

a herald of Christ's presence

THE DAWN

"THEN WILL I TURN
TO THE PEOPLE A
PURE LANGUAGE,
THAT THEY MAY ALL
CALL UPON THE
NAME OF THE LORD,
TO SERVE HIM WITH
ONE CONSENT."

--Zephaniah 3:9

September 1964

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Last Days' Dissemination of Knowledge

"As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming [Greek, presence] of the Son of man be."—Matthew 24:27

WHEN Jesus said that his second presence would be like the lightning he was illustrating the enlightening effect his presence would have on mankind; that it would result in a world-wide diffusion of knowledge. It is interesting to note the manner in which, in the Lord's providence, the means of conveying knowledge, other than by person-to-person conversation has come about within the last few centuries, particularly from about the middle of the fifteenth century, when printing began slowly to be used in Germany, and shortly thereafter in other European countries. The printing press since then has made possible an almost unlimited means of conveying thoughts and ideas, not only from individual to individual, but from nation to nation and from generation to generation.

There is archeological evidence that the art of writing was known before the Flood. Away back in the antediluvian world men learned how to record their thoughts in a way that could be understood by others, but the process was tedious and laborious. The cuneiform style of writing was in general use at that time, and even after the Flood, the characters being etched upon clay tablets, which were then baked in ovens, or in the sun, to give them a degree of permanency. But the method was so slow that the recordings were largely merely of a statistical nature, and sometimes brief family histories. Many of these ancient tablets have been unearthed and their inscriptions deciphered; and while the information thus gained of conditions

which existed before the Flood and since is interesting, it is not of a nature to change the course of the world today.

The art of writing improved somewhat following the Flood, but clay and stone tablets were used for centuries thereafter. Then came the use of parchment rolls, with varying degrees of quality, and improving in durability. Finally paper appeared. But during this entire period there was no better way of recording thoughts than the hand method, with all of its limitations. Few were able to write, and the masses could not read what was written. Even in the case of the Israelites, provision was made for the Law to be read to them on certain stated occasions. This was undoubtedly because the rank and file of the ancient Israelites were illiterate.

The philosophers of Greece had no adequate means of disseminating their theories. Probably the general public today know more about platonic philosophy than did the Greeks themselves at the time of Plato, for the simple reason that the art of printing has now made these views available to all who may be interested in them. The Bible itself had very limited circulation prior to the advent of printing. Copies of the Scriptures were scarce in the days of the Early Church. Each new copy produced required much time, which made it costly. But the advent of printing changed all this.

While we have mentioned the advent of printing in Europe in the fifteenth century, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica "the oldest known printed book, printed from blocks, was discovered in the Chinese province of Kansu in 1910. It bears the statement, 'Printed on May 11, 868, by Wang Chieh, for free general distribution, in order, in deep reverence to perpetuate the memory of his parents.'" The quotation continues, "Printing from moveable type was first done by Pi Sheng in China in the years 1041 to 1049. Both events are well authenticated. Because of the large number of characters in what in Chinese corresponds to an alphabet, the new method was not generally adopted."

The Key of Knowledge

Only those who maintain a hold on others through ignorance need fear the wide dissemination of knowledge, for knowledge

is a key to liberty. It breaks the shackles of superstition and prejudice, of whatever nature they may be; and the printing press has contributed mightily to the increase of knowledge. In the religious field, for example, printing has made possible the wide use of Hebrew and Greek concordances of the Bible. From these we learn that the Bible does not teach the gruesome doctrine of eternal torture for the wicked. With the removal of this superstition we are able to comprehend more fully what the Bible means when it tells us that God is love. Without printing, the Christian world would still be supposing that the Bible teaches hell-fire and damnation.

The religious and civil rulers of the Dark Ages recognized the power the printing press would exercise in the minds of the people, and did what they could to discourage the development of the art of printing, which, as we have seen, got its start in Europe in the fifteenth century. On this point the Encyclopedia Britannica observes: "The quality of printing began to deteriorate in the 16th century, owing somewhat to the fact that the ruling powers in church and state became alarmed because the new art seemed to be creating too much freedom of thought. Measures of repression were adopted and printing ceased to be an art and became merely a vehicle for the conveyance of information."

Progress Resumed

While those who feared the dissemination of knowledge made possible by printing were able for a while to retard the development of this new art, it was destined to improve and expand into the tremendous enterprise which it is today. It is a far cry from the crude presses used in the 15th century to the modern multi-color rotary presses in use today. But with increasing volume through the years of its development, the art of printing has flooded the world with knowledge. It has made possible our public libraries, established our newspapers and magazines, and furnished text books for our schools and colleges.

The Bible has been styled the torch of civilization, and the printing press has sent the Bible into all lands, being now

translated into practically all the known languages of the earth. In contrast with the era of the first printing press, when practically no one possessed a Bible, and none but the high prelates of the church were permitted to read it, there is now scarcely a home in the entire civilized world that does not contain this divinely inspired book.

Hand in hand with the phenomenal circulation of the Bible, made possible by the printing press, there came also a general diffusion of knowledge along other lines—national, political, scientific, economic, and industrial. This knowledge has awakened the world to a sense of its needs, and has begotten in the hearts of the common people everywhere a desire for liberty which cannot be denied. We believe that this is, in part, a fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy concerning the "lightning" which would enlighten the world from the east even unto the west.

The increase of knowledge made possible through printing is cumulative, in that the learning and experience of one generation is recorded and widely disseminated for the benefit of the next. With the printing of books, the thoughts and discoveries of thinkers and inventors were preserved and made available to their successors. As knowledge becomes more widespread, and books more common, each generation possessing these has a decided advantage over previous generations.

Viewed prophetically, the advent of printing is thus seen to be one of the highlights to signal an incoming new age, the age of Christ's second presence, which will eventually bring about the complete enlightenment of the whole world. From this standpoint it should not be viewed as a natural development in human progress, but as one of the providences of God designed to accomplish certain features of his plan in the due time which he had arranged.

If it were possible for an individual who lived in Jesus' day, or even a mere hundred years ago, to be awakened from the sleep of death and shown the world as it is at the present time, he would certainly insist that he was surrounded with miracles. And much of this change has been brought about either directly or indirectly through the advent of printing.

At a Distance

Another outstanding means of disseminating information is through the science of electricity and electronics. Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph, said, "If the presence of electricity can be made visible in any part of a circuit, I see no reason why intelligence cannot be transmitted by electricity." Morse went to work on this idea, and in 1837 applied for his first patent on the electric telegraph. That was just a little over a century and a quarter ago. Now the electric wings of thought are bearing the ideas of man, and the reports of happenings hither and yon over the globe, to a degree that staggers the imagination. The word "telegraph" is from two Greek words meaning "to write at a distance."

The telephone soon followed the telegraph. Then came the wireless telegraph. It was not a long step from the wireless telegraph to the wireless telephone, and on to the radio. Voice and music radio broadcasting took place sporadically from about 1916 on, but the first pre-announced programs on regular schedules are credited to the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Co., operating KDKA at East Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The first of these pre-announced broadcasts was the Harding-Cox presidential election returns on November 2, 1920, less than forty-four years ago.

Beginning in a practical way about 1950, television has been added to radio, and even more recently color television. Television has made possible the dissemination of knowledge on a vaster scale even than radio. And television today is a globe-circling outlet for knowledge, since it is now possible to beam programs to a satellite in outer space and have them bounced back to almost any part of the earth that may be desired. And all of this has come about in such a remarkably short period of time! There are people still living who can remember when there was no telegraph, no telephone, no wireless, no radio, and no television.

It would be folly to say that these outstanding developments have been brought about within the present generation because the people of our day are more intelligent than those of previous generations, for in reality they are not. As a matter of

fact, the general public does not need to be particularly intelligent in order to use and enjoy our modern advantages. The number of people engaged as scientists to produce the marvels of our day is small when compared with the total population, and many of their inventions have been stumbled upon rather than thought out step by step in advance.

It is only as we view the fast-moving developments of these "last days" from the standpoint of biblical prophecies that we are able to see their real meaning. As we have noted, the art of printing—which has been developed to such a high point of efficiency in our generation—the telegraph, the telephone, the radio and television, are media of communication, and communication of ideas leads to enlightenment, and enlightenment is what Jesus prophesied when he said that his second presence would be as lightning which shines from the east even unto the west.—Matt. 24:27

Our Common Version translation of the Bible hides the meaning of Jesus' words to some extent by using the word "coming" to translate the Greek word **parousia**, and "lightning" to translate the Greek word **astrape**. **Parousia** means presence. **Astrape** means bright shining. It can be the bright shining of a candle, and sometimes in the Bible refers to the bright shining of lightning, but not always. (Luke 11:36) In the case of our text Jesus said that the bright shining would be from east to west, like the bright shining of the sun, denoting a world-wide diffusion of light, which is used in the Bible to symbolize knowledge. The psalmist wrote, "His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled."—Ps. 97:4

It is apparent that in his prophecy Jesus is explaining that his second presence would result in a world-wide diffusion of knowledge. This we believe is the real reason that all the marvelous media of communication have come to mankind in our generation. And how potent along this line these modern methods of conveying thoughts from one to another have been! Suddenly the people of the whole world find they are able to converse with one another. Nations of the entire earth have been brought together into one world; and because of human selfishness they are daily learning more and more that the

task of satisfactorily running that world is quite beyond their ability.

The nations talk peace, and want peace, but keep right on preparing for war. When we first heard of nuclear energy we were told much about the wonderful things it would accomplish along peaceful lines, and for the betterment of mankind. And there has been progress along these lines. But offsetting this gain is the fact that the two most powerful nations of earth have built up stockpiles of nuclear bombs sufficiently large to destroy the entire population of the earth several times over.

The electric wings of thought have brought the nations of the world face to face with one another, and they are frightened by what they see. Out of the confusion, however, come a few positive ideas and demands. Some of the people are beginning to identify the underlying causes of oppression and superstition, and are insisting that those causes be removed. In many instances these voices are not heard, but they are sounding forth, and in the general picture are seen to be taking part in an effort which is helping to prepare the people for the blessings of Christ's kingdom.

The foretold increase of knowledge is gradually leading to the overthrow of all systems of iniquity and superstition because they are unable to stand before the increasing light. As the masses which have supported them learn their real character they withdraw their support, and eventually will demand their destruction. Thus all the selfish and oppressive institutions of this present evil world are being shaken by the impact of knowledge. The printing press and the electric wings of thought are carrying knowledge into every nook and corner of the earth in ever increasing volume.

This increase of knowledge is along all lines of human endeavor. In most instances thus far it is blended with selfishness, and sometimes with hate. The world is being divided into opposing camps which ultimately will destroy each other in a time of trouble, fast developing into a severity such as never was since there was a nation. (Dan. 12:1) Jesus referred to this time of "great tribulation," and assured us that it would never be permitted to occur again. (Matt. 24:21) The reason is that

the final solution of the problems posed by the increase of knowledge will be the full establishment of the kingdom of Christ, that glorious kingdom of righteousness and peace and everlasting life.

Only the Beginning

The dissemination of knowledge that we see taking place throughout the earth today is only the beginning. At present the increasing light, or knowledge, of the people is mostly along material lines. In many instances, indeed, it tends to take the minds of the people away from God. This is partly because they associate God with the systems of superstition which have come down to our day from the Dark Ages. It is well that they are getting away from superstition, and in due time they will learn to know and serve the true and loving God of the Bible.

We know that the time will finally come when all our modern means of communication will be used for transmitting information which the people will need in order to come into harmony with the kingdom of Christ, which will then be in control of the affairs of the whole earth. And then the knowledge of God's love and glory will quickly fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Before the kingdom is fully established and in operation, doubtless the transmission of thought will have become still more rapid and universal than it is even today. How quickly, then, will the knowledge of the new kingdom be communicated to all people! What we see today is miraculous, and it is not difficult to believe that the God who foretold these things through his prophets will be able to fulfil all his promises on behalf of his people, and on behalf of the whole world—even to the raising of the dead when the time comes for that.

Jesus in kingdom power and authority is likened in prophecy to the sun—the “Sun of Righteousness.” (Mal. 4:2) From pole to pole this “Sun” will shine, and upon every continent and isle of the sea the life-giving powers of that divine Light-and-Life-giver will be felt for good. There will be no unfinished spots or situations not taken care of by the bright shining of the Master's presence. Nothing short of an east-to-west dispensation of its healing rays can fulfil completely the Master's

own promise concerning the manner and object of his second presence.

The enlightening rays of Christ's presence will fill the earth with a knowledge of the glory of God. This means that all doctrines of devils, all nocturnal hallucinations and superstitions, all human creeds and dogmas, all the precepts of men by which people are made afraid of God rather than induced to love him, all political intrigues, as well as the thousand and one other evils which have plagued a dying world, are to be swept away, and all of this replaced by a true knowledge of God and of his righteous laws.—Zeph. 3:8, 9

The warmth of the enlightening and healing rays of Christ's presence will surely reach into the slums of our great cities, and radiate into the institutions of suffering which we call hospitals. How glad we are for these hospitals today, but how wonderful it will be when the bright shining of the Master's presence destroys the diseases which make them necessary. Whether in hospitals or in homes there will be no more beds of sickness. Our Lord through the Apostle John summed it up when he wrote, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."—Rev. 21:4-7

SPANISH RADIO BROADCASTS

SUNDAYS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Santo Domingo
Emisoras Unidas 910 kc. 7:00 p.m.

PARAGUAY

Asuncion
Z. P. 9 Comuneros 970 kc. 10:15 a.m.

PERU

Lima Radio America 7:00 p.m.

