

The Dawn

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Highlights of Dawn

While the recent disappointment at Reykjavik, Iceland casts a pall over the usual feeling of optimism during the holiday season, it is well to keep in mind that God's hand is over all. It has been written that to him "the nations are as a drop of a bucket." (Isa. 40:15) Man's foolish mistakes and blunders will in no wise stand in the way of God bestowing his wonderful promised gifts upon humanity in his own time and way. For it is written that "the gifts of God are without repentance {change}." —Romans 11:29

The Gifts of God

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning."—James 1:17

For centuries the year's end has been a season for the giving of gifts. It is a beautiful custom, the practice of which temporarily lifts the world somewhat out of its otherwise self-seeking course, and gives millions a taste of the revolutionary changes which will result in human relationships when, under the laws of Christ's kingdom, the unselfish spirit of giving will predominate in the world.

The spirit of giving is the spirit of God, the greatest of all givers. It manifests the generous spirit of love, and the Bible teaches "God is love." The love of God is described by the Greek word *agape*, which in our **Common English Version** is sometimes translated 'charity'. The original and true meaning of charity is the act of giving to those in need, where there is no hope of repayment. How truly this is the case with the gifts of God. There is not anything that God's creatures can give to him which would add to his riches, and regardless of what they might withhold, he would not be made the poorer for it.

God gives because he loves, and the gladness of those who receive his gifts is his joy. This is true even during the present fallen and dying condition of man. Solomon expressed this thought, saying, "Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God." (Eccles. 5:18,19) Here the wise man describes the sheer joy of living on this earth, and declares that all the things here which contribute to man's comfort and joy are the gifts of God. We are also reminded of this in the Genesis record of the creation, where we read of the garden which God prepared "eastward in Eden." In that garden God placed "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food." (Gen. 2:9) It was all designed for the enjoyment of man. David wrote, by way of affirmation, "The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD'S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men."—Ps. 115:16

David also observed how the generous hand of God is manifest in all his creative works: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." (Ps. 19:1-3) This beautiful passage of Scripture tells of the wonderful clockwork of worlds above our heads. It tells us of the glory of God's celestial handiwork, and the perfection of its silent, perpetual operation, and how the voice of God is heard in its unfailling laws. We look at these works of creation, and we stand in awe. For whether it be heavenly spheres or microscopic specimens, each is a world within itself, and each emphasizes the great truth that all God's works are perfect. Having these thoughts in mind, let us remember that this universe is a gift to us from the great Creator, who fashioned its design for our eternal blessing.

Every moment of our existence is in some way linked to what our Heavenly Father has wrought. Everywhere we look, we see his beneficent designs, made for our happiness, and we marvel as we recognize the unbounded power and the explicit skill that is manifested, both in the minutest and in the mightiest things God has made. The growth of seeds in the warm, watered earth to supply our homes and sustenance of life, are gifts of God. We observe the manifold scenes of beauty which nature provides, the splendor of which no human brush can possibly catch to the full in their fast-changing grandeur, and we rejoice in the pleasure they bring.

During this holiday season, a goodly portion of our world is thinking of another gift—a gift from God which has drawn us closer to the greatest of all givers—a gift without which we would be everlastingly alienated from fellowship or communion with God, and in death lose all future hope of enjoying the world he has made for us. It was necessary that someone should take the sinner's place in death. No ordinary person could do this, since all men were sinners, and unable to give to God a ransom. The Bible says that "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners" (Rom. 5:8), a way was opened for us to come back into fellowship with him by the greatest gift that has ever been offered throughout the wide domain of the universe!

In all of the mythology of paganism, the imagination of man has never devised a god that would make a sacrifice on behalf of its subjects. But our Heavenly Father, the only true and living God, offered a sacrifice so great that the very mention of it in John 3:16 makes that text one of the most loved in the entire Bible. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

When we write thank-you notes for gifts received during the holiday season, it would be well if we would take

time to kneel down and offer a prayer of thanks to God—to thoughtfully express our gratitude for the unspeakable gift of his only begotten Son—the gift that opened for us a new and living way to everlasting life. As we express that thank-you prayer to God, one of the texts that will no doubt pass through our minds is the one which says, "Great and marvelous are thy works, LORD God Almighty." (Rev. 15:3) The unselfish love which prompted the Father to give his Son to redeem us from death was also beautifully reflected in the life of the one born in Bethlehem's manger. He also gave. He gave his life for you, and me, and all mankind, as it is written, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Rom. 5:8

At this season of the year the spirit of unselfishness is generated in the hearts of millions of people, a virtue which men should praise wherever it is found. It is a time when many homeless people are fed, and orphans are clothed, the aged, lonesome, and almost forgotten men and women are noticed. The singing of carols, the unselfish sharing of gifts, the general spirit of goodwill which exists, are good and wholesome. The spirit of generosity is a blessing to every human heart that permits it to enter.

Many students of the Bible believe Jesus was not born on December 25, but rather that, according to prophecy, October 1st more closely approximates the time when our Master came into the world. However, we are not interested in the celebrating of a day, but in recognizing that in keeping with the promises and prophecies of God, a child was given as a gift to the human race, and that he grew up to be the Savior of mankind. According to the prophecies he was to be the seed of the woman, born of a virgin. He was to be born in Bethlehem Ephratah, Bethlehem the beautiful, a little town hidden in the hills of Judea. And according to the prophecies he was born a prospective king. While we might wish that men had chosen the proper

day on which to recognize that the Son of God was born, nevertheless we are pleased that this materialistic world in which we live takes time out, even though briefly, every year to recognize the birth of the one who is the Redeemer of mankind.

Above the commercialism, the tinsel and the glitter, and above the dissipation and drunkenness of some which tends to tarnish and befog the true spirit of rejoicing—above all these, millions of people have joy brought into otherwise miserable lives because of the influence of that man-child upon their hearts. Millions are moved at this season by an impulse other than the ordinary course of their lives to spend a little time, a little money, a little thought, in bringing happiness to someone besides themselves; and many of these generous acts will be remembered throughout the ages of eternity. The spirit of unselfish giving brings true contentment. It holds the key to the secret of getting the most out of being alive. The person who puts unselfishness to work has learned a tremendous lesson and has taken a big step toward real human happiness.

The Apostle Paul wrote: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4:7) Certainly this is a question we should ask ourselves, and in answer remember the statement of James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Therefore, like the clouds which pour forth their waters to the refreshment of the ground; like the stars that reflect the light which they have received from the sun; like the diamonds made alive by reflecting the light—all we can do is to give back in devotion that which our Heavenly Father has already given to us from his generous hand!

Paul also wrote: "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is within him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God: that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."— I Cor. 2:9-12

These are the rich truths of the Bible which have been given to us by God. They are not seen by all men. The natural eye cannot see them. The natural ear cannot hear them. But those who study his Word find therein many gifts to treasure in their hearts. One of these is the gift of peace, "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) This peace of God which passes all understanding is able to keep our hearts and minds. And as we think of God's gift of peace and how it came through his Son, we cannot help but declare with the psalmist, "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and will call upon the name of the LORD." (Ps. 116:12,13) What can we render unto the LORD? Mary broke the alabaster box of ointment and poured its sweet-smelling contents over the head of Jesus. (Mark 14:3) That gift was a reflection of the love Mary had received. While Jesus is no longer here in the flesh, nevertheless we can continue to honor his name and remember the great fact that he died that we might live.

To know that we are loved is one of the greatest treasures of life. Our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus treasure our love. Jesus said the greatest commandment was that we should love the LORD our God with all our hearts and minds, and should love our neighbors as ourselves. From these deep undercurrents of human love there are gifts that every one of us can give both to

God and to men. If it were not for these, much of the meaning of life would be gone. And as we endeavor to give these gifts, let us remember that the manner of giving is just as important as the gift itself. It should always be done as a reflection of God who gave his gifts prompted by unselfish love. If we allow this spirit of unselfishness to rule, we will learn that it will make our lives more serviceable to others and will make us content within ourselves; for, as we have freely received, and as we freely give, we learn the secret of true happiness and attain more of the peace of God.

The song in the night sung to the shepherds of Bethlehem's fields, tells of our Father and the gift of his Son. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the LORD came upon them: and the glory of the LORD shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on the earth peace, goodwill toward men."—Luke 2:8-14

These are thrilling words for they speak of eventual peace on earth—peace which will be established by God through a great divine king who, though invisible, will be recognized by all as the one born in Bethlehem; who throughout the thirty-three and one-half years of his short life was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; who healed the sick, caused the lame to leap, the blind to see, and the deaf to hear; who wept over the impoverishment of men and their rejection of him; who poured out his

life unto death; who voluntarily offered his perfect human life on the cross to ransom us from the power of the grave; who said while he yet lived, that like as the Father had power to give life, so also he had given the Son power to give life, and because of this, the hour would come "in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth."—John 5:28,29

Surely a ruler with such power and proven love for man can restore peace to the earth; and so says this prophecy: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God [ruler], the Everlasting Father [lifegiver], the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:6,7

This promise of God to bring peace to the world is yet to come. **But it will surely come**, because the great gift which he gave nearly two thousand years ago was an expression of his 'goodwill' to have it accomplished!

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

Our thoughts again with Christmas here,
Turn to our loved ones far and near—
Turn to God's greatest Gift to man,
The very center of his plan.

In that provision we rejoice
With thankful heart we lift our voice,
And pray that he will haste that day
His reign on earth shall hold full sway.

