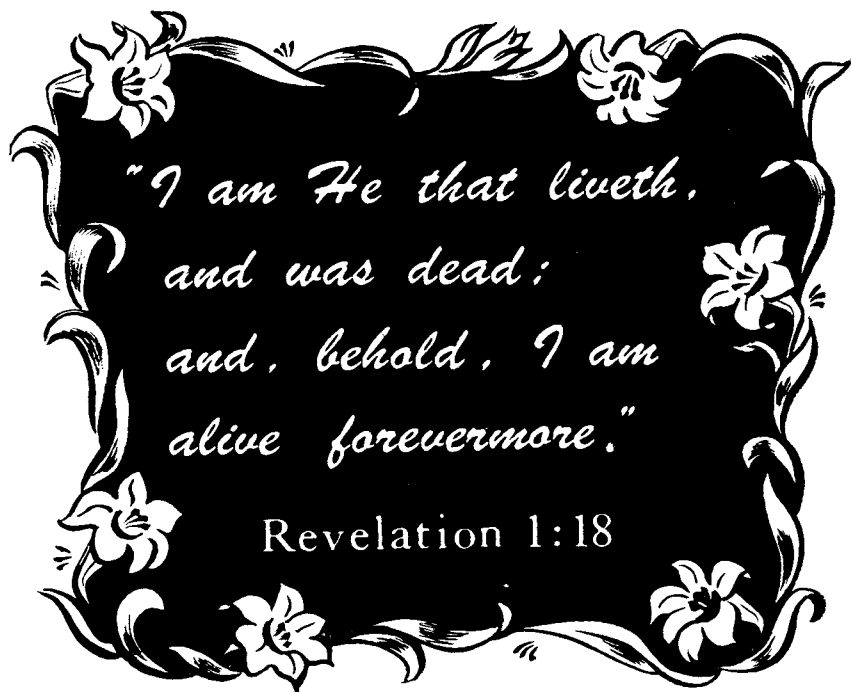


The DAWN



*"I am He that liveth,
and was dead:
and, behold, I am
alive forevermore."*

Revelation 1:18

A HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

April 1952

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These "Frank and Ernest" topics are scheduled for the Mutual Network. Topics on Canadian and other non-Mutual stations may vary somewhat from this listing.



Vol. XXI

APRIL 1952

No. 4

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

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

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

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

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

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

DANISH BRANCH: Dagtry Forlaget, Hyldebaer-vej 13, Copenhagen F.

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

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

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

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

The General Convention

IT IS not too early to begin thinking about and planning for the 1952 General Convention. It will be held at the Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio, beginning on Saturday afternoon, August 9, and closing Saturday morning, August 16. Rates for rooms and meals will be published later.

Home Recordings

THE KINGDOM SERIES—Six double-faced twelve-inch records; seventy-eight rpm. This series brings you six beautiful hymns (tenor solos accompanied by harp) and six five-minute "Frank and Ernest" dialogs pertaining to the kingdom of Christ and its work. You will enjoy these recordings and will want to play them over and over again, for yourself and for your friends. Six dollars a set; album fifty cents. Twenty-five percent extra in Canada.

KNOW YOUR BIBLE SERIES—Seven double-faced twelve-inch records; seventy-eight rpm. This series contains fourteen short lectures on the Bible and the plan of salvation revealed therein, in sequence. They are interesting and instructive. Seven dollars a set; album fifty cents. Twenty-five percent extra in Canada.

THE HOPE OF LIFE SERIES—Three double-faced, twelve-inch records; seventy-eight rpm. This series presents six "Frank and Ernest" dialogs dealing with the questions of life, death, and the hereafter—enlightening and convincing. Three dollars a set; no album supplied. Add twenty-five percent in Canada.

THE MEMORIAL DATE: The proper date this year for commemorating the death of Jesus is Tuesday, April 8, after 6 p. m. Many earnest Christians the world over will gather that night to partake of the "bread" and the "cup" which symbolize the broken body and shed blood of our dear Redeemer. Upon request we will be glad to furnish information concerning address of these gatherings.

Hell Gives Up Its Dead

"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."—REVELATION 1:18

DATELINED Palestine, nearly two thousand years ago there occurred the most dramatic news event of all time; but it was then hardly known except by a few followers of Jesus of Nazareth. Their Lord and Master, crucified by his enemies less than three days before, had been raised from the dead by divine power. And now, once again, we have reached the time of year when this greatest of all miracles will be commemorated; and for a short time, at least, many will give thought to this manifestation of the mighty power of God.

It was a miracle! This means that one of the great cornerstones of Christian faith and hope rests on a miracle in which the mighty power of the Creator of the universe was exercised to restore life to the One who had voluntarily died for the sins of the people in order that they might have an opportunity to live. The fact that Jesus was raised from the dead gives us confidence that every promise of God will be fulfilled, and that we can study his Word and plan in faith, believing that nothing he has promised is too difficult for divine power to accomplish.

The world today is filled with chaos and suffering, and the people fear that tomorrow will be even worse. The main reason for this is the inability of human wisdom and power to cope with the problems which have been created by sin and selfishness. Half the world is dreading the aggressive designs of the other half, and the only means of protection known to man is that very pregnable bulwark of armament. But the success of God's plan for saving the world from the results of its own sin is guaranteed by divine power; that power which the Creator demonstrated by raising Jesus Christ from the dead.

In the Apostle Paul's sermon on Mars' Hill he declares that God

has given assurance unto all men by raising Jesus from the dead. (Acts 17:31) It proved that God was well pleased with Jesus' sacrificial ministry, and it also proved that divine power is abundantly able to bestow the blessings of life provided for by the Master's death. In addition, this miracle proved that, supported by divine power, the resurrected Christ is fully capable of establishing divine control in the affairs of men, that the promises of his kingdom are certain of fulfilment. It means that we can confidently believe that in God's due time there will be peace on earth, that nations will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; for these are among the blessings which have been promised, and we know that his "zeal" will accomplish all his good purposes.—Isa. 9:7

Infallible Proofs

Luke informs us that Jesus "showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs." (Acts 1:3) The miracle of the resurrection is therefore well authenticated. Even after the resurrected Jesus ascended up into glory, and appeared no more to his disciples, he spoke to the Apostle John in vision on the Isle of Patmos and thus furnished another proof that he was alive. Indeed, he emphasized this when in the words of our text he declared, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore."

In various ways millions associate their own hope of life with the miracle of Jesus' resurrection. "Because he lives, we also shall live," is a common expression among professing Christians, and it is very true. But just how those redeemed by Jesus shall live, and where, and when, are questions which usually go unanswered. Certainly, not many are accustomed to associating the words of our text with their own hope of life through Christ, yet it is one of the most meaningful statements of the Bible bearing on the subject.

Jesus not only announced to John that he was now alive, but also that he has "the keys of hell and of death." Until Jesus was raised from the dead no one had these "keys." The world continued to suffer and to die, and there was nothing that anyone could do about it. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin." (Rom. 5:12) It was a just penalty, and could not be set aside, for the unalterable law of God is that "the wages of sin is death."—Rom. 6:23

So there was no solution to the problem of suffering and death. But after Jesus was raised from the dead it was different, for then he had the "keys"—"keys" which would unlock the great prison-

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house of death and hell, and set the captives free. Paul gives us a similar thought to this in Romans 14:9, which reads: "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." To be "Lord" implies having control or power, which is essentially the same thought Jesus symbolized by "keys."

Jesus' Soul in Hell

Jesus associates his death and resurrection with the fact that he now has the "keys of hell and of death," as though it were by his death that he secured these "keys." And it was. During the time Jesus was dead he was, in reality, in the Bible hell. This is brought to our attention in Psalm 16:10. This is a prophetic prayer which represents Jesus as expressing his confidence that he would be raised from the dead, saying, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

To appreciate the full depth of meaning contained in this beautiful expression of faith on the part of the Master, it is essential to take into consideration his use of the word "hell," both in this prayer and in our text, where Jesus tells us that he now has the "keys of hell." In the Old Testament, "hell" is a translation of the Hebrew word "*sheol*," and in our text it is translated from the Greek word "*hades*," which has the same meaning.

This Hebrew word *sheol* is the only one in the Old Testament which is translated "hell," but the same word is also translated "grave" and "pit." It appears, in all, sixty-five times. Thirty-one times it is translated "grave," thirty-one times "hell," and three times "pit." Since this was the only hell of the Old Testament, it was therefore the only hell the ancient servants of God knew about over a period of four thousand years.

In reality, it is simply the condition of death, or the state of the dead. Its meaning is defined in Ecclesiastes 9:10, which reads, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave [*sheol*], whither thou goest." This shows clearly that *sheol* is a condition of complete unconsciousness, which is one reason both the Old and the New Testaments refer to those who have died as being asleep.

In most instances the translators of our Common Version Bibles, because of their own misunderstanding, have translated *sheol* by the word "grave" when the reference is to a righteous person;

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translating the same word "hell" only when the text in which it appears is concerned with a wicked person. To surface readers of the Bible, this tends to give the impression that the righteous and the wicked go to different places when they die—that the wicked go to "hell," which traditionally—though not scripturally—is a place of torment, while the righteous go into the grave.

However, even this is not wholly in keeping with the traditional view, which is that the righteous go to heaven. Probably the translators hoped that the student, when reading a text which revealed a righteous person as going into the grave, would think of it merely as the body finding its resting place in death, since traditionally, it is the "soul" which goes to heaven.

However, in Jesus' wonderful expression of confidence that he would be raised from the dead, the translators used the word "hell" to translate *sheol*, even though they must have known that the text applied to Jesus, God's only begotten Son, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," therefore not worthy of being punished in a hell, as they supposed, of fire and brimstone. (Heb. 7:26) Why did they do this? Why did they not follow their usual custom and use the word "grave," when the reference was so clearly to a righteous person?

The answer, we think, is quite obvious. In the text, Jesus declares that his "soul" would not be left in hell. Those who translated our Common Version Bible did not believe that Jesus' soul went into the grave. They did not, in fact, believe that human souls, whether righteous or sinful, go into the grave; so they could not very well translate the text in a manner which would reveal the views of all Christendom to be in error.

Thus they used the word "hell," even though they must have known that it would cause some to wonder why Jesus went to hell when he died. They were caught in a dilemma, and chose the best solution they could. After all, traditionally—but not scripturally—those in hell are alive, not dead, so to put Jesus' soul in hell by their translation would mean that at least it was still alive.

We are not particularly objecting to the word "hell" as a translation of *sheol*, for after all the original meaning of this English word hell was simply a "hidden" or "covered" condition. It was only when the word was given a false meaning by those who did not understand the teaching of the Bible relative to death, that connotations of fire and torment became associated with it. The word

“grave,” if we think of it as a place of burial, is not a good translation of *sheol*, which denotes, rather, the *condition* of death.

Jesus’ “soul” went into the condition of death. The Prophet Isaiah declares that “he hath poured out his soul unto death.” Also that “his soul” would be made an “offering for sin.” (Isa. 53:12, 10) The word “soul” as used in the Bible means the “living being.” The thought of Jesus pouring out his soul unto death is simply that he laid down his life. He did this, Isaiah explains, as “an offering for sin.”

It was through one man’s disobedience that “sin entered into the world,” Paul explains, “and death by sin.” (Rom. 5:12, 19) Thus the entire human race has, in reality, been going into the Bible hell, the great prison-house of death. They are not suffering torture there, but are dead. The Bible represents them as being asleep; first, because they are unconscious, and also because in God’s due time they are to be restored to life by divine, miracle-working power. The reason for this is that Jesus, by pouring out his own soul unto death, redeemed Adam and his race from death. He took the sinner’s place in death, in *sheol*, *hades*, the Bible hell.

In our text, Jesus confirms this viewpoint, declaring, “I am he that liveth, and *was dead*.” Yes, Jesus was “dead,” from the time he cried on the cross, “It is finished,” until God raised him from the dead. He died, voluntarily, giving up in death his perfect manhood as a ransom, or corresponding price for the sin-cursed race, and thereby acquired the “keys” [the right or authority to open the locks] of hell and of death.

In a very wonderful promise to the Apostle Peter, Jesus referred to “hell”—*hades*—as having “gates.” Jesus spoke about building his “church,” and said that the “gates of hell” would not prevail against it. (Matt. 16:18) Paul explains that the church is the “body” of Christ, and that The Christ is not “one member, but many.” (Eph. 1:22, 23; I Cor. 12:14, 12) The word “Christ” of the New Testament corresponds with “Messiah” of the Old Testament. What Jesus and Paul meant, therefore, is that the messianic promises of the Old Testament must await fulfilment until the entire church is complete. And then, as the Master promised, “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

God’s promises were that, through the Messiah—which, as we have seen, is to include the church—the world was to receive life. The church, therefore, will share with Jesus in the promised work

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of blessing all the families of the earth, as originally promised to father Abraham. (Gen. 12:3) Peter explains that this "blessing" includes the resurrection of the dead. He describes it as "restitution," and asserts that there are to be "times of restitution of all things," and that this great future time of blessing was promised by the "mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:19-21

This promised blessing is sure to come. While each generation of the sin-cursed race has gone down into the great prison-house of death—the Bible hell—the "gates" of hell will not "prevail" to keep them there; for Jesus has the "keys" to those "gates," will throw them wide open, and will call forth the prisoners to freedom. The members of his own mystical "body," the church, will be the first ones to return from death through those "gates." Theirs is referred to as the "first resurrection," and the explanation given that they "shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years."—Rev. 20:4, 6

The church raised from death and exalted to glory and power with Jesus, will be associated with him in the thousand-year work of awakening the remainder of the dead—keeping the gates of hell open until all the prisoners of death are set at liberty. We are assured of this in Revelation 20:13, where we read, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them."

Yes, hell will give up its dead! The Creator, who gave life, has promised to restore life; and Jesus ratified these promises by giving himself in death as a ransom for Adam and his condemned and dying offspring. Through the substitutionary death of Jesus all mankind became "the ransomed of the Lord," and one of the reassuring promises of God is that "the ransomed of the Lord shall return [from death], and come to Zion [the messianic kingdom] with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Isa. 35:10

Three Great Miracles

Thus seen, that greatest of all events in human history, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, was in reality the first of three outstanding miracles in the divine plan to redeem mankind from the penalty of death and to restore the people to life. The

second of these miracles is the resurrection of the footstep followers of Christ, and their exaltation to the divine nature to live and reign with him during the thousand years of his kingdom. The third is the awakening of all who are in their graves, that they also may have an opportunity to participate in the blessings purchased by Jesus' death on Calvary's cross.—John 5:28, 29

Herein, then, is a sure foundation for faith and hope, even though the world today is more afflicted with suffering and death than ever before. In a prophecy concerning our day Daniel spoke of a "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." (Dan. 12:1) There is every reason to believe that this prophecy is being fulfilled in the present world-wide fear and distress of the people. The outlook would be dark and gloomy but for the fact that associated with this prophecy is assurance of deliverance, not only from the trouble, but also from death.

