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The Hope of Universal Peace

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

—Luke 2:14 **SUCH WAS THE SONG OF** the angels as heard by the Bethlehem shepherds on the night of Jesus’ birth. Never has there been any greater song ever sung within the hearing of human ears. Like music, its words have wafted down to comfort mankind through more than twenty centuries of sorrows. Still it bears its note of highest triumph in spite of wars, threats of wars, the overturn of dynasties, kingdoms, and nations, and the many other grave social, political, and economic problems that face humanity at the present time.

There is solace and reason in the angels’ message, such as should appeal to every right-thinking mind. It naturally provokes the question, “Why should there not be peace on earth?” Surely man should prefer peace and life to suffering and death. There is peace in heaven where the holy angels dwell. About the throne of the Almighty there is perpetual calm. Why should not a similar condition exist on this earth? Is it because God does not want peace on

this planet, and because he takes satisfaction in seeing strife and bloodshed among various groups of the human race? Certainly this is not so, especially since the Bible assures us that God is love, and that he is all-wise in the carrying out of his benevolent purposes and plans.

HIS BIRTH DID NOT BRING PEACE

Another question that presents itself is this: Why did not the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, bring the promised peace on earth, and good will toward men? We know it did not do this and, in fact, much of the world knew nothing about the birth of Jesus, the Son of God, until a long time after his First Advent. To be sure, a good many heard of Jesus, the miracle worker in Israel, during his brief ministry there, but at most they simply took him for another prophet, if they seriously considered his mission at all. The world could not well fit him into its affairs. Yet Jesus gave a law that applied to society, home life, public administration, and to the individual, which, if men had followed, would have revolutionized the social order, destroyed pride and selfishness, and exalted love in men's hearts. Indeed, where love dwells, peace must necessarily exist, for no man deliberately fights with one whom he truly loves.

However, at the First Advent of Jesus, the time had not come for the application of such principles. Many events must take place, and numerous trials endured, before the world would learn lessons essential to its future happiness. The birth of Jesus was but one step in the divine program. Other steps were that he was to grow up to manhood's estate,

preach the Gospel, perform miracles, die on Calvary as the world's great ransom offering for sin, be raised from the dead, and ascend into heaven. He was then to be made "Head over all things to the church, Which is his body." (Eph. 1:22,23) Ultimately, as a glorious spiritual being of the highest order, he would return at his Second Advent, overthrow the kingdoms of this world in a great Time of Trouble, and then establish his own righteous reign of peace throughout all lands.

Speaking of this last mentioned event, the Prophet Isaiah wrote, "The government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."—Isa. 9:6,7

THE WORLD'S GREAT NEED

One of the greatest needs of mankind today is worldwide peace. History records that for thousands of years the restless tide of war has surged around the world, breaking on the coasts of every sea and resounding far and wide wherever human beings dwell. There were some short, quieter periods during which the spirit of pious men were founding a reformation, or in which intellectual power or love of learning and art precipitated a Renaissance—but only to be followed by more and greater wars.

The history of all Europe is mainly a record of bloodshed, both before and after the Reformation. Following the Seven Years' War in Europe came the

Napoleonic campaigns which cost England alone two million lives—to say nothing of later conflicts. The United States has certainly not escaped the evils of war either. After the American Revolution and her Mexican conflict came the devastating Civil War between the North and the South. Then in Europe, in 1870, the nations there again indulged their desire for combat, which settled nothing. Then, in almost continual succession, followed the Boer War, Spanish-American War, Balkan Wars, First and Second World Wars, Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War, and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

WORLD WAR I & II, AND THEIR AFTERMATH

What did the world gain by the two World Wars, the most devastating of all conflicts during the past hundred years? Did they furnish any solution to the problems facing the countries involved? Did they make conditions easier and better for the common people? Did they provide permanent employment for people who need work, thus making happy homes and creating real, dependable prosperity? Did they make the world safer, and provide greater confidence in governments and assurance to the people for the future? Did either of the World Wars do any of these things, or did they cause general and increased suffering which is still being felt throughout the earth? The answer is obvious.

The aftermath of both World Wars has been tragic—increased poverty, unemployment, discontent, discouragement, political jealousy and unrest, internal revolution of every kind, terrorism, and fear of what will come next. Despite the lessening

of the proliferation of armaments among the superpowers of the world, these countries still maintain huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons of a variety of sizes and purposes, and the fear of small rogue nations obtaining such weapons grows each day.

The United Nations, formed nearly seventy years ago, has shown that it is impotent to prevent war. Many now realize that world peace today lies outside the province of any leader or group of statesmen. One fundamental reason why nations do not have peace is because they do not want it enough. When they desire it sufficiently to cry out in all sincerity to God to send it to them, then peace will come. However, that will not be until after the last great struggle, which the Scriptures call Armageddon, when the power of selfish nations shall fall not to rise again. Concerning this final struggle, the Psalmist David prophesied, “Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.” Then, speaking of the peace to follow, he said, “He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.”—Ps. 46:8,9

RELATIVE WORLD PEACE IN 2014

Beginning in 2007, the Institute for Economics and Peace, a global nonprofit research organization, with the assistance of various worldwide panels and think tanks, developed the Global Peace Index (“GPI”). The GPI is an attempt to measure the relative position of nations’ peacefulness, and currently ranks 162 countries. Criteria used in determining the ranking include internal factors

such as violence and crime within the country, as well as measurements associated with a nation's external relations, such as military expenditures and activity in wars and international conflicts.

In attempting to gauge relative peacefulness, the GPI researches the extent to which countries are involved in ongoing domestic and foreign conflicts. Various indicators broadly assess what is thought to be the criteria for relative safety and security in society. Low crime rates, minimal incidences of terrorist acts and violent demonstrations, harmonious relations with neighboring countries, a stable political scene, and a small proportion of the population being internally displaced are all equated with peacefulness.

Each year the updated index is released at major world venues, including the United Nations. For the year 2014, the GPI indicates that Iceland is the most peaceful nation, followed by Denmark, Austria, New Zealand, Switzerland, Finland, Canada, Japan, Belgium, and Norway. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the country ranked as least peaceful in 2014, at number 162, is Syria, preceded by Afghanistan, South Sudan, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pakistan, and North Korea. The United States ranks at what most would consider a very disappointing level—number 101 out of 162—and the other two major world superpowers, China and Russia, rank 108 and 152, respectively.

Irrespective of how one might interpret these statistics, it is clearly evident that the “new millennium,” now fourteen years old, has done little, if anything, to increase the prospects of worldwide

peace. The Prophet Jeremiah, with respect to the nation of Israel, penned these words, which just as aptly describe conditions today throughout the world: "We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!"—Jer. 8:15

THE BIBLE MESSAGE

The hope-inspiring theme of the Bible is a true message of peace. In fact, the Bible is the one dependable authority which holds out a hope of universal peace for mankind. That such peace for the human family was the original intention of the Creator is clearly indicated by the peaceful environment in which God placed our first parents. In Eden there was no strife, nor was there any curse upon man. The curse came later, after sin had entered. Then the Lord said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; . . . Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; . . . In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."—Gen. 3:17-19

It was not long after Adam's fall that strife arose in the earth. The first murder gave evidence to the power of rage and jealousy that had entered the human heart. As man multiplied there came wars. We read about them in the days of Abraham. In due course of time came the establishment of powerful Gentile kingdoms—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. All came into being by means of wars. This was foreseen by the Prophet Daniel, who saw in vision four huge beasts rise up out of the sea.—Dan. 7

These four beasts represented the aforesaid four world empires that were to hold sway over humanity for many centuries. Although allowed to do so by God, he nevertheless viewed them as “beastly,” as they miserably failed to bring peace to mankind. The sea from which these symbolic beasts arose pictured strife, conflict, and war. All this is true to the facts of history, for it has been chiefly by means of wars that all empires have come into being and have been extended. “Might makes right” has been one of the maxims of the world, and this has been selfishly carried out in spite of the fact that it has continually spelled sadness and bloodshed among the human race.

