more accurately describe present world conditions than Jesus has done in the foregoing quotation. In calling attention to this time of distress that was to come upon the earth, Jesus quoted from the 12th chapter of the prophecy of Daniel, particularly the first verse, which reads: "At that time shall Michael (another title for the Messiah) stand up (begin to exercise control), and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." The development of this time of trouble is everywhere in evidence today, giving assurance that His Kingdom is near.

In this same 12th chapter of Daniel, from which Jesus quoted, we have other interesting evidence presented, which helps us to identify the present time as that period that immediately precedes the establishment of God's righteous Kingdom. Daniel refers to this day as the "time of the end"—not the "crack of doom" as dark-age theology would have us believe—but the time of the end of Satan's rule over the earth. The prophet declares that in this time of the end, there would come a great "in-

crease of knowledge," and also that people would "run to and fro" on the earth.—Daniel 12:4.

It is a fact that practically all the modern inventions, making possible the wonderful blessings and conveniences enjoyed by the majority today, have been produced within the lifetime of the present generation. It is this "increase of knowledge" that has made possible all the means of rapid travel that are being used at the present time, so that the world now has become a traveling world. Voltaire, the noted French infidel, called Sir Isaac Newton a "poor dotard" because he interpreted this prophecy to mean that the time may come when people would travel as fast "as fifty miles an hour." What would Voltaire think today were he here to see men traveling in airplanes at hundreds of miles an hour?

#### AWAKENING THE SLEEPERS

The remarkable fulfillment of the various statements contained in the 12th chapter of Daniel—the "time of trouble," the "increase of knowledge," and the running "to and fro"—has a very vital relationship to the fact that those who have died are soon to start "coming back from hell." In this very same chapter, portraying as it does the events of the "time of the end," the prophet adds, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake."—Dan. 12:2.

Yes, twenty thousand million, or more, are now sleeping in the "dust of the earth"; but thank God, the evidences all about us in the world today, in fulfillment of the wonderful prophecies of the Bible, assure us that the time is near when the promised resurrection of the dead is to become a reality—and this means that the whole dead world will return from hell soon. And all who then obey the laws of the Kingdom of the Messiah, will have the opportunity of living upon the perfected earth forever; while the disobedient will be "destroyed from among the people."—Acts 3:23.

Some, no doubt, will recall certain symbolic statements in the Bible which have been misused by certain theologians in an effort to prove the God-dishonoring doctrine of eternal torture for the wicked. All of these obscure passages, when properly interpreted, are in full harmony with the Scriptural teaching that the "wages of sin is death."



# The Christian Life

*Upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves (the restless, discontented) roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking forward to the things coming upon the earth (society); for the powers of the heavens (ecclesiasticism) shall be shaken. . . . When ye see these things come to pass, then know that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Look up, lift up your heads, rejoice, for your deliverance draweth nigh—*  
*Luke 21: 25-28, 31*

## CHRISTIAN GROWTH AND OVERCOMING



**A**LTHOUGH the specific expression "character development" is not found in our Common Version English Bible, yet the thought of Christian growth and development is clearly contained therein. It is highly important for every follower of the Master to have definitely in mind just what it is that the Lord requires along this line, because a failure to discern the Lord's will in this vital matter usually leads either to a state of spiritual pride on the one hand, or to one of discouragement or carelessness on the other. To have understandingly in mind just what it is for which we are striving, will contribute much to ultimate spiritual success and victory. Paul says on this point: "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air."—1 Corinthians 9:26.

In approaching this subject it is well to keep in mind that God does not require anything of His people that is beyond their ability, by His grace, to perform. If we can always remember this, it will prevent discouragement and possible ultimate defeat. If we find ourselves apparently failing day by day, it is well for us to make a survey of just what it is that we are trying to accomplish, that we may ascertain whether we are striving along lines laid down in the Bible, or whether we are simply "beating the air" without accomplishing anything. On the other hand, a consciousness that we are able, by God's grace, to render acceptable service through Christ should not cause us to become proud of our attainments, nor yet to feel that we can let down on our daily efforts.

There are a number of expressions used in the Bible to describe the various aspects of Christian growth; and in order to understand the subject clearly it is well to keep these variations of expressions in mind, and to glean from each of them the intended lesson. In speaking of Christ's love for and interest in the church, Paul says, "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." (Eph. 5:26.) What is this "washing" that is accomplished by the Word? Is it a cleansing away of our inherited imperfections? It would seem not; if it were, the merit of Christ's ransom would not be necessary as a continual covering for those imperfections. What then does it mean?

### **Christian Standards to be Sought**

There are certain character changes that even worldly men and women may make in their lives. And when one becomes a Christian, through the influence of the Word of truth, he finds that many formerly accepted standards of the world are not pleasing to the Heavenly Father. He finds in the Bible an entirely new set of standards, covering every phase of the Christian life. These standards have to do with our relationship to others—to the governments of the world; to our neighbors; to our children; the proper relationship between the sexes, etc. Even on matters of divorce, while nearly every state or nation has its own laws covering this subject, there is but one law concerning it in the Bible; which is that for no cause whatsoever is a Christian justified in putting away his mate, except for adultery.

Now obedience to the written Word will effect these important changes in our lives, and *must* do so if we are to continue in God's favor. Regardless of inherited fleshly weaknesses, there would seem to be no good reason why a man should have two wives, when the Bible says that he should have only one. And the same is true concerning all other details of the moral code, as laid down in the Bible for the Christian. Adherence to this code, therefore, will effect a cleansing of the life, and a preparation of the individual for service as a coworker with God. It is a necessary prerequisite to the sanctified life—not sanctification itself. If we are sincere in our use of the Bible we will find that this "washing" by the Word of truth will effect, directly or indirectly, practically every detail of life.

### **Imperfections Inherited and Acquired**

In this connection it is well to take into consideration a fact that is often overlooked by many brethren; namely, that there are two kinds of fleshly imperfections—inherited and acquired. Our acquired imperfections represented largely in bad habits—developed for the most part before we became Christians, by reason of contacts with the unchristian conduct and practices of the world to which one is at that time more or less conformed—can be almost wholly "washed" away through obedience to the Word. For example, the Scriptures speak plainly against drunkenness, and this habit can be cleansed away through the

use of the will power, aided by the consciousness that the Bible requires the Christian to walk soberly—not only in a physical sense, but spiritually also. The same success is possible with respect to all of those unbecoming time-wasting and health-destroying “habits” so common in the world, and with which nearly all of us were more or less tainted prior to our entering the narrow way.

With *inherited* imperfections, however, it is different. Imperfections which we have because we are members of the fallen Adamic race, are organic; hence cannot and will not be eradicated by our efforts—though we should strive against them. This may seem to some of our readers like a startling statement, but a moment's reflection will reveal its truthfulness to most Bible Students. If our inherited, organic imperfections could be “washed” away by the water of the Word, it would mean the attaining of perfection in the flesh; and hence, that the ransom would not be necessary. The Word of God is a guide to our conduct, outlining the proper course for us to take with respect to all our association—in the home, in the church, in business, etc.—but it will not purge the flesh from *inherited* sin. Whole-hearted obedience to the written Word will enable us more or less to curb the fallen tendencies of the flesh, but will not perfect the imperfect organism, nor materially change it.

### **What Do We Overcome?**

But, says someone, are you not forgetting that we as Christians must be *overcomers*—that we must overcome the flesh and its weaknesses if we are ever to attain a place with Jesus in the Kingdom? Well surely, no sincere Christian, no new creature in Christ, will compromise with his fallen flesh. But the word “overcome” is not the one the Bible uses to describe the new creature's relationship to his flesh. We are to “mortify” the flesh; and as Paul says (according to the *Diaglott* translation), we are to “severely discipline” the body and “make it subservient.” (1 Cor. 9:27.) We are to sacrifice the flesh, and “crucify” it; but the Christian's “overcoming” is of the devil and of the world. To keep this Scriptural distinction clearly in mind will be a great help to us in the narrow way, yet it will not offer any excuse for lowering the standard of Christian character nor encourage us to become lax in our endeavor to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Briefly, the Scriptural expressions which describe the Christian's walk in the narrow way indicate that we “overcome” the devil and the world, but that we “sacrifice” the flesh. And in describing the process of sacrificing the flesh the Bible uses such terms as “mortify,” “crucify,” “keep under,” etc. Now this is a tremendously important distinction. It emphasizes the essential difference between the real Christian life and that false conception of the Christian life that has come down to us from the dark ages, which in its “killing nature,” through “austerities” is merely a revamped type of Oriental mysticism to which the name of Jesus has been improperly attached. In a certain sense it may be said that we “overcome” the flesh; but

if we confine the use of this particular term to the manner in which it is employed in the Bible, we will be helped to a better understanding of this whole subject.

But, some may object, if there is to be no overcoming of the flesh, wherein comes spiritual growth or Christian character development? We answer that Christian character development is that of the new creature and not of the flesh. It is as new creatures that we grow in grace, in knowledge, in peace, in joy, in faith, in longsuffering—in fact, in *all* the Christian graces or fruits of the spirit. Our deepening knowledge of God and of His glorious character, plus the spirit of loyalty to Him and the sincere desire to be like Him, brings into our hearts and lives an ever-increasing portion of His spirit of love, which is the sum-total of all true Christian character development.

### **New Creature Enslaves the Body**

Now the more we are filled with the spirit of divine love and unselfishness, the less attention we will pay to the fallen flesh. Nor will it be merely a matter of *ignoring* the flesh, in a negative manner. As new creatures in Christ Jesus, filled with the spirit of divine love, we will not only ignore the will of the flesh but we will actually put the flesh to work and make it serve the interests of the new creature in its endeavor to serve the Lord. As we grow in God-likeness we will become more faithful in *sacrificing* the flesh, and this *sacrifice* will be made “holy and acceptable” through the merit of the ransom. This crucifixion of the flesh is not a blind, purposeless killing of our nature, just for the purpose of killing it, but is a using of the flesh as a part of the great offering that eventually will effect the full reconciliation to God of all the willing and obedient of the sin-cursed world—based on the ransom.

If we are faithful in actually keeping our bodies on the altar of sacrifice, it may often *appear*, as time goes on, that the imperfections of the flesh become more pronounced, rather than less. In the matter of one's disposition, for example, if we have a tendency to be easily irritated under trying circumstances—due to inherited imperfections of the nervous system—it may seem, when our bodies are worn out from service or weakened by age, that we have less control of our nerves than when we first entered the narrow way. Does this mean that we have failed to develop character? How discouraging such a thought would be!

