



*THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT*

*THE GIFT OF GIFTS*

*THE PLAN OF GOD*

# Voice of Tomorrow Radio Programs

EVERY SUNDAY AT THE HOUR LISTED

Alexandria, La., KALB, 1240 kc., 8:15 A. M.  
(Saturdays instead of Sundays)  
Berkeley, Calif., KRE, 1400 kc., 9:05 A. M.  
Chicago, Ill., WJJD, 1160 kc., 9:30 A. M.  
Cincinnati, Ohio, WCPO, 1230 kc., 10:15 A. M.  
Columbus, Ohio, WHKC, 640 kc., 9:30 A. M.  
Dallas, Texas, KSKY, 660 kc., 10:05 A. M.  
Dayton, Ohio, WHIO, 1290 kc., 12:30 P. M.  
Detroit, Mich., WJBK, 1490 kc., 8:30 A. M.  
Joplin, Mo., WMBH, 1450 kc., 9 A. M.  
Kalamazoo, Mich., WKZO, 590 kc. 9. A. M.  
Los Angeles, Calif., KFWB, 980 kc., 6:15 P. M.  
Louisville, Ky., WGRC, 1370 kc., 8:15 A. M.  
Memphis, Tenn., WREC, 600 kc., 8:30 A. M.  
Alexandria, La., KALB, 8:15 A. A.  
New York, N. Y., WMCA, 570 kc., 9:30 A. M.  
Philadelphia, Pa., WIP, 610 kc., 9:30 A. M.  
Phoenix, Ariz., KOY, 550 kc., 10:30 A. M.  
Riverside, Calif., KPRO, 1440 kc., 3:15 P. M.  
Saginaw, Mich., WSAM, 1230 kc., 9:30 A. M.

Salem, Ore., KSLM, 1390 kc., 9 A. M.  
San Luis Obispo, Calif., KVEC, 1230 kc., 9:15 P. M.  
(Thursdays instead of Sundays)  
Seattle, Wash., KJR, 1000 kc., 8:45 A. M.  
St. John's Newfoundland, VPCM, 5:00 P. M.  
St. Louis, Mo., KXOK, 630 kc., 10:00 A. M.  
The Dalles, Ore., KODL, 1230 kc., 9:30 A. M.  
Toronto, Ontario, CKCL, 580 kc., 9:30 A. M.  
(Daylight Saving Time)  
Vancouver, B. C., Canada, CKMO, 5:45 P. M.  
Vancouver, Wash., KVAN, 910 kc., 9:15 A. M.  
Wichita, Kans., KFBI, kc., 9 A. M.

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## POLISH RADIO PROGRAMS

Akron, Ohio, WADC, 1350 kc., 7:45 A. M.  
Chicago, Ill., WCBD, 1110 kc., 8:45 A. M.  
Detroit, Mich., WJBK, 1490 kc., 8:45 A. M.  
Niagara Falls, N. Y., WHLD, 1290 kc., 8:45 A. M.  
Jersey City, N. J., WHOM, 1480 kc., 12:30 P. M.  
Spokane, Wash., KGA, 1510 kc., 12:15 P. M.  
Springfield, Mass., WSPR, 1270 kc., 8:30 A. M.

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## COMING CONVENTIONS

**HAMMOND, IND., Dec 7.** "We are happy to announce our one-day convention, sponsored by the Hammond, Indiana. and Cicero, Illinois, Bible Classes, on December 7. The sessions will be held in Hammond Civic Center, from 9 A. M. to 9 P. M. We ask our friends to bring their own lunch. Coffee and milk will be served. There are also reasonable restaurants nearby. The Hammond Civic Center is two short blocks west of U. S. Route 41, and in the 5600 block south."

**CHICAGO, ILL., DEC. 31 TO JAN. 4.** A five-day convention beginning New Year's Eve., with a Watch Night Meeting. All are cordially invited. Details will be found in "Talking Things Over," on page 32.

**PHOENIX, ARIZ., New Year's Week-end.** For information write the Secretary, Mr. C. F. Deppe, 733 E. Portland St., Phoenix, Ariz.

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## THE ENLARGED RADIO WITNESS

Each month it has been our privilege to announce new stations being added to the list, and in this we do rejoice; for the making known of the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom always does result in blessings to those who sacrifice to do it, as well as to those who hear. This month we are glad to report the following new programs, details of which appear in the general listing: Alexandria, La., Saginaw, Mich., Dallas, Texas, and Spokane, Wash.

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## CHRIST HAS RETURNED

This booklet presents an interesting and convincing summary of the wonderful ways in which the prophecies pertaining to Christ's thief-like return are now being fulfilled. Its Scriptural analysis of the manner of the second advent is revealing and reasonable. First copy free, additional copies five cents.

**The Dawn 136 Fulton Street Brooklyn, N. Y.**

# The DAWN

*A Herald of Christ's Presence*

Dedicated to the Promotion of Christian Knowledge in the Spirit of Tolerance and Good Will

Vol. 10, No. 3

DECEMBER 1941

One Dollar a Year

## THIS ISSUE

### THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

**The Plan of God**—An outline of some of the main features of the divine plan as they are set forth in the Scriptures for the guidance of the Christian. Illustrated. 2

### THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

**The Gift of Gifts**—A meditation prompted by the season's reminder of God's great gift to the world in the person of His beloved Son.

**The Unity of the Spirit**—A study of Paul's admonition to the Ephesians on the subject of Christian unity, and some of the difficulties of the Early Church in attaining to it.

**The Ministry of Sorrow**—This article is copied from the Watch Tower Reprints, and we trust that it will prove a great blessing to all who read it.

### DIVINE PLAN BEREAN LESSONS

<b>Will the World be Converted before Our Lord's Return?</b>	23
<b>The Right Hand of Power</b>	24
<b>Election Versus Free Grace</b>	24
<b>God's Grandest Gift</b>	25

### INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

<b>Christian Stewardship</b>	27
<b>The Coming of God's Son</b>	28
<b>The Christian's Hope</b>	28

### TALKING THINGS OVER

<b>Crowned with God's Goodness</b>	30
<b>Diversity of Service</b>	31
<b>Interesting Letters, Radio and Otherwise</b>	31
<b>Chicago New Year's Convention</b>	32

## NEXT MONTH

### WHAT THE LORD WANTS

An examination of some of the fundamental requirements of the Christian life as set forth in Micah 6:8 these being justice, mercy, and humility before God.

### THE YEAR BEFORE US

What should be the Christian's outlook for the year 1942? What will we need in the way of courage, and faith, and patience, and love and zeal, in order to meet the experiences of the year in a way pleasing to God? These are some of the points to be discussed in this article.

### THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD

A Voice of Tomorrow discussion in which Satan's offer to turn over the kingdoms of this world to Jesus is considered. In this discussion the question is raised and answered as to who the devil really is, and who created him.

### THE PLAN OF GOD

The article on the subject The Plan of God, appearing in this issue, is available in booklet form, at 5 cents each in any quantity.

### CANADIAN ADDRESS

We remind our Canadian readers that orders for literature, renewals, etc., may now be sent to The Dawn, Box 99, Adelaide Street Station, Toronto, Ontario.

# THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

## THE PLAN OF GOD

*IN THE year 1886 a student of Biblical teachings and prophecies, wrote a book entitled *The Divine Plan of the Ages*. In that book the author outlines from the Scriptures God's purpose to exalt the true church of Christ to "glory, honor and immortality," and to restore the earthly paradise in which mankind in general will live everlastingly in peace and happiness.*

*The carrying out of this program, the author revealed, called for the overthrow of the kingdoms of this world to make way for the kingdom of Christ. The worldly kingdoms of that time were mostly the church-state governments of the old world, nearly all of which have since then been destroyed. The overthrow of these has embroiled the nations in a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." In calling attention to these developments long years in advance, the book, *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, also shows that the final outcome will be glorious. The following article is a brief review of some of the salient truths as they are taught in the Scriptures, and so clearly set forth in *The Divine Plan of the Ages*:*

GOD has a plan! A plan for the rehabilitation of the human race. A plan which, when it is complete, will find the human race restored to perfection and living everlastingly in a world-wide Garden of Eden. In this plan are three worlds, and five ages, covering in all a period of seven thousand years—six of which are already in the past. In God's plan there is a heavenly calling for the footstep followers of Jesus, and regeneration to human life for mankind in general. For the work of the final age in this plan, there have been prepared princes for all the earth, who will get their instructions from Christ and His church, who will be spiritual kings. In short, this plan has everything in it that is required to bring everlasting peace and joy to a sorrowing world.

Yes, God has a plan! The assurance of this today, at a time when all human plans are failing, constitutes the only ray of light and hope there is in a world where security, peace and happiness are almost completely blacked out by human selfishness and aggression. This ray of hope becomes a definite assurance for the future when we learn from the Scriptures that its

success does not depend upon the good will and feeble efforts of the minority who still have faith in God, but upon His determination and ability to put it into operation irrespective of the selfish opposition of those who may wish to hinder it.

Most people are willing to agree that if the precepts of Christ, as taught in His Sermon on the Mount, were accepted by the world, lasting peace and happiness could be attained. But, say they, the problem is to get the world to accept these precepts. Human history teaches that selfish man is not likely to suddenly become altruistic and decide to adopt love as a governing motive in their affairs instead of selfishness. Flimsy, indeed, is the hope that by the force of arms, nations may be induced to obey the Golden Rule, and that in this manner a new world order of peace and happiness will arise out of the present debacle of human ambition and greed.

If, therefore, in God's plan we are to find a genuine hope for the future happiness of the human race, that plan must include adequate arrangements whereby it can be put effectively into opera-

tion. Its success must not be jeopardized by the possibility of selfish human manipulation, nor by the cold indifference of the unbelieving masses. The Scriptures assure us that the plan of God for the rehabilitation of the human race is implemented by divinely provided ways and means of guaranteeing its workableness and final success in bringing to the world the "desire of all nations."—Hag. 2:7; Zech. 4:6.

### God's Purposes Never Fail

The present tragic condition of world affairs does not mean even a temporary failure in the divine plan. It does mean a failure of what men have thought to be God's plan; and this failure should impress upon us the necessity of re-examining the Scriptures to discover our mistakes of interpretation that have led to hopes and expectations which are now being shattered by the cold reality of facts.

That false and unwarranted hopes have been entertained with respect to the purpose and progress of Christianity in the world is now clearly apparent to all who do not close their eyes to reality. The accepted thought in orthodox circles has been that the world was steadily getting better; that civilization has been progressing to increasingly higher levels of good will among men, and that soon fear and poverty and war will be no more. In this optimistic outlook of orthodox churchianity, there was envisioned also the possibility of all the heathen being converted to Christianity, probably within the lifetime of the present generation.

These false hopes and claims of Christendom began to be shattered with the outbreak of the first World War in the year 1914. But a supreme effort was made to rally the forces of civilization and righteousness from the result of that breakdown of human efforts to keep the peace. That war came upon the world as a surprise, but philosophically it was claimed to be a "war to end wars," and to

make the world "safe for democracy."

Following the Armistice of 1918, there was much talk about returning to "normalcy," but as we all now know, "normalcy" was never reached. After all conferences and negotiations failed, another bloody war began, and now it is recognized that there is no hope of the world returning to normal. The question today is, not how to return to normal, but what will be the nature of the new order.

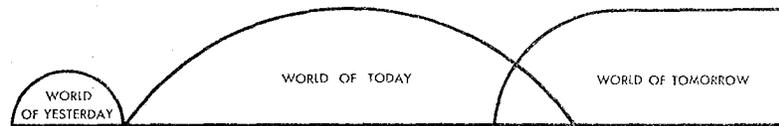
Meanwhile, during all these troublous years, instead of the people of earth being brought in increasing numbers into the churches of Christendom, the reverse has been true. Even in so-called civilized lands, the increase in church membership has not kept pace with the increase of population. Atheism has been on the increase. A spirit of worldliness still grips most of the churches. The youth are being turned out of our schools and colleges almost all of them without faith in God and the Bible. Missionary work has ebbed, and Hindoo philosophers from the Orient have flooded our own fair land, so that America is probably being converted to the mysticism of the East just about as fast as we are converting the East to Christianity.

We review these facts, not for the purpose of criticism, nor to imply that some one should have done better. This is no time for carping criticism of what others have been doing to make the world a better place in which to live. We merely wish to emphasize that somewhere along the line of human endeavor, irrespective of the degree of sincerity manifested, men and women have made a mistake as to the purpose of God. Had God wanted the world converted in this generation, it would have been converted. Had God's protection been over the pre-1914 institutions of earth, they could not have been destroyed.—Isa. 55:8.

Through the prophet, the Lord says, "My Word . . . that goeth forth out of My mouth . . . 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.) This means that irrespective of the distressing conditions throughout the world today, God's

plans, whatever they may be, are steadily and successfully progressing. The apostle says that "known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." (Acts 15:18.) This means that God knew what His plan would be for our time, and that there has been no miscarriage of that plan.—Isa. 46:9, 10; 14:24, 27.

That God does have a plan is clearly shown by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 3:11, where, according to the **Emphatic Diaglott** translation, he speaks of a "plan of the ages," a plan which has for its central feature, the redemptive work of Christ Jesus our Lord. That this plan embraces several ages is indicated in Ephesians 1:10, where



Paul speaks of things that will be done in the "dispensation of the fulness of times," and in Eph. 2:7, "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace . . . toward us." The work the apostle outlines to be accomplished when God's time comes to the full is said to be that of "gathering together in one all things in Christ." This means that at no previous time in the history of the human race should we expect to see "all" things in harmony with Christ.

Seeing then that the plan of God embraces various ages, or periods of time, and that not until the "fulness of time" does that plan reach fruition "in the reconciling of the world to God, through Christ, let us search the Scriptures to ascertain how God's plan in previous ages has been progressing toward its ultimate objective in the "fulness of times."

### THREE WORLDS

In St. Peter's second epistle, chapter 3, we are told of three "worlds." In this prophecy the apostle uses the Greek word *kosmos*, meaning an order of things. The first of these, he tells us, came to an end at the time of the flood; the second ends with the return of Christ; while the third, which is God's world, is "without end." (Ephesians. 3:21.) Above is an illustration of these three worlds,

embracing, as they do, three long periods of time.

In keeping with the modern use of language we might speak of these three worlds as the World of Yesterday, The World of Today, and The World of Tomorrow. The Bible uses the word "world" in the same way we do, not as referring to the planet upon which we live, but to an order of things among men, and sometimes as an age, or period of time. Much of the misunderstanding of God's purpose for the sinner-race has been occasioned by a failure to recognize this fact. For example, the Biblical "end of the world" has been misunderstood to denote the burning up of the literal earth, and all

things upon it. This has deterred many from an investigation of the subject.

On account of this misunderstanding of what is meant by the end of the world many have feared its approach, and therefore, have endeavored to project it far into the future. Others have looked upon it as a mere superstition of the dark ages, unworthy of being given any serious consideration. But when we realize that what the Bible speaks of as the end of the present world, means just what we now see taking place, and what the thinking people of our time refer to as the ending of a world, then the subject should take on an important, yea, a vital meaning to all who are interested in what the World of Tomorrow is to be.

The Bible uses the terms "fire," "earthquakes," "storms," etc., in the same pictorial manner in which they are used in current language to describe the catastrophic trouble that has come upon men and nations in this generation. Just as the Lord uses "wheat" and "tares" and "sheep" and "goats" to illustrate those who serve, pretend to serve or oppose Him; so He uses the terms "earth" and "heaven" to illustrate phases of organized society called "worlds."—Jer. 22:29.

Peter speaks of the heavens and the earth which were before the flood, indicating that they made up the "world that then was"—the

World of Yesterday. That world came to an end at the time of the flood, but the earth itself was not destroyed. Of the literal earth we read that it "abideth forever." (Eccl. 1:4.) In Isaiah 45:18 we are told that God did not create the earth in vain, but "formed it to be inhabited." This is a basic fact of truth which should be kept in mind as we trace, through the Scriptures, the outline of the divine plan. God's plan does not involve the transfer of the human race to another sphere of life, but its restoration to everlasting life upon the earth, his designed and original home.—Psa. 115:16; Isa. 65:21; Jer. 31:17; Deut. 11:21; Matt. 5:5.

The first "world," then, which began at the time of creation, ended at the flood. The second "world," according to the apostle, beginning after the flood, comes to an end in the beginning of what he calls the "day of the Lord." This day of the Lord is ushered in by the return of Christ, hence is referred to by Jesus Himself, as the "days of the Son of man." In this reference, Jesus explains that in the "days of the Son of man," conditions will be similar to what they were in the days of Noah.—Matt. 24:38, 39; Luke 17:26, 27; Gen. 6:11.

In the days of Noah, we are told, the people were "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, . . . and knew not" of the impending flood that was to destroy the "world that then was." Likewise, the Scriptures explain, the "day of the Lord" comes as a "thief in the night"—the people not being aware of the significance of events until the destructive troubles of that day bring about the overthrow of this "present evil world."—Gal. 1:4; 1 Thes. 5:2; Luke 21:35.

But the end of the World of Today will not mean the end of the human race. No, thank God, it will but mean the beginning of a new world, the World of Tomorrow—God's World of Tomorrow. One of the chief characteristics of the World of Yesterday and the World of Today, is that they have been based upon selfishness; and Satan, the arch enemy of God, has been their ruler. But with the ending of the World of Today, and the beginning of the World of Tomorrow, Satan will be bound, and that new world will come under a new, a divine rulership.—Rev. 20:1-4; 21:1-5; 2 Pet. 3:13; Isa. 65:17; Obadiah 21.

#### SELFISHNESS VS. LOVE

Under the leadership of Satan, the spirit of selfishness—self interest—became dominant at the very beginning of the World of Yesterday. Sin and selfishness continued to dominate that first world, with the result that just before it ended, the earth "was filled with violence." The same has been true of the World of Today. We are already, in fact, witnessing the dissolution of the present world, and its destruction is being brought about by the violence of the great time of trouble foretold by the prophet.—Dan. 12:1.