"And at that time," Daniel continued, "thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (Dan. 12:1, 2) The expression, "thy people," is a reference to Daniel's people, who in reality are the Lord's people, those living in this end of the age—spiritual Israelites. They are the first to be "delivered," and this takes place in the "first resurrection."

Then will follow the awakening of those who "sleep in the dust of the earth." When awakened from death, these will have an opportunity to accept the provisions of divine grace through Christ. If they do this, and obey the laws of the kingdom then in force, they will receive everlasting life. If not, they will be, as the Apostle Peter states it, "destroyed from among the people," hence will continue in contempt in the minds of the righteous.—Acts 3:23

It is a glorious prospect, both for the followers of Jesus, and for mankind in general. The fact that we are already passing through the foretold "time of trouble" means that these promised blessings of life are very close at hand. Realizing this, our commemoration of Jesus' resurrection this year should be more than ever meaningful and hope-inspiring. What if we are presently surrounded with sorrow and death, so long as joy and life are near; and the guarantee of this is that nearly two thousand years ago, God raised Jesus Christ from the dead!

The Earth Shall Yield Her Increase

THE want of sufficient food has been a distressing problem for centuries. Authorities estimate that two-thirds of the earth's population are chronically undernourished. This year millions will actually die of starvation and countless other millions will die from diseases which stem from malnutrition. Making the situation even more alarming is the fact that earth's population, at the present rate of increase, will double in the next seventy years.

When the kingdom of God is established, the food problem will involve more than those currently alive. Added to these will be the billions who have been asleep in death. The Scriptures are quite clear in teaching that of all who have ever lived only a few, comparatively, will have a heavenly inheritance with the Lord and enjoy a spiritual existence. By far the majority of mankind will be awakened during the millennial reign of Christ and his church, and be given an opportunity to return to that state of perfection which was enjoyed by Adam prior to his disobedience. Their needs will be those things required by any human being, and prominent among these will be food. Just how can sufficient nourishment be provided for all mankind?

The urgent need for food has been an underlying cause of many wars. Italy's war upon Ethiopia was for expansion, and among her incentives was the need for more food. When Hitler began greedily to appraise the strength and possessions of his neighbors, he was thinking not only of seaports, oil, and minerals, but also of his hungry people. Russia long has looked longingly towards the Ukraine and its abundant grain harvests, prepared to fight to the death any who would dare try to annex it. Japan's overt act of war at Pearl Harbor was partially prompted by a growing uneasiness concerning her increasing population and limited land area. How can we be assured that this plaguing problem of the past will not continue with us?

Some think that Western science and technology can solve the food problem immediately before us. Without question, mechanized farming on the great continents of Asia and Africa would immeasurably increase the world's pantry. Since 1837, when John Deere invented the steel plow, there has been a steady flow of inventions to

ease the farmer's burden. About the turn of the twentieth century, John Froelich attached a cumbersome one cylinder gasoline engine to farm machinery and thus man began to replace muscle with gasoline for agricultural power. The changeover was gradual, for as late as 1918 work animals ate up all the food produced on 90,000,000 acres of good farmland. Now power farm machinery is widely used in this country, and the results are outstanding. In *Steel Horizons* we read:

"Before mechanization, a good man, with cradle scythe and flail, could cut, thresh, and clean a third of an acre of wheat in ten or twelve hours of solid hard work. . . . Now his great great grandson . . . harvests up to 50 acres between breakfast and supper. . . . Corn planting is another good example. Using his hoe and a sack of seed corn a farmer could plant 250 hills an hour. His modern descendant . . . checkplants more than 500 hills a minute, the work of one hundred twenty men with hoes."

In addition, there is the prospect of adding to our tillable land great tracts which are now worthless. Dams and deep wells could supply the water to make gardens of parched lands. Even now bold plans are in the making to tunnel mountains and dam rivers so that water can be diverted from the moist Northwest section of the United States to the arid Southwest area of our country. Recently, Dr. Conant of Harvard, speaking before a convention of chemists, suggested that one of the great accomplishments of this country may be the harnessing of Solar power. This abundant source of power, said he, would make practicable the converting of salt water to fresh water and eliminate the loss of land now lying waste for need of moisture. We also know that scientific feeding of soil could cause land, now impoverished, to yield luxuriant crops.

Even with maximum yield and unprecedented land reclamation, some wonder if all could be fed. However, as man laudably wrestles with this problem, there are indications in the earth that God is doing something. It appears that he has taken steps to remove from "cold storage" vast quantities of land which ultimately will be required to provide for man's sustenance and habitation. In a recent issue of *Time* magazine, in an article under the caption, "Retreat of Cold," facts are cited to show that the wall of cold caused by the Polar Ice Cap is gradually retreating, permitting crops to grow on hitherto barren land.

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"The time may come when cotton will be grown in the state of New York and corn far north in Ontario. . . . Dr. George H. T. Kimble, British-born director of the American Geographical Society told . . . that the climate of the North Atlantic region is growing unmistakably warmer. . . . Along the bleak natural boundary between Canada's forests and the barren Arctic, the trees are marching northward. Saplings of tamarack, spruce, and birch are appearing where none grew before. . . . In eastern Canada, cereals can be grown 100 miles farther north than ever before. . . . Ontario is already experimenting with cotton. . . . In Russia the southern limit of perma-frost (permanently frozen ground) is receding northward up to 100 yards a year. Many Norwegian slopes are raising barley where only grass grew before. Even the fish of the North Atlantic are taking advantage of the change. The cod, which are very sensitive to temperature changes, have migrated northward some 500 miles since 1920."

These facts make one ask, how far north will the cold recede? Will the same action take place in the south polar regions? We expect this thawing out to continue until both extremes are entirely cleared of ice and the climate at the poles, yes, everywhere in the earth, will be pleasantly mild and suitable for man's habitation.

This expectation is not merely wishful thinking nor based alone upon the fact of the slow receding of cold in the polar region. Once before, the land under the ice caps was suitable for vegetation. Why not again? Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, the explorer, brought back from the South Pole region samples of tropical plants found under the ice. And we know that the same warm climate which could grow such tropical flora in the Antarctic circle also was present in the Arctic circle.

There have been found in Siberia complete mastodons embedded in ice, and, in the same general area, were discovered tons of elephant tusks. Although differing somewhat from our present day elephant, these extinct mastodons, in order to live, required the same warm climate and lush vegetable growth. And, of great interest, is the fact that these animals, found embedded in ice, had undigested food in their stomachs and unchewed grass in their mouths.

This shows that the change of temperature at the poles was virtually instantaneous, causing the beasts to be overtaken in a crushing fall of snow while feeding. These facts support a hypothesis of creation called the "Canopy Theory" suggested by Prof. Isaac Vail. See Vol. VI, *The New Creation*, p. 23. It has been observed

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that the earth has a crust composed of various layers, all of which give evidence of having been soft or moist. Beneath are the basic rocks which indicate clearly they were once hot and molten; indeed, it is logically assumed that if possible to probe deep enough, we would find the center of earth still molten.

Prof. Vail reasoned that once these basic, igneous rocks were at a white heat and so, all being combustible elements such as water and minerals, were driven off from the mass in gaseous form. These gases enveloped the earth, and the spinning earth would gradually set in motion these vapors. This motion would cause the mists to form in rings of various density over the equator. Hence in the dim past our earth probably resembled the planet Saturn with its "rings."

As the basic molten rock cooled the density of the gaseous rings would change, and those closest to earth would precipitate. No doubt these would fall at the poles, where repelling centrifugal force would be the least, and wash down toward the equator, laying stratum after stratum of earth's "crust."

The "Valian" or "Canopy Theory" assumes that the last of these rings was pure water and that it did not fall until after creation—more specifically at the Flood. This would mean that at the time of Adam's creation and until the Flood, the entire earth's climate was pleasantly uniform. The cloud vapor of water enveloped the planet and no direct rays of the sun pierced through to earth. Instead, the sun's rays were diffused, causing the climate at the poles to vary but slightly from that at the equator.

Hence tropical plants, such as Rear Admiral Byrd found, could grow in the Antarctic zone, and the Arctic circle had the warm climate to produce lush grass for the mastodons' food. And, in corroboration of the Bible, this would also indicate that no rain fell until the Deluge—the vegetation of earth was watered by a mist rising from the earth.—Gen. 2: 5, 6

When the watery veil broke, centrifugal force at the equator would cause the main body to strike at the poles. This would mean an almost instantaneous change from hothouse temperature to bitter cold at the poles and permit the sun to beat openly and hot upon the equatorial or tropical zone. It explains with logic how animals in the polar regions, while still feeding, could be trapped in an icy grave.

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After the Flood, God made a covenant with Noah that never again would all flesh be cut off by waters of a flood; and, as a confirmation of this he set his bow "in the cloud." (Gen. 9:11-13) In other words, Noah saw the first rainbow. In harmony with the Canopy Theory, this becomes most logical. Prior to this, the watery vapors encased the earth and the direct rays of the sun could not penetrate, hence there could be no bow in the sky. Rainbows are formed by the mists of air-borne water diffusing the direct rays of the sun, and breaking up the light into its component colors. When the water vapor is dense, no such phenomenon is possible, hence we only see such a glorious spectacle after the storm has subsided and the sun breaks through to pierce the thin mist of moisture still in suspension. How definite a reminder, then, is each rainbow, that never again can a watery veil break upon the earth in such cataclysmic fury.

We are again impressed with the fact that God knew the end from the beginning, and introduced human life upon the earth at the correct point in time prior to the Flood. He foresaw man's rapid descent into evil and the need for the destruction of the first world—"the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." (II Peter 3:6) We note again that his precise power has begun to manifest itself in releasing from "cold storage" the vast land areas of the poles for man's habitation. But what about this threat of a "population explosion"?

Statisticians have said that in seventy years our population will double. Optimistic scientists doubt that we could feed earth's billions seventy years hence even with the maximum yield of a fertile earth. God must have some provision for halting the propagation of man. Isaiah 45:18 reads, "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be *inhabited*."

This is in harmony with the Genesis account of creation which reveals that God commanded our first parents to fill the earth and to subdue it. (Gen. 1:28) The implication is that when a sufficient number has been born to fulfil this divine purpose, God will, in his own way, halt the procreation process. Surely the One who gave his human creatures the ability to reproduce his own species will

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have no difficulty in withdrawing that gift when his due time comes to do so.

However, the fact that human wisdom now discerns that the population problem could become serious in such a comparatively short time is strong evidence that a fundamental change of dispensation is very near, a change which will require divine intervention in the affairs of men to call a halt on the process of procreation which was instituted by divine authority and power more than six thousand years ago. And by means of this same intervention—to be accomplished by the agencies of Christ's kingdom—the dead will be restored to life, and all will be given an opportunity through the acceptance of the Redeemer and obedience to the laws of Messiah's kingdom, to live forever.

Yes, God's glorious plan of the ages answers all questions, solves all problems, and provides radiant hope for all mankind. As we consider his marvelous plan our reactions are much like those stated by Paul: "Oh the depth of the wealth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable his judgments, how trackless his footsteps! Who hath known the mind of the Lord or shared his counsels? Who has first given God anything, and thus earned a recompense? For all proceeds from him, and exists by him and for him. To him be glory forever!"—Rom. 11:33-36, *Weymouth*

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East Rutherford

NEW JERSEY

A Fellowship of Many Followers

APRIL 6, 1952

GOLDEN TEXT: "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples."
—John 15:8

JOHN 15:5-9

PAUL wrote, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28) However, in order that true Christian fellowship may exist among such a diversified group, it is necessary for them all to be "one in Christ Jesus." There cannot be a divided headship among true Christians. If one's loyalty is partly to Jesus and partly to a denomination or an organization, or to a human leader, his fellowship of the Spirit is destroyed.

Jesus used the vine and the branches to illustrate this fellowship of his many followers—"I am the vine, ye are the branches." The "branches" in this illustration are the individual followers of the Master, not denominational groups, as has sometimes been claimed. We can be branches only by being severed from all other allegiances, and united exclusively and fully with Jesus.

It is only by abiding in Christ, the true "vine," and the nutriment

of the "vine"—his "Word"—abiding in us, that we can "bring forth fruit." "Severed from me," the marginal translation states, "ye can do nothing." By the same token, a fruit-bearing Christian gives evidence of his vital relationship to the "vine."

What, then, is the "fruit" borne by branches in the true "vine"? Paul wrote, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22, 23) However, the matter of being loving, or joyful, or peaceful, or gentle, or of manifesting any of these noble qualities, might not in itself prove one's position as a "branch" in the "vine." It is only as these qualities result from the life-giving powers of the Word of God in our lives, and are directed in keeping with the divine will, that they can be genuine "fruit of the Spirit."

The fruit grown on the branches of any vine is not for the benefit of the branches, but is for the use and blessing of others. So it is in Christian fruit-bearing. Paul, for example, speaks of the "work of faith" and the "labor of love."

(I Thess. 1:3) Faith which does not work for the blessing of others is "dead." (James 2:26) Likewise, love which does not "labor" in the interests of others and to the glory of God, is not a genuine fruit of the Spirit.

Again Paul writes, encouraging Christians to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col. 1:10) In Romans 15:28 he refers to gifts made by Gentiles to their unfortunate brethren in Judea as "fruit," and truly it was the result of their being in the "vine," and the Spirit or nutriment of the vine being in them. The brethren at Philippi sent a gift to Paul while he was in prison at Rome, and he refers to this as their "fruit," or the evidence of their love for him and for the Lord.—Phil. 4:17

Jesus said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." We can do "nothing," Jesus said, if we are "severed" from the "vine." But if we are vitally associated with him, then everything we do will have as its highest motive the glory of God. This will not be a matter of repeating the phrase, "Glory to God," but of doing his will.

To the extent the power of his Word molds our lives into the divine likeness, his name will be glorified. Faithfulness in showing forth his praises by proclaiming his truth will also glorify him. The desire to glorify God will be present as a consuming zeal in every true "branch" of the "vine."