But let us get away from this negative viewpoint, and look at the matter in the way the Lord looks at it. Are we becoming more and more filled with His spirit? And is this filling of the spirit of the Lord leading us to greater faithfulness in sacrificing the flesh and its interests? Are we daily becoming more enthusiastic about God's truth, and the service of that truth? If so, it cannot but be true that the new creature and its life will largely keep our old disposition in the background. While at times we may, under stress, temporarily lose control of the “old man,” this should not at all be condoned by the new creature; and each such occasion should not only send us to the throne of grace, but cause us also to examine our

hearts to see if selfishness is in any way continuing to be the mainspring of our Christian life.

### **Weaknesses Not To Be Condoned**

While we recognize the fact that we cannot eradicate the organic imperfections of the flesh, whether they be nerve disorders or other predispositions to evil, yet we should not condone these imperfections, nor use them as an excuse for giving loose rein to the flesh. Frequently a great deal of our so-called nervousness and irritability is but an assertion of our own acquired stubbornness and selfishness. If we can't have our own way, perhaps we get "nervous"; our "temper" displays itself, and we say things that injure others and react unfavorably upon ourselves. Now to the extent that we have confidence in God, and delight in His will for us; and to the extent that His spirit of unselfishness fills our hearts and minds, we will realize that having our own way, either in large or small matters, is not at all important; and, looking at every experience in life from the standpoint of "sacrificing" the flesh rather than preserving it, we will be much less likely to become irritated when things "go wrong."

But this will not mean that we have eradicated any of our *inherited* imperfections: it simply means that other interests, the spiritual interests of the new creature, have assumed larger proportions in our lives, and that love for God, for His truth and for the service of His truth, has caused us to make increasingly greater efforts to keep the flesh and its interests on the altar of sacrifice.

The Scriptural viewpoint, then, is that it is the new creature that develops: and to the extent that the new creature and its interests become uppermost in our lives, the carnal desires of the flesh will be ignored or set aside. Paul emphasizes this thought, saying, "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3.) It is the spiritual life that grows, and the spiritual character that is developed.

### **Mortifying the Flesh**

In Romans 8:13 Paul says, "For 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." Yes, this is the Scriptural method. When we present our bodies a living sacrifice to God, and our consecration is accepted, we become new creatures. A "renewing of our minds" begins. This "renewing" is not a matter of removing old brain cells and replacing them with new ones. No, it is a filling of our minds with the things of the spirit, bringing brain cells into action that are already in our heads but lying dormant because unused. As these new thoughts develop more and more in our minds they lead us to take action involving the sacrifice of the flesh. Thus the old man is *mortified* or deadened, because the new creature is using the flesh in the service of God and of the truth.

In Galatians 5:16 Paul says, "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." This is statement of a very practical and philosophical fact in the Christian life. To walk in the spirit of God

simply means to walk in harmony with His divine purpose of love, as it is revealed by His spirit through His Word. This spirit—the spirit of God—leads to the sacrifice of the flesh. God Himself sacrificed His Son in the interests of His plan of salvation for a lost race. "God *so loved* the world that He *gave* His only begotten Son."

Now to walk in harmony with the spirit of love will work a tremendous change in one's life—a change from seeking self interests to that of sacrificing self for the blessing of others. "Now the works of the flesh," Paul says, are "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred; variance; emulations; wrath; strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders; drunkenness; revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."

An analysis of the foregoing list of fleshly works will reveal that they are almost wholly those sins which are *acquired*, through association with the world and by coming under the influence of the world's spirit of selfishness or covetousness. They become works of the flesh when the flesh yields to the influence of the Satanic spirit which produces them. "Adultery, fornication," etc.; are specifically forbidden by the spirit of God; not only in a literal sense, but spiritually also. Inherited organic imperfections are no excuse for these; nor for "idolatry, witchcraft," etc.; and failure to be guided by the spirit of God in these matters simply means that one is not wholly obedient to the divine Word.

### **Appreciation of God Promotes Growth**

"Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings, murders, drunkenness," etc., just do not go together with the operation of the spirit of divine love in one's heart. Where could there be room for envy in the heart of one who is committed to a plan that involves the blessing of "all the families of the earth"? Paul reasons the matter out from this standpoint, as follows: "For we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. *But when the kindness of God our Savior, and His love toward man, appeared*, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy, He saved us, through the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy spirit."—Titus 3:3-5.

Yes, the secret of true Christian growth, in putting off the works of the flesh, is in the fact that the "kindness of God our Savior, and His love toward man, appeared." To the extent that we catch the vision of that love, and note the spirit of unselfishness that motivates God in all that He does for the fallen race, ourselves seeking to come under the influence of that same spirit, we will not "fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Our outlook in life will cease to be a selfish one if we are walking in the spirit. The motive power of our lives will be divine love, and to the extent that we become like God we will be faithful in our efforts to bless

others rather than injure them. Thus hatred, malice, envy, strife, and all the other concomitants of selfishness, will no longer rule in our hearts and minds.

When, through the appearance of the kindness of God and His love toward man, God's spirit comes into our lives; the fruit of the spirit will begin to manifest itself increasingly. This fruit of the spirit, Paul says, is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness; goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22, 23.) It should be readily seen that the growth of this spirit of divine love is not a development of the flesh, but a "renewing of our **minds,**" as a result of our full consecration to do the divine will. To the extent that our consecration is whole-hearted and sincere, and the divine will actually rules our lives, to that extent we will be "walking in the spirit," and our fallen flesh will be kept upon the altar of sacrifice and service to God.

### **Purifying of the Flesh**

Another remarkable passage showing the exact position of the flesh in relation to the Christian life, is that of Hebrews 9:13, 14. We quote: "For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to *serve the living God.*" Here the typical purification of the flesh is contrasted with that which is accomplished through the blood of Christ. In the Millennial age the sins of the believer will be actually removed—"blotted out." But now this cleansing is only reckoned, by faith. It is a "purging" of the conscience from "dead works"—works that lead to death. And while the scars and blemishes caused by indulgence in these dead works still remain, the Christian's conscience realizes by faith that His best endeavors to serve the living God are now made acceptable by the blood of Christ. Yes, this "purging" of the conscience is in order that we may "*serve the living God*" acceptably.

The Apostle Peter adds his testimony as to the proper procedure of the Christian in dealing with the various imperfections and impurities of the fallen flesh. We quote: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also save us; not (by) the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God; by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:22.)—in which we share, if faithful. The "baptism" here referred to by Peter is our baptism into Christ's death. This is our "burial" with Him, through the sacrifice of all our fleshly interests in the divine service; which is, as Peter declares, the "answer of a good conscience toward God." Paul explains what constitutes the "answer of a good conscience," saying, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. 5:14, 15.)—Thus does a "good conscience" respond to divine love.

It is this service for God, Peter explains, that will result in the Christian's "salvation"; and not the mere "putting away of the filth of the flesh." We are not to understand, however, that the Apostle Peter is hereby condoning sin. No, not that; he is merely presenting the proper method by which Christian progress is made—that it is through faithfulness in laying down our lives in harmony with the divine will, rather than through the negative dark-age method of "austerities" and strivings to "kill nature." In this Peter agrees with Paul that if we "walk in the spirit"—which is the "answer of a good conscience toward God"—we will "not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

The more we are filled with the spirit of divine love and unselfishness, the less attention we will pay to the carnal desires of the fallen flesh, and the more we will browbeat the body in making it serve the interests of the new creature. To the extent that we fail thus to be influenced by the great principles of the Gospel, on account of our own laxity in the things of the spirit, to that extent the selfish desires of the flesh will assert themselves, and our growth in grace will be retarded.

### **"Even As I Also Overcame"**

Now let us note the way the word "overcome" is used in the New Testament in connection with the Christian life. In John 16:33 Jesus is reported as making the following statement to His disciples: "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Nowhere in the Bible does it say that Jesus "overcame" His *flesh*. No, rather He "sacrificed" His flesh in the divine service; while His warfare, and His overcoming was directed toward the world and Satan the prince of the world. The same is true with all the followers of Jesus.

In Revelation 3:21 Jesus says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." Here the Christian's overcoming is shown to be the same as that of the Master—an overcoming of the *world*. It is Satan's world that must be overcome; and this overcoming is accomplished by the spirit of God, which is the spirit of love—an overcoming of the spirit of selfishness which dominates and controls this "present evil world."

This overcoming of the world must be accomplished by every Christian who expects to be with Jesus in the Kingdom. A half-way overcoming will not do. We must be so filled with the divine spirit of unselfishness, so perfected in love, that our whole attitude in life will be out of harmony with the spirit of the world. We cannot be half for the Lord and half for the world. This spirit will lead to the sacrifice of the flesh. The flesh may at times rebel against the sacrifice; but we must keep it continually "waved" before the Lord, in the glorious knowledge that through the merit of Christ it is "holy and acceptable unto God" and "our reasonable service."

In 1 John 2:13, we read, "I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one." Here again *Satan* is represented as the one whom we

overcome. Overcoming Satan and overcoming the world would mean about the same thing, inasmuch as Satan is the "prince of this world." In this connection we are reminded of Paul's words: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." In harmony with this, we repeat that our warfare is against Satan and the world. In this struggle we "crucify the flesh with the lusts thereof" — keep it on the altar of sacrifice that it may be consumed in the divine service.

In 1 John 5:4 we read, "For whatsoever is born (begotten) of God overcometh the *world*; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Yes, through faith in the divine plan, and hearty cooperation with it, we are caused to take a course in life that is contrary to the selfish spirit of the world; and thus we overcome it. This seems to be what Paul means when he says, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12:21.) This is a practical, easily understood formula for overcoming the evil and selfishness in the world around us—it is that of putting into practice the divine precepts of love as we find them expressed in the Word of truth.

### **The Operation of the Spirit**

In order to understand clearly all that is involved in the matter of Christian transformation, it is necessary to note briefly what the Scriptures have to say concerning the work of the holy spirit in connection therewith. There is an unscriptural view on this point, held by many sincere people, which is that the holy spirit or power of God operates directly within the fallen flesh of the Christian, cleansing him from imperfection. There is nothing in the Bible to warrant this thought. Paul does say that if "through the spirit we mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live"; but this in no way implies a direct action of God's power to cleanse one from sin.

As already noted, to "mortify the deeds of the body," means to bring the body into slavery to the new mind, that it may be used as a servant of the new creature. We do this "through the spirit"; that is, we do it in obedience to the written Word of God, which sets forth the terms and conditions of the spirit-begotten life. We do it with "the sword of the spirit," by which we bring every thought into captivity to the will of God in Christ.

