

The Dawn

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How Great Thou Art!

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number [referring to the stars of heaven]: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one falleth."

—Isaiah 40:26

THE 40th chapter of Isaiah is one of the peculiarly beautiful instances in the Bible where the Heavenly Father attempts to establish faith in his great power and wisdom to accomplish all that he purposes. The prophet closes the chapter with the most tender words, indicating that this massive power and eternal wisdom is always at the disposal of his people, to guide and sustain them. "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. . . . They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."—vs. 31

But to start at the beginning, we read in the first two verses of this chapter these encouraging words: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins." Isaiah here indicates the point in history when favor has begun to return to Israel, which is the day in which we are living. We see God's overruling providences on the behalf of

his people of old in the return and establishment of Israel as a nation in their ancient land.

And the prophet also tells the last members of the church what message to proclaim at the close of the Gospel Age: verse 3 shows that our message must be that the kingdom of God is close at hand: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

John the Baptist, in his day, was to Israel a voice crying in the wilderness, proclaiming the year of the Lord, announcing to Israel the arrival of the one "full of grace and truth," whose shoe latchet he was not worthy to unloose. (John 1:14,23,27) But the church is the voice crying in the wilderness condition at this end of the Gospel Age. "Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." The 'desert' represents a time of sin, sickness, and death on the earth. By contrast, when the kingdom is established, the desert shall blossom as a rose!—Isa. 35:1

We are also told in Isaiah 35, that "an highway shall be there." (vs. 8) "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." (Isa. 40:4) Do you recognize this description? It is clearly portraying the manner in which a highway is built! If you should drive through a desert region where the terrain is mountainous, it would be tortuously slow and nearly impossible to negotiate without a road. But Isaiah assures us that there will be a highway there to facilitate progress, and it will be called the way of holiness, or perfection. When the travelers reach the end of it, they will have become perfect!

We read again of this highway in Isaiah 62:10: "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." All the hindrances or 'stones' will be removed, making the way clear, wide and smooth, and easy to

travel over. In one sense we could say that this highway is being constructed during the Gospel Age. Since the means of reaching perfection in the Millennial Age will be through the assistance and counsel of Christ and his church—the Christ, the Messiah—which is being developed during this age, we can think of the road as being built now.

When the world of mankind begins to walk up the highway of holiness, we are told that “the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” (vs 5) All mankind will realize that these wonderful provisions were made for their blessing by God, and they will rejoice in them and glorify him. Their opportunity to return to perfection on this great highway will give them a vision of God which they had never before seen.

In Isaiah 40:6 we see the reaction of Christians when the voice says, ‘Cry’. “The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?” These words suggest that when the church views the hopeless condition in the earth now, they inquire of God concerning what message he would have them give to the world. He answers: “All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.”—vss. 7,8

In other words, the church is pictured as saying, “Look at this helpless, hopeless condition in the earth. People are dying, they are sick. They are hungry and they are killing each other. It is a sad situation. But we have faith in God and in his promises. There will be a kingdom upon the earth for which our Master taught us to pray: ‘Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven’.”—Matt. 6:9

To realize and to believe that God is indeed preparing a kingdom which will end all this misery—even to bring back the dead—requires superb faith in the Creator. When we tell the

good news concerning the resurrection, very often we find that it requires more faith to accept than most people possess. Remember when Paul spoke about the resurrection of the dead to the Greeks on Mars Hill? It caused an uproar! Even some Jews did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees tried to tell Jesus that there could not be a resurrection of the dead because of all the problems it would pose. But he ended the discussion by saying to them, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."—Matt. 22:24-29

Isaiah continues to give us pertinent details concerning this wonderful kingdom. He tells us, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." (vs. 11) What a lovely picture this conjures up in our minds! We are reminded of the Shepherd Psalm, and of how tenderly and completely the shepherd cares for his little charges—especially the injured and ill, the wayward, and the little lambs. (Ps. 23) How gently and lovingly he will lead the world of mankind along the highway of holiness, tending to all their needs, healing and guiding them to the end of the way, until each reaches perfection.

Then the LORD began a wonderful soliloquy. He said, "I will ask you some questions. You try to relate yourself to the world. You measure things by so many handfuls. Here is a span, there is a cubit. You measure things by bushels." Then the LORD said, (paraphrasing), "I will give you an idea of how powerful I am, and how easily I can make all these promises come to pass."

The LORD's first question was this: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?" Can you measure the ocean by handfuls? No, you certainly can't! Again he asked, "Who hath meted out heaven with the span?" Have *you* ever measured the heavens? And, "Who hath comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" This is the way man measures things—a handful, a span, a measure. But God tells us, "I think

differently. Your measurements are so tiny compared to mine, because of my great power.”

The Heavenly Father wishes us to comprehend his greatness—not to impress his poor, finite little beings. No—it is to give us confidence in him, and in his power to complete what he has begun. It is to give us a small idea of how simple a task it is for him, even though mankind has been trying for millennia to improve their lot, and has failed miserably. We begin to realize that he is attempting to change our small and limited viewpoint, so we may understand the greatness of his power. Then, when we do understand, we will have faith that the kingdom he told us to ‘cry’ out about, and to proclaim, shall indeed be a reality.

Here is an illustration of how to measure the heavens that may help us to realize how vast God’s creation is. If it costs a penny to travel 1,000 miles, what would it cost to go around the earth? The answer: twenty-five cents, at the Equator. At this rate, what would it cost to go to the moon? That would be \$2.33. To go to the sun would cost \$930.00. The nearest star is about four light years away. What would it cost to go to the nearest star at one cent a thousand miles? The answer is \$266,000.00! The LORD said, “Have you ever measured the heavens with the span of your hand?” Can you measure the earth? God says, “There will be a kingdom. The dead shall come back. My power will perform it.”

Next, God inquires, “Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counselor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?” When we plan a project we research it beforehand to learn as much about the subject as we can; even then our methods are mostly by trial and error. But God said, “I have had no counselors. There was no place to research the results of previous plans; there was no one to guide me by their experience.”

The Apostle Paul, in the eleventh chapter of Romans, traces the intricacies of God’s dealings with the nation of Israel and

with the church. He reaches the climax of his argument at the end of the chapter, where he vouches, ardently, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the LORD, or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." Paul appreciated all the unique, wonderful dealings of God and, in thinking about them, he was overwhelmed with the greatness of his Heavenly Father.

The 40th Chapter of Isaiah continues in the same vein: "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing." The dust in the balance can be blown off with ease, and even if it is left on the scale, it does not add anything to the total weight being computed! "And Lebanon is not sufficient

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to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity." Realizing the greatness of the creation of God, we are compelled to acknowledge his wonderful power and eternal wisdom.

The Creator inquires, "To whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished, that he hath no oblation, chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved." Then he says, to us, "Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in."—vs. 18-22

Although labeling the heavens 'a tent' in which mankind dwells might seem at first like an oversimplified explanation, as we consider it we recognize that it is actually a profound statement of wisdom. "He stretcheth out the heavens ... as a tent to dwell in." We have learned from our space shuttles that there is, so to speak, a bubble around the earth of oxygen and other gaseous matter. We used to believe that there was ether in space, but now we know that space is virtually a vacuum.

As astronauts leave earth to transverse this wonderful universe in which we live, it is necessary for them to take a portion of the earth with them as a life-support system. When man travels to a hostile area such as the moon, he has to have the means to get there and back, and this mode of transportation is made out of materials taken from the earth. He has to have heat and light, manufactured with elements of earth. He has to have radio communication with earth for guidance; and even to speak with each other while on the moon, or walking in space, communication de-

vices are needed because there is not enough atmosphere to transmit the vibration from the vocal cords to the ears. He must have a radiation shield to protect him as the rocketship streaks through space, and he must have water and food brought with him from our home planet.

God informs us that he has created the tent in which we dwell. It is an absolute necessity for the continuation of life, and without it we could never exist. Isaiah then reveals one of the mysteries of creation, informing us that this earth upon which we live is shaped like a ball. Perhaps if we had lived before Columbus discovered America, and someone had told us that the earth was round, we would have questioned their sanity. How could we believe anything so ludicrous? We couldn't have believed it! But in our day we have actually seen pictures of Earth taken from the moon—and it is indeed a magnificently beautiful blue and white sphere!

It is said that Earth travels around the sun at the rate of 66,600 miles an hour, revolving at the speed of 1,100 miles a hour. Think of that! How can we grasp the idea of soaring through space at such velocities? As we live on the earth, which is spinning so fast in one direction, and speeding along so precipitously in another direction, we would simply fly off into space without the pull of gravity holding us here. This gravitational power is so strong and yet so gentle, operating in absolute silence, and in absolute darkness, without friction or strain, without shock or tremor. Our planet, Earth, is propelled through space at almost unbelievable speeds, and in the meantime, it twists and turns upon its axis like a spinning gyrosopic top!

The LORD says he stretched out the heavens as a curtain or a tent under which we can dwell. This is almost more than we can comprehend, but as we think about it we find that as the sun shines upon the earth, light is refracted through dust particles in the atmosphere to give us heat, and there is a layer outside the atmosphere to keep out the harmful radiation that could destroy us.

