

a herald of Christ's presence

THE **DAWN**

**"PREACH THE WORD
BE INSTANT IN
SEASON AND OUT
OF SEASON."**

--II Timothy 4:2

May 1959



What is the mark of the beast?

Do children go to heaven when they die?

What are the "sorrows" of hell?

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

The Great Tribulation—Discusses the prophecies which outline the present "distress of nations," and shows that the human race will not be destroyed. 3

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE—The Quest of Man 9

BIBLE STUDY—Including International Lessons

David, King of Israel 12
 Nathan and David 14
 Solomon's Reign 16
 The Kingdom Divided 18
 Elijah, God's Warrior 20

A HEAVENLY INHERITANCE—The footstep followers of Jesus are to be rewarded with a heavenly home, and they are to live and reign with Christ a thousand years. 22

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

Our Hearts 28
 Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 63

BRITISH SECTION

A Letter from Britain 39
 The Peace of a Perfect Trust 41

YOUR QUESTIONS

The Mark of the Beast 46
 "Children" in the Kingdom 46
 "Sorrows" of Hell 48

TALKING THINGS OVER

In His Presence 50

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

ON TELEVISION

IT WILL be of interest to our readers to know that all the TV stations listed below are televising the truth programs free, the arrangements having been made by brethren of various ecclesias. The brethren are enjoying rich blessings in their efforts to advertise the TV presentations, for which we supply free circulars. The brethren of Detroit, in advertising a series recently concluded there, distributed close to a quarter of a million circulars. A widely advertised public meeting was arranged as a conclusion to the Detroit series. For the series recently concluded in New York, the brethren in the area distributed approximately one hundred thousand circulars. The friends in every area being reached by TV are equally zealous in distributing the circulars. Currently the following stations are carrying the programs:

Spokane, Washington—KREM-TV, Channel 2, 11:15 A. M., Sundays.

Fresno, California—KFRE-TV, Channel 12, 7:00 A. M., Wednesdays.

Johnstown, Pennsylvania—WJAC-TV, Channel 6, 1:15 P. M., Thursdays.

Harrisburg, Illinois—WSIL-TV, Channel 3, 2:00 P. M., Tuesdays.

Kansas City, Mo.—WDAF-TV, Channel 4, 11:30 A. M., Sundays.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—WTAE-TV, Channel 4, 10:45 A. M., Sundays. (Begins Sunday, May 31)

Petersburg, Virginia—WXEX-TV, Channel 8, 5:45 A. M., Tuesdays.

Bristol, Virginia—WCYB-TV, Channel 5, 12:15 P. M., Sundays.

The Great Tribulation

"At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation."—Daniel 12:1

MICHAEL is one of the titles which the Scriptures assign to Jesus. In highly symbolic language the Apostle Paul wrote concerning Jesus' return, saying, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." (I Thess. 4:16) We read of "Michael the archangel," so in this veiled manner Paul is applying the title Michael to Jesus at the time of his return.—Jude 9

In Daniel's prophecy, the standing up of Michael is followed by the awakening of those who "sleep in the dust of the earth," which is one of the Old Testament ways of describing the resurrection of the dead. Paul understood this sequence of events in the plan of God, so in writing about the return of Christ, when his authority would be exercised in the earth, figura-

tively described as the "voice of the archangel," he also wrote that then "the dead in Christ shall rise first."

The similarity of Daniel's prophecy with Paul's forecast of events at the time of Christ's return and second presence, is substantial proof that the standing up of "Michael," with the resultant time of trouble, refers to the work of Christ at his second advent. To the limited extent that Daniel himself understood this prophecy it must have been a great comfort to him, for it probably seemed to him from most of the other visions he received from the Lord that his own people, which also would be the people of the Lord, were destined to be a suffering, persecuted people.

But in this prophecy concerning Michael, there is a definite change. Here is a great one, a "prince," who would stand "for

the children" of Daniel's people. Daniel's people were now to have help, and to be given deliverance. But even so, the prophecy carried strange overtones, for at the time when a prince would stand for Daniel's people, and when "every one" then "written in the book" would be delivered, there also would be a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation."

While this does seem like a strange combination of events, it is in keeping with the general testimony of the prophecies relating to the time of Christ's return. In nearly all of these prophecies we are told of trouble, of tribulation, and also of blessings—kingdom blessings of peace, and joy, and life. In many of the prophecies the "tribulation" is symbolically described as storms, fire, wind, a whirlwind, an earthquake, as well as other upheavals of nature.

Human Selfishness the Cause

DANIEL'S prophecy indicates that in large measure the foretold "time of trouble" is brought on by human selfishness; although the exercise of divine authority and power through "Michael" is also related to it. In previous articles we have noted the marvelous manner in which the foretold "increase of knowledge" and running "to and fro," mentioned in verse 4, is being fulfilled in our day, and it is these developments

which lead to and precipitate the "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation."

The "increase of knowledge" has aroused the backward nations of the earth to a realization of their low standards of living as compared with others, and this has led to the demanding of rights, and a display of willingness to fight for an equal share of earth's bounties. What is true with respect to nations is also true of various groups of individuals within nations, hence the persistent struggle between capital and labor in many countries.

The "increase of knowledge" as seen in the many inventions and scientific developments of our day has equipped the nations for a more destructive struggle than the world has ever known. It has not only brought the nations of the whole earth within mere hours of travel distance from each other, but also within range of each other's missiles of destruction. It is no longer necessary to send an army half way round the world, to attack another nation, for today the whole world stands within reach of the enemy's guns, without the need of an army moving from its base.

Knowledge, and the ability to travel hundreds of miles an hour, are not in themselves evils; but in the hands of selfish man, they can, and will, lead to terrible havoc. Indeed, in the two World Wars of the present generation,

modern methods of destruction have already destroyed countless millions of lives, and devastated many hundreds of cities and towns in Europe and Asia. But the horrible destruction wrought in these two wars was insignificant compared with what is now possible.

However, the wide-spread destruction of the last war could well be described as a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation," for truly there had never been anything like it in the annals of history. Individual nations had suffered brutal attacks, it is true, but in the first and second World Wars, particularly the latter, practically every nation of the earth suffered.

Not all of the nations suffered the destruction of cities by bombs; but in one way or another all felt the impact, a shattering blow from which the world has never fully recovered. And now the nations are facing that which is still more dreadful. Even the United States will not escape the next onslaught of human selfishness. Listen today, for example, to the warnings being given over the radio and television, and through the public press, of what to expect; and the instructions as to the only way to survive.

"Civil Defense" authorities are feverishly circulating this information. They tell us that if we want to survive we must provide

"shelters," we must seal our basement windows so the radio active "fallout" will not be able to penetrate. They tell us that while the cities will be the main targets which the enemy will endeavor to destroy, with all the terrible loss of life that will involve, the "fallout" from the exploding of hydrogen bombs will also be deadly, and cover a much wider area. Scientists tell us that there is a definite possibility that the entire human race will be destroyed. Jesus foretold this very possibility in reply to questions put to him by his disciples as to what would be the signs of his second presence and the end of the age.

Days of Tribulation Shortened

A FEW days before Jesus was crucified his disciples asked him, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3) In this question the Greek word which is translated "coming" actually means "presence," and the Greek word translated "world" means "age." Therefore, the question the disciples really asked was, "What shall be the sign of thy presence and the end of the age?"

It is important to take this correct translation into consideration if we are to understand Jesus' reply. Instead of giving the disciples just one sign of his presence, he gave them many, which would be most confusing should we think of them all as

occurring at a given moment of his return. The fulfilment of all the signs Jesus gave covers a period of a thousand years, the thousand years of his kingdom.

We would also encounter difficulty in understanding the signs given by Jesus as being indicative of the end of the world, especially if we had in mind the traditional end of the world, which is the destruction of the earth—a theory which is not taught in the Bible at all. But when we apply the “signs” to the closing period of an age, and the opening up of a new age, then they are understandable.

Nearly all of what is recorded in chapters 24 and 25 of Matthew are “signs” which Jesus gave to his disciples, signs by which his people would be able to identify the time of his second presence on earth, and would know that the age was ending and that his kingdom of peace and righteousness would speedily be established. These signs are not always presented in the sequence in which they were to occur.

In Jesus’ introduction to many of the signs we find the word “then.” This does not mean that the event described necessarily follows the previously outlined sign. It is simply a reference to the time concerning which the disciples inquired when they asked, “What shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the end of the age?” So over and over again

Jesus pinpointed this period concerning which they asked by his use of the word “then.”

Thus, in verses 21 and 22 we read, “Then [at the time of my second presence] shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (vs. 21) There seems little doubt that Jesus is referring to the prophecy of Daniel concerning a “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.” (Dan. 12:1) It seems obvious, we think, that there could not be two periods of trouble, or tribulation that would be the greatest. This identical description of the “tribulation” by both Daniel and Jesus proves that they are referring to one and the same thing.

Besides, Jesus’ assurance that there would never be another time of tribulation so great further substantiates the fact that the prophecies speak of only this one “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.” Since Jesus gave this to be one of the signs of the end of the age and of the time of his second presence, it indicates that the “Michael” of Daniel’s prophecy referred to him, and to the fact that when he “stood up” to exercise his authority in the earth there would be the foretold time of “great tribulation.”

“No Flesh Saved”

JESUS foretold how severe the “tribulation” would be, saying,

"Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." (vs. 22) This is what our scientists and militarists are now telling us about the present situation which confronts the human race. The only difference is that Jesus foretold it nearly two thousand years before the wise men of this world found out about it.

And this in itself is significant. With the rapid increase of knowledge, science, and invention, the almost universal viewpoint presented by the philosophers of the world was that this great advancement would have a civilizing effect upon the human race, and that very soon wars would be a thing of the past. Those who thought otherwise, and said so, were looked upon as "prophets of doom."

Those who believed the prophecies of the Bible stood alone in proclaiming the coming of a "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." Now the Bible has been proved right in its forecast of trouble. How it should increase our faith in the Bible to realize that Jesus foresaw and foretold this hydrogen age in which the human race, "all flesh," stands in danger of being destroyed.

Jesus foretold that "all flesh" would be destroyed, "except those days should be shortened." To this he adds that "for the elect's sake those days shall be short-

ened." (vs. 22) There is no equivalent Greek text for "sake." Literally, the Greek text reads, "Through [or by means of] the elect, those days shall be shortened."

The "elect," or "chosen," here referred to is, primarily, Jesus, the Michael who "stands up" and precipitates the "time of trouble," and he will bring it to an end before all flesh is destroyed. The divine purpose in permitting this "great tribulation" is to destroy the "kingdoms of this world." In the 2nd Psalm there is a prophecy concerning Jesus in which he is represented at the time of his second presence as dashing the nations to pieces "like a potter's vessel."—vs. 9

Associated with Jesus as the "elect," who will live and reign with him a thousand years, are those who throughout the Gospel age have proved their worthiness for this high position by suffering and dying with Jesus. (II Tim. 2:11, 12) Jesus made a wonderful promise to these, which we quote, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessel of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."—Rev. 2:26, 27

It is clear from these prophecies that Jesus and his faithful footstep followers of the Gospel age, raised to life in the "first

resurrection," will, as the spiritual rulers in the new age, first be instrumental in destroying the "kingdoms of this world" in the time of "great tribulation."

But it is not the divine intention to destroy the human race. God did not create the earth in vain, but formed it to be inhabited, so the "elect," the glorified Jesus, and with him those who have proved worthy to share his authority and power, will intervene in world affairs in time to prevent the total destruction to which human selfishness ultimately would lead.—Isa. 45:18

In Luke's report of Jesus' prophecy concerning the time of his second presence and the end of the age, he quotes Jesus as saying that at that time there would be "distress of nations, with perplexity," and that the hearts of the people would fail them for fear as they look ahead to the things coming upon the earth. (Luke 21: 25, 26) How true this is of conditions in the world today!

Little wonder that the hearts of the people are failing them for fear! With the experts saying that another full scale war might well mean the end of the human race, why should they not fear? The people do not know of Jesus' promises that the "elect" of God would interfere with the mad rush of human selfishness in time to prevent this tragedy. And even if they did know it, very few

would believe it. But those who can believe it have an assurance that dispels fear and enables them to look to the future with confidence.

As "Travail"

THE Apostle Paul, in a prophecy concerning the time of Christ's second presence, speaks of it as the "day of the Lord," the day in which the Lord intervenes in human affairs to establish his long-promised kingdom. Paul describes this "day" as one of destruction. We quote: "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. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."—I Thess. 5:2-4

This prophecy confirms what we have noted, that the world did not expect the coming of a time of "tribulation," but insisted that now, with so much knowledge and technological skills, we would have "peace and safety." But despite this claim, destruction has already started. Paul says that it would come as "travail" upon a woman with child. This is in spasms, with periods of easement between. The first and second World Wars were two of these "spasms."

