



*A SAVIOR BORN
WHO IS WORTHY?
THE VOICE OF GOD*

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

IT IS desired to make the listing of speakers' appointments a greater service to the friends generally, and for this reason we are undertaking to list the addresses where the lectures are to be given, as well as the hour of the meetings. It is not possible, of course, to furnish this information in every instance. We will be glad however, if the classes being served by visiting speakers will, if they so desire, forward the necessary information to us so that in future issues we can give a fuller listing of the time and place of meeting.

* * *

BROTHER FRED BRIGHT

Paterson, N. J., Y. M. C. A., Ward & Prince, 3 P. M. Dec. 10
 Brooklyn, N. Y., 109 Remsen Street, 3 P. M. 17
 Allentown, Pa., P. O. S. A., 38 S. 5th Street 24
 Brooklyn, N. Y. (Convention*) 31

BROTHER N. CONSTANT

Philadelphia, Pa., Y. W. C. A., 18th & Arch, 3 P. M. Dec. 31

BROTHER J. L. COOKE

Brooklyn, N. Y. (Convention*) Dec. 31

BROTHER D. DINWOODIE

Paterson, N. J., Y. M. C. A., Ward & Prince, 3 P. M. Dec. 17

BROTHER EDWARD FAY

New Haven, Conn., 19 Elm St., 10:30 A. M. Dec. 3
 New London, Conn., Y. M. C. A., 3 P. M. 3
 Philadelphia, Pa., Y. W. C. A., 18th & Arch Sts., 3 P. M. 17

BROTHER A. C. FREY

Brooklyn, N. Y. (Convention*) Dec. 31

BROTHER W. J. HOLLISTER

Wilmington, Del. Dec. 17

BROTHER G. S. KENDALL

Pittsburgh, Pa., 610 Arch St., N. S., 3 & 7:45 P. M. Dec. 10

BROTHER PETER KOLLIMAN

Lancaster, Pa. Dec. 10

BROTHER OSCAR MAGNUSON

Reading, Pa., Stauffer's Hall, 6th & Franklin Sts. Dec. 3
 Jersey City, N. J. (Convention*) 10
 New Haven, Conn., 19 Elm St., 10:30 & 3 P. M. 17
 Brooklyn, N. Y., 109 Remsen Street, 3 P. M. 24
 Pittsburgh, Pa. 27
 Indianapolis, Ind. 29
 Chicago, Ill. (Convention*) Dec. 30-Jan. 1

BROTHER EDWARD MAURER

East Liverpool, Pa. Dec. 10

BROTHER E. R. MC JILTON

Duquesne, Pa. Dec. 8

BROTHER M. C. MITCHELL

Baltimore, Md., 4 W. Eager St., 3 P. M. Dec. 17
 Brooklyn, N. Y. (Convention*) 31

BROTHER A. L. MUIR

Spokane, Wash. Dec. 2, 3
 Lynden, Wash. 5, 6
 Everett, Wash. 7
 Tacoma, Wash. 8-12
 Montesano, Wash. 13
 Seattle, Wash. 14
 Victoria, B. C. 15-17
 Vancouver, B. C. 18, 19
 Cloverdale, B. C. 20
 Mission, B. C. 21, 22
 Vancouver, B. C. 23, 24
 Bellingham, Wash. 26, 27
 Seattle, Wash. (Convention*) Dec. 28-Jan. 1
 Portland, Oregon 2-4
 Salem, Oregon 5
 Lebanon, Oregon 6
 Medford, Oregon 7

BROTHER F. H. MUNDELL

Brooklyn, N. Y., 109 Remsen St., 3 P. M. Dec. 3

BROTHER ROBERT E. NASH

Santa Ana, Calif., 417 S. Bristol, 10:30 A. M. Dec. 17

BROTHER G. R. POLLOCK

Mentone, Calif., 1352 Olivine St., 2:30 P. M. Dec. 10

BROTHER GEORGE M. WILSON

Chicago, Ill. (Convention*) Dec. 30-Jan. 1

BROTHER W. N. WOODWORTH

Baltimore, Md., 4 W. Eager St., 3 P. M. Dec. 3
 Jersey City, N. J. (Convention*) 10
 Schenectady, N. Y. (Convention*) 17
 Paterson, N. J., Y. M. C. A., Prince & Ward Sts., 3 P. M. 24
 Chicago, Ill. (Convention*) Dec. 30-Jan. 1

BROTHER C. W. ZAHNOW

Hawthorne, Calif., 13110 Doty Ave., 7:45 P. M. Dec. 17
 (For other December appointments address: Mr. A. W. Abrahamsen, 8414 Second Avenue, Inglewood, Calif.)

(*See convention announcements on page 33)

Tabernacle Shadows

An increasing number of friends are again taking up a study of the types and shadows of the tabernacle and its services; and are reporting the receiving of rich blessings as a result. The Tabernacle Shadow booklet has been republished in order to supply the needs of the brethren who are desirous of going over these vital and fundamental truths of the divine plan again.

The new edition of Tabernacle Shadows has included with it, bound under the same cover for convenience, the original Berean Questions on the booklet. The questions have been found to be very helpful in the study of the types, particularly in classes. The new edition, including the questions, is priced at 25 cents each, in any quantity.

Divine Plan Charts

We are pleased to announce that Divine Plan charts are now available for all who may desire them. These charts are exact duplicates of the small chart appearing in the "The Divine Plan of the Ages." The lines and lettering are heavily drawn making them easy to read at a distance. The charts are 42 inches in length, which is a very suitable size for home or small auditorium. They are blueprinted on heavy, durable cloth—a kind of canvass texture—and can be either folded or rolled. The price is \$2.75 each, postpaid to any address. No reduction for quantities.

The Dawn 136 Fulton St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

The DAWN

A Herald of Christ's Presence

Vol. 8, No. 3

DECEMBER 1939

One Dollar a Year

THIS MONTH

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THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Voice of God—Is there any positive manner by which a Christian today may know that God has spoken to him through the Bible? This article shows that there is and that through the message of Present Truth many have heard the Lord's voice in these last days. 9

Suffering with Christ—Short and to the point, dealing with the privilege the Christian has of sharing in the sufferings of the Christ. 13

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* * *

VICTORY THROUGH DECISION AND TRIAL

This short article discusses the importance of prompt acts of obedience once the divine will is clearly discerned, showing that each definite and prompt decision to take the proper steps in obedience, strengthens the Christian's character, and thus prepares for further victories.

* * *

OUR GLORIOUS HOPE

This lesson is based on the words of the apostle found in Ephesians 1:18. It shows how much more comprehensive and meaningful the Christian life and the Christian hope are than many in the nominal church have supposed. The article is calculated to enhance our appreciation of the divine plan, and the part the church plays in that plan.

NEWS and VIEWS

PROMISES—BROKEN AND UNBROKEN

THE illegal use of a new type of mines by Germany, and Great Britain's retaliation by announcing a plan to further blockade Germany by seizing her exports consigned to neutral nations and being carried in neutral vessels, represents another breakdown of law by which all civilized nations have agreed to be governed, even in time of war. This further breaking of promises by powerful nations is but another severed link in a long chain of broken promises—a chain which no longer, indeed, is able to hold the nations of earth within the bounds of anything that resembles civilized practices. This breakdown of law within and among the nations, causing both the rulers and the ruled to lose faith in the promises and covenants of their fellowmen, is one of the potent factors in bringing the world to its present pitiful plight.

The breaking of promises and treaties, beginning particularly in 1914, has not been limited to one nation, nor to one group of nations; although some doubtless have been more brazen and cruel in their tearing up of "scraps of paper" than others. The result of broken promises is to bring added sufferings to the masses of the people. Sometimes the suffering is inflicted by the atrocities of war; other times by the slower methods of economic hardships and perhaps strangulation. In any case the people suffer; the best proof of which is the manner in which the whole debacle of broken promises during the last quarter of a century has added up to produce the tragic situation that confronts civilization today.

Doubtless nearly everybody remembers the much publicized breaking of a solemn treaty by the German government at the outbreak of the World War, when that government's joint pledge with France and England not to violate the neutrality of Belgium was flippantly cast aside as a mere "scrap of paper." This, of course, was not the first time a treaty had ever been broken by a professed civilized nation; but it was the first major offense of its kind in a long time, hence it came in for a great deal of publicity. It was specially surprising in view of the fact that a general idea had developed that at long last the nations of the earth had learned to trust each other and to dwell together in peace and security. At least, the year before, they had all professed themselves to believe this when they took part in

the dedication of the Palace of Peace at the Hague.

But the tearing up of scraps of paper today no longer constitutes front page news as such. Now, the public interest in such occurrences centers in the fact that new hardships are thereby inevitably imposed upon the people. Laws, national and international, are now made and broken with impunity. Laws are kept, apparently, only if it is expedient to keep them. Perhaps when a nation breaks a solemn treaty it is because there is supposedly a necessity for so doing. If, however, civilized life, the world over, cannot be made to function through the keeping of law, what hope is there for the continuance of an order of things in which the laws that are made to perpetuate its existence, must, through necessity, be broken by one or more of the lawmakers?

Germany's breaking of her promises to respect the neutrality of Belgium was one of the main factors in precipitating the World War which began in 1914, and the war itself signaled the beginning of the tragic era of promise-breaking that has brought civilization to its present plight. When the weary years of the war had brought the nations of earth well nigh to ruin, President Wilson, speaking for the Allies, promised the German people that if they would overthrow the Kaiser's government and establish a government by the people, peace would be made with them in which there would be "no annexations, no contributions, no punitive damages."

Responsible Germans relied upon that promise, and it was the basis on which they asked for an armistice. Wilson's "fourteen points," and his "subsequent addresses," were incorporated into the armistice contract. But this promise turned out to be no more binding upon the Allies than the scrap of paper which it was thought would restrain Germany from marching into Belgium. When the Peace Conference met at Versailles, Wilson's promise to the German people was almost wholly ignored; and the treaty made upon that basis of this broken promise has finally led up to the present war.

One of Wilson's promises to the German people was that of setting up some sort of an association of nations; and this was partly fulfilled in the League of Nations. But Wilson's promise implied, at least, that the United States would become a part of that League, but his good intention in this

respect was voted down by the law-makers at Washington. America's holding aloof from the League of Nations caused it to get off to a bad start on the road to establishing universal and lasting peace among the nations.

Fifty-five of the world's sixty-three nations did join the the League, and by mutual promises attempted to guarantee world peace. But it wasn't long before the world saw these promises broken. Japan, for example, seized Manchuko; and Italy seized Abyssinia; yet, aside from a little talking, and, in the case of Italy the half-hearted application of economic sanctions, the League did nothing about it. Even the Pope, the World's champion of peace, gave his paternal blessing upon Mussolini's campaign of aggression in Ethiopia. Soon it was found that the League of Nations was almost wholly impotent as an instrument to keep the peace.

The "Nine-Power Pact" was broken by Japan in China. The Kellogg-Briand pact signed by fifty-six nations, has been broken. By the beginning of 1939 practically every solemn covenant entered into by nations in an effort to maintain peace was shattered by one or more of the signatories. England, France and Russia had solemnly agreed to protect Czecho-Slovakia, but backed down on their promise, and let that tiny nation perish. To cover this sell-out an attempt was made to form a four-power pact, which was hailed as a covenant that would assure peace for "our times."

Italy, Germany, and Japan agreed to stand together in opposing forces of Communism; only to have the contract scuttled by Germany when she signed up with Russia. Russia had agreed not to attack Poland, but marched into that unfortunate country after the German army had rendered resistance by Poland impossible. Russia and Finland signed a non-aggression pact in 1932, but now that has been declared void by Russia, upon a mere pretext. And so the promise-breaking goes on.

It would almost seem that faithlessness in living up to solemn agreements has become fashionable among the nations, some of the more powerful of which actually teach their subjects that any false promise is blameless if uttered to advance the interests of the state. So many promises have been broken, that no longer do the nations put any real trust in each other. Germany promises not to violate the neutrality of Belgium and Holland, but these two countries are compelled to keep their armies mobilized and their borders fortified just in case—which is more than likely true—that Germany doesn't mean what she says.

Whether it be individuals or nations that are engaged in a controversy, it is always convenient to have a "scapegoat" upon which to lay all the blame; but when it comes to this promise-breaking habit, no nation can claim complete exemption from guilt. When recently the United States government served its customary yearly notice on debtor nations of the vast sums of money they owed this country, we were reminded of another set of promises arising out of the World War which have been broken. During the war America loaned billions of dollars to the Allied nations to help them win the war. Subsequent to the war these nations, through their authorized representatives, agreed to repay these loans on the installment plan. Every nation making such promises, except Finland, has defaulted, so that today, more than twenty years after the war, these debts total more than fourteen billion dollars. This is even more strange when we realize that the nations owing the largest amounts are managing now to finance another war.

Still another link in this chain of broken pledges was the defaulting on promises made by governments to their own peoples. In England and in America, for example, the people were let down by their governments going off the gold standard. In America, for example, while millions of gold certificates were in circulation, on which the government promised to pay the face value in gold, the holders of these certificates were told that the government would not pay the gold they called for; and not only so, but those who did possess gold were informed that they would be prosecuted unless they turned it in to the government within a specified time, and received paper dollars worth 40 per cent. less than the gold dollars they were giving up.

For generations people had been taught to put their money in the bank for safe-keeping; but now they learned that banks were about the most unsafe place of all to keep their money, and, through bank failures, millions lost their entire savings and were forced, in middle or old age, to start their economic life all over again. This epidemic of broken promises continued to spread until hardly anywhere in the world was there a worth-while promise left that men and nations could be sure about. Mark Sullivan, in "Current History" says:

"How may faith be restored? How may the world get back on the track? It is not enough that new promises be made. It is not even enough that new promises be kept for a time. They must be kept for a long time. Before men can live serenely, with a sense of confidence in the promises made by governments and nations, those pledges must be lived up to for decades. The sense of security we had before 1914 was generations in the making. Before we can create

it again, we shall need to travel a long road and, I fear, a rough one."

Yes, the world did have a sense of peace and security before 1914; and the nations talked about it saying, "peace and safety," but after all, it was only a "sense" of security, and not the real thing. It wasn't real because it was based merely upon the promises of imperfect, selfish men. It was to the advantage of all concerned to keep these promises for a while, but when it seemed to the advantage of one or more of the nations to break their pledges, world peace was quickly torpedoed and destroyed.

To the world in general, and particularly the ecclesiastical world, the developments of the last 25 years seem very strange indeed. Philosophers, ecclesiastical and otherwise, were hailing the near approach of a new and better day in which science and higher education would show the way to peace and goodwill, only to have their theories completely upset by the succession of travail-like spasms of trouble that have tormented the world since 1914, and which now have brought civilization to the brink of ruin. The civilization we had was, supposedly, based upon the integrity of the pledged word among nations and governments. Now nearly all pledges have been broken, and civilization is tottering to its fall.

Yes, the outlook is becoming increasingly strange and ominous to the world. God's prophet refers to this time of trouble as the "Lord's strange act." (Isa. 28:21.) The present phase of the trouble is daily being referred to by commentators as well as military and economic experts as "this strange war." One of the strange features about it is that because of the uncertainty of the pledged word, nobody knows who will be allies and who will be enemies tomorrow. Prime Minister Chamberlain recently said that it would be useless at this stage of the conflict to discuss peace terms because it was impossible now to determine just how the nations would be lined up at the close of the war. Yes, the whole situation is becoming more and more "strange" as the days go by.