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Then, to follow the sequential order, we find that as the sun shines upon the earth it causes the circulation of water. It brings up the clouds and the wind blows, causing the burden of the water to drop and to water the gardens of the earth. Seeds germinate and plants grow. They put out their leafy arms which, through chlorophyll, transfer the energy of the sun, thereby producing food that we can eat. Energy from the sun provides us with the water and food systems that give us all that is necessary to sustain life.

Impressing indeed is the fact that without the sun, life could not have been brought into existence. Man could not think a thought, nor wink an eye. He could not move a finger, nor take a step, nor could we see, hear, feel, taste, or smell. Not a seed could germinate, nor a cloud form. There would be no rainfall—no river could flow. No lightning would flash, nor would any flame be kindled without the sun. And God says, (paraphrasing), "Remember this, some say I'm like a gold or silver image, and some who cannot afford precious metals carve out a wooden image that will not last very long. But," he says, in truth "I am he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth. I stretch out the heavens as a curtain. Do not worry about my power to perform anything that is my will. I will surely bring about the kingdom—the kingdom of peace, which I told you to speak about, because it is my will, and my power validates its accomplishment. It shall surely come to pass."

The Heavenly Father continues to allay our poor human fears, and to assure us of his divine greatness, saying, "To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One?" He invites us to go outside for a few moments. It's a dark night. "Lift up your eyes on high," he bids us, "and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." These stunning worlds, so infinite in number, flung far across the heavens, are his creation too!

The author, Emerson, immensely impressed with how great is this heavenly display, wrote that if the stars only came out once in a thousand years, what an event this would be! Certainly all mankind would make it a point to go out to see the stars shining in the sky, and to have this memorable experience, realizing the tremendous power of God which seated these in their far away places! He reminds us that every night we receive of their admonishing smile, because they have become commonplace to us. Our great God tells us to go outside and look up in the blackness of the night and think of his great power!

It is said that the amount of energy which falls upon the earth from the sun in just three days, is equal to all the energy that you could extract from every other known source of energy—wood, coal, oil, uranium, plutonium, etc. Think of that! In three days! And it has been calculated that only one-two billionths of the sun's energy strikes the earth. God counsels us to look up there if we want to know how great is his power! Suddenly we realize that our sun is only a medium-sized sun. There are millions of billions of suns in the heavens! There is one sun so immense that if it were placed in the sky where our sun is, earth would be inside it!

Then God adds a moving statement, "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, *by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.*"

He assures us very tenderly that nothing can go wrong in all his creation. "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding."

This is amazing! He calls every one of the stars by name. How many are there? We are told there are 100 billion in our galaxy, and that there are millions of galaxies. An illustration of how great the number one billion is, can be pictured by placing dollar bills on top of each other, until they reach up over 63 miles high! Imagine if somebody could remember what number each bill holds! One has number C27173806C; and each and every bill has a different ten-digit number printed on it! How can anyone remember the numbers on each of these bills? No human being could do this! But our God could do it! He has named one hundred billion, times a million, heavenly bodies, and can identify each one easily!

In Isaiah 55:11 God assures us, "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." God has a plan far beyond our present comprehension, for the ultimate blessing of all his creation. Some day we will find out the names of every one of the stars placed in the sky for our appreciation, and for some further purpose in the future. Our Father gives us the assurance of Isaiah 55 because he wants us to realize his boundless power, his boundless wisdom. When we do realize his greatness, we will not be fearful to 'cry out' the message of hope and comfort, for we know that if he has purposed the wonderful time of blessing, it will *most assuredly* come to pass!

Isaiah 40:30 goes on to say, "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall." Although even youths in the prime of life become weary, God promises us that those who are his children shall not tire, but shall be given

strength to carry out all that the LORD will require of them. "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint."—vs. 31

It is delightful for the Christian to discover, in studying Isaiah 40, that the primary function of this chapter is that the Heavenly Father, speaking to us very confidentially, desires that we will appreciate somewhat his majesty, his power, and his wisdom. And we also discover that his purpose is that no matter what happens around us, in our personal lives, or in the events of God's church, we may have confidence in his ability to exercise absolute control to bring about good from every experience.

Even though the world is being shaken with innumerable problems—drug trafficking, which can corrupt and destroy the best of young manhood and womanhood, terrorism, economic instability, war, hunger, disease, mental illness, problems of the aging, poverty, inner city problems of racial origin, as well as the general day-to-day criminal activities—expressed by the terminology of the 7th and 8th verses: "The grass withereth." *All* these problems, and *all* others, will be solved simply and completely by our great and gracious God. And he instructs us to publish this message of hope—the only message of true hope in the world! "Get up and be busy, cry out," he says—"I *shall* accomplish these things which I have planned."

So often we find that the Apostle Paul ties together the fact of God's power, and our experiences in the world. He realized there would be a tendency for us to feel forgotten, insignificant, and unworthy of his attention, resulting in fears that God may pass us by unaware of what is taking place in our lives. Paul wanted us to know of God's overruling in *every* experience, and so he wrote these words in the 8th chapter of Romans: "We know that *all* things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—vs. 28

Then he goes on to say, in verse 31, "What shall we then

say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spareth not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

"As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—vss. 32-39

If God is for us, then how can we be defeated? Paul says you may have tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword—these terrible difficulties often do happen to us, or have in the past to God's faithful people, but God is still for us, guiding and directing us, and giving us the strength to withstand the pressures of life. Even as our Lord Jesus was described as a lamb sent to the slaughter, so also the members of his body, his church, have similar vicissitudes. But as he was made more than conqueror, so also will we!

In summation, we quote:

"Jehovah our God is the director of the whole universe, and his wisdom, power, goodness, and benevolence are abundantly equal to all the responsibility of so exalted an office. The human mind staggers in its efforts to comprehend or measure the resources of a being able to assume and bear such responsibilities.

"Think for a moment of the memory that never fails, and a judgment that never errs, and think of the wisdom that plans for

eternity without a possibility of failure, and that times that plan with unerring decision for the ages to come. Think of the power and skill which can harness every opposing element, animate and inanimate, and make them all work together for the accomplishment of his grand design.

“Think of the tireless vigilance that never ceases, nor seeks relief from the pressing cares of universal dominion, whose eye never sleeps, whose ear is ever open and who is ever cognizant of all the necessities and active in all the interests of his broad domain. That is the God that we adore. We are his children. He has touched our lives and our ears, and spoken deep and wonderful things to us!”—Z.-p. 1560 □

*Thanks be to God for his
unspeakable gift!*—II Cor. 9:15

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

November 2—“It is the LORD; let him do what seemeth good.”—I Samuel 3:18 (Z. 01-317 Hymn 104)

November 9—“The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”—Galatians 5:17 (Z. '03-424 Hymn 150)

November 16—“She hath done what she could.”—Mark 14:8 (Z. '99-78; '00-378 Hymn 114)

November 23—“Ye have need of patience, [cheerful endurance, constancy] that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”—Hebrews 10:36 (Z. '01-117 Hymn 198)

November 30—“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age.”—Matthew 28:20 (Z. '01-155 Hymn 305)

International Bible Study Lessons

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 5

Christ Redeems

KEY VERSE: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."—*Revelation 5:12*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Revelation 5:1-12*

OUR Key Verse is an inspiring prophecy pointing forward to a time when the work of Jesus during his first advent will be universally understood and appreciated.

It was John the Baptist who first recognized Jesus as the Lamb of God. From the time Abel offered up a lamb in sacrifice to the LORD, this animal became a symbol in type, pointing forward to Jesus and the greater sacrifice he would offer. Noah offered a sacrifice after leaving the ark. (Gen. 8:20,21) Abraham was called upon to offer a ram (lamb) in place of his son, Isaac. A lamb was sacrificed at the Passover event, and afterward in keeping its memorial, by the nation of Israel. A lamb was the most frequently used animal in the services of the

Tabernacle. Two were offered each day—one in the morning, and the other at evening, as well as the Atonement Day burnt offerings, and subsequent trespass and thank offerings of the people.

With the coming and sacrifice of Jesus, God no longer accepted typical sacrifices. It is also apparent that those sacrifices of the past pointed forward to the sacrificial work of Jesus. The primary difference between the typical sacrifices and the antitypical is that the first consisted of animals which the offerers brought to the LORD—while the latter was the sacrifice of a human life and a human body, not those of others, but of one's own. "A body hast thou prepared me," Paul quotes Jesus as saying. (Heb. 10:5) This was

his human body, his flesh, which he gave for the life of the world.

Our text is a symbolic description of the messianic kingdom arrangement in which the authority of the kingdom is pictured by a throne. We are informed that this is the throne of God, and the lamb is shown as the central feature of God's government. The lamb symbolism reminds us that first it was necessary for Jesus to be slain as the world's Redeemer, to be led "as a lamb to the slaughter." Now exalted to power and authority, it is this Jesus who died as the world's Redeemer who will rule in righteousness and fulfill all the glorious messianic promises of blessing and joy given by God's holy prophets, by Jesus, and by the apostles. Truly, Jesus is the world's Savior!

The sacrifice of Jesus' humanity was as a substitute for the forfeited life of father Adam, and is referred to by the Apostle Paul as a "ransom." Here we have the philosophy of God's great plan of redemption through Christ. It is through this arrangement that provision was made by Jesus' death for rescu-

ing the whole world of mankind from Adamic sin and death. Without making this provision, Jesus could not be the Savior of the world.