God's World of Tomorrow will be under the leadership of a new Ruler, Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. (Psa. 72:1-20.) His rulership will be upon the basis of love, rather than selfishness. This is the reason why the apostle speaks of that world as one "wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. 3:13.) The Satanic misrule of sin and selfishness has brought death, because the "wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6:23.) The Messianic reign of righteousness and love will bring life, for He must reign until all enemies are put under His feet, the "last enemy" to be destroyed being "death."—1 Cor. 15:25, 26.

When we keep before us the fact of these three worlds, and their varying characteristics, we can readily see that whatever the Bible might say about them would seem to be contradictory unless we apply its various statements to the period of time to which they belong. For example, of the present time the prophet says, "Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." But of the World of Tomorrow we read that then the "righteous shall flourish," and "all the wicked will He [God] destroy."—Mal. 3:15; Psa. 72:7; Acts 3:23; Psa. 145:20.

This method of studying the Bible dispensationally seems, in part, to be what the Apostle Paul refers to when he instructs Timothy to be studious in applying himself toward "rightly dividing the Word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) If, in our study of the Bible, we endeavor to apply its various prophecies and promises to the world or age in which they belong, we will find a simplicity, harmony, and beauty in its teaching which we did not realize exist-

ed. We will be able to see, also, why some have been led to say that the Bible is like an old fiddle on which any tune can be played; but more important than that, we will realize as never before why this old adage is not true. The Bible itself is harmonious, and all that remains in order to understand it, is for us to get in harmony with it.—John 7:17; Luke 11:9, 10; Jer. 29:13.

While the first two "worlds" mentioned by the Apostle Peter (2 Pet. 3:5, 6) have been under the control of Satan, the "prince of this world" (John 14:30), and full divine rulership in the affairs of men is reserved for God's World of Tomorrow, yet this does not mean that God has not been interested in mankind during all this time. On the contrary, throughout the ages, He has been steadily carrying forward the preparatory phases of His plan, thus getting ready to take over the reins of government and to bless "all the families of the earth" in His own due time—the "dispensation of the fulness of times."—Gen. 12:3; Eph. 1:10.

The work that God has been doing during the time that Satan has ruled over the masses of the people is shown on the accompanying diagram by the titles to the segments designated "ages." God's Word, His promises and instructions to His people, has contributed largely to the accomplishment of His work in the earth during all these various ages, and He has had a special work for each dispensation of His grace. There is nothing in the Scriptures to indicate that any important changes were made in God's methods of dealing with His people during the first world, the World of Yesterday.

During that time important promises were given. In Genesis 3:15 we are told that the "seed" of the woman would one day bruise the "serpent's" head. Through Enoch God promised that the Lord would come with myriads of His saints. (Jude 14.) In His dealing with Noah certain illustrations were provided which are of great value to us today in connection with the ending of the present world. However, it is not until after the flood that God's plans begin to open up with any great degree of clarity; although in the light of the divine plan as we can now view it as a

whole, what happened before the flood is very meaningful.

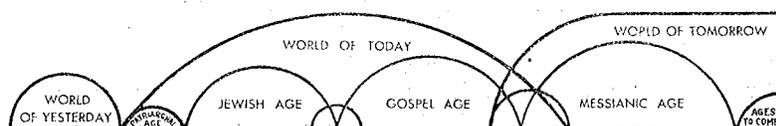
The first 656 years following the flood is designated the "Patriarchal Age," not because that particular expression is to be found in the Bible, but because the Bible clearly indicates that during this period God dealt exclusively with a few individuals who were known as the Patriarchs, or Fathers of Israel, until the death of Jacob and the founding of the nation of Israel in his twelve sons.

The work or plan of God during the Patriarchal age was not the evangelization of the people. He spoke to Abraham, and made won-

hence the only harmonious view we can take of the situation is that God plans to raise the Sodomites from the dead in order to bless them. This is exactly what the Prophet Ezekiel forecasts in the 16th chapter of his prophecy, from the 44th verse onward to the end of the chapter. See also Chapter 6 of **The Divine Plan of the Ages**.

#### The Promised Seed

The promise God made to Abraham during the Patriarchal age, was later confirmed by a divine oath. (Gen. 22:16-18; Heb. 6:16-18.) It was a wonderful promise in which God reveals His purpose to "bless all the families of the earth."



derful promises to him. God told him, in fact, that it was His purpose to bless all the families of the earth. This reveals God's interest in all humanity, but the people in general were not given an opportunity during that age to receive the promised blessings. In Isaiah 51:2, we are told that God called Abraham alone.—Gen. 12:1.

It was during the Patriarchal age that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of their wickedness, yet God made no effort to bring about the repentance of these wicked people. We know this from what Jesus tells us in the New Testament. The Master, who performed a powerful ministry in certain cities of His day, said that if the same mighty works had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah those cities would not have been destroyed, because they would have repented. Obviously, God must have been able to give the people of those wicked cities such an effective witness, had that been His plan; but He didn't do it. Rather, He destroyed them without giving them an opportunity to repent. Also, He promised a "more tolerable" time for them than those favored cities that refused to recognize Him and His mighty works.

On the other hand, we must conclude that these people were included in God's promise to bless "all" the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham,

It was confirmed to Isaac and to Jacob, and at Jacob's death, to his twelve sons, who constituted the nucleus of the nation of Israel. Abraham didn't understand the full significance of this promise. He did not realize, for example, that there were to be two seeds—a spiritual and an earthly—one represented by the stars of heaven, and the other by the sands upon the seashore.—Gen. 22:17.

Neither did Abraham understand clearly that there were two parts of the covenant which God made with him, one part providing for the development of the "seed," and the other for dispensing the promised blessings through that seed. Abraham doubtless thought that the miracle child, Isaac, was to be the promised seed, and he had so much faith in God's ability to fulfil His promises that he believed Isaac would be raised from the dead if he offered him up in sacrifice as God commanded.—Heb. 11:17-19.

In Hebrews 11:13, 39, and Acts 7:5, the apostle tells us that Abraham died without the promise having been fulfilled to him, yet while he lived he "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:10.) A city, to Abraham, was the center of a government, or a kingdom, so what he actually expected from God was that He would establish a Kingdom upon the earth in which his descend-

ants would occupy a prominent position. The promise made to Abraham was, indeed, one of the Old Testament promises of the coming Messianic Kingdom.

Abraham, as well as the other patriarchs of that age will have a very prominent part in the earthly phase of the Messianic Kingdom; and God's promises to them, and their obedient faith in them, had much to do with their preparation for that part. In addition to this, God's promises to, and His dealing with, the patriarchs constitute a very important role in the clearer unfoldment of His plans to His people of a later age. Viewed thus, we can see that while God made no attempt to convert the world during the Patriarchal age, yet He did perform a very important work in connection with His plan. God's work during that age, as always, was a grand success.

#### The Jewish Age

The Jewish age, as indicated on our illustration, began with the death of Jacob, and ended with the first advent of Jesus. The title, "Jewish age" is used to denote this period of time because it suggests the manner in which God continued the preparatory work for the ultimate establishment of His Kingdom and the consequent blessing of all peoples. During that time God dealt with a nation, the Jewish nation, and with none other. Through the prophet He declared to them, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth."—Amos 3:2.

God gave Israel His law. He sent His prophets to them. Through their priesthood He instituted the Tabernacle services which, according to the New Testament, foreshadowed the "good things to come." (Heb. 9:11, 23; 10:1.) God's promise to this nation was that if they were loyal to Him He would make them a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exod. 19:5, 6.) This meant that through them God would dispense His promised blessings to "all the families of the earth."

But Israel as a whole did not qualify for this high and honorable position in the divine plan. (Rom. 11:7.) When their Messiah came to them they rejected Him and as a result were cast off from this special position of divine favor. But God's work during the Jewish

age was not a failure. Paul tells us that the Law served as a "school-master" or pedagogue (R. V., "tutor") to bring the Jews to Christ. (Gal. 3:24.) The failure of the Jews to keep the perfect Law of God, and thereby to gain life, proved the necessity for the redemptive work of Christ. All nations will eventually learn the same great lesson; namely, the need of a Redeemer.

God accomplished other important things during the Jewish age. His dealing with Israel, and their successes and failures, serve as valuable examples and guides to Spiritual Israel of this age. The hundreds of promises made to Israel, through the prophets, constitute an outline of many of the important features of the divine plan, which serves to guide the followers of the Master in their preparation for joint-heirship with Him in the Messianic Kingdom. In other ways, too, the Jewish age work of God fills an important place in the divine plan for human rehabilitation. God's work during the Jewish age was not a failure, but accomplished its divinely intended purpose.

### The Gospel Age

The Jewish age came to an end at the first advent of Jesus. During His ministry and for a period of three and one-half years thereafter, divine favor continued with the Jews; and in keeping with this arrangement, Jesus confined His ministry, as well as the ministry of His disciples, to the nation of Israel until after His resurrection from the dead. Jesus said to His disciples, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."—Matt. 10:5, 6.

Following Jesus' resurrection He told His disciples to extend the ministry to all nations, but even then, they were to begin at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47-49; Matt. 28:19, 20.) According to a prophecy given by Daniel (Dan. 9:24-27), in which he speaks of the Messiah being "cut off" in the midst of a "week," there were to be three and one-half years of favor shown to Israel following the death of Jesus, hence the command, "beginning at Jerusalem." A "week" in prophetic time represents seven years on the basis of a year for a day.—Num. 14:33, 34;

Ezek. 4:6; Dan. 12: 11, 12; Rev. 11:2, 3.

So it was that, "beginning at Jerusalem," the work of the Gospel age began. This age continues until the second presence of Christ, which is also—as indicated on the diagram—the beginning of God's World of Tomorrow. The term "Gospel age" is chosen to identify this period of time between the first and second advents of Christ, because the Scriptures show that the work of God during this time is accomplished by a proclamation of the Gospel, or "Good News" of the Kingdom.

As already noted, during the Patriarchal age God carried on His work by selecting and dealing with certain individual patriarchs. During the Jewish age, His work was accomplished by dealing with the Jewish nation. But during the Gospel age God does not limit His favor either to certain outstanding individuals, as He did in the Patriarchal age, or to a single nation, as He did during the Jewish age; but has commissioned all who are His people to proclaim the glad tidings of the Kingdom throughout all the nations, and those who have responded to that message have been the ones upon whom God has bestowed His favor, by inviting them to participate in His plan of the ages.

What then has been the objective of God's work during the Gospel age? This question is answered for us in Acts 15: 13-18. Here we are told that God visited the Gentiles to take out of them a "people for His name." The Jews, as a nation, were to be this people, and a few of them did accept Christ, and, as many as did, to them "gave He power to become the sons of God." (John 1:12.) But in the divine plan this "people for His name" was to consist of 144,000—a sizeable number from some standpoints, but compared with the total of humanity, or even of professed Christians, it is, indeed, but a "little flock."—Luke 12:32.

In Romans 11:17-24, the apostle explains that Gentiles are able to come into the special privileges of this Gospel age because the Jews, as "natural branches," were broken off on account of their unbelief. This means that when these "people for His name" are selected from among the Gentiles they real-

ly take the places of the Jewish cast-offs in the original Israelitish program—the Natural, fleshly house of Israel losing this particular place of special favor. This is the reason why in Revelation 7: 4-8 and 14:1-3, we find the entire company of 144,000 represented under the Israelitish picture. And note specially, that here this "little flock" who are with the "Lamb" on Mt. Zion, are said to have the name of the Lamb's Father written in their foreheads. Thus are they shown to be a "people for His name"—that is to bear His name. In Revelation 19:7, this same company is pictured as becoming the "wife" of the Lamb, and in this way, also, they partake of the family name of their Heavenly Father. See also Rev. 21:2 and 22:17.

### God's Ruling House

In the light of the general testimony of God's Word, this "people for His name," gathered from among all nations by means of the Gospel is in reality God's ruling House. In Micah 4:1-4, we are told of the establishment of the divine Kingdom throughout all the earth, and this Kingdom (symbolized in the prophecy as a "mountain") is shown to be made up of the "Lord's house." All the hereditary ruling houses of this present evil world have, in reality, been family arrangements, through which, from generation to generation, the rulers inherited their "right" to rule.

So God tells us that His Kingdom is to be in the hands of a ruling house, which also is to be a family arrangement. The members of this family receive their right to rule by inheritance, and because they are a part of the family. It is not an earthly family, however, but a divine family. It is God's own family. The chief one in it is His "only begotten" and beloved Son, Christ Jesus. In addition to Jesus, those who follow in His steps are inducted into the divine family, becoming sons of God.—Col. 1:18; John 1:12; 1 John 3: 1, 2.

The apostle explains, further, that if we are sons, then we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. 8:16, 17.) All of these joint-heirs are promised a place in God's ruling house, and the very purpose of this Gospel age is the selection and preparation of those who, as members of

this royal family of heaven, are to "live and reign with Christ a thousand years."—Rev. 20:4; Psa. 2: 9; Rev. 2:26, 27; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3. See also chapters 5 and 14 of **The Divine Plan of the Ages**.

#### FIRST AGE IN NEW WORLD

With the work of the Gospel age complete, nothing stands in the way of the establishment of God's new World of Tomorrow. At the close of the World of Today, and the beginning of the World of Tomorrow, Christ's second advent takes place, first of all (so far as the world is concerned) "like a thief in the night." Christ first comes to receive His bride. (John 14:3; Rev. 19:7; 21:2; 22:17.) When His bride, or church, is united with Him in heavenly glory, then will be fulfilled the promise of Revelation 22:17, where we read that the "Spirit and the bride say, Come. And . . . take the water of life freely."

The first thousand years of the new world is designated on our diagram as the Millennial age. It will be during this thousand years that the church gathered out from the world during this Gospel age, shall reign with Jesus for the purpose of dispensing God's promised blessings to "all the families of the earth." (Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:27-29; Rev. 5:10; Matt. 19:28.) It will be during the Millennial age that the great plan of God will reach its glorious and victorious conclusion.—Eph. 1:10.

The order of the Millennial age blessings is suggested in the apostle's words of Acts 15:15-17, noted foregoing. After the "people for His name" are gathered from among the Gentiles, then comes the rebuilding of the "tabernacle of David," which is a promise of the restoration of Israel. (Ezek. 39:22.) Then follows the gathering of the Gentiles—"all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." This blessing of "all the Gentiles" follows the first "visit," which was merely to "take out of them a people for His name."

But before the Millennial age can be fully ushered in, the world must go through a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." (Dan. 12:1.) There is a transition period between the Gospel age and the Millennial age, just as there was a transition period be-

tween the Jewish age and the Gospel age. There is every reason to believe that we are now living in that transition period, and that the present distress of the world is a part of the "time of trouble" with which this age comes to an end.

Because church people generally have supposed that God intended that the world was to be converted during this Gospel age the present destruction of civilization is bewildering to them, and tends to destroy faith in God and in Christianity. (Jer. 8:15.) But when we realize that the work of this age has been merely that of gathering out from the world those who are to reign with Christ in the next age, then the present apparent failure of Christianity is understandable.

As a matter of fact, Jesus Himself strongly implied that when the time came for His second advent, there would be very little faith left in the earth. (Luke 18:8.) Paul prophesied that in the "last days" perilous times would come, and that men would be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." (2 Tim. 3:4.) In the parable of the Wheat and Tares Jesus made it plain that large portions of His professed followers would be mere imitation Christians, and that in the end of the age these denominational bundles of what one sincere clergyman called "baptized profession" would be destroyed.

This burning of the tares at the end of the age is what constitutes, in part, the great "time of trouble" with which the age comes to an end. But this does not mean that the work of the age has been a failure. God's work in this age, even as in all previous ages, has been a wondrous success. All His true "wheat" are finally gathered into the heavenly garner, and then they will "shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13:43.) To whatever extent, therefore, we may see what professes to be Christianity being destroyed, let us remember that nothing can happen but by divine permission, and that what might appear to us to be a calamity is but a preparation for the establishment of real Christianity during the thousand-year Kingdom reign.

#### The Edenic Paradise

Let us now trace the development of the plan of God from a

slightly different viewpoint. We have taken note of the great importance of the time element in the divine arrangements—how God's plan has developed from one age to another—and now we will examine the divine program as it relates to different planes of being, or spheres of life. When, in Ephesians 1:10, the apostle describes the completion of the divine plan in the "dispensation of the fullness of times," he declares that then all things will be gathered together under Christ, both those which are in "heaven," and those which are on "earth."

In the light of the divine plan as it is outlined in the Scriptures, we find that two salvations are involved, one a heavenly, and the other an earthly. A failure to take this fact into consideration when we study the Bible results in many apparent contradictions. Most of the promises of the Old Testament, and some in the New Testament, describe earthly blessings; while most of the New Testament promises, and those in the Old Testament, which speak prophetically of the church, outline a heavenly hope. It is necessary that we make the proper time application of these promises if we are to see the harmony that exists between them.

In diagram shown on next page have indicated two horizontal lines on the lower part running the full length of the three worlds. At the extreme left of the upper line, and at the beginning of The World of Yesterday, is a small pyramid. This represents Adam as he was originally created in the image of God. Adam was a perfect human being, of the earth, earthy. (1 Cor. 15:47.) He was commanded to multiply and fill the earth, and to subdue it—that is, to make the whole habitable part of this planet, earth, like the little garden spot God had provided for him, "eastward in Eden."—Gen. 2:8.

We emphasize that Adam was created to live on the earth, and that the earth was created to be man's home. (Isa. 45:18; Psa. 115:16.) Nothing was said to Adam about going to heaven. He was told that if he disobeyed God's law he would die. The reverse would also have been true—if he did not disobey he would not die. Had not Adam transgressed the divine law, the command to multiply and fill

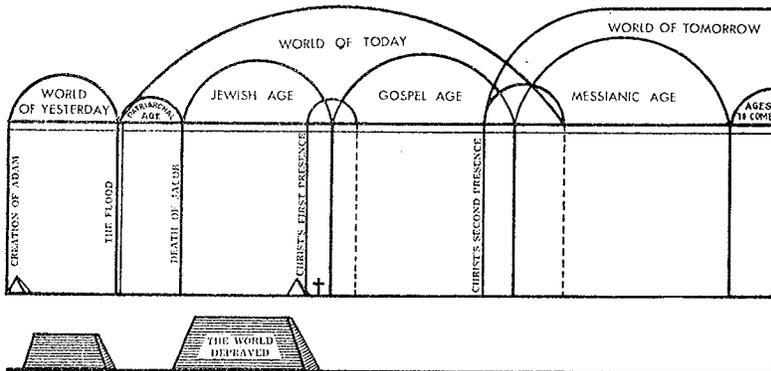
the earth and subdue it would have been carried out apart from sin, sickness and death.