But the Christian is not left without hope. Just as one of the elements contributing to the present world-wide debacle of selfishness, has been the irresponsible manner in which nations have renounced their supposedly solemn pledges to each other, so one of the foundation stones upon which we may now build our hope for future peace and security is the fact that the loving God who has promised to establish a just peace for all nations, intends, and is abundantly able to fulfil those promises.

Today the nations take council together, but it comes to naught, they speak the word, but it

does not stand. Already the nations are recognizing this, and realize that the old world is doomed. Knowing this, they are already talking about establishing a new world; little realizing as yet, that their efforts to establish a new world after the war will be just as futile as were similar efforts at the close of the first World War; and for the same reason, namely, that human selfishness will permit the keeping of covenants between nations only so long as it is expedient to do so.

Nevertheless, *there will be a new world; and that "world of tomorrow" will be a peaceful, blessed and happy one; not because of guarantees made by one nation, or a whole league of nations, but because the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it, and His word will not return unto Him void, but will accomplish that which He pleases, and will prosper in the thing whereto He sent it. (Isa. 55:8-13.)* The Apostle Peter, telling of this new world, and describing it, as a new "heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," declares that our hopes for it are based upon the fact that God has promised it.—2 Pet. 3:13.

One of the divine promises concerning the world of tomorrow is that recorded in Isaiah 65:17-25. A study of this promise reveals many of the reforms that will be brought about in that new world. The so-called natural, but actually unnatural, process of growing old and dying will be abolished, so that the only ones who will die in that world will be the wilful sinners—otherwise there will be "no more death."—Rev. 21:1-4.

There will then be economic and social security, for all will reap the reward of their own labor, and he who builds a house will be privileged to live in it if he wants to. Now, the people pray for peace, but the Lord doesn't hear the prayers; even though special weeks be set aside by the Pope for these prayers, still they are not heard. But in God's new world, it will be different. Then He will hear the prayers of the people, even before they are fully uttered—"while they are yet speaking." Nothing will be permitted in that world that will mar the happiness of those who vow allegiance to Christ, the new and righteous King of earth; for the Lord has promised, "that nothing shall hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain."

And because God has promised these things, they are sure to come.

ZIONISM IN PROPHECY

A valuable treatise of the prophecies pertaining to the hopes of Israel, showing the manner in which they are being fulfilled today. 20 cents each. Lots of 10 or more, 10 cents each.

15 ¶ And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only one:

17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Gen. 22: 15-18 Gal. 3: 8

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed:

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

20 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus:

25 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise

Gal. 3: 26, 29

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Acts 3: 20, 21.

20 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God

Heb. 11: 8, 10

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

2 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 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.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful.

Rev. 21: 2-5.

A Savior Born

ed with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."

In view of all the shocking escapades of selfish men that history reveals, and in view also of the present example of "man's inhumanity to man," we might justifiably feel that Isaiah, while a commendable ideologist in his outlook, had closed his eyes to reality when he penned his description of a future utopia of righteousness and peace which well-wishers in countless generations of human experience have had to reluctantly admit is "too good to be true." But, there is a statement in this prophecy which we should not overlook; one which should form a basis for the reexamination of all the facts related thereto! namely, that **"the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."**

God Is Able

God is able. This is the professed belief of both Catholics and Protestants the world over. Upon the basis of this belief the human mind readily can conceive of the untold possibilities of accomplishment in a distraught world if, indeed, there is a God who is as able as the Christian God is declared to be; and if, at the same time, He is willing. That our God is willing to do for man what he cannot do for himself is abundantly attested by the many prophecies and promises He has made of His intention to perform—"the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

That these promises had not been forgotten hundreds of years after they were made is clear from the angelic message to the shepherds announcing the birth of the One who had been promised. The question is, Have the promises relating to His accomplishment been forgotten? Or, is the birth of Jesus, now so universally celebrated every year, merely a legendary incident in a series of fairy tales, all of which, while supposedly backed up by an all-powerful and loving Creator, yet have no real foundation in fact, and contain no evidence of genuine divine inspiration?

This is the great challenge to Christianity today. Yes, a challenge today more than ever before, because there is now less in the world than ever before to indicate that the

Kingdom of righteousness and peace, which the prophets foretold, would be established by the One born in Bethlehem nineteen centuries ago. In all these nineteen hundred years there has been no genuine nor lasting peace and good will in the earth. Wars and rumors of wars have marred the hopes of peace in each generation. The fact that aggressor nations sometimes have labeled their acts as "Holy wars" has made these no less bitter and devastating in the hearts and lives of those effected.

But "hope springs eternal in the human breast," and is not easily destroyed. All Christendom has believed that Jesus was born; and that He is the Prince of Peace; so they continue to sing their anthems of praise to this King of glory, despite the roar of cannon and the shrieks of the dying on battlefields supposedly made hallowed by the misguided prayers of nominal churchianity. All the while there was the hope of a better time coming. The "heroic dead" of each generation, it was hoped, would make, by their sacrifice, future generations safe for peace.

As late as fifty years ago, and even since the Armistice of 1918, enthusiastic workers for Christ hoped for the full victory of their cause and labored for the "conversion of the world in this generation." Today that hope is blasted by the resistless aggression of atheism and paganism sponsored by powerful nations implemented by machines of war, the efficiency and destructiveness of which are vastly more deadly than the carnal weapons that were used by so-called "Christian" nations in their crusades to forward the cause of Christ in the earth. So it may reasonably be said, as never before, believers in Christ as the Prince of Peace, are challenged to show cause for continuing to believe in a hero who was crucified, and whose cause in the earth has been, apparently, so utterly defeated.

Jesus' Viewpoint

Perhaps the most logical avenue of approach in meeting this present-day challenge to Christianity is to consider Jesus' own viewpoint. What were His expectations? Did He realize that nineteen centuries from His day the world would be in the di-

lemma it is in today, with no serious consideration being given to His teachings by the leaders of any nation, while a great part of the world turns its back on Him altogether? If Jesus did not expect this apparent defeat of His cause in the earth, if the prophetic vision which tells of His birth and ultimate glory as King of earth, does not include and explain the many historic developments of the past nineteen centuries which, to the casual observer, belie the enthusiasm of the prophets; then we might all well wonder what is to become of Christianity.

Jesus, as well as the prophets and the apostles, **did** foresee and foretell the utter collapse of what, to many, appears to be the Christian cause in the earth. For example, concerning the time of His second coming, Jesus raised the question as to whether or not there would then be any faith in the earth. (Luke 18:8.) In answering questions put to Him by the disciples as to what would constitute signs of His return and second presence, Jesus outlined a series of events culminating in what Daniel the prophet describes as a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." (Matt. 24: 21; Dan. 12:1.) Evidently it is this very time of trouble that is to bring about the collapse of what men have called Christendom. Obviously, then, the present increasing blackout of man-made efforts to establish a Christian peace and good will in the earth has not come as a surprise to the Lord; nor does it indicate the failure of His cause in the earth.

Counterfeit Kingdom Foretold

One of Jesus' parables of the Kingdom is that of the Wheat and the Tares. The "Wheat" in this parable—sown by Jesus Himself in the establishment of the early church—He declares to be the "children of the Kingdom." The "Tares"—imitation, or counterfeit wheat—represent the "children of the wicked one." "While the [in the Greek] men slept," that is, after the apostles and other faithful ones in the early church fell asleep in death, these "Tares" were sown.—Matt. 13:24-30; 36-43.

These counterfeit followers of the Master soon became more numerous than the true wheat class—the chil-

dren of the Kingdom. Soon they set upon the task of establishing Christ's Kingdom themselves, without waiting for the return of the King, as they should have done. Lacking the necessary power requisite to the functioning of a real Kingdom, the Tare class united with the arm of the state. Thus, through the illicit union of Church and State, a pseudo kingdom of Christ was established; and for hundreds of years has endeavored to function as the real Kingdom.

At the best, however, this counterfeit Kingdom—established through what the Scriptures describe as spiritual fornication; that is, the union of Church and State—during hundreds of years of its existence, has been a house divided against itself, as represented in the conflicting claims of Catholicism and Protestantism; and now it is fast losing its remaining hold upon the consciences of the people the world over.

In the parable, Jesus explains that the true children of the Kingdom, as well as the counterfeit children, were to be permitted to grow together until the "Harvest," which, He declared, would be in the "end of the age." Then, both the Wheat and the Tares would be dealt with. The Tares, the Master declared, would then be destroyed—burned up; not as individuals, necessarily, but as Tares: their true identity then becoming generally recognized. This would imply, also, the destruction of the counterfeit kingdom arrangements established by the Tares. The Wheat, on the other hand, the Master explained, were to be gathered into the "Barn," which He interpreted as meaning that "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

True Kingdom Promised

In the parable of the Wheat and Tares, therefore, we have a clear indication from the Master that the establishment of the true Kingdom of God would not be until the "end of the age," and, meanwhile, counterfeit "children of the kingdom" would grow up in the field. It is the fulfillment of this prophetic parable that has caused so much confusion in the minds of the people generally. The counterfeit has been taken for the real; and now that the foretold burn-

ing of the Tares is in progress there is a great lamenting, and millions are losing faith in what they had supposed was true Christianity.

But it is not the true Kingdom arrangements that are now crumbling under the impact of forces let loose by the increasing light of the new day. This true Kingdom is not yet recognized by the world. In that Kingdom, ultimately, "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun"—enlightening and blessing the world with universal peace and everlasting life. One of the Old Testament promises of the Messianic Kingdom, pictures Christ as the "Sun of righteousness," which shall arise with healing in His wings." (Mal. 4:2.) The followers of the Master are promised a share with Him in that glorious Kingdom, and in that role they too, according to the parable, shall "shine forth as the sun."

It is evident, then, that Jesus Himself did not expect that the wonderful promises of a world-wide Kingdom of peace and happiness to be established through Him as the Messiah, would be fulfilled until after His second advent, and that His first work as Earth's rightful King would be that of overthrowing the counterfeit arrangements set up by men. To realize this helps materially in understanding the significance of what is now transpiring in the world. It means, not a blackout of true Christianity, but a setting aside of false churchianity in order that the way may be cleared for the people to learn about the true God of love, and the blessings of life and happiness He has provided for all through the redemptive work of Christ.

Paul Foretold Apostasy

The Apostle Paul also foretold the development and final destruction of a false system of Christianity. In 2 Thessalonians 2, he explains that there would come a great "falling away" from the faith, and that a "man of sin," an antichrist system, would grow up in the earth. He also declares that this false system would be rendered powerless and finally destroyed (according to the Greek text) by the "brightshining of His presence"—that is, the enlightening influences set to work in the earth as a result of the second pres-

ence of Christ. We now see this taking place.

Jesus, after His resurrection, gave the wonderful vision of Revelation to the Apostle John, and in it we find a vivid preview of apostasy and counterfeit on the part of a majority of the professed followers of Christ. Not until the end of the vision do we see the nations being healed and restored by the waters of the river of life. (Rev. 22:1-5.) Prior to this we see the wicked nations gathered unto the great battle of Armageddon. We see the false church systems represented as a harlot woman with daughters, who ruled over the kings of the earth.

In other words, the Revelation vision portrays, not the ever-increasing and widening influence of the true Messianic Kingdom beginning at Pentecost, but the flourishing of the forces of wicked intrigue and counterfeit. It does reveal, however, a faithful few who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." It reveals these faithful ones as at last being exalted to Kingdom power and authority with Jesus; while those who refuse to wait for the return of their Lord, but instead adulterously unite with the Kings of the earth in order to reign before the due time, are shown to lose the real reward, and to have their works burned up.

Not Worth Saving

It is only because so-called civilized man has known nothing better than this counterfeit Kingdom arrangement, that he laments its passing. When seen in its true light, few would say that it is worth saving. Surely a Christianity that permits of its leaders in one country to encourage the youth of the land to go and kill their Christian brothers in another country, is far from being ideal.

It is indeed commendable for the ruling head of Papacy now to plead for cessation of hostilities by the warring factions of earth; but the humanitarian aspect of these appeals loses much of its effect upon those who do not conveniently forget that it was only a short time ago that the former "Pope of Peace" was giving his paternal blessing to the ruthless aggression of Italian troops in Ethiopia and in Spain.

It may stir one's religious emotions to self-sacrificing action in

helping to save the church from the unholy influences being forced upon her by the on-rushing forces of Communism; but those emotions are somewhat dampened when one remembers that it was only a short while ago that the spiritual head of another large group of churchianity—the Archbishop of Canterbury—approved the British Parliament for endeavoring to enlist the aid of an atheistic Russia in order to save the democracies from the over-running hordes of paganized Nazis.

We do not wish to criticize the actions of anyone. When emergencies present themselves, people do strange things. The point is, that these contradictory actions of the outstanding leaders of churchianity tend to reveal why the Lord is not bothering to give His protection to these systems. They were not established by God, and now that the time is at hand for the true Messianic Kingdom to manifest itself, all man-made and man-controlled organizations are permitted to fall.

Divine Power to be Exercised

In foretelling the birth of Jesus the prophet declared that the "Government shall be upon His shoulder." This is just another way of saying that He will assume full responsibility for its success. He can do this, for after His resurrection He declared that "all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18.) This means that He will not depend upon the arm of the State to enforce His decrees as they did who established the counterfeit Kingdom arrangements. Jesus now possesses "all power," and will use

it to guarantee the success and efficiency of His Kingdom.

And, after all, is not this what we should expect of Jesus? We believe in the miracles He wrought during the period of His first advent. Should it be hard to believe, that, now He is raised from the dead, He is able to accomplish even greater things? True, many long centuries have passed since Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, calmed the storms; but this does not mean that divine power will never again be exercised on behalf of mankind; for it will be, and that, we believe, in the near future.

And think what that will mean for distressed humanity! No longer will the world be ruled by power politics, or by balances of power; for divine power will sweep aside all of the selfish arrangements of men; and through Kingdom agencies selected by the Lord Himself, will cause righteousness and peace to spring forth in all the earth. Yes, He will truly be "The Prince of Peace," and "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end."

As the "Everlasting Father," or Life-giver, He will restore mankind to life; so that not only will they have peace, but they will have health and life also. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord," the angel announced. Soon the whole world will have the opportunity of receiving the salvation provided through this wonderful Savior.

The fact that so many of the professed followers of Jesus have mis-

understood the real purpose of His coming will in no way interfere with the successful carrying out of that purpose. Christianity will yet be recognized as a glorious success, when, through the Kingdom agencies, "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord fills the whole earth as the waters cover the sea."—Hab. 2:14; Isa. 11:9.

The real Christian work of this age has been a success. That work has been, not the converting of the world and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom, but the gathering out from among the Gentiles a people to be associated with Jesus in the Kingdom when that Kingdom is established. (Rev. 5:10; Acts 15:13-15.) This work of selection has gone on unnoticed by the world. It has been supervised by divine wisdom; and its final completion is guaranteed by divine power.

When it is complete, and the righteous "little flock" are all selected and gathered, and united with Christ in glory; then the promised blessings to the world will no longer be held back. The Kingdom will be here indeed; and all mankind will know for the first time the real significance of the divine program that was initiated nineteen centuries ago when the shepherds heard that glad announcement, "Fear not, for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Then the world will know, also, that the "zeal of the Lord of hosts" has accomplished all the glorious things foretold to be accomplished through the Saviour who was born in Judea and crucified on a hill called Golgotha.

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The Christian Life

The Voice of God

"God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."

Hebrews 1:1, 2.



