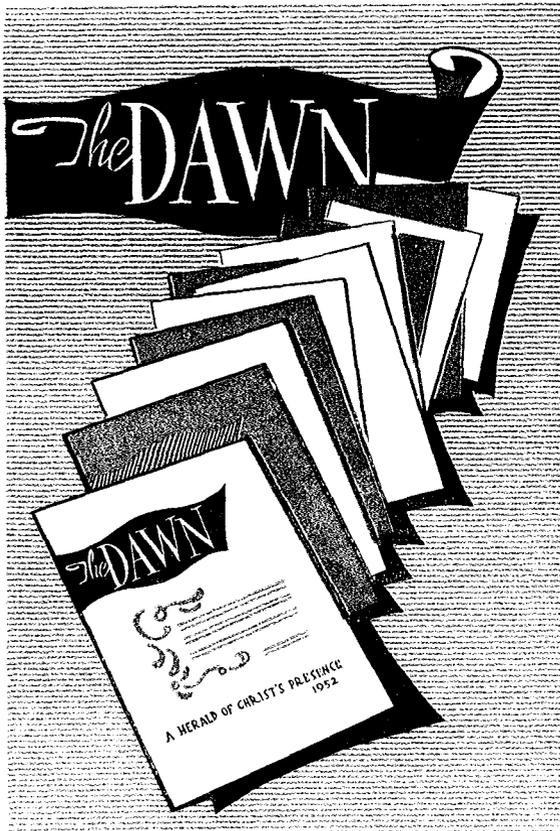


The DAWN

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A HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

DAWN, 1957



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IN ONE



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DAWN PUBLICATIONS
East Rutherford, New Jersey

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Vol. XX DECEMBER 1951 No. 12

Entered as second class matter at the Rutherford, N. J. Post Office February 19, 1944, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Published monthly by the Dawn Bible Students Association, Triangle, East Rutherford, N. J.

CANADIAN BRANCH: 442 Sherbourne Street, Toronto 5, Ontario.

BRITISH BRANCH: 98 Seel Street, Liverpool 1, England.

AUSTRALIAN ADDRESS: Berean Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew E 4, Victoria.

SWISS BRANCH (French Language): Assoc. des Etudiants de La Bible "Aurore," Prilly-Lausanne, Switzerland.

GREEK BRANCH: He Charavgi (The Dawn), Agion Theodoron 4, Athens.

DANISH BRANCH: Dagry Forlaget, Hyldebaervej 13, Copenhagen F.

SWEDISH BRANCH: Dagningen, Postl. 2016 Vinslov, Sverige.

GERMAN BRANCH: Tagesanbruch-Verlag, g. G. m. b. H., Berlin-Friedenau, Menzelstr. 2.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE: United States and Canada, \$1.00 a year; Great Britain and Australia, five shillings. Remit by check, money order; bank draft, or registered mail; from foreign countries—money orders only.

FOREIGN EDITION SUBSCRIPTIONS: The rate is \$1.00 a year. The Dawn is published in Dano-Norwegian; Swedish; French; Greek, and German languages. Subscriptions may be sent direct to foreign branches as listed above.

Each night is followed by its day,
Each storm by fairer weather
While all the works of nature sing
Their psalms of joy together.

CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

The Prophecy of Angels . . . 2

BIBLE STUDY

A Doubting and Disobedient People 13
Moses' Charge to the People . . . 15
The Conquest of Canaan . . . 17
The Promise Fulfilled in Christ . . . 20
The People Make Their Choice . . . 22
The Savior Comes—Poem . . . 24

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

God's Great Gift . . . 25
Heroes of Faith
Book of Hebrews—Chapter XI . . . 35
Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts . . . 43

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Was Jesus His Own Father? . . . 44
Peter's Keys . . . 45
Was Peter the First Pope? . . . 46
Salvation and Church Membership . . . 47

TALKING THINGS OVER

"That Which Every Joint Supplieth" 48
Our Rejoicing in the Lord . . . 52
The Broadcast Schedule . . . 55

ENCOURAGING LETTERS . . . 56

BRITISH SECTION

They "Talk of Thy Power" . . . 58
Fellowship and Service in Wales . . . 59

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

Great Britain . . . 61
United States . . . 62

CONVENTIONS

United States . . . 63

Then learn, oh learn, their song of hope!
Cease, soul, thy thankless sorrow;
For though the clouds be dark today,
The sun shall shine tomorrow.

The Prophecy of Angels

"The angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

—LUKE 2:10-14

DURING the year now closing, and more than nineteen centuries after the angels prophesied that there would be "peace on earth," a little girl in the State of California became so terrified by the thought of atom bombs that she begged her mother to take her to some place where there was no sky. (Reported in *The Christian Herald*.) On that holy night when Jesus The Prince of Peace was born, there came a message from the sky: "Fear not." But now the world is filled with fear as people everywhere contemplate the destructive forces which one day may come raining down upon them from the skies. What has happened? Must we conclude that the powers of evil have made a mockery of that glorious proclamation of the angels, or is there another answer to this apparent defeat of the divine purpose in sending Jesus into the world to be The Prince of Peace?

Certain it is that from the standpoint of human wisdom, and the almost universally accepted conception of Christianity, the close of 1951 finds the world more shrouded in darkness, so far as the hope of peace is concerned, than ever before. Not only have the year's efforts to attain peace been frustrated, but the professed followers of The Prince of Peace remain hopelessly divided in their endeavors to Christianize the world.

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

Whether we look on the international, political, or religious front, confusion and lack of direction continue to characterize all the efforts which are being made to find a way out of the darkness and distress which now engulf the dying world. So far as the political and international aims of this country are concerned, the matter is well summed up by Gabriel Courier who, writing in *The Christian Herald*, says:

“Just what is it we want? Just where are we going? In the direction of peace, we hope. But what will bring peace? A free Japan? Formosa in the firm hands of the nationalists—or given to the Reds? A Europe strengthened against Franco tactics, or using Franco? What of Burma, Indo-China, India? What of Iran, Egypt, the whole turbulent Middle East? We don't seem to know. As Mr. Truman says so blandly, ‘We'll cross that bridge when we come to it.’ But you can't even play chess that way.”

There is, of course, one general objective which practically all in the world this side of the Iron Curtain are agreed upon, and that is that if our present way of life is to be saved, communism must be defeated. The confusion lies in the conflicting opinions as to just how this can be done. It is agreed amongst most of the alleged free nations that an all-out armament program is one of the prime essentials in the battle against aggression; so, instead of beating swords into plowshares, as the prophet foretold would be done during the reign of The Prince of Peace, they are beating plowshares into swords, as forecast in Joel 3:9-11.

It is not possible to obtain too clear a picture of just what is happening behind the Iron Curtain, but it seems reasonably certain that the rulers of the communist world are convinced that the well-being of all nations depends upon bringing them under the control of Marxian philosophy. They try to give the impression that they are united in their objectives and agreed as to how best to attain them, but probably if the truth were known we would discover that, like Mr. Truman, about the best they can do is to cross each bridge as they come to it, somewhat fearful, perhaps, lest it collapse under them.

But the communist world seems also to be united on the matter of armament; so behind the Iron Curtain the munition factories are operating around the clock, turning out weapons of destruction. Thus the mad race for superiority on the land, on the sea, and in the air, continues unabated, and at the close of this year of our

THE DAWN

Lord, 1951, is more furious than has ever before been witnessed by man.

On the armament front, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, scientists are playing their grim part, producing weapons with ever-increasing potentiality for destruction. Since Hiroshima, the world has been fearing the atom bomb, and justifiably so. Then came the announcement of the hydrogen bomb, which, it was claimed, would be even more destructive. But now it has been announced that an instrument of destruction much more powerful than these has been perfected, on which production is about to begin. Referring to this, President Truman, in a speech at San Francisco, said that if there is another war and this new weapon is used, it will certainly mean the complete destruction of civilization.

Is There Hope in Religion?

Increasing numbers of statesmen, philosophers, clergymen, and even politicians outside of the communist world are reaching the conclusion that only through a general adoption of religious principles by the nations and presenting a united religious front against the forces of atheism and paganism, can civilization be saved. But here again disunity and chaos stand in the way of united action. This fact, universally recognized by religionists, was highlighted toward the close of September in a speech made by President Truman in the National City Christian Church, of Washington, before 1,200 attending the first Washington Pilgrimage of American Churchmen, when he told them that he had failed to get men of various religions to agree, even on a common statement of faith, "in the face of the peril we confront today." The President further said:

"For some time I have been trying to bring a number of the great religious leaders of the world together in a common affirmation of faith and a common supplication to the one God that all profess. I have asked them to join in one common act which will affirm those religious and moral principles on which all agree.

"I am sorry to say that it has not yet been possible to bring the religious faiths together for this purpose of bearing witness that God is the way of truth and peace. Even the Christian churches have not yet found themselves able to say, with one voice, that Christ is their Master and Redeemer and the source of their strength against the hosts of irreligion and danger to the world, and that will be the cause of world catastrophe. They haven't

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

been able to agree on as simple a statement as that. I have been working at it for years.

"We should lay aside our differences and come together now—for never have our differences seemed so petty and insignificant as they do in the face of the peril we confront today."

"I have been working at it for years," the President complains; but he has failed, according to his own testimony, to get the churches to agree on a simple statement of their faith in Jesus as their Redeemer and Master. Evidently, in his busy political life, Mr. Truman has failed to keep abreast of the trends of belief—or we might better say, of disbelief—in most of the great churches of our land. Perhaps he does not realize that the modernist churches, comprising probably three-quarters of all denominations, no longer believe in the saving blood of Christ, or that he is actually the Redeemer of the people. He may be unaware of the fact that the leaders of these great denominations have concluded that the idea of redemption through Jesus is "bloody" and "revolting" in the light of twentieth century "intelligence."

Besides, while this vast majority of church leaders still quote some of the ethical and moral teachings of Christ, and are willing to give him a place among the great teachers of history, they hesitate to acknowledge him as their own and only "Master." If the President were up-to-date on these points, he would have less difficulty in understanding why he has failed to get church leaders to adopt a common statement of their faith in Jesus as their Redeemer and Master; for most of them do not have such a faith. It is just that simple.

Human Efforts Futile

There are millions in the world today, among them thousands who are looked up to as teachers of Christianity, who assert their faith in the Bible and its teachings, but who seem not to comprehend the fact that God has ever promised to do anything for the world. They would gladly lay down their lives trying to do something in the world for God, but their vision is limited to what man is able to accomplish, and they have no hope beyond that. As an illustration of this, note the following quotation from a published treatise on one of the International Sunday School Lessons for October.

"The Bible teaches that man makes his surroundings, that he is responsible for the kind of world in which he lives. Carlyle said,

'History is the story of the world's great men.' If greatness is seated in faith we can accept that statement. We read history as the record of God-responsive men, men like Abraham who recognize and respond to God's leadings. Hope in our confused world still depends on God's pioneers."

This is a strange blending of half truth and error. The Bible does teach concerning Christians that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7) But this does not imply, nor has it ever been true, that Christians, no matter how faithful, have ever materially influenced the course of this world. Jesus said to his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) Jesus did not overcome the world in the sense of reforming it, but in the fact that he lived apart from it, and above its self-seeking spirit. Otherwise, the world actually overcame him, for it put him to death.

And so it has been with all the prophets who went before him. Read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews for a record of how they fared in this world of sin where Satan has been the prince. Instead of reforming the world of their day and lifting it up to a standard of righteousness by which their own lives were guided, Paul tells us that they "all died in faith, not having received the [fulfilment of the] promises."—Heb. 11:13

The Early Church did not reform the world of that day. Indeed, following the death of the apostles, the majority of professed Christians succumbed to the influences of the world, and became a part of it. Doubtless they felt that something could be done for the world by joining hands with the state, but this only led to intrigue, oppression, persecution, the un-Holy Inquisition, and war.

It has been said that the Bible is the torch of civilization, and when, as a part of the Reformation, great Bible societies were organized and the Bible was circulated more widely, a small portion of the world was given a ray of hope and a new incentive to struggle for freedom. If the ethical teachings of the Bible had been more faithfully followed by the lawmakers and by the general public, much more would have been accomplished; but peace on earth has never come anywhere near to being established, for there has scarcely been a decade in all the centuries since Christ came and died that at least parts of the earth have not been drenched in blood. In most instances, the bloodletting has been initiated by professed Christian nations.

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

And now, if there is no hope for humanity other than that which rests on the efforts of God-fearing men, regardless of how zealous they may be, the outlook is dark indeed. And this is true, notwithstanding how highly placed in world affairs these ardent religionists may be. In September, a report from Rome stated that the Pope and his co-workers have for some time been laboring to bring about a union of all the various Catholic, and near-Catholic, religions of the world. This, of course, was not news; but the report indicated that little real progress is being made, and that not much is expected in the near future, and then added, "A reunion of Catholicism and various Protestant sects is considered a more distant possibility."

We mention this in passing merely to emphasize that even if we assumed that a united religious front could bring peace out of present world chaos, there still is no hope, for here again human efforts are failing. Besides, those acquainted with history will remember that the bloodiest wars of the past were fought in Europe during the centuries when the Catholic Church reigned supreme throughout that continent. A united religious front under the leadership of the Vatican, therefore, would not assure anything better than what the world has already suffered many times even in the name of Christ.

Will Not Return Void

But the promises of God cannot fail of fulfilment. The Lord himself assures us of this, saying, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isa. 55:10, 11

Over and over again God has declared that it is his purpose, by means of the kingdom of Christ, to establish peace—universal and everlasting peace—on earth. One of the outstanding promises of God assuring us of this reads, "He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his

fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."—Micah 4:3, 4

"For the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it"—herein we may rest our hopes for a better world, a peaceful world, a world in which "none shall make them afraid." Because the Lord has decreed it, no longer shall it be necessary for children to ask their parents to take them to a place where there is no sky; no longer will the whole world be filled with fear of the destruction which may almost any time be wrought by human foolishness and selfishness.

It was the Word of the Lord which came to the shepherds on the night Jesus was born, announcing that through him as the world's Savior and King there would come "peace on earth." Because it was the Lord speaking through the angels, we need have no doubt that what they proclaimed will, in God's due time, become a reality. One of the beautiful and comforting prophecies of the birth of Jesus is Isaiah 9:6, 7, and in this prophecy the great objective of his birth is explained. It declares that he was to be "The Prince of Peace," and that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." But it does not leave the accomplishment of this wonderful purpose of God in human hands, for it concludes with the reassuring statement, "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

All the prophecies and promises of the Bible concerning peace on earth reveal that this divine purpose will be accomplished by means of the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the earth. Concerning this messianic government the Prophet Daniel declares, "In the days of these kings [represented by the ten toes of the human-like image which pictured Gentile dominion] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." (Dan. 2:44) Many efforts have been made throughout the centuries, some by ambitious men, others by the well-meaning and sincere, to set up governments which would assure peace to the people. They all failed because this was not the Lord's way for his peace plan to be carried out. It was to be done by "the God of heaven."