How wonderfully this reflects the true character of Jesus! The whole world praises the spirit of sacrifice on behalf of others, and recognizes its value in those who would rule over the people. All know the evils which result from a ruler seeking merely his own selfish interests. But Jesus proved that his viewpoint was the very reverse of this, for he willingly died for those who later were to become his subjects. In all the annals of history, no ruler, no statesman, no president, king, or emperor has ever matched Jesus in his spirit of devotion, first to God, and then to mankind.

Surely the world will be able to trust such a noble character when his long-promised kingdom has been established in the earth, and is functioning as a world government for the blessing of all the people!

We rejoice in considering the time when our text will be on the lips of all people.

Provisions for the Redeemed

KEY VERSE: *"The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*—Revelation 7:17

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Revelation 7:1-4,9,10,13-17

HERE the loving care of our LORD is described as being directed toward a specific group of people referred to as a "great multitude." We are not told how many constituted this crowd; on the contrary, it is said that no man could number it. This does not necessarily imply that it was too large to number, but rather that no set number had been designated.

The expression, "great multitude," or "great company" is used in other instances in the Bible record, and usually relates to an undetermined number of people in a group situation. It is found in John 6:5 where, five verses following, it states that the number of people in that great multitude was about five thousand. Acts

6:7 refers to a great company of priests who associated themselves with the disciples in Jerusalem. Obviously, by numeric count these would not have been a very large group—certainly not even five thousand.

The fact that those mentioned in our key text were from "all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (vs. 9), indicates they were a product of the call of this Gospel Age. This same expanse of earth's population is mentioned in Revelation 5:9 as the source from which God selects those who are to reign as kings and priests in Christ's kingdom. In the context of our scripture, the Great Company class are revealed in their resurrection, not

to possess rulership, but rather they occupy a position *before* the throne. But happily, though failing in their specific calling, they recognize that the Heavenly Father has wonderfully provided a special spiritual salvation for them. Thus they cry "with a loud voice saying, Salvation to our God."—Rev. 7:10

Verse fourteen explains why this special provision of life was made. Having received the life benefits of the ransom in this age, they properly had offered up their justified human life in sacrifice for the reward of the divine nature, to share in the kingdom reign with our Lord.

Having failed of attainment to this one hope of the high calling, these nevertheless are greatly loved by God and are given wonderful blessings of lesser service in his kingdom arrangements, serving God "day and night in his temple." (vs. 15) Though not serving in a ruling capacity, their service will be related, however, to the recovery of the world of mankind. This was their heart's de-

sire at the time they accepted the calling of God.

Verses sixteen and seventeen so well describe in symbol our LORD's great love for them. Everlasting provisions of life and happiness will be theirs in close association with our Lord Jesus and his church in their heavenly and earthly interests.

These verses also mention that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (vs. 17) This seems to suggest a certain amount of initial disappointment, in not having lived up to the fullest privileges of Christian sacrifice, but God does not intend that this should be lasting. They were victorious over sin, and the unrighteous spirit of this world and the Adversary.

White robes represent purity, and in the symbolism of Revelation were worn by those depicted in a resurrection condition. Palm branches were held in olden times as a symbol of victory.—vss. 9,13

What a God of goodness and mercy we have, that the Great Company should be heralded in this way!

The Victorious Christ

KEY VERSE: *"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever."*—Revelation 11:15

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Revelation 19:11-16

PRIOR to the First World War the European world was ruled largely by church-state systems of government. In more modern times have come republics and democracies. This change, ideologically, implies the rulership of the people by the people. Before that war, also, there were various types of government in existence in the so-called third world, and the former tribal nations of Africa, and other places. Conditions arising out of the First and Second World Wars have stirred up these underdeveloped nations and peoples to improve their lot on earth, and to establish what they hope are better forms of government.

The result of this transition through which the world is passing has thus far been, largely, increasing chaos. The

world longs for peace and security, and the hearts of the people are filled with fear as they contemplate what they see coming upon the earth. In this state of chaos and uncertainty, many righteously inclined people are wondering what God is doing about the situation, or if, perhaps, he has abandoned the human race to its own selfish and sinful ways.

God's reply to these is, "Wait ye upon me, ... until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy [or zeal]." (Zeph. 3:8) The earth, as the word is here used, symbolizes man's social order, which,

while there are many good things about it, is based essentially upon selfishness. The nations are even now being assembled by the overruling power of God in preparation for the destruction foretold in this prophecy.

The overthrow of humanly constituted rulership throughout the earth is in preparation for the setting up of Christ's rulership. This rulership is generally referred to in the Scriptures as a kingdom, although other designations are given to it, such as, for example, "government." (Isa. 9:6) However, the expression kingdom, itself, as used in the Bible, has various connotations, although all are in harmony when we rightly divide the Word of truth.—II Tim. 2:15

Basically, it is the kingdom of Jehovah, the great Creator of the universe, for he is the one who planned it and, through Christ, made all provision for it. Besides, the first thousand years of that rulership are designed to bring about the answer to the prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is

in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) Not until the close of the millennial kingdom of Christ will the prayer be fully answered.

The LORD'S kingdom is also the kingdom of Christ, in that he, as the Mediator of the New Covenant, will be the active ruler of the millennial kingdom as the Father's representative, for the purpose of subduing evil, destroying sin, and bringing into full, hearty obedience to the Father and his laws all of the redeemed race willing to be restored to the divine likeness and favor, and everlasting life.

As this work is accomplished, that which remains of the governments of this world will give way to the kingdom of Christ, and as people turn away their support and allegiance from the structure and principles of this world to God's kingdom of righteousness, this present world will eventually cease to be.

The kingdoms of this world are not to be incorporated into Christ's kingdom. His rulership will be, however, over all the peoples of earth.

New Heaven and New Earth

KEY VERSE: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people."—*Revelation 21:3*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Revelation 21:1-7,22-27*

THE original Tabernacle was the place where God dwelt with Israel. Moses was given very precise instructions concerning every detail of this ancient structure as well as the sacrificial ceremonies which were to be conducted therein. Any deviation from these instructions was punishable by death. The reason for this appears in the New Testament, where we are informed that the arrangements were intended by God to be "shadows of good things to come." (Heb. 10:1) In other words, the Tabernacle and its services were designed to be patterns of the divine plan of atonement and reconciliation with God in which

Christ, the antitypical high priest, is the central figure.

The high priest was typical of Jesus, and the bullock he offered instead of himself pointed to the fact that Jesus would offer his own flesh to make atonement for Israel, and for the world.

In that Tabernacle arrangement, there were also underpriests. In the antitype which began to be fulfilled with the first coming of Jesus, there is also an under-priesthood consisting of the truly consecrated followers of Jesus. The Apostle Peter speaks of these as a priesthood "to offer sacrifices." (I Pet. 2:5) Like Jesus, these do not offer animals

in sacrifice as did the typical priesthood, but they do offer themselves. Paul urges these to present their “bodies a living sacrifice.”—Rom. 12:1

This also explains why the kingdom of Christ was not established in power and great glory at his first advent, for it shows that there was a further sacrificial service to be performed, in which the church of Christ would have the privilege of sharing in his sufferings—dying with him that they might also live (in the resurrection) and reign with him. On Israel’s typical Day of Atonement there were two animals slain: a bullock and a goat. We understand that the bullock was a type of Jesus, and that the goat prefigured his faithful followers.

In Hebrews, chapter 6, Paul indicates that the Most Holy prefigured heaven, where Christ, our “forerunner is for us entered.” (vss. 18-20) The Holy, or first compartment of the Tabernacle, would represent the present state of Christians whose hopes are centered on heavenly things. Here they

offer their sacrifices of praise to God, while their flesh is being sacrificed in his service, as pictured by the burning of the fat and life-producing organs of the animals on the brazen altar in the Court, the enclosure which surrounded the Tabernacle proper.

In Israel’s typical arrangement, after the Atonement Day was over, the Tabernacle and God’s presence there, was used for the specific benefit of the people.

In harmony with this, our text incorporates a promise assuring us that during the thousand-year reign of Christ, the “tabernacle of God” will be with men, and that he will dwell with them. This does not mean that another literal Tabernacle is to be built. But just as God’s presence with the Israelites was shown in the typical Tabernacle, so through Christ and his church he will be present with all nations. Because of this “there shall be no more death, ... neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”—Rev. 21:4

Christian Life and Doctrine

PSALM 23 SERIES, PART 11

The Shepherd's Goodness and Mercy

*"Surely goodness and mercy shall
follow me all the days of my life."*

Psalm 23:6

DAVID, in his meditations on the LORD's tender watchcare over all his interests, became so impressed with the reality of his Heavenly Shepherd's love as to leave no room for even the shadow of a doubt concerning it. Therefore, he wrote, "Surely [unquestionably], goodness and mercy shall follow me." This reminds us of Paul's assurance of divine care as expressed in the statement, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Rom. 8:28

The certainty of the Good Shepherd's care is further emphasized in the expression, 'shall follow me'. The Hebrew text gives the thought of pursuit—'goodness and mercy shall pursue me'. This suggests that divine care is aggressively manifested toward us—that the LORD anticipates our needs and is ready to provide them even before we ask. When we think of how energetic the various forces of evil are in their opposition to the LORD's people, of how we are pursued by evil, it is indeed comforting to realize that we are also being pursued by God's goodness and mercy. And knowing that greater is he who is for us than all that be against us (Rom. 8:31), we can with confidence entrust ourselves to the care of the Good Shepherd all the days of our lives.