THROUGHOUT the book of Hebrews the apostle urges the brethren to stand firm in the Lord and in the faith, and, by giving earnest heed to the things they had heard, not to "let them slip." Basically, this admonition to faithfulness is built upon the fact that the Hebrews had heard the voice of God speak to them through His Son, even as the fathers heard that voice through the prophets of old; hence they could not afford to become lax in obeying the things which this voice had communicated to them. "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh," is one of the closing exhortations of this epistle. (Heb. 12:25.) To do so, would imply unfaithfulness, not to the messengers through whom the message had reached them, but to the Creator who had spoken to them through His Son.

Our faith and faithfulness today should, likewise, be based upon the fact that we, like the Hebrews, have heard the voice of God speaking to us. Indeed, if we have not heard the voice of God, then we have no foundation for our faith. There are probably more contradictory theories in the world today, all claiming to represent God, than there were in the days of the early church; hence there is the greater need to be able at this time to positively identify the voice of God above and apart from the din of conflicting voices around us; and to obey that voice faithfully irrespective of what the cost may be.

In the apostle's day there were "gods many, and lords many," and it is even so today. (1 Cor. 8:5.) It was important back there that the consecrated should hear and obey the voice of the true God; and that true God the apostle identified as the one who had spoken unto the fathers through the prophets. It is the voice of this God, who is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever," for which we should listen today; and, hearing that voice, we should obey it even as did the faithful of old. The voice of the torment god, the trinity god, the god of gold, or the pleasure god, should have no appeal to those who have heard the voice of the true God.

Nor should we be satisfied with a mere spirit of devotion to an "unknown god." There are millions who believe in the existence of a higher power of



some kind. Even in heathen lands this is true. The spirit of devotion is undoubtedly a part of the original godlikeness implanted in man at the time of his creation. In due time, through the pure message that will be turned to the people, God will reveal Himself to all, for the whole world will be filled with the knowledge of His glory. Then, those who have "ignorantly worshipped" Him will rejoice to learn of His love, and they will say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, . . . we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."—Isa. 25:9.

While God is, no doubt, pleased with the spirit of devotion wherever found; yet, the Scriptures make it plain that he speaks only to those whom He would have cooperate with Him in the outworking of His plan. By His voice of truth, God instructs these in the way that they should go and in the things that they should do. Thus it is that these are "sanctified by the truth." This means, then, that among all the devotedly religious people of the world—and there are millions of them—there are some to whom God speaks, while the others are allowed to continue on in unenlightened worship until some future time when their "day of visitation" shall come. Some, then, are now being led by God, and some are not; hence it is a matter of vital importance to us today to be able to determine without a doubt that we have heard the voice of the true God, and that He is dealing with us.

CHRISTIAN BROADMINDEDNESS

God loves the whole world of mankind. He sent His Son to redeem them, and, through His Son will establish a Kingdom to bless them. It is the definiteness of this conviction in the hearts of those who have heard the voice of God, that should enable them to be broadminded and sympathetic toward all who hold differing views from their own. Yet, a knowledge of God's plan for the blessing of all precludes the necessity of taking the attitude that it doesn't make much difference what one believes so long as there is manifested a true spirit of devotion. If in this life only there were hope, we might be justified in an attempt to bring all into the fold of salvation.

Every Scriptural example and criterion; and the general teaching of the Bible as well, bear positive testimony to the fact that God does not deal with His people in their ignorance. Paul suggested that the "unknown God," "ignorantly" worshipped by the Athenians, was really the true God; but the apostle was there to declare the truth of the matter to as many as had the hearing ear, in order that their service of Him might become intelligent and acceptable. The prayers of Cornelius went up as a memorial before God, but before he was brought into God's family to cooperate in the divine plan, the Apostle Peter was sent to enlighten him.

Even the world of mankind in the next age will not be dealt with in their ignorance, because then the knowledge of God will be caused to fill the earth. It is a mistaken notion to suppose that God is now dealing with all who show a spirit of devotion to a higher power. God loves these, of course, and is preparing to enlighten and bless them in His due time. But those with whom He is dealing now, and preparing for the future work of enlightening and blessing the world, He takes into His confidence and reveals His plans. It is upon the basis of this revelation that they are sanctified, or set apart to the doing of His will. These are guided by the Lord's voice, hence the importance of knowing and recognizing that voice when we hear it.

GOD IS UNCHANGEABLE

Of fundamental importance in identifying the voice of the true God is the fact that He is unchangeable. God does not need to change for the reason that His plans always carry through successfully, hence He is never faced with the necessity of altering them. Concerning His Word, which cometh forth out of His mouth, the Lord says, "It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isa. 55:11.

Upon the basis of this undeniable fact concerning God, we are fully justified in deciding that whatever was truth four thousand years ago is truth today. The prophets and other faithful ones of old heard the voice of God speaking to them; and if the same God speaks to us, there is certain to be heard in His voice today that which clearly identifies it with what the "fathers" heard when the same voice spoke to them through the prophets. If this is not so, then we must conclude that God has changed His plan, and that the word spoken back there has returned unto Him void.

Is it possible for us to determine beyond question what constitutes the keynote of the message which the voice of God, through the prophets, communicated to the ancients? It is, and not by human interpretation, but by the authority of the Word of

God. In the New Testament we are furnished with an inspired summary of that which was spoken by the mouth of all God's holy prophets. This summary is recorded in Acts 3:19-21, and consists of a statement made by the Apostle Peter in which he tells of the work of Christ following the second advent, and declares it will be that of restoring all things; and then he adds that this hope for mankind is what God had declared by the mouth of all His holy prophets.

It follows, then, that when "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets," the great theme of coming restitution blessings for the world was the keynote of the message. Surely that which God considered so important as to cause all of His prophets to declare it, would not later be dropped by Him as though the message had never been proclaimed. Yet today, there are countless voices appealing to the professed people of God, all claiming to be His voice, in which the glorious hope of restitution for the world is either wholly ignored or else opposed.

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS SON

In our text, the apostle declares that God, whose voice in times past was heard through the prophets, hath "in these last days," spoken through His Son. Did Jesus continue God's melodious theme song of restitution? He did! The message Jesus was commissioned to preach was that of Isaiah 61:1, 2, which is one of "good tidings unto the meek," of "liberty to the captives" of death, the "opening of the prison to them that are bound," and to "bind up the brokenhearted." The good news which constitutes the basis for such a hope-inspiring message is naught else than that which God "hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

And the Master faithfully obeyed this commission. Not only did He proclaim the Kingdom hope of restitution, declaring that all in the graves would hear His voice and come forth from the dead, but He illustrated the restitution work by the many miracles of healing He performed. Even while on the cross, He reiterated His faith in the glorious hope of restitution when He assured the thief on the cross of a place in the restored paradise. Were we to divorce from the Master's teachings this central theme of coming blessings of life for all mankind, we would rob them of their vitality, and have very little left but moral philosophy and devotionism. These latter, of course, are essential in the Christian life, but they alone do not suffice to identify the voice of God.

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE APOSTLES

The apostles took up the same wonderful theme. Paul tells us that Christ must reign until all en-

emies are put under His feet, and that the "last enemy" to be destroyed, is death. Peter, in his second epistle, in discussing the second coming of Christ explained that in connection with that event, we "look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." In the last three chapters of Revelation, the closing book of the Bible, the hope of restitution is featured. In the 20th chapter, hell is declared to give up its dead. In the 21st chapter, we are told that "there shall be no more death." In the 22nd chapter is seen a "pure river of water of life, . . . and on either side of the river . . . the tree of life," and the "leaves of the tree . . . for the healing of the nations."—Rev. 22:1, 2.

Thus the Bible closes on this dominant note of coming blessings for all mankind. It opens with the message that the Seed of the woman is to bruise the serpent's head. It continues with the declaration that through the seed of Abraham "all the families of the earth" are to be blessed. All God's prophets, likewise, foretold the same thing. The angel, announcing the birth of Jesus to be the Messiah, reechoed the glad refrain of "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people."

In the face of such united testimony on the part of God's messengers, prophets, apostles, angels, and the Master Himself—it seems apparent that no matter how good a theology may be, how pleasing to the ear, or how apparently spiritual, if it doesn't have in it this great fact of coming restitution for all, it is not the voice of God. Let us make sure that whatever we become interested in has in it this glorious theme song of God.

GOD SPEAKS AT THIS END OF THE AGE

With the death of the apostles and other faithful ministers in the early church, the clear, clarion note of the Gospel of the Messiah gradually gave place to the philosophies of men and the doctrines of devils. While an occasional individual was able to hold the truth in more or less purity, yet, for the most part throughout the age, little was heard or known of that which had been the theme of all God's holy prophets and apostles. But God's voice was again to be heard by His people as a body. The time was to come when once more this grand theme song of restitution would again be heard above the jargon of conflicting creeds.

Jesus promised that upon His return at the end of the age, He would serve His people with "meat in due season," and that one from among them would be selected to dispense this meat to the household of faith. (Luke 12:42; Matt. 24:45.) There is evidence that Jesus did return and made good this promise back in the early seventies of the last century. If this be true, as thousands of the Lord's consecrated people have believed—and still

believe—then we should find evidence that God, through His Son, has, in the end of the age even as in the beginning of the age, reiterated that which was the theme song of all His holy prophets.

And, if we are right in believing that we are now on the threshold of that glad day when restitution will become a reality, then surely the restoration of this great truth would indeed be "meat in due season." To identify the voice of God in connection with such vital and stupendous matters requires that we have something concrete upon which to base our conclusions. Have we any such evidence that the voice of God has been heard by His people during the last half century; and if so, through whom was it heard?

We believe that Pastor Charles T. Russell was the chief instrumentality used of the Lord in bringing forth from the "storehouse" this lost-sight-of truth of the "restitution of all things." He indeed was used mightily to direct us to heed the voice of God in this end of the age, speaking to us through the Word, that thereby we might rejoice in it and be led by it. Writing of some of his early experiences as a seeker after truth while in association with other truth seekers, Brother Russell said:

"I soon began to see that we were living somewhere near the close of the Gospel age, and near the time when the Lord had declared that the wise, watching ones of His children should come to a clear knowledge of His plan. At this time, myself and a few other truth-seekers in Pittsburgh and Allegheny formed a class for Bible study, and from 1870 to 1875 was a time of constant growth in grace and knowledge and love of God and His Word. We came to see something of the love of God, how it had made provision for all mankind, how all must be awakened from the tomb in order that God's loving plan might be testified to them, and how all who exercise faith in Christ's redemptive work and render obedience in harmony with the knowledge of God's will they will then receive, shall then (through Christ's merit) be brought back into full harmony with God, and be granted everlasting life. This we saw to be the 'restitution' work foretold in Acts 3:21."

It is evident from this account just what occurred during that season of Bible study, when these faithful watchers were searching for a better understanding of the Lord's plan. God, who had spoken unto the "fathers" through the prophets, who also had spoken at the first advent through His Son, was again making clear the vision that should "speak, and lie not." (Hab. 2:3.) The great theme of His message was again made known, first to a few watchers, and then further witnessed until His voice was heard the world around. Those of us who have heard that voice and are still rejoicing in it, realize that it was the great hope of restitution that served to impress us with the fact that the message of which it was a dominant part,

was indeed of the Lord. After all of our searching after truth we, at last, found in this message something that "satisfied our longings as nothing else could do."

BLESSINGS FOR OTHERS

It is the hope of restitution for the world that makes the truth an unselfish gospel. Without this hope for others no religious belief can be truly said to reflect the love of God. The creeds of nominal churchianity are, in this respect, no better than the theories of the heathen. While the creeds of the churches differ in minor detail, they all, alike, limit the hope of salvation to those very few who are fortunate enough in this life to hear their view of the Gospel and are able to profess faith in it. Believe now and be prepared to go to heaven when you die, or disbelieve, and be forever lost. This is the sum and substance of all creedal teaching which professes to be the voice of God in the earth today.

But how different is the outlook that is reflected in the message which God gave to the "fathers" by the mouth of all His holy prophets! How different also is the continuance of that same glorious gospel as it was reiterated by Jesus and the apostles! A Kingdom for the blessing of all; a judgment day for the trial and righteous judgment of all; a resurrection for both the just and the unjust; blessings for all the families of the earth; glad tidings unto all people—these, and many, many other such like promises, constitute the melody bars in God's great theme song; and it is the clarion tone of such a voice that is blessing God's people today.

It is this gospel of blessing for others that transforms the Christian life from one of mere self-preservation to that of self-sacrifice in order that others might be blessed. And in this Scriptural understanding of what the Christian life really is, we also are able to further identify the voice of God speaking to those who are laying down their lives with the Master. As the Apostle Peter was used of the Lord to summarize the prophetic message as it applies to the blessing of the world of mankind, so he also has been used of the Lord to reveal the significance of God's voice as it speaks in terms of sacrifice to His people of this age.

On this point the apostle declares that by the power of the Holy Spirit the prophets of old foretold the "sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." Clearly do the Scriptures show that the church of this age participates in this suffering, and all who comprise this true church are also promised a share in the future glory. Within the scope of this phase of God's plan are found those heavenly promises of the New Testament—

promises which, in nominal church circles, were supposed to represent the sum total of all God's provisions for the world, but which now are seen to apply merely to those who are willing to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in order that they may be with Him in glory by and by.

RESTITUTION THE KEY

Apart from the hope of restitution for the world which is, in reality, the key that unlocks the plan of God, the full purpose of the Christian life is largely obscured, being, as already suggested, primarily but an effort of the individual to save himself. But how different is the outlook when the full objective of the divine plan is understood. Then it is seen that the Christian is invited to sacrifice. First he is inspired with an appreciation of God's love as revealed in His plan for the blessing of all the families of the earth, and that he is invited to sacrifice all things earthly in order that he may be a coworker with God in dispensing the promised blessings to others.

The sufferings of the Christ now, the Kingdom glory that follows the suffering, and then the Kingdom work of restoring the world of mankind to life during the "times of restitution," are the three basic facts of truth by which we can positively identify the voice of God speaking to His people today. Any message that distorts or nullifies any or all of these fundamental truths is not the voice of God. There can be no glory for the church until after the suffering is over; and the blessings are sure to come to the world once the church is glorified. If we keep in mind the proper sequence of these great provisions of the divine plan, and continue to insist that they remain a prominent part of the message of truth by which we are guided, we may rest assured that we are continuing to be guided by the voice of God.

These truths, in themselves, are simple and easily understood; yet they are the strong meat of the Word. By them we can test the accuracy of other doctrines. The sufferings of Christ, Head and body, of course, include the suffering and death of Jesus Himself; hence the ransom becomes the foundation of the prophetic testimony concerning this phase of the divine plan. The church participates in the sufferings of Christ, hence her share in the great work of reconciling the world is made to appear in its proper light, when this participation is remembered.

Restitution implies, not alone a restoration of mankind to life and health, but also a restoring of harmony between God and man—a work of reconciliation. Man was in covenant relationship with God before his fall into sin and death. This covenant relationship is to be restored. It is to be done, the prophecies show, through the medium of

the "New Covenant." The great work of restitution, following the second coming of Christ, includes this New Covenant work of reconciling the world to God. Christians are made "able ministers" of that Covenant in the preparatory, sacrificial phase now, and in the glory phase in the Kingdom.—2 Cor. 3:6.

Thus we see that restitution, following the sufferings of the Christ, and dispensed by the Christ in glory, is the tri-square, as it were, by which the subject of the New Covenant can be understood Scripturally. Without the hope of future restitution for the world, we must force the New Covenant into this age. Without future restitution, we must force the Kingdom of Christ into this age. Without the hope of restitution there seems to be no good reason for the sufferings of the church, and no real meaning to the promised "glory to follow."