OTHER HUMAN NEEDS

It is not merely a cessation of warfare that the weary world needs. Another great desire is rest and peace from the economic struggle that millions have to endure in order to exist. With the majority of mankind, life is a battle from the cradle to the grave. This is due, in part, to the unequal advantages accruing to some because of the fact that a few selfishly wield power over their fellows. It is also true, on an even larger scale, with respect to nations. There are a few wealthy nations, but most others are either only emerging from poverty, or struggling in their efforts to do so. The earth is amply productive for all. However, its products are cornered and controlled so as to provide an abundance for a few, but little for millions of others. This unequal condition will cease to exist with the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. We are assured by God’s inspired prophet, who wrote,

“They shall build houses, and inhabit them [not rent houses from others]; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain [kingdom], saith the LORD.”—Isa. 65:21-25

The world also needs rest from sickness, suffering and death. All this will come when the Prince of Peace begins his glorious reign. The revelator speaks symbolically of the “tree of life,” and that its leaves will be for “the healing of the nations.” (Rev. 22:2) He also says that there will be “no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain,” when God’s plan of the ages is fully consummated. (chap. 21:4) Indeed, for the sorrow-stricken world of the present time, only the Bible holds out a glorious and harmonious vision of the coming of universal peace. That is why the angels sang their joyful anthem on the night of Jesus’ birth.

A GLORIOUS FUTURE

Let us imagine for a moment what a fulfillment of the prophecies contained in the Bible will mean for the world. “It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain [kingdom] of the LORD’S house . . . shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion [the ruling heavenly phase of the kingdom] shall go forth the law, and

the word of the LORD from Jerusalem [the earthly phase of the kingdom]. . . . And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”—Isa. 2:2-4

Indeed, when men cease to “learn war” they will cease to make war. When they cease to hate they will learn to love. When they cease to follow the ways of evil they will learn to follow the righteous ways of God. When they become appalled with their own failures along the line of all fallen human endeavor, they will seek divine assistance. Man’s extremity will be God’s opportunity. Then love will become the universal law, and hate will go down in defeat before it. Mankind will learn to think sanely, justly, kindly, purely and unselfishly, and, by the help of God, they shall rise up to a nobler realm of human existence. To accomplish this will be the stupendous task of Christ’s universal kingdom. Because God and Christ will be at the helm, we know it cannot fail!

All who have faith in the divine Word of truth, and who are living in expectation of that great age of life and peace, can now lift up their heads and rejoice. All the signs of fulfilled prophecy today indicate that the glorious Messianic era is nigh at hand. When thus established, God will fulfill to men the wondrous hope of universal peace on earth, even as he has promised time and again in the Holy Scriptures. ■

“It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.”

—Lamentations 3:26

Worship Christ's Majesty

Key Verse: *“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”*
—Hebrews 1:3

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 1:1-9

ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”—Eph. 4:8

In our Key Verse, Paul says that the basis on which divine justice and love operates toward fallen mankind is that Jesus “himself purged our sins,” and “sat down on the right hand” of God. Pointing to the high exaltation of our Lord based upon his obedience even unto death on the cross, Paul’s words provide four proofs of

IN THE OPENING CHAPTER

of his letter to the Hebrews, the Apostle Paul calls attention to the fact that God “at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.” (vs. 1) Now, however, God would speak to them through his Son, the Messiah, whom all the holy prophets had foretold would come at the proper time.

Because Jesus had been fully obedient to the end of his earthly ministry, he now had the right to speak with power and authority to his faithful followers—even more so than their prophets of old. “When he

God's plan to redeem the human family.

First, the exaltation of Christ's majesty proves beyond any doubt that he indeed faithfully gave himself a ransom for our Adamic transgressions, a corresponding price which satisfied justice, through the shedding of his blood. (I Cor. 15:21,22; Rom. 3:25) This had been typified in Israel's annual Atonement Day sacrifices, but which Paul now referred to as "better sacrifices," because Jesus needed to die only "once . . . to bear the sins of many."—Heb. 9:22-28

Second, the exaltation of Christ to a high position of majesty is demonstrated by his resurrection to a plane high above that of all the angels. He was given the divine nature and a share in his Father's throne, yet he did not have any desire to usurp these things. Paul said concerning Jesus, "Although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped."—Phil. 2:6, *New American Standard Bible*

Thirdly, Christ's majesty implies that authority now existed to justify those running for the prize of the High Calling during this Gospel Age through the application of the merit of his blood. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."—Eph. 1:5-7

Finally, because the word Savior means life-giver and deliverer, the exaltation of Christ's majesty further implies power to make his precious blood effective to grant life to all the families of earth through the provisions of the New Covenant. (Jer. 31:31-34) How fitting it is to worship Christ's majesty when we realize he has bought Adam and his race from the penalty of death and will soon establish his long awaited kingdom here on earth. ■

Make A Joyful Noise

Key Verse: “O come,
let us sing unto the
LORD: let us make
a joyful noise to
the rock of our
salvation.”
—Psalm 95:1

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 95:1-7

FOR MANY CENTURIES THE

nation of Israel experienced the love and protection of God as his peculiar treasure above all people. God called them to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, and they had promised to follow all the words the Lord had commanded them. (Exod. 19:5-8) Based on God’s special care over them, we see in today’s

Key Verse that David felt it was appropriate to sing unto the Lord with a “joyful noise.” David also refers to God as “the rock of our salvation.” He made this same reference to God when he was delivered out of the hand of Saul.—II Sam. 22:1,47

Clearly Israel had reason to sing praises for God’s care over them as the rock of their salvation. They lost this special care, however, due to their inability to keep the Law as they had promised, and their rejection of the Messiah who had come on their behalf. The result of their disobedience was that of being cast off and left “desolate.”—Matt. 23:37-39

Paul states that the Jews had a great advantage in their experience because “unto them were committed the oracles of God.” (Rom. 3:1,2) He further declares, “All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [ages] are come.” (I Cor. 10:11) Additionally, Paul says, “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us

unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” (Gal. 3:24) Had God now removed the “rock of salvation” from his divine plan because of Israel’s disobedience?