Both the goodness and the mercy of the LORD manifest his love toward us; and while these two principles are closely related, their operation is along different lines. In the use of the two expressions, David's mind is evidently reflecting upon the various ways the shepherd's care for his sheep illustrate God's goodness and mercy—the various ways which he had just enumerated in the preceding verses of the psalm. It is a summing up, as it were, of all those manifestations of divine grace which the psalmist saw so beautifully portrayed in a shepherd's care of his sheep.

"The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want," wrote the psalmist. David knew that it was because of the goodness of the LORD that all his needs were sure to be supplied. He lived under the terms of the Law Covenant given to the children of Israel at Sinai, and through that covenant God obligated himself to supply all the needs of those who obeyed his law. David knew that the LORD was faithful to this arrangement. In another psalm he wrote, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."—Ps. 37:25

Yes, David could write, "I shall not want," because in his own experience as a servant of God, and in his observation of the manner in which divine care had been manifested toward others, there was no indication that God had ever failed to carry out that which he promised. And what was true in the life of David is equally true in our experience today. Although the goodness of God in providing all the needs of his people during the Gospel Age is manifested more particularly along spiritual lines, yet to those who live by faith, setting their affections on things above rather than on things of earth, this goodness is very real, very satisfying.

With David, we too can say that because of God's goodness we shall not want. We may not always have all the material good things of life that we deem necessary, but we will not want for any of the spiritual blessings which are so important to us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. No one in the church has been

more faithful in following the Good Shepherd than was the Apostle Paul, yet he wrote, "I have learned ... both to abound and to suffer need." (Phil. 4:11,12) This is a reference to material needs, and indicates that the apostle did not always have sufficient food and raiment, and perhaps like Jesus, did not always have a place to lay his head. From this standpoint Paul might not always have been able to say, "I shall not want," but from the standpoint of the New Creature he could indeed affirm that all his needs were supplied.

To the apostle it was consistent with the terms of his consecration that the outward man should perish, and it made little difference to him whether it perished as a result of insufficient food, or for other reasons. The important thing to Paul was that the inward man, the new life begotten in him by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, was being renewed and nourished and built up by the spiritual food so abundantly supplied to him by the Good Shepherd.

Following his general affirmation of God's goodness and mercy—"I shall not want"—David began to itemize the various ways in which the LORD's care is manifested, from the shepherd's standpoint. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." Here we are reminded of God's lavish provision of spiritual food. The pastures of truth are indeed green for all those who are faithful in following the Good Shepherd whithersoever he leads. This has been true of the entire church of the Gospel Age, and it is more than ever true now at the end of the age, when, in fulfillment of his promise, the returned Lord has girded himself and has served his people with "meat in due season." (Matt. 24:45) How wonderfully satisfying and refreshing are the pastures of present truth! Truly our longings are satisfied by these green pastures as nothing else could do!

Surely it is a wonderful manifestation of God's goodness to be blessed by a knowledge of present truth in these dark days of world distress and chaos. One of the great blessings of the truth,

especially during this great time of trouble, is the confidence it gives us, the peace of heart and mind, knowing that Jesus is now present to set up his kingdom. Truly we can lie down in these green pastures, and rest contentedly as we partake of the nourishing spiritual food to which the Good Shepherd has led us.

As if the green pastures were not sufficient evidence of the Good Shepherd's loving care, the psalmist adds, "He leadeth me beside the still waters [**margin**, 'waters of quietness']." It is not enough that we should be led where there are waters of truth to drink, but they are still waters—waters that are not only refreshing but have been set out before us in a way that we can drink with ease, and unstintingly.

How true this is of the waters of truth from which the LORD's sheep are privileged to drink during the harvest period at this end of the age! Beginning with the return of our Lord, these waters were cleared of the muddy traditions of the past and caused to flow in a deep and inexhaustible stream of refreshment. This stream has been readily available to all who have had ears to hear and can recognize the Good Shepherd's voice calling them to follow him. Because of this wonderful provision, all who have had their spiritual thirst quenched by the waters of present truth

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can truly say with the psalmist, "I shall not want." They know that in thirsting after righteousness they have been filled to overflowing, and their thirst has been quenched.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." God's mercy is a manifestation of his goodness. He supplies our need of spiritual food and drink, but this is not the end of his goodness. There are times when in addition to these blessings we are sorely in need of his mercy.

The psalmist spoke of this when he wrote, "He restoreth my soul"—or literally, 'He saves my life'. It requires an exercise of God's mercy operating through the saving grace which is in Christ Jesus, for us to become his sheep in the first place. And then, all along the way we need his mercy. We fail at times to give proper heed to the Shepherd's voice and find ourselves straying away from him, or from the remainder of the flock. In this unhappy position we are exposed to the various enemies of the sheep—wolves in sheep's clothing are ready to devour us—and, worst of all, the Adversary goes about as a roaring lion seeking to devour us.

But God is merciful, yea, we are pursued by his mercy, and, when in these positions of special danger and threatened by enemies too cunning and too powerful for us to resist, he comes to our rescue. In his great mercy he restores our souls! No enemy of the LORD's sheep is able to pluck them away from the protecting care of the Good Shepherd. It is only if we willfully walk away from the Shepherd, deliberately turning our backs upon him and upon his goodness and mercy, that he gives us up to our enemies and we fall helpless into their clutches.

Divine goodness is further manifested in the fact that the Good Shepherd leads his sheep in the paths of righteousness—or right paths. We need divine wisdom in order to walk the right way, and this is promised to us if we ask in faith, nothing doubting. (James 1:6,7) But we must be willing to obtain divine wisdom through God's appointed channel, which is his inspired

Word. It is through the Word that the Good Shepherd leads us; it is through the Word that we hear his voice calling us to follow him.

The path of righteousness is not an easy one in which to walk, yet there is joy in walking in that path despite the fact that the path itself is rugged and difficult. It is the narrow way of sacrifice. If we walk in this path of righteousness to its very end, we will find that it leads to death. But the goodness of God is still manifested toward us, in that those who faithfully follow the Good Shepherd to the end will have the privilege of living and reigning with Christ a thousand years.

In a most wonderful manner, then, divine goodness is truly demonstrated as the Good Shepherd leads us in the paths of righteousness. It would be impossible for us to walk in this way unless he did lead us. In leading us he not only shows us the way, but gives us strength to walk in it—strength for every time of need. His strength is so necessary, or else we would soon become weary in well-doing and would faint by the wayside. But his goodness does not permit this. It pursues us, and safeguards our every interest so that we can truly say, “I shall not want.”

David cited an extreme condition of danger and hardship through which a shepherd sometimes finds it necessary to lead his sheep. He declared that even under difficult conditions in the lives of the people of God, thus illustrated, they do not need to fear evil for the Good Shepherd is with them—his rod and staff comfort them. “Yea,” he writes, as if some might doubt such an outstanding example of divine goodness and mercy, “though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.”

When the LORD found us and before we actually became his sheep, we were wandering about in the valley of the shadow of Adamic death. All mankind is walking through that valley, and the only way out of it during this age is to follow the voice of the Good Shepherd. How good the LORD is to permit us to hear that

voice saying, "Follow me," and we have responded affirmatively. We know that by following this dangerous pathway into death, we will actually escape from the valley of the shadow of death into glory, honor, and immortality in the first resurrection!

The Good Shepherd's wise use of both the rod and the staff is a further manifestation of divine goodness and mercy, a further assurance that we shall not want. Through their use he guides and corrects his sheep, and thus manifests a love that otherwise could not be so fully appreciated by his followers. Paul wrote, "Whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth." (Heb. 12:6) How glad we are, then, to realize that the divine goodness and love is pursuing us even when it requires the use of the chastening rod.

Who can question the goodness and mercy of the Good Shepherd as evidenced by the table of rich spiritual food which he prepares for us in the presence of our enemies? There is a special sweetness attached to this thought, especially now that we are living in the days of the presence of the Good Shepherd. The green pastures and the still waters might be thought of as the LORD's bountiful provision for his sheep throughout the entire age, and truly he has cared for them in their every time of need. But yet, more than ever before, he is now feeding his sheep at a table of the choicest spiritual food, designed to give them strength to overcome all their enemies in this evil day. Let us show our appreciation of this specially prepared table by partaking of the meat in due season which is spread out before us.

"Thou anointest my head with oil." Here is another manifestation of God's goodness. There is no greater evidence of God's love than his gift of the Holy Spirit, as symbolized by the oil of anointing. Jesus spoke of this, explaining that just as earthly parents are pleased to give good gifts to their children, so the Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. Yes, God is good, and as we are filled with his Spirit, yielding ourselves to its sweet influence, we partake of his divine goodness and are transformed into the image of God!

Think of what the oil of the Holy Spirit means to the consecrated! It gives enlightenment, spiritual strength, and comfort. By it we are commissioned to be co-workers with God. By it, also, we are begotten to a new life to become New Creatures in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit fills us with love, giving us power and the spirit of a sound mind. It bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. Our relationship with God is sealed by the Holy Spirit. And by the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, its fruits of love, joy, and peace become manifest, enriching our lives and blessing others. Truly the goodness of the LORD is demonstrated by his gift of the Holy Spirit.