In 1 Peter 1:2 we read of "sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Some have misused this statement to prove that the spirit acts directly to cleanse one from sins. The text cannot be understood contrary to the plain words of Jesus, which show that we are sanctified by the *truth*. It is the spirit of God operating through the written Word, and our obedience to the leadings of the spirit which we thus contact, that sets us apart unto God. Our consecration, or setting apart, is made acceptable "through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." This shows that our sanctification does

not imply fleshly perfection, else the blood would not be necessary.

It goes without saying that the spirit of Truth, coming to us through the Word of truth, will of necessity tend to "cleanse" one from the "filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit." Indeed, the influence of the holy spirit of God must, in the very nature of things, make for righteousness and purity along all lines. What we are arguing against is the false theory that the spirit of God acts directly and miraculously upon the Christian for that purpose, or that it actually removes inherited imperfections. Anyone who is skeptical of this point will do well to look up all the uses of the word "spirit" in the Bible: we believe that to do this will convince any honest Bible Student that God's spirit does not miraculously purge the sinner of His sins.

There was a direct and miraculous operation of the spirit upon many in the days of the apostles, but not for the perfecting of the flesh. These manifestations were cataloged as "gifts"—gifts of healing, gifts of tongues, etc. But the Scriptures make it plain that these gifts were to pass away. And even in the early church the importance of these "gifts," so far as Christian growth was concerned, was discounted by Paul, who pointed out the "more excellent way" by which the spirit, operating through the truth, produces that greatest of all qualities, love.

### **"The Spirit Quickeneth"**

The preponderance of New Testament passages in which the holy spirit is mentioned, show that in the early church it was primarily considered to be an energizing influence by which the Christian was "quickened" to faithful activity in the service of God. Along this line it would be highly profitable for all the friends today to study the workings of the holy spirit, as recorded in the book of Acts. We mention this for the reason that some seem to have developed the idea that the more we are filled with the spirit of God the less we will be interested in making known the truth of God. The very reverse of this is true, according to the Bible.

God is love, hence His spirit is the spirit of love; and love is expressed in the blessing of others. The more we become like God, the more we will manifest the Godlike disposition of unselfishness in the use of the truth. Thus, from every standpoint, the spirit of God is seen to be an energizing power in our lives, producing a greater desire and greater determination to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Summing up the matter of Christian character development and overcoming: We would say that according to the Bible it is the new creature that grows, or develops; while the flesh is brought into captivity to the new mind and offered on the altar of sacrifice. And that, in sacrificing the flesh and its interests in the divine service, and for the blessing of others, we are taking a course directly contrary to the world and the spirit of the world—which is under the prince of selfishness, Satan—and thus as new creatures we "overcome the world." And in all this the holy spirit,

operating through the Word, begets, quickens and energizes us to faithfulness in sacrifice, and guides us in the way that we should go.

If we are growing spiritually it means that we are becoming increasingly enthusiastic about the things of God—His plan for us, for our brethren, and for the whole world; and we will delight to think upon the Lord and upon His Word, rejoicing in the privilege

## THE CALL OF BETHLEHEM



MIDST THIS twentieth century pretence of civilization, with all of its vaunted "science falsely so-called" and so much that is spurious, and unreal; and so much restlessness and selfishness; it is a blessed experience for the Christian to temporarily let the curtain fall on the fleeting human drama being enacted around us; and, on the sure wings of the sacred record to mentally float back, back to another age and another clime—to that silent night when the stars, the shepherds, the Bethlehem hills and the angel's song all joined to send down through the darksome centuries, that precious melody of joy, peace and good-will, which soon is to be translated into a wondrous reality, in a worldwide Messianic Kingdom soon to be established, through which pain and death, as well as all other evils that afflict mankind, will be destroyed.

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie:  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and, gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of  
wondering love,

O morning stars! together proclaim the holy birth  
And praises sing to God the King and peace to men on earth.

Yes, little town of Bethlehem; let us return thither again. Let us be simple and humble as were the shepherds of yore, and stand with them beside their waiting flocks in the still of the night, and be suffused in that celestial radiance from heaven above. But we shall not be afraid as were the startled guardians of the flocks in the fields of Judea that hallowed night; for God has revealed to us so many things that the simple, humble shepherds of Palestine knew nothing about. A knowledge of the plan of the ages has presented to us the birth of Jesus in a meaningful setting of matchless beauty, and we can follow the sure line of prophecy relating to that great event from the time when it was first made known to the most ancient servants of Jehovah God.

### A Message for the Church

"Good tidings of great joy" is not merely a proclamation for the world in the morning of the Millennial day; but it is a message for the church of Christ even in the present age. That the world needs salvation there can be no doubt, for all around us we see the forces of death ever at work. But there are some who

of making any sacrifice whatever in order that others may have the opportunity of learning something about the loving God whose spirit fills our lives. To the extent that we are "filled with the spirit," our life will be one of prayer, meditation upon God and His truth, thankfulness, sacrifice, and service. Our prayer is that this may be the happy portion of all who have presented their bodies "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God," their "reasonable service."

desire to lay hold on the salvation that God has held out to a comparatively small number in the present dispensation, and to these the "glad tidings" are now made known.

Concerning these Jesus prayed to His Heavenly Father: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil that is in the world." So then, Jesus is called "The Savior of *all* men, but especially (in a special sense) of them that *believe* (during the present age)." These are said to be in a state of salvation; for the Apostle Peter said, "By which (the gospel) also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."

Yes, the "Savior which is Christ the Lord" is the great Head of the church of God. First of all, He is the Savior of those who have left the world to follow Him. To them the apostle writes: "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and deliverance." From just what have these been saved? Hear the same writer again:

"But you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ . . . and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."—Eph. 2:1-7.

### Sitting in Heavenly Places

It is from this blessed and exalted condition—"heavenly places in Christ Jesus"—that we can best hear the call of Bethlehem. Here is where we can best catch the meaning of "good tidings of great joy," and "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." God's people standing in this condition are the ones who really know the meaning of peace and good-will. They are the real peacemakers of the world today, because they have appropriated to themselves the peace which Jesus left to them. Having His peace in their hearts, they do not try to march on ahead of the great divine plan of the centuries.

While doing God's will, they are content to await God's good time for the salvation of the world. Yet they are faithful witnesses to the fact of what God will accomplish in due time.

Have we really imbibed the truth set forth in the angel's message, and in the chorus of the heavenly host? Is Christ to us a daily Savior, a daily Deliverer? Do we feel each night that through the fleeting hours we have been walking with the Master and learning of Him? Do we realize that He has given us various victories over the flesh? Can we say that we have been kind, when we might have been unkind? that we have been forgiving, when we might have been harsh and relentless? that we have been courageous, when we might have been cowardly? that we have stood for the truth, when we might not have done so?

And do we feel the assurance that these things have taken place in our experience because Christ is our Savior, because He has given us overcoming power, because His grace is sufficient for us in every time of need? And do we rejoice in the wonderful promise that He has made, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name."—Rev. 3:12.

### **Pillars in the Church**

A pillar in the temple of God: What a wonderful thought! We have sometimes heard certain persons called "pillars in the church" of some denominational system. But when we have found out more about such "pillars" we have discovered that their function was to uphold the things of *man* rather than of God. "Ye are the temple of God," said the apostle. For over nineteen centuries God has been preparing this remarkable temple.

In the case of Solomon's temple all the material was prepared beforehand; so that eventually the beautiful structure was put together without the sound of a hammer. Even so it is with the church of God. But think of nearly two thousand years for the preparation of this temple. Think of the stones that have been used—"living stones" cut out of the quarry of the world! What chiseling and shaping has taken place. What a process there has been of beautifying these stones. And ere long they will be placed in the mighty temple of God, to shine forth in all their glory and to manifest their symmetry and perfectness to all eternity.

But where would the temple of God have been without the call of Bethlehem? For hundreds of years the prophecy concerning Bethlehem stood out as a bright light for those who could behold it. It has been truly said to have "called across the tumult of life's wild and restless sea." It called for its fulfilment, as have all God's promises, though not before the due time. The call of the prophecy of Bethlehem did not require that God set the birth of Jesus in the wrong place in His divine program of the ages. It called for

its fulfilment in the proper course of events, just as those events had been prophesied in the divine Word of truth. When it was fulfilled, it gave rise to the wonderful earthly life of Jesus, to His death and resurrection, and to the call of the church; and the building of the temple has been going on from His day until the present time.

And how by faith we look to the great Head-Stone of this temple, and realize that He can sympathize with every one of His followers who is striving to walk in the narrow way of sacrifice! Are these weary in the flesh? He too was weary. Are they affected by the sorrows of the groaning creation? He too was likewise affected. Do they feel at times that the way is a hard one? He too must have felt it when He cried out, "O My God, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me except I drink it. Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done." So then, how truly the apostle exclaims, "For we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted (tested) like as we (the members of the church) are, yet without sin." Verily, He was qualified in all respects to become the great Head of the church, and we can rejoice in that blessed fact.

### **Similarity of the Two Advents**

And there are certain points of similarity between the first and second advents of our Lord. Even as Jesus came at the first advent, quietly and unknown to the world, His presence being manifested to but a few humble persons, so it is the second time. Truly He has caught the world napping with regard to the mighty event of His presence today. And nominal Christians at large have been caught napping as well. Ah, yes,

He has come as "a thief at night,"  
To "claim His jewels fair and bright."

Yet but few, the watchers, are able to recognize His presence now, because it is only through prophecy that He is revealed.

But Jesus has not now come to be put down, nor to be treated with contempt. He is not to be "despised and rejected of men," nor to be slain on a cross the second time. All such are things of the past; for "in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God"; and He now has "the keys of hades and of death." Therefore He has come as a Conqueror, to win the world for righteousness and truth, and He is to "reign until He has put all enemies under His feet; and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

Could anything possibly be more thrilling than this great truth? To know that Jesus is now *here!* To realize that we are actually in "the day of His preparation!" How can any Christian slumber and sleep in view of such a wondrous fact as this? And the 'wise' can see that such truth is supported by the most undeniable proofs. They are aware that Christ is doing the last part of the work of the Gospel dispensation. Very thoroughly indeed the church is being tried and sifted today. If it were possible the very elect would

be deceived; but thank God, this is not possible. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." Those who truly belong to God are not trusting to themselves, nor to any superior wisdom that they believe they may possess; their trust and confidence is reposed entirely in Him who knows their weaknesses and who knows how to supply grace as needed.