PHILIPPIANS 2:14-16

THE little company of faithful Christians at Philippi were among those in the Early Church who enjoyed blessed fellowship as "branches" in the true "vine." This was the first ecclesia to be established in Europe, and Paul was the one used by the Lord to present the Gospel to them. From this standpoint, we might consider the Philippian brethren as "fruit" of his labor. However, in chapter 1, verse 6, he properly gives the Heavenly Father the glory for having begun the "good work" in them.

The ecclesia at Philippi was an ideal one, apparently, for Paul commends them for their faithful obedience during his absence, and urges them to continue working out their salvation, and to remember that it was God who was working in them "to will and to do of his good pleasure."—Phil. 2:12, 13

Paul wanted the brethren at Philippi to "do all things without murmurings and disputings," and this in order that they might be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," adding, "among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

"Blameless," "sincere," and without "blemish," would seem to be nearer to the thought of the Greek text. These, of necessity, must be the heart qualities of those who "shine as lights in the world." It does not mean that we can be perfect according to the divine standard—although this should ever be our goal—but we can measure up

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to these qualities of character to the extent that the world will find no occasion against us. As it was in the case of Daniel, even his enemies could find nothing against him except as they set a trap for him in connection with his obedience to God.

We let our light shine by "holding forth the Word of life." It is true, of course, that if our lives are not "blameless," "sincere," and without "blemish," our holding forth the Word would avail nothing, and certainly would not glorify God. Neither would others ever learn the truth simply by noting the purity of Christian character in the lives of the Lord's people. Character development and active witness work are both essential in order properly to let our light shine.

Paul makes an amazing statement in the 16th verse. He declares that if the Philippian brethren continued faithful in holding forth the Word of life in purity of character he would "rejoice in the day of Christ," considering that he had "not run in vain, neither labored in vain." This places a very high estimate on the value of witness work. But let us not say it is too high. Certainly Paul knew the importance of obeying the Master's commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel.

ROMANS 16:1-7

THIS passage is interesting because it reveals to some extent how closely Paul was in touch with individual brethren in the Early Church, and his personal interest in them. In this chapter he con-

tinues to the 23rd verse to mention names of the brethren. All of these at the time were evidently associated with the Church at Rome.

This is the only time that "Phebe" is mentioned in the Bible. Paul speaks of her as "a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea." What sort of service she rendered he does not say, except that she was "a succorer of many, and of myself also." Some have taken this statement to indicate that in the Early Church "deaconesses" were appointed to serve. Cenchrea was the eastern harbor of Corinth. Paul sailed from this port on his return to Syria from his second missionary journey.—Acts 18:18

Priscilla and Aquila were greatly beloved by Paul. He met them first in Corinth on his arrival there from Athens. (Acts 18:2) They had fled from Rome because of an order by Claudius that all Jews should leave the city. Paul and Aquila worked at their common trade of tentmaking. Aquila and Priscilla accompanied the apostle to Ephesus, where they were instrumental in helping Apollos to a better understanding of the truth. Priscilla's name is mentioned twice (in Acts 18:18 and Rom. 16:3) ahead of Aquila's, and some take this to mean that she was the more energetic of the two.

Paul pays them a high tribute, saying that for his life they had "laid down their own necks." He was thankful for this, as were all the brethren who knew of their self-sacrificing service. They seem to have been well known to a number of congregations. At the time this epistle was written they

were evidently back in Rome and holding meetings in their home, for Paul speaks "of the church that is in their house."

Epaenetus is mentioned only this once. Paul describes him as the "firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ." In I Corinthians 16:15 the apostle also mentions the "house of Stephanas" as the firstfruits of Achaia. Epaenetus must have embraced the truth about the same time as Stephanas, and under the ministry of Paul. Concerning Stephanas and his household Paul writes, "They have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." This was doubtless also true of Epaenetus.

Nothing is known of the "Mary" Paul refers to in this lesson, except that she belonged to the church in Rome; and as Paul declares, had "bestowed much labor" upon him. She was evidently a faithful follower of the Master.

Paul refers to Andronicus and Junia as "kinsmen." This probably has the thought of fellow-countrymen. (Dr. Strong) He says that they were also his "fellow-

prisoners," and that they were of "note among the apostles." Paul does not indicate what made them noteworthy. In fact, we have no other information in the Bible about these two brethren.

The remainder of the chapter continues to list those to whom Paul sent Christian love and greetings. The identification of so many in the one congregation, together with the few details we know about them, helps to give point to the caption of our study, "A Fellowship of Many Followers." In this one congregation in Rome, there were both Jews and Gentiles, and seemingly from all walks in life; but they had all become "one in Christ Jesus."

QUESTIONS:

Are the "branches" in the true "vine" individuals or groups?

What is the "fruit" that is borne by the "branches"?

How is the Heavenly Father glorified by the fruit?

How do Christians "shine as lights in the world"?

In what sense can we be "blameless," "sincere," and "without blemish"?

In what way is the 16th chapter of Romans of great value to us?

Thomas, and the Risen Lord

APRIL 13, 1952

GOLDEN TEXT: "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."
—John 20:29

JOHN 11:14-16

THE Scriptures furnish very little information concerning Thomas, except that he was chosen by Jesus

to be one of his twelve apostles, that he had an ardent and genuine love for the Master, and was of a doubting disposition. This latter trait manifested itself in his re-

fusal to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead unless he could see the nail prints in his hands and the sword wound in his side.

The great love Thomas had for the Master is manifested in his statement to the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." (vs. 16) This was when Lazarus of Bethany had died, the two sisters, Martha and Mary, having previously sent word to Jesus that he was ill. At the time, Jesus and his disciples had gone "beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized."—John 10:40

Jesus went there to escape the wrath of his enemies in and about Jerusalem, for "they sought again to take him." (John 10:39) After receiving the word that Lazarus was ill, the Master waited for two days and then said to his disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." (John 11:7) His disciples questioned the propriety of this, saying, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?"—vs. 8

Jesus' reply seems somewhat ambiguous, but is evidently intended to convey the thought that there is a "due time" for everything in the Father's plan—"Are there not twelve hours in the day?" Jesus had not fled from his enemies because of fear, but because he knew that the proper time for his death had not been reached. But now it was so near that there was no point in further avoiding his enemies.

It was when Jesus made the definite announcement that he would return to Bethany that Thomas

replied, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." (vs. 16) It is this statement that reveals his love for the Master, a love so strong that for the moment he felt willing to die with him if need be. And the disciples were not wrong with respect to the result of the Master returning to Judea. In fact, the awakening of Lazarus helped to stir up additional anger against him, and thus to hasten his arrest and crucifixion.

JOHN 14:1-6

THIS well-known passage sets clearly before us one of the great objectives of the Christian life; that is, to be with the Heavenly Father in that "place" which Jesus went away to prepare for all those who lay down their lives following in his footsteps. "I go to prepare a place for you," he said. This is not one of the "many mansions" previously mentioned, for, as Jesus said, these already were in his Father's house.

It was difficult for the disciples to grasp the spiritual truths which Jesus expressed to them, although at times Jesus seemed to imply that in his opinion they should be able to discern more than they did. "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," he said to them. But Thomas replied, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

Jesus had just said that he was going to prepare a place for them, going, that is, to his Father's house. But they did not grasp the significance of this; so, patiently, he explained, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto

the Father, but by me." (vs. 6) Jesus was going to the Father, and if they also wanted to be with the Father, the "way" was through him, and by dying with him.

We understand the "way" to signify that through the merit of his shed blood we have access to the Father; while the "truth" would indicate that through his teachings we are able to know God's will in following the Master. Then, through his merit, and by faithfulness to his commands, we will eventually enter into life—the divine life, making possible our actual presence with the Heavenly Father. But Thomas, lacking spiritual understanding of what Jesus meant, was skeptical—"How can we know the way?"

JOHN 20:24-29

THIS familiar passage is the one which reveals most clearly the doubting characteristic of Thomas. At the same time, however, it shows, indirectly, his personal love for Jesus, for it indicates that at the time of the crucifixion Thomas was so close to the scene and so intently watching what happened to his Lord, that he had observed the wounds in his hands and in his side, and that he still carried these in his memory, refusing to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead unless he could see them again, literally.

Jesus was sympathetic toward Thomas in his weakness, and accommodated him. Thomas was convinced, and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." The use of the word "God" suggests again the strong personal attachment Thomas

had for Jesus, one which amounted almost to worship. And now that he had been convinced that his beloved Master actually had been raised from the dead, he could not hold back this expression of adoration and love.

Verse 30 explains clearly just what occurred in the upper room where Jesus appeared to Thomas and the others, referring to the demonstration as one of the "signs" which Jesus gave to establish the fact that he had been raised from the dead. Jesus had given his flesh for the life of the world. If he had been restored to life as a human being it would mean that he had not actually taken the sinner's place, that the "ransom" had not been provided. But this did not hinder him from giving Thomas a "sign," the one which alone would convince him that his Master had been raised from the dead.

Thomas was convinced, but Jesus observed, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." This principle holds true today in a special way. Many fail to appreciate the fact of Jesus' second presence because they have not "seen" him, failing to realize that he is no longer flesh, hence cannot be seen with human eyes.

QUESTIONS:

What two traits of character do the Scriptures reveal as being possessed by Thomas?

Does Jesus now possess a human body, marred by nail prints in his hands, and a wound in his side?

What is the explanation of the manner in which Jesus appeared to Thomas?

The Ten Commandments and Teachings of Jesus

APRIL 20, 1952

GOLDEN TEXT: "For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."
—John 1:17

MATTHEW 5:17-20

THE whole Law of God as given to Israel was summed up in the Ten Commandments. Laws or commandments are not needed except where there is sin, and Jesus was sinless. But because of his perfection of being, Jesus lived within—yes even above—the righteous requirements of the Ten Commandments. Thus he fulfilled them and demonstrated the righteousness of the Law, and that its requirements were within reach of those who are not fallen and imperfect.

Far from destroying the Law, Jesus strengthened it by showing that it could be kept, thus proving that it was just in its demands. He also revealed that its spirit, or intended meaning, was much more exacting than the Israelites understood it to be. The Law forbade murder, and Jesus explained that those who hate their fellows without a cause are guilty of murder.

It was a sin to break one of God's commandments, although not necessarily a wilful sin. But to teach men to break the commandments would seem to indicate a large measure of guilt. Jesus de-

clared that one being thus guilty would be "called least in the kingdom of heaven." To be in the kingdom of heaven at all will be a high honor, so it may be that Jesus is referring to practices and teachings which, while erroneous, are not wilfully so, and are sooner or later corrected.

The righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees must have been extremely negative, for Jesus added that unless our righteousness exceed theirs, we cannot be in the kingdom of heaven at all. In verse 43 of the chapter, Jesus quotes a law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." However, he does not say that this was a part of God's Law, but simply, "Ye have heard that it hath been said." Evidently it was one of the tal-mudic laws.

In Deuteronomy 23:6 Moses instructs the Israelites not to seek the "prosperity"—margin, "good"—of the Ammonites and Moabites, partly "because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt," and also because they had hired Balaam to pronounce a curse upon God's people. (Deut. 23:4, 5) But these instructions

were at the most simply that the Israelites should ignore these avowed enemies, leaving them in the Lord's hands to be dealt with according to the good pleasure of his will.

Perhaps the talmudic law, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy," grew out of these instructions to Israel concerning the Ammonites and Moabites. It is easy for the fallen human heart to hate, and it would be natural to exaggerate the Lord's instructions in order to justify hatred. Those responsible for these distortions of the Law hated Jesus because he exposed their falsehoods, and pointed out the course of true righteousness, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."—Matt. 5:44

MARK 10:17-22

MATTHEW and Luke also record the incident mentioned in this passage. Matthew (Matt. 19:16-30) refers to the rich man who asked what he could do to inherit eternal life as being "young" while Luke describes him as a "ruler." (Luke 18:18-30) From these two descriptions he has come to be known to students of the Bible as "the rich young ruler."

Mark informs us that Jesus loved this young ruler. Evidently he was a noble character. He assured Jesus that he obeyed the commandments from his "youth," and probably conscientiously so. But from the standpoint of the will of God as it applies to the followers of Jesus, he was still lacking, for

the call to these is to sacrifice both their possessions and their lives in divine service.

"Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor," Jesus said to him, "and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Paul gives us a further insight into this requirement of the narrow way—"Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, . . . and have not charity [love], it profiteth me nothing" (I Cor. 13:3) In other words, for our sacrifices to be "profitable" in the sense of securing for us "treasure in heaven," they must be prompted by the spirit of love, unselfishness.

The Lord's instructions do not call for a wholesale and precipitous distribution to the poor of all one possesses but rather a relinquishing of our claims upon that which, before consecration, we considered to be ours. We give everything to the Lord, and he makes us stewards of our "goods," and expects us to use them for the blessing of others and to his glory.

And we must give our lives also. This is shown in the invitation to the young man to take up his cross and follow the Master. Criminals condemned to death were required to carry their cross to the place of crucifixion. It will be recalled that Jesus was not physically able to carry his cross, so another was forced into service to carry it after him. Thus it was understood that anyone carrying a cross was on his way to death; and this is evidently what Jesus meant by the invitation, "Take up his cross, and follow me."

Only indirectly did the Mosaic

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Law call for the sacrifice of the individual; although this was implied in Moses' interpretation of the Law—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deut. 6:5) Those who love the Lord with all their strength and life will gladly lay down their lives for him if he indicates it to be his will. Jesus possessed such a love for his Heavenly Father, and it was the Father's will that he die for the sins of the

world. Jesus' response to this was, "I delight to do thy will, O my God."—Ps. 40:8

QUESTIONS:

How did Jesus fulfil the Law?

Did God command Israel to hate their enemies?

In what manner does a Christian bestow all his goods to feed the poor? What does Paul say on this point?

How did Jesus indicate that his followers are called upon to give their lives in divine service?

Did the Mosaic Law in any way imply the necessity of sacrifice?

Supreme Loyalty to God

APRIL 27, 1952

GOLDEN TEXT: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."
—Exodus 20:3, 4

EXODUS 20:1-6

MOSESES, explained the intent of the Law, in so far as man's relationship to the Creator is concerned, saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deut. 6:5) To this Jesus added that a man should love his neighbor as he loves himself, thus explaining the essence of those commandments which outline just and righteous human relationships.