Not only is the Shepherd's goodness and mercy revealed in the wonderful provisions which have been made similarly for all his sheep, but, as we have seen in last month's article, he takes a personal and individual interest in them, providing each one with a cup peculiarly adapted to their special needs. Truly, each one of us can say, "I shall not want!"

One of the marked tendencies of fallen human nature is the lack of constancy. Millions of mankind start out zealously in their lives along some line of endeavor, but soon weary of the attempt and turn to something else. Even among the consecrated people of God this inclination to become weary in well-doing must be guarded against. Sometimes we make an effort to serve the LORD or to bear witness to the truth in some manner, but after a time we give it up as useless, or as too much effort. But God is not changeable. He is constant in the fulfillment of his promises.

We need not fear that the 'green pastures' condition promised the faithful Christian will only continue for a short time, nor that the still waters of truth will 'dry up' or leave us thirsting in vain for the refreshment which they give. There is no danger that the Good Shepherd might tire in his promise to restore our souls, when soul restoration is needed; nor that he will ever fail to lead us in the paths of righteousness. Evil will never befall us as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, for the Good

(Concluded on Page 37)

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PLEASE TAKE NOTE of the many adjustments which are being made in the “*Frank and Ernest*” schedule. Each month, for several months, new stations will be added, and some old ones will no longer carry our program. You may wish to check this schedule regularly, to see what is happening in your area.

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Rosetown	CJYM 1330	10:00 a.m.
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CEYLON

Columbo-Sat.	Radio Sri Lanka	7:15 p.m.
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		MHZ 102	5:30 p.m.
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MEXICO (Spanish)

Culiacán	Ranchera	XEQC	8:30 a.m.
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NEW ZEALAND

Dunedin	4XD	11:15 a.m..
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NIGERIA

Radio Africa	Wed.	8:00 p.m.
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PANAMA

Panama City	HOQ 1250	10:30 a.m..
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PHILIPPINES

Manila-Sat.	DZAM 1026 KHz	7:15 p.m.
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SOUTH AFRICA

Joubert Park	Thurs.	SWAZI Music	
Radio 1400 & shortwave	49 & 60	9:00 p.m.	

SPAIN (Spanish)

Radio Gerona	Mon.	9:45 p.m.
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TONGA

Nuku' Alofa	Mon.	10:15 a.m.
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URUGUAY (Spanish)

Montevideo	Radio El Espectador	810	9:15 a.m.
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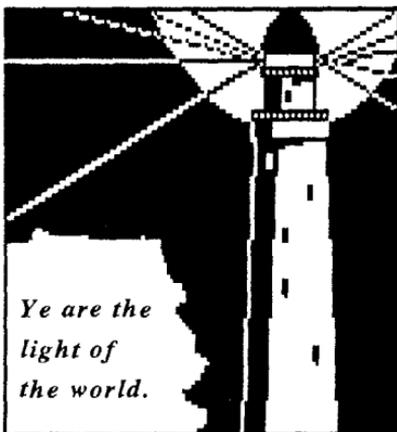
VIRGIN ISLANDS

St. Croix	WSTX	970	9:00 a.m.
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SHORTWAVE BROADCASTS

(Beamed to Africa, Europe, U.S.)

Eastern U.S. (Sat.)	WRNO 15.20	12:45 p.m.
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The Bible Answers



Television Broadcasts

WE ARE happy to announce that each Sunday afternoon, The Bible Answers television programs will be aired on Channel America and affiliates from 12:00 to 12:30 p.m., E.S.T. The list below represents the current stations under contract, and as additional stations are arranged we will update the list. *For airing times, days, and/or channels, see your newspaper.

CALIFORNIA

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Daytona Beach Channel 42

Ft. Myers Channel 7

Ocala Channel 7

Orlando Channel 4

St. Petersburg Channel 35

Tampa Channel 57

GEORGIA

Atlanta Channel 4

Cordele Channel 55

Savanah Channel 55

IOWA

Cedar Rapids KTS Channel 13

*Des Moines Channel 33

LOUISIANA

Jennings Channel 13

New Orleans Channel 61

MAINE

Portland Channel 57

MASSACHUSETTS

Hyannis Channel 41

MICHIGAN

Detroit Channel 26

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis Channel 13

MISSISSIPPI

Philadelphia Channel 20

MISSOURI

St. Louis Channel 7

NEBRASKA

Lincoln Channel 67

NEW YORK

Buffalo Channel 67

Glens Falls Channel 8

Oneonta Channel 15

Rochester Channel 40

Syracuse Channels 14,18

NORTH CAROLINA

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Raleigh Channel 68

Reidsville Channel 14

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PENNSYLVANIA

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Norfolk Channel 68

WEST VIRGINIA

Huntington Channel 55

*Logan (Mon.) Channel 12

PUERTO RICO

Arecibo Channel 28

(Continued from Page 31)

Shepherd will continue to protect his sheep; and his rod and staff will continue to be used until we reach the very end of the narrow way.

Nor will there ever be a lack of food on the table which the LORD prepares for us in the presence of our enemies. It will not be a case of having spiritual food today, and not having it tomorrow; nor will there be any stinting in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to guide and enrich our lives. Ever and continuously the cup which the LORD provides will overflow. There will never be a time when it is not full. It is this constancy of the Good Shepherd's care, the never-failing aspect of his goodness and mercy, that David affirms when he says that they will pursue us all the days of our lives. We can be assured of divine goodness and mercy, not merely for today, or tomorrow, but for every day, and all the days, until we reach the very end of the way.



Thanksgiving Day

Thanksgiving Day comes once a year,
God's blessings every day.
How much of truth and joy to cheer
Us on our Christian way.

Here God's goodness manifold
We cannot rightly count,
Much less if faithful, his untold,
Illimitable amount.—*MCM*

Christian Life and Doctrine

Exodos

“By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing [Greek: exodos] of the children of Israel and gave commandment concerning his bones.”

—Hebrews 11:22

THE Greek word *exodos* (spelled *exodus*, in English) means, ‘the way out’. Professor Strong gives ‘exit’ as a synonym. Generally this word is associated with the time when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, freeing them from the bondage of Egypt. Although this is the way it is used in this text in Hebrews, it is *not* how it is used in the only two other occurrences of this word in the New Testament.

As recorded in the 16th chapter of Matthew, Jesus had a serious talk with his disciples, asking them who others thought he was. He received a variety of answers. But when he asked who *they* thought he was, Peter spoke up and said: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”—Matt. 16:16

If you were in that little band of disciples, and really believed that Jesus was the Son of God, you would have probably expected him to take steps to throw off the Roman yoke of bondage. That would have required him to raise an army, and also to move toward acquiring some political power. Certainly you would not have expected him to accept being defamed or scoffed at, spit upon, smitten, mocked, and finally put to death by his enemies.

The disciples at the time, however, did not understand that this was exactly what Jesus knew was going to happen. “From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and

chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”—vss. 21,22

Peter’s expectations concerning what Jesus should be doing, and what should be happening to him, were so strong that he argued with the Lord about it. But Peter, of course, did not have a clear perspective of what was to occur in the life of Jesus and his followers. This event is also described in Luke 9:23, where these words of Jesus are recorded, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Then he said, “But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God.”—Luke 9:27

This ‘seeing’ was necessary so they would later appreciate that although they would suffer and die in this life, the promised ‘glory to follow’ would far exceed their grandest expectations! Jesus’ statement that ‘some would not die until they saw the kingdom of God’, was actually fulfilled a few days later.

We read further, “It came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he [Jesus] took Peter and John and James and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered and his raiment was white and glistening. And behold there talked with him two men which were Moses and Elias [Elijah], who appeared in glory, and spoke of his decease [Greek: *exodos*] which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.”—Luke 9:28-31

“But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass as they departed from him Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here. And let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spoke, there came a cloud and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out

of the cloud saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.”—Luke 9:32-36

The vision, which is the term Matthew used to describe this experience (Matt. 17:9), was of Jesus in glory. Moses and Elijah were not literally resurrected and alive, but were with Jesus in the form of a vision, although how the disciples recognized them is not explained. This vision was somewhat like a motion picture with sound. The three were talking together, and their subject was *exodos*—the way out from the present condition, via death, and subsequent resurrection to heavenly glory. This was a first-hand experience afforded these three disciples, designed to convince them that the death of Jesus would not be a catastrophe.

Why should Moses and Elijah have been with Jesus in this vision, and not others such as Noah, Daniel, Job (Ezek. 14:14), or some other prophet? There may be several reasons. For one thing, both Moses and Elijah had experiences in common with Jesus. Both had fasted for forty days in a wilderness condition. Both certainly had a peculiarly special relationship with God. Both had unusual deaths. God ‘took’ Moses in death, after allowing him to see the Promised Land from the peak of Pisgah’s mountain. Elijah was caught up to ‘heaven’ in a whirlwind, at the time of his death. Both Moses and Elijah were mentioned in the final verses of the Book written by Israel’s last prophet. See Malachi 4:4,5.

The selection of Moses to be featured in this vision might well relate to something he said in Deuteronomy 18:15. His words were, “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.” The Apostle Peter knew these words; in fact he quoted them in Acts 3:22 when later preaching to the people of Jerusalem. At that time he applied the reference made by Moses to a promised, future prophet, to Jesus. The experience of the transfiguration vision, where he saw Jesus and Moses together, may have given Peter this special insight: “Jesus is truly the one Moses said God would raise up!”