### **Few Now Understand the Message**

"Good tidings of great joy"—"A Savior which is Christ the Lord"—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men"! What a message is this for the Christian! And who can fully understand it but the Christian? He it is who has heard the call of Bethlehem; yes, who has heard the heavenly call of the Bridegroom. He it is who wants to see Christ take to Himself His great power and reign—"from sea to sea, and from the rivers unto the ends of the earth." How glad he is to know that the long night of earth's sorrow and death is about

to end. How rejoiced he is to be able to discern the signs that portend the New Day. His is the satisfaction of knowing that the great God of heaven is the head of the affairs of the universe, and that the mighty plan of the ages cannot fail. Hence he can be at peace, though all around him there is strife and unrest.

Shall we not therefore return to Bethlehem once more, mentally borne there by the glowing narrative of the humble birth into the world of the Son of God? Shall we not bear to Him our gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, symbolizing the fact that we recognize His kingship, that we are willing to suffer with Him and die with Him? While He has been precious to us from the first of our religious experience, He is much more so to us now than when we first believed. He has been walking with us all along the way, providing for us and taking care of us, and we know we can rely on His unerring judgment at all times. His love has never failed and will not fail. Hence we can sing from the bottom of our hearts, "I am safe from all danger while under His wings."

## THE DAY OF VENGEANCE

*Isa. 61:2.*



OTHER features of God's plan may be more pleasant to consider than "the day of vengeance," and it is quite possible that some other topic might be much more acceptable to many enlightened Bible Students. One might discourse anywhere in Christendom about God's love, wisdom, justice or power, with full assurance that his presentation would be favorably received. He might even spend the remainder of his earthly life discussing the various non-controversial portions of the Scriptures, and retain the respect of fellow-religionists of all denominations. But this does not seem to be God's method of imparting instruction to His people at the end of this age; and for us to do so would be to return to the Babylonian practices which we discarded many years ago.

To proclaim the Lord's truth in the past has brought opposition, persecution, and sometimes death; as is evidenced by both Biblical and historical records. An example is found in Jeremiah 38: 3-6, where we read that this prophet, during the reign of Zedekiah, delivered God's message to the people of his day, saying: "Thus saith the Lord, This city shall surely be given into the hands of the king of Babylon's army. . . therefore, the princes said unto the King. . . Let this man be put to death."

Our relationship to nominal spiritual Israel today is somewhat similar to that of Jeremiah's when these words were spoken. We learn, from the Word of the Lord, that chaos is impending over Christendom, and that there is only one way of escape; namely, through repentance and obedience to the will of God. Are we as faithful in proclaiming His message *now* as was Jeremiah in his day?

### **A Day of Clouds**

"The Day of Vengeance" is the scriptural designation for the closing period of the Gospel Age, during which human institutions are depicted as disintegrating because they have outlived their usefulness. It is the time that Joel describes as a "day of clouds and thick darkness." Amos foretold it as a time of "darkness and not light, even very dark and no brightness in it." It is the day to which the Lord refers as a time of "great tribulation," and so ruinous in its character that if it were not cut short no flesh would survive its ravages.—Joel 2:2; Amos 5:20; Matt. 24:21, 22.

That this dark and gloomy day of "vengeance" thus described by the prophets is a day of judgment upon mankind, socially and nationally, is clear to students of the divine Word. This catastrophe is the counterpart of Israel's national cataclysm in A. D. 70-73, which followed their rejection of Jesus at the first advent. It is the antitype of the 'burning of the chaff'—the 'baptism of fire' of which John the Baptist spoke. And while to the world it will be an unpleasant experience, yet Bible Students have learned, through God's Word, that it is but an essential part of the economical arrangement of a benevolent Creator, and is destined to do a threefold work:

(1) It will destroy the works of "wood, hay and stubble" of those who are to be saved "so as by fire."—1. Cor. 3:15.

(2) It will, as it were, "confess over the heads of the antitypical "scape-goat" company the partially willful sins of the people, though leaving upon mankind the scars of sin to be eradicated during the Messianic Kingdom.—Lev. 16:21.

(3) It will destroy much worthless material, in preparation for the coming new order.

For sixty centuries God has not interfered with the will of man, except when necessary to prevent him

from deranging the munificent design of his Creator. But now, that sin has almost accomplished the purpose for which it was permitted, God takes a hand in human affairs; and He assures us, through His Word, that He will so direct the selfish interests of the nations of earth as to bring about a complete collapse of the semblance of order that now exists, and will thus prepare men's hearts for the universal reign of the Christ.

### **Let Us Examine Ourselves**

Some questions of paramount importance to the Christian today are: Am I keeping my covenant with the Lord, as the Lord would have me do? Am I faithfully preaching the divine message of the hour, or am I listlessly drifting away from the present truth and the purpose for which it is intended?

Our knowledge of the significance of the stormclouds which now are everywhere in evidence, places upon each of us a responsibility that cannot be ignored without our suffering the consequences—which means that we will receive but a secondary reward, or perhaps no reward at all!

Brother Russell, considering this subject, said:

"The object in proclaiming the day of vengeance is not, therefore, to enlighten the world, which can appreciate only the logic of events and will have no other, but to forewarn, forearm, comfort, encourage and strengthen the household of faith, so that they may not be dismayed, but may be in full harmony and sympathy with even the severest measures of divine discipline in the chastening of the world, seeing by faith the glorious outcome in the precious fruit of righteousness and enduring peace."—SS. Vol. IV, pp. 14.

To follow in the footsteps of Jesus means that we must go directly contrary to the dictation of the flesh. This is evidenced by the history of Jesus' own ministry. Soon after His baptism He began to preach an unpopular message. It will be remembered that it was in the synagogue, at His home town of Nazareth, that He was given the scroll of Isaiah from which He read from the 61st chapter: "The spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim glad tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to publish a release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to dispense freedom to the oppressed; to proclaim an era of acceptance with the Lord."—Luke 4:18, 19, *Diaglott*.

Commenting on the scripture, He said, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your ears." The record is that all present "bore witness to the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth." But how short-lived was their appreciation of Him! As soon as they found that He was not going to perform miracles in their midst, as He had done elsewhere, they turned against Him, drove Him out of their little city, and desired to kill Him.

### **The Entire Commission**

The question now arises: why didn't Jesus read the entire commission contained in this passage from Isaiah? The answer is that it was not yet "due time" for the fulfilment of the remainder of the prophecy—

concerning "the day of vengeance." However, it was time,

(a) "To proclaim glad tidings to the meek"—the poor in spirit—those hungering and thirsting after righteousness;

(b) "To bind up the broken-hearted"—to tell those in trouble that by and by the Kingdom would bring the opening of the blind eyes, deliverance to the oppressed, and the release of those in the prisonhouse of death; and

(c) "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord"—wherein sacrifices that "speak better things than that of the blood of the bulls and goats" might be offered.

It was not the time in Jesus' day for the preaching of "the day of vengeance," because the day of God's vengeance was to come about as a natural result of the rejection of the message of the Kingdom, which Jesus had then only begun to proclaim. The latter part of the commission of Isaiah 61, therefore, would not be due until the end of the Gospel age, when God's vengeance would be impending because His professed people would have failed to do His will. At that time the remaining members of the Christ body on earth would have scriptural authority for the proclamation of the "vengeance" message, which Jesus refrained from reading in the synagogue at Nazareth.

Again the prophet Isaiah, in his 52nd chapter, foretold the present-day activities of the "feet" members of the Anointed, when he said, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him, that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"—Isa. 52:7.

The import of this prophecy seems to be that so long as there are any feet members of the Christ on earth, the work of proclaiming to Zion "Thy God reigneth" will be in order. And this fact cannot be intelligently announced unless we support the proclamation with a presentation of detailed evidence.

### **John the Baptist a Type**

Our present work, seemingly was typed by the work of John the Baptist, who began his ministry with the announcement: "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" Later he stated: "There standeth One among you, whom ye know not"; and "He that cometh after me is mightier than I. . . whose fan is in His hands, and He will thoroughly purge His floor and gather His wheat into His garner." (John 1:26; Matt. 3:11, 12.)

Does this not seem to teach that the antitypical John will consist of such persons as will be making a similar announcement today, and that this work will continue until the dark night has come?

The day of vengeance is the natural and unavoidable results of the beginning of the reign of Zion's God; and the proclamation, by force of circumstances, is largely a matter of calling Zion's attention to the things written and the fulfilment thereof, as seen in the signs of the times.—Matt. 11:3.

John the Baptist possibly thought that Jesus would immediately take steps to release him from prison; but

(Continued on page 23)

# CHILDREN'S HOUR



## THE COMING OF JESUS

**T**HE coming of Jesus to the earth was the greatest event the world had known in four thousand years, began Uncle Eb. The prophets of Israel had foretold that Christ would come, and the Jews had long expected this. It was a familiar household story with them. Fathers and mothers had told it to their children, and when the latter had grown up they in turn told it to their children. The Jews had long been under the power of the Roman government, and greatly desired to regain their independence once more. They believed that Christ—or the Messiah, as they called Him—would come and give them the freedom for which they longed, and that He would forthwith make them the greatest nation on the earth.

The Jews had been subject to other governments, prior to Rome. In earlier days they had come under the sway of Babylon, then Medo-Persia, and later Greece. Had they as a nation proved loyal and true to the Lord their God, He would not have permitted their enemies thus to triumph over them. To Zedekiah, the last of the Jewish kings, God had said: "You are a profane, wicked king; and the time has come for your wickedness to have an end. The crown shall be taken away from you and the diadem removed. Then I will overturn, overturn, overturn the kingdom, and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is, and I will give it to Him."—Ezek. 21:25-27.

Accordingly, the Lord did take away the crown from Zedekiah; and then He also overturned the Jewish nation three times—giving it over to Medo-Persia, then Greece, and finally Rome—just as He said that He would do; and the Roman power, in A. D. 70, completed the overthrow and dispersed the Jews from Palestine, so that they ceased to be a nation from that time on to the present.

### **How Jesus Was Born in Bethlehem**

When Jesus was born Augustus Cæsar was the emperor of Rome and the master of the world. This monarch issued a command that all the people should be taxed; and in order to be enrolled and pay their taxes, each person was required to go to his native town or city. In the town of Nazareth, in Galilee, there lived a man named Joseph who was espoused to be married to a Jewish maiden by the name of Mary. Joseph and Mary were both descendents of David. Because Joseph's native town was Bethlehem, he and Mary started out for that place. As you know, the travelling in those days was done either on foot, or

by means of donkeys or camels. At any rate, these two persons made the journey in safety and duly arrived in Bethlehem.

Now at this time of enrollment and paying of taxes Bethlehem was filled with people. All the lodging places were occupied, and no accommodations could be obtained in any inn. However, these weary travellers found a shed used for sheltering cattle, and were glad to find rest in the mangers of this humble place. So here, in a manger, took place the most important birth that had ever occurred in this world in which we live—the birth of Jesus, the Son of God, the One whom all the mighty prophets of Israel had foretold.