The injunction against making graven images reveals God's

knowledge of the fallen human tendency toward unbelief, for it is difficult to exercise faith in that which cannot be seen or visualized. Those who resort to the use of images as an aid to faith and worship claim that they are not bowing down to them, or worshipping them, but merely using them as an aid to their worship of God. (These seem not to realize that by doing this the majesty and glory of God is reduced in their minds to the level of the image their physical eyes can see.)

Our faith should lay hold firmly upon the fact that there exists an

all-wise and all-powerful personal Creator, who is also just and loving; but it is a mistake to suppose that we are able to determine what he looks like, or that images can be made of him. (A mistake similar to this is made by many Christians when they think of the resurrected Jesus as having a body of flesh with nail prints in his hands and feet; whereas the Scriptures declare that Christ is now the "express image" of the invisible God.—Heb. 1:3)

In the 5th verse of this lesson is the first mention in the Bible of the fact that the Creator is a "jealous God." The thought is simply that as Creator and Life-giver he has the right to expect the obedience and worship of his creatures, and will not continue to tolerate any other attitude on their part. His active jealousy against a sinful social order is foretold in Zephaniah 3:8, where it is said that the whole symbolic "earth" will be devoured by the "fire" of his jealousy.

Jealousy in fallen human hearts often leads to malice, envy, and strife—works of the flesh and the devil even though to begin with one might have a just cause to be jealous. But all the elements of God's character function without malice, and are always under perfect control. Because he knows that it will result in the eternal happiness of his human creatures, he has willed that all insubordination to his law shall be put down, and that those who continue wilfully to disobey shall be destroyed. Thus his "jealousy" will result in man's blessing. He gave Israel an

opportunity to prove this as a nation, but the record is largely one of failure.

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." This expression occurs three more times in the Old Testament—Exodus 34:6, 7; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 5:9, 10. The thought of visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children through as many as four generations does not imply a continuation of God's wrath, but rather a gradual lessening of a particular hereditary disease, abnormality, or virus in the blood until it works itself out in three or four generations. Mendel's law corroborates this statement.

LUKE 14:25-27

THESE are difficult verses to understand, for they seem to imply that for a person to be loyal to Christ it is necessary for him to hate the members of his own family. The key to the right viewpoint is in the fact that the "hate" is supposed to include one's own life. This clearly shows that there must be another meaning to the word hate than the one ordinarily understood. Prof. Strong informs us that the Greek word here translated "hate," by extension means "to love less," and this, obviously, is what the Master meant.

It seems clear from other scriptures that the Lord wants his people to love their own, and to make proper provision for them. Nevertheless, he wants them to realize that their first loyalty is to him; he wants them to love him even

LUKE 16:13-15

more than they love their own lives. Indeed, he expects them to sacrifice their lives in his service.

It is this that is implied in the thought of cross-bearing. We have the privilege of being "crucified" with Jesus. The ultimate reward of a faithful Christian will be "glory and honor and immortality," but the only means of obtaining that reward is by being "faithful unto death."—Rom. 2:7; Rev. 2:10

An Old Testament prophecy phrases the divine call to the church in beautiful poetic language, saying, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him."—Ps. 45:10, 11

The expression, "own people," evidently refers to the immediate members of a Christian's family. He is to forget them in the sense of loving them less than he does the Lord.

The "father's house" seems to be a reference to father Adam's "house," the earthly home and dominion that he lost through sin, and which will be restored at the end of the Millennium to all the willing and obedient of mankind. Those in this age who consecrate themselves to follow in Jesus' footsteps, give up their hope of human "restitution," and receive instead a hope of joint-heirship with Jesus in the spiritual phase of his kingdom, to live and reign with him a thousand years.

IN THIS passage Jesus continues to emphasize the necessity of undivided allegiance to him and to the divine cause. "No servant can serve two masters," he said, and added, "for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other." The thought of "hate" in this instance is the same as it is in the 14th chapter. Obviously, a servant would not need literally to hate one master in order to love another; but it would be almost impossible not to love one less than the other.

The two "servants" referred to are "God and mammon," or the money god. The Pharisees did not like the idea that they could not serve mammon and at the same time be loyal to God, for they were "covetous." Their supreme love for mammon meant that they did not love God as they should, even though outwardly they professed to be very godly.

"God knoweth your hearts," Jesus said to the Pharisees. They were highly esteemed among men, but that was because man "looketh on the outward appearance." (1 Sam. 16:7) Inwardly the Pharisees loved mammon more than they loved God. That is why, even though they made a great pretense of sympathy for those in need, uttering long and ardent prayers to be seen and heard by men, they devoured widows' houses—that is, exploited the inexperienced and helpless ones whose interests they professed to protect.—Matt. 23:14

"A root of all kinds of evil is the

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love of money." (I Tim. 6:10, **Emphatic Diaglott**) There are many "gods" who attempt to alienate the affections of the Christian from the Heavenly Father, such as ambition, pride, vain-glory; and mammon exerts a strong attraction with many. If our hearts are fixed on the true God, we can use mammon in his service. We should always treat mammon as a servant, not as a god.

QUESTIONS:

How did Moses sum up the meaning of the Ten Commandments, and what did Jesus add to this?

What is one reason God forbids the making of graven images?

Explain the manner in which God is "jealous."

How does God visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the third and fourth generations of children?

What did Jesus mean by "hating" our own families in order to love him?

Why did the Pharisees "deride" Jesus for saying they could not serve God and mammon?

Christ Within

*A living Christ, of wondrous birth,
Who trod the dreary paths of earth,
Shedding abroad his holy light
Through the deep gloom of sin's dark night.*

*A dying Christ, whose precious blood
Seals the poor sinner's peace with God;
And fills the soul with fullest love,
Like to the joy prepared above.*

*A Christ ascended—all is done,
A world redeemed, a victory won.
With angel hosts, a glorious throng,
We'll sing with joy salvation's song.*

*A living Christ our spirits need,
A loving Christ our souls to feed;
A dying Christ, our ransom he,
A risen Christ to set us free.*

*This too our need—a Christ within,
A life with God, afar from sin,
A Christ whose love our hearts shall fill,
And quite subdue our wayward will.*

With Us in the "Fire"

"Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."—DANIEL 3:25

BY FAITH they "quenched the violence of fire," wrote Paul in a reference to the experience of the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. (Heb. 11:34) Faith is "the evidence of things not seen," and certainly Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, from the natural standpoint, could "see" no way of escape from the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar in the event they should defy his command to worship the golden image he had set up. (Heb. 11:1) But their faith in God's ability to care for them took the place of sight, so they were determined "to obey God rather than man." And one "like unto the Son of Man" took his place with them in the fire and delivered them from what otherwise would have been certain death.

Jesus taught that his followers should "render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." (Matt. 22:21) The Apostle Paul wrote that we should be subject to the powers that be. (Rom. 13:1; Titus 3:1) However, with the servants of God in every age, there have been times when their allegiance to God has prevented them from rendering unqualified obedience to earthly rulers, and they have had forced upon them the necessity of deciding what belongs to God and what could properly be rendered to "Caesar."

This was the position in which the three young Hebrews found themselves when confronted by Nebuchadnezzar's demand that they worship the golden image which he had caused to be erected. This was an especially severe test which had been thrust upon them, for it came soon after they had been given high positions of trust in the government at the personal request of their great friend and brother in exile, Daniel. From the standpoint of their own personal interests and advantage, it would have seemed much better for them to have obeyed the king's edict to worship the image.

THE DAWN

The Lord often tests his people by permitting circumstances to come into their lives which offer an easier way to serve him, and with plausible reasons why the way of fewer hardships would be better. It could easily have been so reasoned by the three Hebrews. Certainly their exaltation to positions of authority in the kingdom had been the result of divine overruling, and it seemed evident that the Lord wanted them in these strategic positions for the purpose of rendering some special service to him and to his people. This being true, from the standpoint of human reasoning it would seem foolhardy to take a stand against the king which would destroy this advantage, and cost them their lives as well.

But these ardent servants of God did not take this view of the situation, for a very definite principle was at stake. (The law of their God clearly stated that they were not to worship other gods, neither were they to bow down to images,) and these facts overshadowed every other consideration in reaching their decision. To them, no matter what good might result, or what advantages might be gained by yielding to the king's demand, to do so would still be disobedience to divine law; and like the Apostle Paul, they did not believe that they should do evil that good might follow.—Rom. 12:17-21

It is so easy, and so pleasing to the flesh, to fall in with the crowd, especially when the band plays, and the conformists are hailed as heroes and receive the blessings of the powers that be. This was the alluring opportunity offered to the three Hebrews, but they chose to be nonconformists, thus refusing the "deliverance" that was offered to them in return for obedience to Nebuchadnezzar. (Heb. 11:35) The issue was clearly stated, for a "herald," or spokesman, for the king announced to the gathered representatives of the kingdom, "O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltry, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: and whosoever falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."—Dan. 3:4-6

It must have taken considerable time to erect the golden image which stood for Babylon's gods; and the three Hebrews, being highly placed in the government, would be aware that sooner or later they would have to face the issue of loyalty to their God as against bowing down to this "graven image." It was not something which had been forced upon them suddenly when the band began to play.

Undoubtedly they had made up their minds in advance just what they would do when the crisis came, and they could not be swayed from their position, either by the emotional appeal of the "musick" or by the mass hysteria of heathen worshipers.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego trusted in the Lord. They knew that he was able to deliver them, and would, if he chose to do so. They did not know just how their God would intervene to save them. Faith does not need to know just how and when God will make good his word on behalf of his people. It is enough to know that he is "able," and that his infinite wisdom directs the time and manner in which his grace is made to abound toward those who put their trust in him.

Neither Daniel, nor these three young Hebrews, were popular among the other office holders of the realm, who were always glad when they could find, or even make, an opportunity to discredit them in the eyes of the king. And here was just such an opportunity. Doubtless the three Hebrews were especially watched by the others to see if they would bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's image when the band began to play, and when they did not, were quick to report their disobedience.—Verse 12

The king was, understandably, angry. He was a dictator over his empire, and was not accustomed to having his decrees ignored or flouted. But he was in a peculiar position. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego had been especially honored by him at the request of Daniel, and he felt under some obligation to Daniel because of the wonderful service rendered in the recalling and interpretation of his dream in which he saw himself as the golden head of a great image. Perhaps it was because of this, and despite his "rage," that he gave the disobedient Hebrews a "second chance."

Seemingly, the king spoke personally to the three, and asked them if it were true that they deliberately had not bowed down to his image. The marginal translation reads, "of purpose." The king did not doubt the report that had been given to him, but he wanted to make sure whether the Hebrews had wilfully refused to obey, or whether it had been merely a case of misunderstanding. To make sure of this he said, "Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same

hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"—Vss. 14, 15

The issue was now clear-cut. Nebuchadnezzar had not only threatened the three Hebrews, but had defied their God. The faith and courage reflected in their reply to the king are somewhat obscured by a poor translation. The Common Version reads, "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter." The Hebrew word rendered "careful" could more properly be translated "no need," as the Revised Version renders it, while the word "answer" is from a Hebrew word meaning "come back." It is rendered "restore" in Ezra 6:5. A free translation of the thought would seem to be, "We have no need to reply in a manner to restore ourselves to your favor in this matter."

Then they gave the reason—and what a wonderful reason—"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." (vss. 16-18) The king had endeavored to frighten them with the assertion that their God would be powerless to interfere with what he proposed to do. But this did not cause their faith to waver in the slightest.

"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us." This the three Hebrews knew. What they were not sure of was whether it would be his will to deliver them from the fiery furnace, but even if it were not, they did not propose to accept deliverance on the condition offered by Nebuchadnezzar. While they did not understand God's great plan of salvation as his people are privileged to know it today, they did believe that they would be raised from the dead—that death was not the end of their experience. Thus, while they were confident of God's ability to thwart Nebuchadnezzar's purpose to destroy them, yet if this were not his will, they would still be faithful to him and thus prove worthy of deliverance in a "better resurrection."—Heb. 11:33-35

God's Deliverance

When Nebuchadnezzar learned that the failure of the Hebrews to worship his image was by design, and that they could not be frightened into changing their minds even when another opportunity was afforded, he was "full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against" them. He ordered the furnace heated seven

times hotter than usual, and commanded that the "most mighty" men in his army be used to bind these disobedient ones and cast them into the furnace. The heat of the furnace was so intense that even these "most mighty" men were killed as they cast the three Hebrews into the flames.

The king had made good his threat. As dictator of the realm, there was no other course he could take. He had satisfied the demands of his "fury," and perhaps relaxed quite pleased with the thought that nothing could interfere with the supremacy of his rulership. Through Daniel he learned to know something of the ability of Israel's God, in whom Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego had such abounding confidence. But he had caused them to be cast into the fiery furnace, and their God had not interfered.

Seemingly the king was not wholly at ease, for he had defied Israel's God, the God who enabled Daniel to recall and interpret his dream when all the wise men of the kingdom had failed. It was not a reassuring thought. Under ordinary circumstances probably a king of Babylon would not be especially concerned over the fate of criminals he had condemned to death. But this was not an ordinary circumstance, and it would seem that as soon as the heat of the furnace subsided sufficiently to permit of inspection, Nebuchadnezzar went personally to peer into the flames.

We do not know, of course, the thought which went through the king's mind, nor why he troubled himself to look into the furnace. However, had he been sure of his position, he would have known that there would have been little or nothing to see in that furnace, except the flames. But he was "astonied" (Hebrew, amazed and alarmed) by what he saw. Daniel's God, and the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego had delivered them, not by removing them from the fire, but by preserving them alive in the flames.

The king called his rulers and inquired of them concerning the number who had been cast into the furnace. He was told it was three, but now as he said, he saw "four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." What occurred then is what we should logically expect. The three Hebrews were bidden to leave the fiery furnace, a proclamation was issued by the king forbidding anyone in the whole empire to speak against Israel's God, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were promoted to even higher positions in the government than they had formerly occupied.