In this event, Adam and his children would have continued to live on the earth without the fear of death. When the command to fill the earth had been fully complied with, this particular function of the human race would have providentially ceased, and the earth would have remained filled with a perfect and happy human family, enjoying God's full favor throughout the endless ages of eternity. But it didn't turn out this way, for Adam disobeyed the divine law,

resent the fallen and dying human race during The World of Yesterday, and The World of Today. During both of these worlds mankind has walked through the "valley of the shadow of death." The people in general have been "without God," and "without hope." They have been traveling over what Jesus describes as the "broad way" which leads to "destruction." —Matt. 7:13.

**The Corresponding Price**

Let us remember that when Adam sinned nothing was said to him about going either to heaven



and the foretold sentence of death fell upon him. But this does not mean that God's purpose in creating man had failed.

Now notice the lower horizontal line on our diagram. This represents the plane of sin and death. This is the plane of existence on which the human race has been born, and upon which human beings eke out a fitful existence for a few short years before they go the way of all fallen flesh, which is into the tomb.

It was through Adam's transgression that the whole human race has been born on this plane of sin and death, instead of on the upper plane of perfection and life. Paul explains that by one man's disobedience, sin entered into the world and death as a result of sin, so death has passed upon all men, because all have sinned. (Rom. 5:12, 19.) Adam fell to the plane of death as soon as he sinned, and it was upon this plane that he brought forth his children. Hence, they, too, were in the way of death, because the stream could not rise above its source.

The two incomplete pyramids on the lower line of the diagram rep-

resent the fallen and dying human race during The World of Yesterday, and The World of Today. During both of these worlds mankind has walked through the "valley of the shadow of death." The people in general have been "without God," and "without hope." They have been traveling over what Jesus describes as the "broad way" which leads to "destruction." —Matt. 7:13.

One of the Scriptural terms used in connection with the work of redemption is that of "ransom." Paul tells us that the "man" Christ Jesus gave Himself a "ransom" for all. (1 Tim. 2:6.) In this passage the Greek word translated "ransom" is *antilutron*, which means "corresponding price." The man Jesus, who died as the Redeemer on Calvary's cross, was an exact corresponding price for the perfect man Adam who sinned. Of Jesus it is said that He was "made flesh," and that the purpose of this was "for the suffering of death, . . . that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." —John 1:14; Heb. 2:9.

Now notice how this is illustrated on the diagram by the cross and pyramid located on the upper horizontal line just at the close of the Jewish age and the beginning of the Gospel age. At this point in the divine plan, the first advent of Jesus occurred, and the principal feature of the plan carried out by Him at that time, was the laying down of His life for the sins of the whole world. John the Baptist said of Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." —John 1:29.

Had there not been an additional preparatory feature of the divine plan to be developed, the work of God following the death and resurrection of Jesus would have been that of restoring fallen man to his lost estate—paradise. The message to believers then would have been, "Come, . . . take of the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17.) Through Jesus provision had been made for setting aside the sentence of death which passed upon Adam, and through him upon all mankind; so the next seemingly logical step would have been to begin the work of restoration.

But this was not the work that was started by the apostles at Pentecost. True, Jesus did heal a few of the sick of His day, and raised a few of the dead as an illustration of His future work. (John 2:11.) The Apostle Paul explains that these gifts of the Spirit given to the early church and by which the limited number of miracles were performed, were to "cease," or pass away. (1 Cor. 12:31; 13:1-3, 8; 14:18-20, 22.) Some since have claimed the ability to perform miracles in Christ's name, but the dead have not been raised, and only a pitifully small proportion of the sick have even claimed to have been miraculously healed; and these claims are of doubtful authenticity.

The disciples of Jesus were not promised health and everlasting life upon the earth. They were told, rather, that if they desired to be true disciples of Christ, they must expect to suffer and die with Him. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me," was the way the Master stated the matter to those who were desirous of learning the terms of discipleship. (Matt. 16:24.) One would suppose that if, as the Scriptures reveal, Jesus took the sinner's place in death, those

who believe on Him would not need to die. That will be true in God's World of Tomorrow, but during this Gospel age another phase of the divine plan of salvation is being developed, and that a most important one.

And what is that phase of the plan? It is the call and selection of the church of Christ, preparing its members to share with Him in the work of giving life to mankind during the Millennial age. This is described by the apostle as a "heavenly calling." (Heb. 3:1; Phil. 3:14.) Jesus alluded to it in His statement to the rich young ruler when He said to him that if he followed Him into death, he would have "treasure in heaven."—Luke 18:18-22.

**A PLACE PREPARED**

Jesus also alluded to the heavenly hope of His footstep followers when He made the promise to them, "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." (John 14:2, 3.) Peter refers to the heavenly hope of the church in the statement, "Unto us are given exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature."—2 Pet. 1:4.

Paul encourages Christians to set their affections on "things above." These things above, he tells us, are "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." (Col. 3:1, 2.) This indicates that the reward of the Church is to be the same as the reward of Jesus. This is also emphasized by the apostle, when he said, "If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."—Rom. 6:5.

In this latter text is the explanation of why the followers of Jesus in this age do not have perfect and everlasting human life restored to them—it is because they are invited to die with Jesus. In other words, the sacrificial work of the divine plan was not finished on Calvary. This is made plain by Paul in Romans 12:1, where we read "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service."

In Colossians 1:24, Paul speaks of "filling up that which is behind of

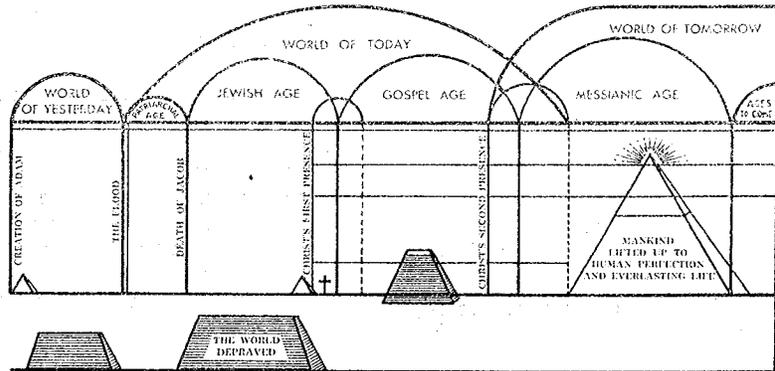
the afflictions of Christ." Other passages represent the church in a role of sacrifice, laying down life itself in doing the will of God. It is this sacrificial work of Christians that the apostle speaks of as being "planted together" in the "likeness" of Christ's death. Jesus did not die under condemnation, as a sinner. He died sacrificially, as a willing offering for sin. His death provided for the legal cancellation of Adam's sin, and through Adam, the hereditary sins of all mankind.

**JUSTIFIED THROUGH CHRIST**

How then, some may ask, could the followers of Jesus die in the

plan. It will be noticed that the church of this Gospel age is represented as above the plane representing human perfection. This incomplete pyramid is intended to illustrate the professed Christian church, rather than merely those whom God considers real Christians. For that reason, a portion of it is shown below the line—that is, those who are merely "hangers-on." We refer the readers to chapter 12 of **The Divine Plan of the Ages**, for a further explanation of this point.

Those who compose the true church of Christ—whose names are



same way that He died? Are they not members of the fallen race, under condemnation to death, the same as all mankind? They were such, but the Scriptures tell us that following the resurrection of Jesus, He appeared in the presence of God for us. (Heb. 9:24.) This means that the merit of His sacrifice releases from condemnation all of His consecrated followers, so that their death is no longer looked upon by God as one of condemnation, but one of sacrifice.

In Romans 6:11, Paul tells Christians that they may "reckon" themselves to be "dead indeed unto sin," just as Jesus "died unto sin"—that is, as a sin-offering. This doesn't mean that the sacrificial work of the church is needed to provide redemption for mankind. This was all accomplished by Jesus. What it does mean is that God accepts the sacrifices of the church as though they were the sacrifices of perfect human beings, and that through these sacrifices, the church is prepared to work with Jesus in the Millennial age as the dispensers of life to all mankind.

The above diagram illustrates this important phase of the divine

"written in heaven"—are those who have been called out of the world and assured that, through the blood of Christ, their imperfect works are acceptable to God. Upon the basis of their willingness to sacrifice earthly life, they are promised a heavenly reward. Thus they travel along the narrow way of sacrifice that leads to glory, honor, and immortality.—Matt. 10:39; Rom. 2:7.

It is to the church that the hope of immortality is given. Adam was not immortal, because to be immortal means to be death-proof. Man will not be immortal when restored to perfection at the end of the Millennial age, but all true, faithful Christians of this Gospel age will finally be exalted to immortality. They will be made like Jesus is now, an exalted, heavenly being; and they shall see Him as He is, and be with Him in the Kingdom, and reign with Him a thousand years. (1 John 3:2; Rev. 2:26, 27; 5:10; 20:4, 6.) See **The Divine Plan of the Ages**, chapter 10.

**PARADISE RESTORED**

When the work of this Gospel age is complete, and all true Christians are united with Jesus in the heavenly phase of the Kingdom, then

will begin the work of restoring mankind to life upon the earth. Notice the large pyramid in the Millennial age section of the diagram, and that it is based on the line representing human perfection. It was on this plane that Adam was created. It was from this plane that he fell. It will be to this plane that he will be restored during the thousand-year reign of Christ and the church.

The Apostle Peter speaks of this work of the Millennial age as being that of "restitution," and he tells us that it was spoken by the mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:19-21.) It is these testimonies of the holy prophets that describe the earthly blessings of life that will come to mankind following the Second Coming of Christ. The fulfillment of these earthly promises must wait until the completion of the church of this Gospel age, who are gathered to Christ on the heavenly plane—the place prepared for them by Jesus.—John 14:1-3.

This Gospel age work completed, then will follow the work of gathering mankind in general under Christ, not upon the spiritual plane, but upon the earthly. Thus will be gathered in one, all things under Christ, "both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." (Eph. 1:10.) The gathering of the church started in the beginning of the Gospel age, is to be completed, and the whole church united with Christ in glory, at the beginning of the Millennial age, hence we are told that in this "dispensation of the fulness of times" both the heavenly and earthly gathering unto Christ will be accomplished.

#### EARTHLY PRINCES

First to be restored to earthly perfection and life will be the ancient prophets. They were the Fathers of Israel, but will become the children of the Christ, and will be made "princes in all the earth." (Psa. 45:16.) Jesus said that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets would be looked up to as the instructors of the people during that Kingdom period. (Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28-30.) These will be the earthly representatives of the divine Christ, and will have committed to them the task of administering the laws of that new Kingdom.

These earthly representatives of the divine Christ will be backed up

by miracle-working power so that there will be no opportunity to successfully avoid the laws then imposed—which will be the laws of Christ. We are told that it shall then come to pass that "every soul which will not hear [obey] that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:23.) Those who do conform to the laws of the Messianic Kingdom will not need not die. They will be restored to the perfection that was lost by Father Adam, and upon the basis of that earthly perfection will have the opportunity of living upon the earth forever. This is what is meant by the term "restitution," as used by the Apostle Peter, and the term "regeneration," as used by the Master.—Matt. 19:28.

In the hundreds of Biblical promises pertaining to the blessings of restitution which are soon to come to the world, we have an outline of the many ways in which it will result in the happiness of the people, and the solving of their problems. We are told that the knowledge of God will fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea. We are told that the Lord will turn to the people a pure message enabling all mankind to "call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent."—Zeph. 3:8, 9.

We are told furthermore, that then the law of God will be written in the hearts of the people. This is descriptive of one of the ways in which man will be restored to the perfection which he lost when Adam transgressed God's law in Eden. This writing of the divine law in the hearts of the people will require assistance from God. Miracle-working power will then be available to help those who need help and who put themselves under the jurisdiction of Kingdom regulations.

Of that time we are told that the people "will learn righteousness." (Isa. 26:9.) They will also learn to know the Lord, whom to know aright is life eternal. (John 17:3.) Satan will be bound during that time, and all evil influences will be restrained. (Rev. 20:1,2.) The way back to life will be made so plain that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."—Isa. 35:8, 9.

How different that will be from conditions now encountered by Christians! These latter are walking in the "narrow way," which is

hard to find, and those who find it and walk in it are tempted and tried at almost every step of the way. (Matt. 7:13, 14.) God, of course, helps them, and their reward is exceeding great. But when the restitution "highway" is opened up the trials of this age will have ended, and mankind will be given every necessary help that they may return quickly and completely to perfection and everlasting life upon the earth.

This, then, is God's plan for the World of Tomorrow. Six thousand years of preparation are now in the past. "Michael," the King in God's World of Tomorrow, has already stood up and His return to take unto Himself His bride and to assume His Kingly authority over the nations, is resulting in a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation," (Dan. 12:1.) This trouble, while distressing, is preparing the world to accept their new King, His presence not yet being recognized and acknowledged by them. But when His glory shall be revealed, "all flesh shall see it together."—Isa. 40:5.

From Jerusalem the "increase of His government and peace" will gradually extend until it embraces all nations, bringing them joy, peace, and everlasting life. (Isa. 9:6, 7.) When the nations of earth become more fully humbled than they are today, they will say, "Come, 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." When they are thus taught of the Lord's ways, they will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."—Micah 4:1-4; Isa. 2:2-4.

Yes, God has a plan, and throughout the ages it has been progressing steadily to completion. Now we are at the threshold of the "dispensation of the fulness of times," when the grand finale of the divine plan will be enacted for the blessing of all nations with peace and happiness and everlasting life. That finale of the divine plan will be God's answer to the Christian's prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6:10.

If we know of God's plan, and what it will soon mean to a dis-

(Continued on page 33)

# The Christian Wife

## The Gift of Gifts

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

THIS is the season of the year when a large part of the world, in a vague sort of way, commemorates the birth of Jesus. We say it is in a vague sort of way, because, while there is much celebration of the event, and the term Christmas (Christ's mass) is on the lips of millions, yet the real significance of what is supposed to be the origin of the gayety is almost wholly unknown. Actually, of course, the 25th of December is not the true anniversary of Jesus' birth—the more nearly correct date being about the first of October—but consecrated followers of the Master are always glad for opportunities to glorify the Lord, and they rejoice in the privilege of praising Him for this marvelous gift at any and all times of the year.

The celebration of Christmas, as a feast day, or holiday, is participated in by countless millions who do not believe in Christianity. This is true even in what is left of the so-called civilized countries of the world. Active faith even in the nominal concepts of Christianity was probably never at a lower ebb than right now. In Great Britain, only eighteen per cent. of the people are regular church attendants. In this country the percentage is only a little higher, yet practically a hundred per cent. of the people will enthusiastically join in the celebration of Christmas. The reason is that it affords an opportunity for a brief respite from the almost entirely selfish outlook now inciting so large a degree of individual, national, and international hatred throughout the world.

There is a "good cheer" spirit associated with Christmas which is wholesome. For this short period in the year, at least, many get the idea that they should try to love their neighbors, and during the brief time that this spirit prevails we are given a partial glimpse of what will be possible in the way of human happiness when the true spirit of Christ is controlling the hearts and lives of all mankind three hundred and sixty-five days of every year. This is a hope that only the truth-enlightened can enjoy in these dark days when the "present evil world" is being destroyed.



To those who know the truth of God's plan, and know of God's love as it is revealed through that plan, this is a good time to be reminded that all the blessings we enjoy, both spiritual and material, represent the bounties of our God who is the greatest-of-all givers of gifts. God is love, and one of the principal ways in which He manifests His love is by His gifts. Many of His gifts are bestowed impartially upon both the evil and the good. The sunshine and the rain are among these. Others of His gifts are reserved for His special friends—those who have become His friends because they have manifested confidence in Him, and a sincere desire to serve Him.

### RECOUNTING GOD'S BLESSINGS

The greatest blessings accrue from God's gifts when they are accepted as from Him, and He is given the glory. Indeed, the greatest of all His gifts—Christ Jesus—cannot bring the full and permanent blessing except upon the basis of acceptance. The Heavenly Father gave His Son in order that those who believe on Him might have life; and unless, through belief, either now or hereafter, this gift is accepted, it will be of no permanent value. While the unenlightened and unregenerate world will celebrate Christmas by "surfeiting and drunkenness" in many instances, appreciation of Jesus, the greatest of all gifts, can be best manifested by a whole-hearted acceptance of Him, and consecration to walk in His steps. And after all, it is only with such that God is specially dealing at the present time. True, "He loves the world of sinners lost, and ruined by the fall," and that love is revealed in His Word, through the divine plan for enlightening and blessing the people during the Kingdom age now dawning; but now the saints are His peculiar care, and upon them He is showering the gifts of His love throughout the year. What rejoicing should be ours as we pause to examine these gifts, and to note how valuable and wonderful they really are!

In countless homes throughout the world, benevolent parents will rejoice over their children as they watch them open their gifts and express their

joy and appreciation as they discover what the various packages contain. This childish delight and appreciation might well represent the humble appreciation we should manifest to our Heavenly Father, as we examine and re-examine His gifts to us. Referring to little children, the Master said, "Of such is the Kingdom of heaven." Should not the manner of children in joyful appreciation of their gifts, teach us to manifest our gratitude to God, and show forth the childlike disposition which Christ commended to those who would be worthy of a place with Jesus in the Kingdom?

As already noted, the greatest of all God's gifts is the gift of His beloved Son to be the Redeemer of both the church and the world. How much do we appreciate this gift? And how are we manifesting our appreciation? Genuine appreciation for gifts is displayed in their proper use. Our appreciation of the Redeemer, therefore, is shown in the manner in which we accept Him. A certain degree of appreciation would be manifested simply by our acknowledgment of the need of a Redeemer, and a mental assent to the fact that Jesus fills that need. But this is not full acceptance of the gift.