The restitution work of the Kingdom, when seen in its true light, becomes the unselfish incentive to Christian endeavor. We add to our faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love; and we do it in the assurance that if faithful, "an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:5, 11.) And to the Christian who has heard the voice of God, the purpose of that "Kingdom" is the blessing of all the families of the earth.

True, Jesus promised to prepare a place for His followers, and promised, also, that He would return and take them unto Himself, that they might be with Him in the place which He had prepared. But, the real unselfish incentive of the hope thus engendered would be largely lost if it were not for the further fact that when united with the Lord on the divine plane, our work will be to enlighten and judge the world, and to say to the faithful, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."—Matt. 25:34.

As already indicated, the rewards of both the church and the world, are yet future. This is the age of sacrifice; and the work of sacrifice is not yet over. God's voice, through His Word, is calling us to faithfulness in sacrifice, that others may, even now, be in a measure blessed. We cannot now bestow lasting blessings upon the world, but by our faithfulness in sacrifice we can demonstrate that we would like to bless our fellow-man if we could, and that we will rejoice to do so when the due time comes.

And we can now, through faithfulness in sacrifice, lay down our lives for the brethren. As all the consecrated are partaking of the sufferings of Christ, we can comfort and encourage each other as we have opportunity. Thus doing, we will be following the voice of God which calls to sacrifice, and not merely to a state of self-effacement, but a genuine giving up of comforts, pleasures, substance, yea, even life itself, that we may demonstrate our god-like love for others. May that voice of God continue to lead us on to full victory!

Suffering with Christ

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously."—1 Peter 2:21-23.



IS a mistaken idea, held by many in nominal church groups, that Christians should expect to be exempt from trials, and that the evidence of their Christianity should be manifested in the material prosperity and happiness with which they are blessed. Apart from an understanding of the divine plan, however, this view represents what obviously should be the result of faithfulness to the Lord. In fact, there are many Scriptures which show that, ultimately, those who are in harmony with God will be blessed with material good things; but these Scriptures apply to the future Kingdom period and not to the present.

The disciples who left their fishing and other businesses to follow the Master did so because they be-

lieved Him to be the Messiah of promise. They expected that through the Messiah there would come deliverance for Israel and blessings for all nations. They visualized Jesus as becoming a mighty King over all the earth, and hoped that they might share in some manner in His Kingdom glory. There were many Messianic promises in the Old Testament which, wrongly applied, seemed to justify them in this expectation. But, there was one important thing they overlooked, and this Jesus explained to them after His resurrection; namely, that the Christ must first suffer and die for the world before the promised Kingdom blessings could come.

Just as those original disciples of Jesus overlooked the prophecies pertaining to the sufferings of Christ, so many since have failed to realize that these foretold sufferings of the Christ were not completed at Calvary; and failing to see this, they have mistakenly supposed that the next thing in order after the death and resurrection of Jesus should be the establishment of His Kingdom and the bestowing of material blessings upon those who accept Him as their Redeemer and

King. This lack of spiritual vision has led to all sorts of misconceptions as to what constitutes the Christian life, and the manner in which the Christian should expect to be blessed.

Peter, in his first epistle, leaves no doubt in the mind of the observing reader, that when the Holy Spirit, through the prophets, testified of the "sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow," the church as well as Jesus personally, was included in the testimony. He says, for example, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are **partakers of Christ's sufferings.**" (1 Pet. 1:11; 4:12, 13.) This, then, is the true significance of the apostle's words in our text in which he explains that in Jesus' persecution, suffering and death, He left us an example that we should follow in His steps.

Yes, the sufferings of Christ are still going on; and the true followers of the Master should expect no different treatment from the world and from nominal churchianity than that received by the Master. "For even hereunto were ye called," asserts the apostle. Yes, called to suffer and to die. Called to be reviled and persecuted. Called to sacrifice comfort, time, strength, means, friends—all that we love and hold dear as natural men and women—in order that we may devote ourselves to the one purpose of following the Master into death.

Jesus' suffering was not a case of doing penance, with no practical good resulting therefrom. He suffered because He went about doing good. So selfish and fallen were the unbelievers with whom He mingled that His good was misconstrued by them as being evil; so they reviled Him, speaking all manner of evil against Him. The Christian is called to endure the same kind of treatment, and largely for the same purpose. If we suffer as evil-doers, or as busybodies, or for any other reason than that we have been faithful in doing the good works of God, then we have no cause for thankfulness. But if we do good and suffer for it, as Jesus did, then we can rejoice, "for even hereunto were ye called."

Jesus was not reviled because there was anything about Him that could properly be reviled, for He was perfect. But Jesus was willing to be reviled because He knew that it was a part of the suffering He was undergoing on behalf of the fallen race. He knew that the world was out of harmony with God, but because He loved them He was laying down His life in order that the fallen race might be reconciled to God; so He reviled not again. He suffered it and rejoiced in it. "Even hereunto were ye called."

There is much in the fallen flesh of the Christian that merits criticism; but, as nearly as possible, our lives should be such that it can be said of us as it was prophesied of Jesus and as He said, "they hated Me without a cause." (Psa. 35:19; 69:4; John 15:25.) And, if we catch the true inspiration of the call to fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, we, like Jesus, will not want to revile when others revile us. We will look upon the experience rather, as evidence that

we have been accepted for sacrifice, and that the Lord is permitting the necessary experiences to train us for the glorious future work of blessing all mankind. When the sufferings of the Christ are complete, then the promises of material health and happiness and everlasting life upon the earth will be vouchsafed to all who obey "that prophet."

MERCY AND FORGIVENESS

In the divine economy the "sufferings of Christ" afford each one in the body an opportunity to develop and practice the divine qualities of mercy and forgiveness. Every infraction of the divine law, beginning with the transgression of Adam, has been an act of opposition to God; some acting in ignorance and others wilfully. But God's mercy has been displayed. He sent His Son to redeem the rebellious ones; and He is preparing the church to be the channel through which the blessings provided by His love are to be dispensed. It follows then, that those who are co-workers with God in these loving arrangements, must, themselves, be like Him in character. They must be merciful as He is merciful.

How important that the Heavenly Father's mercy be extended toward us, too. For, do we not, ourselves, often trespass against the Lord, in thought, word and deed? Realizing our own need to be dealt with upon the basis of mercy, should help us the more willingly to bestow mercy toward those who trespass against us. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt. 5:7.) Yes, the merciful are truly blessed. They receive the blessedness of the Father's mercy extended toward them; and they, also, are blessed in their exercise of mercy toward others. A full resignation to the will of the Lord in this respect cannot help but bring a realization of that great peace of God which passeth human reasoning and understanding.

While the worldly-minded imagine that to exercise mercy and forgiveness is a display of weakness, yet the Christian should realize that the very opposite is true. It takes strength and courage to forgive; but O, the blessings that are derived by the merciful. What greater joy is there in the Christian life than that which accrues to the one who exercises mercy and forgiveness toward those who have reviled or otherwise endeavored to injure him? The spirit of forgiveness should be from the heart. A mere outward act of mercy to which the heart does not truly assent, does not fill the divine requirement. On this point the Master said, "If ye from your **hearts** forgive not every one his brother their trespasses," then, accordingly, we need not expect our Heavenly Father to act differently toward us.—Matt. 18:35.

We are confident that God forgives from the heart. His mercy is thus manifested toward us and toward the whole world of mankind. What a privilege it is to be invited into a partnership with Him in the outworking of a plan through which mercy and forgiveness is to be extended to all. All who receive life, whether in the church, or in the restored earth, will do so because mercy has been extended to them. Shall we not, then, rejoice in all the experiences that come

to us which help us to develop this Godlike characteristic.

But, if, when we are reviled, we strike back in like manner, it means that we have not yet learned this important lesson. We are in the school of Christ to learn; and, primarily, that which we are learning in that school is to be like Him, and like the Heavenly Father. Let us, then, earnestly endeavor to root out

of our hearts every selfish, vengeful motive, and be filled with the spirit that filled the Master—the spirit that enabled Him to bless them that persecuted Him, and to pray for them that spitefully used Him. We need thus to be filled with the spirit of divine love and mercy in order to be qualified to share in the future Kingdom work of bestowing blessings upon the world.

Decorum in the House of God

(From Feb., 15, 1913 Watch Tower—By Request)

“Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.”—Ecclesiastes 5:1.



HE wise man was undoubtedly not talking about literal feet or literal steps, but giving some wise counsel, which his hearers might appropriate, just as we do. They understood him to mean that they must be circumspect in their daily lives.

“Keep thy foot.” Notice where you are going. Do not go to the House of God as you would go to the market-place or to some place of amusement. Go as to the place where God will meet with His people. The wise man goes on to assume what would be heard in the House of God. Be not ready “to give sacrifice of fools.” This would seem to refer to laughter, levity, foolish talk and jesting.

This Scripture is one which may very properly be taken to heart by all of God’s people at the present time. Reverence is very becoming. We have lost the fear that God will cast us into eternal torment. We know our Heavenly Father better than to suppose that He would have any such evil intention toward any of His creatures. But we should not go to the House of God as we would go to the market-place. Many of the Lord’s people do not appreciate the fact that decorum is necessary in every place where God is worshipped.

REVERENTIAL CONDUCT TO BE CULTIVATED

It is for us to realize that we have God in the Church today in a sense that He never was in the typical temple. Wherever there is a meeting of the members of the Church, the Lord has declared that He will be there. The living stones constituting the Temple of God should be as fully revered as temples made of literal stones.

Whether we meet in a parlor or in a church or in an opera house, the fact that God’s people are there, makes that building, whatever it may be, a holy place. Therefore, whoever approaches it should do so with a watchfulness of his feet. When he arrives, he should be appreciative of the place where he is, and should be ready to “hear”—listen

—not full of mirth. All conversation should be of a kind that would edify—build up—along spiritual lines. If we cannot talk along such lines, it would be better for us to hear the discourse, join in the singing, and then withdraw.

Whatever conversation be carried on, it should be with reverence, not merely for the place, but for the occasion. There should be no turning about and saying, “Here comes Brother So-and-so, Sister So-and-so. We shall hear them sing.” Such conduct is very improper.

We do not know any lesson the Lord’s people need to learn more than that of *reverence*. The Lord will not call any one devoid of reverence, and He wants that quality to *grow strong*. But when *fear* is banished, the tendency is to *less reverence*. Special care in this respect is to be observed when we go to the House of God, or to any place where Divine service is to be held.

CONSIDERATION OF THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

Not only should we watch our feet in going to the House of God, but we should watch what we take with us. We should see that we go there clean; that we take no vermin in our clothing; that we have no bad odors about us. We should also see that we do not take children who are not properly trained. Thus we shall not be in danger of annoying others.

There may be occasions when children may be left alone at home. When this is impossible, it would be better for the parents to take turns in coming to the meetings. No one has a right to take children to the meeting, when their presence would be detrimental to the spiritual interests of others. We believe, however, that a way could be devised whereby the child could be left at home until of such an age as not to disturb the Class. The majority of parents become so accustomed to the ways of their children that they do not realize that others are being annoyed—when probably every motion of the child is disturbing others. The others have their own trials to tax their patience.

PUNCTUALITY A MARK OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

It would seem that some need to watch, not only their feet, but also their *watches*. To come into the

meeting late is out of harmony with the principles of both justice and love. All who attend ought, in justice to others, to see that they arrive in time. They ought so to arrange their affairs that they can be at the meeting promptly at the hour.

Doubtless the Lord would view our efforts to be punctual and not to annoy others as marks of Christian character-development, which would have His approval, and which would help to prepare us for the Kingdom. He who is indifferent to the rights of others manifests that he is lacking in the spirit of love, the spirit of Christ, And

whoever has not the spirit of Christ, well developed, will not have a place in the Kingdom.

Hence these matters—unruly children, tardiness at meeting, etc., will have to do with our fitness for a place in the Kingdom. By this we do not mean that we have any right to judge others according to their work. The Lord said, "Judge not." We should show that our *endeavors to do the Lord's will* are equal to the *desires of our hearts*. If we exercise determination in trying to live up to these, we shall be glad when we experience our change in the Resurrection.

Who Is Worthy?

"And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"—Rev. 5:2.



THROUGHOUT the entire Old Testament period God had been causing His servants, the prophets, to record promises and prophecies which were not understood, either by the prophets who recorded them, or by the Israelites who read them. Indeed, even the angels desired to look into them, but were not permitted, so well did God, through His Spirit, succeed in sealing up the testimony containing the divine plan for human redemption and salvation. It is this sealed-up testimony of the divine program that seems to be pictured in our text as the "book," or Scroll, that, in the Revelator's vision, remained sealed until a worthy one was found to break the seals and to look upon and understand its contents.

As the vision progressed a worthy one was found; namely, the "Lamb as it had been slain." There is no question as to the identity of this Lamb. It is our Lord Jesus, the Redeemer and Savior of the world. He was found worthy because He willingly became the Slain Lamb. When He presented Himself in consecration at Jordan, there agreeing to carry out the Father's plan that had been written for Him in the "volume of the book," the scroll began to open. There the heavens were opened unto Him, and the vision He beheld was so inspiring that He was impelled to go into the wilderness, there for forty days to ponder its significance, not only as it effected His own immediate course in life, but also as it related to His Father's "business" in general, which He had come to earth to conduct.

But the Master was not permitted to fully open the Scroll during His earthly ministry. It opened to Him sufficiently to reveal clearly His own course of sacrifice, and through His parables and other teachings, to lay a necessary doctrinal foundation upon which His church could later build; but He did not know all the truth. The time of His second advent, for example, according to the Master's own words, was still held as a secret in the mind of His

Father, although, like the other features of the plan, it had been mechanically recorded by the prophets, but "sealed" until the due time came for it to be understood.

After His resurrection, Jesus said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18.) He had fully proved His worthiness. Having carried out faithfully His own sacrificial part in the plan, He now began to execute its other features. Finally, when every phase of the divine program for restoring the world to life has been faithfully performed by the Master, then will ascend that joyous chorus of praise to be participated in by "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, . . . and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," when they will say, "Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."—Rev. 5:13.

In all the four thousand years from Adam to the first advent of Jesus none was found "worthy" to open the seals and look upon the book—there were none righteous, no, not one. Nor would anyone have been found worthy since that time. Jesus alone, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," who became the Slain Lamb, and because He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," was worthy to both loose the seals of the book, and to look upon it. But, blessed thought, among the provisions of the Scroll is one that makes it possible for a hundred and forty-four thousand, redeemed from the earth, and who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," to look upon that Scroll with the Lamb now that the seals have been broken.

These do not loose the seals of the Scroll; but it is their privilege to look upon it and familiarize themselves with the contents, now that the seals have been broken. Yes, they are privileged to learn the "song of Moses and the Lamb," and none

can learn it but these. In Jesus' prayer to His Father on behalf of the apostles and the entire church, He said, "I have given them Thy Word." The apostles were the first to receive it, but they did not receive it fully until Pentecost. Jesus explained to them that He had many things to say unto them which they could not then receive—not until the Holy Spirit was given.

The necessity of being able to look upon the Scroll lies in the fact that the truth it contains is the guide, or sanctifying influence in the life of those privileged to be coworkers with God. Jesus was sanctified by this truth. That is, it revealed to Him the Father's will, and He set Himself upon the task of doing that will. Jesus explained that this same truth was to be the sanctifying power in the lives of His followers; hence the importance of looking upon the Scroll carefully, sincerely, and with the spirit of full devotion, in order that by "rightly dividing the word of truth," we may become workers that need "not to be ashamed."