His Presence

Many have wondered about Nebuchadnezzar's reference to "the Son of God." In the Hebrew text, however, there is no definite article to warrant the translation "the." The expression would be more properly translated "a Son of God." In verse 28 the king identifies this fourth one in the furnace as an "angel" whom the God of Israel had sent to deliver his servants. The expression, "the" Son of God, does not appear to have been used earlier than the New Testament, where it is applied to the Only Begotten of the Heavenly Father. In the New Testament, angels are referred to as "sons" of God. As for example, the "angels which kept not their first estate."—Jude 6; I Pet. 3:19, 20; II Pet. 2:4, 5; Gen. 6:2

However, the important consideration in this reassuring illustration is that God is able to deliver his people from the hands of their enemies. To Moses, God said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." (Exod. 33:14) This does not mean that Jehovah would be personally present with Moses at every step of the way, but simply that he could be assured that the Lord would know of his needs and supply them, of whatever nature they might be. In a beautiful statement concerning God's care over ancient Israel, we read, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: . . . and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old."—Isa. 63:9

The word "angel" is used in the Scriptures to denote a messenger. In the majority of cases it undoubtedly refers to heavenly beings, as in Hebrews 1:7, which reads, "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." And again, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Ps. 34:7) On the other hand, any agency or instrument the Lord might use to accomplish his purposes, is scripturally referred to as an "angel," or messenger; and while it is interesting to know just how God may be showing himself strong on our behalf, it is well to look beyond the "angel," and recognize God himself as the one whose presence gives us deliverance, peace, and rest. Nebuchadnezzar saw a "Son of God," in the fire with the three Hebrews, but realized that God was the actual deliverer for he had "sent his angel" for this purpose.

The Trial of Your Faith

"Without faith it is impossible to please" God, wrote Paul. (Heb. 11:6) It was the faith of the three young Hebrews that was on

trial—their faith in God's ability to deliver them from the fiery furnace, and their confidence in the wisdom of God as to whether it would be best to deliver them from the flames, or to deliver them in the "better resurrection." True faith in God implies more than a belief in his almighty power, for it includes confidence in the rightness of his decisions with respect to every detail of his plan for the whole world, and his will for us as individuals.

When we behold the marvelous works of creation, it is not too difficult to believe that the Creator of it all is able to care for us, and to deliver us from evil. But to have confidence in his way and time to deliver is more difficult. The three Hebrews had faith in God's ability to save them from the fiery furnace, but their faith also extended to the "if not" view of the matter. It is in this respect that all the Lord's people have their severest tests of faith.

"Fire" is used several times in the Bible to illustrate hard and difficult trials which the Lord permits to come into the lives of his people to test their faith and loyalty. The Apostle Peter wrote, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." (I Pet. 4:12) Peter also wrote about the "manifold temptations," or trials, which come upon the "elect" of this Gospel age, and explains the reason as being, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—I Pet. 1:2, 6, 7

We are given a similar thought in the Old Testament, where we read, "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly." (Isa. 33:14, 15) It is interesting to note that these passages do not indicate that the righteous should expect to be delivered from the "fire," but rather, that although they "dwell" in the fire, and the "fiery trial" comes upon them, they are not consumed—"they have no hurt."—Dan. 3:25

Peter wrote, "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." (I Pet. 3:12-14) Here we have the same proposition as that which confronted the three Hebrews. They

knew that Babylon's king could do them no harm if God chose to prevent him, but "if not," they still would not bow down to his image. So Peter wrote that no one can harm us, "but and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake," be happy about it, realizing that the Lord permits it for our eternal good and that his presence will be with us in the "fire."

Unto the End of the Age

The Scriptures reveal that throughout ancient times God used the angels quite frequently as messengers of his presence. We have confidence that this is still true. During the Gospel age, the Heavenly Father has been more intimately nigh to his people through the Holy Spirit, which Jesus likened to a "Comforter." (John 14: 16, 17) In his promise to send the Holy Spirit Jesus added, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [Greek, *aion*, meaning age]." The thought is that Jesus would be present with his people through the medium of the Holy Spirit.

And then, in this harvest time at the end of the age, we have the assurance of Jesus' personal presence with his people, and that he would manifest himself to them by serving "meat in due season"—rich spiritual food pertaining to the divine plan of the ages. To those who at this time are spiritually "awake" and hear his "knock," his promise is that if they will open to him, he will come in and "sup" with them. (Matt. 24:45; Luke 12:37; Rev. 3:20) How wonderfully these various expressions convey the idea of the Lord's nearness to his people in these special days of trial, the "evil day" which was to come upon the whole earth.—Luke 21:35; Eph. 6:13

Writing concerning this same time, the Psalmist said, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Ps. 46:1) Yes, a "present" help. He is not far away, but actually with us in the flames of trouble to prevent our injury as "new creatures" in Christ Jesus. (II Cor. 5:17) The "secret of his presence" is referred to in Psalm 31:20. It is the "secret place of the most High," and there we "abide under the shadow of the Almighty."—Ps. 91:1

Unlike Nebuchadnezzar, who saw the angel of the Lord with the three Hebrews, the people of the world today do not recognize that we have an unseen partner and caretaker who is tempering the winds and the storms of life that they may not "harm" us, who controls the heat of the fiery trials so that while the flames may burn the cords which bind us to a world like this, we are not injured, but purified, and made "meet to be partakers of the inherit-

ance of the saints in light," the inheritance of exaltation to live and reign with Christ a thousand years.—Col. 1:12; Rev. 20:4

Peter explained that no temptation or trial has befallen us but what is common to man. (I Cor. 10:13) This is perhaps more true of the immediate present than in the days of the Early Church, for then many of the saints were especially persecuted; although these experiences are also common to man, because of political, economic, national, racial, and other considerations, the human race has persecuted one another, and "man's inhumanity to man has made countless thousands mourn." At the moment, however, except mostly in countries back of the Iron Curtain, our trials come largely from everyday experiences of life, yet these can be very severe, very "fiery," and we would certainly be consumed by them were it not that He is with us in the flames.

And in these common, humdrum experiences of life our faith is just as much on trial as though, martyr-like, we were called upon to face a firing squad, or cast into "a burning fiery furnace." Perhaps more so, for in these everyday trifles we are tempted to feel that possibly the Lord may have deserted us. If suddenly confronted with some major test of faith, we would probably realize at once that the Lord's hand was in it, that he was trying us as gold is tried; but it is not so easy to believe that he is with us in the common things of life.

Your fiery furnace may well be those daily chores around the home. You may wish that you could be free and get out into the front line of the Christian battle, where you could witness for the Lord and tell the world about the glories of his kingdom now so near. You may wonder why the Lord does not arrange things differently for you; but have faith. His wisdom sees that you need to prove faithful by performing the common tasks of life. And remember that he is by your side whether you are in the kitchen, the laundry, or the nursery; and he is there to make sure that this drab life of yours is working in you "the peaceable fruit of righteousness."—Heb. 12:11

Other saints of God may find their "fiery furnace" to be the office or the factory, where by divine providence they find it necessary to spend most of their days. But the Lord's presence is with these, also. None of his people need ever to be alone. The only question they need to settle, and to keep settled in their minds and

hearts, is that they have not compromised with the forces of evil, that they have refused to bow down to other gods.

The situation today is quite different for the Lord's people than it was for the three Hebrews. We are not commanded to bow down to a golden image, although the "deceitfulness of riches" might tempt some to bow down to the god of gold. We are not called upon to worship heathen gods, but we need constantly to guard against the danger of bowing down to gods of our own making—"idols" which our wayward hearts set up in place of God.

There is the god of ease, the god of pleasure, the god of pride, the god of self. We might conceivably worship our home or our family, and allow them to take the place in our hearts which belongs to our Heavenly Father. We might have special or "private" interpretations of the Bible to which we bow down—"hobby gods," as it were. It is only by resolutely refusing to bow down to any of these modern "gods" that we demonstrate our faith in the true God, our loving Heavenly Father.

Let us resolve to be loyal to our God, not for reward, but because it is right. If the Lord delivers us from trial, which we know he has the power to do, we will rejoice and endeavor to use the favorable experiences of life to his glory. If he allows us to suffer, regardless of what may feed the flames, we will know that he is with us in the fire, that he has sent his "angel" to protect us from harm, so that when we reach the end of the way there will be "no hurt" to the new creature—all that will have happened being the burning of those "fetters of flesh" that we may be free, and exalted to rulership in the kingdom with Christ.

Moses passed through many severe trials, but God's presence was with him. Joseph was in a "fiery furnace" for many years, but recognized God's hand in his experiences, so did not hold it against his brethren that they had sold him into Egypt. The perfect One, Jesus, endured great "contradiction of sinners." He was not delivered from the flames, but was allowed to die the cruel death of the cross. (Matt. 4:11; Heb. 1:14) Stephen boldly preached Christ to the Pharisees, and was stoned to death. He was not delivered, but the Lord was with him in the "flames," and he had the faith and grace to ask the Lord to forgive his murderers.—Acts 7:60

So may it be with us. Do some of those with whom you associate vex and try you? Tell the Lord about it. He knows; they probably do not. These experiences are the "fire" which is trying

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you; but the Lord is with you, therefore nothing else should really matter. Are you lying prostrate with disease or pain? The Lord knows that, too, and he is with you in such a "fire" of affliction, and will not permit the flames to hurt, but only to refine.

The three Hebrews were exiles in Babylon, and were subject to the whims and wishes of the powers that be. They had little or no choice as to whether they would occupy honored positions in the government or be thrust into prison or into a fiery furnace, except as these changing scenes of their lives would be brought about through their loyalty to God. And the great lesson to us in their example is that they were loyal, regardless of the result.

So with us today, we are as exiles in the "present evil world." (Gal. 1:4) Although we are in the world, we are not a part of it. If we were of the world, the world would love its own, but we are not loved by the world. There are times when the world appreciates the integrity of God's people, as was true in the case of the three Hebrews, but let us not go the way of the world in order to obtain its favors.

Let us be true to our God, and to his standards of righteousness. Only our faith will enable us to do this, and to gain the victory. Let us not become "weary in well-doing." (Gal. 6:9) No matter how fiercely the fires may burn around us, and whatever the local circumstances may be that are feeding the flames that are trying us as gold is tried, let us ever remember the assurance that the Lord is with us, and because he is we will not be "hurt."

Thus may the example of the three Hebrews give us renewed courage to stand firmly for the Lord, for his truth, and for one another. Regardless of what experiences his wisdom may deem to be best for us, may our faith never waver in the fact that he is with us in the fire, and that our "light affliction" which is but for a "moment" is working "for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—II Cor. 4:17

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Approaching Mount Sion

HEBREWS 12:18-29

THROUGHOUT this epistle Paul has presented various incentives to faithfulness, and assures the Hebrew brethren that despite the difficulties of the narrow way of sacrifice the Lord's grace will be sufficient for their every time of need. In the 2nd and 3rd verses of this chapter he mentions the joy that was set before Jesus which enabled him to endure the cross and despise the shame which was heaped upon him by the "contradiction of sinners." And now, beginning with verse 18, the apostle, in a most eloquent manner, sets a wonderful joy before the Hebrews and before us, the joys of participation in the messianic kingdom with all the called and faithful ones whom the Lord will similarly honor and bless.

Verses 18, 19—"*For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more.*"

THIS is a reference to the experiences of Moses and the Israelites in connection with the inauguration of the typical Law Covenant. Similar language to this is used in Joel 2:1, 2, which is a prophecy of the "day of the Lord," that period in the divine plan when the long-promised kingdom of Christ is established in power and great glory in the earth. "Fire," "darkness," "tempest," and "thick darkness" are all used symbolically in various prophecies to describe the great "time of trouble" which immediately precedes the full manifestation of kingdom glory to the world and the inauguration of the New Covenant. The trumpet sound at Sinai might well represent the "seventh trumpet" at this end of the age, the "trump of God" which sounds in conjunction with the return and second presence of our Lord. (I Thess. 4:16) The "voice of words" would have its parallel in the "voice of the Archangel," which causes the symbolic earth to "melt."—Ps. 46:6

Verses 20, 21—"*(For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be*

stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.)"

"*THEY could not endure that which was commanded*": Exodus 20:18, 19, refers to this and to verse 19, which reads, "They said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." In Deuteronomy 18:15-18 Moses refers to this request of the people that God speak no more to them lest they die, and promises that the Lord will raise up another "Prophet" to them, from among their brethren, One who would be able to give them that which they desired at Horeb, which was life. It is this promise that Peter quotes in Acts 3:22, indicating that it will be fulfilled during the "times of restitution of all things" following the second coming of Christ. Thus again do the Scriptures confirm the fact that the inauguration of the Law Covenant is typical of what occurs following the return of Christ to establish his kingdom and inaugurate the New Covenant.

Verse 22—"*But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.*"

IN THE Greek text, the word which is here translated "come unto" is one which means "approached unto." (*Emphatic Diaglott*) The antitypical mount Sion is the Lord's kingdom. That kingdom was not established at the time Paul wrote this epistle, so it could not be true that the Hebrews had "come unto" it in the sense of being in the kingdom and reigning with Christ. But they were approaching unto that kingdom. The hope of the kingdom was their inspiration, and the goal for which they were striving was joint-heirship with Jesus in that kingdom. Revelation 14:1 pictures the entire "little flock" class, together with Jesus, the "Lamb," on mount Sion. In a prophecy concerning Jesus as King supreme in the kingdom, the Heavenly Father said, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."—Ps. 2:6

The church throughout the entire age has also been approaching unto "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." This is the city for which Abraham looked, "whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:10) It is shown in Revelation 21:2 as coming down from God out of heaven. It is another symbol of Christ's kingdom. It will not be a humanly constituted government, for its authority and power come from God "out of heaven." The hope of

reigning with Christ in this "city" has been one of the inspirational joys of the entire church.

In this "city" God, the fountain of life, will exhibit to mankind the principles of righteousness contained in his eternal laws, and show the people how to apply them in their daily affairs of life. The foundations of that "new Jerusalem" will not be a great army or navy, but the divine principles of righteousness and truth.

The church has also been approaching "an innumerable company of angels." This is clearly a reference to those angels which the Lord has made as "a flame of fire," and who have been sent forth "to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. 1:7, 13, 14) These holy and invisible messengers of God have had a very prominent part in the development of the church. We do not know how many of these unseen servants of God there are, but among them there are one or more assigned especially to us as individuals. All along the way, and in every vicissitude of life, our guardian angels have been present to guide us in the paths of righteousness, and to protect us from harm. What a joy it will be to meet and fellowship with them!

Verse 23—*"To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."*

JESUS said, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are made subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20) And we are approaching unto, and will ultimately meet with, all whose names have been thus enrolled. The "church of the firstborn" is a more comprehensive expression than the "church of Christ." The use of the word "firstborn" takes our minds back to the type, and to the fact that it was the firstborn of Israel who were saved from death by the blood of the passover lamb.