In order to fully accept the Redeemer, we must, as Jesus Himself explained, "eat" His flesh, and "drink" His blood. Such an appropriation of the gift is possible only through a full consecration to do God's will. This means that we not only accept Jesus as our Redeemer, but that we look up to Him as our Guide, our Head. It means, furthermore, that we follow in His footsteps of sacrifice and suffering which lead to death. This is the only way in which anyone can wholly accept God's greatest gift during this age. And only through such an acceptance and use of the gift, can we manifest true appreciation for it.

Some may say that the greatest of all God's gifts is the gift of life, and in one way of looking at it, that is true. Certainly without life, no other gift of God could be accepted and enjoyed. But life itself, so far as the human race was concerned, had been forfeited because of sin. In order for it to be restored, the gift of the Redeemer was necessary. God is the fountain source of all life, and could bestow it upon His creatures without sacrifice to Himself. But when man sinned, and thus proved unworthy of the life which the Creator had provided, a propitiation for sin was necessary before life could be restored. To make provision for this God gave His Son, at great sacrifice to Himself, in order that the world might have life.

Viewed thus, from the standpoint of the cost of the gift to the giver, we have the most outstanding manifestation of God's love in the gift of His Son. Here then we have the greatest of all gifts, and a

reminder of the great attribute of the divine character which prompted it. "God so loved . . . that He gave," is the way the text reads, and what He gave was at great cost to Himself. If we accept this gift, and accept it in the spirit in which it was given, we will want to manifest our appreciation by what we give; and nothing short of giving all we have can suffice to show adequate appreciation for such "love divine, all love excelling."

#### THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Another important gift which the Heavenly Father bestows upon His children is that of the Holy Spirit. Jesus tells us about this, saying, "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.) Here Jesus indicates that the gift of the Holy Spirit is withheld until we ask for it. The reason for this is plain. No one could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit unless he earnestly desired it and prayed for it. And it follows, also, that asking merely with the lips would not bring this gift. Such a request must be so genuine that the whole being is brought into harmony with it and is prepared to receive it.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God—His mind, His disposition. It is the spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, brotherly kindness, mercy and sympathy. It is also the "spirit . . . of power . . . and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7.) It is, in short, all those qualities which are exemplified in God, and revealed to us through the truth. By this Spirit we are begotten to a new hope of life. By it we are anointed to be ambassadors for Christ. By it we are sealed unto the day of deliverance. This same Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. Through the written Word it teaches, guides, comforts, strengthens, and inspires us.

From this we can see that to ask for the Holy Spirit implies that we want to get rid of our own selfish spirit. It means then that as a prerequisite to our successful asking for the Holy Spirit, we must renounce self-will, and present ourselves in full consecration to do God's will. If we truly desire to be filled with God's spirit, it means that we want to be like Him. It means that we will want so much to be like Him that we will do all in our power to be emptied of self, and the spirit of selfishness, that we may be filled and controlled with the divine spirit of love.

Such an infilling of the Holy Spirit cannot take place all at once, nor in answer to a single request. We must continue to pray for the Holy Spirit, and continue to prepare ourselves to receive it. The chief burden of all our prayers should be that the Spirit of God may take fuller control of our lives;

and we should ever strive to be more completely emptied of self. There is nothing that more effectively stands in the way of being filled with the Spirit of God, than the spirit of self—self-will. If we want our way in everything, then God can have His way in nothing, so far as we are concerned. If we want Him to have His way in everything, then the gates of our hearts are open for Him to come in and control our lives. Thus a sincere prayer for the Holy Spirit is a request for God to control our lives.

In order to be filled with the Holy Spirit it is necessary to do more than empty ourselves of self. Such a preparation alone would leave the way open to be filled with some other spirit. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must not only renounce our own will, but we must accept in its place the will of God. To accept His will, and be filled with His Spirit, we must make use of the means He has provided. In addition to praying for His Spirit, we must study His Word. God's written Word is the channel of the Holy Spirit through which it flows into our hearts and lives.

God's Spirit inspired the writings of the Old Testament. God's Spirit came upon Jesus and inspired His ministry of precept and example. God's Spirit inspired the apostolic messages of the New Testament. In short, the Bible itself is the product of the Spirit of God; and, as we study it and surrender our wills to its sacred influence, we partake of that Spirit. What a wonderful provision God has made for us in His Word! How could we know Him, hence desire to be like Him, unless He had revealed Himself to us through His Word? May we daily become more appreciative of this "boon most sacred from the Lord"—the Word of Truth.

#### SHOWERS OF BLESSING

In addition to these outstanding gifts, the Heavenly Father is daily showering His people with blessings, the extent of which is limited only by our appreciation and preparation for them. He gives us joy—the joy of faith, the joy of service, the joy of fellowship, the joy of communion with Him. He gives us "grace to help in time of need." He blesses us with divine guidance. He forgives our shortcomings. He gives us wisdom and understanding. In short, He supplies all our needs. If He sees that we need trials, He gives them to us also. "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." (Psa. 84:11.) We cannot fully appreciate what it means to dwell under such a canopy of divine love and protection. We cannot fully appreciate how rich we have been made by the blessings He so unstintingly metes out to us day by day. We are truly objects of grace divine.

What can we do in return for such grace? In our association with each other, we sometimes feel under obligation to bestow a gift where one has been given to us. Is there anything we can give to God that will compensate Him for what He has done for us? Surely there is nothing He needs in the way of material wealth. The cattle on a thousand hills are His; yea, the whole universe is His. He does not give solely with the motive of getting something in return. He gives because it is His nature to give. God is love, and because He is love, He gives. However, He does expect of His intelligent creation that, recognizing this divine principle of love, it should produce in them a ready response to His call.

While this is true, yet God makes it plain that there is a gift that we can bring to Him which He will treasure very highly. It is something that He could not have unless we give it to Him, and that's why He treasures it so highly. He invites us to present this gift to Him, even as we ask Him to give us of His Holy Spirit. His invitation is, "My son, *give Me thine heart.*" (Prov. 23:26.) God has the power to create the universe, and to destroy it, if He wishes. He is the source of all life, and whole nations to Him are but the small dust in the balance. But by His own law He will not interfere with our right to choose, our free moral agency. Hence, while He might destroy our lives, He cannot have our hearts unless we give them to Him.

But how God values the gift of our hearts when we do give them to Him! In the parable of the Lost Sheep, we are told that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. This "one sinner" in the larger lesson of the parable is probably the entire human race, and the lesson reveals the joy in heaven when those who oppose the divine will, finally decide to be obedient to it. Not many human beings in all the six thousand years of human rebellion have returned to God and given Him their hearts.

To give God our hearts means that we will seek to know and to do His will. It means that the doing of His will thenceforth will be the uppermost ambition of life. If we give God our hearts without reservation, it will mean that no "heart strings" have been left attached to the things of the world or of the flesh, to be pulled at by the desires of the flesh or the influences of the world. When we give God our hearts, we give Him all we have that is of value to Him, and its value to Him is in the sense that it is a "whole-hearted" gift.

Let us then, in giving our hearts to God make sure that our heart strings are attached to Him. And, let us ask Him to pull on those strings that we may be brought ever closer to Him. Yes, brethren, may our hearts be so fully given over to

the Lord that we will be glad to be drawn ever nearer to Him, even though it be by means of very severe trials. To the extent that we carry out the terms of our consecration we should find the heavenly things pulling more and more strongly upon our heart strings; while the things of earth should be losing their appeal to us, and their power over us.

If our hearts, our affections, are set on things above, our treasures will be there also. Thus, although we are still this side the veil, we will be walking in newness of life. Our hopes, our aims, our ambitions all will be new. Our work will be the work of God, and not our own work. Indeed, we will be co-workers with God, for He will be working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure, while we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

#### THE CHEERFUL GIVER

There is considerable cheer connected with Christmas giving. Some of it is genuine, and some of it isn't. Real joy comes from giving in the proper spirit. It is more blessed to give than to receive, the Scriptures tell us. This is specially true in connection with what we give to the Lord and to His service. Giving to the Lord should be cheerful giving, else it can't be very acceptable to Him, "for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9:7.) Not merely with respect to money matters is this true, but in connection also with all the little sacrifices and offerings we make to Him and His cause.

If we would be pleasing to the Lord we must bring our lives more and more into harmony with that attitude which He approves. There should be

heartiness, cheerfulness, promptness and zeal in every service we render. We cannot grudgingly serve the Lord and expect to be pleasing to Him. If we have thoroughly learned what a privilege we of this Gospel age have of laying down our all on the altar of sacrifice, in the assurance that it will be acceptable through Christ to Him, we should, indeed, rejoice in that privilege.

If our vision of God as *the greatest* of all givers, is clear, we will permit nothing to stand in the way of our knowing Him better and serving Him more faithfully. His love—manifested in all His wondrous promises, and revealed in His tender day by day care for us—should be constantly affecting our hearts and lifting us up to the higher table-lands of communion and fellowship with Him. Thus, seated in the heavenly places with the Father, and with Christ Jesus, and with the brethren, our lives will be all sunshine; not because we will have no trials, but because we have learned to know that God's will is best for us even though He wills that we have these trials. If our hearts are fully and cheerfully given to Him, we will be able to trust Him, even though He slay us, knowing that in the end He will bring us forth as gold; and that finally, by His abounding grace, we will be a diadem of glory in His loving hand.

Happy are we then, dear brethren, if this season of giving finds us more than ever appreciative of God's great gift to us—in fact, of all His gifts to us. And our joy will be increased, if we are keeping our sacrifices upon the altar, and particularly if our hearts are being drawn closer and closer to the Lord, and our lives filled and controlled ever more completely by His Spirit.

## The Unity of the Spirit

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."—Ephesians 4:2, 3.

IN OUR text the apostle makes it plain that "unity of the spirit" is possible only where there exists among Christians an attitude of lowliness and meekness, mingled with a longsuffering which enables us to bear with the imperfections of each other because we love them as fellow-Christians in the body of Christ. Where these elements of Christian character are lacking, there will be no unity of the Spirit. On the other hand, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and love, could not, apart

from other considerations, produce the "unity of the Spirit" of which the apostle here is speaking.

In addition to possessing these fundamentally necessary elements of Christian character, they must be practised upon the basis of, and in harmony with, our knowledge of the fact that "there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Verses 4-6.) This would indicate that the "unity of the Spirit" of which Paul is speaking, is based upon a large degree of unity of knowledge. It isn't difficult to realize why this is so. A group of individuals whose aims and efforts are akin, will find themselves drawn together in a common interest. This is true in every line of endeavor, and

in the circles of Christian endeavor, the same principle holds true.

We should all give heed to Paul's admonition to keep the "unity of the Spirit." The church at Ephesus had special need for it, as the epistle shows. It was in the fact that some in the group—and this was more or less true among all the early Christians—had formerly been Jews, and some had come into Christ from among the Gentiles. This is clearly shown in chapters two and three; and in these chapters the apostle explains that in Christ they had been raised up "together," that the Gentiles who had been "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise," were now made nigh by the blood of Christ. Peace had been preached, the apostle says, to them "which were afar off [the Gentiles], and to them that were nigh [the Jews]." Because of this, he explains, both Jews and Gentiles now have "access by one Spirit unto the Father."—Ch. 2, vs. 17, 18.

#### GREAT FORBEARANCE NECESSARY

It can readily be understood why a congregation made up of converted Jews and Gentiles would find it necessary to forbear one another in love. Their former viewpoints and stations in life had been entirely different. The background of the Jews had been that they were God's favored people. Had not God said to them through one of His prophets, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth"? (Amos 3:2.) Were they not the "chosen people" of the Lord? Were not the Gentiles mere "dogs" in the eyes of the Jews?

The Gentile converts, on the other hand, would view matters differently. Accustomed to being treated as "dogs" by the Jews, it would now be difficult for them to feel kindly toward those who had thus so disdainfully regarded them. While they had become followers of the Jewish Messiah, old prejudices would not be easily forgotten. In coming into Christ, they would naturally exercise a greater degree of liberty with respect to their food, and other living habits, than would the Jewish converts, because the Gentiles would not have in mind the restraining ordinances of the Law, hence they would be inclined to do things that, to the Jewish converts, would seem very wrong. In other ways, these two groups of Christians would find obstacles in the way of their viewpoints and activities being blended in a whole-hearted unity of the Spirit.

Under these circumstances only a unity produced by the Spirit could make harmony in the church at Ephesus, and only such an operation of the Spirit can overcome the carnal spirit of division wherever it is found. Such a unity is much more than merely a kindly feeling brethren

may have towards each other. Many times such a unity, while admirable, is based on friendship alone, and friendship is usually based on a certain degree of similarity in temperament, habits, station in life, etc. The unity of the Spirit, on the other hand, produces harmony among brethren in Christ in spite of natural obstacles that might stand in the way, such as differences in background of training, education, nationality, etc.

What, then, is the unity of the Spirit? Briefly, it is a unity that is commanded by God through His Word. It is a unity of the Spirit because the Holy Spirit of God was the medium by which His written Word—the Spirit of the truth—reaches us. The Spirit, speaking through the prophets and apostles, and also through Jesus, had made it very plain that Gentiles and Jews were to become "fellow heirs" in Christ. (Eph. 3:6.) This, to be true, was contrary to the experiences of the Jews throughout all the centuries of their national existence, but it was now God's will, made abundantly plain by the Holy Spirit.

In the conference at Jerusalem, Peter explained that the Holy Spirit had come upon the Gentiles, even as it did upon the Jews, that for this reason there was to be "no difference" between them. Later the findings of that conference were sent out to the Gentile converts, with the expression that they "seemed good to the Holy Spirit." (Acts 15:8, 28.) In the 11th chapter of Romans, Paul explains that the Gentile converts were looked upon by God as taking the place of the "natural branches" [the Jews] who were broken off because of unbelief.

There could be no doubt, therefore, that the Spirit had decreed the full unity of Jewish and Christian converts. For anyone, at that time, or since, to misinterpret the Scriptures in a manner to justify a separation between these two groups, claiming that God deals with them as separate classes, would not be maintaining the unity of the Spirit enjoined by the apostle. Paul wanted the Ephesians to realize what a glorious unity this really was, how all comprehensive it was, that it involved every phase of their faith and devotion.

Before becoming Christians, the Jews had one God, and the Gentiles had other gods, sometimes many of them. But now they all had but the one God, who was the Father of them all. They were all members of the one body of Christ. There was not to be one body of Jews and another of Gentiles. There was but the one faith for all. Followers of the Master, whether Jews or Gentiles, were all called in the "one hope" of their calling—there wasn't one call for the Jews, and another for the Gentiles. There was but the one true baptism for all, and that was the baptism into Christ—be-

ing planted together in the likeness of His death. For a mixed group of Jewish and Gentile converts to order their lives in keeping with a program of this kind, required the indwelling of a large measure of the Holy Spirit.

For God's Spirit to dwell in the heart and control the life, means the subjugation of the selfish, human will and desires. God's Spirit is an enlightening influence in the lives of Christians, and its power to change one's life is partly in the fact that it reveals the need of change, and outlines a new program to be followed. It was this phase of the Spirit's influence in the lives of the church at Ephesus that called for the "endeavoring" mentioned in our text, in order that they might "keep the unity"—that is, all work in harmony with the divine plan of the Gospel as it had been brought to them.

This new program revealed to them by the Holy Spirit through the divinely appointed channels of our Lord, the prophets and apostles, was different from what any of them had previously followed. This meant that all of them had to give up their former viewpoints and habits, and endeavor by God's grace to conform to God's plan as it had been revealed to them through the Spirit. The one God, the one faith, the one baptism (burial) of their wills, was to take the place of their former many gods, many faiths, and many kinds of devotion.

Obviously, in order to be successful in such an undertaking, true lowliness of mind, a large degree of meekness, a great deal of forbearance, and true Christian love would all be prerequisites. Lowliness of mind, humility, would help to keep one from thinking more highly of himself, or of his opinions, than he ought to think. With true lowliness of mind one would not be liable to exalt his own opinions and ways "above the knowledge of Christ." He would realize that the knowledge of Christ was to be the order of his life, even as it should be the guide in the lives of all the brethren.

But humility needs to be practised, not merely thought of and talked about. One might have a true appraisal of his own lack of wisdom and ability, yet not manifest it in his association with the brethren. This would lead to resentment when others were advanced in the service of the Lord. It might also lead to unwarranted controversy over details of the truth. When one is humble, truly lowly of mind, he will not be a trouble maker among the brethren. Such would rather withdraw from a scene of controversy, than permit himself to become a storm center.

Meekness is also a necessary qualification for those who are successfully "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit." Meekness is teachable-

ness, and unless we are willing to be taught by the Spirit we can never be in harmony with those who are. The wisdom of the world and of the carnal mind is foolishness with God. Both the Jews and the Gentiles in the church at Ephesus had many foolish ideas before they became followers of the Master. Most, if not all, of us in the past have had foolish ideas. Just as there could have been no unity in the early church had those various ones brought their ideas along with them, and insisted upon promoting them among the brethren; even so, we must give up our theories, our hobbies, and all be taught the "one faith."

Meekness, however, is not weakness. God wants us to be teachable in that we will accept the instructions of His Word without reservations or doubts, but He does not want us to open our minds to teachings that do not come from His Word and are not in harmony with its spirit—the spirit of truth. Not only should we lay aside our own ideas, but we should resist the wrong ideas of others. As each consecrated follower of the Master endeavors to bring his mind and heart into closer harmony with the Lord, through His Word, he will, at the same time, find himself in closer unity with all others who are doing the same. Thus, a willingness to be taught of the Lord is a very important prerequisite if we are to be successful in our endeavors toward unity of the Spirit.

The spirit of longsuffering and forbearance is also necessary. One might be lowly of mind and meek, yet be unable to bear patiently with the imperfections of others. There was great need of forbearance among the various groups in the early church, and there is still great need for it. We are all so very imperfect that forbearance with one another as we worship and serve together is most necessary, in order that our viewpoints and our activities be blended into that one harmonious program outlined for us by the Holy Spirit.