International Bible Study Lessons

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 7

A New Community

KEY VERSE: "All that believed were together, and had all things in common."—Acts 2:44

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:38-47; 4:32-35

THE brief view of the Early Church we get from this interesting set of Scriptures, lets us know that in the beginning the brethren lived in a very close-knit communal environment in Jerusalem. It seems that the LORD blessed this arrangement at first, as it helped to establish their faith and activity in the LORD'S work. The apostles were their leaders and advisors, and were instrumental in developing a solid foundation to truth doctrine upon which the Early Church could build.

But, as could be expected, and no doubt predicted, this seemingly ideal arrangement would fall prey to the human weaknesses and life-style differences existing among the brethren involved. We are told of trouble which came as a result of some feeling that there was an inequitable distribution of food and other goods. How this way of life finally came to an end

we are not informed, except we know that, in time, persecutions came which scattered them abroad, some moving to Antioch and other cities in Asia Minor, where new classes were established.

No doubt this, too, was of the LORD'S doing, as it was not his plan to have the truth movement settle down in Jerusalem among the Jews only. His purpose for the church included the Gentiles, and so it was necessary, in time, to cause circumstances which would bring brethren into Gentile areas of the world for a witness of the Gospel to all nations, in harmony with the commission our Lord had earlier left to his church through the apostles.—Luke 24:47

Our Pastor gave some sound advice on this matter for our guidance today, which we quote from his writings of September, 1885:

"True, God permitted a communistic arrangement in the primitive church . . . but this may have been for the purpose of illustrating to us the unwisdom of the method. And lest some, thinking of the scheme now, should conclude that the apostles did not command and organize communities, because they lacked the wisdom to concoct and carry out such methods. For not a word can be quoted from our Lord or the apostles advocating the communistic principles; but much to the contrary. . . .

The apostles soon found that the management of the community would greatly interfere with their real work—their commission to preach the Gospel—"that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem." So they abandoned those things to others. The Apostle Paul and others traveled from city to city preaching Christ and him crucified; but, so far as the record shows, they never mentioned communism and never organized a community: and yet St. Paul declares, "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." This proves that communism is no part of the Gospel, nor of the counsel

of God for this age. . . .

"Our Lord Jesus not only did not establish a community while he lived, but he never taught that such should be established. On the contrary, in his parables he taught that all have not the same number of pounds or talents given them, that each is a steward and should individually (not collectively, as a commune) manage his own affairs, and render his own account.—Matt. 25:14-28; Luke 19:13-24. (See also James 4: 13, 15)

"Moreover, the forming of a commune of believers is opposed to the purpose and methods of the Gospel Age. The object to this age is to witness Christ to the world, and thus to "take out a people for his name"; and to this end each believer is exhorted to be a burning and a shining light before men—the world in general—and not before and to each other merely. Hence, after permitting the first Christian commune to be established, to show that the failure to establish communes generally was not an oversight, the LORD broke it up, and scattered the believers everywhere, to preach the Gospel to every creature."◊

From Preaching to Writing

KEY VERSE: *"These are written that ye might believe that, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."*—John 20:31

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Luke 1:1-4; John 20:30,31; I John 1:1-4*

THIS scripture refers to a time after Jesus' resurrection when he appeared to the disciples for the purpose of convincing them that he was indeed alive, not a human being as he was formerly, but now one born of the Spirit with great power and glory. The Apostle John, recalling this occurrence, said that Jesus performed many other signs than those that were written, but the ones passed down to us were for the purpose of substantiating our belief that the resurrected Jesus is truly the powerful Christ of the prophecies.

As the promised savior of mankind, it was not enough that he came into the world and gave his perfect human life as a ransom; more was required. In order to fulfill his full Messiahship, his resurrection to divine power and glory was a vital necessity.

The prophecy of Isaiah chapter nine portrays the ultimate great objective of Jesus' coming

into the world, emphasizing the glory of his coming kingdom more than his humiliation and death as man's Redeemer. Isaiah wrote of a time when those who sit in darkness will see a great light. Jesus was to be the light of the world, yet few thus far have seen that light in the true and full sense of the word. The time will come, however, when Jesus, the light of life, will lighten every man who cometh into the world. Truly the people will then see a great light.

The government, the divine kingdom, will be upon the shoulder of him who was rejected by the world nineteen centuries ago. He did not assume the responsibility of the kingdom at that time. The Heavenly Father had said to him in prophecy, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen [nations] for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," but Jesus did not make this request

at the time of his first advent because he knew that it was not yet the Father's due time for him to do so.—Ps. 2:8

It is at his second advent that Jesus will shoulder the responsibility of a world government, by means of which the divine will and law shall be reestablished in the earth. No humanly conceived organization or government will be used, nor will the success of Christ's government depend upon the feeble efforts of man. The government shall be upon Jesus' shoulder, and in this blessed assurance our hope may rest.

His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, and he will teach the people the LORD'S ways, the Prophet Micah tells us. (Micah 4:1-4) While this is true, the special thought conveyed by the title 'Counselor', is that of one who pleads the cause of another, an attorney, or counselor at law. This office is described in the New Testament by the term 'mediator'. Jesus will be a just and loving mediator of a better covenant.

Jesus will also be recognized as the Mighty God of the people. It will be in keeping with the Creator's expressed will that all people honor the Son even as they honor the Father. It will be of him that they will say, "Lo,

this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."—Isa. 25:9

The term 'father' means 'lifegiver'. Jesus will give everlasting life to the people, hence he will be the everlasting Father. This is to be one of the important features of his reign which will cause the people to ascribe to him the title 'Wonderful'.

At the Christmas season we are accustomed to think of Jesus as the Prince of Peace, although his kingdom of peace is not yet established. But when Jesus was on earth at his first advent he said he had not come to bring peace, but a sword. What he meant was that the light of his teachings then would be opposed by the darkness of the world, but it will be different when his kingdom is established. Then he will be the foretold Shiloh, or peacemaker, unto whom the "gathering of the people" shall be.—Gen. 49:10

The accomplishments of these great objectives required the resurrection of Jesus. How comforting to know that with the evidences supplied that he did rise from the dead and ascend to the Father to sit down on his throne, that his kingdom will come and man's full salvation is assured.◊

Born of a Woman

KEY VERSE: *"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth."*—John 1:14

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Luke 2:6,7; John 1:14-18; Galatians 4:4-7; Hebrews 2:14-18*

THE Scriptures make it plain that Jesus has been actively associated with the Father since the earliest dawn of creation. They tell us that he was the "beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14), and also, "the firstborn of every creature."—Col. 1:15

These passages indicate that Jesus was the direct creation of the Father, and therefore properly spoken of as his "only begotten Son." The Apostle Paul also tells us that Jesus was the active agent of Jehovah in all the creative work. He says: "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him."—Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; John 1:3; Eph. 3:9

In our text, Jesus in his prehuman existence, is referred to as the Word of God. Verse fourteen says that the "Word was made

flesh, and dwelt among us." The term 'Word' is a translation of the Greek word **Logos**. Ancient kings, when addressing their people, customarily sat behind a lattice in front of which stood a representative who proclaimed the king's message to the people. The representative was styled the **logos**—the king's word, or mouth-piece.

With this illustration in mind, the title **Logos**, when applied to God's only begotten Son, is seen to be peculiarly fitting. God's Son, as the **Logos**, has always been the active agent of Jehovah, and the Bible assures us that he always will be. Not only in the work of creation, but in the call and preparation of the church in this age, and also in the gigantic task of restitution scheduled for the Millennial Age, this beloved Son of God acts for the Father, expressing his will, and doing his work.

On one occasion Jesus declared to his disciples, "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30) This obviously is a oneness of will and purpose. During his ministry our Lord emphasized over and over that he came not to do his own will, but the will of the Heavenly Father who sent him. When Jesus was facing mockery and ignominy, he asked the Father to let this cup pass from him if it were possible. "Nevertheless," he said, "not my will, but thine, be done." (Matt. 26:39) The Heavenly Father's will was ever paramount in the Master's life, hence he could truly say, "I and my Father are one." This is the reason Jesus could say, "He who hath seen me hath seen the Father."—John 14:9

Jesus, like Adam before the fall, was in the image of God—a perfect, sinless human being. He came to earth as a representative of the Heavenly Father, and everything he did and said was just what the Father would have done and said had he personally visited the earth. Thus it was true that, in a very wonderful way, those who saw him saw the Father. It was the only way that a fallen human being could see God and live.

It is important to note that Jehovah himself, as well as Jesus, possesses the quality of love. The Bible says that God is love. In

God's own declaration of himself, as recorded in Exodus, he states that he is "gracious," and "abundant in goodness and truth." (Exod. 34:6) Jesus, as God's representative while on earth, was a tangible reflection of these qualities, and so it is said of him that he was "full of grace and truth."

And even as our savior, Jesus acts as a representative of God. In Titus 3:4, God is spoken of as our Savior, and is there said to be kind and loving. This scriptural view of Jehovah reveals him as being the Author of the plan of salvation, and Jesus as heartily cooperating. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3:16; I John 4:9,10; Heb. 10:5-7

This understanding of the identity of Jesus as the beloved and only begotten of the Father, should greatly enhance our appreciation of him, and give him the place in our hearts he merits and deserves—second only to Jehovah himself. We should honor the Son even as we honor the Father. (John 5:23) God so highly regarded and honored the Son that he even commanded the angels to worship him. (Heb. 1:6,7) Surely, with all that is within us, we too should worship him! ◊

The Gospel in Human Form

KEY VERSE: *"He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things."*—Mark 8:31

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Mark 8:27-38

THIS was a difficult statement for the disciples to understand.