URUGUAY

Montevideo Radio Carve
Saturdays, 4:30 p.m.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles KWKW 1300 8:15 a.m.
San Diego XERB 1090 10:00 p.m.

TEXAS

Corpus Christi KCCT 1150 10:30 a.m.
San Antonio KUKA 1250 10:00 a.m.

THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV SCHEDULE

ALABAMA

Montgomery WKAB-TV Channel 32
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00 p.m.
Selma WSLA-TV Channel 8
Sundays, 4:30 p.m.

ARIZONA

Phoenix KTVK-TV Channel 3
Sundays, 5:30 p.m.

ARKANSAS

El Dorado KTVE-TV Channel 10
Sundays, 7:30 a.m.
Jonesboro KAIT-TV
Sundays, (Time and channel to be announced.)
Little Rock KTHV-TV Channel 11
Sundays, 11:00 a.m.

CALIFORNIA

Fresno KAIL-TV (Time and day to be announced.)

CONNECTICUT

Hartford WHCT-TV Channel 18
Sundays, 4:30 p.m.

FLORIDA

Orlando WESH-TV Channel 2
Sundays, (Time to be announced.)
St. Petersburg WSUN-TV Channel 38
Sundays, (Time to be announced.)

IOWA

Des Moines KRNT-TV Channel 8
Sundays, 8:30 a.m.
Ottumwa KTVQ-TV Channel 3
Sundays, 7:30 a.m.

KENTUCKY

Lexington WKYT-TV Channel 27
Sundays, (Time to be announced.)

LOUISIANA

Monroe KLSE-TV Channel 13
Mondays, 12:30 p.m.

MASSACHUSETTS

Springfield WHYN-TV Channel 40
Sundays, 8:30 a.m.

MICHIGAN

Grand Rapids WZZM-TV
Sundays, 10:30 a.m.
Jackson WILX-TV Channel 10
Sundays, 11:00 a.m.
Kalamazoo WKZO-TV Channel 3
Sundays, 8:30 a.m.

MINNESOTA

Alexandria KCMT-TV Channel 7
Alternate Sundays, 10:00 a.m.

MISSISSIPPI

Columbus WCBI-TV Channel 4
Sundays, 7:30 a.m.
Tupelo WTUV-TV Channel 9
Mondays, 12:30 p.m.

MISSOURI

Kansas City WDAF-TV Channel 4
Sundays, 10:30 a.m.
Springfield KYTV
Sundays, (Time and channel to be announced.)

NEBRASKA

Holdrege KHOL-TV Channel 13
Sundays, (Time to be announced.)

NEW YORK

Binghamton WBJA-TV Channel 34
Sundays, 2:30 p.m.
New York WOR-TV Channel 9
Sundays, 8:30 a.m.
Rochester WROC-TV Channel 8
Sundays, 10:00 a.m.
Syracuse WNYS-TV Channel 9
Sundays, 10:00 a.m.

TV BROADCAST

NORTH CAROLINA

Asheville WISE-TV Channel 62
Sundays, 7:00 p.m.

OHIO

Cambridge WHIZ-TV Channel 80
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.

Cleveland WEWS-TV Channel 5
Saturdays, 8:30 a.m.

Columbus WLWC-TV Channel 4
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.

Coshocton WHIZ-TV Channel 71
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.

Lima WIMA-TV Channel 35
Sundays, 10:30 a.m.

Zanesville WHIZ-TV Channel 18
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.

OKLAHOMA

Elk City KSWB-TV
Sundays, 5:30 p.m.

Oklahoma City KOCO-TV Channel 5
Sundays, 10:30 a.m.

Tulsa KVOO-TV Channel 2
Sundays, 8:30 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh WTAE-TV Channel 4
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.

KDKA-TV Channel 2
Sundays, 8:30 a.m.

Wilkes-Barre WBRE-TV Channel 28
Wednesdays, 6:30 a.m.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston WUSN-TV Channel 2
Sundays, (Time to be announced.)

Columbia WCCA-TV Channel 25
Sundays, 3:30 p.m.

TEXAS

Big Spring KWAB-TV Channel 4
Sundays, 10:30 a.m.

El Paso KTSM-TV Channel 9
Sundays, 10:00 a.m.

Fort Worth KTVT-TV Channel 11
Sundays, 9:00 a.m.

Odessa KOSA-TV Channel 7
Sundays,

San Antonio KWEX-TV
Sundays, (Time and channel to be announced.)

Temple KCEN-TV Channel 6
Sundays, 11:00 a.m.

UTAH

Salt Lake City KUTV Channel 2
Sundays, 11:00 a.m.

VIRGINIA

Bristol WCYB-TV Channel 5
Sundays, 12:00 noon.

Lynchburg WLVA-TV Channel 13
Sundays, (Time to be announced.)

WEST VIRGINIA

Huntington WHTN-TV Channel 13
Sundays, (Time to be announced.)

Oakhill WOAY-TV Channel 4
Sundays, 7:30 a.m.

Parkersburg WTAP-TV Channel 15
Sundays, 10:30 a.m.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee WITI-TV Channel 6
Sundays, 7:30 a.m.

WUHF-TV Channel 18
Sundays, 3:30 p.m.

CANADA

Montreal, Que. CBMT-TV
Sundays, (Time and channel to be announced.)

Thompson, Man. CESM-TV
Sundays, 5:30 p.m.

Frank and Ernest

BROADCAST SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

ALABAMA		Indianapolis		WIBC 1070 10:30 a.m.
Decatur	WMSL 1400 10:05 a.m.	Muncie	WLBC 1340 8:45 a.m.	
Haleyville	WJBB 1230 10:05 a.m.	IOWA		
ARIZONA		Clinton	KROS 1340 7:15 p.m.	
Phoenix	KUEQ 740 8:30 a.m.	KANSAS		
ARKANSAS		Goodland	KLOE 730 7:45 a.m.	
Jonesboro	KBTM 12:30 10:05 a.m.	KENTUCKY		
CALIFORNIA		Bowling Green	WLBj 1410 10:05 a.m.	
Chico	KPAY 1060 10:35 a.m.	Louisville	WAVE 970 8:15 a.m.	
El Centro	KICO 1490 10:30 a.m.	Newport	WNOP 740 9:00 a.m.	
Los Angeles	KGLM 740 10:00 a.m.	Winchester	WWKY 1380 10:30 a.m.	
Los Angeles	KBIG(fm) 104.3 9:00 a.m.	MAINE		
Napa	KVON 1440 10:35 a.m.	Bangor	WABI 910 12:00 noon	
Redding	KVCV 600 7:45 a.m.	MASSACHUSETTS		
San Diego	XERB 1090 9:45 a.m.	Marlboro	WSRO 1470 12:05 p.m.	
Santa Clara	KGBA 10:35 a.m.	New Bedford	WBMS 1420 10:45 p.m.	
Tulare-Visalia	KCOK 1270 10:35 a.m.	Orange	WCAT 1390 9:15 a.m.	
COLORADO		MICHIGAN		
Denver	KIMN 950 9:30 a.m.	Detroit	CKLW 800 6:00 p.m.	
Fort Collins	KZIX 600 10:05 a.m.	Grand Rapids	WMAX 1490 9:00 a.m.	
Pueblo	KDZA 1230 10:05 a.m.	Saginaw	WSGW 790 10:30 a.m.	
DELAWARE		MINNESOTA		
Wilmington	WTUX 1290 10:15 a.m.	Duluth-Superior	WAKX 1480 12:15 p.m.	
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA		Minneapolis	KEVE 1440 11:05 a.m.	
Washington	WOL 1450 11:00 a.m.	MISSISSIPPI		
FLORIDA		Biloxi	WLOX 1490 10:05 a.m.	
Palatka	WSUZ 800 11:05 a.m.	Waynesboro	WABO 990 2:00 p.m.	
Tampa	WFLA 970 9:30 a.m.	MISSOURI		
IDAHO		Japlin	WMBH 1450 6:05 p.m.	
Lewiston	KRLC 1350 9:35 a.m.	Farmington	KREI 800 9:00 a.m.	
ILLINOIS		Joplin	WMBH 1450 10:05 a.m.	
Chicago	WEAW 1330 10:00 a.m.	Kansas City	KCMO 810 9:35 a.m.	
LaSalle	WLPO 1220 9:45 a.m.	MONTANA		
West Frankfort	WFRX 1300 9:15 a.m.	Miles City	KATL 1340 9:15 a.m.	
INDIANA				
Gary-Hammond	WJOB 1230 8:30 a.m.			

BROADCAST SCHEDULE

NEBRASKA

Grand Island KRGI 1430 10:15 a.m.

NEW JERSEY

Newark WJRZ 970 9:30 a.m.

NEW MEXICO

Silver City KSIL 1340 10:05 a.m.

NEW YORK

Albany WEEW 1300 8:00 a.m.

New York WJRZ 970 9:30 a.m.

NORTH CAROLINA

Beaufort WBMA 1400 9:00 a.m.

Belmont-Charlotte WCGC 1270 12:30 p.m.

Elizabeth City WGAI 560 11:05 p.m.

Leaksville WLOE 1490 12:05 p.m.

OHIO

Akron-Canton WHLO 640 7:45 a.m.

Cincinnati WNOP 740 9:00 a.m.

Columbus WBNS 1460 10:05 a.m.

Piqua WPTW 1570 11:30 a.m.

Zanesville WHIZ 1240 11:45 a.m.

OREGON

Astoria KAST 1280 10:35 a.m.

Lebanon KGAL 920 9:00 a.m.

Portland KGON 1520 10:00 a.m.

The Dalles KODL 1230 9:15 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown WHOL 1600 10:45 a.m.

Connellsville WCVI 1340 12:05 p.m.

Pittsburgh WWVA 1170 9:30 a.m.

Pottstown WPAZ 1370 8:30 a.m.

PUERTO RICO

Aguadilla (Fri.) WGRF 8:00 p.m.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Yankton KYNT 1450 11:05 a.m.

TEXAS

Livingston KVIL 1220 8:45 a.m.

Lubbock KDAV 580 9:45 a.m.

Pampa KPDN 1340 10:05 a.m.

San Antonio KBOP 1380 7:15 a.m.

Sherman-Dennison KRRV 910 11:45 a.m.

Wichita Falls KWFT 620 10:15 a.m.

UTAH

Brigham City KBUH 9:05 a.m.

Logan KLGN 9:05 a.m.

Salt Lake City KSOP 1370 9:30 a.m.

VIRGINIA

Richmond WLEE 1480 10:10 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Bellingham KPUG 1170 11:15 a.m.

Centralia-Chehalis KELA 1470 10:35 a.m.

Olympia KGY 1240 10:35 a.m.

Seattle KAYO 1150 9:45 a.m.

Tacoma KMO 1360 9:45 a.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

Wheeling WWVA 1170 9:30 a.m.

WISCONSIN

Fond du Lac KFIZ 1450 11:05 a.m.

Janesville WCLO 1230 11:05 a.m.

WYOMING

Cheyenne KVWO 1370 10:05 a.m.

CANADA

Calgary, Alta. CKXL 1140 9:15 p.m.

Corner Brook, Nfld. CFCB 570 10:30 a.m.

Dauphin, Man. CKDM 730 10:30 a.m.

Oshawa CKLB 1350 9:45 a.m.

Prince Albert, Sask. CKBI 900 10:30 a.m.

Vancouver CKLG 730 9:00 a.m.

Winnipeg CKY 580 7:15 p.m.

RADIO TOPICS FOR SEPTEMBER

6—"World's End and Judgment Day"

13—"Waters Above and Below"

20—"Are the Dead Alive?"

27—"In the Father's House"

LESSON FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Leaders for Troubled Times

GOLDEN TEXT: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."—1 Corinthians 10:13

JUDGES 2:11, 14-23

WITH the death of Joshua, the successor of Moses, there followed in the history of Israel what Bible scholars generally refer to as the Period of the Judges. This era in Israel's experiences lasted for 450 years. During this time there was no central government in the land. Indeed, there was no government at all. The record is that every man did what was right in his own eyes.—Judges 17:6

After the elders who served with Joshua had died, the nation soon became corrupt. They worshiped other gods; and Jehovah, the God of Israel, permitted his people to suffer defeat at the hands of their enemies, and to be oppressed by them. This was in keeping with God's covenant with his people, as outlined in Leviticus, chapter 26, and Deuteronomy, chapter 28.

But in keeping with his covenant God did not forsake his

people permanently in these situations, but whenever they cried to him for help he raised up a judge to deliver them. These judges were the only representatives of Jehovah in the nation during this particular period of their history. They raised armies to fight Israel's enemies, and exercised authority along all needful lines in order to extricate the nation from the many difficulties into which it had fallen through the worship of idols and other transgressions of the divine law.

Othniel was the first of these judges whom the Lord raised up to deliver his people. (Judges 3: 9) Samuel was the last. Gideon was also one of the judges. All will remember the account of Gideon and his little army of three hundred defeating the mighty army of the Midianites, thus delivering the Israelites from oppression and exploitation.

Much of the Israelites' difficulty arose from the fact that many

of the idol-worshipping Canaanites were allowed to remain in the land. Joshua did not drive them all out in his conquest of the land, and the Lord allowed them to remain as a test to his people. On this point the Lord said, "I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not."—vss. 21, 22

In most instances during this period the Israelites yielded to the temptations which surrounded them, and transgressed the law of the Lord. The judges whom the Lord raised up from time to time delivered them from their oppressors, and they rendered a measure of obedience to the Lord as long as the judge lived. But left to themselves, they soon wandered away from the Lord again, and another judge would be needed to get them out of their trouble.