Jesus was born to be the King in the kingdom which the "God of heaven" had promised to establish. Satan tempted him to accept and to co-operate with a different plan for ruling the world, saying of the kingdoms of this world, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me"; that is, acknowledge

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

Satan as the supreme ruler. (Matt. 4:9) But Jesus did not yield to this temptation. Instead, he waited for God's time and way to exalt him as the Ruler of earth. Meanwhile, his enemies killed him, one of their excuses being that he was a traitor to the Roman Empire because he claimed to be a king.

When brought before Pilate, this Roman ruler asked him if the charge were true, and the Master replied, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (John 18:36) What could be plainer than this? All the kingdoms and governments of this world have been established and maintained by the force of arms. Humanly constituted governments are still resorting to this method. But it will prove just as true now as it has always been, that those who "take the sword shall perish with the sword."—Matt. 26:52

The reason we can have confidence that Christ's kingdom will bring peace to the people is that it is "not of this world." Christ's kingdom will not be made up of the selfish elements of what the Apostle Paul describes as "this present evil world." (Gal. 1:4) Nor will his kingdom employ the methods of this world to gain and maintain its power and authority over the people. That there could be a king whose kingdom was not of this world was difficult for Pilate to understand, so he asked Jesus further, "Art thou a king then?" How could there be such a kingdom?

Jesus replied to Pilate, saying, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." (John 18:37) Then Pilate asked, "What is truth?" (vs. 38) Seemingly Jesus did not reply to this question, but as to the truth concerning God's plan to establish a kingdom in the earth and through it to give peace and life to the people, he had already answered it; and that great truth was, and still is, that the "God of heaven shall set up a kingdom," that the fulfilment of his promises has not been left in the hands of men, nor to human methods—"My kingdom is not of this world."

All nominal conceptions of Christianity fail to take this great truth into consideration. Worldly churches are co-operating with "this world" in their efforts to establish peace, rather than looking to God to accomplish it. Their efforts are failing because the "kingdoms of this world" with which they are co-operating and on which they are pinning their hopes are being removed to make way

for the kingdom which the God of heaven will set up. One of the basic errors of Christendom is this false idea that God expects man to establish his kingdom for him, whereas the great fundamental truth on this point is that God will do it in his own way, and by the exercise of his own power. This is truth!

"The Mountain of the Lord's House"

In Isaiah 2:2 we read: "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established." The "last days" referred to here are not, of course, the last days of time, nor of this earth, nor of human experience, but simply the last days of the reign of sin and death in the earth, the last days of "this present evil world." (Gal. 1:4) And it is in this period that the "mountain" of the Lord is established. By consulting Daniel 2:35, 44 it will be found that this "mountain" is in reality the kingdom of the Lord, the kingdom which the God of heaven will "set up," or "establish," as the prophets Isaiah and Micah state it.—Micah 4:1-4

It is said to be the mountain, or kingdom, of the "Lord's house." This is God's way of telling us that his kingdom will be made up of a divine ruling house, or family. The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that Jesus, God's own beloved Son, will be the Ruler supreme in this "house," the "King of kings, and Lord of lords." But there are to be other sons of God associated with him. These are referred to many times in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament. Paul, speaking of a work of the Holy Spirit, wrote: "The Spirit [of God] itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."—Rom. 8:16, 17

"It is a faithful saying," wrote Paul, that if we "be dead" with Christ we shall also "live with him," and if "we suffer," we shall also "reign with him." (II Tim. 2:11, 12) These Spirit-begotten sons of God who suffer and die with Jesus are described in Acts 15:14 as "a people for his name," and the explanation is given that the divine purpose in proclaiming the Gospel to the Gentiles was to take out of them this people to be members of the divine family. The further explanation is given that it will be after this work of God in the earth is accomplished that both Jews and Gentiles will receive their promised blessings, that all will then have an opportunity to "seek after the Lord."

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

So the work of God in the earth throughout the centuries since the peace prophecy of the angels was given has not been the converting of the world. Men have tried to do this and have failed. God's work during this Gospel age has been the selection and preparation of that small group whom he has called to be sons. Their worthiness to live and reign with Christ has been demonstrated by their faithfulness in suffering and dying with him. Each one of them has been given the assurance, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2:10

But how can these reign with Christ, since they have all died? The answer to this is simple, for the Bible assures us of their resurrection. At the same time, this fact highlights the meaning of the promise that the "God of heaven shall set up a kingdom." More than nineteen centuries ago, and in the exercise of his mighty power, God raised Jesus from the dead to be the King supreme in his kingdom. At this end of the age God again exercises his mighty power to raise the true church of Christ from the dead—those who have suffered and died with him—that they might be associated with him in his kingdom. They are said to come forth in "the first resurrection" to "live and reign with Christ a thousand years."—Rev. 20:4, 6

Consideration of this helps us to grasp more fully the meaning of the statement, "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this," for it emphasizes that his zeal is manifested in the use of his mighty power even to the extent of raising the dead, yes, even to exalting Christ and his church to the divine nature and to his own right hand of authority, in order that his ruling "house" might be established.

We can have every confidence, then, that the "mountain of the Lord's house" will be established in the "last days." Conditions around us in the world are clearly in fulfilment of the prophecies which testify that already the kingdoms of this world are being removed. We are already in the transition period, when the old world, dominated by sin and selfishness, is passing away, and the new about to be manifested. And David declares, "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth [the social order] be removed." (Ps. 46:2) If we can exercise faith in God's providence, and confidence in his ways, we will not need to fear at this time when the hearts of so many are filled with fear.

THE DAWN

To us the angelic message of peace on earth will take on a new and brighter lustre, despite present chaos in the world, if we are able to grasp and believe the thought that its fulfilment is certain because the Lord has promised it and his "zeal" will perform it. And not only will the kingdom established by the God of heaven, bring peace to the people, it will also bring health and life; for Jesus was also announced to be a "Savior." Paul tells us that Christ must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet, and that the "last enemy to be destroyed is death."—I Cor. 15: 25, 26

Let us, then, rejoice in confidence that this dark night of human experience is soon to terminate in a wonderful morning of joy. And while rejoicing in this knowledge ourselves, let us tell the whole world these blessed tidings. No gift could bring greater joy to hearts filled with fear than the assurance that God has a plan which is soon to reach fruition in the blessing of all the families of the earth, that the prophecy of the angels is really true!

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NEW JERSEY

A Doubting and Disobedient People

DECEMBER 2

Numbers 14:1-11

FAITH in the presence of an invisible God and in his willingness and ability to care for those who serve him faithfully has always been rare even among those who profess to be his people, and this was certainly true of the children of Israel who followed the leadership of their divinely provided lawgiver, Moses. This is the more difficult to understand in the light of all the miraculous ways in which the Lord demonstrated his ability to provide for and protect them. Seemingly the majority of them had short memories; or else despite their former oppression they really preferred to return to Egypt and to slavery.

It has always been true, however, that among the great mass of nominal believers there are a few who really put their trust in the Lord, and upon the basis of their faith are glad to obey him and follow his leadership. So it was in the case of ancient Israel. Of the twelve spies who were sent across Jordan to secure information con-

cerning the inhabitants of Canaan and to find out what sort of country it was, only two—Caleb and Joshua—brought back a favorable report and recommended that the Israelites enter in and possess the land. The other ten advised against the undertaking.

The ten spies who urged against proceeding into Canaan saw giants in the land, in comparison with which they said that the Israelites were but as grasshoppers. The two faithful spies also saw these giants, but they saw something else as well. By the eye of faith they recognized the ability of God to help them defeat the giants, so they urged that the Israelites go forward. The people accepted the majority report, for, like the ten spies, they lacked faith in their God and in his ability to fight for them.

The vast majority who profess to believe in God and in his promises have always been like these ten spies. And it is true of the nominal Christian world today. They have faith in God in proportion to their confidence in themselves. Today these nominal believers would gladly help to es-

THE DAWN

establish a more righteous social order in the earth, and indeed, are doing all they can along this line, but seemingly they have no notion whatever of believing that God will ever fulfil his promises to establish a kingdom. To them the promise that "the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established" is mere fantasy—just nice words to quote at a political rally to give the campaign a religious aspect.

It has also often been true that the professed people of God who lack a living faith in his promises have been persecutors of those who did have a vital faith in him and have believed that he would accomplish all he has promised to do! This was the disposition of the Israelites toward Moses and Aaron and the two spies who recommended entry into Canaan and the possession of the Promised Land. They wanted to stone the two faithful spies, the only reason being that they believed God and had confidence that he was able to fulfil his promises and give them the land.

In Hebrews 3:8-19 Paul draws a very practical lesson from the failure of the Israelites to enter into the land because of their unbelief, showing that the sin of unbelief is a very serious one in God's sight. Certainly God cannot be pleased with those who do not have con-

fidence in him. Lack of faith destroys the basis of our fellowship with the Father and with his Son—and indeed, with one another. Abraham became the friend of God because of his absolute faith in him and in his promises.

Confidence is the basis of all friendships, and is no less so in our relationship to God. We must have faith in him, a faith that leads to obedience. When we do have such a faith, then he can have confidence in us, and upon the basis of that confidence will bestow the richest of his blessings upon us.

The Israelites who failed to believe God and rebelled against Moses' leadership, died in the wilderness, thus failing to attain the great objective for which they left Egypt. Let us not cast away our confidence, but, by continuing to believe and to obey, may we, as Paul put it, "apprehend" that for which also we have been apprehended of God.—Phil. 3:12

QUESTIONS:

What was one of the great tests upon the Israelites who followed Moses' leadership out of Egypt?

What is often the attitude of the faithless toward those who really do have confidence in God and in his promises?

What practical lessons may Christians take from Israel's lack of faith and their disobedience in the wilderness?

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Moses' Charge to the People

DECEMBER 9

Deuteronomy 30:15; 31:3

OBEDIENCE to divine law has always been, and will continue to be, the condition upon which God's intelligent creatures, created in his image, may expect to enjoy his abiding favor and blessing. God is patient and long-suffering toward those who lack full faith and fail to render perfect obedience, but the faithless and disobedient must ultimately suffer the loss of divine favor and pay the wages of sin, which is death. The final judgment of worthiness or unworthiness of everlasting life is rendered by God toward some (particularly the church class of this age) in this life, while others will be given a further opportunity during the thousand-year judgment day of the future.

Moses' charge to the Israelites had more particularly to do with their experiences in this life, although many scriptures show that their final judgment as individuals is still future. They had entered into a covenant with the Lord, based upon the Law given to them at Mount Sinai. Upon conditions of obedience God promised them life, material prosperity in the Promised Land, and also that they would be his priestly or teacher nation in the earth. Much was involved, therefore, in their being obedient to the Law; and in his

charge, Moses endeavored to bring this forcibly to their attention.

"I have set before you life and death," said Moses to the Israelites. The Apostle Paul explains that the Law "was ordained to life," but because the Israelites failed to obey its precepts they found it to be "unto death." (Rom. 7:10) Paul further explains that no matter how zealously one might try to keep that Law, he would fail. This, of course, was because no member of the fallen and dying race was capable of keeping God's perfect Law. No Israelite, therefore, could actually have gained everlasting life under the terms of the Law Covenant, although God gave them the opportunity to try. It was through their failure that sincere ones among them, like the Apostle Paul, were helped to realize the need of the atoning blood of Christ. Thus the Law served as a schoolmaster, to bring them to Christ.

For the nation of Israel under the Law there was also the reward, conditional upon faithfulness, of being permitted to abide prosperously in the Promised Land. Even though they could not keep the Law perfectly and thus gain everlasting life, it is reasonable to conclude that had they done the very best they could, they would have been permitted to remain in the land. But, as biblical history clear-

ly shows, Israel was time and time again a backsliding nation, and prone to worship other gods; so they were not permitted to enjoy the blessings of the land as they might have.

As for being God's royal, or kingdom nation, that privilege was lost when they failed to meet the final test which came upon them at the time of the first advent of Christ. Their Messiah came to them, but they rejected him, and in the face of their plotting to kill him, he said unto them, "Your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23:28) Thus it was that Israel did not obtain "that which he seeketh for."—Rom. 11:7

In principle, Moses' charge to the Israelites could well apply to all who at any time, either now or in the age to come, may strive to attain everlasting life. No other conditions will ever be laid down by the Lord than those of obedience to his law. In this age, upon the basis of faith in the atoning blood of Christ, allowance is made for sins and weaknesses resulting from Adam's disobedience, and these imperfections are not imputed to us. Nevertheless, even now the heart must be fully loyal to the Lord and to his will, and nothing short of one's very best endeavors will be accepted as proof of our worthiness of life.

In the next age, also, allowance will be made for inherited imperfections, and help will be given to overcome them. Perfect human life will be the reward for obedience then held out to the faithful, and those who make sincere efforts to obey will gradually be restored

to perfection, enabling them ultimately to render full and perfect obedience. Their progress toward perfection is represented by the Prophet Isaiah as a walking over "the way of holiness"; that is, the way which leads to holiness, or perfection.—Isaiah 35:8

Life for the obedient and death for the disobedient is always the antithesis set forth in the Word of God—never heaven and hell. It is a foundationless argument which is put forth by some when they say that if there is a heaven there must be a hell—meaning a place of eternal torture. No such thought is to be found anywhere in the Bible. There is, indeed, a heavenly hope for the faithful of this age. Those who, by faith and obedience, now prove worthy of life, will be rewarded with a heavenly home—with glory, honor, and immortality, the divine nature. Those who prove worthy of life during the next age will be restored to perfection as human beings.

Deuteronomy 33:27-29

THIS passage is one of the most comforting assurances to God's people to be found anywhere in the Bible. It was made to natural Israel, but it is true of all those whom the Lord calls to be his people in any age. He is our "refuge" and strength today, and we can rest secure in his "everlasting arms."

To natural Israel this promise of divine care meant that they would be victorious in thrusting out their enemies from the land of Canaan, and that the Lord would give them peace and quietness in their new home—if they would be obedient

BIBLE STUDY

to him. To us it also means strength to overcome; and in proportion to our faith we can have peace of heart and mind—that “great peace” which belongs to all those who love God’s law.

QUESTIONS:

Is it possible for anyone to secure everlasting life by any other means than through obedience to the divine will?

What three blessings were promised to Israel and made conditional upon obedience to divine law?

In what way is allowance made in this age for adamic weaknesses?

In the next age, how will imperfections due to inherited sins be dealt with?

Is there any scriptural authority for the statement, “If there is a heaven, there must be a hell”?

Can we of this Gospel age claim the promise made to Israel of God’s care and protection?