And love—that divine principle of unselfishness—must be the motive back of this whole endeavor. Only an unselfish desire to glorify God, and to serve others, will make possible the exercise of true Christian forbearance and humility in our association with the brethren. To the extent that self-interest enters into our fellowship, true humility and forbearance will be lacking. In the business world a veneer of forbearance and courtesy is displayed, but for selfish reasons. It might be possible, for a time, to get along with the brethren while having only a veneer of humility and forbearance. This veneer might be displayed for selfish reasons. One might be seeking position, or popularity, or business advantage, and

deem it good policy to be courteous to the brethren. But this sort of thing doesn't last, and will not promote the unity of the Spirit.

#### THE DIVINE PROVISION FOR UNITY

Unity of the Spirit, like all other Christian attainments, is possible only through the grace of God—that “grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 3:16.) This was true in the early church where the brethren had the extreme viewpoints of the Jewish and Gentile converts to overcome; and it is still true today, when other carnal obstacles stand in the way of this unity. While, in this epistle, Paul urges this spirit of unity in the early church, it is just as applicable to us today. No matter what the influences and viewpoints may be that tend to keep the Lord's people from enjoying unity, this apostolic formula for “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” is a workable one. In fact, it presents the only basis upon which true Christian unity can exist. A unity resulting from any other course would not be Christian unity.

And how much the brethren today need God's grace to help in order to maintain the unity of the Spirit! This is specially true in view of the severe “storms,” doctrinal and otherwise, through which we have all passed during the last few years. Now many of the Lord's dear people, separated by carnal influences, are finding their way back to unity of spirit, purpose and endeavor again. Through the years of separation, their outlooks and experiences have been different. These varying environments have left their mark, so that, at times, it would almost appear as though we spoke a different religious language. In view of this, how necessary today that we all keep humble before the Lord and before each other; that we bear with the imperfections of each other; and that we do this in the true spirit of unselfishness and helpfulness; that the Lord's name, and not our own may be glorified; and that His cause, not our own hobbies, may be forwarded.

But only by God's grace can this be done. What is the manner in which God's “grace to help” operates to promote the unity of the Spirit? Paul answers this question in the succeeding portion of the chapter. In the very next verse he says, “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Here the apostle says that God's grace toward us through Christ, is measured by His “gift.” From this we get the thought that the unity of the Spirit which He helps us to attain is one that is prescribed with certain limitations, limitations that are defined by the “gift of God.”

As we study the succeeding verses of the lesson we learn that the “gift” of God's Christ here

referred to is that of apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers and evangelists, all of whom the Lord has provided for the express purpose of the “perfecting of the saints,” and the “edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come into [margin] the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”—Eph. 4:12, 13.

#### UNITY OF THE SPIRIT AND OF FAITH

It is apparent from the sequence of Paul's argument that he wants us to understand that the unity of the Spirit includes the unity of the faith, as it also includes oneness in baptism. The testimony of the Spirit is that there is “one faith,” and the Lord, in helping us in our endeavor to attain unity in our understanding of that one faith, has through the Spirit, given us the apostles, prophets, pastors, etc. It is through these various servants in the church that the Spirit of God finds expression; and, as we scrutinize their teachings, we are given knowledge concerning the “one faith” which constitutes the basis of our oneness in Christ.

Due to endless doctrinal controversies among nominal church groups, many of their leaders have adopted an interpretation of this chapter which makes the unity of the Spirit mean simply a kindly attitude which all professed Christians should be able to manifest toward each other, while the unity of the faith, although desirable, is not in this view fundamentally important. In these circles unity of the faith is usually looked upon as a good ideal for Christians to keep before them, but an ideal, nevertheless, which will probably never be reached.

This “liberalizing” of the apostle's lesson on unity, is manifestly not in keeping with what he would have us understand. It seems clear that the “Spirit” which is the means of Christian unity is not our spirit, or disposition, but the Spirit of God. It follows, therefore, that to the extent a unity is attained, it means also a unity of the faith, or leads thereto. This one faith is the “most holy faith” taught by all of God's inspired spokesmen. It was God's Spirit of truth that inspired these spokesmen in their outlining of the divine plan. The teachings of these inspired servants constitute the “measure” of the faith within which the followers of the Master are to find unity.

The extent to which this unity can be attained is in proportion to the degree of humility and determination with which the “endeavor” is made. We should not expect perfection this side of the vail, and so long as imperfection exists, there will not be complete unity of the Spirit and of the faith. This is not because the Spirit, through the

inspired Word, has not made the basis of unity clear, but because of the carnality of the fallen flesh which, more or less, limits the influence of the Holy Spirit to operate in our lives.

If the apostle's complete formula were followed without reservation, complete unity of the Spirit and of the faith would be attained. But the fallen, imperfect tendencies of the flesh usually assert themselves, thus hindering to some degree the attainment of perfect unity. We may have lowliness of mind, and not be truly meek or teachable. We might not be able to bear with the imperfections of others as we should. A little selfishness of one sort or another may prevent divine love from fully controlling our lives. Any slight degree of failure to control the selfish tendencies of the fallen flesh will affect the result of unity for which we are striving.

Then, too, our vision of the one Lord, one faith and one baptism, may not be as clear as it should be. Perhaps we are permitting other gods to supplant in our affections, to some small degree, our whole-hearted devotion to the one Lord who has been revealed to us by His Spirit. And there are so many of these idols which we are prone to set up in our wayward hearts, permitting them to displace the "one Lord" whose will should be the unifying power among all the consecrated. To whatever extent we permit the idol of pleasure, or of pride, or of ambition, or of vainglory, or of wealth, or of ease, to influence our habits of thought and action, it means that we will not be wholly at one with those whose devotion to the "one Lord" is more complete.

And then, too, it may be that the "one faith" is not as clearly outlined in our hearts and minds as it should be, due to our imperfections. Perhaps we find a measure of selfish satisfaction in mixing the "most holy faith" with some theories of our own. These theories in themselves may not be harmful; but because they are ours we may attach too much importance to them, and by attempting to force them upon the brethren, may be lending our endeavors in the direction of disunity rather than unity. Interpreting the prophecies in an attempt to advise the brethren what will happen next week, next month, or next year is a fruitful field of this sort of thing. We can enjoy unity of the Spirit and of the faith in our knowledge of what God will do for fallen humanity during the next thousand years, but the Spirit does not seem to enlighten us in advance with the details of immediate world developments. However, by means of these inspired prophecies and the enlightenment afforded by God's Holy Spirit we can realize where we are on the stream of time and the events that are to follow in the sequence therein and thereby disclosed.

Furthermore, a slight failure to enter wholeheartedly into the "one baptism" with which our wills are immersed into the divine will, will inevitably affect our oneness with the brethren. Obviously the unity of the Spirit is only in proportion as each of the Lord's consecrated people submit their wills to the instructions and leadings of God's Spirit. To whatever extent our own spirits, or the spirits of others who may influence us adversely to the divine will, are permitted to govern what we say and do, we will be standing in the way of the attainment of the full unity of the Spirit among the brethren.

Affecting our full surrender to the divine will, there may be the influence of personal friendships. True friendship is a beautiful thing, and because it has such a power in our lives, sometimes Christians may permit it to stand in the way of their full obedience to the divine will. Jesus made plain what the attitude of the fully consecrated should be. He said that if we permitted these friendships, and the close ties of blood, such as brothers or sisters, fathers or mothers, or others near and dear to us according to the flesh, to stand between us and our love for Him, we would not be worthy of Him. Such friendships and loves would certainly militate against full unity of the Spirit.

When the resurrected and glorified Jesus "shed forth" the Holy Spirit upon the apostles at Pentecost, in fulfillment of the promise He made to send the Spirit of truth, it really constituted the giving of the "gifts" mentioned in our lesson; particularly with reference to the "apostles." Because the apostles previous to this time could not understand the prophetic messages of the Old Testament, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost also made the services of the prophets available to the church by and through the apostles.

#### IMPORTANCE OF FULL OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD

The teachings of these inspired servants must be accepted by the consecrated as final. Any attempt on our part to abridge the meaning of what they have said in order to fit our own notions, would be a disrupting influence in the church. This may not be done wilfully. The human heart is deceitful, and unless we are constantly on guard, some carnal desire of the flesh will be helping us to "interpret" the inspired Word in a way to fit our own hobbies. In our endeavor to keep the "unity of the Spirit" we should seek to be more and more in tune with the Spirit's leadings; yes, we should continually be in that attitude of heart and mind in which we will "tremble at His Word."

In addition to the inspired servants of the church, the apostles of Jesus Christ, the Lord has

also blessed us with the gifts of "pastors," "teachers" and "evangelists." These are helpers, provided by the Lord to assist us in attaining a unity of the Spirit and of the faith. They are not inspired in the sense that their words are to be taken as law in the church, but they *are* a part of the Lord's provision, hence to ignore them would result in a failure to attain full unity of the faith.

There was Timothy, for example, a valued co-worker with Paul, whose services meant much to the early church. Then there are the "messengers" to the "seven churches," some of whom are doubtless also apostles—but all have had their place as servants in the church. The last of these explained that we can identify those upon whom the Lord's favor rests by noting their humility, their zeal, their love for the brethren, and their clearness in the truth. Many of us have identified the Lord's special messenger for the end of the age by this method, and by reason of the wonderful way in which he was used to serve the household of faith with "meat in due season."

#### DECORUM IN THE CHURCH

In the Holy Spirit's outline of God's will for His people, we also find the Scriptures teaching a certain decorum for the church, in the way of local ecclesia arrangements in which elders and deacons are appointed by the brethren to represent them in service. We should be lowly enough in mind, and meek enough, to recognize these arrangements, and be subservient to them. To do this will also call for longsuffering in forbearing one another in love. But if we permit our own interests, of whatever sort they may be, to block the influence of these Christian qualities, and decide that we can get along better by ourselves than we can with the brethren, it means just that much failure on our part to keep the unity of the Spirit.

We may justify our failure by claiming that we are standing for principle, but let us all, dear brethren, be on guard lest we interpret our own carnality as being principles of righteousness. There *are* real principles for which every consecrated Christian should firmly stand, and when these are at stake, the way before us should be clear, and our course uncompromising. However, we should never use "principle" as an excuse for failure to humble ourselves before the Lord and before the brethren. Nor should we resort to it as a justification for failure to be longsuffering in our forbearance of the brethren. Let us remember that the brethren probably find it just as hard to get along with us, as we find it hard to get along with them. So may we all encourage each other to keep our hearts and minds fixed more and more upon the perfect pattern, Jesus, and to

have our lives controlled more and more by the truth of the divine plan—the "most holy faith."

Just as the Jews and the Gentiles in the early church had to largely forget the past in order to come together and meet together upon the basis of the one true faith, so all of us today, should strive to do the same. Great have been the tests, doctrinal and otherwise, which the Lord has permitted to come upon His people in recent years. May we search our hearts carefully to make sure we are learning well the lessons of these tests. Let us humble ourselves more completely before God that He may direct us more fully by His Spirit into that unity of the faith that is so productive of spiritual growth among His people.

#### CHRIST, THE CENTER OF UNITY

To whatever extent we may have wandered off into by-paths of false doctrine and false practice, let us come back to the main road, back into the narrow way of full submission to the divine will, as that will is revealed in the divine plan. Thus may the Holy Spirit, through the Word, lead us ever nearer to the center of that glorious unity of the faith, where we will be "no more children [acting childishly], tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."—Eph. 4:14, 15.

While Paul makes special mention of certain servants of the church and shows the value of their aid in helping the brethren attain a unity of the faith, yet he would not have us understand that the servants he particularly mentions are the only ones who help to bring about this true oneness in Christ. The fact is that we all have some part to play in helping to bring about this unity. And no matter what that part may be, we should be faithful in performing it. We should all be promoters of unity among the brethren.

The basis of that unity, however, must be the truth. We cannot promote true Christian unity by compromising the doctrines of the truth. But we can promote unity by "speaking the truth in love," by forbearing one another, and by lowliness of mind and meekness. Thus, when our endeavors are in line with the truth, and the Spirit of the truth, we will have God's blessing, because we will be working in line with His will. Paul expresses the same thought, saying, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."—Eph. 4:16.

## The Ministry of Sorrow

"Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord!" "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"—Psalm 130:1; Job 34:29.

THE life of every human being has its lights and shadows, its heights of joy and its depths of sorrow. These make up a large part of the warp and the woof of experience; and the web of character which flows from the active loom of life, will be fine and beautiful or coarse and homely, according to the skill and carefulness with which the individual weaves into it the threads of experience. In every life, in the present reign of sin and evil the somber shades predominate; and to such an extent is this true that the Word of God aptly describes the human family in their present condition as a groaning creation. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now," says the apostle. The children of God are no exception to this universal rule; we also "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the deliverance of our body"—our company, the body of Christ.—Romans 8:22, 23.

But while we are waiting for our deliverance, the daily experiences of life have a most important mission to us, and the manner in which we receive them should be a matter of deepest concern; for according to the use we make of them, each day's prosperity or its adversity and trial bear to us a blessing or a curse. Those experiences which we are accustomed to regard as prosperous often have in them subtle dangers. If wealth increases or friends multiply or a large measure of earthly joy comes to us, how almost imperceptibly the heart finds its satisfaction in the things of this earth! But when the keen edge of sorrow or disappointment is felt, when riches or health fail, when friends forsake, and enemies take up a reproach against us, the natural tendency is to despondency and despair.

Just here is a very important part of the great warfare of the Christian's life. He must fight the tendencies of his old nature and must confidently claim and expect the victory, in the strength of the great Captain of his salvation. He must not yield to the alluring influences of favorable outward conditions, neither must he sink beneath the weight of trials and adversity. He must not permit any experience in life, however hard and painful, to sour and harden him or make him bitter, morose or unloving. Nor may he allow

pride or love of show, or self-righteousness, to feed upon the temporal blessings which the Lord in His loving providence has given him to prove his faithfulness as a steward.

### DEPTHS OF SORROW LEAD TO HEIGHTS OF JOY

Sorrow and griefs may, and perhaps often will, come in like a flood, but the Lord will be our stay and strength in every experience which He permits. The soul that has never known the discipline of sorrow and trouble has never yet learned the joy and preciousness of the Lord's love and helpfulness. It is in seasons of overwhelming sorrow and grief, when we draw near to the Lord, that He draws especially near to us. So the Psalmist found it, when in his deep affliction he cried to God, saying, "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!" (Vs. 1, 2.) Feeling his own weakness and shortcomings, longing for full deliverance from every imperfection, and prophesying of the bountiful provisions of the divine plan of salvation through Christ, he adds, "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities [imputing them to us] O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared [reverenced]."—Vs. 3, 4.

How precious are such assurances when the soul is painfully conscious of its infirmities, of its utter inability to fully measure up to the perfect law of righteousness! How blessed it is to know that when our hearts are loyal and true, our God does not mark against us the unavoidable blemishes of our earthen vessel! If we come daily to Him for cleansing, through the merits of our Redeemer, our failures are not imputed to us, but freely forgiven and washed away. The perfect righteousness of our Savior is our glorious dress, arrayed in which we may come to God with humble boldness, courage—even into the presence of the great Jehovah, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

If thus God ignores the infirmities of our flesh, and fully receives us and communes with us as His dear children, we should so regard one another, considering not and charging not against one another the infirmities of the flesh, which each humbly confesses, and which they, like us, are earnestly endeavoring to overcome by the grace of God, to the best of their ability. To each one of the Lord's true children the words of the apostle apply: "If God be for us, who can be against us? . . . Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Shall that God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died?" (Ro-

mans 8: 31, 33, 34—*Diaglott.*) The case is different, however, when the infirmities of the flesh are cultivated, indulged in without proper effort to correct them, and are justified, in order that the faults may be continued. Then, indeed, they are charged against us, and if we do not speedily “judge ourselves,” and take decisive measures to correct them, the Lord will Himself judge and chasten us.—1 Cor. 11: 31, 32.

In the midst of the cares, perplexities and difficulties that come to the children of the Lord, we are to trust Him fully, and to possess our souls in peace and patience! We are to wait patiently in His own good way. How necessary is the patient waiting on the Lord! The Psalmist says, “I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say more than they that watch for the morning.” (Psalm 130: 5, 6.) In every experience of sorrow and distress, and when the strain of the jarring discords and the stinging vexations and wounds that make the heart bleed, threaten to overwhelm the spirit, let the child of God remember that “He knows, and loves, and cares,” and that His ministering angel is ever near us, and that no trial will be permitted to be too severe. The dear Master is standing by the crucible, and the furnace heat will never be permitted to grow so intense that the precious gold of our characters shall be destroyed, or even injured. Ah, no! If by His grace the experiences may not work for our good, they will be turned aside. He loves us too well to permit any needless sorrow, any needless suffering.

#### THE REWARD OF PATIENT WAITING

“Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.” (Psalm 37: 5-7.) We must not be disappointed and allow our faith to falter when the test of patient endurance is applied, while the outward peace and quietness which we crave tarry long. Our Father has not forgotten us when the answer to our prayers seems to be delayed. Outward peace and calm are not always the conditions best suited to our needs as new creatures; and we would not desire conditions in which the precious fruits of the Spirit would not grow and develop in us. Therefore, “Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice.” (1 Peter 4: 12, 13.) He who numbers the very hairs of our heads is never indifferent to the sufferings and needs of His weakest and humblest child. Oh, how sweet is the realization of such loving, abid-

ing care! “When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?”