Jesus had just asked them whom men said that he was. They replied that there were different opinions—some said John the Baptist, some Elias, and others believed he was one of the prophets; but no one seemed to believe he was the Messiah. Knowing that it was important for the disciples to understand this fact, he then queried them: "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter was quick to give him the answer he wanted to hear: "Thou art the Christ."—vs. 28

The people in general, even though recognizing Jesus' remarkable abilities, and appreciating his honor and respect for God, were, however, unable to see in his life that which they expected of the looked-for Messiah. This was also true of his close disciples, but their great faith in him as a person overshadowed this seeming incongruity, and they were willing to believe his word on the matter.

But it still seemed

strange that when they made their assertion that he was the Christ, he charged them that they should tell that he as the Messiah, in the form of man, must suffer, be rejected, and put to death. The Jews, and afterward the Christian world have never fully understood the need for Jesus' suffering and death.

The tendency today is to depart from this scriptural concept of atonement for sin. Modern human wisdom takes the position that a loving God would not demand a blood sacrifice for sin. It is claimed that such a thought is revolting to enlightened thinkers.

The rejection of this scriptural philosophy of atonement for sin is, in effect, a denial of the great foundation truths of the Bible. A companion unbelief also held by these is that the Genesis account of creation is merely an allegory, that man is not a direct creation of God and in the divine image.

The Apostle Paul, how-

ever, puts the first advent work of our Lord in true perspective with this statement: "We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."—Heb. 2:6-9

Here we have two important thoughts brought to our attention. One is that the atoning work of Jesus is designed by God to make possible the restoration of man to his lost home and dominion here on earth. The other great truth is that in order to accomplish this divine purpose of his visit to earth, it was essential that Jesus taste death for every man.

The redemption furnished by Jesus Christ provides for a release from the penalty of death inflicted upon the human race because of sin. Unless, therefore, we properly understand the nature of the penalty, it would be impossible to grasp clearly the scriptural doctrine of atonement.

Just as the punishment for sin which was imposed upon Adam (and through him upon his children) was death, so Jesus must die in order to set that judgment aside. He could not redeem man by the good example of his life, nor could he do it by showing us how

to die for a good cause. The intrinsic value of Jesus' faithful ministry was in the fact that he "poured out his soul unto death; and . . . was numbered with the transgressors; and . . . bare the sin of many."—Isa. 53:12

Other statements concerning the basis of Jesus' atoning work are: "He was cut off out of the land of the living." He was led "as a lamb to the slaughter." "Thou shalt make his soul [living being] an offering for sin."—Isa. 53:7,8,10

The Bible clearly teaches that God's plan of salvation for the human race is based upon the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is a fundamental doctrine of the Bible that no one can be saved from sin and its penalty, death, except through the sacrifice of Jesus as the Redeemer and Savior of the world. One of the most simple statements on this question is found in John 3:16. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

The earthly work of Jesus involved much suffering, which he voluntarily endured. But his Heavenly Father suffered also. The work of atonement was costly to him even as it was to his Son; and on the part of both it was an expression of divine love.◊



Christian Life and Doctrine

TIMES AND SIGNS SERIES

PART 5

Peace through Christ's Kingdom

“The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” Daniel 7:27

THE pages of history are stained with the blood of war. Disputes among nations have almost invariably been arbitrated on the battlefield. Seers and sages have envisioned a day when this ruthless and senseless practice would be stopped, and the peoples of the earth would adopt a sane and righteous method of living with one another. The prophets of the Bible, writing under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, foretold such a time, explaining that it would come about through the establishment of a world government, or dominion that would arbitrarily impose upon the people of all nations just and righteous laws, through the keeping of which universal and lasting peace would be assured.

In the Bible's prophecies of this coming time of peace under a world government, the assurance is given that there will be no miscarriage of the divine plan because the kingdom of promise is to be a literal and powerful government, perfectly organized and powerfully implemented to perform every function assigned to it in the

prophecies. It is the kingdom of Christ; and the kingdom of Christ, the Bible reveals, is a genuine government. Concerning this kingdom, and Christ the chief ruler in it, the prophet foretold, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."—Isa. 9:6, 7

The coming world government, which will be the kingdom of Christ, is one of the prominent themes of the Bible. The Old Testament prophets glowingly foretold and described this divinely powered rulership. One of the first references to it was by Jacob, who on his deathbed prophesied, "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."—Gen. 49:9, 10

This prophecy was uttered while Jacob and his family were in Egypt. In Egypt at that time a couched lion was the royal symbol of rulership, and the right to rule. So the prophecy depicting Judah as a couched lion was a pictorial way of saying that from this royal tribe of Israel would come the one whom the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob had promised—the 'seed' who would be Messiah and king. To this royal one to come, Jacob prophetically assigned the title Shiloh, meaning 'peaceful one'. His prophecy that the gathering of the people would be to Shiloh, simply meant that this ruler to be sent by Jehovah would, as The Prince of Peace, bring peace to the nations.

Isaiah foretold the birth and ultimate exaltation to rulership of this great king, saying, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6) Later in his prophecy, Isaiah

referred to this coming ruler of earth as the Arm of Jehovah, and foretold that this “holy Arm” would be made bare in the eyes of all the nations, and that “all the ends of the earth” would see “the salvation of God.”—Isa. 52:10

Concerning the universality of the messianic kingdom, David wrote, “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the LORD’S: and he is the governor among the nations.” (Ps. 22:27,28) David also wrote concerning the LORD’S kingdom, “All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD: and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known unto the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.”—Ps. 145:10-13

Daniel, in a prophecy pertaining to the rulers over the various divisions of the Old Roman Empire, as they were enthroned in Europe prior to the First World War, wrote, “In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”—Dan. 2:44

In the New Testament

We have quoted but a few of the many promises recorded in the Old Testament pertaining to the kingdom, or government, which in God’s due time is to rule the world. The New Testament continues with the same reassuring kingdom theme. The angel who announced the birth of Jesus said to the shepherds, “Fear not . . . for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” Suddenly a multitude of the heavenly host

sang, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill toward men." (Luke 2:10,11,14) The angel also said that this announcement of the birth of Christ, the promised Messiah, was good news which would ultimately reach "all people."

The New Testament references to the Messiah, the king, and the kingdom to be established by him, are not exclusively in the nature of prophecies, for they identify the beginning of the fulfillment of the Old Testament forecasts. While, for example, the Old Testament foretold that the king would come, the angel announced to the shepherds that now he was born. This first expression of God's goodwill toward men, in fulfillment of his promises, was now a reality.

John the Baptist, the last of the prophets, also speaks of prophecy fulfilled. He said, "The Royal Majesty of the heavens has appeared." (Matt. 3:2, **Diaglott**) The Prophet Daniel had prophesied that the God of heaven would set up a kingdom. There must be a king in a kingdom, and now the Royal Majesty promised by God of heaven had appeared in the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus preached, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:17) A more literal translation of this suggests, even as announced by John the Baptist, that the king in the kingdom promised by God of heaven, had come and was at hand, or in the midst of the people of Israel. When Jesus sent his disciples into the ministry, his commission to them was, "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." — Matt. 10:7

The nation of Israel knew about God's kingdom promises. This was particularly true of the religious rulers of the nation, the Pharisees, and others. They knew that many considered Jesus to be the promised king who would set up this kingdom, and they demanded of him "when the

kingdom of God should come.” Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation [outward show, **marginal translation**]. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within [among, **marginal translation**] you.”—Luke 17:20, 21

The Pharisees had little or no faith that Jesus was sent into the world by the God of Israel to set up the messianic kingdom. They could not visualize anyone accomplishing a task like this without the support of a huge army with which he could conquer the Roman Empire and release the nation of Israel from its bondage to the Caesars. Jesus sensed what was in their minds, hence his explanation that the kingdom in which he would be the king would not be set up in this way. It would not come, he said, with an outward show of splendor and glory such as the world was accustomed to seeing displayed by a conquering ruler.

Knowing that the Pharisees doubted he was Jehovah’s promised king, Jesus further explained, according to a proper translation of the Greek text, that the Royal Majesty of the heavens was among them, referring, of course, to himself. This was a bold assertion to hurl at these hypocritical religious rulers, but it was a good witness to them, although few, if any of them, believed it.

A poor translation of this text led to a great deal of confusion as to just what the kingdom of heaven really is. As it stands in our **Common Version** English translation, it says, “The kingdom of heaven is within you.” Those who do not believe the promises of God to establish a literal, worldwide government in the earth which will bring peace and joy to mankind, have seized upon this mistranslated text to attempt to prove the testimony of the Bible pertaining to God’s kingdom refers merely to a wholesome, godly state of mind and heart acquired by individuals who yield to the influence of Jesus’ moral and ethical teachings

such as those contained in his Sermon on the Mount. The foretold increase of Christ's kingdom, they say, is represented in the increasing number of those who do thus yield themselves to Christ and seek to obey his commandments.

The incongruity of this viewpoint is at once apparent when we take into consideration the fact that the statement in question was made to the Pharisees, men whom Jesus had more than once indicated were hypocrites, whited sepulchres, and children of the Devil. How could the kingdom of God be within the hearts of such people? But when we realize, as already noted, that what Jesus really said was that the king in the foretold kingdom which the God of heaven had promised, was in the midst of the Pharisees, the thought is clear, and in harmony with the general testimony of the Scriptures on the subject.