The Conquest of Canaan

DECEMBER 16

Joshua 1:1-7

MOSESES was not permitted to lead Israel across Jordan into the Promised Land, nor even to enter the land. This was because of a measure of presumption he manifested in his second smiting of the rock in order to obtain water for the people. (Num. 20:8-13; 27:12-14) In view of this, it seems a most fitting tribute to his memory that in the opening verse of the book which bears the name of his successor he should be so feelingly spoken of as “Moses the servant of the Lord.” After all, he had been a faithful servant of God, and one of whom it is written that he was the meekest man in all the earth.

While the one act in which his meekness failed him was considered by the Lord as sufficient rea-

son to deny him entry into the Promised Land, he was still looked upon by the Lord and loved as a servant. And when he is brought forth in the “better resurrection” we can be sure that he will be given a very high position among the “princes in all the earth.”—Heb. 11:35, 39, 40; Ps. 45:16

Joshua had served as a “minister” of Moses, and therefore was doubtless well trained in the art of leadership. Above all, like Moses, he had abounding confidence in the Lord and in his ability to fulfil his promises, for he remembered that he was one of the faithful spies who, forty years prior to this, had recommended that the Israelites then enter Canaan and trust the Lord to give them victory over the Canaanites.

Because of his great faith, now that God’s time had come for the

THE DAWN

nation to possess the land, Joshua was given the leadership of the people, and assured by God of victory. To him the Lord said, "Arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses."—Vs. 2, 3

"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life," the Lord said to Joshua. Could any man of God want a more definite assurance of divine help than this! And God made good this promise. After they had entered the land and had celebrated the passover, one who identified himself as "the captain of the host of the Lord" appeared to Joshua and gave to him complete instructions as to just how he was to capture the city of Jericho. (Joshua 5:13-15) In this experience Joshua was reminded, even as Moses previously had been, that the ground on which he stood while in the presence of this angel of the Lord was holy.

The angel's reference to "the host of the Lord" would tend to remind Joshua that he was not alone in his fight to possess the land, nor needed to depend entirely upon the bravery and skill of Israel's army; for there was another army which would fight for them—those unseen forces of the Lord which encamp round about all those who fear him and deliver them. (Ps. 34:7) To have the strategy of the contest clearly outlined was highly important, and

then, in addition, to realize that "the host of the Lord" would be there fighting must certainly have given Joshua great courage.

It is a good thing to be "strong" and "very courageous" as servants of God if our strength and courage come from the Lord and by them we are fortified to do his will. To Joshua the admonition was, "Be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the Law, which Moses my servant commanded thee." (vs. 7) Joshua's strength was to be manifested in his fidelity to the Lord and to his will. In so doing he could be assured that the Lord would never fail him.

Some naturally possess courage and strength in the face of danger, and this undoubtedly is pleasing to the Lord if used properly in his service. It often happens, however, that those who are bold by nature are prone to take matters too much into their own hands, and attempt to serve God in their own way. They may even deceive themselves, and possibly others, into believing that God is blessing their efforts. Only the Lord, of course, can read the hearts of his people; but it is important that we scrutinize our own motives carefully, and whether strong or weak by nature, to make sure that our one determination is to do the Lord's will, and to look to him for strength in our every time of need.

"That thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest," the Lord further said to Joshua. "Prosperity" in Joshua's case meant victory in driving out the Canaanites from the land, and suc-

BIBLE STUDY

cess in dividing it among the tribes of Israel as the Lord directed. Joshua doubtless also prospered in the sense of enjoying a realization of the nearness of the Lord, and a limited fellowship with him, based upon the Law.

If we are strong and courageous in our service to the Lord, keeping on the armor which he provides, and looking to him for guidance, we will prosper spiritually. Faithfulness to the Lord in this age might well mean the loss of material prosperity, for one of the underlying principles of the narrow way to life is, as expressed by the Master, "Go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." (Matt. 19: 21) But, as so beautifully expressed by Paul, if, through our service to the Lord we should become "poor," we are abundantly compensated by the knowledge that we have had a share in helping to make "many rich" in the joys of the truth ministered to them.—II Cor. 6:10

The Apostle John speaks of a prosperity of the soul, and links this with the faithfulness of whoever "walkest in the truth." (III John 1-3) No one on earth could be in a more favorable position than those whom the Lord has blessed with his truth, and in whose lives the joys of the truth are a daily benediction. It is concerning these that the text was written, "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."—Prov. 10:22

Joshua 6:1-5, 20

THE story of how the city of Jericho was captured by the Israelites is a familiar one to all

Bible readers. Many theories have been advanced as to what might have caused the walls of the city to crumble and fall. It has been suggested, for example, that the vibration set up in the air by the sounding of so many trumpets was the cause. We do not know. What we do know is that Joshua followed the instructions given to him by the Lord through the "captain of the host of the Lord," and victory resulted for the Israelites.

While it may be possible to find ways of explaining some of the miracles of the Bible along natural lines, it seems to us that a blessing may be lost in doing so. Those who have true faith in God must believe that he is capable of performing miracles, and surely this faith may be applied in all the outstanding things which the Lord did for his people. We are confident that the Lord wanted the Israelites to realize that he had captured Jericho for them, and is not this an important lesson for us to learn, not only in this case, but also now, in the wonderful manner in which he is caring for us?

Spiritual Israelites today have their "Jerichos" to conquer, and futile would be our struggles were we to lose faith in the fact that now, even as then, God is for us, and that his mighty power is being utilized to support us and to overwhelm our enemies. The Captain of our salvation is our Lord Jesus Christ. If we follow his instructions, and keep on the armor which the Lord provides for us, we are sure to be victorious; for it is still true that greater is he who is for us than all they that be

THE DAWN

against us. Faith that this is so will enable us, even as it did Joshua, to be strong and very courageous.

QUESTIONS:

Why was Moses not permitted to lead Israel into the Promised Land? Did he thus lose God's favor forever?

What was one of Joshua's chief qualifications for being the new leader of Israel?

Name one of the ways by which Joshua was assured that the Lord would be with him?

Which is better for the Lord's people: to have confidence in their own ability, or to have the courage of faith?

What did prosperity mean to Joshua, and what does it mean to the Lord's sacrificing people today?

Should spiritual Israelites today have any difficulty in believing that God is able to perform miracles on behalf of his faithful people?

The Promise Fulfilled in Christ

DECEMBER 23

Luke 1:46-55

LAST week's lesson closed on the theme of miracles, those which the Lord has wrought and continues to perform, to assure the fulfillment of his promises on behalf of his people and the outworking of his plan for blessing all the families of the earth. Today's lesson reminds us again of one of the greatest of these miracles—the conception and birth of Jesus. The Scriptures give us very little information as to just how this was brought about, for the very obvious reason that such information would be quite beyond the human mind to comprehend. Even our greatest scientists do not understand the miracle of so-called natural conception and birth. They know only that it occurs under specific conditions, but the real

secret of a newborn life is quite beyond their comprehension.

God had indicated centuries before that the birth of the One who would be the promised "seed" to bless all nations would be of a special character, for Isaac, the type of Christ, was born as the result of a miracle—both his parents being at the time far beyond the age when they could naturally expect to have children. The miraculous preservation of the natural descendants of Abraham as the people from whom Christ was to be born furnishes further evidence of God's determination to fulfil his purpose in the earth irrespective of what man may or may not do about it.

In promising the birth of Jesus, and stating its great objective, that "of the increase of his government and peace" there was to be no end, the assurance is given that "the

BIBLE STUDY

zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isa. 9:6, 7) We see God's zeal operating in the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus, thus transferring the Logos from the spirit plane to the human, that as a perfect human being he might die for the sins of the world. We see Jehovah's zeal manifested further in raising the Lord of glory from the dead. With such miraculous power manifested in so many ways from the very time when God began to make promises concerning the Messiah until he was raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, can we doubt that this great One will yet reign "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth"?—Ps. 72:8

Mary's heart rejoiced because the Lord used her so wonderfully as the mother of Jesus; and doubtless her appreciation was very pleasing to the Lord. So we today who may have the privilege of co-operating with the Lord in any phase of his work should be thankful for the opportunity, and consider it a high honor to be so used by him. Nevertheless, it will help us to maintain a proper perspective of our own relationship to God's work if we keep clearly in mind that "the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" regardless of human co-operation. God will use us, and happy are we when he does; but our continuing to be used will depend upon our appreciation and faithfulness, not upon his need for our services.

Luke 2:1-7

FUNDAMENTALLY, the world has not changed a great deal since

the time Jesus was born. The whole world then was being taxed, and so it is now. It was a tax problem which took Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem that first "holy night." They were away from home, but despite Mary's condition, no room could be found for them in the inn. There is no reason to suppose, of course, that the innkeeper realized the importance of the child who was about to be born. To him, Joseph and Mary were just ordinary people and he could see no reason for inconveniencing other guests in order to make room for them.

So Jesus was born in a manger! Humble shepherds, watching their flocks by night, were notified of his birth, and went to the manger to see the Lord of glory. This was God's way of introducing the King of kings to the world. Belatedly (probably two years later), wise men from the East sought out the young child and presented him with gifts; but Jesus, God's great Gift to the world, the Gift which will mean life eternal to all who believe was, by divine arrangement, born in a manger, and greeted only by the humblest of his people.

The faithful of Israel throughout the centuries had been waiting for this great event, but few recognized its reality when it occurred. They looked for their Messiah, but were not prepared to accept one who was so humble of birth. Nevertheless, the plan of God had taken a step forward. Promises began to be translated into reality. The Messiah which was to come, had come—at least he had been

THE DAWN

born, and thirty years later he began his ministry on behalf of Israel and the world.

The Christmas message to us today is similar in many respects, for again Christ is present. He has not come this time to suffer and to die, however, but to live and to reign. The kingdoms of this world are already crumbling as this new King is marching on to victory. Soon the glory of his kingdom will be manifested to the whole world; and when it is, there will be peace on earth because God's good will

thus will be manifested toward all mankind.

QUESTIONS:

Is it possible for the human mind to comprehend the conception and birth of Jesus?

How is the "zeal of the Lord of hosts" manifested in the outworking of the divine plan?

To whom was the notice first given concerning the birth of Jesus, and why?

In what sense is the message, "Joy to the world, the Lord has come," particularly appropriate today?

The People Make Their Choice

DECEMBER 30

Joshua 24:1-8, 14-18

OUR last lesson preceding the Christmas study found Joshua, the new leader of the Israelites, beginning the conquest of Canaan, with the Lord giving him an outstanding victory at the start in conquering Jericho. Joshua, like all members of the fallen race, was imperfect, and made mistakes, and these the Lord usually brought to his attention, as in the case of his endeavor to capture the small city of Ai without first consulting his divine leader. But at heart he was loyal to Jehovah, who blessed his leadership in the conquest of Canaan and the division of the land among Israel's twelve tribes.

Today's lesson finds Joshua nearing the end of his faithful life of service. The Lord had blessed him in driving Israel's enemies out of the land, and that task was finished. The land had been divided among the tribes in keeping with the Lord's instructions. This faithful leader of Israel was now 110 years old, and realizing that he had about reached the end of his life he summoned an assembly of Israel's tribes to Shechem for the purpose of exhorting them to faithfulness in their worship and service of Jehovah, the only true and living God.

While Joshua's parting message to the people was not nearly as lengthy as was the oration of Moses just before his death, its purpose

BIBLE STUDY

was the same; namely, reminding the Israelites of their covenant obligations to God and of the importance of fulfilling these obligations if they expected his blessings to continue with them. He admonished them to serve the Lord "in sincerity and in truth," and to "put away the gods" which their "fathers served on the other side of the flood [Jordan], and in Egypt," and to serve Jehovah.—Ch. 24:14

Joshua based his plea on the marvelous manner in which God had dealt with and blessed them, beginning with their father, Abraham, and tracing the Lord's providences on his behalf and on behalf of his descendants through their experiences in Egypt, the Exodus, in the wilderness, and finally in their victorious conquest of the land. This recounting of the Lord's blessings, though briefly stated, reminded the people of the many outstanding ways in which the hand of the Lord had been manifested in their midst for their guidance, blessing, and protection.

It was a wonderful foundation of fact upon which to build a plea for faithfulness, a plea in which appreciation of divine goodness was used as the motive which should inspire the Israelites to loyalty to the God of their salvation. It is the same reasoning as used by Paul concerning Christians, when he wrote that because Christ died for us we "judge," or decide, that we do not belong to ourselves, but to Christ. True thankfulness for divine blessings is sure to find expression in the terms of loyal devotion to God and to his service.

Joshua was what we might today call "subtle" in presenting his exhortation. After recounting all that Jehovah had done for them, including the destruction of all their enemies who had trusted in other gods, he said, "If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord [Jehovah], choose you this day whom ye will serve." What Israelite, under the circumstances, would be ungrateful enough to say that he would consider it "evil" to serve the God who had so wonderfully blessed the whole nation, and in continuing to bless them had delivered into their hands a land "flowing with milk and honey"! And when Joshua climaxed his oration with his own affirmative stand on the Lord's side, saying, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," there was no other answer the people could give than the one recorded, "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods."

The two greatest sins of the Israelites seem to have been their tendency toward unbelief and their proneness to serve other gods. These were manifested soon after they left Egypt, resulting in their rebellion against Moses and the worship of other gods. Moses rallied them to a decision to serve the true God when at Sinai the nation agreed to the terms of the Law Covenant. And now again, Joshua had stirred the people up to take a stand for Jehovah. Throughout the centuries of the Jewish age there were various other times of revival, but the general course of the nation was

THE DAWN

away from Jehovah and in the direction of false gods.

It was not long after Joshua succeeded in getting the Israelites to affirm their loyalty to Jehovah that they became a nation of backsliders and the Lord permitted calamity to come upon them. They were rallied to the Lord's side under the leadership of various of the "judges," particularly Samuel, who was also a prophet. Thus, in a measure, they were kept as the people of God and held together

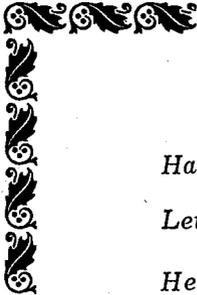
until their Messiah appeared. Then they failed again by rejecting him. Let us, in noting these failures of the past, be on the alert lest we, through unbelief, fall away from our steadfastness in the faith.

QUESTIONS:

What motive did Joshua present to the Israelites in exhorting them to faithfulness?

Did the people live up to their pledge of loyalty?

What practical lesson may we, as Christians, derive from this lesson?



The Savior Comes

*Hark, the glad sound! the Lord has come,
The Savior promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throne,
And every voice a song.
He comes, the "Sun of Righteousness,"
To roll earth's clouds away,
And make its desert wilderness
Bloom in eternal day.
He comes the prisoners to release,
In Satan's bondage held;
The gates of death before him burst,
Sin's binding fetters yield.
He comes the broken heart to bind,
The wounded soul to cure,
And, with the treasures of his grace,
To enrich the humble poor.
Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With thy beloved name.*



God's Great Gift

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable Gift."