FAITHFULNESS OF PRIME IMPORTANCE

We cannot overestimate the privilege of being permitted to look upon the divine Scroll—to understand the divine plan. The question raised in our text, "Who is worthy?" indicates how sacred the Father considers His secrets to be. We cannot be worthy in our own merit, nor in our own strength; but the blood of the Lamb covers our unwilling imperfections, and divine grace is sufficient to keep us in the right way as long as we do the best we can to follow the Lamb. The privilege of looking upon the Scroll means that we are accepted as partners in the divine plan. We cannot do our part perfectly; but we can be zealous for these good works of God.

Faithfulness and loyalty to all things written in the divine Scroll is the evidence of continued worthiness to look thereon. We do not comprehend fully all that the Scroll contains—will not, indeed, until "that which is perfect is come." (1 Cor. 13:10.) Jesus, while still in the flesh, did not understand it all; that is, the Scroll was not then fully unrolled. But Jesus was faithful—O, how wonderfully faithful!—to all that He did see; and thus proved worthy to become the Executor of that divine plan—to take the Scroll from Him that sat up the throne. Of the church Paul says, "Now we see through a glass darkly;" but, we *do* see, and the vision of truth that unfolds before us as we look upon the Scroll brings responsibility.

The brightness of the church's vision as she looks upon the Scroll of the divine plan is in proportion to her needs. In Daniel twelve, where events of the day of the Lord are portrayed, the prophet is told that that particular vision was sealed until "the time of the end." (Dan. 12:4.)

And a great "blessedness" is there forecast for those whose privilege it would be to understand the vision when it was unsealed. That vision is now unsealed, and the feet members of the Christ are rejoicing in the foretold blessings. Do we fully appreciate the favor? Are we proving worthy of the privileges?

Faithfulness to the vision of truth means to safeguard the operation of its principles in our lives. And this applies to every phase of the truth. We cannot be faithful to the truth and at the same time believe and advocate that this, that, or the other detail of it isn't important. How much Daniel would have given to be able to understand the dispensational truth contained in that wonderful vision which to him was sealed! Yea, even the angels would have rejoiced in an understanding of it. Having been found worthy to understand its significance ourselves, let us not now prove unworthy of it by saying that it doesn't matter.

The ones who are to be with the Lamb on the other side of the vail, are the "called, and chosen and faithful." (Rev. 17:14.) To be called and chosen to look upon the Scroll and participate in its provisions is grand, but only those who continue faithful to the call and to the vision will be counted worthy to continue in this inner circle of the Father's love. The vision is not for the world, nor for worldly-minded Christians. It is only for as "many as the Lord your God shall call." We are not to be surprised, then, if others can't see what we see. It is sad when some who have seen, apparently, lose their vision of what the Scroll contains; but we are not to be discouraged by this, nor conclude that if we turn our back upon the Scroll in order to maintain the favor of friends, we will thus be able to help them.

One sign of unworthiness, it seems to us, is indifference, or a lack of zeal for what is written on the Scroll. This indifference may be based upon a lack of faith. A lack of faith in the vision is often manifested in a sort of "maybe" attitude—"It may be so, and it may not be. I believe it, but if you do not, well, I can't blame you, for after all, we can't prove it, so it doesn't make so much difference." Can we suppose for a moment that the Lord would be pleased with us if, after granting us the inestimable privilege of looking upon the Scroll—of understanding things the angels desired to look into—we should take the attitude that what we see, and have been convinced of, is of little importance?

Revelation of divine truth brings responsibility, for it is in this manner that God asks us to go to work for Him. This, indeed, is the reason for giving us the vision. When Isaiah was given a vision of God's glory he understood that this was the significance of it, and he replied, "Here am I, send

me." (Isa. 6: 8.) Saul of Tarsus likewise understood that this is what was meant when he was given that wondrous vision on the road to Damascus; for he enquired, "What wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9: 6.) Later he explained that he had not been "disobedient unto the heavenly vision." (Acts 26: 19.) Paul thus proved himself worthy of the vision.

ARE WE WORTHY?

To us the vision calls for faithfulness in present opportunities of serving the Lord and in preparation for the still greater work of the future. It also is a guide as to the nature of what the Lord wants done at the present time. We are to say unto Zion, "Thy God reigneth," and we are to "comfort all that mourn." We are to continue laying down our lives for the brethren; and especially are we to comfort those who "mourn in Zion." Until the Lord indicates definitely that we are to stop we should continue proclaiming the "acceptable year of the Lord"—that is, that there is still opportunity to run for the prize of the high calling. Are we doing these things? Are we worthy?

If we have only partially looked upon the Scroll, or have not grasped the full significance of what we have seen, then we will not be properly instructed, and our zeal will not be "according to knowledge." If we have not, by looking upon the Scroll, recognized the presence of Him who said He would "stand at the door and knock," then we will not see our privilege of saying unto Zion "Thy God reigneth." If we conclude that the vision which the prophet said would not tarry, has tarried, we will be at a loss to know just where we are on the stream of time, hence will be uncertain as to the privileges and the responsibilities of the hour.

But if, through faithfulness, we are still enjoying the blessed privilege of looking upon that Scroll, and are not depending for inspiration merely upon a past vision of the truth, we will be impelled to redouble our efforts to prove worthy. Let us not under-value the great privilege that is ours, not only of looking upon the Scroll, but of being active in the ministry of the truth that unfolds to us! There is every evidence in the world around us today, that the vision has not tarried. Do we fully appreciate the magnitude of the divine favor that is represented in permitting us to see the vision, and upon the basis of the knowledge thus revealed, be His representatives in this most wonderful time of the world's history?

LET US BE THANKFUL

Faithfulness to the message of truth is the best way of showing our appreciation for it. We may say "Thank you" to the Lord, and that is fine, but our thanksgiving shouldn't end merely with the expressing of it. We have the privilege of showing

our thankfulness by our faithfulness in bringing our lives into conformity with the truth; and by sacrificing time and strength and means in doing those things which the Lord has put into our hands to do.

The thought of thankfulness is suggested in the text: "He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head." (Psa. 110: 7.) Evidently the lesson here is drawn from the example of the birds, which, when they drink, lift up their heads as if in thankfulness to the Creator for the loving provision made for them. It is, indeed, a good lesson for us. We should always lift up our heads in thankfulness for the Lord's blessings; and we can best do this through *faithfulness in the use of the blessings*.

Every good and perfect gift cometh from above, and we are to be thankful for all of them. To have the privilege, with Jesus, to look upon the Scroll of the divine plan, and to become partners with Him in carrying out its provisions, is an inestimable boon. Without this, all other divine gifts would be without vital significance, even as they are to the world in general. But to know the truth gives meaning to every blessing; yea, to every trial as well. It transforms our whole life into a stream of valuable experiences for which we can, with understanding, lift up our heads in praise to God.

A THANKFUL YEAR

As we enter upon the new year, 1940, may it be in the spirit of thankfulness to the Lord for all He has done, and is doing for us. Let us ever be thankful for the gift of His Son through Whom we can be counted worthy to look upon the Scroll. And let us be more than ever, thankful for the privilege of seeing and understanding. O what a vision! and what implications of glory if we are faithful to that vision!

Let us resolutely determine that nothing else really matters in our lives except to prove faithful to the heavenly vision. What matters it what people think of us so long as we have this evidence that God loves us. What matters it if we do not always understand the reason for the experiences through which we are permitted to pass? The Lord understands, and He will not permit us to be tested above that which we are able to bear. If we continue to look upon the Scroll, and are faithful to what we see, we will know that nothing can harm us as new creatures because the Lord is caring for us.

Without a vision of the things written on the Scroll, all is dark and uncertain; but in the light of that vision, there is no darkness, for the path of the just will continue to shine unto the perfect day. Hence, while the year before us is fraught with uncertainty to the world, to us it is bright


with hope; for we know that "our King is marching on," and that soon, having been called and chosen, and if we finally prove faithful, we will be with Him, sharing in the glorious work of causing the knowledge of the glory of God to fill the whole

earth as the waters cover the sea.

Who is equal to these things? Who is worthy? Only those who, in appreciation and self-sacrificing faithfulness, "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

Scriptural Restraints of Liberty

(Continued from last month)

 RUE Christian liberty does not imply license. In fact, the only sense in which the Christian life is one of liberty is because the follower of the Master learns to love the divine will, hence does not consider the restraints of that will as in any way hindering his doing that which as a new creature, he desires to do. But the tests of obedience are often very crucial, and Jesus' followers sometimes find their flesh rebelling against the Scriptural restraints of their liberty. This rebellion is not open, and seldom is considered as being against the Lord and His will. Sometimes it is against servants of the Lord who faithfully point out the divine will. Sometimes it is practiced on the pretext of opposing "sectarianism." There is doubtless always, to the mind of the flesh, an apparent reason why the Lord's will should be violated.

The proper exercise of Christian liberty has to do with our own relationship with the Lord as individuals and also with our association with others in the church. It has to do as well with our attitude toward individuals and groups with whom we cannot agree; yes, even towards the world in general. At no point does the consecrated Christian have the liberty to do as he pleases. He delights to do the Lord's will, and seeks, earnestly to know that will, and do it regardless of the cost.

The spirit of full consecration is outlined in Romans 12:1, and in verse 2 the apostle adds, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." From this verse onward in the epistle Paul deals with many points which have to do with the "perfect will of God" for the consecrated. As these points are noted we realize that a Christian is, in many ways, restrained from doing that which he might consider to be proper.

Verse 3 declares: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." In worldly circles it is considered quite proper that a man think of himself as highly as possible. Indeed, men are encouraged to have confidence in

their own abilities. They are encouraged to develop their personalities so as to be able to exercise an influence over their associates. But the Christian does not have the liberty to do this.

The Christian is to think "soberly," and when he does, he will realize how imperfect and weak he really is; and how impossible it would be for him to render acceptable service to the Lord apart from the loving arrangement that has been made for him through Christ. To the extent that he does take proper cognizance of his own abilities he will do so in the realization that he is but one member in the body, and that his outlook must be one of interest in the welfare of all the consecrated, and not merely that of his own advantage.

In only one sense does the Christian have the liberty to be a "rugged individualist," and that is in his determination to do the Lord's will. Otherwise he is expected, in the carrying out of the divine will, to sink his individualism in order that the interests of the whole body might be the better served. In this body, Paul explains, there are different gifts and varying opportunities. Some can "prophesy," or preach; some can teach; some can exhort; some can give; and all can pray. Paul's argument is that each one should be faithful in the use of whatever the Lord has put in his hands to use; not to his own advantage, but for the good of all.—Rom. 12:3-8.

LIBERTY TO LOVE AND BLESS

The apostle continues: "Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good." (Rom. 12:9.) Yes, we have liberty to cleave to that which is good, but not to the evil. We are to be "kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." (Verse 10.) We do not have the liberty to be anything else than kind toward the brethren. And, while the flesh would prefer, perhaps, to promote self and demote others in the church, we have the liberty only to prefer others in honor, and to rejoice when they are honored and promoted by the Lord.

"Recompense to no man evil for evil." (Verse 17.) How the flesh, at times, would like to break away from this restraint! Satan may help us to reason that by rendering evil for evil we are but expressing "righteous indignation" against the

wrong-doer; but such reasoning is not permitted by the will of God. "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord," and in this assurance the Christian must rest, the while rejoicing in the opportunity of returning good for evil, and thus demonstrating his own heart loyalty to the great principle of lovingkindness.—Rom. 12:19.

"If it be possible," says the apostle, "as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." (Verse 18.) In the statement, "if it be possible," Paul indicates that there would be occasions when it would not be possible to live peaceably, and, apparently, for the reason that to do so would mean a compromise of the divine will. The Christian is to be guided in all things by the divine will which is reflected in the "wisdom that is from above." But this wisdom is "first pure," after that it is "peaceable."—James 3:17.

The Christian does not have liberty to countenance sin and unrighteousness in order to get along peaceably with others, as desirable as peace may be. Purity must come first. Purity of conduct and purity of doctrine must be insisted upon as a basis of peace. The Christian does not have the liberty to compromise these, even though refusal to do so may result in being estranged from family and dearest friends.

RECEIVING THE WEAK

"Him that is weak in the faith," the apostle says, "receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." (Rom. 14:1.) The particular point of weakness here discussed by Paul was that of the propriety of eating meat or vegetables. (See Rom. 14:2, *Diaglott*.) Some could conscientiously "eat all things," whether regarded as clean or unclean, and others could not. Those who could not eat things regarded as unclean were considered by the apostle to be "weak in the faith." But these weak ones were not to be ignored. They should be received into the church, "but not to doubtful disputations." That is, while they were to be fellowshipped they were not to be permitted to disturb the meetings by continually bringing up their differences. These weak ones no doubt felt that they were actually more righteous than the others, and it would be natural for them to use every opportunity to convince the church of the righteousness of their position. This, obviously, would lead to disputation which would not be at all profitable.

The principle involved would just as well apply in all controversial matters, and would mean that we do not have the liberty to disfellowship brethren who are not able to see and appreciate the depths of the truth as fully as ourselves. We are to receive them; but, on the other hand, Christian liberty does not demand that they be given full liberty to continue airing their views before the

congregation and thus keep the brethren in more or less of a turmoil. To prevent such a condition obtaining in an ecclesia is not a throttling of Christian liberty, but merely following the inspired advice of the apostle in order that the best interests of the congregation, as a whole, might be served.

On the other hand, as individual Christians, we have the liberty to take a course that would avoid stumbling a weaker brother. Paul says, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." (Rom. 14:21.) This means that a brother does not have the liberty to go ahead doing and saying things which he himself might approve, but which might serve to offend, stumble, or make weak, another brother. This, perhaps, is one of the most unwelcome restraints the Scriptures place upon the Christian—that is, unwelcomed by the flesh. The natural desire is to do as we please; especially when we believe that we are in the right. Worldly advice would be, "Make sure you are right, and then go ahead," but the Scriptures counsel otherwise. We, of course, must make sure that we are right; but in addition to that, we must take into consideration the best interests of others; for only by so doing can we be wholly right, wholly pleasing to the Lord. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."—Rom. 15:1.

LIBERTY IN TOLERANCE

Before the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost, and while the Master was still personally with His disciples, they came to Him with a report that they had found others preaching and casting out devils in His name. They asked if they should forbid these unauthorized workers to continue serving in the Master's name. Jesus said that these workers should not be restrained. This indicates that we do not have the liberty to prevent others from serving the Lord even though they may not be working with us. Fallen human nature might often wish to "forbid" those serving who may not be directly associated with us; and the reason for so doing might seem quite plausible.

There is only the one true church. We believe, or should believe that we are associated with that church, hence everything outside of our association must be of the devil, and therefore why shouldn't the Lord be pleased that we do everything in our power to prevent further activity on the part of these supposed "opposers"? But the Scriptures restrain "liberty" of this kind. Jesus told His disciples to "forbid them not." In other words, don't do a thing to prevent the activities of those whom you feel are not viewing matters in the right light, or who, for some reason, may not

be working with you. To do so, would be a display of intolerance.

But there is another point in this narrative that is frequently overlooked, and that is that Jesus didn't instruct His disciples to invite those others to cooperate with *them*. The exercise of true Christian liberty does not call for this. Hence, while we should never put a straw in the way of those who are not of "this way," we are not obligated to invite their cooperation. An ecclesia of brethren has the liberty of saying whom they shall have to serve them, but they do not have the liberty to say that those not meeting the doctrinal or other requirements for serving their ecclesia, should not serve the brethren in other ecclesias. To the extent that these Scriptural distinctions and criterions are observed by the brethren generally, the greater will be the peace and happiness of all concerned.