The saints have indeed in every sorrow and grief a blessed consolation of which the world is wholly in ignorance. None but the child of God can know it. What is this consolation? Oh, you who have never enlisted under the banner of the Cross, who have never put yourselves wholly into the hands of the Lord to be moulded and fashioned into His glorious likeness, who have never made an earnest effort to stem the tide of the tendencies of your own fallen nature, who have never contended earnestly for truth and righteousness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, what can you know of the sweets of this divine consolation? It is the precious balm of Gilead for wounded spirits on the battle-field of life, it is the stimulating, refreshing draught for fainting souls, hard pressed by the relentless foe. It is the soothing caress of a loving hand upon the fevered brow of the noble contender for truth and godliness. It is the gentle whisper of hope and love and courage when heart and flesh are almost failing. This is divine consolation, the only consolation that has in it any virtue of healing or refreshment. It is reserved alone for those noble souls who are faithfully bearing the burden and heat of the day in the service of the King of kings; while those who listlessly drift with the current of the world and the downward tendencies of the carnal nature can never have an intimation of its sweetness.

How loving and tender is our God, and how wise and strong! His promises have never failed those who have put their trust in Him. We may feel that our efforts to be good and to do good are very unproductive, that the opposition from without and within is very strong. But it is when we are weak, when we realize our own helplessness and incompetency, that we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. It is then that we may realize that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. The fact that we are weak and lame does not separate us from the love and power of our God, while we are striving to do His will; for “He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust.” Then let us more and more lay hold of this strength of the Lord, that we may courageously pursue our course in the narrow way of difficulty and trial. Precious indeed to the saint of God is the ministry of pain and sorrow!

#### “YE HAVE SEEN THE PATIENCE OF JOB”

The saints of every age have learned the blessing of afflictions and sorrows. The Psalmist David says, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes”; and again, “Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but

now have I kept thy Word." (Psalm 119:67, 71.) God's faithful servant Job suffered almost overwhelming troubles, but the Lord brought him out into a large place when his testings had accomplished their designed effect. He was proven and strengthened by his sore experiences. Few if any of us could suffer more. He suffered the loss of all his property, then of all his children, whom he loved, then of the love and loyalty of his wife; and finally, he was smitten with sore disease—boils, from head to foot. To crown all, three of his friends came to see him on hearing of his great trials; and instead of being true comforters, they added to his sorrows by insisting that his own sins must have been the cause of all these disasters; that his experiences must surely be punishments from the Lord because of unfaithfulness on his part. Surely poor Job was afflicted!

But did he lose his faith in God? Hear him: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21.) "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." (Job 13:15.) Job was indeed much cast down, but he maintained his integrity of character and his faith in the Lord through all. He did not charge God with injustice, and God did not desert his faithful servant. He reproved his accusers and required them to offer sacrifice, and instructed Job to pray for them, that their trespasses might be overlooked. In the end, he was blessed more abundantly than ever before. God made him a great type of the human family, of the troubles of their fallen condition and of their final restoration to all that was lost in Adam, with the blessings of added experiences to make them wise. How faithful is the Lord in all His dealings! Truly His children should never doubt His love; for

"Faith can firmly trust Him,  
Come what may."

#### PRECIOUSNESS OF INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

It is when continued trust in the Lord and His many responsive providences in our lives have ripened into precious personal acquaintance and intimacy that we learn to delight in Him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer bring recognized answers of peace, when the divine love and care have been clearly seen in the guidance of our way, that we can recognize the abiding presence with us of the Father and the Son. Then, however dark may be our way, however severe may be the storm that rages about us, the thought of divine protection is ever with us, so that as the children of the Lord we are never in despair; though cast down, we are not destroyed; though persecuted, we are never forsaken. We know our Father's hand is ever at

the helm, that His love and care are sure and un-failing.

Those who have come into real heart sympathy with God have learned to see Him as the Fountain of all goodness and truth and blessing. To them He is the one altogether lovely. His law is their delight. His friendship and love are their very life. When the heart has become thus centered in God, it is the most natural impulse to commit its way unto Him. These can truly sing with the poet:

"So on I go, not knowing,  
I would not if I might;  
I'd rather walk in the dark with God  
Than go alone in the light;  
I'd rather walk by the faith with Him  
Than go alone by sight."

Surely these have the desires of their heart, and no good thing shall be withheld from them. Their fervent prayers avail much, and in the Lord's good time their righteousness, however much it may be misunderstood, misrepresented and evil-spoken of, shall be brought forth as the light—clear, cloudless and widely manifest; and their judgment, the justice and righteousness of their course and of their hearts, shall be brought forth as the noonday. Even while we remain here as aliens and foreigners in the enemy's land, we shall be fed, nourished, temporally and spiritually, and shall rejoice and be glad in the "house of our pilgrimage." Precious indeed are the promises of God; and to the praise of His abounding grace, His saints of the past and of the present all bear ample testimony to their fulfilment.

"Who need faint while such a river  
Ever flows their thirst to assuage?  
Grace, which like the Lord, the Giver,  
Never fails from Age to Age!"

—*Watch Tower Reprints, Page 5802*

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# DIVINE PLAN BEREAN LESSONS

## WILL THE WORLD BE CONVERTED BEFORE OUR LORD'S RETURN?

(Lesson 41)

**Text Book:** Studies in the Scriptures, Volume 1, Pages 89 to 92, paragraph 1.

**Key Sentence:** "But though the Church has been blessedly conscious of the Lord's knowledge of all her ways and of His constant care and love, yet she longs for His promised personal return."

**Main Text:** "If I go, . . . I will come again."—John 14:3.

What is the title of the chapter in our text book we are now starting to study? "Our Lord's Return—Its Object, the Restitution of all things." What is the theme text for this study? Acts 3:20, 21: "And He shall send Jesus Christ, which [who] before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must retain until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

Does not the fact that Jesus said in Matt. 28:20, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age" conflict with what He said in John 14:3, "If I go . . . I will come again"? We answer, No, and for a very satisfactory explanation turn to Volume Two, Page 105, of the **Studies in the Scriptures**, from which we now quote: "The following incident will serve as an illustration of the harmony of the two promises:—One friend said to another as they were about to part, Remember, I will be with you through all your journey. How? Certainly not in person; for there they took trains to go in opposite directions to distant points. The idea was that in love, and thought, and care one for another, they would not be separated. In a similar yet fuller sense, the Lord has always been with His Church, His divine power enabling Him to oversee, direct and assist them, from first to last." So we see that while our Lord is personally absent in heaven, He can, by the exercise of the "all power" vested in Him at His resurrection, supervise and care for the interests of His own.

What ideas have some who do not believe in a second **personal** coming of Jesus Christ? Some think that Jesus came again in the form of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But Jesus, about sixty years after that date said in Rev. 22:12: "Behold, I come quickly." This plainly indicates that His second coming was not at Pentecost but at a time still future.

How can we answer the argument of some who claim that the way Christ comes again is by the converting of the world and that every time sinners are converted, the coming of Christ is brought one step nearer? This doctrine implies that when Christ fully comes, the whole world will be converted to God and righteousness.

The ones who advocate this theory fail to take into consideration the Scriptures which show that the world will be far from converted when Christ comes again. Take, for instance, 2 Tim. 3:1, 13: "In the last days . . . evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Notice, also, Luke 21:34, 35: "Take heed to yourselves, lest . . . that day come upon you unawares; for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." If all the world were converted when Christ comes a second time, why would such a warning be necessary? No, this text shows clearly that they will be mostly sinners.

In the text found in Rev. 1:7 what is implied? It reads, "He cometh . . . and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." It implies that mankind will be unconverted and so unrighteous that, instead of welcoming His coming, they will dread it.

Why do some set the time for the actual coming and presence of Christ a long way off? Because they think that the work of the Church in her present condition is to engage actively in mission work at home and abroad and that as a result nearly all will come, in time, to accept Christ as their Savior. They think this is the manner in which Satan will be bound. What do they think is left for Christ to do when He comes, according to this view? They think that He will come to wind up earthly affairs, reward believers and condemn sinners.

What is the connection between the trial of the Church and the reign of the Church? Rev. 20:4: "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." The trial of the Church in this Gospel Age is for the purpose of developing its members and fitting them for the future work of converting the world when they shall reign as kings and priests.

How can we meet the argument of some who use Matt. 24:14 to prove that the Lord will not come until after the Millennium? This text reads, "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." We answer that this text does not tell how the testimony will be received. It merely says that the gospel will be preached for a **witness**. Has this witness been given? Yes, this witness has already been given: the Word of the Lord, the gospel of the Kingdom, has been published to every nation of earth. Each individual has not heard it; but that is not the statement of the prophecy. It was to be and has been preached to every **nation**.

But, says some one, is it not true that the missionaries who have gone into heathen lands, have very generally known little or nothing of the "good tidings of the Kingdom"? But we answer, the printed gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John have gone to them brimming full of the Kingdom tidings, just as we have them. How many of the millions living now, have ever heard the name of Jesus? Probably less than one half of them.

## THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER

(Lesson 42)

**Text Book:** Studies in the Scriptures, Volume 1, Page 92, paragraph 1, to Page 93, paragraph 2.

**Key Sentence:** "The Apostle (Acts 15:14) tells that the main object of the gospel in the present age is "to take out a people for Christ's name—the overcoming church, which, at His second advent, will be united to Him and receive His name."

**Main Text:** "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."—Psa. 110:1.

Have we any Scripture which shows us what is the main object of the Gospel age? Yes, Acts 15:14, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name." When the Church is united to Jesus at the "marriage of the Lamb," she will take His name—be His bride. (Rev. 19:7.) The witnessing to the world is secondary in the sense that the witness work of the church has as its main objective during the Gospel Age, the drawing toward God of those who are disposed to righteousness and faith. From this group, the Gospel message reaches a number who go on to consecration to death in the footsteps of their Lord.

How is Psa. 110:1 generally misunderstood—"Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool"? Many think that Jesus will sit on a material throne somewhere in the heavens until the church subdues all enemies of righteousness by converting the whole world to God. Then, they say, Jesus will come to reign. How does the nominal church explain the fact that the world is still so far from being converted? We answer that the church knows that the eyes of the world are turned upon her; that somehow it has been discovered that, while she has claimed her commission to be to convert the world, the time has arrived when, if that be her mission, that work should be almost, if not fully, accomplished, and that really she differs little from the world, except in profession. Consequently apologies, excuses, re-dressing of facts, and extravagant predictions of great achievements in the very near future are heard from time to time. Some contend that it takes time and that it is to be an accomplished fact in the distant future. Meanwhile they are "at sea" regarding their whereabouts on the stream of time, saying, we cannot know anyway.

What is meant by the expression "at My right hand" in this text (Psa. 110:1) that we are now considering? It means the chief place of favor next to the ruler. We find this same thought in Matt. 26:64, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The sitting does not mean that He sat down on a literal seat, and has remained inactive during this age. The thought is that He was seated at the Father's right hand in the sense of being given this permanent position of honor and dignity. In an official sense, He has been away from earth, not doing any restitution work directly for mankind, until the close of the age, when He returns for that specific purpose.

In what sense was Joseph at the right hand of Pharaoh? He was placed in the chief place of favor

as explained in Genesis 41:39, 40, "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou."

What lesson can we learn from this exaltation of Joseph from the condition of a slave and from a dungeon to be the second person of power in the world? It suggests the typical character of Joseph's life. Did not our Lord Jesus take a bondsman's form? And did He not enter the great prison house of death? And was He not suddenly raised up to the throne—to be next to the Father, the Governor of the universe? And did not the experiences of Jesus, under God's providence, have to do with preparing Him for His great work of the future, the blessing of the whole world? And as Joseph saved the lives of the people of Egypt, will not the antitypical Joseph save the lives of the world?

What is the relation between the first advent of Christ and His second advent? We answer that the object of His first advent was to redeem men. The object of the second advent is to give back to mankind what they lost in their representative, Adam, in the Garden of Eden. In other words, to restore and bless the redeemed race.

But why the delay between the first and second advents? To permit the selection and trial and development of the church, called the Bride, the Lamb's wife. The rule of evil had to continue until the church was completed. The overcoming of the influences of the present evil world is the anvil on which God is hammering out and shaping the character of this church class. The development of the church had to follow the first advent because the ransom sacrifice of Jesus was first necessary before the church could be justified to life. We are then asked to "suffer with Him" as a favor, in order that, by so doing, we may share with Jesus in the promised divine nature, and be His companions and joint-heirs. To permit and to enable us to offer ourselves acceptable sacrifices, the benefits of Jesus' death were imputed to us, thereby justifying or cleansing us. Then, under trial, we must attain not a perfection of the flesh, but perfection of heart, of will, of intent. We must be "pure in heart"—the treasure must be of pure gold tried in the furnace, though its present depository be but an imperfect earthen vessel.

## ELECTION VERSUS FREE GRACE

(Lesson 43)

**Text Book:** Studies in the Scriptures, Volume One, Page 93, last paragraph, to Page 97, paragraph 1.

**Key Sentence:** "God has not yet by any means exhausted His power for the world's conversion."

**Main Text:** "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.

Is it to our interest that the reign of Christ is more than nineteen centuries after the time of Christ's suffering as a man to provide the ransom sacrifice? Yes, because God has provided some "better thing for us." (Heb. 11:40.) The better thing is the heavenly calling. If this had been omitted from God's plan, then the restoring and blessing of the race could have started at the time of the first advent.

How about the six thousand years of the permission of evil—if God had omitted the selection of the church and if the work of the first and second advents had all been combined? Then there would have been only the one advent at the end of the six thousand years, instead of the first advent being nearly two thousand years earlier.

Reflection on the points mentioned in this lesson and the previous lesson makes God's plan seem so much more reasonable. It shows God's provision in the Gospel Age for the development of the "Elect" and in the Millennium for the blessing of the non-elect (the world of mankind) by the "Elect."

When we consider Acts 3:21, where it tells us that the heaven must retain Jesus until the times of restitution of all things, and couple it up with Rev. 11:18, where we are informed that the nations will be angry when Jesus comes again, to what conclusion are we led regarding the nominal church's claim that her mission is to convert the world in the Gospel Age? The only possible conclusion is that God has not even attempted to convert the world so far, and that her real mission in regard to preaching the Gospel has been merely for a witness, and a means for the calling and development of the Elect.

In what respect does the Divine Plan of the Ages as taught in the Bible, the Word of God, give a far more reasonable outlook for our friends, relatives and neighbors than do the creeds of some of the leading sects, such as the Baptists, Presbyterians and others? It shows that God has provided not only for the salvation of the church in this age but also for the salvation of the world in the Millennium, whereas the creeds teach that eternal torment will be the lot of those who are not saved in this age.

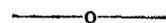
How is Isaiah 55:11 a good proof text to show that God has not been trying to convert the world for the past six thousand years? "So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Because if such were God's plan it would have met with success. God's Word would not have returned unto Him void.

How about the two lines of thought—Election and Free Grace—which have divided Christians for centuries? The adherents of both these doctrines claim that they have Scriptural support for them, yet those holding to Election disagree with those holding out for Free Grace. Which group is right? Both sides are correct in claiming that there is Scriptural support for their doctrines, but these doctrines do not find fulfilment all in one age, as they mistakenly suppose. When we "rightly divide the word of truth" on this subject, we find that Election has been in progress during the present and past ages but that God's Free Grace arrangement for mankind will not take effect until the Millennium.

Is the common view concerning Election altogether correct? Io! The teaching that God is arbitrarily selecting a few to be members of the true church and, no matter how much they disregard His revealed purpose for the children of men, will highly exalt them to a heavenly reward as the Bride of Jesus while arbitrarily sending the balance of mankind, so greatly in the majority, to eternal torment, is not supported by the Scriptures. What principle is followed by God in connection with the Election during this Gospel Age? We answer that it is a selection based on fitness and adaptability to the purpose of this present age as a link in the chain of God's grand plan of the ages.

Compare the doctrine of Free Grace as advocated by the Arminians with the doctrine of Free Grace as taught in the Scriptures. The latter shows that during the Millennium there will be a much grander display of God's loving kindness and favor than the former teaches.

Is not God's grace during this Gospel Age free? Yes, in the sense of being unmerited, but in the sense of being open and available to all, we find that it is not free because certain of God's favors have been restricted to special individuals and nations and classes. Will this be true in the next age? No! Then all will be given the opportunity to share in the restitution privileges then offered, on the condition of obedience. Quote a Scripture along this line. Rev. 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride (following the marriage of the Lamb) say, Come. . . . And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life (Restitution blessings) freely." While it will not be forced upon any, yet all "the ransomed of the Lord" will have the opportunity to "return, and come to Zion," to be blessed forevermore.—Isa. 35:10.



## GOD'S GRANDEST GIFT

(Lesson 44)

**Text Book:** Studies in the Scriptures, Volume One, Page 97, paragraph 1, to Page 99, paragraph 1.

**Key Sentence:** "And it is a blessed fact that free grace in the fullest measure, not merely for the living but for those who have died, as well, is provided in our Father's plan as the blessed opportunity of the coming age."

**Main Text:** "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." —Rom. 8:19.

Looking back over man's history and with the light from God's Word to see clearly the steppings of our God, what do we find concerning God's elections or selections? Some of them are as follows: First, Abraham and then Isaac to be the ones through whom would come the promised Seed, who would be God's instrumentality in blessing all the families of the earth. See Gen. 21:12: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Note also Gal. 3:29: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Also Gal. 4:28: "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise."

**Second**, the selection of Israel as a nation to furnish a type of the great work which He will accomplish for mankind. What is meant by the word "known" in Amos 3: 2, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth"? It means recognized—had dealings with. This text supports the thought that God elected the Nation of Israel for His special favor during the Jewish age. What did this special favor consist of? Paul answers this question in Romans 9:4: "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." The priesthood for their Tabernacle services was a type of the greater priesthood consisting of Jesus and the Church who are called an "holy priesthood" in 1 Peter 2:5. Likewise their covenant, their sacrifices for sins, etc., were all pictures of better things to come.

How long did God recognize them? Until Christ came. In fact, special favor as a nation was confined to them only, until just before His death, when they were cast off. Note what Jesus said to His disciples, Matt. 10:5, 6: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans (mixed people settled in parts of Palestine) enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep (who had wandered away from full covenant relationship with the Lord) of the house of Israel." Note also Matt. 15:24: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

What is referred to in our text book as "God's grandest gift"? The giving of His Son in death to be the ransom sacrifice for the world. He "tasted death for every man." (Heb. 2:9.) This great display of free and all-abounding grace will be a blessing for all in "due time." It was not only for the nation of Israel but for all nations.