God’s plan needs no adjustment. His plan and his Word are absolute. We understand that his dealings with Israel pointed to the actual rock of salvation provided in the person of God’s own Son, Christ Jesus. Paul plainly stated this, saying, “That Rock was Christ.” (I Cor. 10:4) Jesus himself alluded to this when, speaking to his disciples, he said, “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”—Matt. 7:24,25

As the Christmas season approaches, let us take note of the events, prophecies, and words used in the Scriptures which denote this glorious event. Because of a Roman decree, Joseph and Mary were forced to travel from their home in Nazareth to the town of Bethlehem. (Luke 2:3,4) Bethlehem was to be the birth place of Israel’s ruler, according to Micah’s prophecy. (Mic. 5:2) The meaning of Bethlehem is “house of bread,” and Jesus is the bread of life.—John 6:48

It matters not that December 25th is not the real anniversary of the Savior’s birth. It matters not that Jesus only asked us to specially remember his death, not his birth. Let us instead reflect with awe on the message God’s angels spoke to lowly shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem the night Jesus was born: “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”—Luke 2:10,11

This angelic proclamation of our Savior’s birth marks the one who is the foundation of God’s plan. As David properly sang unto the Lord, let us also joyfully celebrate the birth of Jesus, the rock of our salvation. ■

Glory to God in the Highest

Key Verse: *“The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.”*
—Luke 2:20

Selected Scripture:
Luke 2:8-20

IN OUR LAST LESSON WE

concluded that the Christian celebration of December 25th as our Lord’s birth provides no real source of protest. We instead see that celebrating that day with rejoicing of heart and giving of gifts and remembrances one to another reflects the divine favor of God’s gift to mankind. It copies in a small measure the giving to us of our redemption through the gift of God’s only

begotten Son, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”—John 1:29

In announcing the arrival of mankind’s Savior, God sent an angel to shepherds who were tending their sheep in the field. These shepherds were common men of society who would tend to be more receptive to the message brought by God’s angel than those of might or nobility.

The shepherds’ initial reaction to the appearance of this angel was one of fear, which was a natural response of the flesh. How loving and reassuring were the first words of God’s messenger. “Fear not,” they were told. What a lesson it is for us to realize that the Word of God should not be received with any fear of heart, but in

assurance that his message is one of joy and hope. Indeed, as soon as the shepherds had been relieved of their fear, the angel declared the reason for his appearance: “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”—Luke 2:10,11

Here we see yet another important feature of God’s plan. The good tidings would be to all people. The phrase “good tidings” has the same meaning as the word translated “gospel” throughout the New Testament. The angel was announcing the promised gospel of Christ which was hidden until the proper time. Paul spoke concerning this: “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.”—Rom. 16:25,26

God’s plan, once veiled in prophecy and dark sayings, was now revealed as good tidings to all through the birth of a Savior—Christ the Lord. To impress this grand message upon their minds so they would never lose the depth of its meaning, Luke describes what happened next, saying, “Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”—Luke 2:13,14

As we try to imagine the magnitude and splendor of that heavenly choir singing of the coming peace on earth and good will toward men, we realize it was a prophecy. The past two thousand years have been reserved as a time when God has been calling out a people for his name. When that work is complete, we look forward to hearing all mankind join those shepherds in glorifying and praising God for the gift of their Savior, Christ the Lord. ■

In Awe of Christ's Power

Key Verses: *“When they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.”*
—Matthew 14:32,33

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 14:22-36

God's plan in these words: “Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so [all] in Christ shall . . . be made alive.” (I Cor. 15:21,22) All of the Bible's true heroes knew their flaws and came to realize their need for the means of salvation which would be provided by God, in his due time.

Our lesson today focuses on the Apostle Peter, perhaps the most famous of all imperfect followers of Christ. Sometimes referred to as “impetuous Peter,” we see in him a disciple of Jesus completely dedicated to following and trusting in his Master, yet often giving in to his own

UNLIKE OTHER RELIGIOUS

books, the Bible treats its heroes with the naked truth. Weaknesses are revealed as well as strengths of the most famous and familiar characters of Scripture. The failings of the Bible's most revered men and women serve to strengthen the authenticity of its message concerning man's need of a redeemer and savior.

Speaking of the need for a savior to release mankind from the curse of sin and death, Paul describes, in summary fashion,

imperfect will. After hearing Jesus speak of his approaching death, Peter not only disputed the statement, but argued this could not possibly happen, thereby insinuating he knew better than his Master what God's will was. This same Peter drew a sword and smote the servant of the high priest in defense of Jesus, only to deny he knew him with oaths and cursing a few hours later. (Matt. 16:21,22; John 18:10-27) Yet, for all his imperfections and weaknesses, Jesus loved him.

Our lesson finds Peter and the other disciples on a ship in the midst of a storm. Jesus had told them to cross to the other side of the sea while he went alone into a mountain to pray. While the ship was being tossed by the raging waves, they suddenly saw Jesus walking toward them on the water. Not recognizing their Master, they were fearful until Jesus spoke to them saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." (Matt. 14:22-27) How similar was Jesus' statement to the calming words expressed by the angel to the shepherds when announcing the birth of the Savior of the world, saying, "Fear not!"

Peter's faith was stronger than that of the others to the point of asking Jesus to bid him to walk on the water to greet him. Jesus answered simply, "Come." Peter immediately stepped out of the ship and onto the water, walking toward his Master. (vss. 28,29) While his eyes were fixed on Jesus, he walked safely and surely toward the one he loved, but when he saw the roaring wind he became afraid and began to sink, calling out, "Lord, save me." "Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"—vss. 30,31

Our Key Verses explain the outcome of this event. When the lesson of faith had been taught, Jesus calmed the storm and the disciples worshipped him as the Son of God. Through faith, let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the world's Savior, whenever we hear his invitation, "Come". ■

A Pillar in the Temple of God

*“Him that
overcometh will I
make a pillar in
the temple of my
God, and he shall
go no more out:
and I will write
upon him the name
of my God, and the
name of the city of
my God, which is
new Jerusalem,
which cometh
down out of heaven
from my God: and I
will write upon
him my new
name.”*

—*Revelation 3:12*

MANY PRECIOUS PROM-

ises to the faithful followers of the Master are recorded in the Revelation of Jesus Christ to the Apostle John. In particular, the messages to the seven angels of the seven churches each contain a promise to the faithful overcomers who respond to the invitation to follow in the footsteps of Jesus during this Gospel Age. The promise contained in the words of our opening scripture is that of becoming a pillar in the temple of God. In considering what the Word of God has

to say about pillars, it is appropriate to review their significance and also their relationship to the consecrated child of God.

PILLARS ERECTED BY JACOB

One of the earliest examples of the use of pillars is associated with Jacob's vision of the ladder, with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. At that time, God reconfirmed the Abrahamic Covenant with Jacob, and Jacob himself also entered into a covenant with God. In commemoration of this, Jacob erected a pillar as a memorial of the event, from the very stone he had used for a pillow while he slept and beheld the vision. "Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house." (Gen. 28:16-22) The word pillar in this passage signifies something that is stationed or set up—a column or memorial stone. Here it is seen that the pillar was erected by Jacob to memorialize or commemorate the agreement between God and himself, as well as to mark "God's house," the site where the Abrahamic Covenant had been renewed.

That the use of a pillar for such a purpose was appropriate was later attested to by God when he

again appeared to Jacob and identified himself as the God of Bethel. "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." (Gen. 31:13) By so identifying himself, God indicated approval of the memorial pillar, and instructed Jacob to return to his house, to the land he had left, in furtherance of God's plan for him.

Jacob, in response to God's instructions, left Haran with his family and possessions to return to Canaan. During this journey another use of a pillar to commemorate a vow is recorded, when an agreement for peace was made between Jacob and Laban. Laban was very displeased when he discovered that Jacob and his family had departed. He pursued them in anger, and it was only by the direct intervention of the Lord that Laban agreed to the peaceful departure of Jacob, his family and possessions. "Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee. And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap. . . . And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee; This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm."—vss. 44-46,51,52

Later in Jacob's life, while dwelling in the land of Canaan, he built an altar to God, who once more appeared to Jacob. "And God said unto him, Thy

name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel.”—Gen. 35:10-15

On all of these occasions, the significance of a pillar to commemorate a vow or agreement is clearly established. The primary use of the pillar was to mark the setting up or establishment of a particular relationship with God and the continuance of fellowship with him by one who had such a special association.