Seemingly, it is difficult for our finite minds, fallen and imperfect as they are, to exercise faith in the idea that the Creator will ever do anything specific for his human creatures. This lack of faith on the part of the professed people of God has been manifested throughout all the ages. They have imagined that the promises of God would have their fulfillment through human efforts, that the promises implied merely that God would place his stamp of approval on what his human servants conceived to be right, and in their zeal endeavored to accomplish.

Since Jesus was put to death by his enemies, and centuries went by with no evidence of a visible and literal kingdom being established by him even though he had been raised from the dead, it was easy and natural to conclude that the kingdom promises of the Bible referred merely to what the followers of Jesus could accomplish. Devious notions developed as a result of this lack of faith and understanding. The great mass of professed Christians eventually united with civil governments, and called their unholy

union Christendom, or Christ's kingdom. Millions of others, particularly in these later years of the age, have seized upon the idea, as noted, that the kingdom of Christ is merely a righteous influence, or holy impulse in the hearts of Christian believers.

Not of This World

When Jesus was brought before Pilate by his enemies, the charge they leveled against him was that he claimed to be a king. Such a claim, if true, would make him guilty of treason against the Roman Empire. Jesus acknowledged that he came into the world to be a king, but explained, "My kingdom is not of this world [Greek, **kosmos**, 'social order']: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." — John 18:36,37

Jesus' statement that his kingdom was not of this world, and if it were, his servants would fight, places divine condemnation upon all military operations promoted and executed in the name of Christ, claiming to be for the purpose of promoting the interests of his kingdom. According to this rule of action expressed by Jesus, all the so-called 'holy' wars of the centuries have not been holy at all, but unholy, and unauthorized by God.

Besides, Jesus' explanation that his kingdom was not of this world, means the human concept of civilization called Christendom, meaning Christ's kingdom, has been a misnomer, and in reality is a counterfeit of the true kingdom of Christ. Therefore, all the various philosophies which have cunningly applied the kingdom promises of the Bible to one or another of the devious human efforts to establish a better world have been out of harmony with, and contrary to, the divine plan for the fulfillment of God's promises.

There has been no valid reason why sincere and reverent students of the Bible should have indulged in these human philosophies, or have been misled by them, for Jesus made it crystal clear that no one should expect his kingdom to be established during the present age. Only a few days before Jesus told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world, he related a parable to his disciples which was designed to teach them the same important truth. The parable concerned a certain nobleman (picturing Jesus) who went into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return. The introduction to the parable explains that it was related by Jesus because his disciples thought that his kingdom was to appear immediately. — Luke 19:11, 12

The Disciples' Hope

The disciples of Jesus thoroughly believed he was the Messiah, the great king foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament. They believed he had come to establish that kingdom of promise, the government which would extend its sphere of influence until it embraced the whole earth, and brought peace and happiness to all mankind. They were right in this belief. But they expected Jesus to set up this marvelous and powerful government at once. In this they were wrong, as the parable of the 'certain nobleman' revealed.

This incorrect viewpoint on the part of Jesus' disciples was quite excusable, for he had led them to believe they would be prominently associated with him in his kingdom, and in their limited vision of God's plan, this implied that Christ's kingdom would, of necessity, have to be set up within their natural lifetimes. How else, they reasoned, could they hope to share with Jesus in the rulership of the kingdom? How else could Jesus' promise be fulfilled, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"? — Luke 12:32

The apostles were much concerned over the prospect of being associated with Jesus in the rulership of his kingdom, and had many discussions about it among themselves. James and John were particularly anxious to secure favored positions in the kingdom, and had their mother ask Jesus if one of them might sit on his right hand, and the other on his left hand, in his kingdom. Jesus did not say they could not, and would not, be with him in his kingdom, for he had given them reason to believe they would be. He merely called attention to the high price they would have to pay to be with him. He asked, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Their answer was, "We are able." — Matt. 20:20-22

Jesus replied to James and John, saying, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." (vs. 23) Thus, while Jesus did not promise these two beloved apostles a specific position in his kingdom, explaining that he did not have the authority to make such designations, he did confirm their understanding that they would share the rulership of the kingdom with him if they proved their worthiness by drinking of his 'cup' and being baptized with his 'baptism'.

While they affirmed that they were able, or willing, to meet these requirements, it is doubtful if they understood at that time just what was implied by the drinking of Jesus' cup, and by being baptized with his baptism. Actually, as subsequently revealed in the New Testament, Jesus was inviting his disciples to suffer and die with him. Had they understood this, they would have known they could not in any case be with Jesus in the glory of his kingdom until they were raised from the dead, and this they

knew would not be until the end of the age.— John 11:24; Matt. 13:39

Jesus' 'cup' was one of suffering and death, and he drank it faithfully to the bitter dregs. His 'baptism' was a baptism of death, of which his immersion in water by John the Baptist was merely a symbol. Paul wrote, "Know ye not, that so many of us were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (Rom. 6:3) Nothing is made more clear in the Bible than the fact that the disciples of Jesus in this age are invited to follow in his steps of self-sacrifice even unto death. Associated with these conditions of discipleship are the promises that those who prove faithful to them will reign with him in his kingdom.

Paul wrote, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him." (II Tim. 2:11,12) Again: "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." (Rom. 8:17) After his resurrection, Jesus said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. 3:21) Jesus also said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10) And then there is that wonderful promise to these faithful ones that they shall come forth from death in the "first resurrection" to "live and reign with Christ a thousand years."— Rev. 20:4, 6

Born of the Spirit

In John 3:1-13 we are told of Nicodemus, a ruler in Israel, and of his visit to Jesus by night to learn more about his teachings. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that one needed to be born again in order to enter into the kingdom of God. This seemed very strange to Nicodemus, and he asked how it could be. It was not a natural birth to which

Jesus referred, but a birth of the Spirit. He explained to this ruler in Israel that those who are born of the Spirit are as the wind, that is, powerful, yet invisible.

Nicodemus, of course, did not fully comprehend what Jesus meant, but in the light of the subsequent teachings of Jesus and that of the apostles we can now see clearly that those who share the rulership of the kingdom with him will first have to experience a change of nature, even as he did. Jesus gave his flesh, his humanity, for the life of the world. (John 6:51) It was this sacrifice of his human life that provided redemption for the world of mankind, and will assure all an opportunity to regain life during the time of Christ's kingdom. (Heb. 2:9; I Tim. 2:3-6) And, having been put to death in the flesh, Jesus was raised from the dead a glorious divine being, with all power given to him in heaven and in earth.—Heb. 1:1-4; Matt. 28:18

Those who suffer and die with Jesus, and in the resurrection are exalted to live and reign with him, will also experience a change of nature, from human to divine. Peter wrote that unto us are given “exceeding great and precious promises,” that by these we might become “partakers of the divine nature.” (II Pet. 1:4) Peter also wrote concerning Christians, that the Heavenly Father has “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 [“for us,” **margin**].” —I Pet. 1:3, 4

It is promises like this which, being misunderstood, have led to the erroneous belief that all who are saved through Jesus Christ will spend eternity in heaven. But this is not the thought at all. These heavenly promises are only to the footstep followers of Jesus, those who deny themselves and take up their cross and follow him into sacrificial death. (Matt. 16:24) They are not invited thus to

sacrifice in order to attain salvation, but to prove worthy of living and reigning with Christ in that glorious kingdom of promise, the kingdom which is to establish peace on earth and provide health and joy and everlasting life for all who obey its righteous laws.

This exaltation to heavenly glory is what Jesus meant by being born of the Spirit. (John 3:5,6) While every true follower of the Master is, in this life, begotten to this heavenly hope, it is not until the resurrection that spirit birth takes place. This is in keeping with Jesus' explanation that those who are born of the Spirit are, even as the wind, invisible to human eyes, and powerful. Together with Jesus, this class, called from the world and proved faithful during the present age, will constitute the spiritual phase of the messianic kingdom. In the parable of the wheat and the tares, Jesus speaks of these as "children of the kingdom," and explains that they "shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." — Matt. 13:25-30, 36-43

"Keys" of the Kingdom

The invitation to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and thus to qualify for joint-heirship in his kingdom, is extended through the Gospel, the good news of redemption through Jesus and the opportunity of life that will reach the people through the agencies of his kingdom. Jesus explained that only by the denial of self could anyone become his disciple. (Matt. 16:24) But the narrow way of sacrifice was not actually opened until Pentecost, which was after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Jesus had promised Peter that he would give him the "keys" to the kingdom of heaven, so it was Peter who, on the Day of Pentecost, proclaimed the glad tidings and officially opened the door into the kingdom. (Matt. 16:19) This was on behalf of believers in the nation of Israel. Later it was Peter who also first proclaimed the Gospel of the

kingdom to the Gentiles. This was in the home of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert. Thus Peter used the keys of the kingdom.

This does not mean that the kingdom was established at Pentecost, as many erroneously believe. It simply means there began the selection of those who are to rule with Jesus in the kingdom. The keys of the kingdom of heaven used by Peter were keys into the opportunity of rulership in the kingdom as joint-heirs with Christ. The way into this high position in the kingdom is a difficult one. Paul said it is through "much tribulation" that anyone can enter into the kingdom. — Acts 14:22

Those who are called by God to this exalted position in the kingdom are not, as a rule, the great, the mighty, or the noble of this world; although there is no discrimination against these. It is merely that in their present positions of honor and authority, the terms of the narrow way seem too costly. Jesus wrote, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James 2:5) But whether rich or poor, small or great according to the standards of this world, Jesus taught that all must become as "little children" — humble, innocent, childlike — in order to enter into the kingdom. "Of such," he said, "is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:3; Mark 10:14, 15) Jesus was not saying here that the kingdom would be made up of babies.