LIBERTY TO CHOOSE TEACHERS

In last month's article dealing with the subject of Christian liberty we noted the distinction made by the apostle as between "brethren" and "teachers" in the church, as pointed out in the epistle to the Hebrews. These "Holy brethren," Paul declared, were not qualified to be teachers, for they had need that even the first principles of the doctrines of Christ be preached to them again. In a further application of this principle which, in the matter of service in the church, makes a distinction between brethren who are and brethren who are not teachers, the question arises as to just what we can properly consider a necessary doctrinal standard for teachers, and of what Christian liberty demands with respect to those who do not measure up to these standards, yet desire to be teachers in the church.

The Scriptures do not leave us in doubt in this matter. In fact, the apostle in this very connection, gives us a clue as to what he considered the first principles which, alone, did not qualify brethren to be teachers. He enumerates them as "Repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."—Heb. 6:1, 2.

"Repentance," "faith," and "baptisms" cover the progress of an individual from sin to full consecration. Baptisms in the plural includes the true baptism, which is that of being planted together in the likeness of Jesus' death. To have a doctrinal foundation of this sort implies a pretty clear knowledge of a great deal of the truth. To understand properly the doctrine of the resurrection, and of the coming judgment, would mean that one would have a fairly good understanding of the future Kingdom work of blessing all the families of the earth. Altogether, then, this doctrinal out-

line suggested by the apostle includes, in a general way, an understanding of the church's present privileges and also our hope for the world of mankind. To know these things one would need to be "in the truth," yet such an understanding, Paul indicates, should not necessarily be considered as sufficient to qualify one to be a teacher in the church.

The Hebrews had known these things, yet had measurably neglected them, and the apostle tells them he would like to explain some of the more advanced truths, but he hesitated because they were "dull of hearing," hence it was difficult to explain matters to them. The particular point of advanced truth the apostle mentions is that pertaining to the typical significance of the Melchisedec priesthood. As we follow the apostle's lesson through we find him setting forth the great fact of the church's participation in the priestly work of sacrifice in this age, and of her reigning with Christ to bless the world in the next age. We find Him also discussing the typical and antitypical sacrifices of the day of atonement; the covenants; the tabernacle; etc.

It was the Hebrews' dullness of hearing that prevented their appreciation of these deep truths; and which, the apostle argues, disqualified them as teachers in the church, although Paul made it plain that they were "holy brethren."

DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH IMPORTANT

It was important for Noah to know about the coming flood, and to take necessary steps based upon that knowledge. The first advent of Jesus and the accompanying circumstances were important truths for the early church, and, indeed, for us also. The second presence of Christ, bearing as it does, such an important relationship to God's plan, and the Christian's part in that plan, is a *vital truth today*. It is because of the second presence of Christ that the whole glorious divine plan has been revealed to the church. Shall we say, then, that we have the liberty to set this aside as one of the points of truth that a teacher in the church need not be clear upon, or might even deny? Repentance from sin and acceptance of the provisions of the blood of Christ is essential to salvation; but the whole outline of present truth is essential in order to know God's will for His people today, and to be able to cooperate with Him in the doing of that will.

That Paul considered what some may call controversial points important so far as teachers in the church is concerned, is made clear by his statement to Timothy in which he speaks of some who claimed that the resurrection of the dead had already taken place, and by so doing, "overthrow the faith of some." (2 Tim. 2:18.) Evidently the

early church understood that the first resurrection of the dead *could* take place without the necessity of seeing the resurrected ones walking about the streets. There were some in the early church who thought that the "day of the Lord" had already come, and these, evidently, or some of them, also believed this meant that the first resurrection had become a reality. Paul makes it clear that by misunderstanding the truth on these subjects, and teaching the error, the faith of some was overthrown.

Today we have the same issue, except in reverse. Now, the great falling away from the faith and the development of the antichrist which Paul said must precede the day of the Lord, as a matter of history. Now the day of the Lord has come, and they that were asleep in Christ have been raised. This is important dispensational truth; not fundamental to salvation, but fundamental to a clear understanding of what the Lord is now doing in the earth. To hold and teach error on this point would result, even as it did in Paul's day, in overthrowing the faith of many. As Christians, therefore, we do not have the liberty to uphold teachers whose ministry would thus result detrimentally to the brethren, especially to the weaker brethren.

But that Paul did not wish to be understood as ruling out of the body of Christ those who might inadvertently teach or hold to error, is clear, from the next verse, where he says, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His." (2 Tim. 2:19.) This is a blessed assurance, yet it does not grant a Christian the liberty to relax his vigilance in striving along every legitimate line to know the Father's will and to do it.

The argument has been raised that Brother Russell did not consider dispensational truth important as a test of eldership, for the reason that he did not mention it in the V. D. M. questions sent to Pilgrims and recommended for elders and the friends of the truth in general. But it should not be overlooked that one of those questions asks whether the candidate has carefully read the six volumes of Studies in the Scriptures. In view of this question, we cannot suppose that if one answered that he had carefully read these volumes, but that he disagreed with the position taken on chronology, the manner and time of the second coming of Christ, the harvest work, etc., etc., that Brother Russell would consider him qualified to serve as a pilgrim.

In the study and use of Brother Russell's writings as well as in our study and use of the Bible, we need to be careful that it isn't done merely with the thought of proving a "pre-adopted creed," either of our own making, or of someone else's mak-

ing. Let us realize that every command of the sacred Word, its every example, and its every principle, are for our guidance. They all serve in one way or another to circumscribe our liberty, because they all either encourage us to do something which by nature we do not care to do, or else restrain us from doing those things that the flesh would delight in doing.

Yes, we are truly bond-slaves in Christ. As new creatures we delight to be slaves in Christ, that we may exercise the true liberty of Christians. And it is *liberty* to do the divine will. Coming into Christ we become free from our former taskmaster, sin, and become the servants of righteousness. But, if we are to be victorious, we must learn to strive lawfully. Let us then study the Word faithfully for the express purpose of discovering the restraints which its precepts place upon our flesh, and then seek through prayer, fellowship and study, the necessary strength to rejoice in our privilege of being true yoke-fellows with Christ.

yes---

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International Sunday School Lessons



PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

Dec. 17—Matt. 13:3-8, 31-33, 44-46

GOLDEN TEXT: "Incline thine ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live."—Isaiah 55:3.

THE parable given by our Lord in verses 3-8—that of the Sower—is also recorded in Mark, chapter four. In Mark 4:13, the Lord makes a very interesting comment on this parable, saying to His disciples, "Know ye not this parable? How, then, will ye know all parables?" This translation is not as clear as it might be, and Jesus' words may be understood to signify: It is proper for you to understand this parable, as it will prove a key valuable in the interpretation of all parables. Our Lord then proceeded to give a very particular interpretation of the parable.

He first explained that the "seed is the Word of God." (Luke 8:11.) The different kinds of soil represent different kinds of hearts coming in contact with that Word. By the Word of God we are to understand the entire revelation which God has made to us—the Bible. This includes, as the apostle points out, "the word spoken by angels"—God's direct messages in the past to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, etc., including the giving of the Law.

It includes also the messages sent through the prophets, when "holy men of old spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1:21.) And it includes the teachings of our Lord and His Apostles, whom He authorized to speak in His name, as it is written, "God hath in these last times spoken unto us by His Son," and the Son declared respecting the Apostles that those who heard them heard Him, those who received them received Him, as those who heard and received Him heard and received the Father.—Heb. 1:2; Matt. 10:40.

It is well that we lay full emphasis upon this only proper seed, the Word of God because much confusion has resulted from a mistake on this point, the using of improper seed, namely, the theories of men.

How careful, then, the Lord's people should be respecting the seed which they receive into their own hearts from day to day, and respecting the seed of truth which they in turn seek to scatter in the good ground of other hearts.

Our Lord elsewhere declares that the field is the world, but not all the world is being planted at the present time. But, we may say that Christendom is the wheat-field in which the Lord has sown His Word. In Christendom some are like the wayside, or paths hard trodden by life's experiences, sometimes by too great prosperity, and unprepared to receive God's message, unappreciative of it.

If such hear the message it enters not into the heart: it is to them merely a mental hearing, they take little interest in it. Ere long the enemy comes; Satan the adversary steals away from them the elements of truth once seen or appreciated. This wayside class are not acceptable now as the Lord's people, though they may be prepared for the truth in the future age, through trials and sufferings and disappointments in the present life, resulting in the plowing up of their hearts.

The next class the parable mentions is the stony-ground hearers. These are also to be found among professing Christians. They not only see something of the beauty of God's plan, but they receive it with joy, and give evidence of bringing forth fruit. Some of these we might think to be true Christians. But we cannot know the heart nor discern the shallowness of the nature until opposition being aroused, the sun of persecution blights and withers their profession. If any of the Lord's people who have received the truth find in themselves this shallowness of nature, this superficiality represented in the parable, they should at once appeal to the Lord for such a deepening of the soil of their hearts as would enable them to bring forth fruitage to His praise.

The next class of believers which the parable brings to our attention

is the thorny-ground hearers. The soil which brings forth great thorns is said to be rich, and if it were wholly devoted to the production of wheat would bring forth large crops. So it is, our Lord explains, with some who hear the message of God respecting the Kingdom—they are strong characters and would make noble Christians and bring forth much fruitage to the Master's praise if they were fully devoted to the Lord. But alas! their talents, influence, means, time—the strength of their hearts is absorbed in another direction—in the development of earthly projects and ambitions, interests which conflict with the interests of the Kingdom. The parable shows that where the thorns are permitted to remain the Kingdom interests will suffer. It is another way of telling us that we cannot serve God and Mammon. Our hearts must be single, wholly given to the Lord; we must love Him with all our heart, soul, strength, mind, else we cannot bring forth the fruitage He requires of disciples.

The fourth class of hearers is represented as the good-ground. Thank God that in His providence and grace some of our hearts have been plowed deeply by the plowshare of experience, trouble, disappointment in respect to earthly affairs and conditions. Thanks be to Him, too, if the soil of our hearts is deep and able to receive and appreciate the truth, the Word of the Kingdom. Thanks be to God also if our hearts are not infested with business or household or other "cares, and riches and pleasures of this life." Let us, dear brethren, not only be sure that our hearts are of the good-ground sort, humble, honest, sincere, and be sure that we have received and are developing the good seed, the Word of the Kingdom, but let us seek also to bring forth much fruit. Seeing that some of these may bring forth thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold to the Master's praise, let us determine that by the grace of God, which we know is ours and will assist us, we will be of those who

bring forth fruitage an hundred-fold—to our largest possible capacity of loving devotion to our King. And let us keep in mind that we may increase our fruitage by that honesty of heart, which prepares us to receive and to be sanctified by the truth, “the good Word of God.”

THE CHILD AND THE KINGDOM

December 24

Matt. 1:18-25; 18:1-6; 19:13-15

GOLDEN TEXT: “A little child shall lead them.”—Isaiah 11:6.

THE first of the three passages arranged for today’s lesson tells of Jesus’ birth, and the other two of our Lord’s use of a little child to illustrate lessons of trust and humility to His disciples. In Matthew 18:1-6, we read that the disciples came to Jesus saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” In the parallel account in Mark 9:33-37, it is evident that they had been debating this question previously and their inquiry was the result of a question by our Lord as to the topic of their earnest conversation.

Our Lord doubtless knew at the time their arguments in the dispute, but instead of administering a personal rebuke to those most at fault, He chose rather to make the matter a general lesson, profitable, helpful, strengthening to them all. And is not His example valuable to all His followers? Is it not wise on our part so far as possible to avoid personalities and the holding up of any individual to special criticism?

All mankind have faults and blemishes, some in one particular and some in another, and it is rarely wise to single out an individual in the body of Christ for a special reprimand; it is generally better to do as our Master did in this instance—to give a general lesson on the subject which will be helpful to all, not only to those who are taking a wrong course, but also to those who are more nearly right in their views and conclusions.

When our Lord inquired of the disciples what topic was so greatly absorbing their attention and leading to such warm discussion, it is to their credit that they were ashamed to acknowledge that they

had been disputing concerning which should be chief or greatest in the Kingdom. The whole matter was to be a favor to them anyway; they realized they had done nothing to merit so great an honor, that the call to the Kingdom was of grace, of favor. They felt abashed, and Jesus did not press the question.

A child was near—He took it and set it in their midst. Afterwards, Luke says, He took the child in His arms. Their attention riveted by this peculiar proceeding, they were prepared for the lesson—which many have misunderstood, having supposed that our Lord meant the Kingdom of heaven would be composed mainly of children. No such thoughts were communicated by our Lord to His disciples. On the contrary, Jesus did not call little children to be His disciples, and He Himself did not begin His ministry as a child, but when He was thirty years of age. Nothing in this, however, signifies that our Lord had not a deep sympathy with children, as is illustrated by His taking some of them into His arms and blessing them and saying, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such [like] is the Kingdom of heaven.”

Neither should we understand that because Jesus’ ministry began at thirty, and because those whom He called to be His disciples were of mature years, that this would limit the age of any who might become the followers of Christ during the Gospel age. Quite to the contrary, we believe that some of very tender years have gained a sufficiency of information respecting our Lord, His work of redemption and His invitation to followers to intelligently take their stand with Jesus’ disciples by making a full consecration of heart and life and every interest to Him.

Let us not lose sight of the fact that it is the Kingdom of heaven that the Lord was discussing, and that He was using the little child as an illustration of simplicity, docility and teachableness, and freedom from pride and ambition. This was impressed upon the disciples as they looked at the little child sitting there unconscious of the great honor thrust upon it, unconscious of being

used by the glorious King of kings to illustrate a lesson. The thought of our Lord is clearly given in the fourth verse, which says, “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.”

What a lesson is here for the Lord’s followers—His “little ones.” He shows us that while He has invited us to the greatest and grandest of all honors and privileges, nevertheless the attainment of this high calling, the making of our calling and election sure, will depend upon the way in which we receive these honors and privileges. If it stirs up in us selfish ambition for greatness, power and honor among men, it is having the wrong effect. The effect which God designs is that we should realize our own insignificance and unworthiness of such great honors, that we should feel ourselves very little indeed in the sight of God.

The moving power with the proper disciples of Christ, who would maintain the love and favor of their Lord and ultimately make sure their calling and election in His Kingdom, must not be selfishness, grasping of position and power and fame. The moving power must be love—love for God, love for the brethren, and at least a sympathetic love for the whole world of mankind, even including our enemies—many of whom are doubtless such because of blindness. The apostle expresses this ruling, propelling power in the true followers of Jesus, saying, “The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that if one died for all then were all dead: and that He died for all that they which live should henceforth not live unto themselves but unto Him who died for them and rose again.”—2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

FRIENDS AND FOES OF THE KINGDOM

Dec. 31—Matt. 13:54; 14:4; 15:29-31

GOLDEN TEXT: “Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”—John 15:14.

IN the passages composing the lesson for today we have fragments of the history of the Logos, or Word of God, who was made flesh and dwelt among men; the Only Begot-

ten of the Father, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, in order that we, through His poverty, might become rich. The verses in the latter part of chapter 13, tell of Jesus' efforts to instruct His own countrymen and their rejection of His message, and it is said that "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Here was illustrated the principle elsewhere declared and of such great importance to the Christian, namely, that the degree of faith measures the blessings we may receive from the Lord. Other illustrations of this principle are to be found in the Lord's statement, when He healed the two men of blindness: "According to your faith be it unto you." And again in His words to the woman who touched the hem of His garment in faith that she would be healed: "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole."—Matt. 9:29, 22.