PILLARS OF FIRE AND A CLOUD

Another familiar scriptural use of the pillar is found in the many Old Testament passages describing the departure of the Israelites from Egypt and their years of wandering in the wilderness. This pillar took the form of a cloud by day and fire by night. The meaning of the word is simply that of a standing column, but its use in the Scriptures is in the very special sense that indicates the presence of God. When the Israelites departed from Egypt, this pillar marked the pathway of their journey,

giving them direction. “The LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”—Exod. 13:21,22

After the Israelites left Egypt, Pharaoh’s heart was hardened and he pursued them with his army. As his forces approached their encampment, this same pillar of cloud and fire served as a protective barrier for the Israelites against the Egyptians. “The pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.” (chap. 14:19,20) The miraculous cloud and fire denoted the presence of God, not only to the Israelites, but also to other nations, especially the Egyptians. Moses testified to God concerning this, saying, “They [the Egyptians] have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.”—Num. 14:14

During the forty years in the wilderness, this pillar was with the Israelites, standing over the Tabernacle when they were encamped, and leading them to a different location when, in God’s due time, he deemed it appropriate for them to move. “The LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle.” (Deut. 31:15) “Thou in thy

manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.” (Neh. 9:19) The brightness of the cloud and the fire made the presence of God with the Israelites very evident. These pillars served as a constant reminder that he was dealing with them and that his desire was to fulfill the promises he had made to them.

PILLARS OF SOLOMON’S TEMPLE

A more traditional use of pillars mentioned in the Bible is found in the erection of buildings, particularly in the construction of the Temple of Solomon. They were used to support the roof and various projections, and even served as support for the bearing weight of the walls. Of more interest, however, are two pillars described as standing in the porch of the Temple. These were not used in the construction of the Temple, but seem to have symbolic significance related to the unfolding of God’s plan of the ages. “He cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about, . . . And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz. And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.”—I Kings 7:15,21,22

The names of these two pillars are significant. Jachin means “he shall establish,” and Boaz means “in it is strength.” When combined, these two

expressions bring to mind the promise of God concerning the permanence and strength of the kingdom that would be established by David's seed. "When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. . . . But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."—II Sam. 7:12,13,15,16

PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The plan of God and the experience of Israel's kingdom following Solomon verify that this promise of God to David was not fulfilled at that time. It is, in reality, a prophecy of the future kingdom of Christ to be established in the Messianic age as a result of the redemptive work of Jesus, who came as a descendant and heir to David's throne. Associated with him at that time will be those who, during this Gospel Age, have responded to the invitation to follow Jesus by yielding their bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—Rom. 12:1,2

When Peter asked the Master what they, who followed in his footsteps, would receive, Jesus replied,

“Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, . . . and shall inherit everlasting life.” (Matt. 19:28,29) Our glorified Lord also declared, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Rev. 3:21) The two pillars set up on the porch of Solomon’s typical Temple for all to see, were thus a prophetic witness and testimony of God’s promise to Abraham and confirmed to Isaac and Jacob, for the eventual blessing of all the families of the earth. (Gen. 12:3; 22:15-18; 26:4,5; 28:14) This promise will be fulfilled by Jesus and his faithful footstep followers in the kingdom for which we pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”—Matt 6:10

The Prophet Isaiah proclaimed God’s Word regarding that kingdom when he described the strength and justice of the government that would ultimately be established in the earth as a result of the birth and work of the Messiah. “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” (Isa. 9:6,7) This kingdom will bring everlasting peace to the world of mankind, in fulfillment of the promise to

David. It is certain, because the “zeal of the LORD of hosts” will execute it. Zechariah also speaks of this kingdom and informs us that the temple of the Lord, the true church, will be built by Jesus. “Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: . . . he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne.”—Zech. 6:12,13

PILLARS OF A SPIRITUAL HOUSE

The prophecies of Isaiah 4:2; 11:1-10; and Jeremiah 23:5,6, identify the promised Messiah, Jesus, as the Branch. During this Gospel Age he is building a spiritual temple, identified by Paul as a house of sons: “Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” (Heb. 3:6) The Apostle Peter also describes the development of this spiritual house. “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up . . . sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (I Pet. 2:5) It is this specially chosen class—those who respond to the invitation to run the race for the mark of the prize of the High Calling in Christ Jesus, and are begotten of the Holy Spirit—who become potential stones or pillars in the temple of God. If faithful unto death, each one will be privileged to share with Jesus in the work of blessing all the families of the earth when the glory of God fills his true temple and his Spirit is shed forth throughout the earth.

For the present—until the spiritual temple is completed—those who respond to the Gospel Age

call are being built up as individual stones or pillars. “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Eph. 2:19-22) Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, additionally said, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”—I Cor. 3:16

APOSTLES WERE PILLARS

The Scriptures tell us that these same apostles, who left a record of the inspired Word of God, were themselves considered pillars. As we today think of ones who have been faithful servants of God, who have provided much support for others associated with them, so did Paul describe some of the apostles in his time. “When James, Cephas [Peter], and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen [the Gentiles], and they unto the circumcision [the Jews].” (Gal. 2:9) Those who “seemed to be pillars” were ones thought of and perceived as being strong in the Truth and having the reputation of being used by God in preaching sound doctrine and proclaiming God’s promised kingdom.

Thus it is a good work to desire to be a pillar, to be shaped by Jesus and used by our Heavenly Father now, to be kept faithful and submissive to his will,

that we might be used in his plan to bless all the families of the earth. God has identified the faithful followers of Christ, the called out ones from the world of mankind during the present age, as the pillars upon which he will establish the new earth. “The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD’S, and he hath set the world upon them.” (I Sam. 2:7,8) God has purposed and determined that this shall be accomplished. “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”—Isa. 55:11

OUR ENDEAVOR TO BE A PILLAR

As we strive to be a spiritual pillar in our daily lives, we are in reality endeavoring to develop the “mind of Christ,” because it is he—the chief cornerstone of the temple—upon which we are being built. Recalling his mindset, we are reminded of the importance that “whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,” and “whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (Eccles. 9:10; I Cor. 10:31) These were the motivations which guided Jesus, and they are to be ours as well. In addition, we are not to ever doubt that God has properly prepared and equipped us to do what he asks and expects of us. When God appeared to Moses in Horeb, instructing him to return to Egypt and lead the Israelites forth from bondage, Moses expressed doubt that they

would believe and follow him. God answered by asking, “What is that in thine hand?”—Exod. 4:2

This calls attention to the fact that God’s power will enable his servants to profitably use whatever the Lord provides in doing his will. Taking advantage of opportunities such as visiting isolated brethren, calling those who need encouragement, and writing letters or emails of support and comfort, can provide a blessing to the recipient and opportunity for spiritual growth to the one performing such a service. We must be ever on the lookout for opportunities to show forth to others the same love that our Heavenly Father has shown to us. Our spiritual growth as pillars or living stones is dependent upon loving service, for “we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.”—I John 3:14

Our daily experiences are given to us that we might recognize and know the hand of God and respond by seeking his counsel and striving to do his will in all things. If we but wait upon the Lord, he will supply what is necessary, for “what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (I Cor. 4:7) It is to our Heavenly Father’s praise 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) Therefore, in all things we can in full faith be confident that “no trial has assailed you except what belongs to man; and God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tried beyond your ability; but with the trial, will also direct the issue, that you may be able to bear it.”—I Cor. 10:13, *Emphatic Diaglott*