The selection of both Moses and Elijah has additional significance. How fittingly Moses and Elijah picture the two phases of the kingdom. Moses represented the earthly phase, and Elijah the heavenly. Moses was a faithful servant, but he was not referred to as a son. (Heb. 3:5,6) At his death Moses was not caught up to "heaven." Elijah, on the other hand, was caught up to "heaven," and fittingly identifies with those who will be part of the heavenly phase of the kingdom.

Of course Elijah actually died, but he never literally went to heaven. We know this to be a fact because Jesus himself said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven." (John 3:13) He was, like Moses, simply 'taken' by God, and his body was never found. This is another similarity these three individuals shared, for neither Jesus', Moses' nor Elijah's bodies were ever found after their deaths.

Exodos was the subject of discussion between Jesus and the two patriarchs. The conversation concerned the matter of the death of Jesus, and its manner. It was the same theme which had caused Peter to utter his words of rebuke to the Lord, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." Peter needed to learn that *everlasting* death did not necessarily result from suffering and dying. Suffering accepted in a way which is pleasing to God, leading to death, would actually result in exaltation and glory. Death as a result of faithfulness to God would eventually lead to the *exodos*, or exit, from one condition to another.

Peter never forgot this lesson. Later, when he penned his first letter, he wrote: "Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."—I Pet. 1:9-11

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How greatly Peter had progressed in his understanding of this matter from the time of the transfiguration experience! Peter had not been aware of the testimonies of past prophets which indicated that suffering and death would be necessary before Christ could enter into his glory. But with the passage of time, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit, Peter understood this vital truth.

In his second letter, Peter made a specific reference to his experience on the mount of transfiguration. He wrote: "We have not been following cunningly devised tales in making known to you the power and appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were beholders of that greatness. For having received from God the Father honor and glory, a voice of this kind was brought to him by the magnificent glory—'This is my Son, the beloved, in whom I delight.' And this voice which was brought from heaven we heard, being with him on the holy mountain."—II Pet. 1:16-18, Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*

The apostle made it clear that the 'cross-bearing life' he was talking about had previously been prophesied long centuries ago; although before the crucifixion, Peter's expectations had been different. The moving experience on the mount of transfiguration put God's stamp of approval on the life and ministry of Jesus. The translator, Weymouth, makes the next verse more understandable: "So we have the word of prophecy confirmed; to which you do well to pay attention—as to a lamp shining in a dark place—until day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."—vs. 19, **Weymouth**

By these words, Peter assures us that he knows what he is talking about, because of his experience of seeing our Lord in glory. And so he exhorts us to keep our faith strong in the promise that if we are faithful unto death we shall receive a crown of life (Rev. 2:10)—because he knew with certainty that the death of a faithful Christian will lead to their ultimate glorification. It will be their 'way out', their *exodos*.

In fact, the third and final place where this Greek word is used in the New Testament is when Peter described his own death, saying: "Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease [Greek: *exodos*] to have these things always in remembrance." (II Pet. 1:15) Peter could have used another appropriate Greek word for death, but he did not. He chose to use the same word Jesus had used when he talked with the two prophets in the vision. Death was the 'way out' from a condition of human sin and suffering, into perfection of spiritual life and glory. This was very real to Peter and he wanted it to be very real to all the footstep followers of Christ.

Matthew and Mark's records both indicate that Jesus was "transfigured [Greek: *metamorphoo*] on the mountain." See Matthew 17:2 and Mark 9:2. The Apostle Paul used the identical Greek word to describe what should happen to us as Christians: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed [Greek: *metamorphoo*] into the same image

from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD.”—II Cor. 3:18

Paul was no doubt thinking about the face of Moses when he came down from the mountain, and how it shone so brilliantly that Israel could not stand the sight. He had mentioned that event earlier. (Exod. 34:29,30) The phrase, ‘open face’, should really be translated, “unveiled face,” since, when Moses talked with God his face was uncovered. As he descended from Mount Sinai, Moses mirrored the glory of God in his face. The people recognized immediately that Moses had been with God and that he had been tremendously affected by the experience.

Likewise, as we commune with the LORD, the glory we behold should have a transforming influence on us. We should become a copy of that glory. The **Moffatt** translation renders the Greek this way: “But we all mirror the glory of the LORD with face unveiled, and so we are being transformed into the same likeness as himself, passing from one glory [the glory which we behold] to another [i.e., we become a manifestation of that glory].”

This work of transformation of character is one of the most important aspects of our consecrated walk. After Paul told us that we are to present ourselves as living sacrifices, he added, “And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed [Greek: *metamorphoo*] by the renewing of your mind.” (Rom. 12:2) We are to be changed from the fashion of this world into the fashion of our Lord Jesus Christ. If such a transformation does not occur in us, we will not be a part of the glorified Christ.

The mountaintop experiences we have should increase our faith. Like the three disciples who descended from the mount of transfiguration with new knowledge, which later through the Holy Spirit they understood more fully, we too with greater determination will press on in the face of adversity. They will help us never to lose sight of the glorious prize of life which will be ours if we are faithful unto death! We should heed Paul’s words,

“Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:10,11

However, not all of our experiences are of the ‘mountain-top’ variety. Most tests of faithfulness come in meeting the general responsibilities and happenings of each day. The following is a short reading which may help us to appreciate more fully these “Common Days.”

“One of the chief dangers of life is trusting occasions. We think that conspicuous events, striking experiences, exalted moments, have most to do with our character and capacity. We are wrong. Common days, monotonous hours, wearisome paths, plain old tools, and everyday clothes tell the real story. Good habits are not made on birthdays, nor Christian character at the New Year. The vision may dawn, the dream may waken, the heart may leap with a new inspiration on some mountaintop, but the test, the triumph, is at the foot of the mountain, on the level plain.

“The workshop of character is everyday life. The uneventful and commonplace hour is where the battle is won or lost. Thank God for a new truth, a beautiful idea, a glowing experience; but remember that unless we bring it down to the ground and teach it to walk with feet, work with hands, and stand the strain of daily life, we have worse than lost it, we have been hurt by it. A new light in our heart makes an occasion, but an occasion is an opportunity, not for building a tabernacle and feeling thankful and looking back to a blessed memory, but for shedding the new light on the other path, and doing old duties with new inspiration. The uncommon life is the child of the common day, lived in an uncommon way.”—Excerpt from “**Our Most Holy Faith**,” page 541, and marked “Selected.”



Christian Life and Doctrine

The Adversary

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

1 Peter 5:8

ONE of the most successful devices of the devil is to convince people he does not exist, and in such a deceived state, many are unable to resist temptations that come to them. When enlightened people reject the image of Satan as a being with 'horns', a 'tail', and a 'red suit', they often reject the idea that he exists at all. But pitchforks, fire, and brimstone have no place in reality when considering who the devil actually is, and what his part was, is, and will be in the plan of God. He is described in the Bible as the "god of this world."—II Cor. 4:4

When originally created, his name was Lucifer, and he was one of the most beautiful creatures in the universe. We find his description given in Ezekiel: "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. ... Every precious stone was thy covering. ... Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." (Ezek. 28:12,13,15) Although this prophecy is addressed as if to the "king of Tyrus," it describes a spiritual being, not an earthly being. We read in verse 13, "Thou hast been in Eden"; and verse 15: "perfect ... from the day that thou wast created." This obviously is not describing an earthly king. It is clearly the description of a spiritual being who was, as verse 14 describes him, "the anointed cherub that covereth."

There is no room for complacency about the might of Satan, for he is a marvelously powerful spiritual being. And we must not underestimate the activities of this supernatural adversary, for he is our greatest enemy. He is the adversary of God, the adversary of Jesus Christ, and the adversary of the people of God. Jesus called him the "prince of this world."—John 14:30

Satan has, since his fall, always desired to destroy any who find favor with God. We see him behind the plot to get rid of a favored one of God when he filled Cain's heart with such anger that he slew his brother, Abel. Abel simply had offered a sacrifice which was pleasing to God, while Cain did not. (Gen. 4:8) Again, at the time of Queen Esther, Satan filled Haman's heart with such jealousy that he desired that all the Jews, God's chosen people, should be massacred. (Esther 3:9) Later Satan was so influential with the religious leaders of Jesus' day that they would do anything to remove him from the scene—even to the point of killing him. (John 11:53) His attempt to destroy the Seed of promise (Gal. 3:29) makes him the relentless enemy of the Christian, throughout the entire Gospel Age, even until today.

Although undeniably he is a powerful being, Satan is not ALL-powerful. Just before his crucifixion, Jesus said to Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." (Luke 22:31,32) The chosen apostle, Peter, claimed to be ready to go to prison and even to die for the Lord, yet within the next few hours he was to thrice deny that he even knew him. Surely, Peter was a strong character, but his own strength was nothing when it came to contending with Satan.

There is only one way to contend against so great an adversary, and that is with the LORD on our side. The words of the Apostle Paul bring out this thought very clearly. "Be strong in the LORD, and in the power of *his* might. Put on the *whole armour of God*, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities

ties, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against wicked spirits [**margin**] in high places.”—Eph. 6:10-12

This text is as applicable to our era as it was when Paul wrote these words to the Early Christians. Satan has allies who assist him by implementing his evil strategies. The mighty ‘fallen angels’, as well as those less powerful by nature, but possibly in high positions among men—wicked ones among the human race—are still under his control and will continue to be until “this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4) is brought to an end.