God does not shield his people from tests of faithfulness. He could have shielded Adam, but he did not. He could have driven all the idol worshipers from the Promised Land and thus have shielded Israel from temptation to worship other gods. But the Lord desires the worship of those who willingly and gladly acknowledge him as the true God, regardless of the circumstances with which they are surrounded.

So it is with spiritual Israel of the present age. It will be true of the restored world of mankind during the Millennial Age.

The Golden Text is a precious promise, and to the point. The Lord knows that his people have trials and temptations. He knows that these are good for them. Many times our experiences are not any different from those through which the world is passing. The difference is that the Lord is with us in our trials, giving us strength to bear them, pointing out to us by his providences the meaning they have for us as we are being prepared to live and to reign with Christ.

In this promise we are also assured that the Lord will not permit us to be tested above that which we are able to bear. When the trial becomes too great, he will provide a way of escape, that we may not be crushed by it. What a wonderful arrangement this is! The Lord helps us in every time of need; and when necessary, his help is in the form of deliverance. May we respond to such love and wisdom by being faithful to him, even unto death! —Rev. 2:10

QUESTIONS

What was the Period of the Judges? How did God deal with his people during this period?

Does the Lord shield his people from trials?

What blessed assurance is given us in the Golden Text?

A Spokesman for God

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

I SAMUEL 3:19, 20; 7:5, 6, 10-17

SAMUEL was Israel's last judge during the Period of the Judges. But God also used him as a prophet, establishing him as one of his seers very early in his life. The record is that the Lord did not let any of Samuel's words "fall to the ground," or, in other words, to go unfulfilled.

Samuel was a faithful servant of the Lord. In keeping with the thoughts of our Golden Text, he trusted in the Lord with all his heart, and did not lean on his own understanding. He acknowledged God in all his ways and, in accordance with the promise, God directed his steps.

Samuel's service as a judge in Israel followed much the same pattern as did the service of the judges preceding him. When Israel drifted away from the Lord and into the worship of heathen gods, the Lord permitted them to be plundered and oppressed until they cried for help. This lesson finds them harassed by the Philistines, and Samuel was the judge raised up by the Lord to bring them deliverance.

Samuel sent out a call for the Israelites to assemble at Mizpeh, promising to pray for them there. The Israelites heeded the call, and at Mizpeh they acknowledged their sins, Samuel prayed, and their enemies, the Philistines, were defeated.

This was an outstanding defeat. The Philistines learned that the Israelites had assembled at Mizpeh, and from a military point of view it seemed a good opportunity to attack. But the Lord heard Samuel's prayer, and accepted his burnt offering. We read that when the enemy attacked, "the Lord thundered with a great thunder . . . upon the Philistines, discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel."—ch. 7:10

With the Lord thus fighting against the Philistines the victory for Israel was sure. The enemy was routed. It was not a momentary victory. The Philistines were driven out of the land, and did not bother Israel any more during the time that Samuel served as judge. After that, and during the reign of Israel's first

king, Saul, the Philistines again became troublesome to Israel.

Following the defeat of the Philistines at Mizpeh, Samuel set up a stone between Mizpeh and Shen and called it Ebenezer, meaning "hitherto hath the Lord helped us." This would be a good thing for all of the Lord's people to do. Our battles today are against the spirit of the world, against the Devil, and against the cravings of our own fallen flesh. They take place largely in the mind. But the Lord helps us in these battles, giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

When our faith is being severely tested it is helpful to look back upon the Lord's dealings with us and recall the many times he has delivered us from our enemies, and given us the strength to continue on in the good fight of faith. We should realize that having helped us in the past, we can rely on him to continue to help us in our every time of need. How reassuring is the promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."—Heb. 13:5

Samuel was busy judging Israel even when he was not delivering them from their enemies. We are informed that he had a definite circuit which he covered each year. It was "to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh," and then back to his home city of Ramah. He "judged Israel in all those places," we are told, meaning

probably that the people would come to him with their complaints and their misunderstandings, and he would endeavor to straighten matters out for them.

As noted in a previous lesson, during the Period of the Judges there was no government in Israel, and no government officials. Samuel, during his tenure of office as a judge, would be the only one to whom the people could appeal for counsel and help; the only one, when disputes arose, to determine officially who was right and who was wrong. We have no doubt that Samuel, being the faithful servant of the Lord that he was, rendered just decisions, and gave righteous and wise counsel.

One of the great disappointments of Samuel's life was the fact that when he was old, the people clamored for a king. Samuel took this to mean that they rejected him, and he felt badly about it. (ch. 8:4-7) Graciously the Lord explained to Samuel, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Samuel anointed Saul to be the first king of Israel.

QUESTIONS

In addition to being a judge, what other office did Samuel fill for the Lord?

Relate the circumstances of the defeat of the Philistines.

What disappointing experience came to Samuel when he was old?

The People Demand a King

GOLDEN TEXT: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance."—Psalm 33:12

I SAMUEL 10:17-25

TOWARD the close of Samuel's tenure of office as judge in Israel the people clamored for a king. Samuel had appointed his sons to succeed him in office, but the people knew that they were not qualified for the position, so they used this as an excuse to voice their demand, that they be given a king instead. The only reason they gave for wanting a king was their desire to be like other nations.

Beginning with Moses, and on through Joshua and the judges, the Lord himself had maintained fairly direct contact with the Israelites. He, more than anyone else, was really their ruler. So when they asked for a king in order to be like the other nations it was, in effect, a rejection of the Lord's rulership. But the Lord did not arbitrarily refuse their request. Instead, he asked Samuel to explain to the people all the difficulties they would encounter under the rulership of kings.

But the people would not change their minds. They still asked for a king, thus indicating that they thought their way was

better than the Lord's. So God yielded to the desires of the people, and asked Samuel to anoint a king, supervising as to who would be selected for this important office.

The Lord is longsuffering and wise in his dealings with his people. In demanding a king, the Israelites had rejected his rulership over them, but he did not reject them; nor did he give up his rulership over them. Concerning Solomon, who was Israel's third king, we read that he sat "on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father."
—I Chron. 29:23

Throughout the long period of Israel's kings the Lord continued to overrule in their affairs, punishing them when they sinned and blessing them when they were faithful to him. Their last king was Zedekiah, who was overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. This was in 606 B. C. At that time the whole nation was taken captive to Babylon, where they remained for seventy years. At the end of the seventy years they were permitted to return to their land, but were not given back their national independence. They remained a sub-

ject people until A. D. 70-73, when a Roman army under Titus destroyed Jerusalem and their temple, and they became a scattered people until they were re-born as a nation in 1948.

As noted, Saul was the first king of Israel. He was handsome and tall, head and shoulders above most of the Israelites. When the people realized that he was to be their ruler they all shouted, "God save the king." (vs. 24) This was probably the first time this expression was ever used.

When chosen to be the king, Saul was humble, little in his own sight, as Samuel put it. (vss. 21, 22; ch. 15:17) But the honor and power of the office affected Saul adversely. He became disobedient to the Lord, and was finally rejected as king of Israel. He was allowed to continue for awhile, but did not enjoy the Lord's blessing. He finally killed himself by falling on his own sword while fighting a losing battle with the Philistines.

Saul's final act of disobedience, which caused the withdrawal of the Lord's favor from him, was in connection with the Amalekites. He was directed through Samuel to destroy this people and their king, Agag. Their flocks and herds were also to be destroyed. Instead of carrying out these instructions fully, Saul saved the life of the king, and the people reserved some of the best of the sheep and cattle with

which to offer sacrifice.—ch. 15: 15, 20, 21

Concerning this Samuel said to Saul, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."—I Sam. 15:22, 23

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord," our Golden Text declares. To date, Israel is the only nation which actually had Jehovah as God and Ruler. Throughout the Gospel Age many nations have claimed to be Christian, but this has been a false claim. Israel was blessed by the Lord in many ways. Because it was God's nation he punished the people for their sins, and their downward course into sin was somewhat arrested. The Law given at Mount Sinai also helped to preserve the people in part. Rich were the blessings they received from the Lord when they endeavored to observe that Law.

QUESTIONS

Did God reject Israel when the people rejected him by asking for a king?

What sort of man was Saul?

Why did God reject him as king?

Has any nation ever had God as Lord or Ruler?

The Righteous Acts of the Lord

GOLDEN TEXT: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."—Hebrews 11:39, 40

I SAMUEL 12:6-15

IN THIS lesson we find Samuel reminding the Israelites of many wonderful things their God had done for them, beginning with their deliverance from Egyptian slavery. Many of these righteous acts of the Lord were miracles, such as the crossing of the Red Sea and Jordan; the manna; the water from the rock; the overthrow of Jericho; many of their victories in conquering the land; and their deliverances from their enemies during the Period of the Judges. Samuel assured the Israelites that if they were faithful to the Lord he would continue to bless them, and bless their king.

We cannot understand and appreciate the plan of God for the redemption and restoration of the human race to life, apart from belief in miracles. All the wonderful miracles of Old Testament times were eclipsed in glory by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In this we have assurance that God is able to fulfil his promises to restore

all the dead to life, which he will do in his own due time.—Acts 17:30, 31

The Golden Text is a very important part of this lesson. The "these all" referred to in it are the entire Ancient Worthy group, beginning with righteous Abel, and onward to Moses, Joshua, the judges, and including many others from the period of the judges on down to the first advent of Jesus. Through their faith, demonstrated by their obedience, they obtained a "good report"; that is, they received the assurance that God was pleased with them. However, while the messianic promises were made to these, they died without receiving their fulfilment.

Paul explains why, saying that a "better thing" has been provided for the Gospel church of the present age, and that these Ancient Worthies "without us should not be made perfect." What does he mean? An interesting text to compare with this one is Matthew 11:11. In this text Jesus speaks of John the Baptist,

noting that there had been none born of women greater than John. Then he observes that while this is true, "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he [John]."

Here we have the word "greater," while Paul speaks of a "better thing." John was the last of the Ancient Worthies class, and what Jesus says is that he will not be in the heavenly phase of the kingdom at all. But this does not mean that John will fail to obtain salvation. Jesus is not speaking of salvation but a place in the heavenly, or spiritual phase of the messianic kingdom.

There are to be two phases of Messiah's kingdom—the heavenly and the earthly. Jesus, as the Head over his church, was the first to qualify for the heavenly phase. He promised his disciples that he would go away and prepare a place for them, and would come again to receive them unto himself. (John 14:1-3) Jesus was raised from the dead a glorious divine being, invisible to the human eye except as he miraculously appeared to his disciples on a number of occasions after his resurrection.—II Pet. 1:4; I Tim. 1:17

His faithful followers are made like him when they are raised from the dead. John wrote, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:1-3) These are to

live and reign with Christ a thousand years. (Rev. 20:6) However, since they will be divine beings, they will be invisible to the human race, and their rulership will be exercised through human representatives.

These human representatives, the Scriptures reveal, will be the Ancient Worthies, raised from the dead. The psalmist referred to them as the "fathers" in Israel, and tells us that they are to be made "princes in all the earth." (Ps. 45:16) Jesus, speaking of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, tells us that the people will come to them, or sit down with them—denoting recognition—from all over the earth.—Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28, 29

Thus, while we see that all the faithful of past ages will have a very exalted position in the kingdom, the church of this Gospel age will have a "better thing," and that the least of these, as Jesus explained, will be greater than John the Baptist. It is important to realize that there are these two phases of the kingdom.

QUESTIONS

Is it necessary to believe in miracles in order to appreciate God's plan?

What is the "better thing" prepared for the followers of Jesus?

What place will the Ancient Worthies have in the messianic kingdom?

The Manifold Wisdom of God

Ephesians -- Chapter 3

IN THE 19th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we are told some of the difficulties the Apostle Paul encountered as he preached the truth at Ephesus. The great goddess of the Ephesians was Diana. She was worshiped as the great mother goddess in all Asia Minor. Her image was supposed to have fallen from heaven. Remember what the town clerk said in Acts 19:35: "Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshiper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?" Originally a meteoric stone may have fallen and through superstition was made into a goddess; a goddess instead of a god, because it was customary to worship women in those days as, for example, Athena and others.

About that time a silversmith named Demetrius and his craftsmen were doing considerable business manufacturing silver shrines for Diana, selling them to tourists and pilgrims who came to see and worship at the temple of Diana at Ephesus. When Paul came preaching Christ in Ephesus he possibly said the same thing as he had at Athens, as recorded in Acts 17:24, which reads: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands." That kind of preaching did not help sell shrines for Diana and add to the profits of Demetrius and his artisans; so these men created the situation recorded in Acts 19:25-34. After this uproar Paul left Ephesus for a time.

This experience is noted to emphasize that preaching the Gospel of Christ in those days was fraught with peril and difficulty; nevertheless it was preached. It is easy today by com-

parison. Let us take advantage of every opportunity. With this little background let us begin in Ephesians, Chapter 3.

Verse 1 reads: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." This verse emphasizes that Paul realized he could have saved himself trouble and persecution had he not felt the compulsion of his commission to preach the Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles. Paul was a prisoner in Rome chiefly because of the jealousy of the Jews being aroused against him, a Jew, preaching salvation to Gentiles—"I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."

Then verse 2 reads: "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward." Here, still speaking to the Gentiles, Paul reminds them of the "dispensation." This is not a common word today. It means "administration" or "divine arrangement." If Paul were here today, he would likely say in effect: "I am confident that you have heard of the divine arrangement, the divine commission that has been given to me, to dispense (same root as dispensation) the Gospel to you Gentiles."

Verses 3-6 read: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel."