In this way the called out ones are being fashioned as pillars, as living stones, being shaped and

polished, that they may be “fitly framed together . . . unto an holy temple in the Lord,” “which temple ye are.” (Eph. 2:21; I Cor. 3:17) The true church of the ever-living God, the body of Christ, is thus to be established as pillars on the cornerstone of Jesus. To each of these pillars, our glorified Lord has promised, reiterating the words of our opening text, that he “will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”

A NEW CITY AND NEW NAME

The features, blessings and purpose of this “city of my God, which is new Jerusalem,” have been described with these words: “Glorious City of Peace! whose walls signify salvation, protection and blessing to all who enter it, whose foundations laid in justice can never be moved, and whose builder and designer is God! It is in the light which will shine from this glorious city (kingdom) of God that the nations (people) will walk on the highway of holiness, up to perfection and to full harmony with God.”—*Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 1, pp. 295,296

Not only is the name of New Jerusalem promised to the overcomer, but also the name of my God, “my new name.” Paul, in writing to the Philippians, describes the power of that name. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, . . . And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:9-11) Jesus,

our glorified Lord, has already received this new name which, in his promise to his faithful footstep followers, he states he will write upon each pillar—upon “him that overcometh.” It was because of this that Jesus, after his resurrection, was able to declare, “All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”—Matt. 28:18

During the present Gospel Age, our Heavenly Father is extending an invitation to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Speaking prophetically of this, the Lord, through the psalmist, said, “Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” (Ps. 50:5) To those who respond to this invitation, Jesus promises that, if faithful, they will be made pillars in God’s temple and share with him in bringing forth, to the glory of God, the promised blessings to mankind during the Messianic age.

The pillars and the temple are thus seen to be a memorial to God’s promises. During Christ’s Messianic kingdom, and throughout the ages of ages to come, they will verify God’s presence and guidance in the outworking of his plan for man’s salvation. His attributes of love, power, wisdom, and justice will be evidenced in Jesus’ redemptive work as the cornerstone or central pillar. Christ’s body members will be the other pillars of God’s temple, having faithfully developed the “mind of Christ.” Together, the Christ, head and body, will attest to the reality of the successful climax of God’s plan and purposes. For on these pillars, symbolically speaking, will be supported the new earth—God’s righteous kingdom—and the culmination of his promise to bless all the families of the earth. ■

The Healing Physician

“They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick.”

—Mark 2:17

THE SETTING OF OUR LESSON

son is the experience in which Jesus and his disciples walked along the road leading out from the Temple in Jerusalem and encountered a man who was blind from birth. As they looked at him, the disciples asked Jesus, “Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?”—John 9:2

The disciples’ question to Jesus was the result of a concept apparently common in their day—that suffering is a punishment for sin. This philosophy was not new. As far back in history as Job’s time this idea was expressed. Job’s three comforters attributed the calamities which came into his life as God’s punishment for his hidden sins. Even today this belief is still quite prevalent. Many people express the conviction that many of the diseases, natural disasters, wars, and other calamities which come about in our present world, are an expression of God’s punishing judgment, either upon the wicked, or upon mankind in general.

If we could see a consistent pattern in the application of such a principle, perhaps it would appear more credible to believe that those who are the worst sinners experience the worst punishment—pain, disabilities, etc. This, however, is not the case. Some of the most wicked seem to suffer the least—and vice versa. The Prophet Malachi, observing this very situation, was moved to write, “Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up.”—Mal. 3:15

Jesus’ reply to the disciples emphatically denied this philosophy, when he said, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” (John 9:3) A similar thought was expressed in the account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Jesus told the witnesses at that momentous event that Lazarus’ sickness was “not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” (John 11:4) Lazarus did, in fact, die, but he was brought forth from the grave and no doubt lived a normal span of life until he died again.

WHY GOD PERMITS EVIL

One of the “deep things” of the Truth is a knowledge concerning why God permits evil. Many in the world would like an answer to this question. The Bible explains that all the calamities, poverty, sickness, and evil befalling mankind, which finally culminate in that ultimate enemy—death—will eventually work to man’s everlasting benefit.

The Scriptures teach that a powerful contrast is to be soon experienced by mankind. After having had their experience with “evil” during this lifetime,

they will in due time be awakened from the sleep of death and brought forth into Christ's glorious kingdom to then experience "good." At the close of that period of being exposed to the benefits of living righteously, each individual will be able to make an intelligent decision in the choice offered them—to serve God and live, or to follow the Adversary and die. For the vast majority this will not be a difficult decision.

Christ taught us to pray for his coming kingdom, saying, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) During this period, God's love and mercy will be manifested to all mankind, and they will learn to prize those blessings which God will pour out freely. The kingdom will bring man close to God and to their Redeemer, Jesus Christ, through a correct understanding of their loving and wise characters. Through an understanding of God's plan as it unfolds to its climax, mankind will gain as full an appreciation of his wisdom, justice, love, and mighty power as is possible for human beings to reach. This will lead them to the point where they will praise and glorify the Heavenly Father's name forever!

Jesus, using a blind man as the basis for his lesson, said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:4) The "day" spoken of here refers to the earthly ministry of Jesus, during which he preached the "gospel of the kingdom" and performed miracles among the people as illustrations of blessings to flow to mankind at that future time. We read in Luke 8:1, "It came to pass, . . . that he went throughout every city and village, preaching

and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.” This was Jesus’ commission when he was upon earth. In addition, he had to lay down his life as a ransom for all. Thus, as he went about preaching and healing, he was also engaged in the process of sacrificing his life as man’s Redeemer.

The “night” mentioned in John 9:4 refers to the death of Jesus. For him, as for all mankind when they die, there is “no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” (Eccles. 9:10) Jesus knew his life was drawing to a close and that he must be diligent and zealous to do the work for which God sent him. There would be no more opportunity to bless mankind with the illustrations of good to come after he lay silent in the grave. This included healing all manner of diseases, which was a manifestation of the far greater healing work that will be performed in the kingdom by that Great Physician.

JESUS, OUR MINISTER OF RECONCILIATION

Jesus was our “minister of reconciliation,” making us right with God. The Apostle Paul said, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.” (II Cor. 5:17,18) Then, in verses 20 and 21, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*, Paul continued, “On behalf of Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors; as if God were inviting through us, we entreat, on behalf of Christ,—be you reconciled to God! For him who knew no sin, he made a sin offering on

our behalf, that we might become God's righteousness in him."

In the above verses is described the twofold work of Jesus on our behalf. First, he paid the ransom in order that we might be "reconciled" to God and justified—made right—in his sight. Second, during the three and one half years of his ministry, Jesus was made a sin offering for us by being developed, through his experiences, as a sympathetic High Priest. He was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" and was "in all points tempted [tested] like as we are. (Heb. 4:15) As a result of this twofold work of Jesus, we can be made part of the glorious family of God—sons of God—and receive the "ministry of reconciliation" now as Christ's "ambassadors."