John the Baptist

Jesus said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matt. 11:11) If entering into the kingdom of heaven were, as traditional theology teaches, a means of escape from hell-fire, how strange indeed would be this

(Continued on page 37)

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CEYLON
Colombo-Sat. Radio Sri Lanka 7:15 p.m.

HONG KONG
Radio Villa Verde-Fri. 6:00 p.m.

ITALY (Italian)
Europa Radio Milano 83.3-FM 11:30 a.m.
Euro Tele Radio Calabria-Fri. 5:30 p.m.
MHZ 102
Radio Corleone Centrale 11:00 a.m.
FM-88-500 FM-92

MEXICO (Spanish)
Mazatlan XECQ 8:30 a.m.

NEW ZEALAND
Dunedin 4XD 11:15 a.m.
Whakatane IXX 6:45 a.m.

NIGERIA
Radio Africa-Wed. 8:00 p.m.

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

PHILIPPINES
Manila-Sat. DWXX 1026KH2 7:15 p.m.

SOUTH AFRICA
Joubert Park-Thurs. SWAZI Music
Radio 1400 & short-
wave 49 & 60 9:00 p.m.

SPAIN (Spanish)
Radio Gerona-Mon. 9:45 p.m.

TONGA
Nuku' Alofa-Mon.. 10:15 a.m.

URUGUAY (Spanish)
Montevideo-Sun..
Radio El Espectador 810 9:15 a.m.

VIRGIN ISLANDS
St. Croix WSTX 970 9:00 a.m.

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CALIFORNIA Chico (Sun.)	KMPN-5	8:30 p.m.	MICHIGAN Ann Arbor (Sun.)	WIHT-31	12:00 noon
FLORIDA Miami Jacksonville	WKID Channel 17		MISSISSIPPI Jackson	WAPT	
GEORGIA Albany (Sun.) Atlanta	WTSG-31 WATL	9:30 a.m.	MISSOURI Springfield	KOLR	
ILLINOIS Champaign- Springfield	WBHW		NEW MEXICO Roswell	KSWS	
IOWA Cedar Rapids Mt. Vernon- Lisbon (Every weekday)	KTS-13 WMVL Cable	7:00 a.m.	NORTH CAROLINA Hickory	WHKY	
	GUAM (Sun.)		OHIO Dayton	WHIO	
			TEXAS Lubbock	KCBD	
			WEST VIRGINIA Logan (Mon.)	Channel 12	
			KUAM		9:00 a.m.



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(Continued from page 31)

assertion by Jesus. But, thank God for a better understanding than this of the kingdom. Here, as in so many other instances, Jesus uses the expression 'kingdom of heaven' to denote the spiritual or heavenly phase of that glorious government of promise that is eventually to reign over and bless all nations, and John the Baptist will not have a part in that phase of the kingdom.

“The law and the prophets were until John:” said Jesus, “since that time the kingdom of God is preached.” (Luke 16:16) In connection with the Law given at Mount Sinai, and the rewards offered for obedience to it, the LORD had said to the people of Israel, “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, . . . ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” (Exod. 19:5, 6) The nation as a whole did not qualify for this promised position as a kingdom of priests. But the prophets and other faithful ones, as individuals, did qualify. Indeed, the ancient patriarchs, although not under the written Law, were faithful to the precepts it proclaimed, and God will make good his promise to them.

All of these Ancient Worthies served God loyally because they had faith in the messianic kingdom promises. God did not hold out to them a heavenly hope. Their expectation was to be restored to life as humans on the earth. Paul lists many of them in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, tells of their suffering for righteousness' sake, and explains that they endured and died, believing that they would have a “better resurrection.” (Heb. 11:35,39,40) That better resurrection will be to human perfection, and to a position of teachers and leaders among the people.

Jesus said to the people in his day, “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets [including John the Baptist, the last of the prophets], in the

kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.” Matthew’s account says that they shall sit down with “Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.” Matthew also identifies those “thrust out” as the “children of the kingdom.”—Luke 13:28, 29; Matt. 8:11, 12

The children of the kingdom, those who by faithfulness to the Law could have qualified to be a kingdom of priests, will, when raised from the dead, be greatly disappointed when they discover they do not occupy this honored position. Their disappointment is described by the expression, ‘weeping and gnashing of teeth’. But Jesus explains who will occupy that position. It will be the Ancient Worthies, “Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets.” The people will go to them, in the sense of recognizing them as the representatives of the messianic kingdom which will then be in control of earth’s affairs.

These then will be the earthly phase of the kingdom of Christ. In Psalm 45:16 we are told that they will be made “princes in all the earth.” While John the Baptist will not be with Jesus in the heavenly phase of the kingdom, he will be one of these earthly princes, who will represent the heavenly rulers—Christ, and those who faithfully suffered and died by following in his steps of self-sacrifice.

Thus the organizational arrangements of the kingdom of Christ will be complete. Its personnel, both in the heavenly and earthly phases, will have been tested and trained in advance, and raised from the dead to take their positions as rulers and teachers in that kingdom. Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead, and throughout the present age he has supervised the calling and training of his joint-heirs. He has served as their advocate at the throne of heavenly grace. He has been their good shepherd, their

counselor and guide. He has been their Lord and Master, their Head.

With the work of calling and training his joint-heirs completed, and their resurrection from the dead and exaltation to the divine nature accomplished, then will come the resurrection of their human representatives, the princes, and together, harmoniously and gloriously, these two phases of the long-promised kingdom will begin to function.

There will also be a great multitude of spiritual servants in the kingdom. These we are told will be before the throne, not on the throne, not rulers in the kingdom. While the Scriptures do not specifically state just how these will serve, seemingly it will be as liaison between the heavenly and earthly phases of the kingdom. This great multitude is described in Revelation 7:9, 10, 13-17.

What a complete and perfectly organized kingdom or government this will be! In Micah 4:1-4 it is symbolically described as the "mountain of the house of the LORD." The mountain is a symbol of the kingdom, and the house is God's ruling family, or ruling house. In this prophecy the two phases of the kingdom are symbolized as Zion, the spiritual, and Jerusalem, the earthly. The prophecy states that in the "last days" the "mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . and people shall flow unto it."

Micah continues, "And many nations shall come." In a similar prophecy recorded in Isaiah 2:2, 3, it says, "All nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion [Christ and his glorified footstep followers] shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem [the

Ancient Worthies].”

Micah 4:3 says, “He [the LORD, the great king and judge], shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people.” How evident it is from this that the kingdom of Christ will exercise a strong control over the affairs of men, even to rebuking strong nations which do not, at first, bow the knee to its righteous rulership. It is impossible to harmonize prophecies like this with the erroneous theory that the kingdom of God is merely a righteous spirit in the hearts of individuals.

As a result of learning the LORD’S ways under the rulership of Christ’s kingdom, and if necessary being rebuked or disciplined in the process, the nations will, the prophet continues, “beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” “But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.” —Mic. 4:4

Subjects of the Kingdom

In addition to the fact that the kingdom of Christ has both a spiritual and an earthly phase, it also has both rulers and those who are ruled—the subjects. It is important in the study of the Bible to note this distinction. When Jesus promised his disciples that they would be with him in his kingdom, the reference is to the ruling aspect of the kingdom, that they would be “kings and priests” in the kingdom with him. (Rev. 5:10; 20:4,6) The thief on the cross asked Jesus to remember him in his kingdom, and Jesus replied, “Verily I say unto thee today, Shalt thou be with me in paradise,” the placing of the comma being incorrect in the **King James Translation**. (Luke 23:43) This was a promise to the thief that he could be one of the subjects of the kingdom.

The reason Jesus here used the word 'paradise' is because his kingdom will restore paradise conditions throughout the whole earth. Our first parents disobeyed God's law and were driven from paradise, but the will or law of God will be reestablished by the kingdom, and paradise will be restored. The whole earth will become as the Garden of Eden, and filled with the restored and perfected human race. These will be subjects of the kingdom. And what happy subjects they will be!

Using, again, a mountain to symbolize the kingdom, the Prophet Isaiah wrote that in this mountain the LORD would "swallow up death in victory; and the LORD God will wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa. 25:6-9) Those who have died will be awakened from death and given an opportunity to enjoy the life-giving blessings of the kingdom. We are assured of this by the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the church at Corinth, chapter fifteen—that wonderful chapter on the resurrection of the dead. First he describes the resurrection of those who will live and reign with Christ, explaining that these will be exalted to immortality. Continuing he says, "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" —vss. 54, 55

This will be included in the work of the kingdom. Paul explains that Christ will reign until all enemies are put "under his feet," and that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (vss. 25, 26) In this glorious work of the kingdom, Jesus' followers will share, for this is the kingdom which, according to our text, "shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." (Dan. 7:27) It is also the kingdom foretold in Revelation 11:15, where we read, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever."

While thousands of years are consumed in the preparation for this kingdom, when the time finally arrives for it to be established, it accomplishes all that God has promised. Its setting up will mark the time for the resurrection of the dead, when the saints of this age are exalted to reign with Christ in the spiritual phase of the kingdom, and when the ancient prophets will be made princes in all the earth.