In the first part of chapter 14 we have the record of the execution of John the Baptist, at the behest of Herodias. This has become a classic example of the hatred aroused in a depraved, evil person by reproof for wrong-doing. Doubtless our Lord was deeply moved by the murder of John, and His course immediately thereafter is most interesting. In verse 12 we are told that when John's disciples had claimed his body and buried it, they came and told Jesus of his death.

He at once departed with His disciples by ship to a desert place, apparently desirous of having a time of rest and communion with the Father. The multitude, however, learned where He was going and followed Him on foot. Verse 14 indicates that when Jesus came forth from the boat He saw the great multitude. Instead of feeling any impatience at this interruption of His plan, if such it was, it is written that He "was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick."

What a beautiful illustration of that complete harmony with the Father's will is seen here in the Lord's equal readiness to minister to the multitude and heal the sick as to go apart for communion with the Father. It reminds us that real

success as a Christian is not in carrying out our plans, even though they may be good ones and intended to glorify the Lord; but in such complete harmony with the Father that we feel no disappointment and offer no resistance when a new program is indicated as His will instead of the one we had planned.

Not only did Jesus remain and minister to the multitude during that day, but when the evening drew on and the disciples suggested that He send them into nearby villages to buy food for themselves, Jesus said unto them, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." Again, what a beautiful lesson for the disciples, of benevolence, hospitality and faith. The disciples apparently were not yet prepared to expect such a miracle of their Lord as the feeding of the great multitude of five thousand men, beside women and children, the only available food being "but five loaves and two fishes." But He used them, nevertheless, to cooperate in the distribution, and then "they took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full." It was wonderful day, and how thankful we are that the record of it and the lessons it contains for the Lord's followers have been preserved for us.

The third section of the lesson prepared for today, records a similar day in which Jesus healed the afflicted among the multitude that came unto Him, and afterward performed a miracle in feeding them. Between these two incidents we are told that after the interruption of His plan to have a period of solitude and prayer, after He had healed the afflicted and fed the multitude, "Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitude away."

Afterward, we are told, "He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come He was there alone." (Matt. 14:22, 23.) Evidently our Lord realized a necessity for periods of special communion with His Father, even though He was always in such close fellowship with Him that He could say, as at the tomb of Lazarus, "I know that Thou hearest Me always." And no more important les-

son can be gained from our study than this of our Lord's dependence upon His Father for wisdom, and strength to carry out His purposes. We are told that Jesus was able to offer Himself as a perfect sacrifice "through the eternal spirit." (Heb. 9:14.), and that the Father gave not the spirit by measure unto Him.

Our fellowship with our Lord is beautifully illustrated in the fact that we, too, are told that our source of strength and wisdom is the Father, and that He is more willing to give His spirit to them that ask it, than an earthly parent is willing to give good gifts to his child. (Luke 11:13.) It is in the realization of the unlimited supplies of grace and strength available to us when we "ask in faith, nothing doubting," and by taking these precious promises at their full value that we may become "disciples indeed," and reach that full development to which we are called, "conformed to the image of His Son"—our Lord Jesus.—Rom. 8:29.

Our Golden Text summarizes the basis on which we may enjoy the fellowship and blessing of the Lord as His "friends." And here again the complete similarity between Jesus and His faithful followers is indicated, for He says: "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love."—John 15:10.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONFESSION OF FAITH

Jan. 7—Matt. 16:13-24

GOLDEN TEXT: "Thou art the Christ Son of the living God."—Matt. 16:16.

OUR Lord had been teaching the apostles and the public for about three years, and although He had frequently referred to Himself as the "Son of Man," a title recognized among the Jews as appropriate to the Messiah, and applied to Messiah by Daniel (Dan. 7:13, 14), our Lord had never positively declared Himself to be the Messiah. He had allowed His words, "such as never man spake," and His works such as never man performed, to testify of Him.

By way of bringing the matter gradually before their minds, our Lord first asked the apostles respecting the general opinions of the peo-

ple regarding Him—whom they thought Him to be. The answer was that there was some confusion, some claiming that He was Elijah, others that He was John the Baptist returned with greater power, others that He was one of the ancient prophets who had reappeared. With this introduction our Lord put the important question directly, "Whom say ye that I am? At once came a noble confession from the Apostle Peter, who, while expressing his own sentiments, evidently expressed the minds of the other disciples also, for there was no protest on the part of any and their silence gave assent.

Our Lord promptly acknowledged Peter's confession as being correct, and He added a blessing, saying, "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas, because flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." This question, "What think ye of Christ?" has been rung down through the ages from that time until now, wherever the knowledge of the Lord has gone. Thank God that in due time this true Light shall lighten every man that cometh into the world. (John 1:9.) Eventually every son and daughter of Adam must decide respecting the great Savior whom God has provided—each must accept or reject Him as his Redeemer, Teacher, Priest and King, if he would enter into life; or, rejecting Him knowingly and wilfully, will die the second death—utter destruction.

In this conversation, Peter speaking as the mouthpiece of the apostles, was especially addressed by our God, though the blessing spoken to him was in a measure shared by the others also. Our Lord here gave Simon his surname, Peter, which signifies a stone, declaring, "Thou art Peter [a stone], and upon this rock [this great truth which you have enunciated] I will build My church." Peter writing subsequently refers to the matter, saying of all the Lord's true followers, "Ye, also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 2:5.) Peter and the other apostles are presented to us as foundation stones built upon this

great truth, that Christ is the Redeemer, the Savior, the Messiah.—Rev. 21:14.

With the correct understanding of the meaning of the Greek word "hades", translated "hell" in our common version of the Bible, our Lord's words respecting His church that "gates of hell shall not prevail against it," remind us of His own triumph over death in His resurrection. The Apostle Paul likewise speaking of the deliverance of the church from the grave, exclaims, "O hades, where is thy victory?" He pictures thus the church triumphing over hades, coming out of the death state, and this is the same thought our Lord presents. Furthermore, through Christ and the church all mankind will be delivered from "hades."

After our Lord had given Himself as a sacrifice and had thus provided redemption for members of Adam's race, it was possible to accept truly consecrated followers—to throw open to them the door of the Kingdom. And it was the announcing of this invitation and declaring the conditions of membership in His body that He evidently referred to when He said that He would give to Peter the keys of the Kingdom.

On the day of Pentecost Peter was used to present the Kingdom message to the Jews and proselytes, inviting them to become sharers in the Kingdom of God's dear Son. And when, three and a half years later, the Lord's due time had come for throwing open the other door into the Kingdom—the door for the Gentiles—Peter again was given the key, the right, the authority, to open that door. He it was who was sent to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, to explain to him the conditions of relationship to Christ in the Kingdom.

The declaration respecting Peter's authority to bind and loose was a common form of expression in those days, to indicate forbidding and permitting. This authority was shared by all the apostles (Matt. 18:18, 19), and it is because of our belief in this that we hold to the exact presentations of the apostles as representing the divine will, and allow no testimony by subsequent followers of the Lord to have the same weight

or influence. Respecting the apostles alone we have the assurance that they were divinely supervised—that whatever they forbade or allowed was under heavenly guidance and sanction.

Although Peter did not so intend the matter, his efforts to dissuade the Master from the course that would lead to His suffering and death, were in the direction of turning the Lord aside from the fulfillment of His covenant. And so doubtless it is with some who, Peter-like, do not give sufficient heed to the Master's teaching—their influence at times upon their brethren and the church is to hinder the sacrificing rather than to assist the sacrificers in the good way.

Let us be on guard as respects ourselves and our influence upon others. Peter reasoned from the human standpoint, not from the divine. Our Lord's life was an illustration, and put emphasis upon the words which He then addressed to the apostles, "If any man will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it."

DISCIPLINE

"God's hand that saves, though kind,
seems rough;
His methods sometimes rude;
Fail shrinking nature cries, 'Enough!'
Yet proves the Lord is good."

"The temple stones God now prepares
Oft cry, 'You hurt me sore';
The Sculptor seeks their perfectness,
And trims them more and more—"

"Until, by dint of strokes and blows
The shapeless mass appears
Symmetric, polished, beautiful,
To stand the eternal years."

"The beaten sheaves, all threshed and torn,
And trampled under feet,
Yield forth, when tribulation's o'er,
Their grains of golden wheat."

"Out of the crushed and mangled grapes,
Comes forth the sparkling wine;
If God but still my portion is,
Be such experience mine."

"Kept while the furnace, heated white,
Shall purge the dross away!
Thy judgments, Lord, are true and right,
And brighter every day."

Hymns of Dawn

CHILDREN'S HOUR

LUCIFER—THE PROTECTING ANGEL

Chapter 5—December 17

ADAM and Eve did not have very much work to do. The food they ate grew on the trees in Eden and they did not have to cook it. They did not need very much of a house because the weather was so fine—they spent most of the time out-of-doors. Sometimes they worked in the garden; God had told them to keep it looking nice. He had told Adam they might eat the fruit of any tree there except one. This He called "The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil." The fruit of this tree, He said, they must not eat. Why do you suppose God put the tree there if He did not want them to eat its fruit? That is an easy question, isn't it? God wanted His earthly children to learn to obey Him.

We must not suppose that Adam and his wife were left all alone in the garden. Oh, no! God knew they had much to learn. Such nice, new people as Adam and Eve did not know very well what to do; they needed someone to teach them and help them. So God chose Lucifer to watch over them just as your mother, perhaps, sometimes tells you to take care of the baby. God called Lucifer the "Covering Cherub" which means he was a protecting angel.

Lucifer had been living a good many years. He had seen many, many times the wonderful things God could do. God had made Lucifer a most beautiful, wise angel and had given him many good things. Now God gave him the great honor and pleasure of teaching Adam and Eve how to love and obey God and how to enjoy most fully the things of the earth in which God had placed them to be rulers.

Lucifer did not want Adam and Eve to love and obey God and he did not want them to be rulers of the earth. Lucifer wanted Adam and Eve to love and obey him, as he, Lucifer, wanted to be King of the Earth. Of course, this was very, very bad of Lucifer and God could have killed him at once, just as soon as he began to think such wicked thoughts. But the other angels did not know what was in Lucifer's mind. If God had killed him, then the angels might have said: "Why did you kill our brother Lucifer?" God thought He would let Lucifer be as wicked as he wanted to be and then, when the time came to punish him, the angels would know that God was right.

Memory Verse: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways . . . till iniquity was found in thee."—Ezekiel 28:15.

Questions:

- 1 What did Adam and Eve do in the Garden of Eden? Why did God tell them not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? Par. 1.
- 2 Whom did God choose to teach and help Adam and Eve? Par. 2.
- 3 Do you think Adam and Eve had much to learn? Par. 3.
- 4 What happened to Lucifer when he was given this wonderful chance to be a blessing to Adam and Eve? Why did not God kill Lucifer as soon as he became wicked? Par. 4.

GOD'S CHILDREN SIN

Chapter 6—December 24

BEFORE God made Eve He had told Adam that he must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; that if he ate of it he would surely die.

One day when Eve was alone she came to this tree and stopped to look at it. While she stood there she saw a serpent near the tree. The serpent spoke to Eve. He said, "Is it true that God told you not to eat the fruit of some of the trees in the garden?" Eve said: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but we must not eat the fruit of this tree; we must not even touch it, for if we do we will die." Then the serpent said: "You will not surely die. God knows that when you eat the fruit of this tree you will be like Him, knowing good and evil."

You must remember that Eve did not know what sin meant. Neither she nor Adam had ever done a wrong thing. She thought she was talking with a serpent but really it was Lucifer making the serpent talk or else he had made himself look like a serpent—we are not sure which. At any rate, Lucifer was in it all and he was much older and wiser than Eve. He talked until he fooled her. She ate of the fruit and gave some to Adam. Now, thought Lucifer, they were obeying him and he would be their god. He would take their kingdom away from them and keep it for himself and they must work for him.

Just as soon as Adam and Eve had eaten the fruit they knew that they had done wrong. They were afraid. They felt they needed something to cover them and they made themselves aprons from fig leaves. And about evening they heard the voice of God in the garden and they hid themselves among the trees. God called Adam and asked him whether he had eaten of the tree and Adam said

that the woman had given him the fruit. God asked Eve what she had done and she said the serpent had tempted her. Then God told the serpent that he could no longer be God's friend. He said that some day one of Eve's children should bruise or crush his, the serpent's, head. God changed Lucifer's name to Serpent, Dragon, Devil or Satan, and by these names we know him today.

To Eve God said that she would have much suffering and that her husband should rule over her. He told Adam that he must work hard the rest of his life; that there would be thorns and thistles in the earth; that in time Adam would die and return to the earth from which he was taken.

God then killed some animals and made coats for Adam and Eve from the skins. Then He sent them out of the garden. He did not want them to eat of the fruit of the trees for if they did, they would live forever. So Adam and Eve were driven from their beautiful home, and God set an angel at the entrance to the garden with a flaming sword that turned everyone away so that they couldn't come near to the tree of life.

Memory Verse: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."—Genesis 2:17.

Questions:

- 1 What did God tell Adam he must not do? Par. 1.
- 2 Tell what took place in the garden between Eve and the serpent. Par. 2.
- 3 Who caused Eve to disobey God? After Eve had eaten of the fruit what did she do? Par. 3.
- 4 Did Adam and Eve know they had done wrong? What did they do? Tell what God said to them. To what was Lucifer's name changed? Par. 4.
- 5 What did God tell Eve and Adam? Par. 5.
- 6 Why did God send them out of the garden? Par. 6.

ADAM'S FIRST CHILDREN

Chapter 7—December 31

AFTER Adam and Eve had been living outside of the garden for a while, their first children were born. They were boys and their names were Cain and Abel. They were very nice babies, probably even nicer than babies are today; but there was something the matter with them just the same. What do you think it was? Well, they were not perfect. Their father and mother had sinned and the babies had caught the sin from them just as people sometimes catch sicknesses from each other.

The babies grew up. Cain was a farmer and Abel had many, many sheep. One day they thought they would like to give something of what they had raised to God. But they could not go to God with their presents for He was in heaven. Besides, God would not eat Cain's fruit nor Abel's sheep for God does not eat as we do. So they each made

a little heap of rocks or earth and called it an altar. Then each built a bonfire on top of his altar. Cain put some of his fruit on the fire on his altar and Abel killed a lamb and put it on his altar. This was their way of giving a present to God. They wanted the smoke to go up towards the sky. If it did this they would know that God was pleased with their gifts.

We must remember that Cain and Abel were sinful. Their father and mother had sinned and God had sent them out of His garden and away from Himself. Because of this, Cain and Abel had no right to come to God, not even to give Him a present; for God has never done wrong and He hates all sin. God had told Adam that he must die, but God was planning that some day some one would die for Adam and then both Adam and all his children could be friends with God again.

Perhaps Abel was thinking of this when he brought a lamb to his altar and after killing it, offered it to God. Perhaps by this Abel wanted to say to God: "I know I am sinful and need someone to die for me." God seemed to know what Abel meant and loved him for it. The smoke from Abel's present went up towards the sky and Abel knew that God was pleased with his gift.

Cain brought fruit to his altar. He did not seem to care whether God wanted to be his friend or not. He seemed to think that God ought to take whatever he brought. God was not pleased. The smoke from Cain's sacrifice went down to the ground. Cain was very angry. He looked at Abel's smoke going upward to God; he looked at his own going downward. He took a big stick, crept softly up behind his brother and killed him. Then he ran away. Wasn't that terrible?