Paul continues in II Corinthians 6:1, saying, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." If we have been accepted into the family of God by grace, having received justification to sonship with him, and are daily appropriating the benefits of his offering on our behalf as a sympathetic High Priest, we must be diligent in the work that is set before us. To be considered as "workers together with him" is nearly an incomprehensible privilege, and we certainly must not receive this grace of God in vain. Rather, we must be zealous and diligent to carry on this ministry of reconciliation to the best of our abilities, to the glory of God, "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed."—vs. 3

Returning to the account in John 9, Jesus stated, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (vs. 5) On another occasion he also said to

his followers, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:14-16) We have the same work to do which Jesus performed when he walked upon the earth. We must shine as lights, proclaiming the Gospel message, and heralding forth the glad tidings of the blessings that will occur during the Messianic age, when Christ’s kingdom is abroad upon the earth, and when “the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”—Isa. 26:9

We today cannot raise the dead or heal the sick, as Jesus did. However, we can spread abroad the Gospel with its good news concerning the time when all will be raised from the dead, and receive the ministry of reconciliation made available to them. The psalmist, when speaking of Christ’s kingdom, said that all mankind’s diseases will be healed, and their transgressions removed. (Ps. 103:3,12) All will possess the ability to “do his commandments,” “bless the LORD,” and “do his pleasure.” Having thus received the ministry of reconciliation made available to them in that day, all the willing and obedient will themselves become “ministers of his.”—vss. 20-22

JESUS HEALED THE BLIND MAN

After Jesus explained to his disciples that the blind man was not in his pitiable condition due to either his own sin, or that of his parents, he

proceeded to heal him. "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. . . . He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."—John 9:6,7

It is interesting to note that this healing of the blind man occurred on the Sabbath day. (vs. 14) In the Scriptures the Sabbath points forward to the kingdom, when Christ will be the Lord of the Sabbath. (Luke 6:5) However, this miracle affected only one man. Think of the billions, the world over, throughout the centuries of man's history, who have gone down—sick, suffering, and dying—into death.

The Lord did not plan only to heal the few which his gentle hands touched during his earthly ministry. His plan includes every child of Adam. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so [all] in Christ shall . . . be made alive." The account further states that God will give these resurrected ones "a body as it hath pleased him." (I Cor. 15:21,22,38) It would not "please" God to raise mankind from the dead with maimed and deformed bodies. As his gentle hands lift all members of the human race in their turn out of the grave, they will also be healed, and returned to life on earth with whole bodies and minds. Thus they will be in a condition to receive the glorious news that Christ's kingdom—the great Sabbath Day—will give them the first full chance they have had to truly know and love the Creator and his son, Christ Jesus, their Redeemer.

THE BLIND MAN'S PART

The blind man had a part to play also to make this miracle happen. He had to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He had to demonstrate his obedience, and his faith. On other occasions also, when people were healed by Jesus, a measure of faith had to be evidenced. For example, when healing the paralytic man, Jesus instructed him to demonstrate his faith by picking up his bed and walking, which he did, to the amazement of those gathered there.—Mark 2:9-12

The man who was blind is figurative of the blindness of the world. There are many blind in the world today, but very few who receive their spiritual eyesight. Soon there will be a day when all the blind eyes will be opened, and all the deaf ears will hear. (Isa. 35:5) As stated in the words of our opening scripture, the entire world is “sick” and “in need of the physician” to heal them of all their diseases—those of the body, the mind, and the character. This will be the glorious work of Christ’s kingdom.

At the present time, we who are among the footstep followers of Jesus have been blessed by being dipped in the pool of Siloam. We have been healed, not physically, but spiritually. Our ears have been privileged to hear, and our eyes to see, the beauties of God’s plans and purposes.—Matt. 13:16

The word Siloam means “Sent.” Jesus was the one sent of God to draw disciples after him to follow in his footsteps and carry on the work of preaching the Gospel throughout this age. Those who respond to this call draw nigh to the Lord—the Sent one—and there they receive the Holy Spirit of enlightenment and are healed.

THE NEIGHBORS

“The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.”—John 9:8-11

The blind man's neighbors might represent our associates, coworkers, friends or even family members. These may be skeptical when we tell them how our eyes have been opened by Jesus to receive spiritual healing, and when we give witness to them of the wonderful message of the Gospel of the kingdom for all the world of mankind. Not all men have faith at the present time to believe these things. However, some might be moved by our message, and come to Christ to present themselves a living sacrifice also and to be spiritually healed. Not many today will do this, but we are thankful that there will be a day soon when all men will be drawn to Christ, which we look forward to with eager anticipation and yearning.

THE PHARISEES AND “OTHERS”

The account continues: “They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees,

This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.” (vss. 13-17) Sadly, a variety of opinions were expressed, and interpretations given—some very critical—of what had happened, instead of a straightforward acceptance and belief in what everyone’s eyes had clearly seen. The blind man, however, realized simply that Jesus was a prophet.

Verse 18 states: “But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.” The Jews in general, and especially their religious leaders, had little faith in Jesus. They were particularly offended and enraged by the fact that many of his miracles were performed on the Sabbath Day. Being spiritually blind themselves, they did not realize that Jesus chose to heal on the Sabbath as an illustration of the greater healing work which he would accomplish during his Messianic kingdom—the Greater Sabbath Day.

THE BLIND MAN’S PARENTS

When the Jews called the parents of the man whose blindness was healed, “they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes,

we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.” (John 9:19-21) The Jews then went back to the man who had been blind, and said, “We know that this man [Jesus] is a sinner.” The man replied, “Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.”—vss. 24,25

Later, after the angry and frustrated Jewish leaders had cast the man out, Jesus spoke again with him, and asked, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” The man replied, “Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?” Jesus then said, “Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.”—vss. 34-38

There are many levels of understanding, or lack of understanding, in response to the message we preach, as shown in the various reactions to the healing of the blind man by Jesus. For the most part, however, the response to the Gospel message at the present time gives evidence of a lack of faith. Indeed, faith is a precious commodity in the world, and in order to be pleasing to God we must have full faith in him and his Son, as exemplified by the blind man of our lesson.

WHEN ALL EYES WILL BE OPENED

For all the promises of the Bible to be fulfilled, the exercise of divine power in the resurrection of the dead is essential. When Jesus was raised from the dead by his Father, he was highly exalted to the right hand of God. Another exercise of divine power which is a major factor in the plan of God is the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus' footstep

followers at the due time. This is spoken of in the Bible as the “first resurrection,” which we believe began to take place at the beginning of our Lord’s Second Presence. (Rev. 20:6) Upon the completion of the first resurrection, these faithful ones, having been raised to divine power, will administer from their heavenly position with Christ, the necessary blessings, guidance, and teaching in the restoration of mankind upon the earth as perfect human beings. This work, too, will begin with the raising of mankind from the sleep of death, “both of the just and unjust.” (Acts 24:15) Christ’s Messianic kingdom, the blessed period during which this restoration work is accomplished, is described by the Apostle Peter as “times of restitution of all things.” He informs us that this loving feature of the divine plan was foretold by all God’s holy prophets since the world began.—Acts 3:20,21

Only then will the true and living God, and his only begotten Son, Jesus, be exalted and worshipped by all mankind. At that time will be fulfilled the Apostle John’s prophecy, “Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, . . . and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Rev. 5:13) The throne is here used as a symbol of the Creator’s sovereignty over his creatures, and the lamb is a symbol of Christ, who meekly gave himself in sacrifice, that mankind might be restored to life.

We rejoice greatly that in due time both the Father and the Son will be universally recognized and acclaimed. Then all false gods, theories, and teachings will have been destroyed. The people,

gradually enlightened and restored to human perfection, will rejoice to worship and serve the true God, and by obediently doing so from the heart will themselves live forever in peace and happiness upon a restored and perfect earth.