Then, also, the whole world, small and great, will be enlightened, and all restored will learn to reverence the LORD. Those who continue willfully to oppose God and righteousness, described in this prophecy as those who "destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18), will themselves be "destroyed from among the people."—Acts 3:23

Thus the work of the kingdom will be complete, and God, the Creator of heaven and earth will be, as Paul foretold, "all in all." (I Cor. 15:24-28) And so, through the agencies of the kingdom, will have been brought about the complete fulfillment of every Christian's prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) No prayer that has ever been offered will have had a more complete and glorious answer! □



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Talking Things Over

This is a report made by Brother Leo Post of the Dawn, who, accompanied by his wife, Mary, visited some of the brethren in Europe during the month of August of this year. Their trip took them to four countries: Germany, Poland, France, and England.

Our Brethren in Europe

OUR pilgrimage started at the Bible Students International Convention in Willingen, West Germany. This was the third gathering of its kind in the last six years, and the largest thus far. A total of five hundred and fifty-five brethren came from fourteen countries as follows:

Argentina, 1; Belgium, 7; Canada, 11; Denmark, 2; England, 11; France, 116; East Germany, 2; West Germany, 30; India, 1; Netherlands, 2; Nigeria, 2; Poland, 241; USA, 114.

The discourses at this convention were translated into English, French, German, Greek, and Polish; and electronic equipment was available for listening to the language of choice. The talks were inspiring and helpful. The fellowship was interesting, pleasant, and beneficial. Brethren had convincing proof that the Holy Spirit indeed removes the barriers which language differences impose upon men. Although there was a tendency for brethren to associate with the brethren who spoke their own language, yet there was a desire to learn about brethren of other countries. Usually someone was available to serve as interpreter for con-

versations in other languages. Fellowship was thereby expanded and enhanced.

After seven days of spiritual feasting and fellowship in this beautiful environment, we traveled to Poland, going first to Poznan. There, on Sunday, about fifty brethren assembled, where they had two meetings—a Bible discourse and a study in "***The Divine Plan of the Ages.***" It was not possible to have an interpreter at every city visited in Poland. But, by having a discourse previously translated from English to Polish, it was arranged to have someone read the lesson in Polish, coordinating the words spoken in English. This procedure was first tried at Poznan, and was partially successful. Thereafter, wherever necessary, improvements were made on this method when no interpreter was available. At Poznan, the meeting was held in a small meeting hall built on the premises of one of the brethren. There are many such meeting places in Poland.

Our next stop was the Katowico area—in particular, a community known as Brzerinka—where most of the brethren live. Before going to the meeting that evening, we were able to visit a sister who has been bed-ridden for many years. She was very appreciative of our visit, and spoke of old-time, faithful pilgrim brethren in past years. We were to hear more about such brethren sent by the LORD to serve his people in Poland, and who helped immensely to maintain congregations of brethren before and after the difficult war years.

At the service that evening, about forty-five assembled, and, despite a severe thunderstorm, all listened attentively. There we also had sweet fellowship—with an elderly widow and sister in Christ, who told of her experiences, describing the time during World War II when she had been forced to do heavy manual labor because her husband was too sick to do so.

After Chrarnow we went to Krakow and served the brethren there. Having an interpreter, we spoke to them of the regathering of Israel—a topic which proved to be of great interest. Again we were able to visit some of the elderly brethren. One sister in particular was so joyful she continually praised God for our visit. The government provides someone to assist her, and the lady who performs this service is learning about God's plan from her. To see such joy and faithfulness was one of the highlights of our trip.

From Krakow we went to Miechow, where a retirement center is being built to house sixty-five residents. There is a dire need for these facilities because there are brethren without homes who would like to move into the basement area as soon as the concrete is poured for the first floor. There is an old house on the property adjoining the new construction which serves to provide living quarters for volunteer workers. It will be remodeled once the new facilities are built, which will provide additional space.

In Miechow the class has a large meeting hall at the home of a brother who makes his personal facilities available for class activities. A young people's camp was in progress during our visit, where children get schooling in Biblical topics, learn special songs, and have recreation and fellowship. Our meeting of about thirty-five brethren was swelled by the presence of twenty-five young people, ages six to twelve. The young people in Poland of all ages have choirs, and are outstanding in their presentation of special musical renditions at conventions.

From Miechow we traveled to Jaroslaw, to visit briefly with relatives, and then we went on to Bil-

gorej. There, a third-Sunday regional convention was held where about two hundred came from other nearby congregations. The regular meeting facilities are in the basement area of a large residence, and are not sufficient to accommodate all that were gathered there. Additional rooms, including a large porch, are wired with sound equipment so that all can enjoy the discourses. Three talks were given from morning to early afternoon. During this time, several sisters were busy cooking a large kettle of nourishing soup to serve all of those who came. Later, tables were set up and we ate in shifts, while others fellowshiped in the gardens and home.

From Bilgorej we traveled to Warsaw, staying that night at the House of Prayer, where we enjoyed blessed fellowship and the discussion of Bible topics. We left Poland with the mental picture of sisters busily working and preparing meals cheerfully, of brethren discussing Biblical questions and rejoicing in the LORD, of songs of praise to the LORD, and of elderly brethren and sisters rejoicing in the LORD during their latter years of infirmity.

After leaving Poland we arrived in France, where we were guests at the home of a sister in Mulhouse. We saw the office she maintains for taking care of correspondence and requests for literature, and where *The Dawn* is translated into French and sent to subscribers. There was a meeting held in Mulhouse the next afternoon in the basement room of a brother's home, with about thirty-five in attendance. A discourse had been translated into French in advance of the meeting.

Two days of sweet fellowship were enjoyed, after which time we left for Lille, where a dear brother was our

chauffeur, taking us to a meeting in the afternoon in Oignies. There about thirty brethren were assembled, many very elderly, and the discourse was interpreted into Polish. The next day we visited both an elderly, isolated sister, and then a dear brother who was recuperating from an illness. A meeting was held that evening in a pleasant meeting hall used by brethren in Cysoing, and about forty attended. There the discourse was interpreted into French.

When our trip in France came to a conclusion after many blessed meetings with these dear French and Polish brethren, we went on to Great Britain. In London we were hosted by a dear Christian couple and on both Saturday and Sunday we had a small fellowship meeting, or convention, at West Wickham in the home of brethren, and at a school meeting place. Some brethren who had traveled to the International Convention and then on to Nigeria for a convention there, had stopped in Great Britain on their return homeward, bringing a good report of the Nigerian Convention. This stopover made it possible for the brethren in Great Britain to arrange two days of special fellowship and convention. About twenty-five English brethren assembled, with eight American visitors, and a blessed time was had in fellowship and spiritual feasting!

The next day we traveled to the Yeovil area, and visited at the Gainsborough House, which is the English retirement center. We had a most blessed visit with several sisters, calling to memory the faithful services rendered by their husbands to the American brethren in years past. There were about thirty-five brethren at a meeting held there that evening. Before leaving England we visited a dear sister who had just returned from the hospital, and we reminisced about the work of staunch brethren in Eng-

land from the time of Pastor Russell's day until the present time.

In all these places we had reminders of the LORD'S work which has been going forth steadily, unabated. We had evidence of the LORD'S use of unwavering brethren over the last seventy years, who have carried forth the Gospel message. And we were reminded how the LORD continues to use faithful brethren today to do the same work, knowing that he will continue to do so until the work of finding a people for his name is completed and we enter the next phase of his plan—the glorious kingdom of Christ! This was most encouraging!

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Christian Life and Doctrine

Witness of the Spirit

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit
that we are the children of God.”**

—Romans 8:16

CHRISTIANS sometimes have doubts arise in their minds about their relationship as children of God. If these thoughts are not dispelled, or worse yet, if they are allowed to grow, they can cause laxness in consecration and even eventual withering of the new creature. But if these doubts are met with the assurances found in the Word of God, then needed strength or faith can be found, and a deepening conviction of sonship will result.

The scripture cited as the theme text opens the door for study along these lines. However, to understand all that is implied in these words requires a recognition of God's will for the church, and an appreciation of his plan of the ages. Without such knowledge, confusion can result. For instance, some church groups erroneously believe that a mark of God's friendship is material prosperity. Those who are elevated to any position in their church organization must have evidence of earthly riches and good health as special evidences of divine favor. Once, during a nationwide drive for church membership, the following slogan was promoted: “Church builds character—character builds success. Join the church!”

However, when one understands the plan of God and knows what purpose is being accomplished in the call of the true church during the Gospel Age, it is at once clear that material prosperity and health are not marks of sonship. If these were true marks, how discouraging it would have

been for the Apostle Paul. We can read his own testimony regarding his personal lot as far as material possessions are concerned, while serving God: "Even unto this present hour we hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place." (I Cor. 4:11) Yet, in this condition of privation and sorrow, he nevertheless said with assurance, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Rom. 8:28

Of Jesus, our principal example, we read, "It became him to make the captain of their salvation perfect [complete] through suffering." (Heb. 2:10) And again we read, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. 5:8) Likewise the church is being developed to share the high honor, and glorious privileges of divine life with our Lord through stringent testing. Hence the need, as it was with him, to have our characters eternally set in righteousness.

Our Father, knowing that the necessary trials might bring discouragement, has given ample assurance of his faithfulness and love for his sons. Among these are the witnesses of the Spirit, which comfortingly say, "You are, indeed, my very own." The word 'spirit' found in our text must be understood correctly if we are to receive the comfort it affords. It means the power or influence of God. By using our concordances we learn the Hebrew word **ruach** and the Greek word **pneuma** simply mean 'wind'. These words have been translated in the Bible by various English words such as 'mind', 'power', and 'spirit'. We can easily understand what might have influenced early writers to first use such a simple word as wind to describe God's power or influence. Historically, languages grew; known words were used to describe something entirely new, and in time their original meanings would be lost and the new definitions become accepted.