—II CORINTHIANS 9:15

THIS is the season of the year when the spirit of giving is more universally manifested than at any other time, and how appropriate that Christians should, now and always, remember that in God we have the greatest of all examples of unselfish giving. Indeed, the gift of his Son is so far beyond our ability to comprehend fully that it can be truly described as "unspeakable." And how very practical is Paul's reference to God's great gift, for he reminds us of it as a climax of an appeal to the Corinthian church for funds to be used on behalf of their brethren in the famine-stricken land of Judea.

Little mention is made in the New Testament of the financial needs of the brethren or of the Lord's work in the Early Church, although the subject is not entirely ignored. Jesus and the apostles had a treasurer. For a time after Pentecost, the disciples put all they had into a common treasury, to be used as needed by the brethren and for the work. This arrangement, of course, did not continue long.

When famine conditions arose in Judea, Paul did not hesitate to collect funds from brethren elsewhere to help supply the needs of the brethren in the stricken areas. He complimented the brethren at Corinth for their generosity, and assured them that the Lord loves a cheerful giver. (II Cor. 9:7) In all these various references to finances, however, there is no indication that the brethren of that day engaged in specially planned campaigns of money-raising, nor that every meeting of the disciples for study and worship was made an occasion for taking up a collection. They were not ashamed to mention the subject when the need arose, but

money-raising was not made the major business of the Christian life.

In the Early Church, gifts of money were an obvious manifestation of the true spirit of Christ in the hearts of those who had consecrated themselves to follow in his footsteps. In setting forth the terms of discipleship Jesus told the rich young ruler that he should sell all that he had and give the proceeds to the poor. As the Early Church understood it, consecration to the Lord meant giving everything to him, even life itself, and that the Lord in turn made them stewards of that which now belonged to him, including their time, their strength, their money, their all, to be used in his service.

So we find that the subject of giving to the Lord, whether it be for the furtherance of the Gospel, or for the spiritual or material needs of his people, was far from taboo in the church. Indeed, quite the contrary is true, for in our text the Apostle Paul lifts it up to a sacred position in the hearts of the Corinthian brethren by likening it to what our Heavenly Father has done for us and for the world by the gift of his Son. It is after using such expressions as, "He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly"; "Let him give, not grudgingly," and, "Your liberal distribution unto them," that he closes his appeal, saying, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable Gift."—II Cor. 9:15

Here the apostle is reminding us that God's gift of his beloved Son to the church and to the world is the most precious of any and all gifts ever bestowed, costing our Heavenly Father more in sacrifice and suffering than has ever been equaled by any disciple of Christ; approached only by Jesus, who, in following the example of his Father, gave himself to die on the cross that all might have an opportunity to live. It is this principle of giving, this true spirit of charity, or love, that is emphasized in the New Testament, and its outworking in the details of our Christian lives will of necessity cause us to be unselfish and liberal in the use of whatever resources may come under our control as the Lord's stewards.

The Unspeakable Gift

In the act of giving, both the giver and receiver are made happy. We know how much joy God's Gift to us has brought, and we believe it must be true of our Heavenly Father, as stated by Jesus, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." The joy of both the giver and receiver is enhanced when the gift is specially examined and appreciated. Should not our joy, then, be increased by

refreshing our memories concerning some of the virtues of God's unspeakable Gift to us, for in doing so we are sure to find in him the One who "is altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousand."

Who, then, was Jesus, this One whom the Heavenly Father gave to be the Redeemer and Savior of the world? John identifies him in his prehuman existence as the "Logos," or Word, declaring, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with [the] God, and the Word was [a] god. . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."—John 1:1-14

In Revelation 3:14 we read, "Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." The Heavenly Father himself, speaking to us through the Psalmist concerning his Son declares, "I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." (Ps. 89:27) In another scripture, where the Logos is personified as "Wisdom" he is quoted as saying, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. . . . Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."—Prov. 8:22-30

The scriptural testimony is clear that the One whom our Heavenly Father chose to be his Gift for the redemption of the world was the highest of all his creatures, and the very beginning of his creation, and that he participated in all the remaining creative work. And the Scriptures also indicate that the association of the Father and the Son was a very intimate one, that the Son was constantly a delight to his Father, doing always those things which were pleasing to him. This fellowship of interest is revealed in the Genesis account of creation, where we find the Father saying to his Son, "Let 'us' make man in 'our' image." (Gen. 1:26) Who among us today would not thrill to have our Heavenly Father speak to us in such an intimate manner. Surely the partnership of the Father and the Son must have been hallowed and sweet, and their love for each other deep beyond the ability of the human mind to grasp.

And it was this beloved Son whom the Heavenly Father elected to give for the redemption of the sin-cursed and dying race. No wonder that John, in writing about such a gift, emphasized the extent to which it manifests God's love for the world, saying that he "so" loved the world "that he gave his only begotten Son." (John 3:16) Among the angelic sons of God there were doubtless many who would gladly have served their Creator in this manner, and the "gift" of any one of them would not have been without cost to him—for he loved them all—but he chose to give the One who meant the most to him, the One dearest to him of all his obedient and treasured creatures.

A gift reveals the love of the giver, not so much because of its intrinsic value as by what it represents to the giver. This is why Jesus called particular attention to the widow's mite. To the wealthy, the mite had little value, but because it was all that the widow had, her giving it to the Lord represented a spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice far beyond that sometimes possessed by those who out of their abundance are able, without sacrificing their material comforts, to give large sums.

We know that in the very nature of things our Heavenly Father is not "poor." Poetically the Psalmist, in describing God's riches, declares that the "cattle on a thousand hills" are his. The entire universe is God's creation and is owned and controlled by him. There is nothing that we can give to God to make him rich, nor does our withholding make him poor. How, then, could any gift which he might make be akin to the widow's mite?

The Logos was God's only direct creation, so from this standpoint, giving him to be the world's Redeemer meant the giving of all that he had. While the Logos in his prehuman existence was not on the divine plane of life, and could not reach up to the great heights of his Father's thoughts, he was the highest of all in the spirit realm, hence in him the Creator enjoyed a larger measure of fellowship and companionship than with any of his angelic sons. To give him up to die, then, meant the giving of that which costs the Creator more than anything else, for as we have seen, in a sense the Logos was all that he had.

Only the First Step

The Logos was "made flesh and dwelt among us," wrote John, "and we beheld his glory, as of the Only Begotten of the Father." We may be inclined to think of the natural process of begetting and

birth as being something which our finite minds are capable of understanding and explaining, but in reality they cannot. All life is a mystery to us and, from the standpoint of our inability to understand it, is in the realm of the miraculous. Nor can we understand the manner in which the life of the Logos was transferred to Mary, and in due time born as a babe in Bethlehem.

In Philippians 2:8 Paul speaks of Jesus as being "found" in fashion as a man. This suggests that to the heavenly hosts the Logos was lost for a while, and discovered only when they recognized him as having been made flesh. This, of course, emphasizes how completely he was given up by the Father for a time, and yet his being made flesh was only the first step in this supreme sacrifice of the Father, the "unspeakable Gift" which so effectively reveals his boundless love for his fallen and dying human creatures. The Logos, now made flesh, was yet to give his flesh in death for the life of the world.

As a child, and until he was thirty years of age, Jesus seemed to have an increasing understanding of the fact that he had been born into the world for a special divine purpose. This is indicated when in the temple at the age of twelve, he inquired of his mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Not, however, until he was thirty years of age, when he presented himself to John at Jordan to be baptized, did the Father communicate directly with him. But at that time Jesus was assured of his true relationship to God by hearing the voice of his Father saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. 3:17

Here a sweet fellowship between the two was established, and later Jesus said to his Father, I know that "thou hearest me always." (John 11:42) But of necessity it was a limited communion. Jesus was no longer living on a high plane of spirit life. His ability to comprehend his Father's thoughts was limited by his human mind, and although it was a perfect human mind, it was still greatly circumscribed as compared with the intelligence he possessed as the Logos, that mighty One who shared in all the work of creation.

While in the former association of the Father and Son great works were done by them—creation and otherwise—there is no reason to suppose that sacrifice and suffering were involved. But now it was different. Jesus was being offered in sacrifice, and the manner in which this must have affected the Heavenly Father is well represented by the experience of Abraham in offering up

Isaac as a burnt offering to God. It was a three days' journey for Abraham and Isaac before they reached the land of Moriah where Isaac was to be offered in sacrifice, and the account says that "they went both of them together."—Gen. 22:6

So it was with the Heavenly Father and with Jesus. They went "together" toward Calvary. And while Jesus had a general idea that he was to die, he seemingly did not understand all the details involved until he reached Gethsemane. But the Father did, and in the unselfish and complete giving of his "unspeakable Gift," his sympathetic and loving heart must have ached as he witnessed the hardships through which his Son was passing—sufferings which he knew would increase until he would hear his beloved One cry out, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me."—Matt. 26:39

Just as Isaac, in the type, displayed no opposition to his father, and willingly allowed himself to be placed on the altar to be sacrificed, so it was with Jesus. As he walked "together" with his Heavenly Father during the three and one-half years of his earthly ministry, his chief concern was to do always those things which pleased his Father. Jesus was also conscious of the fact that the Father was close to him. (John 11:42) This companionship of the Father and the Son, though limited by the fact that one was on the divine plane and the other on the human, must, nevertheless, have been sweet and blessed.

But only the Father understood fully the painful and ignominious end for Jesus to which this journey toward Calvary was leading. Only the Father knew that eventually, and for a few awful moments at the end of the way, he would withdraw the sunshine of his smile from his beloved Son, forcing him to cry out in bitterness of soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46) Surely, when we consider all that was involved in this complete giving up of his Son by the Father, it should help us the more to understand the depth of what Paul had in mind when he described it as God's "unspeakable Gift," for truly it was a Gift which was precious and costly.

Jesus' Willingness

Jesus' own part in humbly submitting to his Father's will in the great redemptive plan for the recovery of the fallen race is also an important consideration. He said, speaking of his Father, "I do always those things that please him." (John 8:29) This was so completely true that he was able to say on another occasion, "He

that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9) His obedience would in itself make the Father's part in the sacrifice more difficult. Obedience merits reward and blessing, not ignominy and suffering; but the Father endured seeing his Son suffer so severely, knowing that thus on him would be laid the iniquity of us all, and a way of escape from sin and death provided.

From the time of his baptism, when Jesus said, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart," he began to realize the true purpose of his coming to earth. (Ps. 40:7, 8) During his forty days in the wilderness he no doubt learned that he was to die for the sins of the world. Later he explained to his disciples that he expected to give his flesh for the life of the world. (John 6:51) He knew now that in being "made flesh" the body which had been prepared for him was "for the suffering of death."—Heb. 10:5; 2:9

We know, however, that Jesus' understanding of the divine plan, and of his own part in that plan, was progressive. Near the close of his ministry he acknowledged to his disciples that he did not then know the time of his second advent. Seemingly, also, he did not fully comprehend the extent to which he was to suffer in connection with his death until very near the end. Thus each painful experience which came to him would serve as a further test of his obedience to the divine will; and how wonderfully victorious he was in them all!

One of the most crucial tests came in Gethsemane. He knew that he was to die. He knew that this had been written of him in "the volume of the Book," and symbolically speaking, he had, like Isaac, willingly and gladly placed himself on the altar to be slain. But now circumstances closed in around him which seemingly he had not foreseen in detail. He was to be accused of blasphemy against the God whom he loved more than life itself. His sonship and kingship were to be denied.

Jesus prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." However, even in this there was not the slightest tendency on his part to hold back from full obedience, for he added, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39) And as his Heavenly Father heard this impassioned cry deep from the heart of his beloved Son, how it must have pained him not to "let this cup pass." He did, however, grant comfort to the Master.

We cannot be too sure of all that may have been involved in Jesus' crucial test in Gethsemane. Paul explained that he "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears," to him who was able to deliver him from death, and that he was heard in that he feared. (Heb. 5:7) It seems unlikely that Jesus asked to be delivered from dying as man's Redeemer. The "death" from which he sought deliverance was probably the "second death," a death into which he would fall if he had not faithfully carried out every detail of his covenant of sacrifice. And he "was heard in that he feared," yes, favorably heard, and given the assurance that his Father was pleased with him, and by this he was comforted.

The value of God's Gift, in terms of suffering, becomes even more apparent as we note the manner in which the Father and Son continued to walk "together" through the hours of the Redeemer's trial before the high priest and before Pilate. Each grim scene during those hours of ridicule and scoffing further enhances the value of that "unspeakable Gift." Jesus was given opportunity to gain his freedom and to escape crucifixion, but he did not accept it. He voluntarily "poured out his soul unto death," and allowed himself to be "numbered with the transgressors." (Isa. 53:12) And since in Jesus we see the Father, we know that his part in this offering was no less costly, that he suffered with his Son.

Perhaps one of the most crucial moments in this whole ordeal was when Jesus was hanging on the cross, and the crowd cried out, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Matt. 27:40) And then again they cried, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." (Matt. 27:42) Here was a final opportunity to take back the gift, as it were. The Father had said concerning Jesus, "This IS my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17) Must he not have yearned to demonstrate to this sin-stained crowd that the One whom they were jeering and crucifying was indeed his Son! Certainly Jesus also would have been glad to convince them that their conception of him was wrong, that he was not a blasphemer, but he did not, instead he "endured" this "contradiction of sinners against himself."—Heb. 12:3

"Let him save himself," the rulers shouted. (Luke 23:35) How little they realized that by his refusal to save himself, Jesus, in co-operation with his Heavenly Father, was providing salvation for them and for all the families of the earth. What a Savior! What a Gift—truly an "unspeakable Gift."

When Abraham and Isaac "went the both of them together" to mount Moriah, the final test upon them was when Isaac was stretched out on the altar, and his beloved father raised the knife to slay him. Could we imagine anything that would place a greater test upon a father's love, or upon a son's confidence in his father? It must have been something akin to this that Jesus and his Heavenly Father experienced when finally, on the cross, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46) It was as though, having trusted his Father all along the way—and even as recently as in Gethsemane being assured of his love and confidence—he now saw him, as it were, raise a knife to slay him.

This cry of anguish was a quotation from the prophecies, but this does not mean that it was any the less real. (Ps. 22:1) Perhaps the recognition of the meaning of this prophecy indicates that by it the Master was made to realize even more deeply that his Father had actually forsaken him. True, the fact that this final test had thus been foretold would assure Jesus that nothing had gone wrong in connection with the offering, still he was forsaken. The sunshine of his Father's smile had disappeared under a cloud, and now he was alone.