After the nation left Egypt, the tribe of Levi was substituted for the firstborn, and set aside to be the religious servants of the people. From the Levites the priests of Israel were chosen, the high priest being typical of Christ, and the under-priests representing the church of Christ. (Heb. 3:1; I Pet. 2:5, 9) The Levites in general were the servants of the priests, and represent those pictured in Revelation 7:9-17 as a "great multitude" who serve God day and night in his temple. Paul includes these in the "general assembly," by describing it as the "church of the firstborn."

And what an inspiration it is to know that we are approaching unto such a wonderful company of God's people! There will be Paul and Peter and John, and all the apostles and other faithful ones of the Early Church, besides those dear ones whom we have personally known and loved. It is a joy even now, at meetings and conventions, to fellowship with those of like precious faith, and how much greater will be our joy when, having reached the end of the way of sacrifice, we join this "general assembly," not temporarily, but to be with them forever! Who could faint, or grow weary when such a glorious prospect is held up before us?

And then, also, we will meet our loving Heavenly Father, "the Judge of all." Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8) Fortunately, the only ones who ever will see him face to face will be the pure in heart, and being thus pure, they will delight to be in the presence of him who is "Judge of all," for they will have nothing to fear. "In thy presence is fullness of joy," wrote David, "at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—Ps. 16:11

The "spirit of just men made perfect" to whom we are approaching are evidently the ancient worthies. They will, of course, be in the human or earthly, phase of the kingdom, nevertheless, the church will be in communication with them, either directly, or possibly through the "great multitude." All the ancient worthies were "just men," being justified by their faith. "They without us," however, as Paul states, could "not be made perfect." (Heb. 11:40) But with the church complete and beyond the veil, the making perfect of the ancient worthies will quickly follow; thus as we look forward to the glorious consummation of our hopes, we visualize, with the other rewards to which we are approaching, the great joy of meeting and working with the ancient worthies.

Verse 24—"*And to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*"

WHEN we get the proper setting of this passage, and realize that the Mediator of the New Covenant is but one among many things to which we are approaching, it is clearly apparent that Paul is not telling us that the New Covenant is now functioning and that the church is under it with Jesus as the Mediator. This is no more true than that the kingdom was established at Pentecost, or that the

ancient worthies were resurrected at the beginning of the age; or that the church throughout the age has had the privilege of fellowship with the angels face to face; or have had the blessed privilege of meeting "God the Judge of all," and enjoying the "pleasures" of his presence. In fact, just as all these joys are still future, and we are merely approaching unto them, so is the New Covenant. The text is a conclusive proof of this important truth.

We are also approaching unto the "blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than that of Abel." Abel's blood cried out for vengeance, but the blood of Christ will speak of justice being satisfied, and that God's love and power are ready to assist the dying world back to life and to fellowship with the Creator.

The idea of "sprinkling" takes us back to the type, when "the book and all the people" were sprinkled with the blood of the typical Law Covenant. The church "drinks" Jesus' blood, and is cleansed by it. (John 6:53) We are also represented as using the blood as a covering or "robe of righteousness." (Isa. 61:10) But the symbolism of "sprinkling" seems to have been used particularly to describe the sealing of the New Covenant. I Peter 1:2 is interesting in this connection, for in this text the apostle tells us that our sanctification, or setting apart to God's service by the Holy Spirit, is "unto" the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," not by that sprinkling. In other words, the purpose of our sanctification is, among other things, that we might participate with Jesus as ministers of reconciliation, or co-mediators of the New Covenant. The blood will be Christ's, but if faithful, we will have a share in the work of "sprinkling."

Verse 25—"*See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.*"

IN THIS verse Paul reverts to the opening theme of the epistle, that "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." And the reason these things we have heard are so important is that they represent the voice of God which has reached us through his beloved Son, for in these "last days" God has spoken to us by his Son.—Heb. 2:1; 1:1, 2

Verse 26—*“Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.”*

THE literal earth—that is mount Sinai—shook at the voice of the Lord when Moses mediated the Law Covenant. But Paul, quoting from Haggai 2: 6, 7, informs us that the heavens also are to be shaken in connection with the setting up of Christ's kingdom. Through Haggai, the Lord said, “Yet once [more], it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.”

The shaking of the literal earth in the type foreshadowed the “shaking” of the symbolic heavens and earth in the antitype. Peter explains that this shaking will be so severe that “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” (II Pet. 3: 10) In reply to questions asked by the disciples concerning signs of the Master's presence, he replied that the “powers of the heavens” would be “shaken.”—Luke 21: 25, 26, *Diaglott*

The reference in all these prophecies is to the present heavens and earth, the spiritual and material phases of “this present evil world.” (Gal. 1: 4) The spiritual or religious elements of our present social order are already terribly shaken, and they are fast losing their power over the people. This bears convincing testimony of the fact that we are at the very end of the age; that the kingdom to which the whole church has been approaching is now very near; and in the realization of this every Christian should truly rejoice.

Verse 27—*“And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken [margin, “may be shaken”], as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”*

“YET once more,” yes, this is to be the final shaking, and it is brought about by a “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation,” but Jesus adds, “No, nor ever shall be.” (Dan. 12: 1; Matt. 24: 21, 22) The things which will be shaken, or removed, during this trouble will be the ones “that are made,” that is, the man-made governments, institutions, societies, customs, and stand-

ards. These, for the most part being built upon the foundation of selfishness, will not stand up under the "shaking" and the "fire of God's jealousy" by which the whole symbolic earth is to be "devoured."—Zeph. 3:8

But there will be some things which cannot be shaken. These will be the things pertaining to the kingdom of Christ. In Psalm 46 we are told that we should not fear though the "earth be removed," and the "mountains" be carried into the midst of the sea. But we are also given the assurance that "she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." The preparation of the kingdom began at Pentecost, and throughout the age those associated with it have been approaching its completion, when it will rule the nations with power and in great glory. Hence it will never cease to exist, so is represented by Paul as "remaining."

Verse 28—*"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."*

YES, we are "receiving"—Greek, "associated with"—a kingdom which cannot be moved. Concerning it Daniel said, "It shall stand forever." (Dan. 2:44) This being true, "Let us have grace" or, as the thought here seems to be, gratitude. Our gratitude to God for his favor in extending to us the privilege of being associated with such a glorious kingdom, should move us to give all, even life itself, in his service, and to do so with reverence and godly fear—"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."—Ch. 4:1

Verse 29—*"For our God is a consuming fire."*

THIS does not mean that God is a torment deity. It is simply an affirmation of the fact that God is opposed to all sin and unrighteousness, and ultimately will destroy everything that is out of harmony with his holy will. He has made a wonderful provision of grace through Christ which makes acceptable the service of those whose hearts are perfect toward him, but his law still stands that "the wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6:23) This "present evil world" is now being "devoured by the fire of God's jealousy," but if we keep our hearts pure, and serve him acceptably through Christ, we will have an "abundant entrance" into the new kingdom, even the kingdom of Christ.

(Continued next month)

Armageddon

I have often heard of the Bible expression, "the Battle of Armageddon." Please explain its prophetic meaning.

THE word "Armageddon" occurs but once in the Bible. The common expression, "the Battle of Armageddon," is not a scriptural one, although Armageddon is associated with "the battle of that great day of God Almighty," for we read in Revelation 16:14, 16, the following, "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . . . And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

Students of the Bible have generally accepted the opinion that Armageddon denotes a great struggle at the end of this age with which the Lord is associated. It is our conviction that Armageddon is a prophetic symbol to denote the great tribulation of this present time, and that it precedes the time when Christ will institute universal and lasting peace through the establishment of his kingdom.

Armageddon, geographically, is the name of the plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon, which is located at the base of the mountain of Megiddo. It was at this location that many important battles were fought in

ancient times, and this has given it a solemn importance in prophetic study. The victory of Barak over the Canannites (Judges 4, 5), and of Gideon over the Midianites (Judges 7), took place there as did the death of Josiah during the invasion of the Egyptians.—II Kings 23:29

Israel was God's typical people and the events in their history are of special interest to us, for it is written in I Corinthians 10:11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [ages] have come." Thus we believe that God took a hand in the affairs of Israel, and overruled both their victories and their defeats in keeping with the over-all picture that he was making, "for our admonition."

Because God was interested in the struggles that took place at Armageddon during the Jewish age, the use of the word Armageddon in Revelation suggests that he is also interested in the struggle now going on between nations and people. As God directed the results in ancient times, so also he will direct the result of the present struggle; for the prophecies assure us that the forces of righteousness will finally be victorious through the defeat of Satan and his present evil kingdom. Armageddon, we believe, is used in the Bible to describe "the battle of that great day

of God Almighty" which will prepare the people of the world for the kingdom of God on earth; the kingdom for which our Master taught us all to pray.

Now or Future?

Do you believe that we are now living in the Battle of Armageddon, or is it still to be fought at some future time?

THE only way to find an answer to this question is through a careful study of the prophecies which apply to "that great day of God Almighty," for such is Armageddon according to Revelation 16:14-16.

The Bible speaks of the time in which we now live as "the day of the Lord" because it is the time when he intervenes in the affairs of men. Our time is also spoken of in the Scriptures as "the last days," not because the earth is about to be destroyed as some would have us believe, but because the last days of "this present evil world" are upon us. (Gal. 1:4) Our day is also spoken of in prophecy as "the day of trouble" which is a description understandable to all. Our day is also the time in which our Lord is present "as a thief," that is, unseen, but doing a work of which the world will, for a time, be entirely unaware. He is thus present during Armageddon according to the Revelator for, in the description of this great battle, we read, "Behold, I come as a thief."—Rev. 16:14-16

Isaiah 42:13, 14 reads as follows: "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jeal-

ousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once." In this prophecy, the trouble of the day of the Lord is described as coming in spasms, such as the pains of a "travailing woman." The Apostle Paul uses the same figure of speech in his description of this time in I Thessalonians 5:1-3, where we read: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

Since 1914, the year which marked the end of the Gentile Times, the recurring spasms of war and trouble are fulfilling these prophecies of Armageddon. However, other prophecies show that this day of perplexity will have a climactic conclusion, and because of this, some have thought that the term Armageddon should be applied only to the culmination of God's intervention in earth's affairs. In the prophecy of Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39, a description is given of the climax of Armageddon; here we are told that God will use his power to defeat the enemies of righteousness and usher in the kingdom which will bless all the families of the earth.

The Bible Harmonious

How do you support the opinion that the Bible is God's revealed Word, in view of the many contradictory statements which it contains?

WHAT may at first appear to be contradictory often becomes beautiful and harmonious when properly understood. Certainly such is the case with the Bible. It would be wrong to reject the Bible as God's Word simply because it is not understood, just as it would be wrong to deny the fact of television because the laws which control it may not be comprehended.

The seeming contradictions of the Bible disappear as we realize that the book is a system of truth in which is revealed the divine plan of the ages—past, present, and future. A text that is properly placed within the framework of God's plan will be found to be harmonious with every other text that is likewise properly placed.

Some texts contain truth that lies upon the surface and is easily understood and these stimulate further research. But the great truths that make the Bible stand out as a beacon are not found on the surface, nor are they given to satisfy the curiosity of unconsecrated minds. We read in Proverbs 2:1-5: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as

for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear [reverence] of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Here we are told that it is only through prayerful searching and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of truth that an understanding of the Bible may be obtained.

The Bible was written so as to remain dark for a time, and then gradually to unfold its truth as that truth should be due to be understood. Living at this time, in the end of this present age, the force of the Scriptures is keenly felt when we read in Proverbs 4: 18: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Those who seek to do justly, and who study to show themselves "approved unto God," and have the spirit of truth, will learn the divine plan for man, and appreciate the beautiful harmony that it brings to God's Word. (II Tim. 2:15) Our understanding of the Bible will keep pace with our obedience to God's will.

Wicked Destroyed

I know that light shining in the present century reveals errors of the past, but how can you explain away the fire that shall "burn up" the wicked who do not serve God, as explained in Malachi 4:1?

WE BELIEVE the answer to this question is to be found in the study of the text itself, if we approach it without prejudice; for this is one of the prophecies which tell us of the kingdom blessings. The verse which immediately precedes the

text of our question reads as follows: "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." (Mal. 3:18) Thus we are told that there will be a grand reversal of the present order of things—instead of the proud being set in positions of authority as now, the meek, those who are submissive to the divine control, will inherit the earth. (Matt. 5:5) If the discipline of the millennial reign of Christ fails to effect a transformation in the hearts of evildoers, they will be cut off as being unworthy of life.

The Lord's plan as we find it recorded in the Bible does not contemplate the perpetuation of the conditions which permit the righteous to suffer and the unrighteous to prosper. The prophecy in question tells of the day that shall completely consume the hypocrisies, the ambitions, and the pride of selfish men. It will also consume those individuals who refuse, under full light and knowledge, to come into harmony with the divine law of righteousness, which will then be operative.

Malachi 4:1 reads: "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Certainly this text gives no support to the belief that eternal fiery torment is the reward of the wicked, for the record is that they shall be

burned up, that they shall have "neither root nor branch." This language of course is symbolic, for human beings actually have neither roots nor branches; but the use of these words teach that the wicked shall be utterly destroyed if, by disobedience, they refuse the blessings of the kingdom, and that the pride and the selfishness which causes their downfall will also be completely removed in a way that gives no chance for future growth.

During the time when all enemies of righteousness and all evildoers are destroyed, the righteous of earth shall be blessed, and the next two verses describe their lots thus, "But for you my worshippers, the saving Sun shall rise with healing in his rays, and you shall leap like calves freed from the pen, and crush down evil men like ashes under foot, on the day when I take action, so the Lord of hosts declares."—Mal. 4:2, 3, **Moffatt**

The "Self-Existing One"

Who created God?

ACCORDING to the Bible, God was not created. He always has and always will exist. His name, Jehovah, means the "Self-Existing One," or "the One having underrived existence," and of course he is immortal. The Psalmist beautifully expresses the truth of our Heavenly Father's life by the statement, "Lord [Jehovah], thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

Honor, Shame, and Glory

"And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."—LUKE 19:11

ON APRIL 6 the professed Christian world will observe what is known as Palm Sunday; and on April 13, the resurrection of Jesus will be commemorated. Palm Sunday is in commemoration of Jesus' triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem, when he was hailed as King by his friends and followers, and when they "took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." (John 12:13) It was a moment of high honor in the life of Jesus. The Pharisees, in their selfish jealousy, were greatly wrought up over the situation, and said, "Behold, the world is gone after him."—John 12:19

The royal, or kingly, promises of God had all been made to the nation of Israel. It was to this nation that the King came in fulfillment of these promises. For this reason it was essential that Jesus should present himself formally to the nation as King. Besides, it had been foretold that he would do this, and it was essential that the prophecy be fulfilled. (See Zechariah 9:9) Jesus' disciples and friends were highly elated over this experience, for it betokened to them that the messianic kingdom was soon to make its appearance in power and great glory.