This was true of all living languages. In English, for

instance, the word *rostrum* is defined as 'a place where one stands in giving a speech'. But originally this Latin word meant 'a bird's beak', such as the beak of a hawk or sparrow. But now this meaning does not even enter one's mind when he hears or reads the word. In the days when Rome was a world power naval vessels were constructed with long sharp prows for ramming enemy ships. Because of the appearance, it came to be known as 'the bird's beak', and this portion of the vessel was considered a trophy of war. The captured *rostrum* was taken to the Coliseum at the time a victorious commander went there to receive the acclaim of the people, and he would stand in the *rostrum* to receive his trophy and to give his speech. Such evidences of changes in word meanings can be found in a high percentage of currently used, living languages.

The Hebrew word **ruach** and the Greek word **pneuma**, simply meant, as we stated earlier, 'wind'. Wind, of course, is quite invisible—but its power and movement can be felt but not seen. When men long ago sought a way to describe the unseen power of God, it was inevitable that the idea of an invisible, powerful force such as the wind, would be used.

In our lesson text, however, we believe the word 'mind' would best be substituted for spirit. Our text would then read, "God's mind itself beareth witness with our minds that we are the children of God." Some might ask, In what way do we mean that it is God's mind? The mind of anyone represents his thoughts, and the only place we can find the thoughts of God expressed is in his Word, the Bible. The Bible came to us through the influence, or power, of God directing those who wrote.

To illustrate how God's thoughts, or his mind, bears witness with our minds, we might use the illustration of a doctors' book. It was a practice in former years for many families to have such a book. It contained a compilation of various symptoms relating to a specific illness, such as

measles or mumps, etc. It also suggested, in some instances, remedies which might be used. Parents having such a doctors' book might observe their child becoming ill. Perhaps measles was suspected; so a quick check was made with the book concerning the symptoms and their order of appearance. If the child's condition seemed to match the symptoms listed, a diagnosis could generally be made.

In our Father's Word he has outlined for us certain identifying actions and experiences which will come to us as his children. If we find that ours match those noted in his Word, then we have assurance that God's mind is bearing witness with ours that we are his children.

Let us note some of the words of the Bible concerning the witnesses of the Spirit. In John 6:44, we read the words of Jesus, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Here is explicit testimony that everyone who comes to Jesus must be drawn of God. Have we had such an experience? What does it mean to be drawn to Jesus? In answer to this question, the Bible gives ample proof that being drawn to Jesus implies an appreciation and comprehension of the Lord's life and work.

When the disciples noted that Jesus explained his parables to them, but not to others, they inquired concerning the matter. They asked, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" (Matt. 13:10) His answer makes it clear that those drawn of God are given special understanding. His words were, because "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

How can we determine if we have been drawn to Christ? Did circumstances arise that drew our attention to the Bible? Did we begin to understand that Jesus became a man and died for all? Have we learned to appreciate his nobility of heart, and a desire to serve him grew because of this? Do we find ourselves loving him because he did so much for the world and for us? If our answer is 'Yes' to

these questions, it means we have been drawn to Jesus because, by his own testimony, we are informed that no man comes to him unless the Father, God, which sent Jesus draw him.

However, this knowledge and appreciation of our Lord, which indicates we have been drawn to him, does not in itself mean we are children of God. According to God's Word this is a first step, which must be followed by others. In Matthew 16:24,25 we read, "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

This statement of our Lord clearly describes the step we call consecration. To deny oneself means giving up one's will. To those who become disciples of Jesus, this is a vital step, because we must be willing to have God's will as our guide. This was true of Jesus also—a fact noted prophetically of him in Psalm 40:7,8: "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

The next part of Jesus' stated requirement was, "and take up his cross and follow me." What a background of truth is contained in these few words. The phrase, 'take up his cross', was a figure of speech indicating that one was involved in walking unto death. How literally true this became of Jesus a short time later. His words suggested to his disciples that it was necessary he must die, and in addition they expressed the great truth of the Messiah which is that the Messiah is composed of Jesus and his faithful disciples. And all must die before the reign of the Messiah begins. Note the Apostle Paul's words, "The body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ [Messiah]."—I Cor. 12:13

Considering our Lord's words, can we look back to that point in time when we recognized the terms of discipleship and saw that our human will was to be surrendered, and henceforth we were to do the will of God as found in his Word? Did we realize the will of God meant that we were to sacrifice our lives as Jesus did, and that, if faithful, we would be with him in glory as a part of the Messiah? If so, we can say God's Word bears testimony with our minds that we are children of his.

Again the testimony of God's Word speaks concerning the experience of his children, saying in II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Have 'old' things passed away? And how did all things become 'new'? With most of us, prior to our knowledge of the truth, we had limited horizons. At most we might have had some plans concerning a work or profession we desired to pursue. We may have tried to follow some principles or qualities of character we admired and held in high esteem, but almost all were limited to this present short span of life. But when the witness of God's Word came, it lifted our horizons—we could see far beyond the limits of our lifetime on earth, into eternity! We perceived new goals toward which to strive. We began to observe the character of our God and Lord, and attempted to change our thoughts and lives accordingly. The truth gave new point and objectivity to our existence. Old things passed away; behold, all things became new! This important witness of the Spirit must be maintained until we have finished our course.

There are also other witnesses of the Spirit which stimulate us to faithfulness. One which falls into this class is noted in John 15:2, which reads, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." In this parable, God is pictured as the husbandman,

or caretaker, of the vine. Jesus is the stalk, and we are the branches. The fruitage would illustrate the character of love we are to attain—not merely a passive conformity to Jesus' disposition, but rather a demonstration of love by self-sacrificing devotion, similar to his.

Note how this is brought to the fore in verses twelve and thirteen, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The particular point in the parable to note in relation to the witness of the Spirit is contained in the statement, "every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." An unattended grapevine has a natural tendency to produce wood, and not fruit. So with us. No matter how high our resolve, our natural human frailties will assert themselves unless we receive pruning by our Father. The pruning of the LORD would be those experiences brought to us which, if met correctly, will bring forth an abundance of the fruitage of righteousness. Sometimes these are very circumscribing to our natural tendencies; often humiliating to our flesh, and we may question the need of giving up so much of this world. If we recognize they are 'from the LORD', then such prunings will prove beneficial.

We may be unduly concerned with the approval of others, so that if it is not forthcoming we are distressed. Such approbateness could cause one to seek approval at the expense of principle and truth. With such tendency toward woodmaking, the LORD may permit experiences and misunderstandings which could cause us to receive special criticism and disapproval. If such experiences would be met correctly, so that there comes a recognition within of the need to have only God's approval, then rich fruitage has been produced.

Can we see in our Christian experiences where God allowed circumstances which for the moment thwarted

natural tendencies of attaining our will, be it in our jobs, our families, our classes, or other instances? If so, and we met them correctly bowing to the will of the Father, then we have testimony in his Word that we are being led of him as his children.

Another witness of the Spirit is found in John 15:19, which reads, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." But one might ask, how does the world manifest its hatred toward us? Actually, very few of us ever receive abuse from the world. For that matter, neither did our Lord. His abuse and suffering came mainly from the incitement of the people by the religious leaders of Israel.

The reason we do not often receive the world's scorn is because times are very different today, and the people are considerably more liberal-minded toward those of religious persuasions other than their own. However, in those instances where our principles run counter to the world's, we sometimes see scorn and ridicule. This can happen during the stress of war, when our views of service run counter to theirs. Also, we sometimes see the world's frown when we refrain from engaging in politics. To many, the present time is the time when the ills of governments should be corrected. By such, our attitude might be contested because it appears that we are unconcerned about reform. Yes, we will see the world's frown from time-to-time if we are faithful, and will experience their contempt for our understanding of things which we know must wait until the kingdom. This peculiar witness of the Spirit will come to us only if we are faithful in witnessing and letting our light shine.

Note many of the assurances of sonship which depend upon our continued love of the brethren. This is stated in I John 3:14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

The first requisite is to recognize that we are a family of God. This truth was very dramatically presented to the church by Jesus. In the Gospel of Matthew we read of an instance where our Lord's mother and his brethren sought to speak with him. At the time, he was inside a home, tightly packed with listeners, and the crowding prevented free access for his mother and brothers who were outside. An observant person saw the problem and interrupted Jesus with the announcement, "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee." This interruption caused our Lord to stop speaking, and we can imagine that his hearers waited for the reply to this particular statement. The Master, always watching for the seasonable time to sow a seed of truth, realized the appropriateness of this occasion for his hearers to receive a lesson. He asked what appears to be a strange question: "Who is my mother? Who are my brethren?" Imagine the first reaction of the disciples as they heard this! What a strange question! After a pause, during which a variety of thoughts must have entered the minds of his listeners, came the wonderful statement of Jesus as he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."—Matt. 12:46-50

Imagine the reaction to this statement. The simple folk who saw in Jesus such perfection and beauty of character, realized that he tenderly considered them as his own family. They knew his words were not shallow, spoken only for effect. They told of his deep conviction of heart. We can well imagine the special warmth they felt for him that day when the goodbyes were said! We, too, as disciples, are part of the family of God, and the full meaning of this truth should be imbedded deeply in our hearts. The tie that binds our hearts transcends any earthly tie of family or affection. The realization of this truth should cause us to dearly love

our brethren. That love must not come merely because we are told that should be the case. Our love for each other comes from our mutual relationship and love for the Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus. As our appreciation and love of God grows, so does our concern and tenderness toward those whom he has named as our brethren. If he has drawn and begotten a member of the family, leading them daily, hearing their prayers, should not we, too, view them in this special way? Perhaps we can, after a fashion, measure our love for God by our love for the brethren.