Out on the star-lit hillsides of Judea there were certain shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night, as is the custom of eastern shepherds even to this day. Suddenly a great and wonderful light shone round about these men, which made them very much afraid. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to them and said: "Do not have any fear, for I am bringing you good and joyful news, which all people shall know in due time. For Christ the Savior is born this very day in Bethlehem, the city of David. And you will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." Then suddenly there was heard a great company of angels praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Then the shepherds thought it might be well for them to go to Bethlehem and see what had taken place. So they set out on this journey and arrived at the town of Bethlehem and found exactly what the angel said would be there, that is, the babe Jesus and His mother Mary. So they went away and told others of the wonderful things that had taken place.

### **Wise Men From the East**

Sometime after Jesus' birth there were certain wise men, called *magi*, who had come from some eastern country to find the Savior. They went to Herod, who was king or the ruler in Jerusalem—an appointee of Cæsar—and said to Him, "Where is He that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him?"

Now when King Herod heard these things he was much troubled in his mind. Probably he thought that this new king would aim to set Himself up in opposition to him and to Rome. So Herod gathered to-

gether the chief priests and the scribes and asked them where Christ should be born.

The reply made to him was: "In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet: And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel."

Then Herod called the wise men and asked them at what time the star appeared. And when they had answered this question, he told them to go to Bethlehem and search for the young child, and that when they had found Him to come back and tell the king so that he also might go and worship Him. This saying of Herod's was utterly false, for it was his intention to kill the child Jesus.

So the wise men set out to go to Bethlehem, where they finally found Jesus in a house—not in the manger as did the shepherds, as this was perhaps sometime after the actual birth of the child Jesus. They entered into the house and saw Jesus and His mother Mary. They bowed down and worshipped Him; and then they presented to Him their treasures of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Then by means of a dream—as these wise men were firm believers in the reliability of dreams—God warned the *magi* that they should not return to Herod. So they departed to their own country by another way. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been mocked by the wise men, sent out soldiers and ordered them to kill all the young children that were in Bethlehem or near by; so there was great mourning and grief among the people. And this fulfilled a saying of one of the prophets of Israel.

In order to save Jesus from being killed God told Joseph and Mary to take Him down into Egypt, and to keep Him there until they received further instruction from the Lord. At a later time, when Herod was dead, Jesus was brought back to Palestine and lived in the town of Nazareth, in the province of Galilee; for it had been written by one of the prophets that He should be called a Nazarene.

### **The Life of Jesus**

The life of Jesus is the most interesting and unusual life story of which we have any account. One day, when he was but twelve years of age, Jesus was found in the Temple discussing deep problems with the doctors of the law, hearing them and asking them questions. In due time He grew up, and continued to increase in favor with God and with men. At length He reached thirty years of age and began His work.

The forerunner or announcer of Jesus as the Son of God was John the Baptist. At the age of thirty Jesus came to him and requested to be baptised in the river Jordan. So John performed this service for Him. As Jesus came up out of the water John saw the heavens opened, and the spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. Then a voice from heaven said: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

After being immersed in Jordan, Jesus went out into the wilderness to fast and pray. He had not

eaten anything for forty days and nights. So Satan, who knew Jesus could perform miracles, said to Him, "Turn these stones into bread." But Jesus replied, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Later Satan suggested to Him: "Go into Jerusalem and jump down from the pinnacle of the Temple. It won't hurt you, and it will surprise the people who then will believe in you." But Jesus answered, "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Finally the evil one said, "Well, just worship me and acknowledge my power and authority, and I'll give you all the kingdoms of earth." But the Son of God again foiled Satan, saying, "It is written: Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Then the devil left Him, and angels came and ministered unto Him.

### **His Ministry**

For the next three and a half years Jesus went throughout Palestine doing good in many ways. He healed the sick, cast out evil spirits from persons who were possessed by them, opened the eyes of the blind, cured the deaf, the lame and the palsied, also those afflicted with the disease of leprosy. Then He raised three persons from the state of death. One of these was Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha of Bethany, who were personal friends of Jesus.

Jesus called certain ones to follow Him. Twelve of these, specially called and appointed, were called apostles. Some of them had been fishermen. He told them that He would make them "fishers of men." He also told them that to follow Him would mean hardship and suffering for them. He said the way leading to life was a narrow and difficult one. Then He foretold that He Himself would be put to death, and that they would suffer the hatred of men for His sake.

Jesus taught His disciples many things in short stories, called parables. In one of these He told of a man who planted good seed in his field. Then an enemy came in and sowed tares. The Master said to leave them both till the end of the age, which would be a "harvest time," when they would be separated. We know what this story means, for our Lord explained it. It was the Lord who sowed the good seed of truth. Then came Satan, who sowed the weeds or tares. Now at this end of the age has come the "harvest," and God is now gathering out the wheat (His own people), and the others who are not true Christians will go into a great time of trouble, called "fire" in the Bible.

Another of Jesus' parables was that of the Prodigal Son. This story teaches us that the world has wandered away from God into the "far country" of sin; but that some day the world will return to God, who will be merciful and will forgive men of their sins, and will restore to them the conditions of the old first home in Eden: then there will be a great time of feasting and rejoicing.—Isa. 25:10.

Still another of His parables is that of the Rich man and Lazarus. Some people think this teaches that there is a hell of literal fire; but actually it teaches

nothing of the kind. The Master was simply comparing the Jewish people to a rich man who lived in luxury; and the Gentiles (all peoples outside of Israel). He compared to a *poor* man. The hell of "fire" which is spoken of represents the state of suffering the Jews fell into after God cast them off as a nation. But eventually God's favor will return to the Jews, and once again they will become a great people.

### **The Death and Resurrection of Jesus**

At the end of three and a half years of ministry Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to die. The religious leaders of the Jews were jealous of Him, and falsely accused Him. So He yielded Himself to their power. They took Him before Pilate, the Roman governor, who would have released Him had it not been for fear of the people. Finally Pilate gave the command to put Jesus to death, and this they did by crucifying Him.

Jesus died on Mount Calvary, between two thieves. At the time of His death there came a great earthquake, and there was darkness over all the land for three hours. When the Roman centurion saw these things, he exclaimed, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

Jesus had foretold that He would rise again from the dead, but His disciples had not grasped the meaning of His words. His body was placed in a new tomb; and a guard of Roman soldiers was set to watch the place, to prevent anyone from taking the body away.

But all the precautions were in vain, for an angel of the Lord came down and rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb. His face was bright like the lightning, and his garments were white as snow. And the soldiers who were on guard fell down like dead men before him.

Two women—Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene—had gone to the tomb. They saw that the great slab of stone at the entrance had been taken away. While they stood there wondering, the angel spoke to them. He said, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come and see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead. He has gone to Galilee, and you will find Him there."

While the women were on their way to join the disciples, Jesus Himself met them; and they knew Him. They then realized that He was indeed alive. Later He appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem, and convinced them. For forty days Jesus was on earth before He ascended into heaven; and during that period He could now appear or disappear at will, for He was no longer a human being. He had given up His human body in death, for ever. After His resurrection He was a spirit being, with a spiritual body. He could enter in through the doors while they were bolted and barred. He could talk to His disciples, and then instantly vanish right out of their sight.

Finally the risen Lord led His disciples out to Bethany; and while He talked to them He lifted up His

hands and blessed them. Then suddenly He was parted from them and ascended up into heaven. And while they stood gazing into heaven, an angel said to them: "This same Jesus shall come back again, in like manner to that which you have seen Him go into heaven." Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem to await certain things, which Jesus had told them would occur.

### **Other Facts About Jesus**

The life of Jesus was the most wonderful life ever lived on earth. His birth was a miraculous one. He was not the son of Joseph, but was the Son of God. In order to be born in Bethlehem He gave up the glory of a higher nature which He had enjoyed in heaven before He came to earth. Before He came to earth He was the highest being in heaven, next to God Himself. He was the first being whom God ever created. Using the power committed to Him, this pre-human Jesus had made the worlds. Yet He was of humble disposition and did not desire to have any greater glory than His Father had given Him. In this respect He was very different from Lucifer, who later became Satan, and who did aspire to a higher estate and who wanted to be equal to God Himself.

While Jesus was on earth He wrought the mightiest miracles ever performed. On one occasion He fed five thousand men, besides women and children, with only five loaves and two fishes. He spoke to a fig tree and caused it to wither away. He gave sight to a man who had been born blind. He walked on the sea of Galilee. By the word of His mouth Jesus filled the net of some of His disciples with great fishes. By the spoken word He healed a nobleman's dying son. He turned water into wine. And He raised to life a man who had been dead four days.

But the thing above all others that Jesus came to earth for, was to *die* for the human family, as their ransom. In order to do this He had to be perfect, and He was perfect. He had kept the law that God gave to the Jews, and thus had proved Himself worthy. Because Adam had sinned, and had brought sin and death into the world, all men were condemned to death. Jesus took this death sentence upon Himself, so that all the human family may be released from the death sentence in due time. He is the great ransom sacrifice for all the people of earth who have lived in all ages.

Because Jesus "humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore God highly exalted Him, giving Him a name that is above every name; so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and of things on earth, and of things under the earth; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

### **QUESTIONS:**

Had the Jewish prophets foretold the coming of Jesus?—Acts 3:21.

To what government were the Jews subject when Jesus came at His first advent?—Luke 2:1

Where was Jesus born? (Matt. 2:1.) What prophecy did this fulfil?—Matt. 2:5,6; Micah 5:2.

Was Jesus the son of Joseph? (Luke 1:35; John 3:16.) Was He the son of Mary?—Luke 1:27-35.

What did the shepherds see out in the fields the night of Jesus' birth? (Luke 2:8.) What did the angel say to them?—Luke 2:10-12.

What words did the heavenly choir sing?—Luke 2:13,14.

What did the shepherds do?—Luke 2:15-18.

Who were the magi or wise men? (Matt. 2:1,2.) Why were they looking for Christ?—Matt. 2:2.

Who was Herod? (Matt. 2:1.) Did he want to worship Christ?

How did the wise men mock Herod? (Matt. 2:12.) What did Herod then do?—Matt. 2:16.

How was the life of Jesus saved?—Matt. 2:13-15.

Where was Jesus found at twelve years of age?—Luke 2:46.

Where was Jesus baptized? (Matt. 3:13.) Who baptized Him?—Matt. 3:13-16.

How did Satan tempt Jesus?—Matt. 4:1-11.

Tell some of the miracles that Jesus performed?—Matt. 8:13-16; 9:18-33; John 11:1-44; 2:1-10; Luke 8:41-56.