Now mankind dreads the coming of the next "spasm" of de-

struction, for the people realize how destructive it will be. But we need not fear. The glorified Christ, the "elect," has the situation well in hand, and in due time will bring the carnage to an end, which will be before "all flesh" is destroyed. Jesus, who so accurately foretold the present dilemma of the world, and who after his resurrection said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," will know when and how to call a halt on the destruction being wrought by the raging nations.—Matt. 28:18

We are assured that the time will come, and soon, when the nations, humbled by their folly, bleeding and dying, will be glad to look to the Lord for help. And then the first requisite for the people to receive peace and life will be to recognize divine sov-

ereignty in earth's affairs. It will be then that the Lord will say to the raging nations, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen [Gentiles], I will be exalted in the earth."—Ps. 46:10

When, through the kingdom of Christ, God is exalted in the earth, there will flow out to the people those rich blessings of peace and joy and life so eloquently described by the prophecies of both the Old and New Testaments. Surely, then, we can be glad that "Michael" is now "standing up," and although at first the world is filled with trouble, this is but a necessary prelude to the golden age of blessing so long envisioned by the sages, and so beautifully described by the "mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:19-21

ON AN ASS

IN EASTERN countries the ass is a very different animal from what he is in the western world. With us the ass is a symbol of stubbornness and stupidity, while in the East it is especially remarkable for its patience, gentleness, intelligence, meek submission, and great power of endurance. In the past the ass was the animal of peace, as the horse was the animal of war. How appropriate that The prince of Peace, in presenting himself as Israel's ruler, should ride into Jerusalem on an ass!

The Quest of Man

ANCIENT man studied the heavens, the earth, the elements of the weather, the lightning, thunder, fire, and floods. Later, and especially with the early Greeks, the question became mainly "who" made the lightning, the thunder, the famines, and the floods? In answer to these and other questions came the host of gods and goddesses. The early concept of physical phenomena was heavily laden with myth and superstition. Astrology flourished among the Babylonians, and even to this day the sale of astrological periodicals abounds in some areas of the world.

Later, as factual information was accumulated, the question changed from "who?" to "how?" How did the sun get overhead? How did the planets rotate and maintain their periodicity of motion? Along with the question "how?" came the question "how much?" The early application of geometry and trigonometry contributed much in answer to the questions, How far was the sun from the earth, how far away was the moon, and "how much" the circumference of the earth?

The scientists of the present era have continued the quest for the answer to "how the universe," "how the nucleus," and "how much" can

the atoms be changed to the will of man? In following his God-given reason he has gone far beyond the limits of his God-given senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. By his handmade tools he can probe far into the infinitely great and infinitesimally small. By physical tools he has probed into the "how" of beast and man, and the "how" of the forest and the flower.

Man now beholds a world nearly filled with the varied and abundant fruit of his intellect, of his skill, and his labor. But the search continues on and at a frantic pace: More power from the atom! Bottle up the heat of the sun! Make way for man to conquer outer space! All aboard for Mars!

Some scientists now have become so bold as to venture into the quest of "why" the universe, the why of life, and the why of man. It is remarkable that the question "why?" should be encountered so late, or found to have been too difficult for an earlier solution. Possibly now man is so confounded by the numerous answers to so many "hows" that he is beginning to question why the predicament? With man's great knowledge, it seems strange that he does not in-

quire why he is the only "animal of science" to "evolve" from the great multitude of species of fish and fowl and beast of the eons past.

Furthermore, it is significant to note that although man has survived to conquer all the animals of the earth, and approaches the conquest of all diseases, he now finds himself to be the possible enemy to his own survival. Does not this signify that man is not clever enough to save himself by his intelligence alone? and therefore that he is not really smart at all?

What sort of intelligence is required of man for him to recognize the answer as to why the universe, the why of life, and the why of man himself? If man is able to recognize an Intelligence outside of himself, and greater than he, then, in proportion, he may find an answer to his search as to "why."

In a negative sense it requires no great insight to recognize the limitations of mortal man. He is imprisoned within the confines of his flesh. How can he ever experience a "break through" into things beyond the ability of his fleshly mind to conceive?

The quest of man for the answer to "why" need not be in vain. Let him acknowledge his limitations, and by faith seek the answer from the only source wherein it is available. That source is the Book of books, the Word of God. What work of science has even so much as hinted at the purpose of it all?

It is only in the Word of God that the divine plan in creation is made known. The plan reveals that in "due time" the knowledge of "why" will become available to all. That will be when the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. —Isa. 11:9 Hab. 2:14

BORN FREE

THE "chief captain" of the "band," or cohort of Roman soldiers who arrested the Apostle Paul in Jerusalem, learning that his prisoner, although a Jew, claimed to be a Roman citizen, said to him, "With a great sum obtained I this freedom." To this Paul replied, "I was born free." (Acts 22:28) Paul was born in Tarsus, a city which, in the civil wars of Rome, took Caesar's side. In recognition of this, Augustus proclaimed Tarsus a "free city." Evidently this implied that even Jews born in Tarsus were considered to be Roman citizens by birth, and therefore "free."

David, King of Israel

GOLDEN TEXT: "The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established forever."
—Proverbs 29:14

II SAMUEL 5:1-12; 8:15

DAVID was anointed three times. His first anointing was by Samuel, who represented the Lord. This anointing signified God's authority for him to be king. Then, after the death of Saul, the house of Judah anointed him. And finally, as recorded in today's lesson, David was anointed by all Israel. Thus the Lord's choice and appointment was recognized by the entire nation, and he reigned as king over all the tribes.

David's recognition of the Lord's previous appointment of Saul, is seen in his attitude when learning that Saul was dead. The messenger who informed David of the king's death explained that, in response to a request by Saul, he had helped put an end to his life. David resented the idea that even under such circumstances this man should take the life of the Lord's anointed, and ordered the man killed.—II Samuel 1:13-16

On the other hand, when David learned that "the men of Jabesh-gilead buried Saul," he said to

them, "Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. And now the Lord show kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing." (II Sam. 2:5, 6) The magnanimity of this expression can be recognized only in the light of all the jealous and hateful efforts Saul had made to destroy David. It is quite in harmony with Jesus' teachings that we should love our enemies, and do good unto those who despitefully use us and persecute us.—Matt. 5:44

The elders of the twelve tribes of Israel accepted and anointed David to be their king because they recognized that he was the Lord's choice for this high office. As noted in a previous lesson, while the idea of having a king originated with the people of Israel, they accepted the arrangement which they insisted upon it, and had the kings rule as his representatives. Thus the throne of David and of his successors was, in reality, the throne of the Lord and was typical of the messianic kingdom.

David reigned over the tribes of Judah for seven years and six months. (II Sam. 2:11) During this time his headquarters were in Hebron. But when he was recognized by the whole nation, and anointed as king, he quite properly moved his headquarters to Jerusalem. There was opposition to this from the Jebusites, who inhabited the city. But the opposition was overcome, and David was soon strongly entrenched in the capital.

We read that "David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him." (II Sam. 5:10) He was bound to grow great if the Lord was with him. David merited the Lord's favor, his guidance, and his strength, because he was loyal to him, and the law of God was his meditation all the day.—Ps. 119:97

We read further that "Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house." (vs. 11) Undoubtedly David greatly appreciated this kindness, but he did not look upon it as an evidence of his own worthiness and popularity, but as a further token of God's blessing upon his kingdom. "David perceived," we read, "that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake."—vs. 12

David always maintained this attitude of humility before the Lord. There were times when, through weaknesses of the flesh he yielded to temptation, but even in these experiences he was genuinely repentant when his sins were called to his attention.

David, unlike Saul, never disobeyed the instructions of the Lord in performing the functions of state, or in giving battle to his enemies. Nor did he, either by precept or by example, even momentarily, encourage the people to worship and serve false gods, as did so many of his successors. He was truly a man after God's own heart.

So pleasing was David to Jehovah that his name is sometimes given to the messianic kingdom throne. For example, when announcing the coming birth of Jesus, the angel Gabriel said to the mother to be, "Fear not Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."—Luke 1:30-33

The Prophet Isaiah wrote concerning Jesus, that he would sit "upon the throne of David, . . . to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice." (Isa. 9:7) Surely David was greatly beloved by the Lord!

QUESTIONS

How many times was David anointed, and by whom?

Relate circumstances which reveal David's largeness of heart.

Was David ever disloyal to the Lord?

In what way has God recognized David in his plan?

Nathan and David

GOLDEN TEXT: "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."
—Psalm 51:2, 3

II SAMUEL 12:1-7, 9, 10, 13, 14

ONE of the traits of fallen human nature is the failure to see faults in one's self that are so apparent to others. This was David's experience. When Nathan the prophet related to David the story of the poor man whose cherished ewe lamb was taken from him by a rich neighbor, he was quick to recognize the injustice and, according to the Revised Version translation, heatedly exclaimed that the man who had done this unjust and cruel thing was "worthy to die."—vs. 5

Not until it was called to his attention by Nathan did David realize that he had committed a crime which was far more reprehensible in that he had arranged for the murder of a man that he might have his wife. There was no excuse for this, for as Nathan pointed out, the Lord had wonderfully blessed David.

Outlining these blessings, Nathan said to David, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave

thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things."—vss. 7, 8

Not until Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man," and reminded him of the gross injustice of his crime had David realized the extent of his sin. It was a sin for which, according to the Law given to Israel by the hand of Moses, he should have been put to death, and doubtless would have been, had he not manifested such genuine heart repentance. "David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."—vs. 13

The entire 51st Psalm, from which our Golden Text is taken, is an expression of David's sincere repentance when his sin was brought to his attention by Nathan. "Have mercy upon me, O God," he wrote, "according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."—vs. 1

"Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity," David continued, "and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." Here David is expressing the inner thoughts of his heart. But at the same time, being one of the inspired servants of the Lord, his words convey the conditions upon which the Lord will extend his forgiveness to any and all of his people, for they are all imperfect and need his mercy.

In Psalm 51:5 David wrote, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." This was true of David, and it is also true of the entire human race. Paul wrote that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."—Rom. 5:12

Inasmuch as the death condemnation came upon all mankind through the one man, Adam, it made possible the redemption of all from death through the one man, Jesus. Paul explains it thus: "As by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."—Rom. 5:18

This means, of course, that provision has been made through Christ for justification to life to be made available to all. Knowledge of the "gift," acceptance, and compliance with its conditions are essential in order actually to receive life. During the present age this is upon the basis of faith. During the kingdom age those who accept the

gift, and comply with the laws of the kingdom will be restored to perfection and live forever as humans, even as Adam would have done had he remained obedient.

In the case of David, while the full penalty for his crime under the Law was not imposed, he did not go free from all punishment. The child which was born to him through his sin was not permitted to live, and this was a severe blow to David. Nevertheless, David could feelingly write, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him."—Ps. 103:8-11

While here David was again reflecting the background of his own experiences, through inspiration he was also revealing God's attitude of kindness and mercy toward all of fallen humanity. God loves the world of sinners, and, through Christ, has made provision for their forgiveness and reconciliation.

QUESTIONS

- Do we usually recognize our own faults as readily as we should?
- What attitude should we take toward our wrong doing?
- Why was David a man after God's own heart?
- How is God's mercy and kindness shown toward the fallen race?

Solomon's Reign

GOLDEN TEXT: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
—Proverbs 3:5, 6

I KINGS 9:1-9

SOON after Solomon became king of the Israelites the Lord appeared unto him at Gibeon, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." To this request by the Lord, Solomon replied, "Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my Father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or to come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"—I Kings 3:5-9

The Lord was pleased with this request, and in compliance with it, gave Solomon great wisdom, and an "understanding heart." Solomon was undoubtedly sincere in this request, recognizing his own lack of wisdom, and his need to be guided by the Lord. It was in keeping with this that he wrote the beautiful sentiments contained in our Golden Text—"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."—Prov. 3:5, 6

David very much wanted to build a "house" for the Lord, but was not permitted to do so, although he gathered much of the material for it. The construction of the temple was under the jurisdiction of Solomon, and when it was completed he appropriately dedicated the magnificent structure to the Lord. The record of this is set forth in chapter 8 of I Kings.

Probably Solomon's Temple represented the greatest concentration of gold and other precious metals, as well as costly stones and wood,

that had ever been brought together into one building. Yet, after it was completed he realized that the Lord would not literally dwell in it, so in his prayer he said, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"—I Kings 8:27

All Solomon asked was that when the Israelites were in need of divine help, the Lord's "eyes" might "be open toward this house night and day," and that he might hearken unto the prayer of his servant. Solomon enumerated various situations in which the Israelites would need the mercy and help of their God, and prayed that when they turned to him for help he would hear.