Perhaps Jesus' recognition that this crucial moment in his experience had been foretold in prophecy served to give him strength to endure the remaining moments of his suffering. In any event, his last outcry was one of confidence in his Father, as well as full surrender to his will—"Into thy hands I commend my spirit," my life, my all. (Luke 23:46) Now the "Gift" had been fully given. The Heavenly Father had not only given his Son to be made flesh, but had traveled with him all the way to his cruel death on the cross, had sympathetically endured and suffered with him, and voluntarily so, for by design, and because he "so loved," the Father had laid upon his Son "the iniquity of us all."—Isa. 53:6

The Costly Method of Giving

Our appreciation of God's "unspeakable Gift" is thus greatly increased by the costly manner in which the atoning blood of the Redeemer was made available for the church and for the world. The great principle of divine love represented both by the Gift and by the manner in which it was given is held out in the Word of God as the only proper motivating power in our lives as we endeavor to be conformed to the pattern set before us, in both the Father and the Son. We, too, are to give all, and are never to take

our sacrifice off the altar regardless of the suffering which may be involved in our offering.

An understanding example of how this principle operates in actual practice is the unselfish love of the Philippian church for Paul, as manifested by sending him a gift while he was in prison at Rome. Of what the gift consisted the Scriptures do not disclose. This is not important. Our interest is in the fact that the Philippian brethren loved Paul, and demonstrated their love by sending him a gift. Paul appreciated this, and indirectly alludes to it in his epistle, saying, "I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more." (Phil. 1:9) This was not a solicitation for another gift, but a compliment to their unselfish interest in him as a servant of God and a brother in Christ. Their love had prompted the gift, and Paul wanted their love to abound in all ways approved by their knowledge of the divine will.

The gift itself meant much to the apostle. But that gift was even more precious because of the great cost involved in its delivery. It had been brought to him by Epaphroditus, a member of the Philippian church, who, because of the hardships involved in making the journey to Rome, had become seriously ill—"nigh unto death." In sending this faithful servant back to the brethren at Philippi, Paul wrote, "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me."—Phil. 2:29, 30

No wonder Paul appreciated that gift. In this sacrifice he saw devotion to Christ and to the spirit of Christ—yes, he saw the same spirit as that manifested by the Father in the "unspeakable Gift" by which his love is so wonderfully demonstrated. This Gift truly is "unspeakable," but the further love of the Father as manifested in his manner of giving, and the great cost in suffering attached thereto is so overwhelming in its implications that our finite minds are lost in their effort even to comprehend it, much less to describe such love.

The only adequate expression of appreciation we can make at all, in the face of the love manifested by God's "unspeakable Gift," is in the offering of our all to him, including life itself with no reservations as to what may be involved in the way of hardship and trial as day by day we present our offering on the altar of praise to him who is the greatest of all Givers.

Heroes of Faith

HEBREWS—CHAPTER XI

THE Hebrew brethren to whom this epistle was originally written were, seemingly, inclined to be somewhat unstable in their faith and zeal, and one of the practical purposes of the epistle was to stimulate them to give "more earnest heed" to the things which they had heard, lest at any time they should let them slip. (ch. 2:1) They had apparently been zealous for a time, but had become lax, so that now they needed to be taught again the first principles of the truth. (ch. 5:12) It is in keeping with his effort to revive their faith and zeal that in the 10th chapter Paul asks these brethren to recall the "former days," and reminds them of their willingness at that time to suffer for the cause of Christ, adding that then they endured "joyfully" the spoiling of their goods.

It is in keeping with this objective of the epistle that Paul presents the wonderful lesson of faith which we find in the 11th chapter. Beginning with verse 32 of chapter 10, the apostle builds up to and introduces his discussion of faith, showing the Hebrew brethren how essential faith was to them, lest they should "draw back unto perdition." (ch. 10:38, 39) In order to establish the fact that genuine faith in God and in his promises is a mighty keeping power in the lives of those who serve God, Paul cites many examples of the past, beginning with Abel, and notes what faith gave them strength to accomplish and endure.

A study of the chapter gives one a deeper appreciation of the power of faith in the life of a devoted servant of God, showing how it enables him to endure, fortifies him to resist discouragement, and to continue in a way of life in which it is known that danger and hardship will almost constantly be encountered. Truly, the ancient worthies present a glittering testimony of their faithfulness in enduring inhuman persecution. What a powerful incentive to greater faithfulness this testimony must have been to the Hebrew brethren when it was so eloquently presented to them by Paul!

Verse 1—"*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*"

THE Greek word here translated "substance" could be more properly rendered "foundation," or "basis." Faith, then, is both the basis for our hope, and the evidence (Greek, "proof," or "conviction") that it will find fruition in the glorious realities of the things promised. The "things hoped for" and the "things not seen" are the same. In Romans 8:24, 25 Paul writes: "Hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

We could have no hope apart from faith. The other essential element of hope is desire. It would be improper to say that we hoped for something which we did not desire. Nor could we say that we hope for some desirable thing if we had no assurance of ever receiving it. The natural eye has not seen the glorious spiritual inheritance which God has promised to the church, but, as Paul explains, they have been revealed to us by the Spirit, "for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."—I Cor. 2:10

This does not mean that we can actually understand what a divine being is really like; but the Spirit of God, through the Word, has revealed sufficiently to create within us a desire for heavenly things, and the assurance is given us by the promises that we will be able to attain such a reward. It is our faith which grasps these promises and thus gives us a reason for hoping for the things which we have been led to desire.

Verse 2—*"For by it the elders obtained a good report."*

THE "elders" referred to here are undoubtedly the ancient worthies, the "fathers" of Israel, for it is these whom the apostle discusses throughout the chapter. The expression, "obtained a good report," seems to indicate that these faithful ones of the past received from the Lord some assurance that they were pleasing to him—something, probably, akin to what is described in Christian experience as the "witness of the Spirit." (Rom. 8:16) It is also true, of course, that this "report" has reached us, bringing the individual faithfulness of each of the "elders" in a wonderful panorama of inspiration (or as Paul puts it, "a cloud of witnesses") for our encouragement.—Heb. 12:1

Verse 3—*"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."*

TRUE faith is not "blind," for it enables one to see, to "understand," as Paul states it in this text. As we view "nature" today we discern that everything which develops, or grows, starts with something which is largely visible—a seed becomes a plant; a grub becomes a moth. But reason tells us that this could not have been true in the original creation. Faith builds upon our reasoning, and comes to the understanding that through the mighty power of God, the visible things of creation were "framed," not from things which appear, but from invisible elements beyond our powers to comprehend. In Romans 1:20 the apostle writes: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen [by the eye of faith], being understood by the things that are made."

We understand by faith, Paul states, that the worlds were framed by the "word" of God. The Greek word here used is not *logos*, but one which means a command, or directive. Paul's reasoning here is evidently based upon his knowledge of the Genesis account of creation, where such expressions are found as "Let there be light"; "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters"; "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together"; etc. Thus did the Creator command, and the worlds were "framed."

The Greek word translated "worlds" in this text is *aion*, meaning age, or in the plural, ages. Paul's reference, therefore, may be understood to include God's divine plan of the ages pertaining to man's place in his great creative scheme. The language of the texts seems to preclude the possibility of limiting the reference merely to the ages in the divine plan, but these might well be included since they have to do with man's eternal existence, as the crowning feature of God's earthly creation.

Verse 4—"*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*"

"FAITH cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God," Paul tells us. (Rom. 10:17) This would indicate that Abel received information from God concerning the kind of sacrifice he should offer. If it had simply been a case of each of the brothers offering to the Lord what they had on hand to give, Abel's faith would not have entered into the offering any more than Cain's. Seldom does the Bible give all the details of any occurrence and,

although no mention is made of it, we think it is quite possible that Abel was informed by the Lord that he wished a flesh and blood offering. His obedience demonstrated his faith, and proved that he was righteous.

The text says that Abel was "righteous." The same Greek word is used here as when Paul wrote, "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10) In this latter statement, however, absolute righteousness, or perfection, is referred to, whereas the righteousness of Abel was merely his heart condition which was demonstrated by his faith and obedience. It is essentially the same thought as that contained in the reference to Abraham's justification by faith.

A close analysis reveals the great importance God attaches to faith in him and in his arrangements and promises. Had Adam possessed true faith and confidence in God he would not have transgressed his law. And while Adam's descendants have lost perfection and life because of his sin, those such as Abel, Abraham, and others who, despite their imperfections, do believe God, prove their worthiness of his favor and friendship. Such faith-righteousness is properly and scripturally described as justification.

During the Gospel age those who possess such a faith, and demonstrate it by full consecration to the Lord, are justified to life through the merit of the shed blood of Christ. This is in order that they might present their bodies living and acceptable sacrifices to God and thus share in the sin-offering work of this age. However, during the preceding ages there was no opportunity to share in the "better sacrifices," so the imputation of the blood of Christ was not needed to give a standing of life to God's servants; but their faith was no less vital because of this, nor were they less pleasing to God. It is simply that he dealt with them differently than he does with those in this age who possess a justifying faith.

While it is true that God's testimony concerning Abel's righteousness has come down through the ages to us, the text also indicates that Abel himself was encouraged by this "witness." His life of faithfulness was brief, and probably he received little in the way of reward except this assurance of the Creator's favor and love. We doubt if any greater blessing could be experienced by anyone than to know that he is a friend of God. It is even a blessing to us now to know that by faith Abel proved worthy of this high honor, for his example stimulates us to be faithful. In the margin, the

expression, "yet speaketh," is translated, "is yet spoken of." Not many of all the millions who have died throughout the ages have been remembered long by their own generation, but these heroes of faith of the Old Testament are still spoken of, and their lives cited as examples, thousands of years after they died.

In passing, it is well to give thought as to why God was pleased with the flesh and blood sacrifice offered by Abel. It was evidently because it pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ, the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) When condemning our first parents to death, God made the statement that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. This was a veiled promise of future deliverance from the result of original sin. But for this to be possible there would need to be remission of sin, so God began to illustrate that this was to be accomplished by the shedding of blood. As his plan of redemption unfolds, it comes to light that it was to be through the shed blood of his own beloved Son.

Verse 5—*"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."*

IN GENESIS 5:24 we are informed that Enoch "walked with God." This was a walk of faith. Not much is said in the Scriptures about Enoch, but Jude informs us that he prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord with myriads of his saints to execute judgment. (Jude 14) This would indicate that in his walk with God, Enoch had been informed concerning at least some of the divine plan, and that he believed what the Lord told him and acted upon it. So in this again is shown God's pleasure with those who believe his promises. Even in the human sphere of association it would be impossible to enjoy friendly relationships with those who did not believe what we said. How much truer this is in our relationship to God!

Enoch was "translated," Paul tells us, "that he should not see death." This is one of the texts in the Bible which is used by many of our nominal church friends to prove that the righteous do not sleep in death, but are taken immediately to heaven. But does the Greek word here rendered "translated," necessarily imply this? Two other examples of the biblical use of this word may help us to reach a conclusion. One is found in Jude 4, in which the word

"turning" is a translation of the same Greek word, and the text reads: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, *turning* the grace of our God into lasciviousness." The other example is in Galatians 1:6, in which the word "removed" is a translation of the Greek word Paul used in Hebrews 11:5 to describe what happened to Enoch. This text reads, "I marvel that ye are so soon *removed* from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel." Obviously the word "translated," with the meaning ordinarily attached to it, would be quite out of place in both of these texts; for in both instances the writers are simply describing a changed position, or attitude, of certain believers. They had allowed themselves to be removed, or turned, from one position to another. Prof. Strong gives the literal meaning of the word as "transfer."

The question remaining, then, is in what sense was Enoch removed, or transferred—from what, to what? The Scriptures divide the dead and dying world of mankind into two general groups, the "quick," and the "dead." (Acts 10:42; II Tim. 4:1) The "quick" are evidently those who, while under condemnation to death, are still alive, not having fallen asleep in death; while the "dead" are those who have actually gone down into the tomb. To be transferred from one of these classes into the other could well be what Paul tells us God did for Enoch in order that he "should not see death"—that is, should not experience the painful process of dying, or what is sometimes referred to as "death agonies." Most people, in thinking of the time they will die, express the wish that they might go suddenly, in their sleep, if possible; and for Enoch to be taken in this way, without his being conscious of what was occurring, could well be construed as a great favor from the Lord.

The Old Testament record seems to bear out this conclusion. It does not use the word "translated," as the seemingly faulty translation of the Greek in Hebrews 11:5 suggests, but simply states that "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." (Gen. 5:24) The expression "were not," is used in Jeremiah 31:15 to describe the death condition of Rahel's children. And the Scriptures tell us concerning certain wicked cities of Abraham's day that God "took" them away as he saw good. (Ezek. 16:50) So, the fact that Enoch "was not," and that God "took" him, does not imply that he has remained alive somewhere, but rather the opposite.

In any event, we know that Enoch was not taken to heaven, for Jesus declared definitely in his day that no man had ascended to heaven. (John 3:13) Whether or not he may have been preserved alive elsewhere for some unexplained purpose is not a point over which we need to be dogmatic. To us the weight of testimony seems to be to the effect that in Enoch's case God intervened to end his life without the necessity of suffering the horrors of dying, while with others of his faithful servants he did not—with the possible exception of Moses, although Moses at least knew that he was about to die.

Verse 6—*“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”*

THE faith referred to is that which begins with one's original confidence in the fact of God's existence, and that the Creator is a just and loving God, One who rewards those who diligently seek him. It is faith that causes one to “seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him,” as the apostle declares. (Acts 17:27) But “all men have not faith,” Paul explains. (II Thess. 3:2) Those who do not have faith do not enjoy God's favor at the present time, for nothing inspires them to search after him. How thankful we can be, however, to realize that in the next age, the glory of God will be demonstrated to the faithless ones, giving them an opportunity to approach him upon the basis of “sight.” When, in this way, they learn to know God, they too will have faith in him; and, if they demonstrate their faith by their obedience to the laws of the new kingdom, then operative throughout the earth, they will be rewarded with life everlasting on the earth. That will be the day of their “visitation.”

But now the Lord is dealing with and blessing only those who have faith strong enough to be convinced that he is able and willing to fulfil all his gracious promises. And faith should grow stronger as we become better acquainted with the Lord, and experience the manifold blessings which he continually showers upon those who “diligently seek him.” The evidence of growing faith will be found in our increasing zeal in seeking to know and do the Heavenly Father's will.

Every follower of the Master needs a strong faith in order to meet the various tests which divine wisdom permits to come upon

him. But faith gives the victory now, even as it did for those heroes of faith throughout Old Testament times. Just as faith enabled them to suffer and to die in their loyalty to God, and in their obedience to his cause which he had entrusted to them, so it will with us. It is only through the exercise of such an increasing faith that we can hope to have the witness of his favor, and be assured of receiving the reward which he has so many times promised.