Even though Peter’s faith did temporarily fail him, he later became a pillar of the church. Thus he could, from personal experience, write the following words of advice to the church regarding Satan: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith.”—I Pet. 5:8,9

Why Did Satan “Fall” from God’s Favor?

Isaiah tells us why Satan, a being who had been created perfect, became corrupt, in this passage taken from the 14th chapter: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, ... I will be like the Most High.” (Isa. 14:12-14) His desire to be like the Most High did not mean that he wished to emulate the beautiful characteristics of his Creator, but rather to have the same mighty power and control which God innately possesses.

Just as the man, Adam, as well as all the angelic beings, had been created free moral agents, so also had Satan. He could choose to do good, or he could choose to do evil. God did not coerce him into remaining in harmony with him, with his laws, and with his principles. God did not have to use force because Satan had an innumerable multitude of reasons to enthusiastically serve the One who had created him, and who had provided every

blessed condition necessary to continue his happy existence. But instead he chose to follow evil paths, to pursue a strategy of unbridled ambition that would, he believed, give him equality with God.

We are told in Ezekiel 28 that Satan was created perfect. He was "full of wisdom and perfect in beauty." But, to use Jesus' words, he "abode not in the truth." (John 8:44) He left the path of truth and righteousness by the exercise of his own willful ambition. The verse continues: "There is no [longer] truth in him [the devil]. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

Satan knows the power of truth. That is why he makes it appear as though he personally supports truth. Paul wrote: "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (II Cor. 11:3,14) If anyone would try to make us believe that they have a correct understanding of God's Word, when we know their doctrine contains a principle contrary to what is clearly taught in his Word, we may be sure that the beguiling 'serpent' is, once again, using his favorite method of attempting to ensnare us—he loves to twist the truth of God's Word.

One of the most subtle wiles of the devil is the suggestion that we can please God now without suffering for righteousness' sake. Satan used this pleasing approach when he talked with Jesus in the wilderness: "The devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them [the kingdoms of the world] ... if thou therefore wilt worship me." (Luke 4:6,7) But Jesus was not impressed or tempted. He responded, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."—vs. 8

The Judgment of Satan

God does not intend that Satan's domination of mankind

will continue forever. Speaking about his own death, Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." (John 12:31) Jesus assured us that Satan's days are numbered, because "the prince of this world is judged," and has been found unworthy of life. (John 16:11) And again, in Hebrews, we read, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Jesus] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."—Heb. 2:14

If we did not see the future as clearly described in God's Word, we might conclude that Satan has indeed been successful in his rebellion against God. He succeeded in getting Adam and Eve to do his will, and to ignore God's command. He continues to be the prince of this world, with powerful spiritual principalities and beings under his complete control; and he has been successful, to varying degrees, in deceiving some who might seek after God into worshiping him, Satan, and receiving their blessings and favor and wealth and power now, during this present life.

But the text in Hebrews 2:14 makes it very clear that his dominion over mankind will *not* last forever. The time is coming when he will be *completely destroyed* by the power of righteousness in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ! This coming destruction is also prophesied by Isaiah. "[Thou hast said] I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell [Hebrew: *sheol*, the place of the dead], to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?"—Isa. 14:14-16

Satan's rebellion certainly was not something beyond our wise and omnipotent God's control! Far from it! While Satan has been following his own strategies, he has also been used to provide the testing experiences which come to all who would follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Although the Bible speaks of Satan as being bound or restrained for a thousand years during Christ's

kingdom, it also says he will be released at the end of that period of time. Once again he will seek to entice others to follow his evil ways, instead of following God's righteous principles.

By doing this he will again bring testing experiences to those who would seek to forever be part of God's family. "When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth ... and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone [picturing complete destruction]."—Rev. 20:7-10

We do not believe that the 'binding of Satan' has occurred yet. He still walks about "as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." We can resist him only by putting on the whole armour of God, and looking to God for our strength. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7) "Neither give place to the devil." (Eph. 4:27) We must never let him supplant our dedication to God with something else. We are told that one of his tools is using "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."—II Cor. 11:13,14

Those who are faithful to God even unto death become part of Christ's body. As such they are united with Christ and will bring the blessings of the kingdom to the world of mankind. They will also have a part in the fulfillment of this prophecy: "The God of peace shall bruise [Greek: *suntribo*, 'to crush completely'] Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. 16:20) When this occurs, the world will finally understand the meaning of the words spoken by God long ago in the Garden of Eden: "I will put enmity between thee [the 'serpent'—the devil] and the woman, and be-

tween thy seed and her seed; it [the seed of the woman—Christ and his church] shall bruise thy head.”—Gen. 3:15

Haste ye along, ages of glory;

Haste the glad time when Christ appears.

O! that I may be one found worthy

To reign with him a thousand years.

A thousand years! earth's coming glory!

'Tis the glad day so long foretold;

'Tis the bright morn of Zion's glory,

Prophets foresaw in times of old!—*Hymns of Dawn*

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Christian Life and Doctrine

Let Us Give Thanks

IT has been a long time since the first Thanksgiving Day, and many changes have taken place. The population of our land has increased to nearly three hundred million. With reference to just our country alone, the Revolutionary War won freedom from the mother country of England. There was the Civil War between the North and the South, the Spanish-American War, the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Through all this welter of experiences, many have lost faith in the existence of a loving God whose providences overrule in their lives.

But still the custom of observing a national day of thanksgiving continues, and certainly those who rejoice in a knowledge of the true and loving God and his plans are happy to take advantage of this special occasion for giving thanks. We recognize, of course, that it is the Christian's privilege to give thanks to the Heavenly Father every day for his tender watch-care over all their affairs. They know that while he may permit them to pass through difficult experiences he is so overruling in their affairs that all things are working together for their good as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.—Rom. 8:28

The Apostle Paul wrote, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (I Thess. 5:18) To properly give thanks in everything means that every day will be one of thanksgiving. It means that we will not thank the LORD merely for those things which contribute to our immediate well-being and joy, but also for the trials which he permits to test and to develop us as Christians.

For His Son

There are certain abiding values in our lives as Christians for which we should daily give thanks. One is the fact that our Heavenly Father gave his beloved Son to be our Redeemer and Savior. (John 3:16) In II Corinthians 9:15 the Apostle Paul writes, "Thanks be unto God for his inestimable gift." (TCNT) This inestimable gift is Jesus, the one who is altogether lovely—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."—Heb. 7:26

Jesus is not only our Redeemer and Savior, but also our elder brother; our advocate with the Father; our great high priest; our good shepherd who gave his life for his sheep; our friend. Jesus is also the captain of our salvation; and in due time will be our heavenly bridegroom.

We should be thankful for the assurance that we will be given the necessary strength and courage to continue on in the narrow way of sacrifice and service, and will attain victory and the crown of life at the end. Again Paul wrote, "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place." (II Cor. 2:14) If we are on God's side, humbly serving him, we cannot lose, but are sure to be victorious, so we can say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—I Cor. 15:57

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Giving thanks to God for his many blessings is an important aspect of prayer, and is properly a part of all our prayers. Paul had learned from a fellow worker, Epaphras, of the love and zeal of the brethren at Colosse, and he wrote to them, saying, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”—Col. 1:9-12

What a wonderful summary this is of God’s blessings upon those whose one desire and purpose is to know and to do his will! These are the ones whom God “hath made ... meet [or suitable] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Truly, this is a cause for thanksgiving to all who have heard the invitation to the high calling, and who have responded in terms of full devotion to God and to his will.

This, in reality, is simply being thankful for the truth concerning God—the truth of his great plan of the ages. It is through this truth and its power that we are invited to take up our cross and follow the Master; and it is through the truth that we are assured of victory, and of the future glorious privilege of living and reigning with Christ as priests and kings unto God.—Rev. 20:6

For the Brethren

As we have seen, one of Paul’s outstanding reasons for thanksgiving was his brethren in Christ. He appreciated and loved his brethren, and not only did he pray for them, but daily gave thanks to God for what they meant to him. One of the outstanding examples of this is in his expression of love to the brethren at Philippi. He wrote: “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”—Phil. 1:3-6

There is an unusual tenderness of thought expressed in this message of greeting to the brethren at Philippi. “I thank my God,” Paul said, “upon every remembrance of you.” And he assures these brethren that he remembered them in his every prayer,

and that he had been doing this from the first day until now! Apparently Paul held very fond memories of that first day. And well he might, for it was indeed a blessed day. Philippi was Paul's first stop in Europe when he responded to the call which had come to him in a vision, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us."—Acts 16:9

Paul and his companions, responding to this call, went to the city of Philippi, "the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony." There they remained for a few days, and then came the Sabbath. As the account explains, "We went out of the city by a riverside where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spoke unto the women which resorted thither." (Acts 16:12,13) Among these women was Lydia, a seller of purple.

The record states that Lydia's heart was opened by the LORD, and that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul. (vs. 14) This was genuine interest. She was baptized, together with her household, and then she said to Paul and his fellow workers, "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the LORD, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."—vs. 15

That was the first day mentioned by Paul, when he began to give thanks to God for these brethren at Philippi. What a wonderful day it was! Imagine at the present time going into an area where, as a result of bearing witness to the truth, a group of brethren would become interested and furnish a meeting place for the start of an ecclesia! Surely Paul must have been assured that his affirmative response to the call, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us," had been blessed by the LORD. Yes, he had received this additional evidence that God was directing his steps.