Our lesson for today is, in part, the Lord's reply to Solomon's prayer of dedication. The Lord said to him, "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there forever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually."—vs. 3

How strengthening this must have been to Solomon! And the Lord promised him even more. He promised that he would not rend the kingdom from him, but this was conditional. Most of the Lord's promises are conditional, the conditions being loyalty to him and the doing of his will. In Solomon's day, and in fact through most of Israel's national existence, the greatest temptation of the people

seemed to be to worship false gods, and Solomon was warned particularly against this.

Strangely enough, it was this very sin which later led to the withdrawal of divine favor from Solomon. We read, "It came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father." Then the Lord said to him, "Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant."—I Kings 11:3-11

But the Lord eased the blow somewhat for the aging king, and said that he would not rend the kingdom from him directly, but that after his death, it would be taken away from his son. And even then, he promised Solomon that, for David's sake, his son would retain rulership over Judah. This was to be a manifestation of the "sure mercies of David."

QUESTIONS

What blessing did Solomon ask of the Lord at the beginning of his reign?

What did God promise Solomon when he appeared to him, following the dedication of the temple?

What condition was attached to this promise?

Did Solomon comply with the condition?

The Kingdom Divided

GOLDEN TEXT: "If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand."
—Mark 3:24, 25

I KINGS 12:12-20

UPON the death of Solomon his son Rehoboam ascended the throne. The greatness of Solomon, and his vast riches and personal glory are emphasized. Indeed, even Jesus spoke of "Solomon in all his glory." (Matt. 6:29) The record indicates, however, that he was rather a severe taskmaster, that throughout his reign, and in order to maintain his glory and riches, burdensome taxes were imposed upon the people.

Now that a new king had come to the throne, he was presented with a petition, which read, "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee."
—I Kings 12:4

King Rehoboam then consulted with what we might refer to today as the "elder statesmen" of the nation, those who had served faithfully during his father's administration, and asked their advice as

to what to do in the face of the people's demand. They said to Rehoboam, "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants forever."
—I Kings 12:7

Rehoboam rejected this advice, and sought the counsel of the "young men that were grown up with him." (vss. 8, 9) These young men advised Rehoboam just to the contrary of what the elderly men had urged. Instead of yielding to the demands of the people, they told Rehoboam to threaten them with increased burdens, which he did. Then ten of the tribes rebelled against his rulership, Rehoboam being able to retain control only over Judah and the small tribe of Benjamin.

Jeroboam, who had served in the government under Solomon, but had fled to Egypt, now had returned, and the people of the ten tribes made him their king. He was an idolater, and led the people into

the worship of false gods, setting up a "high place" for worship at Bethel to keep his subjects from going up to Jerusalem to worship Jehovah.

After the rebellion, Rehoboam returned to Jerusalem and from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin assembled a sizable army with the view of attacking Jeroboam and recapturing control of all Israel. But the Lord instructed him otherwise. He said to Rehoboam, "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me."—I Kings 12:24

Thereafter the ten-tribe kingdom was known as Israel, and the two-tribe kingdom as Judah. They were never again united. After the reign of a long line of wicked, idolatrous kings, the ten-tribe kingdom was overthrown and the people taken captive into Assyria. Somewhat later Judah, the two-tribe kingdom, was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and the people taken captive to Babylon. A number of Judah's kings, however, were faithful to the Lord.

The Lord said concerning this division, "This thing is from me." He had foretold that he would rend the kingdom from Solomon's son. Undoubtedly, also, there were important lessons which the Lord wanted his people to learn from this experience. While the two segments of the nation remained divided until both were destroyed, the Lord assures us that in the age of Christ's kingdom, when Jesus

will be reigning as the antitypical David, they will again become one people. Concerning this we read:

"Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king [Christ] shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them."—Ezek. 37:21-24

The reference here is apparently to the antitypical David, who is Christ. However, David himself will then be raised from the dead, as will all the ancient servants of God, who will be "princes in all the earth."—Ps. 45:16

QUESTIONS

Relate the circumstances which brought about the division of the nation of Israel.

What finally happened to both of the kingdoms?

Will the nation ever again become one?

Elijah, God's Warrior

GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

—Psalm 27:1

I KINGS 19:9-18

ELIJAH was not a writer such as David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others of Old Testament times, nevertheless he was one of God's outstanding prophets. Indeed, he was more than a prophet, for the Lord used him also as a reformer in Israel. Today's lesson follows closely Elijah's challenging of the priests of Baal, which led to their destruction and to re-establishment of the worship of Jehovah in Israel.—I Kings 18:17-40

In the destruction of the priests of Baal, Elijah incurred the wrath of the wicked queen, Jezebel, who sent word to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." (I Kings 19:2) Elijah was frightened by this threat upon his life, and "he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down

under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers."—vss. 3, 4

But the Lord did not let Elijah die. Instead he sent an angel with food, and "he went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God." (vss. 5-8) James wrote that Elijah was a man of "like passions" as we. (James 5:17) How true! In his prayer in which he asked God to let him die, he said, "It is enough." We would say, "I have had all I can stand."

At one time or another probably every servant of the Lord is brought to a position like this. If we are properly exercised it can be a rewarding experience, because it teaches us to rely more completely on the Lord. Just as the Lord answered Elijah's prayer, not by allowing him to die, but by supplying "meat" so that he might have strength to continue in his service, so it is with us if we are properly

exercised by our experiences, and we should be able to say, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"—Ps. 27:1

Reaching Horeb, Elijah lodged in a cave, seemingly as a place of protection, for when the Lord asked him why he was there, he reiterated the sins of Israel in killing the prophets, and that he alone was left, and now they were seeking his life. To Elijah the outlook was most discouraging, but he did not know all the facts. Later he was assured by the Lord that there were more than seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal.—vs. 18

In this also we have an important lesson for the encouragement of all who faithfully serve the Lord. Among the professed people of God in every age there have been the true and the false, the real and the nominal. The faithful of this age will be brought forth in the "first resurrection" to live and reign with Christ for a thousand years; and the true people of God of the ages preceding our Lord's first advent will be restored to perfect human life to represent the divine Christ during the thousand-year kingdom.—Rev. 20:6; Ps. 45:16; Matt. 8:11

In front of the cave the Lord gave Elijah a demonstration of the mighty forces of nature in wind, earthquake, and fire. While this doubtless has a typical significance, to Elijah it was frightening. Then

followed the "still small voice," which in reality was the voice of the Lord bidding the prophet to perform further service. This could have meant to Elijah that despite the terrifying forces that were against him, he could faithfully follow the Lord's instruction, and continue to trust in his protection.

Because of Elijah's work of reformation he is used by the Lord to typify a larger work described by the Prophet Malachi as turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers. (Mal. 4:6) Jesus indicated that John the Baptist partially fulfilled this prophecy.—Matt. 11:14

But the call to repentance initiated by John has continued throughout the age. And like Elijah, the true church class has contended with false religions, under the leadership of an antitypical Jezebel. (Rev. 2:20) Throughout the age many of the true servants of God have suffered at the hands of "Jezebel." But this will not continue forever, for eventually the "rebuke" of God's people will be taken away.—Isa. 25:8

QUESTIONS

What particular service did the Prophet Elijah render in Israel?

In what way did his experiences parallel those of all the Lord's true people?

In what way were Elijah's experiences typical?

A Heavenly Inheritance

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."—1 Peter 1:3-5

THE thought of leaving this earth and going to heaven to spend eternity is almost inseparately associated with the Christian religion in the minds of people. There have always been a few sincere and ardent Christian believers to whom this has been a bright prospect, something which they have anticipated with a considerable measure of joy. To the vast majority, however, even of professed Christian believers, it has appeared merely as an alternative to going to a place of torment at death. These would much rather remain alive on the earth; but since they cannot do this they would, of course, rather go to heaven than to eternal torture.

And this is understandable, for according to tradition heaven has not been specially inviting, the main reason being that tradition pictures it largely as a place of

idleness or, at the best, of harp playing and singing. In the Bible there is a definite heavenly hope held out to the faithful followers of Jesus, and while it is impossible for our finite minds to understand heavenly conditions, the Bible does assure us that there is a real purpose in exalting some to this high position in the divine arrangements, that heaven is not designed as an escape from a fiery hell.

Jesus said to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2, 3) Here we could properly think of the "Father's house" as the entire universe, and the "many mansions" as the numerous places of

abode, or spheres of life, which had already been created at the time Jesus made this promise to his disciples, including the various orders of angelic creation.

An old Gospel hymn states, "I want to be an angel, and with the angels stand." This is a laudable desire, but the Bible gives no assurance that humans, no matter how faithful to the Lord they may be, will ever become angels. The angels are a separate order of creation. Their plane of life and dwelling place is one of the "mansions" in the "Father's house." But Jesus said to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you, a "place" or mansion which did not then exist.

In this promise Jesus said, "If I go . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." From this we learn that the hope of the Christian outlined in this promise by Jesus is not realized until the time of his return. This is contrary to the tradition that Christians, when they die, go immediately to heaven. No, they remain asleep in death, and are resurrected and exalted to their heavenly home at the return of the Lord.

A Priesthood to Bless

HEBREWS 3:1 reads, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." In keep-

ing with this, the Apostle Peter wrote, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."—I Peter 2:9

These two texts reveal that those who receive the "heavenly calling" are inducted into a "priesthood." This terminology is based upon God's dealings with ancient Israel. There were twelve tribes of Israel, and one of them—the tribe of Levi—was set apart from the other tribes to minister to the nation in holy things. One of the families of the tribe of Levi was chosen to be priests. The priests of Israel offered sacrifices and, upon the basis of their sacrifices, extended blessings to the people.

So, Paul and Peter explain that in the present age, beginning with Jesus' first advent, the Lord is calling a people to be a priesthood under Christ as Head, or High Priest. These also offer sacrifice, not of bulls and goats as did the priest of Israel, but themselves.

Jesus gave his human life for the sins of the world. We are invited to be co-sacrificers with him. Based upon this work of sacrifice, we will also extend blessings to the people. But before these blessings reach the people, this antitypical priesthood

will all be exalted to heavenly glory. Their calling is not only to a priesthood, but to heaven also.

The divine plan to bless the world of mankind through Jesus and his true church is shown in God's promise to Abraham that through his "seed" all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Gen. 12:3; 22:18) The Apostle Paul explains that Jesus and his true followers are this foretold "seed" of Abraham. In Galatians 3:16 Paul identifies Jesus as being the chief one in this "seed" class, and then in verses 27-29 of the same chapter he says, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Yes, the great objective of the divine plan of salvation through Christ is the "blessing of all the families of the earth" upon the earth. The purpose of the "heavenly calling" is not to afford an escape from torture for a few of God's favorites, but to select and prepare representatives from among mankind to be associated with Jesus in extending blessings of life to the remainder of the human race.

The "Bride"

IN ORDER to help us understand more clearly all that is involved in the "heavenly calling" of a few in order that they may be used as channels of blessing for the remainder of mankind, the Lord refers to these under various symbols. As we have seen, they are a priesthood to offer sacrifice, and later to extend blessings to the people.

They are also spoken of as the "bride" of Christ. In Revelation 19:7 we read, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb [Christ Jesus] is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." In chapter 21 we read, "There came unto me one of the seven angels, . . . and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."—vss. 9, 10

The "holy city," then, is not a place to which Christians go to escape hell-fire, but is the "bride, the Lamb's wife," composed of the true followers of Jesus. This "holy city" comes down from God out of heaven after the saints are united with Jesus, and "the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the

glory and honor of the nations into it."—vss. 24-26

The "open gates" of this city suggest that Jesus and his church will welcome the peoples of earth to "come in" and to receive the blessings of life provided for them through the death of Jesus, the "Lamb that was slain." (Rev. 5:12) In chapter 22, verse 17, we read, "The Spirit and the bride (the Lamb's wife) say, Come, . . . and take of the water of life freely." The true followers of Jesus will not be sitting on clouds playing harps for all eternity. Instead, for the first thousand years of their existence, they will be engaged with Christ in the wonderful work of "blessing all the families of the earth."

Begotten Again

IN OUR text Peter speaks of Christ's disciples as being "begotten . . . again." When Nicodemus went to Jesus at night to learn more about him and about the message he was presenting to the people, Jesus said to him that in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven he would have to be "born again."

Nicodemus did not understand this, so Jesus explained that those who are born again are able to come and go as the wind, meaning that they are invisible and very powerful. This was Jesus' way of describing some of the characteristics of those who enter into the heavenly inheritance to

which they are called. This was literally true of Jesus after his resurrection, for, with the exception of the few brief times he appeared to his disciples, he was invisible to human eyes. When he appeared in their midst they knew not from whence he came; and when he disappeared from their midst they did not know where he went. Thus "is every one that is born of the Spirit," Jesus explained.—John 3:8

And it is this that is involved in our hope of being "born again" into the heavenly phase of Christ's kingdom. In our text, Peter says that we are "begotten" to this hope. This new life has begun in our minds, but will not come to birth until, in the resurrection, we shall be made like Jesus and, like him, be invisible and powerful.