Verse 3 refers to the vision which the apostle had received from God, recorded in Acts 22:17-21, following: "And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that

slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

No wonder Paul valued the mystery. It was "meat in due season," "present truth" at that time, that Gentiles could be fellow heirs with the Jews, members of the same body, partakers of the same promises. It meant that Jesus Christ and the hope of the Gospel can mean as much to one people as another. It meant that God is "no respecter of persons"; that the church comes not from one nation only, but from all nations, peoples, kindreds, and tongues. Paul thrilled with that commission.

We take this truth more or less for granted today, but before apostolic days it was unknown. Neither Abraham, Moses, nor David, nor any of the prophets, understood the two phases of the kingdom of God (the heavenly and the earthly aspects). Revelation 5:1-5 tells us why. The seven seals of the book had not been broken. No one had been found worthy to break the seals and open the book. But in due time "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" had come. The root of David, through faithfulness, had prevailed. Through him the divine plan of the ages was revealed, including the truth of the two phases of the kingdom and the truth that the church is composed of people from among both Jews and Gentiles.

The mystery given to the Apostle Paul, which had been hidden from all generations which had lived up until that time, was now made manifest to his saints. Both Jew and Gentile could now rejoice in the truth, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."—Col. 1:27

Verses 7-9 read: "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

Here in verses 7 and 8 the great apostle acknowledges, as a gift from God, his privilege of being the apostle to the Gentiles, and that God's power had been demonstrated in transforming

him from Saul, the persecutor of God's people, into Paul, the minister and servant to preach among the Gentiles the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

Continuing, verses 10-13 read: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory."

Here in verse 10 we find the expression, "the manifold wisdom of God." Isn't this a striking phrase? Just how does God show his "many-sided" wisdom? Here the Revised Version helps us. It reads, "that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known." What is the "manifold wisdom of God"? This expression is often used to describe the varieties of creation, the many kinds of flowers and trees, the many colors and fragrances, the diversity and yet the harmony of the universe. And of course these varieties of creation do emphasize God's many-sided wisdom. However, that is not specifically what the Apostle Paul is talking about. Who does the verse say is made to appreciate this "manifold wisdom of God"? Is Paul referring to our appreciation? No. Let us re-read verses 9, 10 and 11, paraphrasing as necessary:

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now [note this, that now] unto the principalities and powers in [the] heavenly places [sphere] might be known by [or through] the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose [or purpose of the ages] which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This understanding of the mystery concerning the church (that it is from Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female; that its members, people like you and me, are transformed to be "members of the Christ"; that together they constitute the "anointed of God"; and "if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise") is in-

deed thrilling and does reveal to us God's wisdom, making us very humble before God. But Paul in verse 10 is referring to the understanding of the manifold wisdom of God which this knowledge brings to the heavenly host—the angels, arch-angels, principalities and powers. The call of the church was not a haphazard afterthought, but part of the eternal scheme. As long as it was hidden (from ages and dispensations), not even the heavenly host understood how God would “in the dispensation of the fulness of times” bring order out of chaos through Christ and the church.

Now let us read verses 14-16: “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.”

Verse 15 presents a thought that is worth thinking about. “The whole family in heaven and earth,” it reads. The family of God, in heaven and on earth, includes angels and men; it includes those on the other side of the veil and those who are still the “church militant.” Job (38:7) calls the angels, “the sons of God.” We also are the “sons of God,” and in Ephesians 3:15 we are included in the same family; the same by creation, the same by redemption through Christ.

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10) This is the prayer we were taught by Jesus. And we know that through Christ that part of the divine family which was alienated from God through sin will be reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. Then, too, we note Ephesians 1:10: “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” When this is done and the kingdom handed over to the Father, then the whole family of God, in heaven and on earth, will be at one.

But God is our Father now. May he grant us, out of the rich treasure of his glory (and not according to the poverty of our hearts) to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit, constantly renewing and re-enforcing our spiritual life, the inner man, or the “hidden man of the heart.”—I Pet. 3:4

Continuing, verses 17-19 read: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

We all love this text of Scripture. Through faith we have opened our hearts to Christ. The full expression of faith is consecration, and Christ has entered into our hearts thus opened. He has not entered temporarily, but permanently; he is not a transient, not just sojourning; he is dwelling perpetually. Ephesians 2:22 tells us, "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

In this prayer of the apostle, which begins with verse 14, he asks that we may be strengthened as new creatures; that "Christ may dwell" in us; that his Spirit may be manifest in us. Paul prays that we may be "rooted and grounded in love." The word "rooted" brings to mind a tree and "grounded" brings to mind a building. "Grounded" is from the same root word as "foundation." In Europe the foundation is spoken of as "the grounds of a building." To be "rooted and grounded in love," then, is to develop love as a fundamental principle of Christian life. And as a root is to a tree, as a foundation is to a house, so is a knowledge of God's love, to our being a habitation of God.

Then verse 18 presents the thought that through strength in the inner man, through being spiritually strong as new creatures, we will be able to comprehend, or have the ability to grasp, what all saints must be able to grasp; that is, "all saints" in any part of the age. And only saints (God's devoted people) can understand and grasp fully (comprehend) the love of Christ. And they cannot do this if they believe in eternal torment, if they believe the Devil's lie, for we remember it is the truth that sanctifies. Down through the ages the saints did not have all the light which shines on our path today. However all God's devoted people have had enough light to grasp the love of God and to know that he is a God of love, not of eternal torment.

"The breadth and length and depth and height" of his love, Paul says. What did the apostle have in mind when he wrote this? Some think that no special interpretation should be given to these words, the intent being to present the love of Christ in its entire vast dimension. We do not know exactly what he had in mind, but here is a thought that may help us to grasp the full beauty of the text: The breadth of his love is world-wide, so wide that it embraces every man, yes even Adam. The length of his love extends from everlasting to everlasting; it extends throughout all ages; it bridges condemnation with reconciliation. The depth of his love none can fathom, and it reaches six feet below the ground. The height of his love is beyond the reach of any foe to deprive us of it, and it reaches from earthly creatures even to the host of heaven. And Christ's love is an expression of God's love.

"Which passeth knowledge" is how verse 19 describes Christ's love. How can we know something that passes knowledge? Only by the Holy Spirit. We know his love far exceeds our understanding of it, but because of the Holy Spirit we are able to comprehend that which is revealed, that which is beyond human ability, that we "might be filled with all the fulness of God."

We note the recurrence of the word "that" in Paul's prayer. He prays, in verse 16, that God may grant we will be strong; in verse 17, that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith; in verse 18, that . . . we may be able to comprehend the love of Christ; and in verse 19 that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. The goal of a Christian is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but we must be emptied of self if Christ is to completely fill our hearts.

Verses 20 and 21 conclude: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Here the apostle ends his prayer. Paraphrasing, verses 20 and 21 read: "Now unto him who is able to do beyond all that which we could ask or think, according to the power that work-

eth in us, unto him be the glory which is due his holy name because of his love which finds expression in his great divine plan, and in the church through whom his manifold wisdom is displayed, and will be displayed throughout all ages." The church gives expression to the fulness of God, and also finds its expression through Christ Jesus, for the church could not exist without him. Salvation, redemption, and restitution could not exist without him. The glory of praise to God, because of him, will extend "to all generations of the age of the ages" (**Diaglott**), and they will continue to worship and praise him throughout the endless ages of eternity. And, with the Apostle Paul, from our very hearts, we say, Amen, so be it!

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

SEPTEMBER 3—"I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."—Hosea 6:6 (Z. '03-220 Hymn 154)

SEPTEMBER 10—"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

—Ephesians 4:29 (Z. '99-70 Hymn 312 A)

SEPTEMBER 17—"Christ in you, the hope of glory."—Colossians 1:27 (Z. '03-375 Hymn 21)

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CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

The Book of Esther

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In chapter 1, verses 4-9, we are told of the tremendous wealth of the king, and his great pride therein. He made a great feast, lasting 180 days, for the nobles and leading families of the city and provinces, the power and glory of Media and Persia. Following this was another feast for seven days more for all the people present around the palace.

Note the beautiful, rich curtains with their silver rings hung on marble pillars; the gold and silver beds; and the floors of colored marble tile of blue, white, black, and red; the drink-

ing vessels of gold, each one of a different pattern; wine of the king's appointment in great abundance. The drinking was as each man desired; none did compel or restrain. (vs. 8) The wealth and extravagance was like a fairy tale. Also the queen, Vashti, made a feast for the women in the royal palace. The expense was hardly measurable.

In verses 10-22 we are told of the natural result of such unrestrained eating and drinking, for on the final day, when the king and nobles were partially beclouded in judgment, they acted foolishly. The king sent for the queen to come before the nobles and exhibit her beauty, with the royal crown upon her head. Moffatt's translation reads, "She was lovely to behold." She seems to have had the only level head among them, and refused to demean herself.

This inflamed the king, and his lords debated what should be done about it, and finally decided that Queen Vashti should be deposed, and another chosen in her place. So the great feast ended in folly and trouble for the king's household. This first chapter records the events which led up to and prepared the way for Esther to be chosen queen.

Chapter Two

The second scene of our story begins in chapter 2, with the advice of the king's counselors and servants that a proclamation be made to gather the fairest maidens of the kingdom, and bring them to the house of the women in charge of Hegai, the king's chamberlain, and prepare them for the king's selection. The one which pleased the king most was to be made queen in the place of Vashti.

According to Herodotus, there were seven Persian families of the first rank of nobles, and the king usually chose his wives from these. The names of the leaders of these families are given in chapter 1:13, 14, as the princes, or counselors, of the king. Verses 8, 9, imply that each seeking to be the king's choice received seven maidens as servants, but that Esther especially pleased Hegai, the custodian, and she was given seven selected maidens. Her Persian name may have let her pass for a Persian.

Mordecai evidently occupied a humble position at court, and had to make special effort to keep in touch with Esther. She had not made known to her people and kindred that she was a Jewess, for Mordecai had charged her not to show it. Esther, being accepted by Hegai, became a favorite, and after acceptance by the king was returned to the second house, or

house of concubines, under a new manager, or chamberlain, called Shaashgaz.

Verse 15 tells us that Esther needed but little besides her own personal attractions. Much time, even a whole year, was spent for purification with perfumes and oils, and every known aid to accentuate beauty. She was brought before the king in the seventh year of his reign, the tenth month, which is Tebeth, and the king was greatly pleased with her.

Here begins the evidence of God's foreknowledge, and of his preparation to deliver the Jews, and destroy their enemy, Haman. Ours is a covenant-keeping God. He always looks after his consecrated people. He is continually preparing, even before the events happen, for our deliverance and the destruction of the evil forces which rise up against us. (Isa. 54:17) Verse 17 show the king "loved Esther" above all the other women, and "he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti."

The king's satisfaction and delight in finding a virgin so pleasing to his taste was so great that he made "a great feast" in her honor for his princes and servants; and this time he did not become drunk, nor too merry with wine. Also he made a release; that is, from taxes or military service, or both. Moffatt

(Continued on page 34)

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DAWN PUBLICATIONS

East Rutherford

NEW JERSEY

(Continued from page 31)

renders it, "He granted a holiday to the provinces and made presents right royally."—vs. 18

A new paragraph begins here. It seems that a second selection of young women was made. Moffatt reads, "It was during a second levy of girls." About this time Mordecai saved the king's life, through word to the king about a conspiracy against him by two trusted chamberlains. Mordecai sent the word through Esther, thus adding to her influence with the king; and Esther reported it to the king in Mordecai's name, thus securing favor for him also. They worked together, and were loyal to each other. This also was of the Lord's influence. Still Esther did not make known her nationality, as there was no need for it.

Chapter Three

Here we are told of the rise to power of Haman. His story shows the spirit of pride developing unchecked in one who is a stranger to God. His exaltation apparently was the preparation by Satan to destroy the people of Israel. These wild, insane orgies of slaughter of the Jews have been recurrent in the history of the Gentiles. The worst of these were in Europe by so-called Christian nations during the Gospel Age, and were evidently repeated efforts by Satan to destroy the Jews as the covenant people of God. But always

there has been a reaction which stopped the carnage before it had destroyed the whole nation. Hitler's name is the blackest in the perpetration of insane mass murders to grasp dominion.

Though these Jews had not availed themselves of the decree of Cyrus to return to Jerusalem and help in the rebuilding of the temple, these experiences under Xerxes evidently led many to return to Jerusalem with Nehemiah under the commission given to him in 454 B. C. Thus God often uses adversity to bring his people back to him. The Jews in Persia were still the covenant people of God, and God loved them and looked after them in mercy. See Lamentations 3:31-34.

King Xerxes gave Haman very high honors and privileges, and commanded his servants to reverence Haman. But Mordecai disregarded the order, giving as a reason that he was a Jew. According to verses 3-5 Haman seems not to have noticed it until it was called to his attention. Then an insane madness seized him, for he planned to punish not only Mordecai but to destroy all his people, the whole Jewish population.

The lies told by Haman to the king were such as to make the Jews seem an utterly worthless and pernicious people, and dangerous. The lies were very like those told by the people of Samaria against the Jews at the

time of Ezra and Nehemiah. See Ezra 4:11-16. Haman promised to pay into the king's treasury ten thousand talents of silver, probably from the booty expected from the slaughter.

Verse 10: The king gave his signet ring to Haman. This gave him full authority, as the king's representative, to carry out his suggestions, and he graciously told Haman that the silver would be Haman's to do with as he wished. Thus the king showed great trust in and esteem for Haman. This ring had the royal seal attached to it, which carried the full power of the empire behind it. Additionally he granted Haman all the property of the Jewish families executed. The lives of the whole Jewish people were given him. This seems incredible, but it is in line with the character of Xerxes as history gives it.