The quality of the faith described by Paul is also worthy of note. It is a belief, not only in the existence of God, but has in it a measure of comprehension of his wonderful character—that he is “a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Millions have had a negative sort of faith that there is a God, but it has not been the kind of faith described by Paul. It has been more akin to fear. They have been afraid that a demon-like god existed, and that he was ready to plunge them into an abyss of torture if they failed to please him. For this reason they have tried, in some measure, to please him, but their efforts have not been based upon a true faith.

Verse 7—*“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”*

IN THIS text we are again reminded that faith is the evidence of things unseen, for Noah believed what God told him concerning the coming flood before there was any visible evidence of rain. And this was a greater test of faith than it might seem to us now, since those of the antediluvian world had never seen rain at all, for the record is that a mist went up from the earth to water it.—Gen. 2:6

In so many cases the translators of our Common Version Bible take occasion to introduce the idea of “fear” into the text, evidently because of the gross misapprehension they had of the character of God. Here we have another example of this. They have used the word “warned,” when the Greek expression which they translate simply means “to utter an oracle.” And the word “fear,” in the expression that Noah was moved with fear,” simply means to be circumspect, or having due reverence for God and the desire to conduct himself in keeping with the information which he had received from him concerning the coming Deluge and the need they would have for an ark.

It was Noah’s faith that led to this attitude, and acting in har-

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

mony therewith he built the ark—another demonstration of the fact that only through works of obedience is faith manifested. And Noah actually did demonstrate his faith and thereby “condemned the world”—that is, “the world that then was.” The record is that Noah was a preacher of righteousness, although none of his sermons is recorded in the Bible. On the principle that actions speak louder than words, may it not be that part of his preaching was done by the fact that, exercising faith in what God told him concerning the coming flood, he proceeded to build the ark?

The world did not believe this testimony nor any other which Noah might have given to them, so they were brought under condemnation and perished in the Flood. It was his faith in God and in the information God had given to him, leading to obedience in building the ark, which highlighted the faithlessness of the world at that time; for, through him, and as a result of his faith, the people had an opportunity to believe, but failed to accept it. Thus they were condemned.

At the same time, Noah’s obedience resulted in his becoming an heir to the righteousness which is by faith. In other words, he was brought into the same friendly relationship with God as were the other heroes of faith of that ancient time. And what a favored position that was for all of them!

(Chapter 11 continued in next issue)



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

DECEMBER 6—“He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.”—Proverbs 25:28 (Z. '01-295. Hymn 183)

DECEMBER 13—“Lay not this sin to their charge.”—Acts 7:60 (Z. '01-331. Hymn 95)

DECEMBER 20—“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.”—II Timothy 2:15 (Z. '02-318. Hymn 105)

DECEMBER 27—“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”—I John 5:21 (Z. '02-284. Hymn 312)



Was Jesus His Own Father?

John 1:1 reads, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; and in John 1:14, we read, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Are these texts not proof that the babe Jesus was God and not just another human child?

JESUS was not just another human child, tainted with sin and subjected to the condemnation which has come upon all the human race. Jesus had a prehuman existence which is not true of any other babe ever born into the world. In John 1:15 and 30, John the Baptist bore witness to this truth by saying that Jesus lived before John had been born, even though John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus. And in John 8:58 we find this statement, "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." In Jesus' prehuman existence his name was the Word (Greek, Logos), the representative of God.

None of the fallen human race could redeem himself nor anyone else from the condemnation of death, for at birth all are defiled with sin and imperfection; there-

fore in the plan of God it was necessary that the Word be "made flesh," that is, transferred from his prehuman spiritual condition to the human state, and born as the Babe of Bethlehem. He was not stained by sin; he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26); thus, different from those defiled by transgression, he was able to die for the race as a ransom, a corresponding price for Adam; as it is written in I Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

But Jesus' prehuman existence does not prove that he is the Almighty. An accurate translation of the Greek text helps to uncover the correct thought expressed in John 1:1, which has been hidden by a faulty rendering. It reads, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with **the** God, and a god was the Word." (**Diaglott**) Thus a contrast is made between the Almighty, here described as "**the** God," **the** Mighty One; and the Word described as "a god," a mighty one. This contrast is further emphasized in the other text of our question, which describes the Word as "the Only Begotten of the Father," showing that the one has received life from the other. And this is in full harmony with Revelation 3:14, which describes the Word as "the faithful

YOUR QUESTIONS

and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

At this holiday season, let us rejoice in the knowledge of God's love in providing his Son for our redemption; and may we be thankful that we have been given to understand the philosophy of Jesus' words when he said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."—John 6:51

Peter's Keys

Matthew 16:19 reads as follows: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." What is the meaning of the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" that our Lord here gave to Peter?

AT THE time our Lord made this statement to Peter, the door to the kingdom of God was locked, and none could enter in. Even while living on earth, our Master could not open the door to the kingdom to permit his disciples to enter in, for he had not yet died as the Savior of the world. It was not until after his death and resurrection; not until he had ascended on high and "appeared in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24), presenting the merit of his sacrifice as the condition upon which his disciples might be accepted, that any could be ushered into the kingdom of heaven.

To possess a key signifies that one has the power to unlock and open a door; and because our Lord used the plural form, and gave to Peter the "keys" of the kingdom of heaven, it implied that there was more than one door to be opened. A study of the Scriptures reveals that there were two doors, and Peter opened them both.

The first door to the kingdom of heaven was opened at Pentecost, when only the Jewish believers were invited to become sharers of the kingdom with our Lord. In accordance with the promise of our text, Peter, as the spokesman of our Lord (Acts 2:14), stood up and introduced the new dispensation of the Spirit to the three thousand who were assembled. They at once believed and entered through the door thus opened to sonship with God.

Three and one-half years later was God's due time to have the door of the Gospel invitation to sonship thrown open to the Gentiles. The seventy weeks of divine favor to the Jewish people had run their course to completion, and it was now time to favor the Gentiles with the opportunity to become members of the bride of Christ. In harmony with the promise of our text, Peter was again chosen, and this time he took the message to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, and to his household. Here the second key was used, and the entrance of Gentiles into the kingdom of God was witnessed by the miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit upon the assembled company, even as it was on the day of Pentecost.

Thus our text teaches that Peter was chosen by our Lord to open the hitherto closed doors that would permit both Jews and Gentiles to become spiritual sons and heirs of God.

Was Peter the First Pope?

In Matthew 16:19 we are told that Jesus said to Peter, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Does not this tremendous responsibility show that Peter was here chosen to be the first head of the church?

THIS commission to Peter has been misunderstood by many. It has been the basis of the false claim that Peter was the first pope, which our questioner probably has in mind, and also that Peter's authority was greater than that held by the other apostles.

According to authorities of history, no other terms were in more constant use in rabbinic canon law than those of "binding" and "loosing"; they represented the legislative and judicial powers of the rabbinic office. These terms were familiar to all Jews at the time of our Lord's first advent, and they knew of the use and abuse to which they had been subjected by the Jewish leaders. In the text of our question, Christ transferred the power to "bind" and "loose" to Peter, and later to the other disciples, as we read in Matthew 18:1 and 18. "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Verily I say

unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Since this commission was conferred upon Peter and the disciples generally, we are enabled to see its meaning in a clearer light. It simply means that Christ, knowing the will of God, told Peter that the Father purposed to use him and others of the disciples in such a manner that the whole church would have confidence in them, knowing that their teachings were inspired by the God of heaven. Later, the writings of the apostles made it clear that certain of the commandments of the Jewish Law are not "binding" upon Christians. We know that this is true because all Christians are free, or "loosed," from the Law Covenant; and this freedom proclaimed by the apostles is also recognized in the courts of heaven.

Again, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostles bound doctrines and teachings which we, as followers of Christ, must accept as the requirements necessary if we are to be accounted faithful by the heavenly Judge. This commission, then, is our authority to accept the apostles as God's representatives and inspired mouthpieces; not Peter alone, but all the inspired writers were endowed with the same authority. This text is also recognized by many to teach that "the voice of the church is the voice of the Lord," when a group of consecrated Christians take action on any matter.

Salvation and Church Membership

Some of my friends who claim to be saved live more carelessly than I choose to do: yet they tell me I am lost because I have never joined a church, and that they have eternal security because they have done so. I would like your opinion upon this point of constant discussion.

IT IS a God-given privilege to be a true Christian, and the only way to have communion with the Heavenly Father. To think that eternal security can be bought in any other way than by faithfulness to the "high calling" of Christian consecration and devotion even "unto death," is unscriptural and wrong. Every Christian must wage a valiant battle against the allurements of the world, the temptations of the devil, and the natural tendencies of his own fallen and imperfect fleshly nature. If this battle is not constantly pressed, the worldly mind prospers at the expense of the spiritual life.

Sometimes once devoted Christians, through careless living, become alienated from God, and their love for him and his ways is cooled, because the love of money, the pleasures of the world, or the desire for honor among men who know not the Gospel, have filled their hearts and crowded out the reverence and devotion which they had promised at the time they made their consecration to him would be his alone.

There is much worldly-minded-

ness in many church organizations today. In fact, some have become church members because of business or social advantages, or to enjoy the recreational facilities now commonplace, rather than through their conviction of condemnation because of sin and their heart's desire to become footstep followers of Jesus Christ. Such are not true Christians, as it is written, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8:9) Those who are called of God and desire to do his will are attentive to the standard set by the Master when he said, "Let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16:24) Surely the truth expressed in the apostolic statement found in Galatians 6:8, 9 is not hard to understand—"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

It is not given to us to judge another individual in his relationship to God. It is proper that we examine ourselves. Whether it is our lot to serve him in the heavenly or earthly division of the kingdom of God, to the extent that we carefully follow the principles of righteousness in our lives we shall be blessed. Let us not be smug in our own self-righteousness, but rather seek the righteousness that comes through Christ's death.

"That Which Every Joint Supplieth"

EPHESIANS 4:16

AT THE Christmas season of the year the people of the world make a special effort to display the spirit of good will toward one another, but this should be the aim of Christians at all times. True unity among the brethren can stem only from the spirit of good will and love which overflows their hearts, spilling over in an unctuous stream of sympathy and helpfulness toward all who are walking in the same narrow way of sacrifice and devotion to God.

By nature we are all more or less different, emotionally and otherwise. Our viewpoints are molded somewhat by environment of home, of business, and of country. But we have all accepted Jesus as our Head, and the Holy Spirit reaching us through him and through the Word should, despite our natural differences, be blending our viewpoints into a unity of purpose and determination to be faithful to our God and loyal to one another, as we endeavor to exalt our Head, Christ Jesus, and be obedient to the heavenly impulses which reach us through him.

The Spirit of the Lord promotes love and sympathetic understanding among the brethren, as well as an attitude of humility. It is not Christlike to be indifferent to the needs of our brethren, nor to exalt ourselves above them, saying, Pharisee-like, that we are thankful we are not as the other brethren, that we have advanced beyond them and are able to dig deeper into the Word of God and discover more spiritual truths upon which to feed. If we find ourselves inclining in this direction, it would be well to examine our

hearts very carefully and sincerely, for it may be that unwittingly the spirit of pride is developing there.

Because we are different, naturally, we may have a tendency to become specialists in our study and use of the truth. Some minds seem especially to appreciate the types and shadows of the Old Testament; others find great joy in the prophecies, particularly those pertaining to our day; still other brethren are thrilled (all should be) by the doctrines of the divine plan and never tire of talking about their harmony and beauty. Then again, there are those, more emotionally inclined, who feel that the most important thing to meditate upon and to talk about is the love of Jesus—his love for us, and our love for him.

All of these phases of the truth are contained in the Word of God, and are there for our instruction and encouragement. It may be natural for one mind to specially appreciate a certain phase of the truth and its application in our lives, but to indulge this preference to the exclusion of the remainder of the truth, or to decide that those who do not appreciate so much the things in which we particularly rejoice are not as “spiritual” as we are, would be dangerous, for it could lead to the judging and condemnation of our brethren. Actually, of course, it is unwise to make a hobby of any phase of the truth: Jesus said that man can live only by feeding upon “every word” that comes from the mouth of God. The Lord would not have given us the entire Bible if it were necessary only that we love Jesus, or study the tabernacle, or rejoice in certain prophecies.

Paul, in using the “body” illustration of the church, speaks of that “which every joint supplieth.” (Eph. 4:16) Perhaps, in the divine economy, the Lord knew that some of his people would give more study to certain parts of his Word than others, and has so arranged it that they can, and should, help one another by combining their special treasures in sweet and upbuilding fellowship.

The types and shadows of the Old Testament could have no meaning except as they are viewed in the light of the precious doctrines of the divine plan. And the doctrines are made to glow with a brighter lustre as the lessons of the types are focused upon them. Surely, then, the brother who especially revels in the doctrines should appreciate the studies of the brother who enjoys types and shadows, and vice versa.

Indeed, we should learn to appreciate what every brother and sister is able to contribute to our fellowship in the truth. One of the important parts of the Bible, for example, is the Book of The Acts, and one reason we all enjoy it so much is because it relates so many thrilling experiences of the brethren in the Early Church. And today also, an important part of our fellowship is based upon our experiences in serving the Lord and one another.

Love is certainly an all-important requisite in the Christian life. It should pervade all our thinking, our study, and our service. We must have supreme love for God, a love which will cause us to sacrifice everything, even life itself, in the doing of his will. Our love for God will include love also for Jesus. The Master encouraged us to love his Father, and indicated that if we did, we would love him also. When Peter professed his love for Jesus he received the commission, "Feed my sheep." To all of his disciples, Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."—John 14:15; 21:15-17

In obedience to the commission to feed the Lord's sheep, Peter wrote two of the outstanding epistles of the New Testament. One of them (the first) deals primarily with the foretold sufferings of Christ, and the privilege we have of sharing in those sufferings, and if faithful, to participate also in the "glory that follows." (I Pet. 1:11) The other is devoted mostly to "that blessed hope" pertaining to the second presence of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom, using this glorious outlook as an incentive to faithfulness in adding to our faith fortitude, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, and love. But in this epistle Peter did not hesitate to warn the church of false teachers and scoffers who would seek to undermine the faith of the brethren. He did this because he loved Jesus.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." One of these commandments is that we "love one another" as Jesus loved us. But there are many others, involving every phase of the Christian life, including our study of the Word and our activity as his ambassadors. When we let our light shine, we are demonstrating our love for Jesus. When we sacrifice time and strength and means in serving the brethren, we are proving our love for Jesus. Our enthusiasm for all the glorious doctrines of the divine plan, in which Jesus is the central figure, displays our love for him, and of course, also for our Heavenly Father, the Author of the divine plan.