Is there more opportunity to hear the gospel in some parts of the world than in other parts? Yes, there is, and this is a sort of election. The gospel is free to all who hear but all do not have opportunity to hear.

Will God's plan for the world's salvation be completed when the Church has been selected, and raised to joint-heirship with Jesus Christ? No, it will be only beginning.

When the Apostle Paul in Rom. 16:20 said, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly," to what Old Testament text was he referring? Gen. 3:15. "Her [Eve's] seed . . . shall bruise thy head [the serpent's], and thou [the serpent] shalt bruise His heel." Why are these texts now quoted in our text book? To prove the statement that Jesus and the Church when exalted to power will be the seed that will bruise the serpent's head, and hence the removing of evil and bringing in of restitution blessings wait only for the selection and development of the Church class.

Is it correct to refer to Jesus and the Church as the second Adam and second Eve? Yes, and if we turn to 1 Cor. 15:45-47 we find that the Apostle Paul refers to the second Adam as the "Lord from Heaven"—the Lord who will come from heaven, and at His second advent assume the office and duties of a father to the race of Adam which He redeemed with His own precious blood at Calvary. Accordingly, the work of the future, the work of the Millennial age, the grand

object for which Messiah will reign, is expressed by the word, "regeneration." See Matt. 19:28. The world will receive perfect human life on the condition of obedience, from the glorified Jesus Christ and the Church, who is called the second Eve because she will be married to the Lamb when "His wife hath made herself ready."—Rev. 19:7.

We can see therefore that when the Church is no longer the espoused virgin but united in the first resurrection with Jesus Christ as His Bride, that then the opportunity for human salvation (restitution) will be thrown open to all the world as we read in Rev. 22:17: "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

How does Rom. 8:22, 19, further support the fact that the blessing of all the families of the earth with restitution is the next step in God's plan after the selection and development and exaltation of the Church? Paul explains that mankind "groaneth and travaileth in pain while they are "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." When will this manifestation be? When Jesus and the Church are revealed to the world as the kings and priests in full Kingdom power ready to bless them with the restitution blessings promised.—Acts 3:19-23.

## HOLIDAY GREETING CARDS

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The Dawn 136 Fulton Street Brooklyn, N. Y.



# International Sunday School Lessons



## CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

December 14—2 Cor. 8:1-9; 9:6, 7

**GOLDEN TEXT:** "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."—1 Cor. 4:2.

AT THE council held by the apostles in Jerusalem, A. D. 50, which determined that the Jewish law was not binding upon converts to Christianity from among the Gentiles, Paul promised to take up collections among the congregations of the Gentiles for the poor at Jerusalem. He had already taken collections in Macedonia and Greece and in Asia Minor; and in the words of this lesson he appeals to the Church at Corinth.

There was great need for such a collection: (1) the converts to Christianity were mostly from the poorer classes; (2) the turbulent state of the times had driven many people from the surrounding country into the city of Jerusalem for greater security, and many were thus thrown upon the charity of their fellows. (3) Christians were unpopular, and could expect no outside aid. The appeal of this lesson was made about A. D. 57, some twelve years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Concerning the distress of Jerusalem at that time, Canon Cook says:

"The abnormal condition of the labor market is illustrated by the fact that Agrippa II was compelled to resort to artificial means, such as paving the streets of Jerusalem with white marble—after having declined the proposal to destroy and rebuild Solomon's porch—in order to supply with work and wages 18,000 workmen who had been employed in repairing the Temple. Life and property were rendered painfully insecure by the terrible atrocities of the Sicarii, at once assassins and robbers."

The apostle's experience proved to him the truth of the saying, "The liberal soul shall be made fat." (Proverbs 11:25.) He had noted the fact that those individuals and congregations which exercised them-

selves most in this great liberality (under the guidance of reason and justice, of course) were the most blessed in spiritual health and wealth. He, therefore, longed to see all Christians appreciating and using this grace.

The congregation of the Lord at Corinth, while, in many respects highly favored with instruction and knowledge, had not made the proper progress in spiritual development, and hence was greatly in danger of losing the truths received but never properly put into practice. (1 Cor. 1:4-6, 11-13; 3:1-3.) They, too, had evidently been appealed to with reference to contributions for the poor of the congregation at Jerusalem; but seemingly, they had not responded—or, at least, not according to their means.

Paul now, therefore, while patiently correcting their errors, deflections and stumblings, suggests to them that the exercise of the grace of benevolence is an important factor in the spiritual life. In proof of this he points them to the congregations of Macedonia, among which, although themselves sorely pressed by great trial and by deep poverty, probably the result of the famine which occurred about that time, had been very liberal in their donations to the yet poorer ones at Jerusalem. The giving, says Paul, did not stop with the money, but extended even to the giving of themselves in any way to serve the cause of God, and thus it brought them great spiritual blessings.—Verse 5.

In view of this spiritual blessing upon the Macedonian Christians, the apostle urged upon Titus the importance of bringing the subject to the careful notice of the troubled and distracted Christians in Corinth, believing that if they would begin to practice the spirit of Christianity—love, benevolence—they would speedily receive a blessing, and come to see more clearly the doctrines of Christ, which, because of failure to practice, they were in danger of losing.

Benevolence, unselfishness, the apostle suggests, is a test or proof of the sincerity of our love. If any

one claims to have died to the carnal mind of selfishness, and to have been begotten to the new mind of love, the opportunities for the exercise of benevolence will prove it—or to what extent the new mind is ruling in us and conquering the old. (Verse 8.) As an illustration of the true spirit of love in unselfish benevolence, the apostle cites the perfect example of our Lord Jesus.—Verse 9.

The special terms or conditions of this Gospel age for the selection of the church, first applied to the great head of the church, our Lord Jesus—He must sacrifice ere He could be made the King of earth and have the power and authority to bless. His sacrifice was a comprehensive one; it began with the sacrifice of His riches, and ended with the sacrifice of His life.

"He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might [eventually in the Millennial Kingdom] be made rich." His wealth, consisting of heavenly glory and subsequently, of human talent, and every kind of good possession, was all sacrificed, including even His reputation, so that the apostle declared, "He made Himself of no reputation."

His will also was sacrificed—the strongest individual thing that any being can possess; as He Himself declared, He sought not His own will, but the will of the Father who sent Him. His life, the most precious thing to any intelligent creature, was freely laid down, a sacrifice, a sin-offering, in harmony with the divine plan, on our behalf. (Phil. 2:5-8.) And in all of this course He became an example to His body-members to whom it is written by the apostle, "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him, if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him."

### Questions:

What were the circumstances in the church at Jerusalem that furnished an opportunity for other churches to send material aid?

Does the practice of giving tend to increase one's spiritual riches?

What is the relationship to the call of this age?

## THE COMING OF GOD'S SON

December 21—Isaiah 9:6, 7; John 1:1-4; 1 John 4:9-11

**GOLDEN TEXT:** "The Father hath sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."  
—1 John 4:14.

APPROPRIATE to this season of the year today's lesson is a prophetic picture of "Israel's Hope" and "the desire of all nations," the picture of Messiah and His Millennial Kingdom. The story of Jesus' birth and His whole life and death and even His resurrection would be of comparatively slight importance if disconnected from the prophecies of His glorious Kingdom power and reign, under which all the families of the earth shall be blessed. It was in view of this grand consummation to be accomplished by the Kingdom that the angels sang at our Lord's birth, "Peace on earth, good will toward men," and proclaimed "Good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people"—in due time.

The first section of our lesson is a part of Isaiah's prophecy regarding the birth of Jesus and of His glorious Kingdom to be inaugurated at His second advent. The word "for," with which the sixth verse opens, signifies because; hence we read, "Because unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The "because" is an explanation of the process by which the foregoing gracious prophecy of blessing and release from the oppressor shall be accomplished.

The Lord would draw the attention of all who have the hearing ear of faith to the fact that no such Kingdom of righteousness, no such enlightenment and blessing of the world could be possible until first Messiah should come. He would show also that Messiah would be born after the manner of mankind, and would nevertheless be the Son of the living God. How beautiful, how simple is the entire statement from the standpoint of faith, yet how possible it is for the wisdom of this world to stumble over even such simple statements as these and to claim, as higher critics do, that this prophecy was wholly to the Jews in Isaiah's day, and that the one of promise was King Hezekiah.

Blessed are our eyes if they see and our ears if they hear the true

meaning of this prophecy, and thus permit us to recognize in it Messiah, the sent of God, Emmanuel, God with us, to be the great Deliverer and to accomplish for us all the wonderful things which God has spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began, confirming the promise made to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Continuing, the prophecy pictures the child grown to manhood and the government placed upon His shoulders—His responsibilities falling upon Him as a royal mantle from the heavenly Emperor, Jehovah. The prophecy stepped over the earthly trials and sufferings of our Redeemer, the Head, and of the church, His body, throughout this Gospel Age. It ignores the names Beelzebub, prince of devils, man of sorrows, etc., and points to us the complete and glorified Messiah at His second Advent, as viewed from the standpoint of Jehovah and from the standpoint from which ultimately the whole world shall recognize Him, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to Him to the glory of the Father. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God [or Mighty Lord], Everlasting Father [or giver of everlasting life], the Prince of Peace."

Continuing our lesson in the passages from the Gospel and first Epistle of St. John, we note that the apostles and all believers who had intercourse with our Lord in the days of His flesh, "beheld, His glory." They beheld the grandeur, the nobility, the perfection of the "Man Christ Jesus"—a perfection and glory seen in no other, because all others were sinners, while He by virtue of special birth, was holy, harmless, separate from sinners.

Our Lord Jesus was crowned with glory and honor in its perfection in the days of His flesh, and His disciples beheld this dignity of human perfection, which marked Him as separate and distinct from all others; and they recognized it as differentiating Him from the world of sinners, marking Him as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth—abounding in every proper and desirable quality and characteristic.

The final section of our lesson points out that the coming of our Lord to earth and taking the human

nature was an evidence of God's great love for His human creatures. This gift of divine love was another indication of the cost to our Heavenly Father of His great and marvelous plan. Not only did He behold the fall into sin of a large portion of His family, but their recovery cost the sacrifice of the dearest treasure of His heart, and the subjection of this beloved One to the most abject humiliation, ignominy, suffering, and death.

The illustration of a parent's love assists us in comprehending the cost of this manifestation of Jehovah's love. With what tender and yearning emotions of love must He have made this sacrifice of His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. In addition to all the graces of His character manifested since His creation, was now added the further grace of full submission to the divine will, even when the pathway pointed out was one of pain and humiliation.

Surely the Father did not let the Son go on that errand of mercy without the sensation of powerful emotions, nor was He without an appreciation of the pangs of a Father's love when the arrows of death pierced the heart of His beloved Son. But God could and did sacrifice at great cost to His loving fatherly nature, the dearest treasure of His heart, and thus He manifested the great love wherewith He loved His deceived and fallen creatures.

### Questions:

Should Christians continue to have faith in Isaiah's prophecy concerning the Prince of Peace in spite of present world conditions?

How did the apostles behold the glory of Jesus?

What illustration helps us to grasp the depth of God's love in giving His Son to be our Redeemer?

## THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

December 28—John 14:1-6; Revelation 22:1-5.

**GOLDEN TEXT:** "In My Father's house are many mansions."—John 14:2.

AFTER washing the disciples' feet, and after the sop had been given to Judas, and he had gone out; and after telling the disciples that they all would be offended that night because of Him, and answering Peter that he would deny Him thrice before the cock crew, we may well suppose that the hearts of

the eleven were heavy, disturbed, troubled with a fearful foreboding.

Had they indeed been deluded, or had they misunderstood the Master when He told them that He was the Messiah, the heir of the Kingdom, and that they should sit with Him in His throne? How would they interpret His language, seeing that only five days before He had received the hosannas of the multitudes as the Son of David, the King of Israel, when riding on the ass. What could it mean that the Master was now "exceeding sorrowful" and spoke of betrayal, and of their dispersion, and of His own death? It was in answer to these their troubled thoughts that our Lord spoke to them the beautiful words of comfort and consolation recorded in the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of John's Gospel, beginning—"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

The apostles evidently were already consecrated to God as His servants; they already believed in God, trusted in Him, were Israelites indeed without guile. This is testified to further by our Lord's prayer, in which He says, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them Me." The trouble in their hearts was not in respect to the foundation of their hopes, for these were all established. They not only knew and trusted God, but knew and trusted also the promises of God respecting the Kingdom and the blessings that should come to all the families of the earth through it. The whole question before their minds was respecting Jesus—was He indeed the Messiah, or had they built some false expectations upon His wonderful words and deeds?

Our Lord began by reviving in them their faith in the Father and in His plan, saying, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me," recognize the fact that all of the Father's plan will be accomplished, and in as much as you have seen My loyalty

to the Father in word and in deed, and in as much as you have seen the Father's power unto good works manifested in Me, let faith's anchor hold; continue to trust Me, continue to have confidence, and you shall have a blessing; wait for the development of the Divine Plan, and it will more than satisfy your highest expectations. You are perplexed because I said I am going away—going to the Father, but let Me explain to you that My going is in your interest: I go to prepare a place for you in My Father's house of many appointments; and as surely as I do this I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that we may henceforth be together forever.

Thus in a few words, the Master declared the work of the Gospel age, His second advent, and the glorification of the church in the end of the age. He did not stop here to give them detailed explanations of the trials of faith and patience they must have; this He had done on other occasions, warning and cautioning them (Matt. 24); now their hearts were troubled, and He would merely console them with the assurance that His going away was necessary, that His second coming would be certain, and that the gathering of all to everlasting fellowship with Him in the mansions prepared was assured.

Our Lord was the way in that only through His sacrifice, the ransom, imputing His merit to sinners, could they be made acceptable to the Father or be received back again into fellowship with Him. He was the truth, in the sense that only through His word, His instructions, His guidance, could there be any hope of coming into harmony with the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth. He was the life, in that all the race was dead, under the divine sentence—had forfeited the rights of life—and none could come again into life conditions except through Him—through the life which He gave for ours. Thus He is our ransom, or

way; our teacher or instructor in righteousness, and our life giver; neither is there salvation in any other. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me"—no man need hope for any place in any of the mansions of My Father's house by any other way, by any other truth, by any other life.—Acts 4:12; John 14:6.

The second section of our lesson pertains to the new Jerusalem, which in the preceding context is described as "coming down from heaven as a bride prepared for her husband"—beautiful, pure, gorgeous, resplendent. The city represents the church in glory, this being indicated by the declaration that it was like a bride prepared for her husband, and a further demonstration is in the fact that the angel who called to John, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife," showed him the new Jerusalem descending, etc.—Rev. 21:9, 10.

The throne of God and of the Lamb is represented as being in this city. That is to say, the kingdom, the government, that will then be established in the world, will have as its center of authority the divine law and the divine power—every feature of the government will be in accord with the divine will. From the throne of God will proceed the river of the water of life, of crystalline purity, not muddy with traditions and false doctrines. It will be the pure message of the Lord, going forth from the Millennial Kingdom for the blessing, refreshment, rejuvenation, and eternal life of the whole world of mankind, or so many of them as will accept the glorious provision.

#### Questions:

What were the circumstances which called forth the words of comfort contained in today's lesson?

What are the many mansions referred to by Jesus?

What is signified by the New Jerusalem being prepared as a "bride adorned for her husband"?

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# Talking Things Over

## CROWNED WITH GOD'S GOODNESS

"THOU crownest the year with Thy goodness." (Psa. 65:11.) Thus does the Prophet David remind us of the wonderful manner in which the Lord's rich blessings are continuously upon His people; and the end of the year is an appropriate time for all of us to "look back and praise the way He has led us day by day." Happy are we if we can look back and praise God for all the experiences which in His wisdom and love He has permitted to come to us. It is easy to praise God for the sweets of Christian experience, and if our faith is strong enough at the close of 1941, we will be able also to praise Him for the bitter.

In the business world the end of the year is often chosen as a time for "taking stock." Is it not also a good time for spiritual "stock taking"? What, if any, have been our Spiritual gains during the year? Where do we stand with our Heavenly Father as compared to a year ago? We are, of course, debtors of His grace, and always will be. We are such great debtors, in fact, that we do not actually belong to ourselves, but to Him. But, as God's bond-slaves, have we been as faithful as we could have been in doing those things which we knew would please Him? Have we conducted our lives as though we were fully conscious of the fact that we are not our own, but bought with a price?

Have we drawn closer to the Lord during the year, so that now we are living nearer to Him in thought, word and deed, than we were a year ago? Have we looked to Him as much as we should for help in times of need, for forgiveness of our sins, and for guidance in the narrow way? As we praise God for the way He has led us during 1941, can we feel that we have always followed His leadings as closely as we should; or have we sometimes followed afar off? If in walking with God we have not kept as close to Him as we ought to have done, then we will not be able to praise Him as whole-heartedly for His leadings as would otherwise be our privilege.

Whatever of blessings we have enjoyed during the year have come to us from God—He is the giver of "every good and perfect gift," the "crown of all our joys." While from one standpoint we are His servants, His bond-slaves, yet—O wondrous grace!—He has also accepted us into His family, as sons. As His sons He cares for us as a

father. We do not merit this blessed relationship with God, but because He loved us while we were yet sinners, He made provision through Jesus whereby our imperfect works are acceptable, and we are begotten into the divine family. As we contemplate this love, and how it has continued to operate toward us during the year, we can surely rejoice.

And, as we reflect upon the Father's love, and what it has meant to us, we are reminded of the words of the poet, that He "who loved us once, will love us still; be calm, and sink into His will." As we look forward to the new year we need to be "calm," and we need also to "sink into His will." Perhaps we failed to plumb the full depth of divine blessings during the year because we didn't at all times, sink fully into God's will. If that be so, let us benefit from this failure, and try by His grace to do better next year.

It is in trials that we are most liable to display some measure of self-will. How are we receiving our trials? Are they burdensome to us, or are we looking upon them as "light afflictions"? A question was asked of one of the friends: "How did you get along with your trials during the year?" and the reply was, "What trials?" Those with less faith, and not living so close to the Lord, would probably look at their trials in quite a different manner. They might, indeed, emphasize their severity, and how grievous they were. God does permit fiery trials to come upon us, but He helps us to bear them, and in His grace we can rejoice.