At last Haman ascertained his lucky day by casting lots—probably much like the modern throwing of dice—and it fell on the thirteenth of Adar the twelfth month, for the destruction of the Jews. (vss. 7, 12) Note the cruel, heartless and even mad design to destroy, kill, and cause to perish even the women and children.

The Jews throughout the empire thus had nine to eleven months' warning of the peril which threatened them. Why did they not flee? To flee would be giving public acknowledgment of

their guilt, and would immediately provoke a massacre. Possibly Haman thought of this, and some may have fled, but as a whole the Jews stood their ground, evidently believing some deliverance would come.

But why did Haman give such long notice? Perhaps it was partly to allow time for the decree to reach the utmost limits of the empire; possibly also to strike terror to the hearts of the Jews. Possibly his main wish was to get rid of Mordecai, and flight would serve as well, and would give a proof that Haman was right, and an excuse and provocation for the massacre. The king's command hastened the announcement of the king's decision, and the two sat down to drink, well pleased with their work.

But the people of the capital city, Susa, or Shushan, were perplexed. Susa, the capital of Persia, was the residence of the high-ranking Persians, the families of the nobles. These were Zoroastrians, and would naturally sympathize with the Jews, for they had the records of how God had delivered Daniel from the den of lions, and the three Hebrews from the fiery furnace. But even apart from this, the decree was sufficiently strange and sudden and ominous to perplex thoughtful citizens.

At this point of the story the situation looked as though Satan had triumphed and the Jews would certainly be destroyed,

for the laws of the Medes and Persians could not be altered. No human eye could see any way of escape. But the covenant God of Israel was not asleep. The strange chain of circumstances by which the deliverance of the Jews and the destruction of their enemies was accomplished, is one of the most interesting and astonishing accounts in human history.

Chapter Four

When the news of the decree reached Mordecai he rent his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city streets with a great and bitter cry. It reminds us of the lamentations of Jeremiah when Jerusalem was destroyed. (Lam. 1:11) In every province, when the decree arrived there was great mourning, weeping, wailing, and fasting. Mordecai came even before the king's gateway to the palace, though none could enter the palace clothed in sackcloth. Nothing of an evil omen was ever allowed to obtrude itself into the king's presence, which was the general practice in the East. The reason for it was in the absolute authority of the kings, and their persons were held sacred.

Indirectly the mourning and wailing of Mordecai was reported to Queen Esther. She sent him raiment and asked him to put away the sackcloth, but he would not. So she sent officially through the chamberlain whom the king appointed to look after

Esther's needs, and demanded to know the reason for his behavior. The chamberlain, Hatach, had to go out into the city streets to meet Mordecai, who laid the whole matter before him, showed him a copy of the decree, and told of the money Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasury for the destruction of the Jews.

He asked Hatach to show the decree to Esther and urge her to make supplication to the king to release them from such a doom. But here arose a difficulty which seemingly made it impossible for her to do so. The national law, known to all men, was that none could enter the king's presence, into the inner courts of the palace, without the king's invitation, on penalty of death, except to such as the king would hold out the golden scepter to signify that the caller could come in and make his petition. The reason for this precaution may have been the danger of some disaffected person assassinating the king. Esther stated these rules to Mordecai and said she had not been called by the king for "thirty days."—ch. 4:11

When Esther's answer reached Mordecai he realized the desperation of the situation, but felt sure that God would not allow his people to be destroyed. He sent word to Esther that if she was not willing to risk her life for her people, then deliverance

would come from some other quarter, and she would not only lose the blessing, but could not hope to escape the decree just because she was queen, and thus she, too, would be punished for her failure to act. He suggested that it might be she was raised up to her high position for this very occasion.

Mordecai's confidence should teach us a lesson. Our covenant with God is not merely that we will obey him, but that he will take care of us as his own, and in accord with his promises. So from such records as this we may have full confidence and assurance in his promises for our spiritual interests, and that he is ever watchful over his people, and will never leave us nor forsake us; that he will never forget, nor be taken off his guard.—Matt. 28:20; Ps. 34:19; 91; II Tim. 3:11

So Esther sent her answer to Mordecai that she would take the risk and trust the Lord, but that she and all the Jews in Shushan should fast, neither eat nor drink for three days.

She said that if she perished then she would accept her fate. Mordecai then was content that all would be done that was possible, and the Lord would intervene in his own time and way.

Chapter Five

On the third day from the beginning of the fast the time had come to act. Esther put on her

royal apparel and stood in the "inner court of the king's house," opposite the entry of the throne room "in the royal house." The usual location of the throne in the throne room was such that from the raised position of the dais the king could look out beyond the door into the court.

Seeing Esther, the king extended his golden scepter, indicating that she was granted an audience. Her touching the top of the scepter was an acknowledgment of the king's authority, and a gesture of obedience and submission by Esther. The king offered her anything up to half of his kingdom, showing his appreciation of Esther. Note the gracious expression of the king—"What wilt thou, Queen Esther?"

Esther's wisdom is shown in that she did not ask her petition immediately, but wished to impress the king favorably. She judged that the king would understand that she had a real petition in the background, and that he would recur to it, which he did. She requested the presence of the king and Haman at a banquet which she was preparing. So the king commanded Haman to attend. After the meats were removed, it was customary to continue the banquet with fruits and wine. The king repeated his request for her petition, saying it would be anything up to half of the kingdom. But Esther postponed her petition, and asked both the king and

Haman to another banquet, promising to present her petition then.

This wise delay gave an opportunity for this great honor toward Haman to work on his mind and pride. He rose greatly in his own estimation, thinking that he must really be on the road to greatness to be thus honored by the queen. Pride is thus pictured in effective colors. It blinds the discernment, and often throws caution to the wind. Vanity and pride blind one to any possible warning to take care. Instead of wondering what could be behind such an unusual honor, he gloated in great delight on these favors bestowed on him, but deeply resented the neglect of Mordecai to notice him.

Pride brings resentment because of the failure of another to gratify it. How different is the effect of humility, which leads one to be glad to remain unnoticed, and even to appreciate being checked, lest too great honors should awaken pride. Mordecai did not complain when his saving of the king's life seemed to pass unnoticed. Two strong characters are thus interestingly contrasted.

Haman held himself in check, but was boiling with wrath inside. He called for the advice of friends, and before them he enumerated his honors, his wealth, and his social position, as if to say: "Is not such a man as I

worthy of the respect demanded?" He dwelt on how the king promoted him and advanced him above the servants and even the prince, and how the queen had honored him so conspicuously. But in spite of all this the thing that rankled in his heart was that this one man, a Jew, would not bow the knee. We would think that surely any sensible man would be satisfied with such honors, and not be upset because one man refused to honor him. But not Haman. He is an example of unrestrained pride working out the destruction of its victim.

Haman's friends and his wife urged him to build a gallows seventy-five feet high, and ask the king that the Jew, Mordecai, be thus punished for refusing to obey the king's command: for he refused to acknowledge and bow the knee when the king had commanded all men to honor Haman. Notice the heartlessness of his wife and friends in the advice—"Go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet."

Chapter Six

Meanwhile the all-seeing eye of the Great Judge of all apparently took a hand. His majesty had a sleepless night, and his unavailing efforts to get sleep may have made him wonder if he had neglected to take care of any obligations. So, to refresh his mind he called for the book of records to be read to him. In that day many kings could not read, and

this was left to the professional scribes and priests. Possibly the king wished to think while another read, as is often done, even now.

In the Persian custom, rewards were not always given immediately, but sometimes waited for months, but it was a settled principle in the Persian government that adequate reward always be given. What irony in this situation! Some would ascribe this sequence of events to fate or chance, but as these events are related to the Jewish people, we believe that the Lord directed them, while leaving the actors free.

Just at the instant the king had made the decision to reward the faithfulness of Mordecai in saving his life, he asked who was available to carry it out—who was in the outer court? Haman had just come in to ask the king for the privilege of hanging Mordecai. The king called him in and asked what should be done to the man whom the king delighted to honor. Haman, saturated with pride and vanity, could think of no one but himself that the king would delight to honor. His suggestion showed the deep vanity of his nature; his love of outward show and grandeur. What an empty reward for a real service!

This was his suggestion: "Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal

which is set upon his head: and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honor, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

Very likely the king had been watching Haman and he may have sensed a bit of irony here, as Mordecai's nationality was generally known. (Chapter 3:4, 6) The king commanded very particularly: "Make haste, and take the apparel and horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken."

The king's command was that it be done immediately. "Make haste," and the king must be obeyed! Had Haman been of a worthy character he would have been glad thus to honor a faithful servant; and, had he less pride, the honor he suggested would have been of some real value to the one receiving it. How he must have choked on the words he was commanded to proclaim while leading Mordecai in princely regalia and mounted on the king's own horse, through the streets of the capital city. "Thus it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

The experience must have been humiliating to Haman, but he had

to obey the king's order. Such honors were the highest that could be bestowed on anyone not of the princely blood. Could anything more humiliating for Haman be thought of? No wonder he hung his head in shame as he went homeward, lest any of his friends should meet and recognize him. Such a complete and disastrous reversal! Yet his own mouth had selected the conditions, and his own hand had to carry them out.

When he reached home with his head covered, he told his wife and all his friends what had befallen him. The signs were plain, and his wise men and friends said that if Mordecai was of the seed of the Jews then certainly Haman could not prevail against him, but would surely fall. What was the source of this seeming certainty? The history of Daniel and of the three heroes in the fiery furnace must have been known to them, also a certain fear of the Jews, because of the great deliverance which God had effected for them at different times, was known among all nations. (Deut. 11:25; Joshua 2:9-11) The Gentile nations knew these things then, even as they do now.

Chapter Seven

This chapter opens with the significant word, "So." Note the circumstances: 1. The king, pleased at a most excellent bit of irony or joke upon Haman, accomplishing two things—rewarding a faithful servant and at

the same time cooling the grasping ambitions of an officer of the court. 2. Haman, his pride and self-confidence sorely shattered, greatly perplexed and somewhat fearful. 3. Queen Esther, determined at any cost to save her people, having fasted for three days, yet careful and cautious. A wonderfully dramatic scene! Such forces at battle!

The banquet began. The king repeated his request for her petition. Note the endearing words, "What is thy petition, Queen Esther?" and repeats more earnestly his offer of up to half the kingdom. Note the order of the queen's answer. She asks for her life, thus openly declaring her Jewish nationality, and for her people as a whole. She does not even remotely suggest the king's responsibility for the difficulty, but states the facts of the situation. Calling attention to the thoroughness of the decree, she repeats its exact words—"to be destroyed, to be slain, to perish." She says that if it had been only slavery, or bondage, she could have borne it and said nothing.

What a shock this statement must have been both to Haman and the king! Haman could hardly have suspected that the queen herself was a Jewess, and began to realize into what a dangerous pit his pride and vanity had dragged him. The king could not fail to understand and to realize for the first time that the queen whom he loved was a Jewess. He

realized what an intolerable situation had been created by this decree. His anger began to rise.

Esther suggested to the king that even the payment into the king's treasury of the large amount promised could not offset the damage the king would suffer by the loss of so many industrious subjects. Beginning to realize the author of the difficulty, the king demanded to know who had such a swelling of heart ambitions that he had dared thus to threaten the king's own household.

We can imagine the blazing eyes of the queen as she charged that this wicked Haman was the author of the whole dastardly plot. Haman quailed and cowered before the presence of the king and queen, stunned and speechless. King Xerxes, in his wrath, went out into the garden, overwhelmed with the realization of the trap he was in, and how Haman had used him as a tool to wreak his vengeance on the Jews. The king needed to collect his thoughts, and decide what action should be taken. What an astounding revelation that one of his closest officers had such a traitorous ambition! His rage and suspicion demanded proper satisfaction.

While the king was outside, Haman, in despair and desperation, pale and terrified at the awful pit his unlimited pride and vanity had created, could see nothing but terrible retribution.

In the intensity of his supplication he fell down at the foot of the couch which Esther used at the banquet, to beg for his life. Just at this instant the king returned, having made his decision, full of rage at being so duped by Haman, and found Haman at the foot of the queen's couch. His rage exploded as he accused Haman of not having even decent reverence for the queen's person, "Will he force the queen also before me in the house?" He determined that such a man was not safe to have at the palace, and as the words went out of the king's mouth the attendants covered Haman's head and took him out for execution.

One of the chamberlains who served before the king suggested that the gallows were already erected, the one that Haman had made on his estate for hanging Mordecai. The King thought it would be the most fitting retribution for such conduct, that Haman be hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. "Then was the king's wrath pacified."

So Jehovah, the Almighty Creator, the covenant God of the Jewish people had swiftly rolled back upon Haman's own head the slaughter he had intended for God's people. Likewise the same Jehovah, the fountain of wisdom and justice, love and power, is even now preparing to destroy the enemy, not only of the Jews, but of all mankind, and to break

up his whole household, Satan's empire. It will be accomplished in the final destruction of the armies which rise up against Jerusalem, in the last phase of the battle of Armageddon. It will mean the binding of Satan, and the breaking up of his empire of darkness, cruelty, and selfishness over all mankind. A glorious deliverance for the whole human race, and a declaration of liberty for all men, is just before us!—Isa. 25:6-12; 27:3; 40:28-31; Matt. 21:44

Chapter Eight

"On that day" the king gave Mordecai the place of honor, service, and authority which Haman had so misused. The signet ring which the king had given to Haman, but which had been reclaimed, was now given to Mordecai. The king recognized his merit. No doubt the king was glad to delegate some of his authority, cares, and responsibilities to one who had so proved his loyalty. Esther told the king that Mordecai had been her guardian, and that she was the daughter of Mordecai's uncle. Also the king gave all of Haman's property and household to Esther, and she put Mordecai in charge of it. So now these were under the king's protection and favor, but the decree against the Jews still remained in force, and how was that to be remedied?