TALKING THINGS OVER

No, brethren, we cannot properly set apart any feature of the truth, or any phase of our relationship to God through Christ and the truth, and devote ourselves primarily to that one thing, in the belief that we have chosen that which is best of the Lord's arrangements. Those who allow the Spirit of God to lead them will rejoice in all that pertains to the divine plan and its service; and in their love for God, and for Jesus, will take a lively part in forwarding the interests of all the truth, delighting in the privilege of discussing and hearing discussed all its doctrines and the manner in which those doctrines should be influencing us in the laying down of our lives in divine service.

The Apostle Paul tells us that the Lord has set every member in the body of Christ as it pleaseth him. (I Cor. 12:18) This means, for one thing, that our privileges of service will vary. But in this also there should be a beautiful and loving blending of interests and joys. No matter how small or how insignificant our opportunities of service in the "body" may be, they are important—just as important as the larger opportunities of others. We are all servants one of another. None of us is a lord over the brethren. What a wonderful harmony of interest is thus represented, and what sweet joys will be ours if, by the Lord's grace, we keep this viewpoint of love in mind and faithfully adhere to it in our associations with the brethren.

We are not saying these things because the brethren do not know them, but because they do, and because it is so obvious that these vital principles of loyalty and love are already ruling in their hearts. We do not believe that the Lord's blessing would have been so abundantly upon our united efforts to serve one another and to proclaim the truth throughout the year just ending had this not been the case. And, as we enter upon another year of mutual fellowship and service, let us endeavor to keep it so.

Wonderful opportunities of service are continuing—the radio witness; the follow-up work; kingdom card and tract distribution; service in the ecclesias; personal witness work; and the great privilege of prayer. Besides, we will continue to have our joys of study and fellowship, and of our personal communion with the Lord. Nineteen fifty-two will be a blessed year if, in the spirit of love, we share all our joys as children in the one family—the family of God—and as members in the one body—the body of Christ.

Our Rejoicing in the Lord

*“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and
though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though
the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.”*

—PSALM 46:1-3

ANOTHER year is drawing to a close. For those not acquainted with the plans and purposes of God it has been a year of increasing tension and fear, but to us to whom it has been given to know “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” the “fear not” announcement of the angel on the night Jesus was born has never meant more. Every circumstance in the world which causes fear to strike deeper into the hearts of those who do not put their trust in God, causes us to “look up” and “lift up” our heads, knowing with increasing certainty that our deliverance “draweth nigh.”
—Luke 21:28

Our sympathy goes out to the suffering world, and we long for the time to come when, if we are found worthy, we will enjoy the blessed privilege of shining forth with Jesus as the sun in that glorious kingdom in which none will molest nor make afraid, and peace and health and life will be vouchsafed to all. This sympathy is an active one. By it we are impelled to do all we can to tell the suffering world about the kingdom which is so near. And what a joy the proclaiming of the kingdom message has brought to the hearts of the brethren during the year!

Because God “is our refuge and strength” in this “time of trouble,” we will not fear, says the Psalmist, “though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” Throughout the year, those who have been taking heed to “the sure Word of prophecy” have seen the signs which betoken the removal of the symbolic earth, that is, the social order which Paul described as “this present evil world.” (Gal. 1:4) The people of the world have also seen this “removal” taking place, but not knowing the ultimate purpose of God in connection therewith, their hearts have been filled with fear.

TALKING THINGS OVER

"There is a river," David continues, "the streams whereof make glad the city of God." (vs. 4) These "streams" seem clearly to symbolize the many promises of God which outline the divine plan, and they rejoice the hearts of those who have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son—that "city" which is represented in the people of God who are "alive and remain" during these early years of the Master's presence. While fear fills the hearts of others, these are made "glad."

Above all things, we rejoice in the Lord. Through the truth we have learned to know him, and to put our trust in him. Next to the Lord, we rejoice in the truth which has revealed his wisdom, justice, love, and power to us. We rejoice also in one another, in the privileges of fellowship we enjoy with the Lord's people of "like precious faith." In this respect especially the year 1951 has been a blessed one, for there are many evidences that the brethren have been drawn together more closely than ever, that the "blest tie" which "binds our hearts in Christian love" has been strengthened.

This is as we should expect, for each year brings us a little closer to the kingdom, and if our preparation for the kingdom keeps pace with passing time, each year should find us more emptied of self, and more filled with, and controlled by, the Holy Spirit. It is by this "one Spirit," Paul wrote, that we have all been baptized into one body. (I Cor. 12:13) The more, therefore, that self-will is conquered and the will of the Lord allowed to control our minds and hearts, the stronger will be our affinity for other members of the body, and the greater our joy in fellowshiping with them.

The "time of trouble" which is upon the world is leading to increasing chaos everywhere, and along all lines of human endeavor. The "earth" is truly being "removed," just as the Psalmist foretold. Paul prophesied the same ending of Satan's world saying that the Lord at this time would "shake, not the [symbolic] earth only, but [the symbolic] heaven also." The apostle then speaks of "those things which cannot be shaken," and explains that he refers to a "kingdom which cannot be moved."—Heb. 12:26-28

How beautifully this harmonizes with David's assurance that "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her when the morning appeareth [marginal translation]." (Ps. 46:5) The "earth" is being removed, the "mountains" are being carried "into the midst of the sea," but "she shall not be moved." Since the first advent of Christ the Lord has been preparing his

kingdom. Now that work is nearly complete, and he is especially in the midst of the last members of the kingdom class. This "kingdom" cannot be removed. As individuals we could lose our place in it by unfaithfulness to our vows of consecration. From this standpoint we should take to heart Paul's admonition, "Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest" any of us should "seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1) We do not fear because the earth is being removed, but we should have this "fear" mentioned by Paul; that is, an alertness, or watchfulness, to make sure that we are not neglecting any of the means of divine grace by which we are kept from falling, or from being removed from the kingdom class. Peter expresses a similar thought saying, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."—II Pet. 1:10

To this blessed assurance, Peter adds, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (II Pet. 1:11) This is the kingdom which shortly will manifest itself in power and great glory, the kingdom we are "receiving," as Paul puts it, during this time when all earthly kingdoms are being removed. We are the "children" of the kingdom now, (Matt. 13:38) but if we are faithful even unto death we will be with our Lord in glory, and will actually reign with him a thousand years.

"God shall help her," the Psalmist declares. Every consecrated follower of the Master can testify that throughout the year the Lord has indeed been a "refuge and strength," that he has provided help in every time of need. But the "help" here mentioned seems to be a special reference to the use of divine power in the final deliverance of the last members of the church. This is the "help" that is given to the Lord's people "when the morning appeareth."

The "day star" which introduces the morning has already risen. Indeed, we are even now in the early morning hours of the new day. One by one the "feet" members of the body are passing over, receiving their "abundant entrance" into the kingdom beyond the veil. For all the faithful remaining ones "the time is short." Shall we not, then, as Peter admonishes, "gird up the loins" of our minds, and "be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought" unto us "at the revelation of Jesus Christ"?—I Pet. 1:13

As we look ahead to the New Year it is with confidence that regardless of what our experiences may be, whether bitter or sweet,

the Lord will be with us to give wisdom and strength in every time of need. The shortness of the time in which to make our calling and election sure should increase our zeal to know and to do the Father's will; not only with respect to the personal application of the truth in our own lives, but also in making known the glad tidings to others. Opportunities for bearing witness to the truth were never greater.

Brethren in all parts of the country write us that they have never found the public more willing to listen to the message. It is the time foreseen by Brother Russell, when, in "The Divine Plan of the Ages" he wrote, "The troubles of this 'Day of Jehovah' will give opportunity for preaching the good tidings of coming good, such as is seldom afforded, and blessed are they who will follow in the footsteps of the Master, and be the good Samaritans binding up the wounds and pouring in the oil and wine of comfort and cheer."—p. 342

Those who sacrifice time, strength, and means to proclaim the kingdom message can all testify to the rich blessings their efforts have brought into their own lives. The truth becomes more precious to us, and is a more powerful influence in preparing us for the kingdom, if we use it for the blessing of others. This will continue to be true throughout the coming year, and all the years to come.

Let us then rejoice in all the wonderful opportunities the Lord is giving us to proclaim "glad tidings to the meek," and to "bind up the brokenhearted." (Isa. 61:1-3) Not only should we rejoice that through the truth the Lord has removed fear from our hearts, but we can also be joyful in the fact that he has commissioned us to "say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you."—Isa. 35:4

"Happy Zion, what a favored lot is thine!"

The Broadcast Schedule

WE EXPECTED to publish in this issue the complete list of radio stations now broadcasting the "Frank and Ernest" programs, but there are still some changes being made, and it has been thought best to wait until the January issue. As the majority of the friends

already know, the schedule in most of the large centers remains the same, the changes being for the most part in some of the smaller cities. There are exceptions, however, and these we will mention now for the benefit of the friends in the territories involved.

In St. Louis, the programs are now being carried by KXOK, 630 kilocycles, at 11:45 a. m. Sundays.

Station KCOM, in Kansas City no longer carries the programs, but they are heard in this territory over KIMO, Independence, Missouri, at 12:15 noon, on Sundays. This station broadcasts on 1510 kilocycles.

In Arizona, Stations KOY, Phoenix; KTUC, Tucson; KSUN, Bisbee; and KYMA, Yuma, all carry the program at 12:30 noon, Sundays.

In Saskatoon, Canada, CKOM, 1340 kilocycles, now carries the programs at 9:30 a. m., Sundays.

Station CFOR, 1570 kilocycles, Orillia, Ontario, broadcasts the message at 9:45 a. m., Sundays.

In St. Catharines, Ontario, "Frank and Ernest" can be heard over CKTB, 620 kilocycles, at 9:00 a. m., Sundays.

Encouraging Letters

My Desire Deepened

Dear Sirs: I wish to make application for the book "God's Plan." Having heard your broadcast only once, it has deepened my desire to know more about this great subject, and I pray that God will bless you all very much in your efforts for him. Thanking you in anticipation, and feeling that this book will be well worth having, and a big help in studying my Bible.

Yours affectionately in Christ, V.
C. P., Ireland.

Great Help to Me

Dear Students: I received last month's "Dawn" safely and have found it very interesting. I would like you to know the great help both your radio discussions and booklets have been to me. I have learned more about God and his great work through them, and as a result I love him very much

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

more. It is great to know that there is really no such place as hell, as taught by the creeds, and that God has a plan for the world, and that it is not going on aimlessly. As I would like to learn more, I am enclosing a postal order for the literature named. Yours sincerely, D. R., Ireland.

Comfort and Hope

Dear "Frank and Ernest"; I am a regular listener to your programme. It has brought me comfort and hope, which I needed. If it is possible, I want to know more about God and his teachings. I am in the unfortunate position of not being able to go to church owing to an illness which keeps me at home. I should be glad if you will send me your book, "Our Lord's Return," and any other book that can bring me comfort, and the thoughts of God, so that I might find peace and happiness in our Lord's love, and be able to interest more people in your programme and help them to find God as I hope that I have found him. Will you please give me your help, and oblige, J. L. W., England.

Considerable Interest

Dear Sirs: Please accept my thanks for your lovely broadcast, which I received last night from Luxembourg; it has created considerable interest in my mind. Could you kindly let me have the book referred to, for example, "God's Plan," and oblige. God bless you. S. R., Scotland.

A Great New Hope

Dear "Frank and Ernest:" Please let me have a copy of your book, "When a Man Dies." I am a be-

liever on the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour. Acting under a kind of compulsion; that is, I felt I had to, I switched on to Radio Luxembourg at 11:00 pm, and again at 11:15 pm tonight (Monday), and heard your questions and answers, which dumbfounded and bewildered me, yet stirred a great new dawning hope in my wondering soul, so that I have earnestly prayed on my knees for the last twenty minutes, ere I write this letter at midnight. May the Lord guide you in the perfect dividing of his holy Word of truth, through the Holy Spirit's power; and pray for me that the same Holy Spirit may also guide me into all faith, obedience, wisdom, and understanding. Yours in Christ Jesus, J. G., Scotland.

Will Now Be Listening

Gentlemen: Your programs are surely interesting, and we enjoy them very much. For the last two Sundays we have had quite a few people at my home to listen to your inspiring discussions. These people never listened before, but they will from now on, I am sure. Respectfully, A. O. M., Florida.

Believes Every Word

Dear "Frank and Ernest": I am still listening and rejoicing in your wonderful discussions on the Scriptures. I can truthfully say that I believe every word. Since I have learned the truth about God's Word through your broadcasts and literature, it seems as though life would be almost impossible without this knowledge. May God bless you in your work. It is wonderful. J. L. M., Va.

They "Talk of Thy Power"

THERE is abundant evidence in the British Isles that the Lord is continuing to bless very richly the true Gospel message as it goes forth by radio. It is being realised more and more that it is our great privilege, and also our responsibility, to proclaim this good news concerning our Lord's glorious kingdom.

This is fully in keeping with David's description of the attitude of the "saints" in their expressions of thankfulness to God for his grace in calling them out of darkness into his marvelous light. He wrote: "Thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations."—Ps. 145:10-13

There is increasing rejoicing by the brethren in the British Isles because Radio Luxembourg continues to send forth the "Frank and Ernest" programmes every week. The number of very appreciative letters from listeners is

increasing heavily, and for this we render heartfelt praise and gratitude to the Lord, who is so richly blessing his work.

While all these letters are interesting and inspiring, we are presenting here some which reveal the wide extent to which the people are listening to these truth broadcasts, and appreciating them. For instance, here is one from the south of Ireland which is very revealing:

"Dear 'Frank and Ernest': You will be pleased to know how popular your programme is here in the capital. My good wife and myself listen to all your broadcasts, and hundreds of our friends do likewise. We would be delighted to receive a copy of your 'Plan' Book, as offered. H. W."

The following letter from northern Ireland also indicates that the message is being heard and appreciated by many:

"Dear 'Frank and Ernest': Please forward to me the booklet, 'When a Man Dies.' Your broadcasts are very interesting indeed, so keep up the good work. We here in northern Ireland hear you quite plainly. I know hundreds of people here who are listening, and who say your Gospel programmes are most interesting indeed. Yes, that is what the old world is lost for—good sound Gospel teaching. The people on the whole love good plain speaking, and I know that God is blessing your work abundantly. Daily I hear it mentioned in the streets of Belfast, and also in the homes of the Irish people. So God bless you both abundantly. Yours in Christ, T. M."

THE BRITISH SECTION

We rejoice, of course, to learn that so many are hearing and appreciating the "Frank and Ernest" broadcasts throughout the British Isles; and it is a further cause for thankfulness to realize that a few are showing a very deep interest in the truth, and in various places associating themselves with the brethren. In this connection we were very happy to receive the following letter from Scotland:

"Dear Brethren: We would like to say how much we have enjoyed The Dawn Magazine during the past year, and how wonderful it is to read the letters of appreciation for the 'Frank and Ernest' broadcasts. We have two new members in our little class who became interested through this wonderful programme. So carry on, dear ones in Christ! With much Christian love, B. B. and S. B."