The “pleasure” of the Lord referred to earlier in Psalm 103:21 is God’s great desire to provide for the redemption and recovery of the fallen human race from sin and death. The Great Physician, Jesus, has made this possible through his own sacrifice on Calvary’s cross. He became a “propitiation through faith in his blood”—that is, a satisfaction for our sins—and “not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (Rom. 3:25; I John 2:2) The Apostle Paul also wrote: “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”—I Tim. 2:3-6

This salvation of all mankind was pictured by Moses when he led the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, across the Red Sea, and eventually, under the leadership of Joshua, into the promised land of Canaan. When the world of mankind reaches the land of promise—Christ’s kingdom—and are released from their bondage to sin and death, their eyes of understanding will be opened, just like the blind man’s literal eyes. As they come to know and appreciate the love of God through Christ, the vast majority will willingly and joyfully take advantage of the opportunity for perfect everlasting life being offered to them.

THE HEAVENLY REWARD

A still more glorious opportunity has been offered to those who believe during the present Gospel Age. If faithful, these will be exalted to heavenly glory to be with Jesus and to share in the rulership of his kingdom. (Rev. 2:10; 3:21) It is to these that Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," and to whom he promised, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—Luke 12:32; John 14:2,3

How merciful is our God! He has made provisions for us, formerly the fallen sons of Adam, that we might now come into his family and be called the sons of God. In the kingdom we will, if faithful, have the privilege of being members of the Great Physician class—of working with our Lord Jesus to open all the blind eyes and to help mankind walk up the highway of holiness. (Isa. 35:5-8) May the kingdom soon come for which we have all prayed, and the great work of healing the world of mankind from all their diseases, both spiritual and physical. ■

"In Jerusalem there was at this time a man by the name of Simeon. He was an upright man, devoted to the service of God, living in expectation of the restoration of Israel. . . . He had been led by the spirit to go into the Temple, and when Jesus' parents brought the child, . . . he took him up in his arms, blessed God and said, Now, Lord, you are dismissing your servant in peace! . . . For with my own eyes I have seen your salvation which you have made ready for all peoples to see—a light to show truth to the gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel."
—Luke 2:25-32, Phillips Translation

“Mine Eye Seeth Thee”

“Job answered the LORD, and said, . . .

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.”

—Job 42:1,5

JAMES WROTE, “TAKE, MY brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience

of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” (James 5:10,11) We understand from these words of the apostle that God considered Job to be one of his holy prophets, and in his experiences there is encouragement for all the Lord’s people as, like Job, they find themselves passing through fiery trials.

We do not know very much about the historical background of Job. From Genesis 46:13, it appears that he was possibly a grandson of Jacob, and among the seventy souls who went to Egypt to be near Joseph and to be assured of a plentiful supply of food. If the Job of Genesis 46:13 is indeed the same one whom James identifies as a prophet, it

means that his ministry was performed prior to the giving of the Law, and that he was a descendant of Abraham. On the other hand, there are those who hold that Job was in reality a Gentile, although most all agree that he lived long before the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt.

However, the important things concerning Job are not his exact identity or the time he lived, but the manner in which the Lord dealt with him, and how he reacted to the providences of God in his experiences. The first verse of the book which bears his name, reads, "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God, and turned away from evil."—Job 1:1, *Revised Standard Version*

Job had a large family—seven sons and three daughters. He was wealthy, having "seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually."—vss. 2-5

This bit of information concerning Job's children, and his great concern that they would continue to enjoy the blessings of God, are a clear indication of

his own reverence for the Lord and desire to please him. He was indeed a man of God. Eventually, the time came when Satan set his heart upon destroying Job's faith and integrity. There was a meeting of the angelic "sons of God," and "Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."—vss. 6,7

Then the Lord asked Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" Satan replied, "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face."—vss. 8-11

The faith and loyalty of many of God's professed people throughout the centuries have been based upon the material good things with which the Lord blessed them. Many lack faith, and thus depend upon the things which can be seen and felt as evidences that God is blessing them with his love and care. Satan, with his corrupt heart, could not conceive of anyone serving God unless he was being well-rewarded for it by material advantages of one sort or another, and so he made this bold statement in an attempt to undermine the faith of Job.

However, God could read Job's heart, and he knew that he would maintain his integrity regardless of

any material blessings which he possessed, so he said to Satan, "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD." (vs. 12) With the Lord's restraining hand now removed, Satan worked quickly against Job, bringing evil upon him to the extremity of what God would permit.

The account of this reads: "There was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger to Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."—vss. 13-19

JOB REMAINED FAITHFUL

Seldom, if ever, has such a series of calamities come into the life of one individual. These events came without warning, yet Job was not turned away from the Lord because of the reports given to him. He was shocked and saddened, but instead of blaming God and bemoaning his lot, he said, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”—vs. 21

Satan was not satisfied, however, and he told God that if he would permit him to inflict personal harm upon Job, “he will curse thee to thy face.” God granted this permission, but with the stipulation that Job’s life would be spared. Again Satan acted quickly, and he “smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.”—Job 2:4-8

Then, almost unbelievably, a further severe trial came to Job. His wife lost her confidence in him, and said, “Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.” Job replied to his wife, “Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” The account says that “In all this did not Job sin with his lips.”—vss. 9,10

Three of Job’s friends, hearing about his trying experiences, arranged to visit and comfort him. The account states, “Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment

together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes from afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.”—Job 2:11-13

JOB’S COMFORTERS IN ERROR

The fact that these “comforters” said nothing at all to Job during the first seven days of their visit must have, of itself, been a trying experience for Job under the circumstances. In addition, however, when they finally began speaking with him, they revealed a general viewpoint which was not true. God was so displeased with what they had said, he finally told them, saying to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.”—Job 42:7

The concept these comforters had, and which they communicated to Job, was wrong. They insisted his sufferings were due to sin he had committed, and which he had not confessed to God nor to his fellows. In other words, they as much as accused Job of being a hypocrite, which added to him even greater sorrow. In this respect, Job’s experiences were somewhat like those endured by Jesus. While born as the Son of God, for the purpose of eventually being a king, these great realities concerning him were contradicted, and he was

finally put to death as a result of this “contradiction of sinners.”—Heb. 12:3

Not everything that Job’s comforters spoke concerning him was untrue. Eliphaz said to him, “Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.”—Job 4:3-5

This statement by Eliphaz indicates that Job was rather an important man in the land of Uz, a religious teacher and comforter to others. However, human weakness is much the same wherever we find it, and is present to one degree or another in all of us. It is true that while we do what we can to comfort others in their trials, when troubles come upon ourselves we may lose sight of the viewpoint we expressed to them. As a result, we wonder perhaps as to why the Lord is permitting us to experience so much suffering.

THE WICKED FLOURISH

In pressing the accusation that Job was suffering because of some gross but secret sin, Eliphaz said, “Who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.”—vss. 7-9

Job was not disturbed by this accusation, because he knew that it was not true. He understood that often the most wicked of the earth flourish. Malachi stated the matter correctly, saying, “Now we call

the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.” (Mal. 3:15) This was true in Job’s day. It is still a fact today, and will continue to be true until Satan is bound and the “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” are functioning. (II Pet. 3:13) Job’s way of stating this condition of the present evil world was, “The tabernacles of the robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure.”—Job 12:6

Pressing the charge of hypocrisy still further against Job, Eliphaz said, “Acquaint now thyself with him [God], and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.” (Job 22:21) This is a well-known text, but its setting in the Book of Job is usually overlooked. Here Job’s comforter is saying to Job that the reason he is not enjoying peace is because he is alienated from God through his sin, and he urges Job to go to the Lord and correct the situation.

It is not true that all who are acquainted with God are assured of continuously enjoying peace. Many, in their severe times of trial, are often troubled of soul. They do not lose faith in God, necessarily, even as Job did not lose faith. However, they are unsure at times as to why the Lord permits such bitter experiences to come to them, and in their perplexity they are unsettled and disturbed, even if for only a short time.