In the Gospel

Paul thanked God for the fellowship in the Gospel which he had enjoyed with the Philippian brethren from that first day. The **Revised Standard Version** properly uses the word "partner-

ship" instead of "fellowship." The brethren at Philippi had been faithful in working with Paul in the great cause of promoting the Gospel. Their mutual discussions of various aspects of the Gospel was part of their fellowship. But they did more than talk about the truth; they went out and proclaimed it to others so that those to whom the LORD gave "hearing ears" could have an opportunity to rejoice together with them.

This was a wonderful partnership which Paul enjoyed with the brethren at Philippi. And it is this same partnership which brethren in Christ enjoy today, for the promotion of the Gospel continues, and will continue until the last members of the body of Christ have passed beyond the veil, and are living and reigning with Christ in his kingdom.

And this should be one of our great causes for thanksgiving this coming Thanksgiving Day, and every day of every year as we continue to witness for Jesus and for the Word of God. And are we thankful for our brethren even as Paul was—thankful because they are our brethren, and thankful for their partnership in the promotion of the Gospel? Do we rejoice in our partnership with the brethren, or are we hesitant about becoming involved too deeply in their work of sacrifice in the promotion of the Gospel?

We at the Dawn are particularly thankful for our brethren throughout the world; and this is especially true when we consider the wonderful manner in which the lovers of present truth have labored together for the promotion of the truth. Like the Apostle Paul with respect to the brethren at Philippi, we thank our God upon every remembrance of the manner in which our brethren the world over are enthusiastically laying down their lives in the work of the harvest, making the truth available to the potential 'grains of wheat' in these closing days of the age. Our partnership in the Gospel with our brethren everywhere is indeed heartening, and we daily give thanks for the goodness of the LORD in permitting us to enjoy this blessed fellowship.

The LORD Has Blessed

We are thankful also for the many evidences that our labor together in the LORD has not been in vain, for there are those here and there who within the year have been brought into contact with the truth through the cooperative efforts of the truth people, and are themselves now rejoicing in their knowledge of the wisdom, justice, love, and power of our great Creator, our loving Heavenly Father. What a joy it is to note the love and zeal of those whose 'first love' enthusiasm is still aglow with self-sacrificing zeal for the LORD and for his people!

And that 'first love' spirit of sacrifice and devotion to the LORD and to his cause should remain with us. It is a pity if we permit it to cool off to any degree. Nor is there any valid reason why it should. Indeed, as we become better acquainted with the LORD and note daily his overruling providences in our lives, both our love and faith should increase, and our joy in the LORD should abound yet more and more.

The LORD has blessed every aspect of the work of proclaiming the simple and glorious Gospel of the kingdom, and for this we are thankful. It is great cause for thankfulness to realize that so many of our partners in the Gospel are distributing the kingdom message. It is a joy to realize that every week, through the cooperation of our partners in the Gospel, the truth of the divine plan continues to go out over the radio and television on such a wide scale.

God's Keeping Power

To note the keeping power of God in the lives of his people is always great cause for thanksgiving. How we rejoice to realize that our faith in the precious doctrines of present truth remains firm, and that those doctrines have lost none of their luster. This is a special cause for thanksgiving in these days when there is so much chaos and uncertainty in the world among professing Christians.

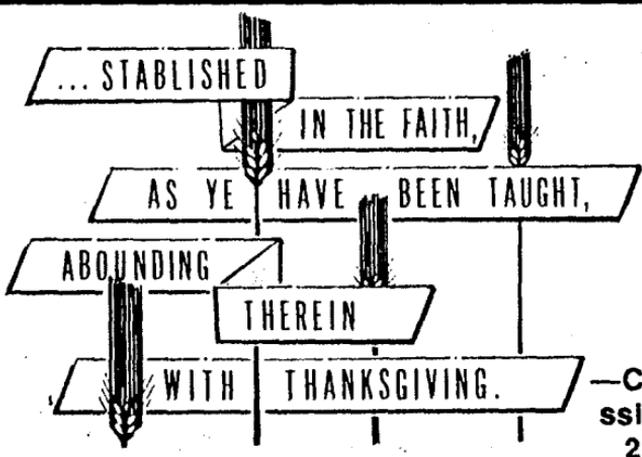
It is true that we are still waiting for the fulfillment of God's promises respecting the establishment of the messianic kingdom. And that waiting period has been much, much longer than many of us expected. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick," wrote Solomon. (Prov. 13:12) But this is true only if we lose sight of the vitality and validity of the precious doctrines of truth. We should remember that it is not God who is deferring our hopes, but our own misconceptions of the time elements of his plan.

The great fundamentals of the truth are just the same, and therefore just as precious today as they have ever been, and there is nothing we can do to speed up God's timetable of events in the outworking of the details of his great plan of the ages. Let us be thankful that he has not revealed these details to us, for as it is, our faith and patience are being tested, and these are important elements of Christian character. How appropriate are the words of Jeremiah: "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD."—Lam. 3:26

The salvation in which we are now particularly interested is that "great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." (Heb. 2:3) This great salvation, as we know, includes the future opportunity of living and reigning with Christ for the blessing of all the families of the earth. That blessing will be the salvation of mankind and the restoration of whosoever will to human perfection, and to life on the earth forever. How thankful we are for the blessed prospect of sharing in the great project of offering this salvation to mankind, awakening all the dead from the sleep of death, and helping them over the road to holiness and perfection.—Isa. 35:8

How thankful we are, also, that in this time when the hearts of the people are filled with fear because of the chaotic conditions throughout the world, the LORD, through his Word, has revealed to us the meaning of present world events; that meaning

being that the Messianic kingdom is indeed near at hand. The details of time we do not know, but today we are seeing the things foretold by Jesus as marking the signs of his second presence and the end of the age. And, as Jesus admonished, because we see these things, we lift up our heads with confidence, knowing that our deliverance into the kingdom is drawing near—a whole year nearer than on Thanksgiving Day a year ago!



—Colossians 2:7

IF OTHERS have cause for thanksgiving, how much more cause have those into whose hearts the light of the knowledge of God has shone. Those thus favored can rejoice and give thanks under all circumstances and conditions: in sickness, in death, in poverty's vale, or in comfort and health.

Surely, thankfulness is a necessary ingredient to Christian living. It must be mixed with our songs of praise and with our prayers; it must fill our hearts to enable us to render faithful and efficient service to our LORD, in any direction.

It was this gratitude, thankfulness, which enabled Paul and Silas to serve our Master so faithfully that they could sing praise and thanks for the privilege of suffering with Christ. ▲

Speakers' Appointments

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

E. Herrscher
New York, NY November 5

G.M. Jeuck
San Diego, CA November 23-26

E.F. Lankford
Portland, ME November 3
Vergennes, VT 4,5

G. Passios
Allentown, PA November 19

Obituaries

We wish to express our sincere sympathy to the families and friends of the following brethren who have recently finished their Christian course.

Brother John Tarnawski, Hamilton, Ont.—September 9. Age, 86.
Brother Tony Piotrowski, Milwaukee WI—September 1. Age, 70.



Praise the LORD!

My soul, with humble fervor raise
To God the voice of grateful praise,
And all thy ransomed powers combine,
To bless his attributes divine.

Deep on my heart let memory trace
His acts of mercy and of grace,
Who, with a Father's tender care,
Saved me when sinking in despair.

He led my longing soul to prove
The joy of his forgiving love.
And when I did his grace request,
He led my weary feet to rest.

Conventions

ALBUQUERQUE, NM—November 17-19. Contact Tim Thomassen, 402 Bryn Mawr S.E. 87106 for information. Phone: (505) 268-8170

JERSEY CITY, NJ Pre-Thanksgiving Convention, November 18, 19—Masonic Temple, 1912 Morris Avenue, Union. Contact Mrs. Charlotte Teklinski, 84 Arthur Street, Ridgely Park 07660 for information. Phone: (201) 440-0925

SAN DIEGO, CA, November 23-26—La Jolla Village Inn, 3299 Holiday Ct. Contact: Gilbert Rice, 4005 Olympic St, San Diego 92115. Phone (619) 583-2431 by **October 31st** for accurate meal count.

PHOENIX, AZ, December 30, 31, January 1—Quality Inn, 2420 W. Thomas Rd. 85015. Contact: Mildred Enteman, 542 W. Southern 85041. Phone: [602] 276-3267 / 254-7766

**"Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High."
—Psalm 50:14**

SAMUEL appeared to fleshly Israel to remember the great things God had done for them, as a ground for thankfulness and faithfulness. If we apply these words to spiritual Israel, with what greater force do they come to us! The LORD has delivered us from Egyptian bondage, the bondage of sin and death. He has led us out of darkness into his marvelous light. He not only lifted our feet from the horrible pit and the mirey clay, but he placed them upon the Rock, Christ Jesus; yea more! He has put a new song into our mouths, even the loving-kindness of our God. He not only forgave our sins, but accepted us in Jesus, and invited us to joint-heirship with Christ. He not only gave us exceeding great and precious promises to cheer our hearts in the wilderness journey, but has in reservation for us things exceeding great and precious of which he has given us a glimpse or foretaste through the Holy Spirit, an earnest of our inheritance.—C.T.R.