The Apostle John wrote concerning this glorious hope of the true Christian, saying, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:1-3) While the disciples, after Jesus was raised from the dead, were able to see and feel the various earthly bodies in which he appeared to them, they did not really see him "as he is." As John explains, it is only those who are, in the resurrection, made like him, that will be able to see the divine Jesus.

The "Last Time"

IN OUR text Peter speaks of a revelation of the heavenly class "in the last time." The present age in the plan of God to save the world from death and to restore the willing and obedient to perfection of human life on the earth, is for the purpose of calling from the world this class who will enter into the heavenly inheritance to live and reign with Christ. They have been unknown to the world, and often persecuted by those who have been blinded to the truth of the Gospel by the "god of this world," who is the Devil.—II Cor. 4:4

But in the beginning of the new age, the age of Christ's kingdom, the final age or "last time" in the plan of God, the true position of these faithful ones will be revealed. Then it will be recognized by all mankind that this "little flock" of misunderstood and persecuted followers of the Master were really the Lord's true people, and that now they have been raised from the dead, exalted to heavenly glory, and together with Jesus, are the new spiritual rulers of the world.

And it is fitting that these should receive a heavenly inheritance, for they gave up all earthly honor and advantage in order that they might devote their lives wholly to following in the footsteps of their Master, Christ Je-

sus. The Apostle Paul was a good example of this spirit of full devotion to the Master. He wrote:

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. 3:8-14

Paul's use of the expression, "high calling," is revealing. It indicates that those to whom the promise of a heavenly reward has been offered are invited to a very special place in the divine arrangements. It is not, as tradition

would have us believe, an alternative to being tortured forever, a sort of emergency escape from an eternity of doom. It is not a matter merely of being saved, but a "calling," an invitation, to participate in the divine plan for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

Children and Heirs

IN A passage already quoted, the Apostle John refers to this class to whom the "high calling" is extended as being "sons" or children of God. Paul also wrote concerning these: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."—Rom. 8:16-19

The expression "earnest expectation of the creature," is, in the Revised Version, more properly translated, "earnest expectation of the creation," the reference being to God's human creation, the whole world of mankind. In verses 22 and 19, Paul speaks of the "whole creation," which "groaneth and travaileth in pain

together until now," waiting for the "manifestation," or revelation, of "the sons of God."

The world of mankind, blinded by the great Adversary, the Devil, does not understand the plan of God. The people are blind to the glorious provision of life through Christ which has been made for them by divine love. Nevertheless, in their "groaning" and "travailing" they are ever hopeful that conditions will change, and that happiness will in some way replace misery. Pain and death shall indeed be destroyed in God's due time, and this will be done through the power of the divine Christ, made up of Jesus, the Head, and his body members, the "house of sons," who have been made partakers of the "heavenly calling."

When these "children of God" are revealed together with Christ, in power and great glory, then the promised kingdom work of blessing all the families of the earth will begin. The "sons of God" themselves will occupy a heavenly position, being exalted to "glory and honor and immortality." (Rom. 2:7) In this position of authority and power, they will be the instruments of God in extending blessings of health and life on the human plane to all who, when they are enlightened, accept the gift of life through Christ, and obey the laws of the kingdom which will then be in force.

Our Hearts

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—Proverbs 4:23

THE word "heart" appears in the Bible about eight hundred times. While in a few instances the reference is to the literal heart, in most cases it is used figuratively to denote our innermost thoughts, sentiments, and motives, whether good or evil. The first time the word heart is used is in Genesis 6:5, which reads, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

In Revelation 18:7 the word heart appears for the last time. This text reads, in part: "She saith in her heart, I sit a queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Here the reference is to the "harlot" woman, "Babylon." In this prophecy "Babylon" is depicted as being destroyed, but even while being destroyed she continues to boast—in her "heart."

In describing the various "heart" conditions which are possible, the Bible uses such expressions as "integrity" of the heart; a "faint" heart; a heart that "faileth"; a heart that is "hardened"; a "willing" heart; a "stirred up" heart; "wisdom" and "hatred" of heart; a "discouraged" heart; an "obstinate" heart; "all thine heart"; "speaking" in the heart; a heart that is "not deceived"; a heart that is "grieved," and a heart that is "lifted up."

There can also be "blindness" of heart, "astonishment" of heart, and hearts that are "melted." There are "glad" hearts, "merry" hearts, "rejoicing" hearts, "trembling" hearts, "understanding" hearts, "perfect" hearts, "soft" hearts, "singing" hearts, and "sorrow of heart."

The Bible also speaks of "clean" hearts, "fixed" hearts, and

hearts that are "strengthened." There are "enlarged" hearts, "lonely" hearts, "burning" hearts and "believing" hearts. There are "broken and contrite" hearts. There is also "singleness" of heart. These are some of the "heart" conditions mentioned in the Bible as it describes the characteristics of the people whose lives it records, and admonishes us to "keep" our own heart with "all diligence."

The Bible uses the heart as a symbol of what we really are, our motives, desires, and emotions, in contrast with what we may appear to be. The Apostle Peter, for example, contrasts the outward "apparel" one might wear with the adornment of the "hidden man of the heart," the adornment of this "hidden man" being "a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."—I Pet. 3:4

The expression, "hidden man of the heart," aptly describes what the symbolic heart really is. We know one another only from the standpoint of what we see and hear. Our inner thoughts, emotions, and motives are "hidden." It is these that we are admonished to "keep." As members of a fallen and dying race, it is not possible to "keep" our words and deeds as fully in line with the will of God as we desire to do, but we can and must keep our hearts if we are to enjoy the favor and blessing of the Lord.

When Samuel was selecting one of the sons of Jesse to anoint as king of Israel, he chose the one who seemed to possess the best physical qualifications. Then he was informed that the Lord does not look upon the outward appearance, but upon the heart. Samuel learned that David was the Lord's choice.

The Scriptures reveal that while David was imperfect, his "heart" was right. The Lord said concerning David that he was "a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will." (Acts 13:22) Despite David's fleshly imperfections, his real, innermost desire and determination were to serve Jehovah faithfully, to do "all" his will.

Proverbs 23:6, 7 reads, "Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee." Here is a clear illustration of what the Scriptures mean by the "heart." The person with the

evil "eye"—or selfish designs—feigns friendship by inviting another to eat and drink with him. But the real intention of the man is not to be a friend, but to exploit, or otherwise to injure. It is this real intention that is symbolically described as "thinking" in the "heart."

The lesson here is obvious and vital. What we say to others, and what we do that can be seen of men may not reflect our inner thoughts, desires, and motives. It is these inner thoughts of the "heart" which determine what we really are, and these are concealed from all but ourselves and the Lord.

A consistent walk of life over a period of years may, to some extent, be a guide to the thoughts of the heart, but even in this we could misjudge another. When the outward professions of others are good, we should not doubt their sincerity. Even when imperfections are apparent, it is best to assume that the heart is pure. This is the course which will contribute the most to our own peace of heart.

Jesus said to the religious leaders of his day, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matt. 12:34) These words of condemnation followed the accusation of Israel's religious "vipers" that Jesus had cast out demons through the power of "Beelzebub the prince of devils." (vs. 24) They had witnessed a good work, but their hearts were so filled with hatred against Jesus that they overflowed with untrue and bitter words.

The reverse of this is also true. Making a further application of the principle, Jesus said, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." (vs. 35) How forcefully this emphasizes the importance of "keeping" our hearts, making sure that what we treasure in them is that which is good, pure, and wholesome! If we allow our hearts to become filled with bitterness, hatred, jealousy, and other unholy desires, these qualities will, sooner or later, manifest themselves in what we say and do.

But what a wonderful privilege we have of filling our hearts with "good treasures." This is done by meditating upon good

things; by studying the Word; by fellowshiping with the brethren; by noting the good qualities of others, especially the brethren, and seeking to emulate them. The "good treasure" of our hearts consists of peace, joy, tenderness, courage, humility, faith, hope, and love. If these "treasures" fill our hearts in abundance, then we will speak forth those things which are unctuous and blessed to all.

In Colossians 3:22 the Apostle Paul admonishes "servants" to be obedient to their "masters," not "with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God." The Greek word here translated "singleness" includes the thought of sincerity. The "servants" in the Early Church were not merely to be outwardly obedient to their masters, but genuinely and sincerely so, realizing that their service was "unto the Lord."

And this emphasizes that the only kind of devotion and service which the Lord will accept is that which is wholehearted, undivided, and sincere. Our loyalty to the Lord must be from the heart, not merely an outward profession. Outward professions, or lip service, may impress those with whom we are associated, but the Lord "looketh on the heart," and only "singleness of heart" will meet with his approval.

Fixed Hearts

Psalm 57:7 reads, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise." The marginal reading is, "My heart is prepared." In verse 6 David writes, "They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down." In Psalm 112:5 we read, "A good man sheweth favor, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall not be moved forever: . . . he shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."—vss. 5-7

How important it is that our hearts be "fixed," or "prepared," to meet the trying emergencies which come upon us, and also to withstand the almost continuous efforts of the world, the flesh, and the Devil to discourage and defeat us as new creatures in Christ Jesus. If at the beginning of our consecrated life we properly took into consideration the fact that we would be confronted with many difficulties, our hearts should be prepared

(Continued on page 34)

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East Rutherford

NEW JERSEY

(Continued from page 31)

to meet these as they come, always having the assurance that the Lord is our helper.

Nor should we expect that our "enemies" will always be spectacular in their attacks. In some respects it might require less fixity of purpose to stand up against a wall and be shot than it does to endure the little vexing trials of a seemingly humdrum and monotonous life. Physical infirmities which are common to all might discourage us if our hearts are not properly "prepared" to meet whatever experiences may come to us. In keeping our hearts with all diligence let us make sure to "keep" them "fixed."

Believing Hearts

It is essential also to have "believing" hearts. In Romans 10:10 we read, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Heart belief is more, much more, than a mental assent to the fact that God and Jesus exist. It is a belief that is so deep-rooted and complete that the whole soul is engrossed by it, leaving no alternative but to devote oneself fully to God and to the doing of his will. Such a belief, through Christ, results in righteousness, or justification.

The "abundance" of the heart that thus believes, of necessity consists of those precious verities concerning God and his loving plan of salvation which are centered in Christ, and out of this "abundance" the mouth speaketh. If the love of God, which is reflected in his plan of salvation and in all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of his Word, is filling our hearts, out of that "abundance" there will inevitably be an overflow which will be refreshing to others, and redound to the glory of God.

Hearts of Unbelief

It is also possible to have an unbelieving heart. The majority of the ancient Israelites had unbelieving hearts. There were a few in each generation who, like Abraham, had genuine heart belief in God and in his promises. These individually, through faith and obedience, qualified to be among the "princes in all the earth" during the reign of Christ. But the vast majority had

unbelieving hearts. Holding these up as an example to us, Paul exhorts, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."—Heb. 3:12-15

Here, again, the distinction between nominal believers and heart believers is pointed out—those who outwardly profess, and those who inwardly believe and perform. Only the heart believers will be able to "hold the beginning" of their confidence "stedfast to the end." Only these are actually and permanently made "partakers of Christ."

In similar vein Paul further wrote, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)." (Heb. 10:22, 23) Here a "true" heart is associated with "full assurance of faith," a "true" heart being one that is "sprinkled from an evil conscience."

To have our hearts sprinkled "from an evil conscience" simply means that we have permitted the Word of God, which acts as a cleanser, to help us get rid of those unholy thoughts and desires which are contrary to the will of God, and contrary to what we want to be. John wrote, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (I John 3:21) If we have confidence toward God, then we have "full assurance of faith."

If we do not have confidence toward God because we have not purified our hearts, then we will know that all the divine assurances of grace and strength to help in every time of need will not be fulfilled on our behalf. Knowing our own weaknesses, and how much we depend upon the Lord for help, we cannot have "full assurance of faith" if we have not complied with the conditions upon which divine help will be vouchsafed to us.

II Chronicles 16:9 reads, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." How truly

important it is that we keep our hearts pure, perfect! This can be done only by a sincere effort to bring every thought into captivity to the will of God as it is expressed through Christ Jesus and through the Word of truth. Paul wrote, "The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."—Heb. 4:12

With the Lord's help we are able to read our own hearts, especially in the light of God's Word which can be focused upon them, the Word which is "sharp" and "powerful." John gives us an example of this. He wrote, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."—I John 3:18, 19

What, we may ask, is the difference between loving in word and loving in deed? John answers, "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (vs. 17) This is not complex or difficult to understand. It is simply the difference between saying nice things about our brethren and actually sacrificing time and strength and means to serve them in whatever way opportunity might offer.