Following up this argument, Eliphaz continues: “Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. Then shalt

thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver. For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways. When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person. He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands.”—vss. 22-30

JOB’S REPLY

Job knew he could not “return to the Almighty,” for he had never left him, nor turned away from his fidelity to his God. He realized that, although the words of his comforter may have sounded on the surface to be reasonable, he did not have the right viewpoint. He knew he had not lost his wealth because he had departed from God. Job’s difficulty, however, was in understanding why God had permitted such severe calamities to come upon him. He felt that, although he had not departed from God, he had lost a measure of communion with him, and cried out, “Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!”—Job 23:3

Job explained how desperately he was trying to find the Lord. He said, “Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right

hand, that I cannot see him.” (vss. 8,9) Here Job is using figurative language. How well he pictures the experiences of many of the Lord’s people. In our deep trials and sorrows we often seek to know the meaning of God’s providences in our lives. In doing so we properly reflect on our own attitudes, and carefully examine our motives to discern if we may have erred.

In his perplexity, however, Job did not lose his faith, for in the next verse we find him saying, “He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” (vs. 10) Although Job sought a greater understanding of God’s providences, he knew the Lord was watching over him. He also realized that his bitter experiences were not evidences of the Lord’s displeasure, but merely that he was being tried. Job was confident also that in due time the trial would be over, and that by God’s grace he would triumph in it, and would “come forth as gold”—that is, he would stand the test.

GOD SPEAKS TO JOB

There was much discussion between Job and his comforters, and finally a fourth person joined them—namely, Elihu. He did not condemn Job as directly as did the others, nevertheless, he was of no special help to him. Then God spoke to Job directly: “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon

it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof?"—Job 38:2-6

God's questions to Job continue almost uninterruptedly throughout chapters thirty-eight through forty-one. Then Job answered the Lord and said, "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." (Job 42:2) This was the lesson which God was teaching Job by means of the many questions which he propounded to him. Job knew he had not committed gross sin which would justify the suffering that had come upon him. However, he had failed to sufficiently understand the greatness, power, and wisdom of the Creator in his attempt to discover the meaning of his experiences. Now Job realized that a God so wise and so great could, and did, have reasons for allowing certain experiences, and that these reasons would at times be far beyond his ability to understand. He understood that he should accept this fact, and upon the basis of faith, continue to serve the Lord and to rejoice in him.

How wonderfully Job learned this lesson! He said, as stated in our opening text, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." (vs. 5) Earlier in his experience, after lamenting the fact that his friends, his wife, and the servants in his household despised him, Job could say with confidence, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." (Job 19:25-27) He

had also prayed to God, "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, . . . that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!"—Job 14:13

In these statements of Job, he expressed his hope in the resurrection, and the belief that when he is restored to life in the flesh, he will then "see God." This, however, will not be literal sight, but an understanding of God such as he expressed as having come to him even before he died, when he said, "now mine eye seeth thee." What a wonderful experience that must have been for Job, and how he must have rejoiced that he had again found the Lord, could see him in his experiences, and more fully understand the meaning of his providences.

It will be in this sense that all mankind, during the thousand-year reign of Christ, will come to "see" the Lord. In Isaiah 25:6-9, where the Messianic kingdom is symbolized as a mountain, we are informed that in this mountain God will "destroy . . . the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations."

Job said that the Redeemer would "stand at the latter day upon the earth," and this is true. Christ Jesus is the great king and mediator who will rule and bless the people. In one of the symbols applying to him he is referred to as the "arm of the LORD," and concerning him we read, "The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."—Isa. 52:10; 53:1

Then, all mankind, having passed through the long nighttime experience of suffering and of death, mostly without benefit of any clear knowledge of God, will be able to see him in the rich experiences

of blessing which will come to all flesh at that time. Just as Job finally saw and appreciated God more clearly than ever before, this will also be the lot of all mankind—all those who accept the provisions of God's grace through the Redeemer, and who obey the righteous laws of the kingdom. ■

OBITUARIES

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to their family and friends in the loss of these dear ones.

Sister Evangelia Blatsioris, Salonica, Greece—October 31. Age, 87

Sister Celia Mitchka, Columbus, OH—November 22. Age, 94

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

DECEMBER 4—"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"—Luke 11:13 (Z. '01-271 Hymn 205)

DECEMBER 11—"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."—Proverbs 23:26 (Z. '01-324 Hymn 208)

DECEMBER 18—"The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."—Hebrews 13:6 (Z. '02-45 Hymn 307)

DECEMBER 25—"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2:10,11 (Z. '03-457 Hymn 345)

“I Wish I Knew What To Do!”

HOW OFTEN WE hear this statement made by those who are zealous for making known the glad tidings of the kingdom. May we suggest one thing that practically all can do is to send one or more *Dawn* gift subscriptions to their friends. Just think, one gift subscription means that *The Dawn* magazine enters the home twelve times during the year as your messenger of Truth. Isn't this something worthwhile doing? Each subscription is only \$12.00, and you can have three names entered for just \$30.00! It is simple to do when you use the coupon(s) below, and on the next page.

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SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below are invited by individual classes, or their services have been arranged by their home classes:

E. Blicharz

Atlanta, GA December 7

E. Kuenzli

Louisville, AL December 14

O. B. Elbert

Chicago, IL December 27,28

CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed by request of classes who sponsor them. So your convention can be placed in these columns in time, make your request in writing three months before the date of the convention to Dawn Magazine, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

IBADAN CONVENTION, December 6—Contact C. Egbu, #24 Fayemi Street opp. Coca Cola, Mokola, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Phone: 234-803-333-9949 or 234-808-214-6621 or Email: egbucaje@gmail.com

CHICAGO CONVENTION, December 27,28—Prisco Community Center, 150 W. Illinois Avenue, Aurora, IL 60506. Contact A. Schneider. Phone: (847) 533-1874 or Email: secretary@chicagobible.org

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, January 25—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91605. Contact J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 438-1086 or Email: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 13-15—Holiday Inn Express, 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821. Contact J. Freer, 8012 Vintage Way, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Phone: (916) 879-4655 or Email: shootingln@aol.com

NIGERIA SERVANTS SEMINAR, February 20-22—Uzi Obudi Agwa Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. Egbu. Phone: 234-803-333-9949 or Email: egbucaje@gmail.com

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 7-9—Howard Johnson Hotel, 230 West State Road 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. For room reservations, contact the hotel. Phone: (407) 862-4455. Specify “Florida Bible Students” for special rates, which expire on February 25, 2015. Other information, contact J. Wesol. Phone: (407) 921-9248 or Email: JerryWesol@hotmail.com

GREATER NEW LONDON PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 22—Location to be determined. Contact V. Grillo. Phone (860) 823-7099 or Email: millennialview@sbcglobal.net

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 28,29—Quality Inn-Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48083. For hotel reservations, phone (248) 689-7500. Specify “Detroit Bible Students” for special rate. Contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588 or Email: nemeshfp@aol.com

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 3-5—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. For reservations, contact S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 268-8170 or Email: srbt@juno.com

NEW YORK CONVENTION, April 12—DoubleTree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Contact A. Williams. Phone: (718) 261-3053 or Email: austin@osnetinc.com

*Christ is come! now let creation
from her groans and travail cease;
Let the glorious proclamation
hope restore and faith increase.
Christ is come! Christ is come!
Christ, the blessed Prince of peace.
Christ is come! Christ is come!
Christ, the blessed Prince of peace.*