How many apostles did Jesus have? (Luke 6:13.) Can you name them?—Luke 6:13-16.

What is a parable? (Matt. 13:3.) Tell about the prodigal son, and the wheat and tares. (Matt. 13:24-30.) The rich man and Lazarus.—Luke 16:19-31.

How was Jesus put to death? (Matt. 27:35.) Why did He die?—1 Cor. 15:22-26; 1 Tim. 2:6.

Tell about the resurrection.—Matt. 28; Luke 24.

Tell about the ascension.—Acts 1:3-11.

### Christian Life—(Continued from page 19)

when He did not, and failed even to visit him there, his faith began to waver, as was evidenced by his calling to himself the two disciples and sending them to make inquiry of Jesus.—Matt. 11:1-6.

A similar disappointment has come to the Lord's people of our day, and with almost the same effects, viz., a lack of faith in "The Presence of the Lord."

A scriptural axiom is that light was never intended to be put under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and the church in the flesh is that candlestick.

In ancient times, when God revealed His intention to deal severely with His professed people because of their waywardness, the message served a *dual* purpose, viz., to test the loyalty of His prophets, and also to warn the disobedient of corrective measures about to be applied. If we are His servants our present duty is obvious.

In the case of God's typical people, the greater responsibility rested upon their *leaders*, as was evidenced by the Word of the Lord as recorded in Ezek. 33:1-9;

"The word of the Lord came unto me saying: Son of man, speak to the children of Israel. . . say unto them, When I bring the sword upon the land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts and set him for their watchman; if when he seeth the sword come upon

the land, he blow the trumpet and *warn* the people, then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet and take not warning. . . his blood shall be upon his own head; but if the watchman see the sword come and blow not the trumpet, and the people be *not warned*, if the sword come and take any person away from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the hand of the watchman."

### The People Should be Warned

While the foregoing was addressed to natural Israel, we believe that it has a very special application to the leaders of spiritual Israel, because of its typical significance.

Our Lord, toward the end of His earthly career administered what seems to have been His most severe reprimand to the leaders of Israel—those who "sat in Moses' seat"—when He said: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you pay tithes of mint, and dill and cummin, but neglect the more important matters of the law—justice, compassion, and faith. These things you ought to practice, and not to omit those."

"Woe unto you. . . because you purify the outside of the cup. . . but within they are full of rapine and injustice. . . on account of this . . . all the innocent blood, being shed upon the land, will come upon you; from the blood of Abel, the just, to the blood of Zachariah . . . whom you will murder between the sanctuary and the altar."—Matt. 23:23-35.

Remembering that "these things occurred unto Israel (typically), and were written for *our* admonition, on whom the ends of the age have come," it gives us reason for much earnest prayer and serious thought.

In this chapter Jesus summed up the sins of Israel's leaders, as a basis for His condemnation which He was about to pronounce upon them and their nation. It is as if He were laying down a precedent for a future decision at the end of the Gospel Age.

This record, we believe, justifies the conclusion that unfaithful leaders today may likewise be required to carry the burden of the people's partially wilful sins. After Aaron had *typically* cleansed the people of Adamic sin, by offering the blood of the bullock and the Lord's goat, he confessed over the head of the live goat the (partially wilful) sins of Israel, and then sent it away to die in the wilderness. "If the watchman see the sword come, and blow *not* the trumpet, . . . and the sword come and take any person away. . . his blood will I require at the hand of the watchman."

Those in the type carefully kept the *letter* of the law; but our Lord said that they failed to do the most important thing, viz., "justice, compassion and faith." To refrain from proclaiming the message of the Lord to those for whom it is intended, would be the greatest injustice that one could practise upon any people. To neglect to warn our brethren of pitfalls and snares, would indicate a lack of compassion for fellow members of the household of faith; and to take no action toward meeting the responsibilities of the hour would be tantamount to a denial of faith itself.—*Contributed.*



# International Sunday School Lessons



## EZRA TEACHING THE LAW OF GOD

Dec. 15—Ezra 7:10; Neh. 8:1-3,  
5, 6; 8-12.

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

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And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel.

And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate, from the morning until midday, before the men and the women and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law...

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

And Ezra blessed the Lord the great God: and all the people answered Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

So they read the book, in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha (governor), and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not nor weep. For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.

Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved.

And all the people went their way, to eat and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

**GOLDEN TEXT: Thy words have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee,—  
Psalms 119:11.**



**W**HAT rejoicing there was among the Israelites when they heard the law of God again, from the mouth of Ezra the priest. Here they were in their own land once more, and the law had been read and expounded to them as of yore. Truly it had been hard to sing the songs of Zion while in a strange land; but now they were back home, and they could sing for joy. Everything looked bright before them, and their trials seemed to be all in the past. They felt grateful to God and they wanted to hear again and to know His will, as expressed in the sacred book of the law.

What a wonderful thing is liberty—freedom to serve God, as we feel that He would have us do! The Jews had lost their liberty in Babylon for a long time, and now they could appreciate it all the more. They were no longer surrounded by heathen idols and symbols; they were at liberty to worship God in their own way, without let or hindrance. The law of God sounded sweet in their ears. It gave assurance that He was still with those who loved Him, and would show His favor to them.

Ezra carefully explained the law of God, so that the people could understand it. It was no mere ritual that he went through. The Apostle Paul said, "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an

unknown tongue." This shows that Paul was a real teacher; for always the aim of the teacher is to make things as simple as possible. So Ezra broke the words of life as bread to the people, and took pains to clearly expound each item of the divine law so that the words might be unctuous and blessed to the hearts of the hearers.

Bible Students today realize that through the long Dark Ages the truth of God's divine plan and purpose has been hidden under a mass of human tradition, superstition and error. Those who possessed portions of the sacred Scriptures didn't dare to reveal the fact under pain of death. Truly the powers of darkness were exalted at that time. Then came the Protestant reformation, with some gleamings of light; though belief in eternal torment for the unsaved, and other egregious errors, still survived. The fuller measure of light was to come in God's due time, but there was to be a long wait for it.

But now the light has come—for those who will receive it. The Word of God has been elucidated to us in a wonderful manner. Now we can both read the Bible and understand it. It is no longer a book of unsolved mystery. Truths shut up and hidden till the end of the age—truths concerning the times in which we live, and the great facilities and advantages we employ—are now clearly made known. The truth now due reveals the fact that we are nearing the end of the old systems of earth, that the rising of the great Sun of righteousness is nigh at hand, and that the great and glorious day of universal blessing will dispell all the woes of the human race. We realize that God is speaking as He never spake to us before, until we got the truth.

When the people heard the words of God's law explained to them they were told to rejoice, and they did. Their dirge of sorrow and mourning was over. So should i

be with us today. The joy of the Lord should be our strength, even as it was their strength. The Master Himself said that we should look up and lift up our heads (in rejoicing attitude) when we see our deliverance drawing nigh, in this time of the end. And ere long comes the revealing of divine truth to the whole world. When the people come to realize that God is good, merciful, loving and kind, what a great time of happiness there will be throughout the earth.

QUESTIONS:

*What specially qualified Ezra to be an instructor of the people?*

*Why was the reading of the law specially important at that time?*

*How did the book of the law in Ezra's time compare with the message of the truth today?*

*Why should God's people now rejoice?*

*Explain the verse, "The joy of the Lord is your strength."*

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**MALACHI FORETELLS  
A NEW DAY**

Dec. 22—Mal. 3:1-12.

Behold, I will send My Messenger, and He shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

But 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 fuller's 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.

Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hire-

ling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith the Lord of hosts.

For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from Mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But, ye said, Wherewith shall we return?

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house; and prove Me now therewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room to receive it

Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.

And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

**GOLDEN TEXT: Behold, I will send My Messenger, and He shall prepare the way before Me.—Mal. 3:1.**



APPARENTLY the returned Israelites had declined religiously, during the absence of Nehemiah the governor at the court of the king of Persia; for, after his return to Jerusalem there was what may be termed a revival of interest. Malachi's prophecy, therefore, may have served primarily to reprove the people at that time, as well as to set forth a prophetic lesson for the Christians of the Gospel age. From an enlightening commentary on this subject we quote the following:

"The Golden Text is the key to

this lesson. The Messenger whom Jehovah would send is the Christ—not alone the man Christ Jesus, who was pre-eminently the divine Messenger, but inclusively the whole Christ, the church, the body, the under-associates, with Jesus the Head. This messenger appears in the two following capacities: First, as the suffering one, the sacrificing one; and secondly, as the anointed, glorified one, the king, the restorer.

"The work of suffering belongs to this Gospel age, the reign of glory belongs to the Millennial age. The suffering began with the consecration of our Lord and Master at the time of His baptism into death, and His personal sacrifice was finished at Calvary. During this Gospel age, in harmony with the divine plan, our Redeemer has accepted a 'little flock' from the world, upon their renouncement of sin, their acceptance of Him as their justification, and their consecration of their all to His service, 'to be dead with Him' that they might also live with Him, 'to suffer with Him' that they might also reign with Him."

Before the great blessings of the Millennial age are poured out upon the world, comes the dread "time of trouble" foretold in the Scriptures. The "fire of God's jealousy" will be poured out upon the present systems. This is a symbolic fire, and is intended not merely to destroy but also to purify; and after its work is accomplished the Lord will "turn to the people a pure language," a message that will clearly set forth an understanding of the mighty plan of salvation which God has had in mind all through the ages.

The prophet asks, "But who shall abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth?" Who indeed? For this time of special judgment, testing and trial is to "try every man's work of what sort it is." This applies first of all to the antitypical Levites, who are the prospective members of the "bride" of Christ; whose faith, patience, diligence in service, and love, must all be prov-

## CHRISTMAS LESSON

Dec. 29—Matt. 2:1-12.

ed to the satisfaction of the Lord, before they receive the high exaltation to future office. And secondly, it applies to "the virgins, her companions that follow her," and who are said to "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, serving night and day in His temple."

And finally the trying of "every man's work" applies to the world of mankind; for the world will be judged in righteousness, each sin being promptly punished and each effort toward uprightness being duly rewarded, during the incoming Messianic Kingdom. Thus the entire human family will have the fullest opportunity of reconciliation with God, and each member thereof will have the best possible chance to gain the inestimable boon of everlasting life on the earthly plane.

According to the signs of the times it will not be long till the Lord's jewels will all be made up, meanwhile God's people should "speak often one to another," "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together . . . as ye see the Day approaching." To them is committed the oracles of God, that they may know the times in which they live and that they may prepare themselves for their future office as reigning kings and priests with Christ, who are to bless the world with righteousness and everlasting life.