The intermingling of our lives with the brethren requires the exercise of great patience. Our Father has called us from varying childhood backgrounds where we acquired different casts of mind, unmatched human frailties, and uneven economic levels. The need of adjusting to each other will ever be present. It is as though our Father, as part of our development, drew together those who are naturally diverse, and said, "Now, my children, live together in love. Cherish and serve each other." If we maintain a strong love for God and our Lord, keeping in focus his plan and our relationship thereto, then the knitting together in love between us and our brethren will be sure and firm. If we can say we have seen and appreciated the family relationship of the brethren, then this witness of the Spirit is real and vital in our lives. If we find in our hearts a desire to be with and serve the interests of the brethren, then we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. I John 3:14 then becomes a witness of the Spirit that we are children of God.

One strong evidence of sonship is our knowledge of the mysteries of God. In the first chapter of Ephesians the Apostle Paul discusses the fact that the church has been a special recipient of knowledge. In verses twelve and thirteen he states, "We should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your

salvation: in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.”

The phrase, ‘sealed with the Spirit of promise’, refers to the possession of special knowledge which identifies us as being the sons of the king. Paul apparently took this figure of speech from a practice used by rulers of old to identify their representatives. When a person representing a ruler went to a far place, he had with him a letter of identification which carried the seal of the potentate. Our text indicates that our identification is the fact that we are filled with the Holy Spirit of promise. Look carefully—the text does not say ‘by’, but ‘with’ the Holy Spirit of promise. Thus stated, it would mean that the seal itself is the possession of the Spirit of promise.

Just what does this mean? The matter is made clear by the same apostle in I Corinthians, where we read: “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.” (I Cor. 2:7) Subsequent to this text it is made clear that this wisdom is yet hidden from the world. Then the apostle makes the point that we know these hidden things only by the Spirit of God—God has revealed them to us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searches the deep things of God.—vs. 10

Then, continuing in verse twelve, he says, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things freely given to us of God.” This is the Spirit of promise, or influence of God revealing to our minds those deep truths of his plan which outline the inheritance of the new creation. The Spirit of promise, then, is the enlightenment which comes to us by the Spirit of God.

Note how emphatically the apostle states that such knowledge cannot be appreciated now by those not Spirit begotten. He says, in verse fourteen, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: . . . neither can

he know them.' If we see the deep things of God, which, simply stated, is his plan of the ages, and if this prompted our consecration and walk of discipleship, then, again, his Spirit is bearing witness to ours that we are children of God.

A child of God has many experiences in the Word to bolster faith in his sonship. As we have noted, some of these are recognition of occurrences which drew us to God, our consecration; and God's pruning. Our witness of the Spirit depends very much on our present faithfulness in witnessing, sacrificing, and serving the brethren. But in all these, past or present, we are especially aware of the warmth of God's smile and his tender leading. □



Encouraging Letters

"GOODNESS" IN BOOKS

Dawn Bible Students Association: Your organization attempts to bring sympathy into the lives of many who have lost a loved one. Thank you for your work. I have found goodness in your books received. Prayerfully
—FL—

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

Dear Brothers in Christ: Once again we thank our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and God, our Heavenly Father, for having led us through the past year. Soon it will be Christmas, and our hearts sing with

much gladness and joy for the birth of our Lord Jesus into this world. Because of his holy birth, suffering and death on the cross, and resurrection from the dead, we are healed of our sin and transgression. He has imparted his righteousness to us and set us free from the bondage of sin and death. May all his creation ascribe unto his everlasting name glory, honor, and thanksgiving, and may all mankind accept him as their Savior and sing joyful Hallelujahs to his glorious name! We thank you for sending us the monthly publication. We

have received a lot of spiritual guidance through those spiritual booklets. We wish you all a very blessed Christmas, and a prosperous new year. Thank you. Sincerely yours. —Saudi Arabia

RECEIVED COMFORT

Dear People: I recently read "When a Man Dies," which is published by your association. I was comforted a great deal by this booklet and everyone I have loaned it to enjoys reading it. I would like to get three more copies to give to a few members of my family. We lost my little brother and that booklet is such a comfort. —NH

HELPFUL IN SORROW

Dear People: Since my husband's recent death I received a booklet called "Hope" from you. It is extremely helpful to me. Would you kindly send me three more copies of the booklet for my three daughters, who do not live here. Also I would like the booklet, "God and Reason." Thank you kindly, and may God bless your work. Sincerely. —NY

PART OF OUR LIFE

Dear Brothers and Sisters: I am sorry to find that my Dawn subscription has expired. The Dawn means everything to me, along with my Bible. Please renew it. Thank you for The Dawn. It has been, and is, a part of our living with the Word of God. Your brother and sister in Christ. —NM

IT'S ALL IN THE BIBLE

Dear Dawn Magazine Friends: I just want to say thanks for twenty years of good reading. I look forward to my magazine each month, without it I would be very unhappy. I know nothing is happening in this day and time that isn't explained in the Bible, and The Dawn magazine makes it so clear to me. Thanks again for the wonderful way in which you make the Bible more understandable. —WA

FINDS COMFORT

Sir: Please send a copy of "Hope beyond the Grave." We recently lost our young son, a Marine, and appreciate the comfort your program gave us. —OH

THROUGH "PARADE"

Dear Brothers: I received your wonderful Dawn publications through the Parade Information Center. This is my first contact with you dear people. Enclosed is a money order for a two-year subscription, plus all the five-cent and ten-cent booklets and a copy of "The Divine Plan of the Ages" and "The Creator's Grand Design." I will be ordering more material in the future. Until then, may the good LORD bless you. Your brother in Christ. —CA

A CHRISTIAN'S FOOD

Dear Friends. I have received the literature I ordered. Thank you for being so prompt. The Dawn is the best magazine of its kind I have ever read. I find it very informative and well written. It is truly food for a thinking Christian. I am eager to share it with my associates. Would you please send me, "The Battle of Armageddon," "The New Creation" and "Tabernacle Shadows." Thank you. Yours sincerely. —Canada

SINCERE THANKS

Dear Brethren in Christ: My sincere thanks to each and every one engaged in sending forth The Dawn. Every issue is a source of encouragement and blessing. May our Heavenly Father richly bless you in your labor of love. Please renew my subscriptions, and send to the other addresses I have included herewith. Use the remaining amount in the service of our Lord and Savior. Sincerely. —IL

ESSENTIAL DATA

Gentlemen: I would like to keep your booklets, "Hope," as a regular piece of essential data in my funeral home. I think it is a wonderful idea! —NC

FOUND US THROUGH DAD

Dawn Bible Students Association. My dad was a subscriber to The Dawn magazine for many years. For the past three years he lived with me, and I have enjoyed reading your publication. Dad died last spring and his subscription expired. I would like to enter my own subscription. —PA

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

DECEMBER 4—If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.—Luke 11:13 (Z. '01-271 Hymn 249)

DECEMBER 11—My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.—Proverbs 23:26 (Z. '01-324 Hymn 176)

DECEMBER 18—The LORD is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.—Hebrews 13:6 (Z. '02-45 Hymn 27)

DECEMBER 25—Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.—Luke 2:10,11 (Z. '03-457 Hymn 144)

FOR YOUR NEWSPAPER

To the right is a suggestion for a small advertisement in your local newspaper. This outline is designed for three and one-half inches in one column.



DECEMBER SPECIAL

On Sunday, December 21, "Frank and Ernest" will discuss a topic of interest to many. Attractive circulars will be available for announcing this program, and you are invited to send for as many as you can use. They are free. Address your request to: The Dawn, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

«Frank & Ernest»

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Speakers' Appointments

These speakers are associated with the Pilgrim Department of the Dawn. Their services are furnished free upon request. Write to: Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged when possible.

R. GORECKI	Pottstown, PA	December 7
London, Ont. December 14	Chicago, IL	27,28

S. MENGOS	J.H. SNYDER
Fresno, CA December 14	Berwick, PA December 7

L.B. POST	J. TATE
Allentown, PA and	Middletown, NY December 7

Conventions

These conventions are listed at the request of the individual classes who are sponsoring the gatherings.

PHOENIX, AZ, January 2-4—
Quality Inn, 2420 West Thomas
Road. Contact: Mrs. Mildred
Enteman, 542 West Southern,
85041
Phone: (602) 276-3267

ST, PETERSBURG, FL,
January 11—Majestic Park
Homes, Inc., 8300 Seminole Blvd.
(Alt. 19). Contact: Mrs. Lloyd
Hagensick, Secy., 8003 Seminole
Blvd., Lot 8, Seminole 355422
Phone: (813) 391-1772

Obituaries

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to the families and friends in their loss of these dear ones. We appreciate information concerning any brethren to be included in this list.

Brother C.V. Thomas, Meenadom, India—December 11, 1985. Age, 98.

Sister Gloria Gardner Stewart, San Diego, CA—August 9. Age, 70.

Sister Ollie Yundak, Winnipeg, Man.—August 12. Age, 62.

Brother Wayne R. Schiffner, Burlington, CO—August 19. Age, 70.

Sister Norma Dhein, Seattle, WA—October 21. Age, 92.

Sister Gloria Koehnemann, St. Louis, MO—October 27. Age, 57.

Sister Edna Delaney, Washington, D.C.—October 30. Age, 91.