Then there have been the blessings of service. What a privilege it is to be one of the Lord's ambassadors! We have not all been able to serve in the same way; but there have been some opportunities for all. If we have been letting our light shine, it means that the truth has thereby become more precious to us; and that we can consider as another of the Lord's rich blessings—a blessing that has come to us in the Lord's appointed way. The knowledge of the truth and of the Lord becomes more and more a part of ourselves as we teach it to others. They that water, are themselves also watered.

The better we know God, the more we will desire to fellowship with Him. The privileges and blessings of prayer should be our daily portion. If this has been so during the year, then we have been rich indeed. Our communion with God

should be one of thanksgiving and praise. We also need to approach the throne of heavenly grace to obtain forgiveness, and receive strength to help in every time of need. And how thankful we should be for our Advocate, Christ Jesus, through whom we are able to enter into the presence of our Heavenly Father.

While it is a blessed privilege to talk to God, let us remember that we need to listen attentively as He talks to us. God talks to us through His Word; and what a blessing it is to continue our individual study of His Word. Through it He leads us and encourages us. Through the Word we are inspired to greater faithfulness by the increasing brightness of its gems of truth as one after another they come to light. How true are the words of the poet concerning the Bible:

"Tis a mine, aye deeper, too,  
Than can mortal ever go.  
Search we may for many years,  
Still some new, rich gem appears."

And how beautiful are these rich gems which appear as we study the precious Word in the light of Present Truth, the Harvest message, with which the Lord has blessed His people at this end of the age! May the eyes of our understanding never grow dim. May we never lose our appreciation of the glorious truth that has been entrusted to us.

Another blessing of the Lord which His people have enjoyed during the year has been that of fellowship with the brethren. This is another way, indeed, in which we fellowship with the Lord. How sweet is that blest "tie that binds" our hearts in Christian love! That tie should be getting sweeter all the time, and more binding. Brethren in other parts of the world have not been so favored as those of us here in America. Here our fellowship, in meetings large and small, at any time of day or night, is as yet unrestricted. Are we making the best possible use of these privileges while they are still ours?

Yes, it has been a blessed year—blessed because crowned with the Lord's goodness. Let us look forward to the coming year in the hope that by divine grace it will be even better than the one now closing. May each year find us further along in the narrow way; not only from the standpoint of time, but also in actual progress in spiritual growth. In God's due time the end of the way will be reached, and then we will rejoice in that fulness of joy which belongs to those who are privileged to be in the actual presence of the Lord. Yes:

"Another year, or more, or less,  
And we have crossed the wilderness;  
Finished the toil, the rest begun,  
The battle fought, the triumph won!"

## DIVERSITY OF SERVICE

How happy we should be that the Lord has not limited His consecrated people to any one avenue of expressing our love for Him and for His truth by making it known to others. A public witness of the truth does not always mean a public meeting, a radio program, or the distribution of many thousands of tracts. These efforts are all good, and should be used whenever possible. But the individual efforts of the consecrated are equally important.

In various parts of the country some of the friends are again finding rich blessings in taking the literature to the homes of the people in much the same way as did the colporteurs years ago. And the Lord is richly blessing their efforts. This house-to-house work is usually combined with making calls on those who have written for literature in response to the radio programs, or from reading tracts or Kingdom Cards. Perhaps there are others who might find time to do some of this work. A blessing awaits all those who try. One of the friends working in the New York district recently sent us the following interesting letter:

"Greetings in our dear Lord's name. I must tell you about something that brought tears of joy, I was so deeply touched. A Jewish salesman came into the office and said, 'I want to tell you what happened to the little tract you gave me. I read it and thought it was fine. Then one day the Rabbi from our synagogue was passing and I gave it to him. He made it a subject of a talk the following Sabbath. Now you know the old men that live at the synagogue and study the Talmud day and night? Well they are so solemn and never smile. But since hearing about the tract and the talk on it, they have been smiling ever since. Everybody is talking about it. You can't imagine how it has affected all the people who heard of it.'

"He then told me that the Rabbi would like to have several hundred copies. It was the tract 'The Jew and the World Crisis.'

"An atheist after hearing of restitution remarked, 'Well, now that is more like it, that sounds reasonable. Surely I'll read the little booklet.'

Sincerely, B. T., N. Y.

## ADDITIONAL INTERESTING LETTERS RADIO AND OTHERWISE

"After so long a time I am sending you a dollar for The Dawn, and don't ever stop it, for I want it as long as I live and when I am dead I want you to send it to some of my children, for I have searched for the truth for sixty years, and I know I have found it,

and I want my children to have it. And please send me the Chart of the Ages and the book 'Restitution.' I assure you that it will be read and studied and appreciated. So may God bless you and let your good work go on, and may it continue to do good. I remain a brother till death.—A. W. A., Tenn."

"Frank and Ernest: Enclosed please find a money order for which kindly send me five copies of 'The Divine Plan of the Ages.' I want to send them as Christmas gifts. The balance of the remittance is a gift to God which you may use as He would wish you to. I wish it could be more but I am having a trying time of it now. I listen to your radio programs and find you are doing wonderful work. I regret I cannot attend your lectures. My health is very poor and the trip would be too much for me. God bless you and may you receive the prize which God has promised to those who are working for him. Very sincerely yours, A. S., N. Y."

"Dear Sirs: I heard your broadcast for the first time this morning—the way you explained God's Plan made me more determined than ever to try and live as Jesus would want me to while here on earth. I am a young girl and love to study the Bible. May I have your 'Restitution' booklet. Thanking you in advance I am, Yours sincerely, K. L., Miss."

"Gentlemen: While sitting at a lonely cabin thirty miles from my town seat the radio was tuned on just in time for me to hear your program. I enjoyed your explanation of the Scriptures. I thought about my church and its members, and wondered just what could be done to get this message to them. After you closed the announcer said I would be able to obtain a booklet from you with more of what I had heard on the program. This caused me to wonder if I might be able to obtain several copies. I would appreciate it if you would send enough copies to supply ten young men.—I. M. T., Miss."

"Dear Sirs: As I listened to your program this morning with your questions and answers in connection with the Jews and Gentiles I was much interested. I would like to ask you a question about all of the people back before Christ came to die on Calvary. Will all of those people have a chance to be saved? Take for instance the people who died in the flood. I have often wondered about these, whether they would have an opportunity, but nothing is impossible with God. Perhaps God has a plan for those people also and a different way than which we have thought. Surely He must have had a plan for all the people in the days of Moses and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, yet Christ did not die until a long time after that. What is your opinion on the subject? Your tracts are very interesting and may God bless you all and may your talks reach the hearts of many people. Sincerely, C. D. K., Pa."

"Dear Brethren: One Sunday morning this summer we turned the dial to your radio program and heard the most helpful discussion, and ever since have not missed one unless away. We have intended sending for your booklets before, but sickness and various reasons prevented, so am enclosing a small

gift to help you in your wonderful work and also enable you to send all the booklets starting with the one called 'God's Remedy for a World Gone Mad.' We shall continue to listen and will appreciate being placed on your regular mailing list. Praying God's blessing on you and that many will come to know and serve Him better for having heard your broadcast, I am, Yours sincerely, J. T., N. J."

"Gentlemen: I have just finished reading for the second time your booklet, 'Christ Has Returned.' The Scripture interpretations presented therein are indeed fascinating. Through several years of Bible study I have gained a fair knowledge of God's procedure in the establishment of the everlasting Kingdom of righteousness. The facts you give in this booklet helped me to understand more than ever before the certain and absolute predominance of justice. With this knowledge is the incentive to complete uncompromising dedication of one's life to the Lord. May God through His grace support us by the power of the Holy Spirit, first of all that we may demonstrate the mercies of His kindness in our daily lives, and secondly, that we may proclaim the victory of righteousness on earth by the establishment of His Kingdom.

"If this booklet is the typical result of the activities of The Dawn I am interested in receiving further information. Kindly send me 'The Divine Plan of the Ages,' 'God and Reason,' and 'Hope Beyond the Grave,' also four copies of 'Christ Has Returned.' I am also interested in obtaining the set of 'Studies in the Scriptures.' Very sincerely, J. R. B., Ohio."

#### THE CHICAGO NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION

December 31 and January 1-4

ALL sessions of this gathering will be held in the Masonic Temple, 910 North La Salle Street. The convention will open on Wednesday evening, which is New Year's Eve, and this session will be in the nature of a Watch Night Meeting. Then, throughout New Year's Day, as well as Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the brethren will continue to enjoy the blessings of fellowship and service together; glorifying God, and building one another up in the most holy faith.

We have not been advised of all the arrangements, but we understand that every effort is being put forth to make this an outstanding gathering, especially from the standpoint of spiritual blessings for the consecrated. We understand also that there is to be a public witness for the truth, and that this will tie in with the weekly broadcasts of the Voice of Tomorrow programs which have been going out over WJJD for nearly a year. Let us pray that the dear Lord may bless the Chicago Convention to His own praise and glory. The Convention Committee advises us that the speakers thus far arranged for, are Brothers S. C. De Groot, Peter Kolliman, Chester Sundbom, George Wilson, Norman Woodworth and C. W. Zahnow. A cordial welcome awaits all.

# Speakers for Class Meetings

(For Convention Speakers See Convention Announcements)

**BROTHER H. E. ANDERSON**  
Philadelphia, Pa. .... Dec. 14

**BROTHER T. E. BARKER**  
Worcester, Mass. .... Dec. 7  
Boston, Mass. .... 14  
Lynn, Mass. .... 28

**BROTHER FRED BRIGHT**  
Baltimore, Md. .... Dec. 14  
Shamokin, Pa. .... 27  
Bloomsburg, Pa. .... 28

**BROTHER W. A. BUHL**  
New Haven, Conn. .... 7  
Reading, Pa. .... Dec. 14  
Wilmington, Del. .... 21

**BROTHER N. T. CONSTANT**  
Baltimore, Md. .... Dec. 28

**BROTHER A. C. FREY**  
Lancaster, Pa. .... Dec. 13  
Norristown, Pa. .... 3 P. M., 14

**BROTHER W. J. HOLLISTER**  
Paterson, N. J. .... Dec. 21

**BROTHER C. F. GEORGE**  
East Liverpool, Ohio. .... Dec. 14

**BROTHER G. S. KENDALL**  
Pittsburgh, Pa. .... Dec. 7

**BROTHER R. KREBS**  
Paterson, N. J. .... Dec. 14

**BROTHER J. Y. MAC AULAY**  
Glendale, Calif. .... Dec. 2  
Monterey Park, Calif. .... 3  
Hyde Park, Calif. .... 4  
San Gabriel, Calif. .... 5  
Los Angeles, Calif. .... Afternoon, 7  
Hawthorne, Calif. .... Evening 7  
Taft, Calif. .... 9  
Tulare, Calif. .... 10, 11  
Fresno, Calif. .... 12  
Oakland, Calif. .... Afternoon, 14  
San Francisco, Calif. .... Evening, 14  
Martinez, Calif. .... Dec. 16  
Stockton, Calif. .... 17, 18  
Sacramento, Calif. .... 19  
Berkeley, Calif. .... Afternoon, 21  
San Francisco, Calif. .... Evening, 21

**BROTHER M. C. MITCHELL**  
Philadelphia, Pa. .... Dec. 28

**BROTHER R. E. MITCHELL**  
Hartford, Conn. .... Dec. 14

**BROTHER G. M. WILSON**  
Duquesne, Pa. .... Dec. 7

**BROTHER W. N. WOODWORTH**  
New London, Conn. .... Dec. 21

**BROTHER E. G. WYLAM**  
Memphis, Tenn. .... Dec. 21, 22  
Atlanta, Ga. .... 26  
Nashville, Tenn. .... 28, 29  
New Albany, Ind. .... 30

**BROTHER H. L. YOUNG**  
Lebanon, Pa. .... Dec. 7

**C. W. ZAHNOW**  
Wichita, Kans. .... Dec. 1-3  
Albany, Ill. .... 9  
Chicago, Ill. .... 10  
Elkhart, Ind. .... 11  
Cleveland, Ohio. .... 14  
Saginaw, Mich. .... Dec. 20-Jan. 2

## THE PLAN OF GOD

(Continued from page 10)

tressed world, it is our privilege to tell others about it. The story of God's plan is a beautiful one. It is the real message of the Gospel, the "good news" that is centered in the redemptive work of Christ. As we have opportunity, let us tell the people that there has been no failure of God's plan anywhere along the line, but that it is proceeding according to His purpose and to a glorious consummation. His work in the World of Yesterday will not fail. His work in the world of Today has not failed. His work in the World of Tomorrow will not fail.—Isa. 42:4; Isa. 55:10, 11; Isa. 53:11.

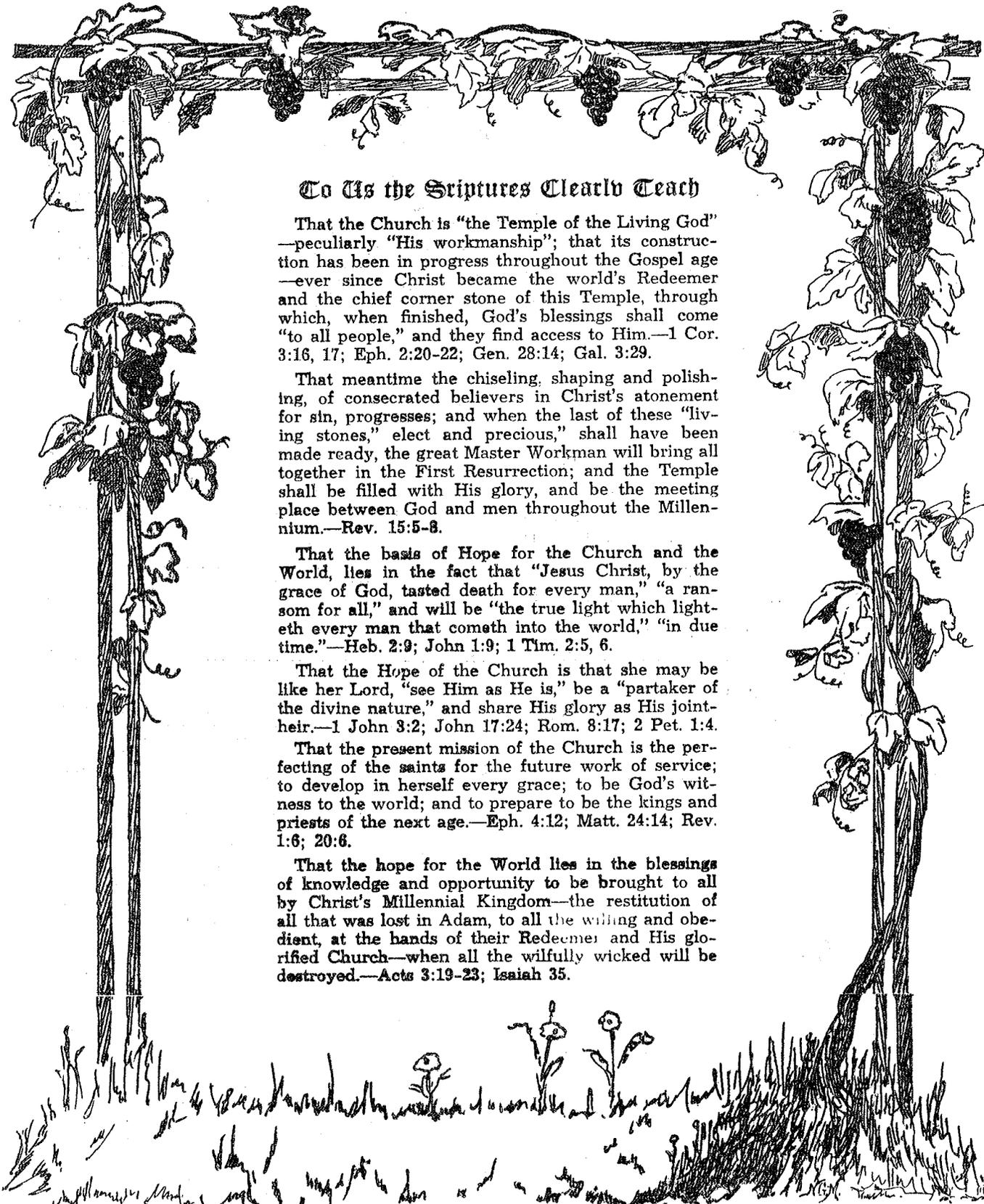
Because God's plan is soon to be completed in His World of Tomorrow, the whole earth will soon become a paradise, and all that was lost in Eden, and purchased by the death of Jesus, will be restored to the people. Thus will God wipe away tears from off all faces, and death will be swallowed up in victory.—Rev. 21:1-5; 1 Cor. 15:54; Isa. 25:8.

## FINISHED HIS COURSE

We have received word that Brother Walter Sargeant, for long years connected with the truth movement as colporteur and pilgrim, finished his earthly course on November 19, last. He passed away in a hospital in Lindsay, Ontario, Canada. Brother Sargeant suffered from poor health a great deal of his life, but continued to carry out the terms of his consecration despite this handicap. Those who knew him will rejoice that these fleshly handicaps will no longer hinder him in his whole-souled desire to glorify God whom, through the truth, he learned to love so dearly.

## GOD AND REASON

A more detailed discussion of the foregoing subject is contained in the 128-page booklet, "God and Reason." This booklet has helped many in their study of the Bible and it will help you. It outlines briefly the plan of God and shows from the Scriptures what the outline of present world distress will be. First copy is free, additional copies five cents each, in any quantity.



## To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach

That the Church is "the Temple of the Living God"—peculiarly "His workmanship"; that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel age—ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the chief corner stone of this Temple, through which, when finished, God's blessings shall come "to all people," and they find access to Him.—1 Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29.

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

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

That the Hope of the Church is that she may be like her Lord, "see Him as He is," be a "partaker of the divine nature," and share His glory as His joint-heir.—1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; 2 Pet. 1:4.

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

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