## QUESTIONS:

*Who is "the Messenger of the covenant" to whom the Prophet Malachi refers?*

*In what way is "silver" refined and purified by the Messenger?*

*Who are the sons of Levi?*

*Who are the "jewels"? Where are they referred to in Revelation?*

*Explain, "Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old."*

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

Saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him.

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet,

And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judea, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel.

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also.

When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it stood over where the young child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding joy.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

**GOLDEN TEXT: Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.—Matt. 1:21.**



IT IS amazing how foolishly wicked people can act. Had Herod actually believed that the Christ was in Bethlehem, he should have known that no power of his could harm the divinely protected Son of God. But he reasoned selfishly and superficially. His one idea was to preserve his own position; and in order to do so, he cast all scruples of conscience and even common sense to the winds. Those opposed to the truth of God have ever acted in like manner, according to their power and ability.

Whoever the eastern sages were, and whatever may have been the character of the star that guided them, they certainly seem to have been actuated by a sincere motive; and they obeyed God's directions. It was no light manner to undertake a long journey in those days. Just why they were directed first to Jerusalem, we are not told. At any rate they eventually found the infant Savior in Bethlehem—but not in the manger where the shepherds were told by God to look for Him, for the account distinctly says that Jesus was in a house when the magi found Him. Evidently some considerable time had been consumed by the wise men in going, first to Jerusalem, and then to Herod. Finding the young child they presented to Him the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Then the sages were "warned of God in a dream" not to go back to Herod. Being Magians, they believed in dreams, and therefore returned to their own country by another route. Thus Herod was foiled in the pursuance of his nefarious scheme to destroy the Christ child.

Truly God's ways seem strange to those who do not understand them. Such a momentous event as the birth of Christ might have been spectacularly announced to all the kings of the earth; but that was not God's way. Out in the fields of Judea the great God of the universe made known the mighty event to a few lowly shepherds. It was to them the angel said, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be

to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord! And then in their hearing the angelic host sang, "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace; good-will toward men!"

The virgin birth of Jesus is one of the great facts of the Bible. To deny His immaculate conception is to deny one of the basic truths of the Scriptures. The great doctrine of the Ransom depends on this; for if Jesus had been the son of Joseph, he would have been imperfect and could not have redeemed any one. Therefore, the angel, when announcing the birth of Jesus to Mary, was most explicit. He said, "The holy spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also the holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."—Luke 1:35.

The message of the angel is one of good cheer. All through the long centuries of sin and death the one hope for humanity has lain in Christ the Savior. No human power can accomplish much while the death sentence holds sway in the earth. That Jesus came to earth and gave His life for men, and was raised from the dead, is indeed "good tidings of great joy"; and in due time it shall go "to all people." When His great Kingdom of righteousness is established, all the people of the world will raise the "jubilate Deo" of "Glory to God in the highest," and they then will experience the blessed condition of "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

Today God's people look for the early establishment of the divine Kingdom, for there are indications that this evil age of the world's history is about to close and another one shall begin. Biblical prophecy affirms that this age will terminate with wide-spread trouble on all continents of the earth. A "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation," will break down the systems instituted by men; and then on a sure, mighty and enduring foundation of truth, justice, love and peace, the God of

heaven will set up His own glorious regime.

This is the great hope that animates the Christian today; for he realizes that "man's extremity will prove God's opportunity"; and all that man cannot do for himself God is ready and willing to do for him. When the death sentence is cancelled and the law of God is established, man will have a chance to win back life and all the perfections of his being lost through the fall into sin and death.

QUESTIONS:

*Who were the Magi, and why did they want to find Christ?*

*How did Herod reason? Could he by any possibility have killed the infant Jesus?*

*Of what importance is the doctrine of Christ's virgin birth?*

*What gifts can we bring to the King today?*

*What special point of similarity is there between the first and second advents of Christ?*

♦ ♦ ♦  
**GOD LEADS HIS PEOPLE**  
**New Year's Lesson**

Jan. 5—Psa. 23; John 10:4, 5;  
11-14

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

\* \* \*

And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice.

And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers...

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.

But he that is an hireling, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine.

As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep.

And other sheep have I, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

**GOLDEN TEXT: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.—Psa. 23:6.**

**P**SALM twenty-three tells us of Jehovah as the great leader and sustainer of His people, who are pictured as sheep. The chief qualities of sheep are meekness and docility. They know their shepherd and obey his voice. He looks after their best interests, and they have confidence in him.

The first thing then is to be able to realize that we are sheep of the Great Shepherd. If this be the case, we can say with the Psalmist, "I shall not want." In regard to temporal necessities the Christian knows that "bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure." (Isa.33:16.) He will not be left to walk in darkness like the world of mankind, for he has "the light of life."

But the true Christian shall not lack for correction and discipline, for "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." (Heb. 12:6.) Nor shall he lack for sympathy; for the Lord has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5.) And then, too,

(Continued on page 30)

# Talking Things Over



## GOOD-BYE, BROTHER HOEVELER

Yes, he has left us; but just for a moment,  
Just while the shadows sweep out for the Dawn,  
Just while the light hoods the great mountain summits,  
Just while the crowning with glory is on;  
Thus he has left us—but what he has won!

Servant of God, your trials are ended,  
The wilderness journey is over at last,  
The winds are all banished, peace reigns in the silence,  
The trail that led on to the Kingdom is past;  
A trail that drew light from a radiance vast.

No more will your voice yield its message of blessing  
To minds that responded, to hearts caused to sing;  
No more will you bring us thoughts golden with  
treasure.

No more will your smile suggest flowers of spring.  
Your secret in service was love for your King.

Good-night! and good-bye! will you wait for our coming  
Beyond the pearl portals where radiant you'll stand?  
Ah, then, you would miss us if night should engulf us  
And if we should fail to arrive on that strand,  
To join the immortals who dwell in that land.

The foregoing poem by Brother Walter Sargeant was composed for and read at the funeral service of Brother Joseph H. Hoeveler, who, at the time he was stricken with his last illness in the early part of September, was serving as Business Manager of *The Dawn* office. Brother Hoeveler passed beyond the veil on Wednesday afternoon, November the 13th. The funeral was held Saturday afternoon, November the 16th. The service was conducted by Brother W. F. Hudgings, assisted by four other elders of the Greater New York congregation of Associated Bible Students. Interment was in Rutherford, N. J., a suburb of New York City.

Brother Hoeveler was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., in the year 1867, and at an early age entered a Benedictine monastery near Pittsburgh where he received his education, with the view of becoming a Catholic priest. His plans were changed and he entered the business world. Twenty-seven years ago he accepted Present Truth, made a full consecration of himself to the Lord, and he kept his sacrifice securely bound to the altar until it was wholly consumed.

Brother Hoeveler was living in St. Louis, Mo., when he came into the truth, and for a number of

years he served there as secretary of the local ecclesia. Through his service in this capacity he became intimately acquainted with Pastor Russell, and they were close friends. Later he spent considerable time in the pilgrim service, both in the United States and Europe.

Brother and Sister Hoeveler were living in Chicago, Ill., at the time the new ecclesia known as the Chicago Bible Students was formed in 1933; and they were among the original members of that group—Brother Hoeveler serving them as an elder until June, 1934 when they accepted an invitation to come to Brooklyn to serve in connection with the efforts being made by the brethren of *The Dawn*. In October of that same year he was elected to eldership in the Greater New York ecclesia of Associated Bible Students.

Being enthusiastic about Present Truth, as we originally learned it, and, convinced that *The Dawn* is being used of the Lord to uphold this blessed truth at this time, when it is being assailed from so many quarters, Brother Hoeveler rejoiced in his privilege of cooperating in this work. Every opportunity of service that came his way, whether it was giving a discourse or sweeping the office floor, was to him an esteemed privilege and a holy work; and he put his utmost into it. May God bless his memory to all of us who knew him well, and give us strength to follow his example of faithfully sacrificing self, even as he followed the Lord.

Sister Hoeveler's strong faith in the Lord and in His truth enables her to actually rejoice that Brother Hoeveler, having "run well," has now finished his course with joy. But she will miss him, and will need an abundance of the Lord's grace to make up this temporary loss in her life. To this end the prayers of the friends will be appreciated by her. She wishes to express her deep gratitude for the many flowers, telegrams and letters so kindly sent to her by the brethren. Sister Hoeveler will continue to serve at *The Dawn* office.

## 'HEART APPEALS' NOT A SAFE GUIDE

The Psalmist tells us that the "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." A letter received recently has helped us to appreciate more fully than ever before just how true are these words of the inspired writer. The letter has to do with the false theory of Universal Reconciliation. Commenting on certain arguments that had been raised against it, the writer of the letter says: "These arguments seem logical, and doubtless there is much that can be said both for and against it, but Universal Reconciliation

*appeals to my heart."*

This expression opens up a vast and tremendously important field of thought, and one which may reveal the secret back of many departures from Present Truth, as well as the refusal of those in darkness to accept the truth. How many mothers have refused to believe that the dead are actually dead—irrespective of what the Bible says—simply because it appealed to their *hearts* to think of their deceased children as being in heaven with the angels. Has not this same "heart appeal" caused millions of others, besides mothers, to reject the Bible testimony—so plainly set forth in the Word—that "the wages of sin is death"?

It is but natural to rebel against punishment, even though that punishment may be just. Death is a horrible thing, and to camouflage its reality by claiming that it is but a gateway into some other, and probably better form of life, has made a powerful heart appeal. Is not this same heart appeal revealed in the original transgression of the divine law back in Eden? God had said plainly, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Now there was no occasion to mistake the meaning of these plain words. Only human philosophy, prompted by the deceitfulness of the depraved human heart and accentuated by the cunning wiles of the adversary, was able to distort the meaning of what God had so clearly stated to our first parents.

It was Satan who said to mother Eve, "Thou shalt *not surely* die." Doubtless if we could know all the thoughts that passed through Eve's mind when she was confronted with this malicious lie, we would find one of them was that it *appealed to her heart* to believe it, even as it appeals to the hearts of mankind today. After all, she would reason, wouldn't it be more like God to keep his creatures alive, rather than to destroy them? Certainly I can find no objection to it? Then who am I to object to such a *benevolent* thought concerning God as this seems to be; does it not really enlarge His sovereignty? Yes, it was a "heart appeal" but it didn't square with the divine command, "Thou shalt surely die." It was false, malicious and Satanic, though seemingly a blessed and hope-inspiring truth.