Naturally we think of the English language programmes broadcast from Luxembourg as being especially for us here in the British Isles. However, they are being heard and appreciated elsewhere also, as the following letter from Paris clearly shows:

"Dear 'Frank and Ernest': I have listened to your evening programmes for many months, and enjoy them immensely. They give one a very different outlook on life and death. Most of us have a terrible fear of what is to come. Perhaps if more of us were to listen to you, and also read your booklets, our minds would be more at rest. At all events I find your evening talks very, very soothing, and I would be very grateful if you would send me a copy of your 'Hope' Book. Thanking you most sincerely, C. M. C."

Fellowship and Service in Wales

BECAUSE of the very heavy flow of grateful correspondence received from Welsh listeners, a brother from England—who formerly lived in Wales—arranged to spend some time making personal calls on as many of these interested friends as possible. While in Wales, the opportunity was also taken to call upon various brethren who have long embraced present truth, and a number of meetings were served.

He went forth in the spirit of joyfully bearing witness to the truth, and also in the consciousness of the strength which the Lord supplies. Being a Welshman, he was in the very happy position of

being able to speak about the truth in the Welsh language, as well as in the English. Judging from his diary of the week's experiences he must have had a blessed time in the service of the Lord, the truth and the brethren. Here are some of the highlights:

"After lunch on the first Sunday, we motored to the nearby city for meetings. Here a good number of friends had assembled, and it was my privilege to speak at the afternoon and evening sessions. Some newly interested 'Frank and Ernest' listeners were also at these meetings, causing the joy of all present to be increased.

"The next day I turned my ac-

THE DAWN

tivities to visiting 'Frank and Ernest' enquirers. This gave me much joy. There were extremely interesting interviews, including a conversation with a dentist. There were others also whose interest in the truth was very keen.

"Tuesday I went to a distant mining town, where I called upon many 'Frank and Ernest' listeners. In one house, eight miles from the town, I sold a 'Divine Plan,' and several small books. I was very happy to note that the person was rejoicing in the message of truth as it was being discussed over the radio. During the day I walked many miles—sometimes down into the valleys; at other times up to the heights of the mountains to lonely cottages, but always to carry the precious truth; and to me this was a great and joyous privilege. At the end of the day I sincerely thanked God for a further share in this blessed work.

"On another day one of my calls was upon a Reverend gentleman of a Seamen's Mission. After discussing various precious truths with him he told me that he fully endorses these teachings. He purchased 'The New Creation,' also some small books. We had a happy and helpful time together.

"On another day I went into a park where I rested for a little while. Seated near me were two students discussing the Bible and evolution. Overhearing what they said I discreetly waited for the opportune moment to ask them if

they had heard of the 'Frank and Ernest' broadcasts. They said they had. I joined in the discussion, and they bought two of the 'Creation' booklets from me.

"Friday, in one of the principal Welsh towns, contact was made with the brethren, and in the evening I addressed a meeting held in the Y. M. C. A. Building. Friends traveled in from a distance, and the attendance was very encouraging. I spent Saturday fellowshiping with these brethren. Many features of truth were discussed; also our privileges and responsibilities in connection with God's Holy Word and will. The real need to continue proclaiming the kingdom Gospel, as we have opportunity, and in the spirit of love, was included in the discussion, and there was manifested in our midst a zealous determination to be proved faithful in this as well as in all other phases of the Lord's will. Our fellowship was indeed sweet.

"The total number of books sold was sixty-two, including fourteen copies of 'The Divine Plan of the Ages.' For my part a great spiritual uplift was experienced. Daily there was marked evidences of God's blessing upon the efforts put forth. This greatly encouraged and comforted me, and I continue to thank and praise him for this privilege of service. I am also grateful to all those I met, who so very readily manifested the Master's Spirit."



SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

C. A. CORNELL

Oxford December 9
Ipswich January 13

J. E. HUMPHREY

Portsmouth January 20

F. LINTER

Leigh (Afternoon) December 9
Warrington (Evening) 9

J. LESLIE McKEOWN

Portstewart December 2
Belfast 30

J. H. MURRAY

Eastleigh December 30
Leigh (Afternoon) January 13
Warrington (Evening) 13
Guilford 27

W. E. PAMPLING

Maidstone January 13
Anerley 27

R. J. PHILIP

Ossett December 2

A. SPAIN

Anerley December 30

W. WALLACE

Dewsbury January 6

"FRANK AND ERNEST" BROADCASTS

"Radio Luxembourg" I

11:15 P. M. every Monday—1293 Meters
Long Wave; 49:26 Meters Short Wave;
232 kc.

"Radio Luxembourg" II

11:15 P. M. every Monday—208 Meters;
1439 kc.

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Volumes 4, 5, and 6—3/9 each

Berean Questions (Volumes 1, 2, and 3)—6d

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"Frank and Ernest" Announcement Cards for Radio Luxembourg. Order as many as you can use.

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God's Hand in the Affairs of Men; Divine Intervention Near; The Judgment Day; God's Remedy for a World Gone Mad; God's Restitution Project.

THREEPENNY BOOKLETS—2/6 per dozen

Spiritualism; Jesus, the World's Savior; Hope for a Fear-Filled World; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Armageddon; Does God Answer Prayer?

SIXPENNY BOOKLETS

Our Lord's Return; God's Plan; The Truth About Hell; God and Reason; Hope Beyond the Grave; Creation; A Royal Nation; Chosen People; When a Man Dies.

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"Behold Your King" (Cloth)—2/6; (Paper)—1/3

God's Promises Come True—10/-

Daily Heavenly Manna—(Cloth)—2/6; (de luxe)—6/3

Hymns of Dawn (Cloth)—2/6 each; without music, 1/3

Tabernacle Shadows (Cloth)—2/6 each

Moffatt's Translation (Complete Bible)—17/6

The Everlasting Gospel—8d each; 7/6 per dozen

Hope (Consolation booklet)—1/2 a dozen

"Songs in the Night"—2/6

Our Most Holy Faith—10/

THE DAWN

98 Seel Street

Liverpool 1

Speakers Appointments

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

JULIUS BEDNARZ
Allentown, Pa. December 2

FRED A. BRIGHT
Hartford, Conn. December 2

ALFRED BURNS
La Salle, Ill. December 16

ORLANDO D. DEIFER
Philadelphia, Pa. December 2

EDMUND JEZUIT
Milwaukee, Wis. December 9

ARTHUR H. KRUMPOLT
Mahanoy City, Pa. December 9

RAYMOND J. KRUPA
New Haven, Conn. (Morn.) Dec. 2
Waterbury, Conn. (Afternoon) .. 2

LUDLOW P. LOOMIS
New London, Conn. .. December 16

JOHN Y. MAC AULAY
Bellingham, Wash. December 1
Seattle, Wash. 2, 3
Tacoma, Wash. 4, 5
Wenatchee, Wash. 6, 7
Spokane, Wash. 8, 9
Lewiston, Idaho 10
Boise, Idaho 11
Ogden, Utah 12
Salt Lake City, Utah 13
Ft. Collins, Colo. 14
Denver, Colo. 15
Colorado Springs, Colo. 16
Burlington, Colo. 17
Wichita, Kansas 18, 19
Topeka, Kansas 20
Kansas City, Mo. 21, 22
St. Joseph, Mo. 23

Elkader, Iowa 24-26
Gary, Ind. 29, 30
Chicago, Ill. 31

E. R. MAC JILTON
Duquesne, Pa. December 2

MARTIN C. MITCHELL
Wallingford, Conn. (Morn.) Dec. 23
Bridgeport, Conn. (Afternoon) .. 23

JOHN H. MOORE
Salem, Ore. December 1-3
Newport, Ore. 4, 5
Lebanon, Ore. 6
Sacramento, Calif. 7-10
Stockton, Calif. 11, 13
Sonora, Calif. 12
Oakland, Calif. 14
San Francisco, Calif. 15, 16
Santa Cruz, Calif. 17
San Luis Obispo, Calif. 18, 19
Los Angeles, Calif. 20, 21
Hawthorne, Calif. (Morning) 23
Los Angeles, Calif. (Afternoon) .. 23
Whittier, Calif. 24
Pomona, Calif. 26
San Diego, Calif. 27, 28
Phoenix, Ariz. 29-31

DANIEL J. MOREHOUSE
Gary, Ind. December 16

LEON H. NORBY
New Brunswick, N. J. December 2
Baltimore, Md. (Morning) 23
Wilmington, Del. (Afternoon) 23

ADOLPH OBENLAND
Orlando, Fla. December 16
Augusta, Ga. 17
Hendersonville, N. C. 18
Greensboro, N. C. 19
Lynchburg, Va. 20
Cleveland, Ohio 23

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

<p style="text-align: center;">LEO B. POST</p> <p>Aurora, Ill. December 9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">J. I. VAN HORNE</p> <p>Washington, Pa. December 16</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FELIX S. WASSMANN</p> <p>Wilkes Barre, Pa. December 9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CLAUDE R. WEIDA</p> <p>Lancaster, Pa. December 16</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GEORGE M. WILSON</p> <p>E. Liverpool, Ohio December 9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">W. NORMAN WOODWORTH</p> <p>Cincinnati, Ohio December 2</p> <p>Levittown, N. Y. 9</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ERNEST G. WYLAM</p> <p>Indianapolis, Ind. December 19</p> <p>New Albany, Ind. (Morning) 23</p> <p>Greenville, Ind. (Afternoon) 23</p> <p>Cincinnati, Ohio 30</p> <p style="text-align: center;">H. L. YOUNG</p> <p>Lehighton, Pa. December 2</p> <p>Easton, Pa. 9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHRISTIAN W. ZAHNOW</p> <p>Tacoma, Wash. December 1</p> <p>The Dalles, Ore. 2, 3</p> <p>Portland, Ore. 4-9</p> <p>Newport, Ore. 10</p> <p>Salem, Ore. 11, 12</p> <p>Lebanon, Ore. 13, 14</p> <p>Klamath Falls, Ore. 16-18</p> <p>Sacramento, Calif. 20-25</p> <p>Stockton, Calif. 26, 27</p> <p>Oakland, Calif. 28</p> <p>San Francisco, Calif. 29, 31</p>
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CONVENTIONS

For Mutual Fellowship, Edification, and Service

CINCINNATI, OHIO, December 2—Morning services to be held in the Finance Building, 616 Walnut Street, 4th floor. Afternoon and evening meeting place to be announced.

SAGINAW, MICHIGAN, December 9—Women's Club, 311 N. Jefferson St. Opens at 10:20 A. M.

BOWIE, TEXAS, December 16—Regular third Sunday convention. For details write, Mr. J. Frank Whitaker, R. F. D. 1, Sunset, Texas.

CLEVELAND, OHIO, December 16—Y. M. C. A. Building, Prospect Avenue and East 22nd Street, beginning at 9:30 A. M.

PHOENIX, ARIZONA, December 29-January 1—Osborn School Auditorium,

3415 North Central Avenue, Phoenix. For reservations and other details write the secretary, Mr. Stuart Sowers, 1730 E. Roma, Phoenix, Arizona.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., December 30—Neighborhood Club, 104 Clark Street. Regular fifth Sunday convention.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, December 30—Maccabees Building, Woodward Avenue at Putnam.

GARY, INDIANA, December 30—All sessions to be held in Y. M. C. A. Building, 5th and Adams Streets, beginning at 9:45 A. M. Closing service will end at 4:00 P. M.

WEATHERFORD, TEXAS, December 30—Zion Hill Country Schoolhouse.

Our Place in God's Plan

A tiny screw in the works of a clock
Sighed, "O dear, I don't amount to much;
I wish I were a wheel, or the mainspring strong,
Something that makes things move along,
Or the gong that makes such a pleasing sound,
Or the hands that travel round and round.
They do something, but here I just stick,
Screwed tight in a hole and can't even kick."

"Tut! tut!" said the dial with his wise old face,
"It's little you know about the works in this case;
How do you suppose the mainspring could work
The wheels in this clock if you were to shirk?
Don't you see that whether large or small,
There's a special work for each and all?
Be content with your lot, be patient and strong,
For if you were to shirk, then all would go wrong."

For each little part, no matter how small,
Is obviously necessary to make a complete all.
Each part is made for the burden it bears,
And has just a certain amount of the cares.
The spring couldn't push, the wheels couldn't turn,
If the screws didn't hold them tight and firm;
No more could the hands with accuracy trace
The time and declare it on my smooth face;

And the hours as told by the ring of the gong
Would never be right, but would always be wrong.
Hence you see the position which you occupy,
Whilst apparently lowly is in reality high;
Hold fast to your place, for it depends upon you
To make the works in this clock run perfectly true;
Then the patient performance of duty's a joy,
That may properly all of your powers employ."

Dear friends, from this fable a lesson learn,
Some duties are pleasant, but others quite stern;
Let all of us do the best we can
To fill our small part in God's great plan.
This body of ours has many members and parts,
And the Head to each member its labor imparts;
So we in Christ's body being many are one,
And each has a part in the work that is done.

—Unknown

TRUTH LITERATURE FOR OUR TIMES

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SIX VOLUMES—CLOTH—\$3.75

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The Time Is at Hand—Cloth, 50 cents.

Thy Kingdom Come—Cloth, 50 cents.

Battle of Armageddon—Cloth, 85 cents.

The Atonement Between God and Man—Cloth, 85 cents.

The New Creation—Cloth, 85 cents.

Berean Questions—These books are available for the above volumes as follows: First three, 10 cents each; the last three, 15 cents each.

BOOKLETS—100 for \$1.00

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God and Reason—German; Italian; Greek, 10 cents each.

God's Plan—French, 10 cents each.

Where Are the Dead?—French. Free.

The Divine Plan of the Ages—German; Italian, 50 cents each.

God's Remedy—Italian, 50 cents a hundred.

The Dawn—Greek; German; French; Danish; Swedish, \$1.00 a year.

ORDERS NOT ACKNOWLEDGED UNLESS REQUESTED

THE DAWN

2004 Northfield

NEW JERSEY

To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach

That the church is "the temple of the living God"—peculiarly "his workmanship"; that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel age—ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the chief corner stone of this temple, through which, when finished, God's blessings shall come "to all people," and they find access to him.—I Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29

That meantime the chiseling, shaping, and polishing of consecrated believers in Christ's atonement for sin progresses, and when the last of these "living stones," "elect and precious," shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Rev. 15:5-8

That the basis of hope for the church and the world lies in the fact that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God tasted death for every man," "a ransom for all," and will be "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," "in due time."—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; I Tim. 2:5, 6

That the hope of the church is that she may be like her Lord, "see him as he is," be a "partaker of the divine nature," and share his glory as his joint-heir.—I John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; II Pet. 1:4

That the present mission of the church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be the kings and priests in the next age.—Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6; 20:6

That the hope for the world lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ's millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the wilfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isaiah 35