While the Scriptures place the greatest emphasis on the spiritual needs of the brethren, it is also clear from the Word that the Lord expects us to be aware of their physical needs, and be willing to share that which, in his providence, has come into our hands. The principle thus revealed is simply that of being willing to sacrifice, not a little, but actually to lay down our lives for the brethren.

If we find that we are willing to do this, and that we take pleasure in doing it, then our hearts will be "assured" insofar as this particular aspect of the Lord's will is concerned. Yes, we can, with confidence, ask the Lord, before whom all things are "naked and opened," to look into our hearts with his discerning "eyes," knowing that he will see the purity of intention which is there, and will show himself strong on our behalf, that he will give us strength which will enable us to run in the narrow way

and not be weary, to walk in the footsteps of our Master and not faint.

Deceived Hearts

James wrote, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." (ch. 1:26) He also wrote, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell [*Gehenna*]."—James 3:6

Jesus explained that it is not that which goeth into the mouth that defileth a man, but that which cometh out. (Matt. 15:11) He expressed surprise that Peter failed to grasp the significance of this statement, and then he amplified it, saying, "Do not ye understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."—Matt. 15:17-20

No wonder James wrote that the tongue is a "world of iniquity," which sets on fire the course of man's fallen nature, and which, in turn, is set on fire of Gehenna, or death. How this emphasizes the importance of keeping our hearts with all diligence. We read that "a sound heart is the life of the flesh." (Prov. 14:30) Just as the physical heart pumps the blood, with its life-giving oxygen, to every part of the body to keep it healthy and alive, so will be the "issues" of the figurative heart which is sound and pure.

By the same token, if the physical heart is diseased the blood is poisoned, and sooner or later this leads to the death of the body. The "bloodstream" of the figurative heart is our words. If our hearts are defiled, our words will be defiled. Since, as Jesus explained, it is by our words that we are "justified," and by our words that we are "condemned," if the words which flow from the abundance of our hearts are unclean, envious, and bitter, they will lead eventually to death.

Primarily, this overflow of a deceived and defiled heart leads to the death of the one who has failed to purify his heart, and to "keep" it perfect before the Lord. Moreover, those words often cause much injury to others. But if the heart is pure, so that the words which flow therefrom are wholesome and upbuilding, this pure "bloodstream" will lead to "glory and honor and immortality" for the owner of that "heart," while his words will have been a rich blessing to those with whom he came in contact.

The Lord's Help

It is only by the Lord's help that we are able to purify our hearts. By nature our hearts are sinful—"deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9) Because of this, how appropriate is David's prayer: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." The marginal translation reads, "a constant spirit."—Ps. 51:10

In praying to the Lord to "create" in us a "clean heart," it is essential to co-operate with him in answering our prayer. It is largely in giving heed to the instructions of his Word that our hearts are purified. It is essential not only to study the Word, but humbly to yield in full obedience to its precepts in order for our hearts to be made right and kept right before the Lord. David expressed it beautifully when he wrote:

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear [reverence] of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer."—Psalm 19:7-14

A Letter from Britain

"Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

—Daniel 12:4

WHEN the Prophet Isaiah made the following statement he was really enjoying a preview of world conditions in our day. This is what he says: "The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage." (Isa. 24: 19, 20) Again in the first verse of the same chapter he says, "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down."

Here, in conjunction with Daniel's prophetic vision of increased knowledge and much running to and fro, we have a photographic picture of these last perilous days in which, to use Paul's words, "men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, ... having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, ... ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."—II Tim. 3:1-7

Upside down and empty—that

certainly seems to sum up the position in which the world finds itself today. And this, according to the Prophet Isaiah (24:1), is the Lord's doing. Without the light of divine truth, through his Word of truth, how strange and unrealistic all this would appear. Why should the Lord wish to turn the world upside down? Why should he empty it of all the hard-won achievements of man's wonderful structure of civilization?

Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the matter becomes clear, the purpose manifest, and the power and glory of God intensified by the things which are happening around us in these closing days of Gentile dominion. For let there be no mistake about it, these are the days to which the finger of prophecy has pointed consistently, and with unerring accuracy, since God first spoke, through his Spirit, to holy men of old.

Much Flying to and Fro

THAT which Daniel described in vision as "much running to and fro" might well be thought to include "much flying to and fro." The statesmen of earth in these modern times seem to devote themselves with unlimited energy and zeal to flying hither and thither in vain attempts to keep the creaking machinery of civilized government running smoothly under the persuasive influence of diplomatic lubrication.

Following on the somewhat spectacular and well-staged visit of Russia's Mr. Mikoyan to the United States, Britain's Prime Minister, with the Foreign Secretary, sets off on a trip to Russia; the Greeks, Turks, and Cypriots converge on London; and a high-ranking Russian mission to Persia flies home in a huff because the Persians evince a desire to manage their own affairs.

And behind this crazy facade of talk, and still more talk, looms the figure of Mars (god of war) pointing with grim satisfaction to the weapons of annihilation. These are ready and able, should negotiations finally fail, to settle the issue by wiping out both sides in a fruitless conflict from which nothing but disaster can ensue.

Increase of "Know-how"

DANIEL'S vision of increasing knowledge is undoubtedly being fulfilled in complete measure by the astonishing achievements of science and invention, not only in respect to nuclear energy and space exploration, but also in matters concerning our everyday lives, regarding which the "know-how," to use a modern phrase, has never before been revealed. An example of this is to be found in the work of specialist institutions devoted to the science of geriatrics, which involves special study of diseases of the aged.

In one such institution recently a man of one hundred was so rejuvenated by the treatment he received that he could run, skip, jump, and even stand on his hands balanced on the edge of a table, a feat quite impossible for many in

the prime of life. When he was ninety-eight, this man, it is said, was crippled with rheumatoid arthritis and could not use his limbs, or even his fingers; additionally, he was completely bald. Now, coupled with his amazing athletic achievements, he has grown a fine head of dark hair.

These and other wonders of our age are loudly acclaimed as triumphs of human achievement, and undoubtedly they are the very creditable results of long and patient study and investigation, representing often a lifetime's devotion to the laudable objectives of relieving suffering and increasing the span of human life. But are they really a proof that man is master of his fate and architect of his salvation? To the Christian they provide no such evidence.

Compared with the miracles of our Lord, these scientific achievements are, to say the least, decidedly incomplete and inconclusive. In the raising of Lazarus, the healing of lepers, the feeding of multitudes, and other stupendous acts, our Lord gave God the glory and demonstrated, in miniature, the power of God as the sole motivating force behind such blessings. One seldom hears God's name mentioned in connection with the wonderful discoveries of science and invention today.

Take a glance at the 35th chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, verses 5 and 6: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." There is no evidence to sug-

gest that these will be isolated cases, or the result of long and laborious treatment. No, they will be a part of the glorious scheme of divine healing which will come to all mankind in the "times of restitution of all things" about which, Peter tells us in Acts 3:21, "God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

God's Power to Be Revealed

TO THE child of God, divine power is not to be sought in the laboratory or the operating theatre, valuable as these may be under present imperfect conditions. God's power is manifested through his Word, in the outworking of his gracious purposes shortly to come to fruition in the establishment of divine authority and rulership, under which the present fleeting glimpses of the hidden treasures of his wisdom will give place to the glorious vision of his revealed majesty, the wonders of which caused the Apostle Paul to exclaim: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! ... For of him, and through him and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever."—Rom. 11:33, 36

So the running to and fro continues, the probing and prodding into the unknown brings its fleeting moments of partial success to be followed, all too often, by failure and disappointment. Harassed by wars and rumors of wars, drunken with its own achievements, and fearful of the consequences of its newly found powers, the poor world "reels to and fro like a drunkard."

Our much vaunted civilization stands, in the searching light of divine wisdom, "upside down and empty." But not for long, thank God! These conditions, the Scriptures assure us, are but a prelude to the new and glorious era of peace, happiness, and complete security which will obtain under the wise rulership of Christ and his church. This is the world's only hope. It will not fail!

The Peace of a Perfect Trust

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."—Isaiah 26:3

HERE is one of those veritable gems of truth with which Isaiah's magnificent writings teem. It is set in the midst of a song of praise and thanksgiving,

and it reflects in striking phrase the prophet's complete trust and confidence in Jehovah.

Peace is surely the desire of all right-minded and warm-heart-

ed people. Peace, friendship, happiness—what would not most people give to have these things assured to them and their children—“on earth peace, good will toward men.” Well might man ask, “When will this be? How can it come?”

**“All’s Well, All’s Well,
When All Is Not Well!”**

THE pattern of life today is largely moulded by the dreadful fear of war, the very thought of which must present itself to every thoughtful mind as a complete negation of the angel’s message of joy and gladness which heralded the birth of Jesus nearly 2,000 years ago. War, the pinnacle of human folly, the crowning triumph of satanic achievement, still haunts the mind of man and, despite the best efforts of those who seek to prevent it, today threatens the very existence of the human race in a hideous cataclysm of destruction which may well bring to mind our Lord’s warning words, “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.”—Matt. 24:22

Why should this be? Who or what is to blame for the condition in which the world of mankind finds itself today? The complete answer to that question opens a very wide field of discussion, but there is much in God’s dealings with his typical people Israel which helps us to

understand where responsibility lies for the absence of peace and good will in this our world of today.

The Prophet Jeremiah, speaking of the priests, the religious leaders of his day in Judea, refers scathingly to their complete lack of responsibility in carrying out their high office. He accuses them of crying, “Peace, peace; when there is no peace,” or as Moffatt renders it, “All’s well, all’s well, when all is not well.” (Jer. 6:13-14) He accuses them of being greedy for gain, and deceitful, leading the people into idolatry and other abominations, and he warns the nation that unless the old paths are sought and the Word of the Lord heeded, disaster is sure to follow.

Where Are Our Leaders Today?

COULD it be that we have spiritual leaders today who are betraying their trust in like manner, leading their flocks away from the paths of truth into the darkness of false theories and speculative philosophies which have little or nothing to do with God’s revealed Word? Are not many of these false leaders crying “All’s well, all’s well, when all is not well?” Are not many dear Christian people hungering for the “Bread of life,” only to be offered the stone of some narrowly conceived creed or catechism which bemuses the mind and chills the heart?

Every true child of God knows that this is the case. Just as in Israel of old there were those among the spiritual leaders who were "greedy for gain," so today, as our Lord warned us, "many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."—Matt. 24:11

The recipe for "perfect peace" has always been the same—a quiet mind and trustful acquiescence in the divine will. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." (Isa. 30:15) That is as true today as it was when Isaiah, as the mouthpiece of the Lord, uttered it nearly 3,000 years ago.

"Softly Flowing Waters"

AT ONE point in Judah's history (and this is one of many such instances) a set of circumstances had arisen which called for precisely this trustful obedience which God required of his people if they desired his blessing. The king of Syria had joined forces with Israel against Judah, and was marching to attack Jerusalem. King Ahaz was on the throne of Judah at the time, and the Prophet Isaiah was sent by God to be the king to reassure him and explain to him that the attack would not succeed. "Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands." (Isa. 7:4) Here is indeed an apt description of the type of mind which today finds its coun-

terpart in the sabre-rattling dictator.

But Ahaz and the people were not convinced; they had lost their faith in Yahweh's gentle workings, picturesquely described as "the waters of Shiloah that go softly." They wanted a more spectacular demonstration of Jehovah's power, and because of this the far greater peril presented by the armies of Assyria was permitted to come upon them, a peril depicted most graphically by "the waters of the river, strong and many," which were to overflow them "even to the neck," so complete was to be their defeat. Had they not refused the "waters of Shiloah that go softly," the quiet and gentle workings of Yahweh, they would have continued to enjoy peace and contentment.—Isa. 8:6-8

How vividly this should bring to the mind of every child of God the vital importance of trusting even where we cannot trace, and of seeking to find in the quiet waters of our gracious Heavenly Father's providences, that peace which comes from a humble and thankful submission to his will and purpose.

"Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled"

AS HE drew near to the end of his earthly ministry, our Lord grew increasingly solicitous for the spiritual well-being of his disciples and of those which

would believe on him "through their word." (John 17:20) Giving to them the promise of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which would teach them all things needful, and bring to their remembrance his own wonderful words, he added another legacy in one of the loveliest exhortations ever given us—"Peace I leave with you, MY PEACE I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

—John 14:27

What a rich and gracious gift this is! It has come down to all his followers through the centuries with a power and assurance that has strengthened their faith and comforted their hearts in every time of need. His peace stemmed from perfect communion with the Father, perfect obedience to the Father's will. It was a peace complete, unshakable, immovable; the peace of an absolute trust derived from the most intimate understanding of, and acquiescence in, God's majestic plan of salvation in which he himself played so vital a part. This peace he gave to his faithful followers of old, and he gives it to us! Listen again to his words:

"These things I have spoken unto you, that IN ME ye might have peace. IN THE WORLD ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

—John 16:33

Only IN HIM can we find this peace. It is useless to look elsewhere for it. We cannot find it in churchianity, philosophy, science, nor yet in speculative doctrines of our own devising. "IN ME ye might have peace," or as the Apostle Paul expresses it "Christ IN YOU, the hope of glory."—Col. 1:27

May we all, in these closing days of our earthly pilgrimage, be able always to see in "the waters of Shiloah that go softly," the wise and gentle providences of our gracious Heavenly Father, and derive from our trust in him and the loving assurances of our Lord and Master, that "peace . . . which passeth all understanding," the perfect peace which is the rightful possession of every child of God who trusts in him.—Phil. 4:7

LEAVES

IN THE Bible green leaves are used to symbolize the righteous (Jer. 17:8), while the ungodly are spoken of as "an oak whose leaf fadeth."—Isa. 1:30

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

C. A. CORNELL		Mr. T. R. Lang, 41 Clooney Terrace,
Southend	May 10	Waterside, Londonderry, North Ireland,
E. HALTON		for accommodations and other details.
Portrush	May 16/18	Brother H. Herrscher, of the U. S. A.
T. R. LANG		will be one of the speakers.
Portrush	May 16/18	
J. LESLIE MC KEOWN		H. HERRSCHER
Portrush	May 16/18	Portrush
Belfast	June 21	Londonderry
W. J. MERCER		Clonelly
Portrush	May 16/18	Dublin
J. H. MURRAY		Belfast
Yeovil	May 3	Dundee
Portrush	May 16/18	Glasgow
Coventry	24	Dewsbury
Letchworth	June 7	Latchford
Liverpool	14	Manchester
E. TERRY NADAL		Liverpool
Portrush	May 16/18	Lymm
Guildford	May 31	Liverpool
Welling	June 7	Coventry
E. G. ROBERTS		Kettering
Portrush	May 16/18	Nottingham
T. STRACY		Lincoln
Eastleigh	May 10	Luton
CONVENTION AT PORTRUSH, NORTH		Aylesbury
IRELAND, Whitsun, May 16-18. Write to		Oxford
		Ipswich
		Aldersbrook (Ilford)
		Guildford
		Yeovil (Hill Grove)
		Parkstone
		Eastleigh
		West Wickham

AVAILABLE IN GREAT BRITAIN: All books and booklets listed on pages 32 and 33 are available in Great Britain, and also the six volumes of "Studies in the Scriptures." The prices are:

Five cent booklets, three pennies; ten cent booklets, six pennies; fifty cent books, 2/6; one dollar books, 5/; two dollar books, 10/. Scripture Study sets, 19/9; One year subscription to The Dawn Magazine, 5/.

The Mark of the Beast

Revelation 20:4 reads: "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." What is the "mark" of the "beast" referred to in this text?

IT IS generally agreed among students of the Bible other than Catholics, that the "beast" referred to in this text, whose "mark" is imposed upon its devotees, is symbolic of the anti-Christian, church-state system of Rome. To be "marked" by that system seems to suggest the thought of being in abject slavery to its dogmas and practices.

We get this thought through comparison with what the Apostle Paul wrote concerning the "marks" of the Lord Jesus. (II Cor. 1:5; 11:23-25) In Galatians 6:17 Paul wrote, "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." This language is based upon the custom of slave owners in the apostle's day of branding their slaves with a particular mark to designate their ownership.

Paul had become a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, and in this text he is reminding the disciples at Galatia of this, explaining that since he was now "marked" as belonging to Christ, no one should endeavor to induce him to serve other masters, especially since he had voluntarily given himself completely to Christ.

Using this as a guide to the symbolic meaning of being "marked," it is apparent that the "mark" of the "beast" would, as we have stated, denote a state of bondage to that great anti-Christ system of iniquity. It does not suggest the belief and practice of error along merely one particular line, but complete allegiance to that which is counterfeit to Christ in every way. Only those who succeed in attaining the "mark" of the Lord Jesus will, when raised from the dead, be rewarded with the high honor of living and reigning with him for a thousand years, for the uplift and blessing of the whole world of mankind.

"Children" in the Kingdom

Jesus said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 19:14) Does this not prove that children go to heaven when they die?

NOT at all! In this statement

Jesus is not speaking of heaven, but of the "kingdom" of heaven, the kingdom which the God of heaven has promised, the kingdom in which Jesus is the great King, with the rulership shared with his faithful footstep followers, those who suffer and die with him. Nor did Jesus mean that little children would be joint-heirs with him in his kingdom. The true explanation of this text is given in the preceding chapter, where we read:

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted [change your attitude], and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso receiveth one such little child [one who has thus humbled himself] in my name receiveth me."—Matt. 18:1-5

From this it is apparent that when Jesus said, "Suffer little children ... to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven," he meant that all who participate with him in the rulership of his kingdom must become childlike in their humility and trust—of "such like" being the thought.

Children who have died will, of course, be richly blessed in the kingdom, but not as rulers with Jesus. A prophecy recorded in Jeremiah 31:15-17 reveals that children who die are in the "land of the enemy," which is the state

of death. The hope we may entertain for these is that they will be awakened from death, that "they shall come again from the land of the enemy." Then, under the laws of Christ's kingdom, they will grow to maturity as subjects of the kingdom, living forever if they obey its laws.

Predestination

The Apostle Paul wrote, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren," (Rom. 8:29) Does this mean that the only ones saved are those who are predestinated for salvation?

NO INDEED! Paul is here explaining that in his plan of salvation, God foreknew that he would select a class from among humanity who would be associated with Jesus in extending salvation to the whole world of mankind. These are the "firstborn" over whom Jesus is Head. See Hebrews 1:18, and Revelation 14:4.

This class is again referred to by Paul in Hebrews 2:10, 11, which reads, "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

In keeping with this, Paul explains that God predestinated that

all who would compose this "first-born" class, the "brethren" of Jesus, would have to be conformed to the image of Christ. Thus we see that it was the class that was fore-known, and the condition upon which one might be in this class that was predestinated.

God's Care

Matthew 6:34 reads, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Does this mean that a Christian should not concern himself with providing the necessities of life for himself and for his family?

WE DO not think that Jesus had any such thought in mind! The Revised Standard Version translation gives the correct thought. It reads, "Do not be anxious about tomorrow." The lesson being taught by Jesus is summed up in verse 33, where he says, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [material needs] shall be added unto you."

The Lord expects a Christian to make reasonable provision for his own material needs, and also for any who may properly be dependent upon him. To do this, some thought must be taken for the morrow. Those who would reap must sow. Those who would collect wages must work. But as Jesus said, our "first" interest in life is seeking the "kingdom," laying up "treasures in heaven." Whatever thought we may need to give to our material needs should not be "anxious,"

or worried. We should learn to trust the Lord with respect to every detail of life.

"Sorrows" of Hell

In II Samuel we read, "The sorrows of hell compassed me about." How do you harmonize this statement with your claim that there is no sorrow or pain in hell?

THESE are the words of King David, and, obviously, descriptive of a situation which he experienced before he died. What did David mean by the "sorrows" of hell? The marginal translation indicates that the Hebrew word here translated "sorrows" would be more properly translated "cords." Using this better translation the entire text reads, "The cords of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented [old English for preceded] me." The Hebrew word here translated "hell" is *sheol*, which simply means the condition of death. Thus it is apparent that David is describing a situation in which he was threatened with death.

It is highly figurative language. Those who are actually bound by the "cords" of death, or of hell, are helpless except as the Lord will exercise his mighty power to restore them to life. And these "cords," David indicates, were already reaching out as though to drag him down to death. Properly understood, the text does not even remotely suggest that those in *sheol*, the Bible hell, are conscious and being tortured in the flames of burning brimstone.

Wilful Sin

Jesus said, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Matt. 12:32) What is the sin against the Holy Spirit which is so reprehensible that it cannot be forgiven?

THE Holy Spirit of God is the power of God, exercised in any manner which he may choose. Sometimes it is an enlightening power enabling the mind to grasp the "deep things" of God which, without this help, could not be understood. Sometimes it is a creative power, as during the six creative days of Genesis chapter 1. In the circumstance under consideration the Holy Spirit was a power which Jesus enlisted to cast out an evil spirit which had caused a man to be "blind and dumb."—Matt. 12:12

The people generally were amazed at this wonderful miracle, "but when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils." (vs. 24) It was this attitude of the Pharisees to which Jesus referred when he spoke of sin against the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees could be forgiven for refusing to accept the teachings of Jesus. Being prejudiced, their imperfect minds could easily fail to

grasp the importance of what the Master said.

But this miracle was different. Here was a direct, understandable manifestation of the holy power, or Spirit of God, which operated to relieve this suffering man from a terrible affliction. To say that this was a work of the Devil was manifestly a wilful ignoring of facts which even their hate-filled minds could understand. It was therefore a sin against the Holy Spirit.

Broadly speaking, therefore, a sin against the Holy Spirit would be a sin against light, a wilful opposition to that which one knows to be right. A miracle would not have to be involved. Paul speaks of those who "were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and of the powers of the world to come." These, he shows, are able to commit sins which cannot be forgiven, because they cannot be brought to repentance.—Heb. 6:3-6

A continuance in sin against light leads to the "second death," from which there is no resurrection. And even a single wilful sin cannot be forgiven. The sinner must be punished. But when there is repentance and reformation, the punishment is something less than the second death. Incidentally, Jesus' statement implies that sin committed against him in this life can be forgiven in the age to come.

In His Presence

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."—Matthew 18:20

IN THE Garden of Eden God said, "It is not good that man should be alone." (Gen. 2:18) While this observation was made concerning Adam's need of a "helpmeet," it is nevertheless true in principle along general lines. In so far as the human race is concerned the hermit is considered to be something less than a normal individual. Normal men and women enjoy association and companionship. It is imperative that the disciples of Christ seek association with one another, and those who have no desire to do this may well question the vitality of their relationship with the Lord himself.

We read concerning the early disciples of Christ that "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42) Certainly this language does not describe an isolationist attitude on the part of those first disciples, but the reverse. They had much in common, and they delighted to be together to share their hopes and joys, and to comfort one another in their trials.

This Spirit-inspired desire for association was in evidence throughout those early days of Christianity. To begin with, the brethren met together, mostly in each other's homes. These meetings were not for the interchange of news with respect to the everyday affairs of their lives. The purpose of their association was much more important than this. It was for their mutual edification as footstep followers of the Master. Paul indicates the nature of some of the meetings which were held at Corinth,

writing, "When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying."—I Cor. 14:26

There were, of course, other types of meetings. Some of them we would describe today as preaching services. Paul preached to the brethren in Troas. This was on "the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread." (Acts 20:7) The custom in the Early Church of breaking bread on the first day of the week was evidently in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus. This should not be confused with the Memorial Supper, which was observed once each year in commemoration of the death of Jesus.

After Gentiles began to accept Christ and associate with the brethren, the apostles met together in Jerusalem for a general conference to determine what the attitude of the church should be toward this new turn of events, and what should be required of these Gentile converts. Peter was one of the chief spokesmen at this assembly. Paul and Barnabas also participated. James presented a summation of the findings, and recommended what seemed to him to be the wise thing to do. The record of this remarkable gathering is presented in the 15th chapter of The Book of Acts.

MATTHEW 18:15-18

IN THIS passage Jesus indicates another reason for the brethren to meet together if and when the need might arise. His instructions are based on the supposition that one brother has trespassed against another brother, and Jesus explains how a difficulty of this sort should be handled. Blest indeed are those who, in situations of this kind, follow the Master's instructions.

First there should be a sincere effort to settle the matter privately between those involved—"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." (vs. 15) There have been many heartaches among the people of God because this instruction was not followed. When we think that we have been wronged it is so like the fallen flesh to complain to others rather than to go to the one involved.

However, Jesus recognized that going to the one who has trespassed might not always result satisfactorily. If it does not, we still do not have the privilege of complaining to all our friends. Jesus said that the next step would be, "If he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established."—vs. 16

But this second step might also fail. Even so, we would not even then be at liberty to make our grievance a public matter. The third and final step would be to take it to the "church," to the gathering of the brethren with whom we ordinarily enjoy fellowship. Then, whatever the church decides should be accepted as the Lord's will. If it were found that the accused brother had really been a trespasser, and he was not willing to apologize and make amends, then he was to be considered a "heathen man and a publican." (vs. 17) Jesus explained that the findings of the church in cases of this kind would be recognized by God. We quote, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."—vs. 18

"In the Midst"

THE vital importance for association with those of like precious faith is brought to our attention in the next two verses, the latter of which is our text. Jesus continued, "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—vss. 19, 20

It is the fact that the Lord meets with his people when they come together in his name that makes their gatherings so tremendously important. Whether or not, in this context, we think of Christ, or of our Heavenly Father, being present in spirit when we meet as his disciples, both would be true. And when we think of what this means, how sacred all our gatherings should be, and how reverent should be our demeanor when we meet with our brethren for mutual edification!