Wisely Mordecai left to Esther the interceding for the Jewish

people. He could not act without the king's order, and he would not presume on the king's favor. So once more Esther risked her life in coming before the king without being invited. It was her privilege and duty toward her people, and she was faithful and energetic. She put her whole soul into her effort, and God blessed her work and prospered it. The king was pleased.

Esther fell down at the feet of the king, tearfully pleading with him to reverse the decree against the Jews. She was careful to state that the whole plot was the work of Haman, which was the truth. He had used the king as a tool to get personal vengeance. How could she endure the wholesale slaughter of her people, her own kindred?

The king told her that his signet ring had signed the decree, and according to the laws of the Medes and Persians it could not be reversed. But his sympathy and good will went out to her, for he realized that he had been partly responsible, because he had given Haman the signet ring with full authority to use it as he saw fit. So he suggested that she and Mordecai get together and draw up a second decree, which would give the Jews the privilege of defending themselves. This did not nullify the first decree, but the first decree would ingeniously be offset.

The king's suggestion quick-

ened the inventive faculties of Esther and Mordecai. The old decree was not revoked, but the Jews could stand to their own defense and slay all that opposed them or attacked them, and the king would help them. He realized it would mean civil war in the great cities of his empire. Probably a sense of justice, and of anger at being duped by Haman, prompted the king. So the king's scribes recorded the new decree on the 23rd day of the third month, two months after the issuance of the first decree (chapter 3:12). Sivan corresponds to our May-June, a suitable time for deliverance.

The new decree was sent out under the king's authority and seal, to all the lieutenants, satraps, or governors, of all the provinces (127 of them), and in the language of every people, from India to Ethiopia. It gave the Jews permission to do in their defense all that the first decree gave to their enemies—to destroy, kill, cause to perish, and to take the spoil for themselves. It gave these privileges for the same day mentioned in the first decree, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is Adar.

Great effort was made to hasten the second decree, even to using the king's own horses. The empire post roads were again used, seeing how much depended upon the mandate, and how necessary that all the provincial

governors well comprehended the real wishes of the king (see chapter 6:13). We need not be surprised that all haste was made.

What a relief and cause for deep thankfulness and rejoicing that their fasting and humbling themselves had brought such a wonderful deliverance in answer. Note the expression: "The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor" among the people. Many became Jews. They reasoned that such royal favor as to have issued such a counter decree, must mean that the Jews were in great esteem. Some may have thought it merely good policy, but a fear and respect fell upon all the people. The account says that the Jews even had a feast over it.

Chapter Nine

The record continues that on the day when the enemies of the Jews had hoped to have power over them, contrariwise the Jews had rule over those who hated them. Public sympathy was now more with the Jews, whose favor they sought. From the account it seems that the Jews did not remain on the defensive, but "to lay hand on such as sought their hurt." Their enemies were doubtless well known to them, and the Jews were prepared for the struggle.

The rulers were probably all Persians, all the lieutenants, deputies, and officers, and helped the Jews, for the fear of Morde-

cai fell on them. A change seemed to be in the very atmosphere. Mordecai became great in the king's household, and his influence increased till his fame went out abroad to all parts of the empire. Evidently the king found him trustworthy and capable, and so delegated more of the authority and business of the empire to him.

In Shushan, the palace, there fell 500 of the Jews' enemies. Probably the whole of the upper city or fort is meant. The real Persians, who formed the standing army, and kept the empire in order, were at the disposal of the governors of the provinces. These all helped the Jews. The enemies were almost entirely among the idolatrous people of the various subject nations, for whose lives neither the king nor the Persians cared greatly.

In the lower city, which lay west of the town, and of about the same size, the next day the Jews slew 300 men, but on the spoil they laid not a hand, wherein they showed great restraint and wisdom, as legally they could have taken it. (ch. 9:13-15) And throughout the empire they refrained from this, to show to the public and to the king that all they wanted was justice, freedom to pursue their calling in life, and security.

So this great deliverance was accomplished. The enemy had plotted to destroy the Jewish

people, but through fasting and self-denial for three days, the deliverance had come about in such a way as not only to deliver the Jews, but stamp and publish the occurrence as a notice to all peoples that the covenant God of the Jews was a living and powerful deliverer, and spread fear of him among all people.

But the world quickly forgets, and new devices and plots continue to arise. God permits some of them as punishments upon the Jews for their disobedience, but he sees to it that the Jews as a nation are not destroyed. Repeatedly, during the recent half century, the Gentiles under Hitler and others have plotted to destroy the Jews, but God has delivered them in the face of the opposition.

One more great tribulation from the Gentiles is to be permitted to come upon them. Out of this God has promised to deliver them with such a complete and emphatic deliverance as shall make all nations realize that God's favor has returned to them in full, and this will be the beginning of the blessing of all nations, until there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are the sons of God on the human plane, in loving helpfulness and co-operation.

The Jews rejoiced with a great feast on the 14th of the month Adar, and in their rejoicing sent portions one to another, and es-

pecially to the poor. They rested on the 15th day. In the country districts they made the 14th an annual feast day. So, as related in verses 20-24, Mordecai sent out word that the 14th and 15th days should be observed annually in commemoration of their deliverance.

Note the expression in verse 22—"The month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day." It is like Psalm 30: 5—"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." It calls our attention to the millennial morning, the time of great deliverance for all mankind from the efforts of Satan and his sons to destroy the human race. God will wipe away the tears from off all faces, and all evil will be restrained.—Isa. 25:6-10; Rev. 21:4

The Jews named these days "the days of Purim," after the word *pur*, or lot, because Haman had cast lots to destroy the Jewish people, and the lot fell on this thirteenth day of Adar. Esther and Mordecai wrote out the manifesto as a law, and sent it to all the provinces in the king's name, that the Jews shall observe these days unto all generations.

Chapter Ten

The tribute referred to in verse 1 was probably made to reimburse the national treasury

for the disastrous war against the Greeks. This chapter is a very fitting close to the inspiring story of God's deliverance of his people, the greatness of Mordecai, and the peace of God's people. It should increase our faith now, when the enemy seems to be coming in as a flood and overwhelming the hopes for peace and prosperity which for centuries have been the desire of mankind. The restraints of law and order are breaking down under the pressure of evil influences.

But we know that in this situation also the wisdom of the Almighty will know how and when to bring order out of the confusion. The prophecies indicate that God will allow Satan and his servants to give such an exhibition of themselves and their ways as to revolt all the decent of mankind, and teach them all the danger of admitting even a thought of selfishness and disobedience in any direction, for such will certainly lead to misery and death.

Let us, then, learn the message of the Book of Esther; that God will in the proper time and way bring deliverance to all those who trust in him, that all evil will be destroyed, and mankind delivered from sin's degrading, blinding and destroying influence, into everlasting freedom, happiness, and fellowship with our Creator.—Contributed

"I Have Learned"

THESE words are part of Paul's letter to the Philippians. He writes in chapter 4, verse 11: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content." Many of the experiences of life would be completely wasted if we learned nothing from them, and Paul's words here represent a high standard indeed, for he says not only that life's experiences have taught him something, but "I have learned, . . . to be content."

How many of us can say we are perfectly content? Often things come into our lives which disturb the equanimity which should be there. Paul in I Timothy, chapter 6, deals with some such situations. The chapter begins by addressing the "servants [or, as another translation says, 'Christian slaves'] as are under the yoke." These were obviously comparing their lot with that of their masters, for verse 9 says, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts," while verse 6 says, "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

A portion of our well-known "Morning Resolve" reads, "I will

seek not only to be pure in heart, but to repel all anxiety, all discontent, all discouragement. I will neither murmur nor repine at what the Lord's providence may permit, because 'faith can firmly trust Him, come what may.'"

When the Apostle Paul wrote that he had learned in every state to be content, he was in prison, chained between two Roman soldiers, awaiting an unjust trial which might mean losing life itself. He was writing with gratitude to his beloved Philippian brethren who had sent a gift to him, but he was careful to explain that he was not in need, as "I know both how to live in straitened circumstances and how to live amid abundance. I am fully initiated into all the secrets both of fulness and of hunger, of abundance and of want. I have strength for anything through Him who gives me power." (Phil. 4:12, 13, Weymouth) This means that he was learning well his lessons in the school of Christ. It has been said, "What a wonderful school God keeps; what an excellent syllabus he has arranged; how incomparable is the education he provides."

Paul was no stranger to learning. Acts 22:3 reads, "I am verily

a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers." But the lessons he was then learning by the experiences through which he was passing bore no resemblance to the teachings of Gamaliel, or to the law of the fathers. The providences of God in his life were the fulfilment of the words of the Lord to Ananias concerning him, as recorded in Acts 9:16, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

When Paul wrote the epistle to the Philippians many of the lessons of his Christian life were behind him, and he could write of his entire confidence in God. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [margin, or, finish] it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6) The cause of his content was not the expectation that God would deliver him from all difficulties, trials, and suffering, because he well knew, as shown in Acts 20: 23, 24, margin, that "the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions wait for me," but, he added, "none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy."

This does not mean that he rejoiced, or found contentment

in suffering, but it was the knowledge that the Lord was standing by and strengthening him that lifted him above all earthly suffering. This is shown by II Timothy 4:17, 18, wherein he wrote, "The Lord stood with me, and strengtheneth me; . . . the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." This was his answer to loneliness: "The Lord stood with me." In II Timothy 4:10 we read, "Demas hath forsaken me"; in verse 14, "Alexander . . . did me much evil," and in verse 16, "No man stood with me, but all forsook me," but verse 17 says, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me."

Not only did Paul express to the Philippians his own confidence, but he encouraged them, and us, to rest content in the knowledge of our Father's overruling providence in our lives by writing, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:19) What a wonderful thing it is thus to rest in the providences of God! This blessed contentment is expressed in Lamentations 3:26: "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."

If we turn to II Timothy 3:7 we find a contrast to this wholesome learning, for there we are told of some who are ever learning, and never coming to a knowl-

edge of the truth. Paul likens these to the two men who withstood Moses, the servant of the Lord, and continues in verse 8 to explain that as these men resisted Moses, "so do these also resist the truth."

That some are ever learning, yet never coming to a knowledge of the truth, shows us that there are many things to which we could apply our minds which might come under the heading of learning, but would not contribute to our better understanding of God's plan, and would only confuse the mind or even positively drive us in the opposite direction. We have only to listen to some of the talks given on the radio by men of undoubted learning to realize that they are at complete variance with the teachings of the Word of God.

Paul wrote in II Timothy 3:13, "Seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived," but he adds the admonition in the next verse, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." How true is the statement of I Corinthians 1: 21: "The world by wisdom knew not God."

The Scriptures tell us that our Lord Jesus "learned." Hebrews 5:8 reads, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." He had always been perfect and obedient to the Father under

favourable conditions, but now he learned what it meant to be obedient under the most adverse conditions, and being thus tested he became worthy of the highest honour. The next verse tells us that because of this learning, "being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Verse 10 reads, "Called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec." As shown in the earlier verses of this chapter, the work of the priest is to offer to God gifts and sacrifices for sins, and he is one who can (as a result of his experiences, his fitness, his learning) "have compassion on the ignorant." Jesus therefore became that sympathetic, understanding High Priest who is able to save "to the uttermost [those] that come unto God by him." (Heb. 7:25) Hebrews 8: 12 reads, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Often, after a scholar has graduated he becomes a teacher, and thus the process of learning continues. Jesus occupied this position in much of his life's work here on earth. Nicodemus, addressing him as "Rabbi" said, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God." (John 3:2) In John 1:37,38 we read that two of John the Baptist's disciples said to Jesus, "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" Young's Concordance tells us that the term "Rabbi" means "teacher."

Many scriptures tell of Jesus' work of teaching. For example, "He taught them as one having authority" (Matt. 7:29) "He departed thence to teach and to preach." (Matt. 11:1) "The elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching." (Matt. 21:23) "These things" said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum." (John 6:59) This work of teaching his disciples was a burden which our dear Lord had to bear in addition to his great work as the sin-bearer, for, as the prophet says in Isaiah 53:6, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

In the disciples' hour of trial and sorrow he was unmindful of his own sufferings, and thought of their well-being, saying, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: . . . I go to prepare a place for you."—John 14:1, 2

In their learning the disciples often made mistakes, and sometimes thought they knew better than their teacher. One such case is recorded in Matthew 16:21, 22. Jesus began to show them that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. But Peter thought he knew better. He would not let this happen to his Lord, and he said, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."

Jesus had to tell Peter that he

was using purely human reasoning which was not in harmony with the plan of God, saying, "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of man." (Matt. 16:23) A little later, after Jesus had spoken to his disciples about his imminent departure, Peter responded, "I will lay down my life for thy sake." But Jesus, who knew his pupil better than Peter knew himself, said, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? . . . I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice."—John 13:37, 38

There are opportune times and inopportune times for telling certain truths. Sometimes a teacher has to withhold some things for awhile. The wise man in Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." This was so with our Lord, and the time came when he had to tell his disciples that persecution awaited them. "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." (John 16:2) He told them this that they should not be stumbled (John 16:1), and he explained why he had not told them earlier, saying, "These things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you," and he added, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."—John 16:4, 12

What a loving, patient teacher

Jesus was, leading his disciples step by step, and introducing these sad truths only when it was necessary, and as they could bear them! From this they, and we, learn the wonderful lesson of his great love for his own. John 13:34 reads, "As I have loved you, . . . love one another." Very imperfectly have the disciples of the Master learned that love; yet, wherever the true Gospel has gone, a wave of tenderness has rolled.