But, as Jesus said to two of them after his resurrection, they were "slow of heart to believe," for just prior to this he had related to them a parable, which, had they comprehended its meaning, would have taught them not to expect the kingdom at that time. It was the Parable of the Pounds. The opening words of the parable are, "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I

come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us."—Luke 19: 12-14

This is the parable referred to in our text, the one which was given for the very purpose of alerting the disciples to the fact that the "citizens" of King Jesus, the Jewish nation, would hate him and would not have him rule over them. But, for the time at least, the intended purpose of the parable was not accomplished. However, after they realized, through the compelling logic of events, that their King was hated, and that he might indeed be killed, they seemed to remember vaguely that the parable had said the king would go away, and would later return; for they went to Jesus on the mount of Olives, and said, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming [*parousia*, presence], and of the end of the world [*aion*, age]?"—Matthew 24: 3

This seems to indicate that for the moment, at least, they had grasped the idea that Jesus was going away, and that later, as the parable taught, he would return and reward his faithful servants. In his kingdom then to be established, they would be given responsibility and honor, as the King in his wisdom saw that they were worthy, some receiving "authority over ten cities," others over "five," etc. But their spiritual vision was not entirely clear, for when Jesus subsequently was put to death, they were scattered and perplexed.

Had they not been "slow of heart to believe" they would have known not only that Jesus was going away, but that he would be taken away from them by death. About the time when his friends hailed him as King, and the Pharisees became concerned that the "whole world" had "gone after him," certain Greeks sought an audience with the Master. The disciples reported this to him, and, in refusing to see them, his answer was, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."—John 12: 20-24

These words must have sounded strange to the disciples. Doubtless they thought that their Master had already been glorified. Had not the crowd shouted, "Hosanna, Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord"? But Jesus knew that this was not his real glorification. Before he could actually be glorified, he must die as the Redeemer of the world, for otherwise, like the

"corn of wheat," he would remain alone. Conceivably, through the exercise of divine power, Jesus could have established his kingdom at that time. But had he done so without dying to redeem the human race from death, he alone would have eternal life, while all his subjects would continue to die.

But again the disciples failed to grasp the significance of the Master's words. Later he explained to them that he was going away to prepare a "place" for them, and added, "And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." But Thomas replied, "We know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" (John 14:4, 5) He was right. They had not yet grasped the fact that Jesus was to die, be raised from the dead, and glorified as a divine being. Nor did they yet know the "way" to glory, although they had been invited to follow him.

Only a short time before this James and John had asked to sit, one on Jesus' right hand, and the other on his left hand, in his glory. Jesus explained that to share his glory it would be necessary to drink his "cup" of suffering, and be "baptized" with him into death. They said they were willing to go through these experiences, but their understanding of what was implied was evidently vague, for now Thomas admitted that they did not know the "way" to the place of glory to which Jesus was going.

"If I Be Lifted Up"

In another effort to prepare his disciples for the fact that he would be taken away from them in death, Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." To this the people answered, "We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up?" (John 12:32-34) The context shows that the "people" who asked this question were not Jesus' disciples, but rather those who did not believe on him, yet they understood from his remark that he expected to die, and that he would die on the cross.

However, as the "people" remarked, they understood from the Law that the Christ, the Messiah, would not die, but would continue forever. The disciples had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, so they, too, were sure that he would not die. Thus, their great faith in him as being the Messiah was one of the things which tended to obscure for them the meaning of all that he said relating to the fact

of his death and the establishment of his kingdom at a later time. This was a case of being blinded by a "dark saying," hence not able to see and appreciate its fuller unfolding.

It is true that the Messiah will abide forever, but first it was necessary that he should die to redeem those over whom he would reign. It is true that of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, but before he can draw all men unto him it was necessary that he be lifted up upon the cross to die, the "just for the unjust." (I Pet. 3:18) Thus it was that although Jesus' disciples loved him dearly, and would gladly have given their lives to save him from death, yet when he came to the end of the way, "then all the disciples forsook him." That is, none of them did or could understand the significance of what was taking place.—Matt. 26: 56

Shame and ignominy were heaped upon the Master. He was derided, blasphemed, and beaten. A crown of thorns was crushed upon his bleeding head. On the cross he was further disgraced, but one of the thieves being crucified with him, noting the inscription at the top of the cross stating that Jesus was a king, and grasping at a straw of hope, said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."—Luke 23: 42

And how clearly the Master had the whole situation in mind! In the parable he had shown that he would go into a "far country" and when he would return establish his kingdom. And now, although he was dying, he possessed unbounded faith in his Father's plan. He knew that he would receive the promised kingdom, and that its control over the affairs of men would re-establish paradise conditions world-wide. He knew that even the dead would be raised and have an opportunity to enjoy the blessings of that kingdom, and that the thief would thus have his opportunity, together with the others. So, grasping this very much "out of season" opportunity to give a witness for the truth, he replied, "Verily I say unto thee today, shalt thou be with me in paradise."—Luke 23: 43, punctuation corrected.

Jesus' final words on the cross were, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"—my life. Thus died the King of glory. All nature seemed to join in the mourning. The ground shook, the sky was darkened; and so were the minds of his trusting and now bewildered followers. The One whom they so surely thought would live for-

ever, had died; yes, died as a grim and confusing climax to that series of events crowded into his last few days which, paradoxically, began with their hero riding into Jerusalem as King, accompanied by the hosanna cheers of his disciples and friends. They had honored and exalted him, but his enemies had killed him.

Now Glorified

We all know what occurred after the enemies of Jesus had put him to death. Peter related this most eloquently, saying to those who had witnessed the miracle of healing a man lame from his birth, "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." —Acts 3:13-15

After his resurrection Jesus himself announced, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18) But he did not then exercise that power by establishing the long-promised kingdom. Instead, and as he had foretold in the parable, after he appeared to his disciples a few times, "he went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." (Luke 19:12) But he commissioned his disciples to represent him, to "occupy" until he returned. They were to be his witnesses throughout the entire world, proclaiming the fact that he would return, and that then the kingdom of God would be set up in the earth, and that through that kingdom all the families of the earth would be blessed.

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the waiting disciples to empower them properly to represent their absent Lord. By its enlightening influence, great truths stated to them by Jesus, and outlined by the prophets, became understandable. They now saw clearly what Jesus meant by taking up their cross and following him into death. How could they, prior to this, know the meaning of dying with Jesus when they did not believe Jesus would die? Their only thought then was that they would reign with the Master, and when James and John requested special positions of honor in his kingdom, the other ten were disturbed, and complained.

Now they knew that they would have to drink of his "cup" and be "baptized" with his baptism in order to prove worthy of reigning

with him, and they preached it to those who had ears to hear. Nor did they now have any illusions that the kingdom would be immediately set up. They knew that Jesus had gone into the "far country" of the parable, even heaven itself; and as all their hopes of life and glory centered in his promise to return, they looked forward to his "glorious appearing," while daily they presented their bodies a living sacrifice in his service.

Soon after the apostles fell asleep in death, the church began to lose sight of the glorious hope of the Master's return. Ignoring his teachings on the subject, many tried to imagine that the kingdom of Christ was merely a holy influence in the lives of believers, and that when the whole world became believers, his kingdom would have fully come. Others ambitiously endeavored to exercise kingly authority through the arm of civil power. Between these two blinding errors, the hope of Christ's return to set up his kingdom was lost by the vast majority of his professed followers.

Jesus expected that matters would turn out this way, and related a number of parables in which he foretold this apostasy of the kingdom hope. Speaking of the time of his return, he said, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) Many still profess to believe in his teachings, but they have no hope that divine power will actually be used to establish his kingdom. Millions this year, as every year, will go to church on April 13 as a token of their belief that Jesus was raised from the dead, oblivious of the fact that divine power did not cease to operate for the ultimate blessing of mankind when that mighty miracle was performed.

Yet this is the real essence of the resurrection story to all who know the plan of God and have confidence in his ability to perform all his good pleasure. The fact that the King of glory was killed did not interfere with the outworking of God's plan. Nor do nineteen centuries of bloodshed among the nations, and divisions, strife, and persecution among the professed people of God, mean that *the fulfilment* of his kingdom promises has failed, or has been delayed.

To us the risen Christ is a sure token that all of God's good purposes will come to pass! And now that his second presence has become evident to the faithful watchers, and therefore the kingdom so near, our hearts should truly burn within us as we meditate on the kingdom theme, discuss it with one another, and proclaim it to

the whole world. As shown in the parable, it is after the king's return that he reckons with his servants, and it is our privilege now to prove our worthiness of reigning with him by faithfully using the "pound" which he has entrusted to us. Let's not hide it in a napkin!

The commission Jesus gave to his disciples to preach the Gospel is just as binding upon us as it was upon them. When the women first met the risen Lord by the empty tomb, the instruction of the angel to them was, "Go your way, tell his disciples." (Mark 16:7) So, today, our message still is, "The Lord is risen indeed." The greatest miracle of all time was performed. The Lord of hosts by his "zeal" manifested his ability to perform all his good pleasure. Now we can witness to the fact that God's miracle-working power will continue to operate for the establishment and manifestation of the messianic kingdom, that the hope of the world does not rest in the frustrated plans and efforts of the institutions of men.

When the women bore the glad tidings of Jesus' resurrection to the disciples, their message was looked upon as "idle tales." It is still thus with the majority of those to whom we bear witness. But some believe, and as the utter failure of human plans becomes more and more apparent, greater numbers will turn aside from their mad rush for pleasure and gold, to give ear to the tidings that the King has returned, that The Prince of Peace is here, and that soon God's good will toward all the families of the earth will be revealed by the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."—Rev. 22:1

So dear brethren, continue to "go your way and tell" the glad tidings. Let us tell it in every way we can. Co-operatively, let us continue to tell it over the radio; in public meetings, and in tracting parties. Individually, let us be on the alert to use our every opportunity to "tell" the glad tidings, either by word of mouth or by the printed page. Never were there such golden opportunities for making known the glad tidings!

It was difficult for the disciples in Jesus' day to realize that the kingdom was not then "immediately to appear," but no longer is this true; for the King has returned, the kingdom is at hand. The wrath of the enemies that slew him has been overruled by God for the redemption of the world, and he has been raised from the dead and glorified. He no longer remains in the "far country." The

THE DAWN

heavens no longer retain him. He is even now reckoning with his servants. He is serving his household with "meat in due season." The bright-shining of his presence is enlightening and warming the hearts of his people, where the "Day Star" has already arisen. How can any of us, then, hold back from giving all that we have and are in proving our worthiness of being glorified together with him, that we may live and reign with him a thousand years.

*"Christ is come! now let creation
From her groans and travails cease;
Let the glorious proclamation
Hope restore and faith increase.*

*"Earth can yet but read the story
Of his cross and dying pain;
But shall soon behold his glory;
For he cometh now to reign.*

...

*"With this blessed hope before us,
Let no harp remain unstrung;
Let the mighty ransomed chorus
Onward roll from tongue to tongue."*

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

APRIL 3—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."—Romans 13:12 (Z. '03-122. Hymn 254)

APRIL 10—"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—I Peter 5:6 (Z. '93-7. Hymn 208)

APRIL 17—"The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you."—I John 2:27 (Z. '03-223. Hymn 154)

APRIL 24—"Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification."—Romans 15:2 (Z. '03-406, 407. Hymn 71)

Searching the Scriptures

"The Jews at Berea were of a nobler disposition than those in Thessalonica, for they very readily received the message, and day after day searched the Scriptures to see whether it was as Paul stated. As the result, many of them became believers, and so did not a few of the Greeks—gentlewomen of good position, and men."

—Acts 17:11, 12 (Weymouth)

BEFORE the Apostle Paul reached Berea he had been in Thessalonica where, according to his custom, he visited a synagogue of the Jews, and on three sabbaths he reasoned with them from the Scriptures. (Acts 17:2, **Diaglott**) The Greek word in this account which is translated "reasoned" is **dialogomai**, meaning a dialogue, or discussion. The same Greek word appears in various other scriptures, emphasizing that this method of proclaiming and teaching the truth was then in common use. While the dialogue or discussion method of proclaiming the truth is not now generally used among Christians, it still is an excellent one, because it helps the interested listeners to find answers to their own questions.

It was by reasoning or discussing the Gospel message with his hear-

ers that Paul opened up the Scriptures to them, unfolding that which was hitherto concealed or obscure; "alleging"—laying down the proposition—"that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus . . . is Christ." (Acts 17:2, 3) Doubtless other important features of the truth were also explained to these devout Jews; but the highlight of Paul's reasoning seems to have been, "This Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

From Thessalonica Paul journeyed to Berea. Realizing the importance of his commission to proclaim the Gospel, upon reaching this new field he again lost no time in locating the synagogue. Here he found some who were very susceptible to the truth, and "more noble than those in Thessalonica." The Greek word here translated "noble" seems to suggest persons of noble birth. However, true nobility implies reasonableness, as distinguished from prejudice. Actually, those of so-called noble birth are often the least susceptible to the truth.

The Bereans were reasonable—and, from this standpoint, truly noble—for they welcomed the servants of God who drew their attention particularly to the things written, and showed that the Gospel they were proclaiming was the same good news which had been previously expressed by the holy prophets. With all readiness of

mind these Bereans began to examine the Scriptures—not merely on the sabbath days, but daily—to determine how well Paul's reasonings and arguments were supported by the testimony of the Law and the prophets.

As could be expected, many of the noble Bereans accepted the good tidings. Compared with those of Thessalonica, these Bereans were more generous and noble in their feelings—more disposed to inquire candidly into the teachings being advanced to them. They did not reject and spurn it as unworthy of examination.

It was proper that the Bereans should search the Scriptures to make sure that the teachings of Paul agreed with the inspired record. It is also our obligation now to search the Scriptures, to prove whether the teachings being advanced to us are true or false. We are to "examine all things, and hold fast the good." (I Thess. 5:21, **Diaglott**) "To the Law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them."—Isa. 8:20

The entire testimony of the Scriptures (allowing for interpolations and faulty translations) is harmonious, whether it be communicated by the Law, the prophets, the Lord Jesus, or the apostles. This harmony is one of the proofs of the divine inspiration of the Bible. The testimony of Jesus and the apostles reveals things new and also confirms the old. Thus the entire Word of God becomes increasingly stimulating the more we study it in sincerity and in truth.