Paul wrote, "Let all things be done unto edifying." (I Cor. 14:26) We can apply this to all our gatherings regardless of the particular form they may take. Paul also admonished that all things should be done decently and in order. (I Cor. 14:40) We are confident that this is the desire and aim of the brethren everywhere, and it seems to us that we will be more on the alert to have it this way by remembering that when we do come together the Lord is in our midst. There are, perhaps, many things we would do, or fail to do, if our brethren alone were involved, but since the Lord meets with us, we try to be more watchful, not only of our words and deeds, but even of our thoughts.

The Unseen Guest

THERE is a very meaningful motto which many Christians have on display in their homes, which reads, "Christ is the Head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation." We could just as truthfully say of every gathering of the Lord's consecrated people that "Christ is the leader of this meeting, the unseen observer of all that takes place, and the silent listener to everything that is said." Yes, even more than that, he is able to read the thoughts and intents of our hearts.

Since the Lord does thus meet with us, and occupies such a prominent position in our assemblies, we of course desire to assemble with the reverence that is due to him, and to the Heavenly Father whom he represents. If we keep this in mind it will have a bearing on our demeanor from the very moment we enter the door of the assembly room. And even before this, it will induce us to make proper preparation for the meeting, through prayer and otherwise.

Stepping into a room, small or large, where a group of the Lord's disciples are gathering in his name, how would we conduct ourselves if the Master were visibly present to conduct the meeting? Would we begin talking with this, that, or the other brother or sister about the weather, or about our infirmities, or perchance our family troubles? Would we be so intent upon

discussing these trivial things that we would fail to hear the chairman of the meeting announce the opening hymn?

If we were a little more conscious of the fact that the Lord, although invisible, is an observer at all our gatherings, would we be habitually late, and therefore a disturbance to the Lord's people at every meeting we attend? For reasons best known to each of us, there is often a reluctance on the part of the brethren in going into a meeting to occupy the front seats. Now this would not be particularly serious if everyone attending the meeting arrived on time. But since there almost always seem to be some late comers, these have to disturb those who were on time, and distract the speaker, in order to occupy one of the empty seats that are nearer to the front.

He Sees and Hears

WOULD there ever be a situation like this if everyone concerned kept in mind Jesus' promise, "There am I in the midst"? We think not! The fact that we do not see him does not change the situation. The reason we would be more careful if he were visible to our human eyes, is not because we see him, but because we would thus be so acutely aware of the fact that he sees us. But let us remember that he sees us anyway. Yes, he sees and hears.

Those who conduct meetings made up of the Lord's devoted people with whom he promised to be present should keep in mind their responsibility to him as well as to his people. We doubt if any minister of the Gospel, or any teacher of a Bible study meeting, would be likely to consume time in speculating, and in doubtful disputations, if he actually saw the Lord occupying one of the front seats at the gathering. What a feeling of reverence and sense of responsibility this would give to all who serve in the church as elders. But even though we do not see him, Jesus' promise still stands, "There am I in the midst."

Consciousness of the Lord's presence at our meetings should also have a profound bearing on how we listen to what is being said, whether we are being exhorted to faithfulness to the Lord and his service, or whether we are being taught one or another

of the precious doctrines of the truth. At times a speaker feels called upon to express a word of warning against some false doctrine, or wrong practice. As we listen, do we search our own hearts with the view of making a personal application of what we hear, or are we thinking of how timely the remarks are for someone else in the congregation?

Reality

IN PRESENTING these thoughts in this manner it is merely with the desire of reminding ourselves of the realities associated with our fellowship as brethren in Christ. To meet with the Lord's people one or more times a week is a great privilege and a high honor, and the more so when we remember Jesus' promise, "There am I in the midst." It means much more than to remark at the close of the meeting that we heard a "good talk," or "we had a good study." Or, in the case of a prayer, praise, and testimony meeting, to observe that sister so and so gave a very revealing testimony.

Has that "good talk" penetrated into our hearts so deeply that it will affect our lives through the days and weeks ahead? Are we determined, as a result of what we have heard, that we will more diligently than ever "seek first the kingdom of God"; that we will seek the kingdom by increasing our zeal to sacrifice more faithfully in any and every way we can? Does that "good talk" move us to action—just as though we had heard Jesus say the same things? It should, for if the brother was properly representing the Lord he should have said what is contained in the Word of the Lord.

Nominal Church

WE OFTEN speak of the "nominal" church, which means "in name only." But if we should forget what it means to be disciples of Christ and the purpose of our meeting together as his followers, we could easily become nominal in our attitudes, especially in the matter of attending meetings. Throughout the country today, by radio, by television, and through the public press, people are urged to attend church on Sundays. The ad-

monition is to go to the church or synagogue "of your choice," but go.

The implication in this is that attending church once a week largely takes care of one's religious responsibilities. This may be all right for the world, but we should be careful not to think of attending meetings as a sort of ritual, by the once a week observance of which we thereby live up to the terms of our covenant of sacrifice. Assembling with the followers of the Master is not a ritual. It is one of the means the Lord has provided for our upbuilding and strengthening as new creatures, that we might day by day lay down our lives in his service. The assemblies of the Lord's people are "feeding grounds," from which, nourished and refreshed, we go forth as ambassadors of Christ, holding forth the Word of life "in the midst of a crooked and perverse" world in which we are commissioned to shine as lights.—Phil. 2:15, 16; Matt. 5:14-16

Jewels

"THEN they that feared [reverenced] the Lord spake often one to another," Malachi wrote, "and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels: and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (Mal. 3:16, 17) This well-known and precious passage of Scripture emphasizes the importance of the Lord's people meeting together for mutual encouragement and edification.

The presence of the Lord at such gatherings is also assured by Malachi. The Lord "hearkens" and he "hears." If we did not know of the Lord's love, his mercy, his sympathy, and his understanding, we might at times be terrified to realize that he hears, not only what is said at our meetings, but that he is a silent listener to every conversation of his people. But he does understand. He knows how imperfect we are, and in his book of remembrance is recording the thoughts and intents of our hearts, rather than the imperfect way in which we give expression to what is in our hearts.

Let us then, as Paul wrote, "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised); And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."—Heb. 10:22-25

The Approaching Day

"AND so much the more as ye see the day approaching." There are evidences all around us that the "day" of the millennial kingdom is fast approaching, which means that the time is indeed short in which to prove our worthiness to live and reign with Christ. If we are to be one of the "jewels" in that royal diadem, we will need to make faithful use of all the means of

IDOLATRY

THROUGHOUT the Scriptures the worship of idols is forbidden, and under the Law given to Israel those found guilty of idolatry were punishable by death. In the New Testament idolatry is used to symbolize any selfish interests which a Christian may permit to take the place of God in his affections. Many have wondered why God's typical people seemed so easily led into idolatry. The fact is that it was very attractive to the fallen human mind. Idolatry was accompanied by visible outward signs, with shows, pageants, parades, all of which have an attraction to the human heart. Besides, associated with idolatry also were licentious revelries and obscene orgies which appealed to every sensual passion. This, joined with the attractions of wealth, fashion, and luxury, made the worship of idols difficult to resist.

grace which the Lord, in his love, has provided for us, and one of these is "the assembling of ourselves together."

May we avail ourselves of every opportunity of assembly that is offered to us. There are the gatherings of our home ecclesia; the local conventions; the larger district conventions. And then there is the General Convention. There are many of the brethren who, through no fault of their own, are so situated that they are unable to attend any meetings. For these the Lord has ways and means of compensating for their lack of fellowship with his people. In this we rejoice!

But for those of us who can attend meetings, may we continue doing so with appreciation, and with hearts prepared to receive the blessings which the Lord provides for his people when they assemble in his name. And may we attend with reverence, ever remembering Jesus' promise, "There am I in the midst."

The 1959 General Convention

A glance at pages 61 and 64 reveals that the "convention season" is here again, and that many gatherings for the spiritual edification of the Lord's people have been planned. Doubtless many additional conventions will be announced throughout the summer months. They are widely scattered geographically, one or more of them being within reach of the brethren in essentially every area of the country. We suggest that you make it a point to attend at least one that is near to you.

THE GENERAL Convention this year, as already announced, will be held in Bloomington, Indiana, August 8-13. The program for this gathering is now in course of preparation, and the June issue of *The Dawn* will carry an article outlining many of its main features. The Theme Text has already been selected, which is I Corinthians 15:58, and reads, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." We trust that the convention will be a renewed source of encouragement to all who attend, and to those also to whom it will be reported through *The Dawn*, and otherwise. So, plan to go to Bloomington.

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

Great Value

Dear "Frank and Ernest": Thank you for sending us your splendid magazine, The Dawn, for the past year. It has been of great value to the young people. Could you please send us copies of your various tracts for door to door distribution, and for use with interested young people. Yours sincerely, B. S., Young Peoples Library, England

Much Benefit

Dear "Frank and Ernest": I thank you from the very depth of my heart for your quick response in sending me the "Creation" booklet, and also a copy of The Dawn Magazine. I am carefully reading these, with the help of the scriptural references, and am deriving much benefit, as they explain so explicitly various phases of God's Word which the churches do not teach. I do sincerely hope that your broadcasts will continue to reach and bless

many people. I am looking forward to your next programme. —England

An Oldtimer

Dear "Frank and Ernest": I first attended the meetings in Allegheny in 1904. I am now eighty-seven years old, and blind, so I do enjoy your radio talks on Sunday. Enclosed is a small donation to aid with your good work. —Pennsylvania

Loves to Serve

Dear Brethren: I have read your notice in The Dawn that you need help. How I would love to be there and to serve with you, but I cannot on account of my age. But the Lord has wonderfully blessed me in that I can send out the literature by mail. I am looking forward to receiving the two tracts which I ordered—"God's World of Tomorrow," and "The Homecoming of the Dead." I will need at least one thousand. God bless and keep you all. —California

Fear Removed

Dear "Frank and Ernest":

Your Sunday program gives me new hope and inspiration to face life from day to day. I never could understand many verses in the Bible, but you explain them so clearly that all the fear I had of life beyond the grave has disappeared. Will you please send me your free booklet on that subject. —Michigan

A Serious Student

Dear Sirs: Please send me a copy of "When a Man Dies," as announced on your last broadcast. I have left the church in which I was raised and have now been studying the truth for two years. It is a very serious thing with me. Last summer I subscribed to The Dawn Magazine, and I have the first two volumes of "Studies in the Scriptures," "God and Reason," "God's Plan," "Hope Beyond the Grave," and other booklets. They have all been a great blessing to me. —Illinois

Questions Answered

Dear Friends in Christ: I have just completed reading "Behold Your King" and "The Truth About Hell." I

wish to thank you and our loving God for making this literature available. These booklets have answered so many questions which my mind has pondered. I have particularly wondered what would happen to those people who, through no fault of their own, never heard the glorious Gospel of salvation. The answer was revealing, and I thank God that you have shown it to me.—Washington

Comforted

Dear Sirs: I enjoy your programs on television very much. They are a great comfort to me. I lost my mother two years ago, and if we did not have faith that some day we would see our dear ones again, the outlook for the future would not be very cheerful. I do not go to church. I just would not know where to go. I get much more out of your programs.—Ohio

Clearer Knowledge

Dear Sirs: I have seen two of your television programs, and am looking forward to more. You have given me a new hope, and a clearer knowledge of God and his wonderful ways. Thank you very much.—Ohio

Bible Harmonious

Dear Sirs: I love to read your books and to hear "Frank and Ernest," because they truly explain God's plan. I am sending a small donation to help the work. It is just wonderful how the truth has opened my eyes. I am grateful to God and to you. The truth is surely so much better than the traditions of men. Now I see that the Bible is truly harmonious.—Ohio

God's Love

Dear Sirs: Please send me your booklet "The Truth About Hell." Your radio discussion on this subject impressed me greatly. It is the first real interpretation of it that I have ever heard. It is my firm belief that if God is love he would never allow his human creatures to burn in hell forever. A mother will punish her children, so will God, but she would never permit them to be tortured in the fires of hell.—Massachusetts

Made Happy

I am happy to greet you, and to tell you how much I appreciate your Bible radio programs [Spanish lan-

guage] to which I listen every Sunday over Station XICO, of Calexico, California. Once I was affiliated with a church in Mexico, but now I do not attend anywhere. I would like you to pray for me, as I also pray for you, that God will continue to bless your labors.—Arizona

No Longer Confused

Dear Friends: Although I am poor I can afford a dollar for your magazine. There is nothing that I buy for which I receive so much. Until I heard of your association I was confused about the Bible. I have read many books on the Bible, but your way of explaining it is the most reasonable and hopeful I have ever found.—New York

"New Light"

Dear "Frank and Ernest": Your radio programmes have been very interesting to me. I am a science teacher, and am often asked about the Bible's creation story. Your questions and answers have given me a new light on the subject. I would appreciate receiving a copy of your booklet, "Creation." Thank you, and praise God for your testimony. Sincerely.—British Columbia, Canada

CONVENTIONS

Full information concerning programs and room reservations can be obtained by writing to the name listed. An asterisk (*) indicates an immersion service is being planned.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, May 2, 3—YMCA Building, 404 East 10th Street. Mrs. H. E. Brink, 4236 Antioch Road, Kansas City North 16, Mo. Speakers: Brothers Samuel Baker; William A. Baker; John A. Meggison; Chester A. Sundbom.

CONNELLSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA, May 3—Fireman's Hall in South Conneltsville. Mrs. Raymond Siesky, R. F. D. 2, Box 497, Conneltsville, Pennsylvania. Speakers: Brothers Harry Casler; Harry Passios; and E. K. Penrose.

PIQUA, OHIO, May 3—YWCA Building, 418 North Wayne Street. Mrs. Eva Peddemors, 222 Walker Street. Speakers: Brothers William H. Ellis; Ludlow P. Loomis; and Daniel J. Morehouse.

***AKRON, OHIO, May 10**—YWCA Building, 146 South High Street. Mrs. Bonnie Bordes, 776 Frank Boulevard. Speakers: Brothers Mike Balco; John Baracos; A. Jarmon; Louis Zbik; and either Owen Kindig or E. K. Penrose.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, May 10—I. O. G. T. Hall, 2933 Cedar Avenue. Mrs. C. R. Newham, 678 40th Ave., N. E.

SAGINAW, MICHIGAN, May 10—The Woman's Club, 311 North Jefferson Street. Mrs. C. A. Sundbom, 207 Alice St.

WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT, May 10—Masonic Hall, on South Main Street. Mrs. S. Wawrzeniak, 49 Scrub Oak Road, North Haven 2, Connecticut. Speakers: Brothers R. J. Krupa; Steve Suraci, Jr.; Tony Tsimonis; Claude R. Weida; and John Zytkeiwicz.

VANCOUVER, B. C. CANADA, May 16-18—Vancouver East Community "Y," 788 Commercial Drive, corner of Adanac. Mrs. W. A. McNee, 6569 Argyle Street. Speakers: Brothers J. Andrus; C. T. Barton; K. Barrett; M. Chandler; Thomas Fay; Frank French; Hugh Hanham; A. Hawkins; B. Kirkham; E. G. Lorenz; L. E. Parsons; W. Price; and Theodore Smith.

CINCINNATI, OHIO, May 17—Morning service at 608 Walnut Street. The place of the afternoon service will be announced. Mrs. W. N. Poe, 1 West Ridge Road, Newport, Kentucky. Speakers: Brothers William Molhoek; Roy Poland; and Alvin Raffel.

CLEVELAND, OHIO, May 17—YMCA Building, Prospect Avenue and East 22nd Street. Mrs. Ion Cipperley, 1539 Genesee Road, Euclid, Cleveland 21.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, May 17—YWCA Building, 2027 Chestnut Street. Mr. Otis Barrall, 42 Fairfield Road, Havertown, Pennsylvania. Speakers: Brothers Levi Jacobs; Peter Kolliman; F. S. Wassmann; and W. N. Woodworth.

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK, May 17—Todd Hall, YMCA Building, 100 Gibbs Street. Mrs. Ann Fornuto, 27 Candy Lane. Speakers: Brothers R. J. Krupa; and G. P. Ostrander.

BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT, May 24—Barnum Hotel (Ballroom) 140 Fairfield Avenue. Mrs. M. Rakocy, 165 Pope Street,

(Continued on page 64.)

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

SAMUEL BAKER

Kansas City, Mo. May 2, 3
Topeka, Kans. 4
Burlington, Colo. 6, 7
Pueblo, Colo. 8
Denver, Colo. 10
Ft. Collins, Colo. 11, 12
Laramie, Wyo. 13, 14
Ogden, Utah 17
Salt Lake City, Utah 18, 19
Fallon, Nev. 20, 21
Sacramento, Calif. 24
San Francisco, Calif. 25, 26
Asilomar, Calif. 28-31

WILLIAM A. BAKER

Denver, Colo. April 29
Kansas City, Mo. May 2, 3
St. Joseph, Mo. 4
Lincoln, Neb. 5-7
Topeka, Kans. 8
Kansas City, Mo. 10
St. Louis, Mo. 17

GEORGE BALKO

Monessen, Pa. May 10

MIKE BALKO

Monessen, Pa. May 3

JOHN BARACOS

Duquesne, Pa. May 3

FRED A. BRIGHT

Washington, D. C. May 3

J. BURTON BROWN

Santa Ana, Calif. May 24

BERTRAM C. COOPER

Whittier, Calif. May 3
Phoenix, Ariz. 10
Riverside-
Ontario, Calif. 17

ORLANDO D. DEIFER

York-
Lancaster, Pa. May 24

EDWARD E. FAY

San Jose, Calif. May 10

THOMAS C. FAY

Salem, Ore. May 13
Seattle, Wash. 14
Vancouver, B.C. Can. 16-18
Duncan, B. C. Can. 20
Victoria, B. C. Can. 21
Bremerton, Wash. 22
Chehalis, Wash. 23

IRVING C. FOSS

Whittier, Calif. May 10

EARL L. FOWLER

Whittier, Calif. May 24

G. HOMER HAMLIN

Chico, Calif. May 3

RUSSELL L. JURD

Bakersfield-
Tehachapi, Calif. May 3

DANIEL KAZIAK

Toledo, Ohio (a.m.) May 17
Adrian, Mich. (p.m.) 17

PETER KOLLIMAN

New Brunswick, N. J.
May 10

ARTHUR H. KRUMPOLT

Catawissa-
Quakake, Pa. May 3
Groton-
New London, Conn.
16, 17

LUDLOW P. LOOMIS

Reading, Pa. May 10

EDWARD G. LORENZ

San Diego, Calif. May 10
Vancouver, B.C. Can. 16-18
Bellingham, Wash. 19
Seattle, Wash. 20
Tacoma, Wash. 21
Portland, Ore. 22
Salem, Ore. 24
Asilomar, Calif. 28-31

JOHN Y. MAC AULAY

Mobile, Ala. May 3, 4
Fairhope, Ala. 5, 6
Meridian, Miss. 8
Waynesboro, Miss. 10

J. Y. MAC AULAY (Cont.)

Franklinton, La. 12
 Kenner, La. 13
 Reserve, La. 14
 Hayes, La. 15
 Lake Charles, La. 17, 18
 Shreveport, La. 19-21
 Livingston, Tex. 22
 Houston, Tex. 24
 Taft, Tex. 25, 26
 Corpus Christi, Tex. 27, 28
 Donna, Tex. 31

ROY E. MITCHELL

New Haven-
 Waterbury, Conn. May 17

KENNETH M. NAIL

Whittier, Calif. May 17

HOWARD W. OSTRANDER

Sonora, Calif. May 17

HARRY PASSIOS

East Liverpool, Ohio May 10
 Washington, Pa. 17

G. R. POLLOCK

Bakersfield-
 Tehachapi, Calif. May 17

KENNETH W. RAWSON

Paterson, N. J. May 24

RAYMOND RAWSON

Flint, Mich. (a.m.) May 3
 Saginaw, Mich. (p.m.) 3

F. W. RICE

Ventura, Calif. May 10

BERT ROSE

London, Ont. Can. May 10

CHESTER A. SUNDBOM

La Salle, Ill. April 30
 Kansas City, Mo. May 2, 3
 Hannibal, Mo. 4
 Mattoon, Ill. 5
 Muncie, Ind. 6
 Asilomar, Calif. 28-31

J. I. VAN HORNE

Steubenville, Ohio May 10
 Monessen, Pa. 24

GEORGE M. WILSON

Chicago, Ill. April 26

CLAUDE R. WEIDA

Boston, Mass. May 24

W. N. WOODWORTH

*Coatesville, Pa. May 3

*YMCA Building, 335-341
 E. Lincoln Highway, 3 p.m.



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MAY 7—"Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel."—I Corinthians 9:16 (Z. '03-174 Hymn 232)

MAY 14—"Speaking the truth in love, ... grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."—Ephesians 4:15 (Z. '03-200 Hymn 198)

MAY 21—"All Scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteous-

ness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—II Timothy 3:16, 17 (Z. '97-170 Hymn 296)

MAY 28—"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body [so long as we feel entirely contented with present conditions—ourselves and our surroundings], we are absent from the Lord."—II Corinthians 5:6 (Z. '97-305 Hymn 145)

CONVENTIONS—Continued From Page 61

Fairfield, Connecticut. Speakers: H. E. Anderson; F. S. Wassmann; and W. N. Woodworth.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, May 24—Macca-bees Building, Woodward Avenue at Putnam. Mr. Raymond Rawson, 19050 Addison, Detroit 41.

STEUBENVILLE, OHIO, May 24—YMCA Building, 214 North 4th Street. Mrs. Robert Sims, 199 Canterbury Boulevard. Speakers: Brothers Raymond J. Krupa; and Adam Miskawitz.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, May 28-31—Asilomar Convention Grounds, California. Miss Nannette Kiddoo, 3010 Fulton Street, San Francisco 18. Speakers: Brothers Samuel Baker; King Barrett; L. Paul Davis; I. C. Foss; Emile Herrscher; John G. Hull, Jr.; Edward G. Lorenz; H. W. Ostrander; Leland Parsons; G. R. Pollock; Stephen Roskiewicz; and C. A. Sundbom.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, May 30, 31—Masonic Temple, 912 North LaSalle Street. Mr. Edmund M. Jezuit, 4327 S.

Christiana Avenue. Speakers: Brothers Jens Copeland; George O. Jeuck; W. S. Geisinger; and W. N. Woodworth.

NEW ALBANY, INDIANA, May 31—Fifth Sunday gathering to be held in their new hall, 1614 East Spring Street. Miss Nellie K. Goodbub, 620 Culbertson Ave.

LANGLEY, B. C. CANADA, June 13—Joint convention of the Langley-New Westminster Ecclesias. Masonic Hall in Langley (Trans-Canada Highway.) Mrs. V. Mihalech, 12304 116th Avenue, North Surrey, B. C.

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA, June 20, 21—Knights of Pythians Lodge, 615 Grandin Road. Mrs. William E. Roach, 224 Grandin Road.

YORK, PENNSYLVANIA, June 20, 21.

FOURTH OF JULY CONVENTIONS: Detroit, Michigan; Los Angeles, California; and New Brunswick, New Jersey.

CANORA, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA, July 11, 12.

"GOD'S REMEDY FOR A SUFFERING WORLD"

To be discussed by

"FRANK AND ERNEST"
WOR-710 kc.—10:30 A. M.
Sunday, May 17

All human plans for peace are failing, but God has a plan. Hear "Frank and Ernest" discuss this topic, and send for a free copy of the booklet, "God and Reason." There is no obligation. Address:

"FRANK AND ERNEST"

Box 60, Dept. N, General Post Office
New York, N. Y.

For Your Newspaper

To the left is a suggestion for a small advertisement in your local newspaper. The outline is designed for two inches in one column.

JUNE TOPIC: On Sunday, June 21, "Frank and Ernest" will discuss the topic, "Joys of the Judgment Day." This interesting topic should be well advertised, and an abundant supply of circulars will be available for this purpose. You are invited to send for as many as you can use. They are free.

"Better" than Angels

ONE of the traditions of the Dark Ages is that when Christians die they become angels. "I want to be an angel, and with the angels stand," is the way it is expressed in one of the old-time hymns, "a crown upon my forehead, and a harp within my hand." The Bible does not teach that Christians become angels. Instead, in the resurrection they are exalted to "glory, honor, and immortality."—Rom. 2:7

Concerning Jesus, the Apostle John wrote, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him." (1 John 3:2) The Apostle Paul wrote that in the resurrection Jesus was made "better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." (Heb. 1:4) Since faithful Christians are to be made like Jesus, they also will be "better" than angels. Thus we see that still another tradition comes far short of the truth of the divine plan as taught in the Bible. See the article, "A Heavenly Inheritance," beginning on page 22 of this issue.

The first of these "keys" to the Bible was written more than seventy-five years ago, the last in 1904. They continue to be the outstanding text books on the Bible for our day.

Studies in the Scriptures

- . The Divine Plan of the Ages, cloth, 50 cents, ten or more 40 cents each; paper, 30 cents, ten or more 23 cents each.
- . The Time Is at Hand, cloth, 50 cents each.
- . Thy Kingdom Come, cloth, 50 cents each.
- . The Battle of Armageddon, cloth, 85 cents each.
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- Question Books for Volumes 1-3, 10 cents each; Volumes 4-6, 15 cents each

SIX VOLUMES, OVER 3,000 PAGES, CLOTH BOUND, \$3.75

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