Some of our Lord's farewell teachings came in answer to his disciples' questions. Peter asked him, "Lord, whither goest thou?" Jesus told him that where he was going Peter could not follow him at that time, but he would follow him afterwards. (John 13:36) It was a great part of Peter's education to learn what it meant to be a footstep follower of the Lord.

Thomas also had a question to ask. Jesus had said, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," but Thomas was slow to comprehend, and he asked, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" We are glad that Thomas asked this, for it brought the wonderful answer that Jesus himself is the way, the truth, and the life.—John 14:4-6

To know Christ is to know the way to heaven and eternal life; to have Christ as Saviour, friend, and Lord is to be led by him through even the darkest way,

home. Not only is he the door, or gate, which opens into the way, but he is the way. He is the guide in the way in which he has gone himself. He is the truth about the way, and the life which inspires us in the way; we need only to abide in him.

Philip heard the Lord's reply to Thomas, and he had something to ask. The words of Jesus about knowing and seeing the Father caught his ear, and he said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." (John 14:8) Jesus was wonderfully patient with the dulness of his disciples, but these words seemed to pain him, for it showed how little Philip had learned through his three years of discipleship. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" (Verse 9) The Lord explained that he had been showing him the Father all the time.

Judas (not Iscariot) also had a question. He could not understand in what special and exclusive way Jesus could manifest himself to his own, and not to the world. Perhaps he expected some setting apart of Christ's followers like that which had fenced off Israel from other nations, but Jesus showed that the condition was love. "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." It would be a spiritual indwelling.—John 14:22, 23

After these questions of his disciples had been answered, Jesus made some bequests to his friends, distributing among them his possessions. We might ask, what had he to leave? True, he had no houses or lands, no gold or silver. While he was on the cross the soldiers divided his clothes among themselves. Yet there are real possessions besides money and estates. One may have won the honour of a noble name which he may bequeath to his family, or one may have acquired power which he may transmit.

It seemed that Jesus had neither name nor power to leave to his friends except the name, Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit. The next day he was to be crucified, but he quietly made his bequests, fully conscious that he had possessions that were far greater than any earthly treasure. One of these bequests was peace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." (John 14:27) His peace is not merely ease—the absence of strife and struggle—it is something that lives in the midst of the fiercest strife and struggle. Jesus knew not the world's peace of ease and quiet, but he had learned the secret of heart quietness which the world could not disturb, and this he left to his disciples, making them richer than if he had given them all the world's wealth.

Another of the possessions which he bequeathed was his joy.

We think of Jesus as a man of sorrows, and we may ask what joy had he to give? It seems a strange time for him to speak of his joy, for in another hour he was to be in the midst of the Gethsemane anguish, and the next day he was to be crucified. Yet in his heart was joy. "For the joy that was set before him [he] endured the cross, despising the shame."—Heb. 12:2

This joy also Jesus bequeathed to his disciples. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you." (John 15:11) They really received this legacy. The world wondered at the strange secret of joy these men had when they went out into the world; they sang songs in the darkest night, and their faces shone as with a holy light in the deepest sorrow. Christ's joy was indeed fulfilled in them.

The Lord also put within the reach of his followers the whole of his inheritance. He prayed, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." (John 17:24) "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." (John 17:22) He told them that they should have power to do the works they had seen him do, and even greater works than these (in the kingdom) and that whatsoever they should ask in his name, the Father would give it to them. The whole power of his name should thus be theirs.—John 14:12, 13

These are mere suggestions of

the gifts which Jesus left to his dear disciples when he went away; his peace, his joy, and the treasures of his inheritance. He had blessed them in wonderful ways as he taught them during his life, but the best and the richest things of his love were kept to the last, and given only after he was gone. Indeed the best things were given through his death, and could be given in no other way.

Other men may live to do good, knowing that their plans must be finished while life lasts; but the plan of God for our Lord centered in his death. The great gifts to his followers would come as a result of his dying. He must be lifted up in order to draw all men to him. He must shed his blood that remission of sins might come, and it was expedient for him to go away so that the comforter might come.

There was one other act performed by Jesus after he had made his bequests. He lifted up his eyes and prayed to his Father, and his pleading was full of deep and tender love. While he had been with his disciples Jesus had kept them in the shelter of his own strength; none of them had been lost—so faithful had been his guardianship over them—none but the son of perdition. He had guarded them through all the dangers up to the present time, but he was about to leave them; he knew they must encounter great dangers and would not have him to protect them.

The form of his intercession for them, as recorded in John the 17th chapter, is worthy of special notice.

Jesus did not ask that his disciples should be taken out of the world, although this might have seemed the way of tenderest love. It is not usually God's way, to take us out of trouble. These followers of Jesus had been trained to be his witnesses, to represent him when he had gone away. They must, therefore, stay in the world, whatever the dangers might be. Our Lord's prayer was that they should be kept from the evil. They were not to be kept from persecution, from earthly suffering and loss, from pain or sorrow. These are not the evils from which our lives need to be guarded.

The real evil is sin. Our danger in trouble or adversity is not that we may suffer, but that we may sin. If enemies wrong or injure us, the peril is not that they may cause us to suffer injustice, but that in our suffering we may lose the love out of our heart, and grow angry or become bitter. In time of sickness, trial, or bereavement, that which we should fear is not the illness or the sorrow, but that we shall not keep sweet, with the peace of God in our heart.

There was a pleading also that the disciples might be led into complete consecration; that they might be prepared to go out for their Master, to be as he had been

in the world. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." (John 17:18) This was not a prayer for a path of roses; rather it was for a cross, the utter devotion of their lives to God. Before the prayer was closed came that final wish that when their work on earth was done they may "be with me where I am that they may behold my glory."—John 17:24

It must be manifest that all this valuable learning is not to be wasted; it is surely to some purpose. There is intense ignorance in the world concerning God's plan, "Darkness shall cover

the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Isa. 60:2, 3) Rotherham translates part of this passage, "Darkness covereth the earth, and deep gloom the peoples, . . . so shall nations come to thy light."

These are some of the things we have learned in the school of Christ, and we pray for the time when all mankind, for whom Christ died, shall come to a knowledge of the truth, and be blessed by his glorious kingdom!

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The Providences of God

THE providences of God in the lives of his dedicated people are a powerful stimulus to faith and an aid to faithfulness. We should be able to observe these providences not only in our own lives, but to some extent also in the consecrated lives of others who are laying down their lives in God's service. How encouraging it is to note the wonderful manner in which the Lord directed the affairs of his people during the days of the Early Church! While many outstanding miracles were performed during that short period in the church's history, divine providences in the lives of his people today, individually and collectively, are also frequently beyond our ability to understand.

We can well imagine the feelings of the apostles and their associates after Jesus, appearing to them for the last time, was taken up into heaven. They had been stunned by the crucifixion of their Master; and while he had appeared to them several times after his resurrection, he had given them no clear indication of what their role in the divine plan, and particularly in his service, was now to be. They continued to think of him as the Messiah, and the Messiah, they believed, would deliver Israel from her yoke of bondage, and restore the independence of the nation and its government which had been lost so long before, when King Zedekiah was overthrown by the Babylonians.

So when Jesus appeared to them on the Mount of Olives they made bold to ask, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—vss. 7, 8

Thus Jesus made the matter of time very indefinite so far as the disciples' understanding was concerned, emphasizing that the Heavenly Father was controlling the time features of his plan. This did not imply that Jesus' followers would never be given any information concerning the time elements of the plan of God. Jesus simply said that the Father was maintaining control; that he had put "the times" and "the seasons" in his own hands. In "due time," and in keeping with his promises, the Father revealed some of the times and seasons to his people. We rejoice in this, but at the same time realize that there is much we still do not know about the time elements of the divine plan. We do not know, for example, when the last member of the church will pass beyond the veil.

Instead of revealing to the disciples what they wanted to know concerning the time for the deliverance of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, Jesus gave them a commission to be his witnesses, beginning at Jerusalem, and extending their activities to "the uttermost part of the earth." We think that in this we have a good lesson for ourselves. We could easily be overly concerned as to just when the kingdom will be fully established. What might seem to us as a delay could be discouraging. But we should remember that now, even as in those early days, we, too, have a commission to witness for Jesus, and for the Gospel of the kingdom which he introduced. Let us rejoice in this great privilege while we wait patiently for the further unfolding and development of the divine plan.

Jesus instructed his disciples to tarry at Jerusalem until they received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but we do not need to wait for the Holy Spirit. That one anointing of the Spirit which came upon the church at Pentecost has reached down to our day, and every consecrated follower of the Master receives of its inspiration, its power, and its authority. So we have the privilege of doing now what our hands find to do, witnessing individually as the providences of the Lord open doors of opportunity, or in association with others in a general proclamation of the Gospel.

The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was a wonderful experience for those waiting disciples. In just a few hours, three

thousand were converted by its power as expressed through the heart-pricking sermon which Peter preached. This was an outstanding providence of God. This was not to be repeated, yet all those who have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit which began there have been marvelously blessed in their service of the Lord.

Every detail of a Christian's life is guided by the Lord, and to study our experiences with this thought in mind leads to rich blessings. We may seldom see outstanding results from our witness work. The Lord may be testing our faith and our patience; but if we recognize this, even our disappointments are accepted as the providences of God, and we are able to rejoice in spite of them. Often we are able to discern the meaning of God's providences in our lives, but many times we cannot, at least at the time. Later, when the sunshine of his smile reveals the meaning of disappointments which were so difficult to bear, we rejoice the more, realizing anew that his loving hand is holding ours, and that we can walk safely with him, even in the dark.

The Work Progresses

How wonderfully the Lord has blessed the co-operative efforts of his people during the harvest period at this end of the age! We haven't had a Pentecostal experience as did those who were waiting in the upper room in Jerusalem, but we have had the benefit of the printing press, the radio, television, and motion pictures. Is it not by the providences of God that these modern media of mass communication have been made available to the Lord's people? Think of the television stations which are using "The Bible Answers" films, and without charge!

All the circumstances in connection with the work during the last three decades, with which we are particularly acquainted, have manifested the providential hand of the Lord directing the affairs of his people. This has been particularly true with respect to the radio and television work. It is also true in connection with the opportunity the brethren are now enjoying of witnessing at the New York World's Fair. The Lord has not now given his people any indication of how much longer they will remain this side of the veil, but he has given us work

to do, and let us zealously and courageously use these opportunities to his glory.

And speaking of courage, this was one of the characteristics of the apostles, especially after they received the Holy Spirit. It was soon after Pentecost that Peter preached that wonderful sermon concerning "the times of restitution of all things." (Acts 3:12-26) As a result of this sermon Peter and John were brought before certain religious rulers in Jerusalem, and were asked, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" The reference is to the miracle of healing the man who had been lame from his birth. Boldly Peter explained that the man had been healed through the name of Jesus, whom God had raised from the dead. These rulers hated Jesus, and had crucified him, but this mattered not to Peter.

We read concerning this that when the rulers saw the boldness, or courage, of Peter and John, "they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:7-13) The word "boldness" is used in our Common Version. The thought is that they were courageous, not willing to be frightened into compromise when it came to witnessing for Jesus and for the Word of God. And this was one of the outstanding qualifications of Jesus. Oh yes, Jesus was kind, sympathetic, and loving; but Jesus was also courageous—strong in the power of the Holy Spirit with which he was filled.

The religious rulers of Israel had learned that Jesus was courageous. They knew of his firm stand before the high priest, and of his acknowledgment that he was the Son of God even though he knew that this would lead to his condemnation. They knew also of his testimony before Pilate in which he declared that he was born to be a king, realizing that Pilate would have him put to death for this "confession." And now, after Pentecost, these same rulers perceived that Peter and John were just like Jesus in this respect because they had been with him. Yes, they had learned from Jesus that the will of the Heavenly Father comes ahead of the edicts of men.

Have we also been with Jesus and learned to be courageous as he was? This does not mean that we are to be rude in our presentation of the kingdom Gospel. Jesus was never rude. He was always kind and dignified, and gentle, but courageous. He

spoke the truth without compromise regardless of what the cost might be to him. Just now the feelings of the people against the truth are not so intense as they once were. However, even now the truth is not popular, and it could be a temptation to withhold the message from our neighbors lest they look upon us as being different from other people. But let us remember that the friendship of the world is enmity with God, and be courageous in bearing witness to the truth regardless of the cost, but always with love and kindness.

Another Providence

Another of the wonderful providences of God brought to our attention in the Book of Acts is in connection with Cornelius, the first Gentile convert. In this also we see the "due time" element of the divine plan in operation. This took place at the full end of the seventieth symbolic week of Daniel's prophecy. (Dan. 9:23-27) Daniel's prophecy reveals that in the midst, or middle, of this seventieth week the Messiah would be "cut off," but "not for himself"—he would die for the sins of the whole world. After Jesus death there would therefore remain three and one-half symbolic days—three and one-half years—during which Jehovah's exclusive covenant with Israel would be confirmed, or continued.