Now the heart appeal of Universal Reconciliation is very similar to that which was presented to Mother Eve; and in fact, should be recognized by Bible Students as but another form of that same old Satanic lie—"Thou shalt *not surely* die." According to this deceptive theory you may be "destroyed from among the people," you may be "cut off" from life, you may go into the "second death," you may "be as though you had not been," yet somehow, somewhere, in the aions of the aions, God will see to it that you will not actually go out of existence, that you will *not* "surely die." Is not this but another form of presenting the inherent immortality theory? True, the wicked may have several long sleeping spells, but according to the Universalists, they cannot die, everlastingly.

Various phases of the Universal Reconciliation theory are discussed elsewhere in this issue of *The Dawn*, and it also has been discussed in prior issues.

We are here merely pointing out what seems to a large extent to be the *foundation* upon which the appeal of this, as well as many other false doctrines, is made. To say that we believe a certain thing because it appeals to our "hearts" is but another way of saying that we believe it simply because we *prefer* to have it that way—and this is an exceedingly dangerous attitude for any consecrated Christian to take, even as it was dangerous in the case of mother Eve. It probably appealed to the heart of King Saul to reserve some of the cattle which he had been commanded to destroy, in order that he might offer them in "sacrifice to the Lord"; but the prophet of the Lord reminded him that to "obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." This act of disobedience on Saul's part had much to do with his total loss of God's favor.

Now the Bible makes it plain that God's love provided a way of escape from the original death sentence. This glorious fact has been a *true* heart appeal, because it is in harmony with reason and with the expressed will of God; and it has led many of us to make a full consecration to the Lord, by which we agreed to use all that we have and are in the divine service. But the apostle tells us that for those once enlightened, and who then do "despite unto the spirit of grace," sinning wilfully, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Shall we then accept a theory which purports to go beyond this, without Scriptural authority, and say it makes little difference whether there is any more sacrifice for sin—that it "appeals to our hearts" to believe that somehow God will reconcile wilful sinners without a further sacrifice for sins? Would not such a yielding to the desires of our deceitful hearts constitute an act of disobedience to the written Word? Such a position certainly nullifies the apostle's argument by destroying the very basis of his warning.

Some have said, "It gives us so much peace to believe in Universal Reconciliation." Well, why shouldn't it? Doubtless Eve had great peace also—although short lived—when she believed that she would not, and could not, possibly die. If our ultimate salvation is assured, irrespective of what we may or may not do, why should we be particularly concerned about anything? And why should we exert ourselves in "working out our own salvation," and in witnessing to others, if nothing we can do will change the final result, either for ourselves or for others? Ah, dearly beloved, can we not see that this is but another of Satan's wiles by which he would induce us to remove our sacrifice from the altar and to be "at ease in Zion"? The things we *believe* govern the things we *do*, and that is why it is so very important for us to keep pure in our minds the truth of God's Word.

#### BEREAN STUDIES FOR BEGINNERS

Sometime ago we suggested the possibility of introducing a series of studies specially adapted for Junior Bible Students and other beginners in the study of the truth. There has been some delay in this matter, due largely to the fact that we have not as yet decided just what form these studies should take. We have

been consulting brethren in various parts of the country, seeking to obtain the general consensus of opinion on the matter, and hope to have some definite announcement to make in the January *Dawn*. Possibly we may even introduce the new series of studies in that issue.

In seeking to reach a conclusion concerning the nature of these studies, we have been impressed with the advisability of presenting them in such a way as to help the student become familiar with the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, as well as with the *Tower Reprints*. We believe that this could be done by means of a topical study of the Bible; in which case the outline in *The Dawn* would consist largely of pertinent questions, with copious references to the Bible, the *Scripture Studies* and the *Reprints*, in which

the student would find the answers to the questions. Studies of this kind could also readily be adapted to the use of advanced Bible Students, as well as beginners. But, as already suggested, the matter is yet to be decided; and we will be glad to have further and immediate suggestions from our readers.

**God and Reason Books in Australia**—We are glad to announce for the benefit of Dawn readers in Australia that the God and Reason books may now be obtained from the Berean Biblical Institute, National Bank Chambers, 226 Glenferrie Rd., Hawthorn, E2, Melbourne, Vic., Aus. The price of the paper bound is 10d per copy. The well-bound blue cloth edition is 2 shillings, post paid. Reduction in price for three or more.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

(Continued from page 27)

he has fellowship with the Lord's people. He shall not lack for grace and strength in times of suffering, and trial; for the Lord has said, "When thou goest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overthrow thee." And He also says, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

The pastures which the Great Shepherd provides for His sheep are green pastures. They do not grow stale and parched so as to provide no nourishment. The truth is so wonderful that it always seems to be fresh. While one would starve to death on the creeds of the Dark Ages, the cravings of his spiritual appetite are satisfied by the things he now finds in the Word of God. Here, in the strength of his faith, he can lie down and find rest of heart and mind, and can say, "It satisfies my longings as nothing else can do."

"He leadeth me beside the still waters." A rushing stream would be very dangerous to sheep, for a sheep is easily carried off its feet. But to a quiet safe place, where the waters are still, the shepherd leads his flock. Nor does the expression "still waters" imply that the waters are stagnant; but rather *gently* flowing waters are meant—not rushing currents. And so the Lord

provides refreshment for His people, leading them away from the rushing streams of worldly ambition, from the vain riches and honors craved by the people of earth at large.

There is nothing that gives such peace and satisfaction to the Christian as an assurance that God is with him and is interested in him; and that all things are working together for his good, because he belongs to Him. Jesus called the water of truth "living water." At the same time it is quiet water. There is nothing about it that stirs up restless, inordinate desire in us; instead, while earnestly striving to do the divine will, God's people can patiently wait upon Him.

"He restoreth my soul." This takes place whenever we become weary and faint by the way. The restoration is a spiritual one. Then, He leads us "in the paths of righteousness"; and "though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death," He is with us, taking care of us. Yes, we are still in this dark valley, for death is over all the world; and it will be here until deliverance comes to all the human family, in the great morning of life. But while we are still here we can ever say, "Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me."

"Thou preparest a table before me, in the presence of mine enemies." Verily, we know that there are many enemies all around us.

There are wolves, hyenas, jackals, bears and lions. The greatest enemy of the sheep is Satan. He would dearly love to get them into trouble and draw them away from the Shepherd's care. But here, in the world, with all its opposition to the truth, God has prepared a wonderful table of choice viands for those who love Him. Furthermore, "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

"Surely (positively), goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." What more could one ask? Truly, as the apostle said, "All things are yours, for you are Christ's and Christ is God's." As we realize the Lord's leadings of the past year, we can feel assured that He will continue to guide us along the way of life, till we finally shall be privileged to dwell in His house forever.

### QUESTIONS:

*What are the chief qualities of sheep?*

*Explain the statement, "I shall not want."*

*What are the green pastures? What keeps them green?*

*What is the value of "still waters" to the sheep?*

*Explain, "He restoreth my soul"; "Thy rod and Thy staff"; and "the house of the Lord."*

# "GOOD HOPES" REPORT

(Months of July, August, and September, 1935)

For the benefit of new readers we wish to explain that our purpose in arranging the different Funds is in order that the friends when making contributions to the work may indicate a choice as to how their donations will be used, if they wish to do so. Each contribution is listed on our books under a separate code number, and this number is sent to the contributor. The quarterly reports list these numbers, together with the amounts they represent, so that one who has made a donation during the period covered by the report knows not only that the donation has been received but also that it has been properly accounted for.

It has long been the custom in connection with the Present Truth movement to publish a Good Hopes coupon each year, in order that the friends might have an opportunity to indicate in advance the amount they may hope to donate during the year. While it is an advantage to have some knowledge in advance as to the amount of funds that will be available for use, and we will be glad to have such information, yet we have decided not to use the formality of a coupon. We appreciate the kind cooperation of the friends, and ask an interest in the prayers of all that we may be faithful in the use of whatever funds the Lord may see fit to place in our hands.

## FREE TRACT FUND

A1-274—A1-292	\$17.59	1-285	5.00
1-275	5.00	1-288	10.00
1-277	10.00	1-289	5.00
1-281	8.00	1-290	25.00
1-284	5.00	1-291	5.00

Total ..... \$95.59

Total number of tractpages in free literature sent out (Sample Dawns, Bible Students News, Hell Booklets, Tracts, Circulars, Programs, Song Slips;) 276,580

Total cost of printing and shipping ..... \$302.10

Deficit in Free Tract Fund ..... \$206.51

## TRAVELING SPEAKERS' FUND

C3-139—C3-154	\$ 24.50	3-145	50.00
3-138	305.00	3-146	5.00
3-140	10.00	3-148	15.00
3-143	10.00	3-150	5.00
3-144	20.00		

Total ..... \$444.50

Traveling expenses of speakers ..... 353.98

Balance in Traveling Speakers' Fund ..... \$90.52

Number of class meetings served ..... 171

Total attendance ..... 5,553

Number of public meetings served ..... 19

Total attendance ..... 1,741

## FREE SUBSCRIPTION FUND

Total number of 3-months subscriptions charged against this Fund: 50, at 25 cents each ..... \$ 12.50

Total number of annual subscriptions charged against this Fund: 123 at \$1.00 each ..... 123.00

Deficit in Free Subscription Fund ..... \$135.50

## FREE BOOK FUND

Total number copies of "God and Reason" sent out and charged against this Fund: 60, at 13 cents each ..... 7.80

Balance July 1 ..... \$5.50

Deficit in Free Book Fund ..... \$2.30

## ADVERTISING FUND

H8-45—H8-49 ..... 8.45    8-47 ..... \$25.00

Profit on books sold from previous advertisement, and not included in last report ..... 1.34

Balance July 1 ..... 87.19

Total in Advertising Fund ..... 121.98

This balance will be used shortly to place an advertisement in a national magazine.

## GENERAL FUND

F6-433—F6-489	\$57.92	6-464	10.00
6-435	25.00	6-467	10.00
6-436	10.00	6-468	5.00
6-437	5.00	6-470	25.00
6-439	10.00	6-471	25.00
6-440	5.00	6-476	25.00
6-442	29.00	6-478	12.00
6-444	5.00	6-479	5.00
6-445	5.00	6-480	5.00
6-448	10.00	6-483	10.00
6-449	5.00	6-484	15.00
6-454	5.00	6-486	5.00
6-459	10.00	6-490	5.25
6-460	7.00	6-491	10.00
6-461	14.00	6-492	30.00
6-462	5.00	Balance July 1	386.96

Total ..... \$792.13

The General Fund is used to make up deficits in other Funds. We have transferred the following amounts for this purpose:

Free Tract Fund ..... \$206.51

Free Subscription Fund ..... 135.50

Free Book Fund ..... 2.30

Total transferred ..... \$344.31

Balance in General Fund ..... \$447.82

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