If we are like the noble Bereans we also will zealously and daily search the Scriptures, in the consciousness that the full testimony of the Word is to be our guide. Paul wrote, "All Scripture, divinely inspired, is indeed profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for that discipline which is in righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted for every good work."—II Tim. 3:16, 17, **Diaglott**

A knowledge of the truth is essential in order to possess the spirit of the truth. However, one might have much knowledge of the Scriptures, yet be sadly lacking in the spirit of that knowledge. To receive the spirit of the truth—which is an essential in the Christian walk—it is necessary to come into heart harmony with the truth; into mental accord and co-operation with the divine will as expressed in the Word of God. This condition can be attained only by first accepting the Lord Jesus as our personal Saviour and then consecrating oneself unreservedly to do God's will.

As a part of the divine will, there will come to us in due course the great privilege of proclaiming, or testifying to, the true Gospel as it has so graciously been revealed to us. Then we will find it appropriate and effective to use much the same method as did the Apostle Paul—the reasoning, or dialogue method (**dialogomai**). Not many have the opportunity of proclaiming the truth in lecture form from the public platform, but we can all find opportunities to reason with those with whom we come in

THE BRITISH SECTION

contact, thus setting forth to them the good news and encouraging them to read the Word and to meditate upon it. Thus we will prove ourselves to be "approved workmen, irreproachable, rightly treating the Word of truth."—II Tim. 2:15, **Diaglott**

The "Frank and Ernest" dialogues, or reasonings, upon the Scriptures, being broadcast over Radio Luxembourg, are continuing to be very widely blessed by the Lord. For this we here in the British Isles are deeply grateful. The number of very encouraging letters from listeners is increasing heavily.

Just as the noble Bereans of old were encouraged to search the Scriptures that they might become better acquainted with the glorious message which it contains, so today many are turning to their Bibles with renewed interest to see if these things be true; and as they do, they are obtaining a fuller understanding of the divine plan. Here are a few examples, briefly stated:

"You are sending us back to our Bibles."—G. H., Erin

"I greatly enjoy your radio programmes each Monday, and am much helped in a better understanding of God's Word."—A. A., Northern Ireland

"These broadcasts certainly encourage a close study of the Scriptures."—T. H., England

"Your little chats together make the teachings of God's Word so very clear."—F. B., Northern Ireland

"I enjoy your Bible broadcasts, and they have helped me to understand more fully the points in the Bible that you have discussed."—L. W., Scotland

"Your broadcasts are very helpful to us, as we seek to know more of our Bible."—E. and M., Northern Ireland

"I have listened, and your programs make the Bible so much easier to understand."—M. S., England

Surely those who are enjoying the light of present truth, and who realize that it was through the sacrifice of the Lord's people that it was brought to them, will rejoice that the message is still going forth in various ways to bless those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Although the hour is late when the program is on, nevertheless, many thousands in the British Isles are hearing the message every week over Radio Luxembourg. It is the Lord's doing, and marvelous in our eyes. Following are a few more examples of letters being received:

Desiring a Better Understanding

"Dear Brethren: Just a line to say how much we appreciate your broadcasts. I will be very grateful if you will send me a copy of 'God and Reason,' or any other book will be gladly accepted. Reading these books helps us to come to a better understanding of God's Word, and we must study if we want to serve him. Yours in his service, I. C., Scotland."

Most Interesting

"Dear Sirs: I have been listening to your religious questions and answers, and find them most interesting. I pray God that these discussions will help many to know the Lord and his teachings better. May God bless you. Yours in Christ, J. M., England."

Wanting to Hear More

"Dear Sirs: We owe a great deal more than we can ever repay for the way you make us understand the Bible, and take us so near to our Saviour, Jesus Christ. You make every word so un-

THE DAWN

derstandable, and give us such a complete picture of the Bible. We don't get enough of 'Frank and Ernest.' You may be sure that every time you are on the air I am listening to you with all my heart. Yours truly, J. Mc. I., Scotland."

Should Stop and Listen

"Dear 'Frank and Ernest': Will you please send me a copy of the 'Hope' book. I am very interested in the explanations you broadcast concerning the Bible. You make it all sound so simple and easy to understand. If only the people would stop and listen to the Lord's Word I am sure we would not have so much talk of wars and destruction. God bless you both. Yours sincerely, H. K., Scotland."

Very Enlightening

"Dear 'Frank and Ernest': I would be very happy if you could send me a copy of your 'Hope' book. I find your programme very enlightening. Your explanations of the Bible are very clear, and are most comforting. I always look forward to that peaceful quarter of an hour. Yours faithfully, A. T., Scotland."

A Special Treat

"Dear Sirs: Will you please forward me the booklet, 'Our Lord's Return.' Our family of five consider it a special treat to 'listen in' to your most helpful broadcasts. What once puzzled us a great deal is now plain and satisfying. God bless your work. Yours truly, D. H., Scotland."

Great Spiritual Uplift

"Dear Sirs: Kindly let me have your book, 'God and Reason.' I feel sure that it will be a great blessing to me, for God has truly inspired you to have a wonderful knowledge of his Holy Word. I am often perplexed about the Bible and do derive great spiritual uplift by listening to your reasonings on Bible passages. I know that 'God and Reason' will answer many questions for me, and may God bless your work. Yours in Christ, J. M. A., Northern Ireland."

"Do not look forward to what might happen tomorrow; the same everlasting Father who cares for you today will take care of you tomorrow, and every day. Either he will shield you from suffering, or he will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace, then, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations."—Selected



SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

W. CLARKE

Maidstone May 11

C. A. CORNELL

Luton May 11

C. A. DICKINSON

Leigh (Afternoon) May 4

Latchford (Evening) 4

EDWARD FAY

Brentwood March 30

Ipswich. 31

Anerley April 1

Maidstone or Chatham 2

Grays 3

Ilford 4

West Wickham 5, 6

Guildford 7

Portsmouth 8, 9

Eastleigh 10, 11

Yeovil 12-14

Swansea 15

Oxford 16

Coventry 17

Birmingham 18

THE BRITISH SECTION

Glasgow	19, 20	Yeovil	12-14
Dewsbury	21	Portsmouth	27
Doncaster	22	Lincoln	May 11
Lincoln	23	Guildford	18
Latchford	24		
Lancaster	25, 26		
Belfast	27		
Co Fermanagh	28	Yeovil	April 12-14
Dublin	29	Lincoln	20
Liverpool	May 3, 4	Coventry	May 18
Romford	8	Anerley	25

J. E. HUMPHREY

Anerley	April 20
Ipswich	May 4

J. LESLIE MC KEOWN

Portstewart	April 6
Belfast	27

J. H. MURRAY

Dewsbury	April 6
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W. E. PAMPLING

Yeovil	April 12-14
Lincoln	20
Coventry	May 18
Anerley	25

CONVENTION: Brother Edward Fay will serve at Yeovil, April 12 to 14. Details may be obtained from the secretary, Mr. W. F. Fox, 34 St. Michaels Road, Yeovil, Somerset.

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Tabernacle Shadows (Cloth)—2/6 each

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

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Our Most Holy Faith—10/-

THE DAWN

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SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

H. E. ANDERSON					
Wollingford, Conn. (Morning)	April	20			
Hartford, Conn. (Afternoon)		20			
JULIUS BEDNARZ					
Wilmington, Del.	April	5, 6			
New Haven, Conn. (Morning)		20			
Waterbury, Conn. (Afternoon)		20			
FRED A. BRIGHT					
New Brunswick, N. J.	April	20			
ALFRED BURNS					
Wilmington, Del.	April	5, 6			
JENS COPELAND					
Dublin, Texas	April	1			
Brownwood, Texas		2			
San Angelo, Texas		3			
Tucson, Ariz.		5-7			
Phoenix, Ariz.		8, 9			
Yuma, Ariz.		10, 11			
San Diego, Calif.		12, 13			
Santa Ana, Calif.		14			
Long Beach, Calif.		15			
Glendale, Calif.		16			
Inglewood, Calif.		17			
Whittier, Calif.		18			
Pasadena, Calif. (Morning)		20			
Los Angeles, Calif. (Afternoon)		20			
Bell Gardens, Calif.		21			
Pomona, Calif.		22			
Riverside, Calif.		23			
Alhambra, Calif.		24			
Los Angeles, Calif. (116th St.)		25			
Hawthorne, Calif. (Morning)		27			
Los Angeles, Calif. (Afternoon)		27			
San Luis Obispo, Calif.		28			
Fresno, Calif.		30			
ORLANDO D. DEIFER					
Wilmington, Del.	April	5, 6			
Paterson, N. J.		13			
IRVING C. FOSS					
San Diego, Calif.	April	13			
JOHN G. HULL					
Santa Ana, Calif.	April	27			
ARTHUR H. KRUMPOLT					
Wilmington, Del.	April	5, 6			
Easton, Pa.		20			
RAYMOND J. KRUPA					
Wilmington, Del.	April	5, 6			
Paterson, N. J.		13			
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.		20			
LUDLOW P. LOOMIS					
Wilmington, Del.	April	5, 6			
Reading, Pa.		20			
EDWARD LORENZ					
Oakland, Calif.	April	6			
JOHN Y. MAC AULAY					
La Follette, Tenn.	April	1			
Dana, N. C.		3			
Hendersonville, N. C.		4, 6			
Greensboro, N. C.		8, 9			
Kinston, N. C.		10, 11			
Newport, N. C.		13			
Rocky Mt., N. C.		14, 15			
Enfield, N. C.		16, 17			
Richmond, Va.		18, 20			
Washington, D. C.		21			
Baltimore, Md.		22			
Wilmington, Del.		23			
Brooklyn, N. Y.		27			
Rutherford, N. J.		29			
E. R. MAC JILTON					
Duquesne, Pa.	April	6			
MARTIN C. MITCHELL					
Wilmington, Del.	April	5, 6			
Lancaster, Pa.		27			
LEON H. NORBY					
Paterson, N. J.	April	13			
Allentown, Pa.		27			
HARRY PASSIOS					
East Liverpool, Ohio	April	13			
E. K. PENROSE					
Saginaw, Mich.	April	13			
KENNETH W. RAWSON					
Wilmington, Del.	April	5, 6			
GEORGE P. RIPPER					
Riverside, Calif. (Morning)	April	20			
Pomona, Calif. (Afternoon)		20			

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

BERT E. ROSE			W. NORMAN WOODWORTH		
Saginaw, Mich.	April	6	Paterson, N. J.	April	13
CHESTER A. SUNDBOM			Boston, Mass.		20
Wilmington, Del.	April	5, 6	Tonawanda, N. Y.		25
W. P. TWELKER			Cleveland, Ohio		27
Whittier, Calif.	April	20	HARRY L. YOUNG		
J. I. VAN HORNE			Mahanoy City, Pa.	April	20
Washington, Pa.	April	20	C. W. ZAHNOW		
FELIX S. WASSMANN			Fayetteville, Ark.	April	1, 2
Groton, Conn.	April	19	Little Rock, Ark.		3, 4
New London, Conn.		20	Monroe, Ark.		6
CLAUDE R. WEIDA			Memphis, Tenn.		7-13
Catawissa, Pa.	April	20	Jonesboro, Ark.		14
Lehigh, Pa.		27	Paragould, Ark.		15, 16
GEORGE M. WILSON			Columbus, Ky.		17
Detroit, Mich.	April	27	Madisonville, Ky.		18, 20
			Salem, Ind.		22, 23
			New Albany, Ind.		24, 25
			Cincinnati, Ohio		27-29
			Richmond, Ind.		30



CONVENTIONS

For Mutual Fellowship, Edification, and Service

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE, April 5, 6—Pre-Memorial Convention. Opens Saturday in the Unitarian Church, 807 West Street. A baptismal service is arranged for Saturday evening in the Seventh Day Adventist Church, 11th and Adams Streets. Sunday meetings will be held in the Hotel Dupont, Gold Room Suite, 11th and Market Streets. For room reservations and other information write the class secretary, Mrs. Peter Kolliman, 404 West 31st Street, Wilmington.

BUFFALO (KENNEMORE), N. Y., April 6—Regular monthly gathering in the Kenmore Lodge, No. 795, I. O. O. F. Temple, Kenmore and Myron Avenues, beginning at 2:30 p. m.

PATERSON, N. J., April 13—Opens at 9:30 a. m. in the Y. M. C. A. Building, Ward and Prince Streets, two blocks west of Erie Railroad Station.

SAGINAW, MICHIGAN, April 13—Woman's Club, 311 N. Jefferson Street. Opens at 10:20 a. m.

BOWIE, TEXAS, April 20—Regular third Sunday convention. For details write Mr. J. Frank Whitaker, R. F. D. 1, Sunset.

CLEVELAND, OHIO, April 27—Opens 9:30 a. m. in the Y. M. C. A. Building, Prospect Avenue and East 22nd Street.

SALEM, OREGON, April 20—Home gathering 2239 State Street.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, April 27—912 N. La-Salle Street.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, April 27—Maccabees Building, Woodward Avenue at Putnam.

WALLINGFORD, CONN., May 11—Details in May issue.

BUFFALO (KENMORE), N. Y., May 30, 31, June 1—Details in May issue.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF., May 30, 31, June 1—Details in May issue.

VANCOUVER, B. C., CANADA, May 30, 31, June 1—Opens at 2:00 p. m., May 30 in the Hastings Auditorium, 828 East Hastings Street. For reservations and other details write the class secretary, Mrs. W. A. McNee, 6569 Argyle Street, Vancouver 15.

GROTON, CONN., June 15—Details later.



Key to the Scriptures

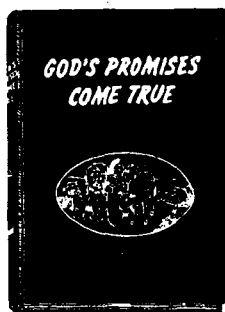
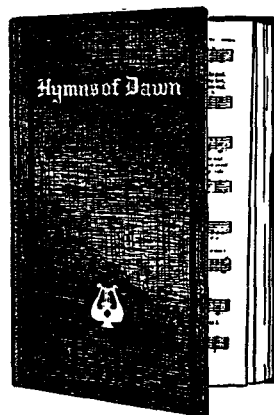
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FRENCH: God's Plan, 10 cents; God and Reason, 10 cents; "Behold Your King," 50 cents; Daily Heavenly Manna, 50 cents; God's Remedy, 10 cents.
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To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach

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

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

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

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

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

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