Then it would be the due time in the plan of God for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles, and Cornelius was selected to be the first one to receive it. The circumstances of Cornelius' conversion were unusual, and by divine arrangement. He was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." (Acts 10:2) He had a vision "evidently about the ninth hour of the day." An angel spake to him, and Cornelius asked, "What is it, Lord? And he [the angel] said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."—vss. 3-6

Toward evening of the next day, when messengers were on their way to visit Peter, he went to the roof of Simon, his host, to pray. He became hungry, but the evening meal was

not ready, so he fell asleep and into a trance. In this vision he saw a sheet, folded to form a basket, let down from heaven "wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air." Then "there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat." Peter replied, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." Then the voice "spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." This was done again a second and a third time. —vss. 9-16

The significance of this experience was not clear to Peter until he returned with the messengers sent by Cornelius, and in response to his preaching witnessed the repentance and conversion of this Gentile and his "kinsmen and near friends," and saw the evidence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them. (vss. 17-38) Peter now perceived that it was God's time for the "unclean" Gentiles, who responded to the Gospel call, to come into the church and to receive the blessings and favors of the Lord which previously had been confined to the natural descendants of Abraham. "Of a truth," Peter said, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."—vs. 34

It was difficult for the Jewish believers to become reconciled to this broadened aspect of the divine call to joint-heirship with Christ. The miraculous providences of God had revealed the matter to Peter. Later he attended an apostolic conference at Jerusalem, where he related his experience in connection with Cornelius, and they also were helped to see this broader aspect of the divine plan. We today are not confronted with this problem, but is it not true that from time to time each one of us, individually, has difficulties grasping some one or more aspects of the truth, and that the Lord permits certain experiences to come into our lives which help us to understand his ways more clearly?

All of God's dealings with his people are important. There are no little things with him. Each of his children is dear to his heart, and he sees to it that each one is brought into contact with exactly the right experiences to guide and to help in every time of need. Do we have problems, unanswered questions, perhaps, concerning what the Lord's will might be in circumstances

which may be confronting us? Where and how does the Lord furnish the solution to our problems, the answers to our questions?

Basically, of course, the Word of the Lord is the true source of all information pertaining to the divine will, but God's providences play a very important role in calling our attention to just the right portions of his Word to supply our particular needs from day to day. Perhaps we should not say that we "just happened" to remember a certain text of Scripture, or that Brother Jones "happened" to call our attention to just the text that we needed to help us over our difficulty. Let us, rather, rejoice in the fact that God is directing in these matters, just as he directed Peter to visit Cornelius. Nothing "just happens" in the experiences of any of the Lord's consecrated people.

Stephen Stoned

Jesus had forewarned his disciples that as his witnesses they would encounter much opposition from the world. He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) Brethren in the Early Church experienced much opposition from the world. The first disciple actually to give his life for the messianic cause was Stephen. He was taken before the Jewish Sanhedrin for trial, where he presented a brilliant oration in which he outlined the messianic hopes of Israel. But Stephen's testimony served merely to make his persecutors more bitter against him, and he was stoned to death.—Acts, ch. 7

The Lord strengthened Stephen for this difficult experience by favoring him with a vision. Stephen said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." (vs. 56) This must have given Stephen additional assurance that Jesus was the Messiah of promise, and that death in his cause would ultimately lead to joint-heirship with him in his kingdom.

The Lord has favored us with the "vision" of present truth. In this vision we recognize the second presence of the Lord and are assured of the near establishment of his kingdom. What a marvelous vision this has been! The vision of present truth is

not a momentary thing. Rather, if we are faithful to it, this vision remains with us, and we are privileged to look upon it, and to study its details throughout all the years of our earthly pilgrimage.

The special vision given to Stephen strengthened him to face his persecutors, and the vision of present truth gives us strength to continue walking in the footsteps of the Master, and will continue to do so until we have reached the end of the way, which will be at death. But every day there are trials and difficulties to face, and these might well lead to discouragement and a cooling of our zeal if we do not continually make use of the Lord's provision to give us strength, which, primarily, is through the truth. So, as Stephen in vision saw the Lord, and was strengthened, may we keep turning to the vision of present truth which has revealed the Lord to us, and from what we understand and appreciate of its message let us receive strength and courage for every experience which the Lord, in his providence, sees is good for us.

What to Expect

We are not to expect that the Lord will deliver us from all trouble. He favored Stephen with a vision, but allowed him to be stoned to death. To follow in Jesus' footsteps means suffering, and finally death. There are times when the providences of the Lord may lift the burden for a time, or provide "a way of escape"; but, generally speaking, what we are to look for in the providences of the Lord is the manner in which he continues to help us bear our burdens.

Let us remember that our loving Heavenly Father, who so wonderfully directed the affairs of his people during the days of the Early Church, is doing the same for us today. He wants us to be active in his service, but may test our faith in connection with the results of our efforts. He wants us to study his Word, and to meet with his people. He wants us to lay down our lives for the brethren. And while we are doing these things, rich will be our blessings if we keep close to him, and observe in all our experiences the marvelous manner in which his providences are surrounding, protecting, and guiding us as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

These speakers are associated with the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their services are furnished free, upon request. Address your request to Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, N. J. A visit will be arranged when possible.

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

OTIS R. BARRALL		Indianapolis, Ind.	24	Victoria, B. C.	12
Pottstown, Pa.	Sept. 27	Muncie, Ind.	25-27	Seattle, Wash.	13, 14
MARSTON M. CHANDLER		Cincinnati, Ohio	28, 29	Bremerton, Wash.	15, 16
Toledo, Ohio	Sept. 1	Dayton, Ohio	30	Tacoma, Wash.	17
Detroit, Mich.	2	L. P. DAVIS		The Dalles, Ore.	18
Saginaw, Mich.	5-7	Toledo, Ohio	Sept. 1	Portland, Ore.	19
I. N. COMPARATO		Akron, Ohio	2	Salem, Ore.	20, 21
Rome, Italy	Aug. 5-7	Pittsburgh, Pa.	3	Lebanon, Ore.	22
Agrigento, Italy	8-10	New York, N. Y.	5-7	Klamath, Falls, Ore.	23
Catania, Italy	15, 16	New Haven, Conn.	8	Redding, Calif.	24
Napoli, Italy	20-24	Waterbury, Conn.	9	Chico, Calif.	25
Vallo della Lucania, Italy	23	New Bedford, Mass.	10, 11	Sacramento, Calif.	26
Genova, Italy	26, 27	Boston, Mass.	13	San Francisco, Calif.	27, 28
Ventimiglia, Italy	28	New London, Conn.	14	Stockton, Calif.	29
Torino, Italy	29, 30	Paterson, N. J.	15	Sonora, Calif.	30
Milano, Italy	Sept. 1, 2	Rutherford, N. J.	16	PANTEL HATGIS	
JENS COPELAND		Philadelphia, Pa.	18	Crete, Greece	Sept. 1-10
Gary, Ind.	Sept. 1	Washington, D. C.	20	Athens, Greece	16-20
Milwaukee, Wis.	2	West Newton, Pa.	22	LEVI JACOBS	
Minneapolis, Minn.	5-7	Stuebenville, Ohio	23	Bridgeport, Conn.	Sept. 20
St. Joseph, Mo.	9	Columbus, Ohio	24	Wallingford, Conn.	20
Topeka, Kans.	10	Dayton, Ohio	25	G. M. JEUCK	
Kansas City, Mo.	11-13	Cincinnati, Ohio	27	Allentown, Pa.	Sept. 20
Wichita, Kans.	14	Muncie, Ind.	28, 29	GEORGE O. JEUCK	
Oklahoma City, Okla.	15, 16	Indianapolis, Ind.	30	Lynchburg, Va.	Sept. 1
Stigler, Okla.	17	O. D. DEIFER		Richmond, Va.	2
Memphis, Tenn.	18	Catawissa, Pa.	Sept. 13	Washington, D. C.	3
St. Louis, Mo.	20	EARL L. FOWLER		New York, N. Y.	5-7
Zeigler, Ill.	21	Seattle, Wash.	Sept. 5-7	G. F. JUDSON	
New Albany, Ind.	23	Bellingham, Wash.	8	Groton, Conn.	Sept. 20
		New Westminster, B. C.	9	New London, Conn.	20
		Vancouver, B. C.	10		
		Duncan, B. C.	11		

A. H. KRUMPOLT	Spokane, Wash. 2	Tacoma, Wash. 8, 9
Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Sept. 20	Seattle, Wash. 3-7	Onalaska, Wash. 10
R. J. KRUPA	M. C. MITCHELL	The Dalles, Ore. 11, 12
Boston, Mass. Sept. 27	New Haven, Conn. Sept. 27	Clarkston, Wash. 13, 14
L. P. LOOMIS	Waterbury, Conn. 27	Spokane, Wash. 15, 16
Buffalo, N. Y. Aug. 30	C. A. SMITH	Bellingham, Wash. 17
Lockport, N. Y. 31	Baltimore, Md. Sept. 13	Victoria, B. C. 18
Toronto, Ont. Sept. 1	Philadelphia, Pa. 13	Duncan, B. C. 19
London, Ont. 2	RICHARD SURACI	Vancouver, B. C. 20, 21
Chatham, Ont. 3	Hartford, Conn. Sept. 13	New Westminster, B. C. 22
Saginaw, Mich. 5-7	F. S. WASSMANN	Seattle, Wash. 23, 24
Grand Rapids, Mich. 8, 9	Paterson, N. J. Sept. 20	Bremerton, Wash. 25, 26
Jackson, Mich. 10, 11	FRANK J. WEBBER	Portland, Ore. 27
Detroit, Mich. 13	Salem, Ore. Sept. 1	Salem, Ore. 28, 29
Toledo, Ohio 14	Tacoma, Wash. 2	Albany, Ore. 30
Elyria, Ohio 15	Bremerton, Wash. 3	C. R. WEIDA
Akron, Ohio 16	Seattle, Wash. 5-7	Gettysburg, Pa. Sept. 27
Pittsburgh, Pa. 17		Lancaster, Pa. 27
J. Y. MAC AULAY		G. M. WILSON
Calgary, Alta. Sept. 1		Pittsburgh, Pa. Sept. 26, 27

The listings in this schedule have been arranged by local ecclesias co-operating with The Dawn.

JOHN BARACOS	S. W. JEUCK	E. F. LANKFORD
East Liverpool, Ohio Sept. 13	St. Petersburg, Fla. Sept. 13	Monterey, Calif. Sept. 20
FRED J. DARROW	EDMUND M. JEZUIT	D. J. MOREHOUSE
Riverside, Calif. Sept. 20	Aurora, Ill. Sept. 13	Minneapolis, Minn. (Cedar Ave.) Sept. 6
Ontario, Calif. 20	LEONARD JEZUIT	Ccovert, Mich. 13
THOMAS C. FAY	Milwaukee, Wis. Sept. 13	HARRY PASSIOS
Bakersfield, Calif. Sept. 20	RUSSELL L. JURD	Duquesne, Pa. Sept. 6
Tehachapi, Calif. 20	San Luis Obispo, Calif. Sept. 20	G. R. POLLOCK
BRUNO HACK	DANIEL KAZIAK	Fullerton, Calif. Sept. 27
LaSalle, Ill. Sept. 6	Chatham, Ont. Sept. 13	ALBERT SHEPPELBAUM
St. Louis, Mo. 20	Adrian, Mich. 20	Gary, Ind. Sept. 20
		J. I. VAN HORNE
		Washington, Pa. Sept. 20

CONVENTIONS

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

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., September 5-7—I.O.G.T. Hall, 2922 Cedar Ave. Mrs. Edward Borowiec, 224 S. Fifth St., Delano, Minn.

NEW YORK, N. Y., Sept. 5-7—Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, 50th St. and Park Ave. Mr. F. S. Wassmann, 453 W. Saddle River Rd., Upper Saddle River, N. J.

SAGINAW, MICH., Sept. 5-7—YWCA Building, 215 S. Jefferson St. Mrs. C. A. Sundbom, 207 Alice St.

SAN DIEGO, CALIF., Sept. 5-7—Mrs. Gilbert L. Rice, 4005 Olympic St.

SEATTLE, WASH., Sept. 5-7—Norway Center, 300 Third Ave. W. Mrs. John R. Keith, 22515 95th Place W., Edmonds, Wash.

COLUMBUS, OHIO, Sept. 13—Southern Hotel, S. High and E. Main Streets. Mrs. Josephine Ewing, 273 S. Algonquin Ave.

SALEM, ORE., Sept. 20—Four Corners Community Hall. Mrs. James Blackman, 3754 Felton St. S.

DENVER, COLO., Sept. 26, 27—Farmers Union Building Auditorium, 1575 Sherman St. Mrs. Don Spitler, 865 Nickel St., Broomfield, Colo.

PITTSBURGH, PA., Sept. 26, 27—Malta Temple, 100 West North Ave. Mr. Harry Passlos, 137 Creekside Lane, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15237.

CHICAGO, ILL., Sept. 27—Central Masonic Temple, 912 N. LaSalle St. Mr. D. J. Morehouse, 4354 W. Cortez St.

DETROIT, MICH., Sept. 27—McGregor Memorial Building, Second Blvd. and W. Ferry. Mr. Walter Blicharz, 19300 Braile.

***ST. LOUIS, MO., Oct. 3, 4**—Statler Hilton Hotel, Ninth and Washington Ave. Mr. W. A. Pardue, 6829 St. Charles Rd.

AGAWAM, MASS., Oct. 4—Benjamin Phelps School, Corner of Main and School Streets. Mrs. Alex Gonzewski, N. Grand St., W. Suffield, Conn.

PIQUA, OHIO, Oct. 4

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH., Oct. 10, 11—Pantlind Hotel, 187 Monroe N. W. Mrs. Bernard Fuerst, 804 Conger St. N. E.

CINCINNATI, OHIO, Oct. 17, 18

STOCKTON, CALIF., Nov. 14, 15

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That the church is "the temple of the living God"—peculiarly "his workmanship"; that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel age—ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the chief corner stone of this temple through which, when finished, God's blessings shall come "to all people," and they find access to him.—1 Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:21-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29

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

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

That the hope of the church is that she may be like her Lord, "see him as he is," be a "partaker of the divine nature," and share his glory as his joint-heir.—1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; 11 Pet. 1:4

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

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