A little later God asked Cain where Abel was. Cain said he did not know. "Am I my brother's keeper?" he asked God. But God knew all about what had happened. God said Cain could not stay with his father and mother any more but must go away from home. Cain did not like this, but God said he must go. So Cain went away.

Memory Verse: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?"—Genesis 4:7.

Questions:

- 1 What were the names of Adam's first children? Were these babies perfect? Why not? Par. 1.
- 2 After they grew up what did they work at? How did Cain and Abel offer a present to God? How were they to know their gifts were accepted by God? Par. 2.
- 3 Did Cain and Abel have a right to come to God? Why not? What was God's plan with regard to His dealing with Adam? Par. 3.
- 4 Did Abel's offering please God? Par. 4.
- 5 How about the offering Cain made? Why wasn't

God pleased with his offering? What did Cain then do? Par. 5.

6 What answer did Cain give when God asked him where Abel was? How did God punish Cain? Par. 6.

SATAN AND HIS HELPERS

Chapter 8—January 7

WHEN Satan disobeyed God and stole the kingdom from Adam and Eve there were many angels watching him. They did not think anyone could fight against God and live. When Satan saw that God did not stop him, he was very proud. He thought God could not stop him. We know God could have stopped Satan at once; but God thought He would let Satan work for Him a while, first. God wanted the angels to choose between right and wrong, so He let Satan live so that the angels could watch him and choose for themselves whom they would serve—God or Satan.

As the people on earth began to suffer and die, the angels were sorry. They asked God whether they might not go down and try to help people. God said they might try. Perhaps He told them to be careful of Satan, who was there also. When the angels came down, Satan tried to make them obey him instead of God. Some of them would not sin because they loved and trusted God. Some of them thought they would rather have Satan for their king and friend. These wicked angels are now called demons.

Instead of thinking about how to help people to do good these naughty angels began to help people to do wrong. Now the people had not only one angel, Satan, to make them bad, but many angels.

Some of them even changed themselves into men and married Adam's daughters. Their children were very, very large people—giants—who were wicked all the time. They quarreled with Adam's children and because they were giants everybody was afraid of them. The earth became a terrible place to live in. The people grew more and more sinful. You will understand how bad it was when I tell you that of all the families in the earth there was only one family, Noah's, that God wanted for His friends.

Noah was a very good man. He loved God and tried to do His will. That is the best that anyone can do. It is the best that we can do. One day God told Noah a secret. He said He was going to send a flood on the earth; that is, He would make it rain and rain and rain until everybody was drowned except Noah and his family. He told Noah to build a big boat called an ark, to keep him safe while everything was covered with water. I will tell you about this in our next chapter.

Memory Verse: "Noah was a just man . . . and Noah walked with God."—Genesis 6:9.

Questions:

1 Could God have stopped Satan, and why did He not do so? Par. 1.

2 What happened when the angels tried to help the people on earth? Par. 2 and 3.

3 Tell about the children that these wicked angels had when they changed themselves into men. Was there anyone on the earth who was not wicked? Par. 4.

THE BIG FLOOD

Chapter 9—January 14

ONE day when Noah, who loved God, was walking about wondering whether he could not do something to make people better, God called him and told him to build a boat—a very, very large boat, "For," said God, "I am going to bring a great flood upon the earth and every living creature will die." God called this boat the Ark.

"Will all the animals die too?" asked Noah.

God said: "I have a nice plan for the animals. When the boat is finished I want you to take some of every kind of animal and put them in it, then take your wife and your three boys and their wives, go into the Ark and I will shut the door. After you are in the Ark, it will begin to rain and it will keep on raining until everything is covered with water and all the wicked people and the giants will drown. When the water is gone you can come out of the Ark, let the animals out and the world will be a better place to live in because all the wicked people will be gone."

Noah worked for one hundred and twenty years to build the Ark. While he worked he told the people what God was going to do. He thought, perhaps they would try to do better; but they only laughed at him. These people had never seen it rain. A mist or fog such as you sometimes see even now came up from the earth, and rain had not been necessary.

When the Ark was finished and Noah's family and the animals and birds were in it, it began to rain and kept on raining until the highest mountains were covered. The people and the big, bad giants drowned.

For many days the Ark floated on top of the water and all in it were safe and happy. When the water went down and the earth dried up, Noah opened the Ark and the animals ran out, glad to be free. Noah built an altar and offered animals upon it, as we read some time ago that Abel did. Then the first rainbow that ever was seen shone out in the sky. When the people saw the rainbow God said to them: "This is My promise that I will never bring another flood as great as this upon the earth." You may remember this promise when-

ever you see the beautiful rainbow in the sky. You need never fear that God will again destroy everybody in a great flood, such as that one was.

And now, let us try to understand why God let all these bad people die. Did He love them? Yes; God loved them, but He let them die so they would know what sin brings and that God will destroy all the wicked. Some day God will bring back all of Adam's children who died in the flood and give them a chance to do better. If the people had kept on living and getting worse all the time they would be so bad that it would be hard to help them when the time came. So we see the flood came because

God still loved these naughty children of His.

Memory Verse: "The waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh."—Genesis 9:15.

Questions:

1 What did God tell Noah to do? Why? Par. 1, 2 and 3.

2 Had it ever rained before? How had the earth been watered? Par. 4.

3 What happened when the Ark was finished? Par. 5.

5 When did the first rainbow shine in the sky and what was God's promise? Par. 6.

6 Why did God let all the bad people die? Par. 7.

"GOOD HOPES" REPORT

(Months of July, August, September, 1939)

FREE TRACT FUND

A1-676--A1-700	\$31.40
1-670	12.50
1-674	10.00
1-675	5.00
1-678	5.00
1-679	10.00
1-685	5.00
1-688	5.00
1-697	5.00
1-698	10.00
Balance July 1	64.49
Transferred from General Fund	500.00
Total	\$663.39

Total number of tract pages of free literature of various kinds sent out and charged against this fund, 699,872.

Total cost of printing and shipping..... \$581.79
Balance

CLASS FORMING FUND

B2-37, B2-38	\$3.00
2-33	10.00
2-34	5.00
2-35	8.00
2-36	5.00
2-39	5.00
Balance July 1	132.72
Transferred from General Fund	200.00
Total	\$368.72
Total Charge	225.39
Balance	\$143.33

GENERAL FUND

F6-1948--F6-2020	\$55.44	6-1988	9.00
6-1950	20.00	6-1989	25.00
6-1951	5.00	6-1993	10.00
6-1952	5.00	6-1994	100.00
6-1953	5.00	6-1995	5.00
6-1954	10.00	6-1997	10.00
6-1955	7.00	6-1998	5.00
6-1957	5.00	6-1999	5.00
6-1958	15.00	6-2000	25.00
6-1959	20.00	6-2001	65.00
6-1960	23.00	6-2005	5.00
6-1961	5.00	6-2007	5.00
6-1962	10.00	6-2010	60.00
6-1963	5.00	6-2011	5.00
6-1967	5.00	6-2012	10.00
6-1968	5.00	6-2013	10.00
6-1969	10.00	6-2017	15.00
6-1971	10.00	6-2018	10.00
6-1973	5.00	6-2021	23.81
6-1975	5.00	6-2022	10.00
6-1977	730.00	6-2023	5.00
6-1978	5.00	6-2024	5.00
6-1979	5.00	Balance July 1	239.92
6-1980	10.00	Total	\$1679.87
6-1982	5.00	Transferred	1150.00
6-1984	6.70	Balance	\$529.87
6-1987	25.00		

FREE SUBSCRIPTION FUND

E5-160--E5-164	\$2.50
5-161	5.00
5-162	5.30
5-165	5.00
Balance July 1	53.87
Transferred from General Fund	400.00
Total	\$471.67

Number of 3 months subscriptions charged to this fund, 630 at 25 cents each; \$157.50; number of annual subscriptions charged to this fund, 177 at \$1 each: \$177. Total charge.....

Balance

FREE BOOK FUND

G7-92--G7-95	\$7.00
7-90	10.00
7-91	5.00
7-93	5.00
7-96	5.00
Balance July 1	47.10
Transferred from General Fund	50.00
Total	\$129.10

Booklets charged against this fund, 779 at 5 cents each: \$38.95; 156 at 2 cents each: \$3.12; other books \$1.30. Total charge.....

Balance

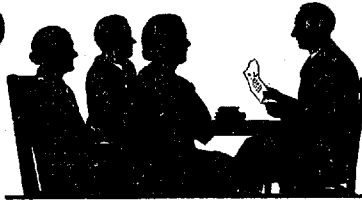
TRAVELING SPEAKERS FUND

C3-1388--C3-1450	\$58.50	3-1414	100.00
3-1384	5.00	3-1416	5.00
3-1385	5.00	3-1420	10.00
3-1386	5.00	3-1422	5.00
3-1387	10.00	3-1424	15.00
3-1389	5.00	3-1425	5.00
3-1391	5.00	3-1428	5.00
3-1392	15.00	3-1434	10.00
3-1393	5.00	3-1435	5.00
3-1395	5.00	3-1436	5.00
3-1396	70.00	3-1437	5.00
3-1397	50.00	3-1441	10.00
3-1398	5.00	3-1443	10.00
3-1399	5.00	3-1445	10.00
3-1400	5.00	3-1446	20.00
3-1401	5.00	3-1447	5.50
3-1402	10.00	3-1448	5.00
3-1404	20.00	3-1449	15.00
3-1405	5.00	Balance July 1	234.46
3-1406	5.00	Total	\$791.46
3-1407	5.00	Traveling Expenses ..	561.28
3-1408	5.00	Balance	\$230.18
3-1413	5.00		

Number of class meetings served, 316; total attendance, 22,885.

Number of public meetings served, 29; total attendance, 4704.

Talking Things Over



ANOTHER YEAR

THE year nineteen thirty-nine will soon all be in the past. For Bible Students, enlightened with Present Truth, it has been a momentous year. In America, it has been a blessed year of spiritual progress represented in the revived hopes and renewed zeal of many of the consecrated throughout nearly all parts of the country; resulting in the establishing of new ecclesias, and the coming into ecclesias already established of those whom the brethren continued to love, but lost a while. "Old timers," as well as new comers have rejoiced much together, as the verities of Present Truth have continued to be impressed upon their hearts and minds with increasing clarity and beauty.

In Europe there has not been the same opportunities for fellowship and service as in America, but this does not mean that the Lord has forsaken His people in those countries. It is merely that He is permitting them to have different experiences in order to round out their development, in preparing them for the Kingdom joys and glory now so near. Perhaps in this sense, our brethren in Europe are more favored than are we on this side of the ocean. At any rate, the evidences of the near approach of the Kingdom come home to them with greater force and reality than to us who are at present removed from the actual scenes of trouble by which the Lord is bringing this present evil world to an end.

Where opportunities still exist for publishing the truth by word of mouth or by the printed page, new interest has been awakened, with the result that the close of nineteen thirty-nine finds brethren here and there throughout the country rejoicing in a knowledge of the divine plan, and fully consecrated to the Lord, who a year ago knew nothing of the glorious gospel of the Kingdom. We rejoice with these dear ones, as we believe all the brethren do. Their first-love zeal for the Lord and for His Truth is an example which we will all do well to emulate.

Nineteen thirty-nine has been a significant year to Bible Students also in the fact that it witnessed the outbreak of another progressive step in the great "time of trouble" with which the age is ending. While the so-called war is looked upon by

the world as most strange, to the Lord's people it is seen as another fulfilment of prophecy, and an added reason why we should "look up, and lift up" our heads, knowing that our deliverance draweth nigh. And to rejoice in thus witnessing the fulfilment of prophecy is by no means an indication of indifference to the world's suffering; rather, our rejoicing is as much on account of the blessings soon coming to the world as it is due to the hope of our being with the Master in the Kingdom; for the glorification of the church means that Kingdom blessings of peace and life will soon begin to flow out to the world.

Poor world! How much it needs the Kingdom; and how much we should indeed rejoice, that through the "manifestation of the sons of God," a "feast of fat things" for all nations will soon be spread; and that in response thereto the people will say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." (Isa. 25:9.) And, while rejoicing in our hope for the distressed world, let us not overlook our privilege of sharing our rejoicing with as many as we can reach who may have a hearing ear for the Gospel message. In this connection the brethren nearly everywhere have displayed unselfish zeal throughout the months of nineteen thirty-nine; and all who have thus endeavored to share their joys have had vouchsafed to them a rich portion of the Lord's grace.

All in all, it has been a blessed year for the Lord's people. There have been blessed privileges of service for some; and there have been joys and trials for all. Above everything else, the Lord Himself has been an ever-present help to all who have put their trust in Him; and communion with Him has been their soul-satisfying portion.

BROTHER STANFORD GOES HOME

ON Saturday morning, November 25th, Brother A. F. Stanford, of Donelson, Tenn., finished his earthly course. The end came suddenly, as a result of a heart attack. Funeral services were held Monday afternoon, the 27th, conducted by Brother George Wilson, of Pittsburgh, Pa. Brother Stanford was widely known among the brethren, it being his custom, together with Sister Stan-

ford, to attend one or more of the general conventions each year. On behalf of the many friends who were acquainted with Brother and Sister Stanford, we extend our sympathy to Sister Stanford, and assure her of an interest in our prayers.

Brother Stanford owned and operated a large dairy farm a short distance outside of the city of Nashville, and was beloved by all who knew him. In writing to us about the funeral, Brother Wilson says:

"Brother Stanford surely was a 'living epistle' in his community, as was evidenced by the fact that 400 people crowded into his commodious house to pay tribute to one so kind and considerate to those who possess little of this world's goods. The audience consisted of educators, bankers, and other professional and business men; besides many in the humbler walks of life. Many of these wept bitterly as they viewed the remains of one who was really their friend and benefactor. It was indeed a privilege to witness to so many concerning the hope beyond the grave, and the faith that animated and directed this truly consecrated Christian.

"An automobile procession over a mile long was led to the cemetery by a motor police escort, where the mortal remains of our dear brother were laid to rest, with the knowledge that the Lord had promised to give him a new body, perfectly adapted to carry on the 'work that follows after.' Surely we can rejoice with those who now finish their course; and what a glorious reunion there will be when, if faithful, we shall also be joined with our living Head; as well as with all those who have gone before, in the activities beyond the veil."

Brother Stanford was a very active witness for the truth. Yearly he sent out through the rural districts of the state many thousands of cards offering to loan The Divine Plan of the Ages to any who would request it. In this way he succeeded in putting about 500 of the Volumes into circulation each year. Many were the interesting and appreciative letters received from those thus brought into contact with the truth; many of whom developed a deep and genuine interest.

A number of the workers on Brother Stanford's farm accepted the truth, and they met regularly in a little "chapel" fitted up in the basement of his home. Recently, on the occasion of Brother Zahnow's visit, ten of these symbolized their consecration to follow in the footsteps of the Master. It was a real inspiration to attend a meeting with these dear ones.

BROTHER WAGNER GOES HOME

News of Brother Stanford's passing was received at the Grand Rapids, Mich., Convention, where word was also received, through Brother Obenland, of the passing of Brother Wagner, of Dayton, Ohio, another stalwart in the truth, and known by many especially throughout Ohio. Funeral services for Brother Wagner, the details of which we have not received, were conducted

by Brother Obenland in his former home, Cleveland, on Tuesday, November the 28th. To Sister Wagner, and other members of the family, we also extend sympathy, and an assurance of an interest in our prayers.

* * *

WORK PROGRESSES ON THE SCRIPTURE STUDIES

IT is a pleasure to report that good progress is being made on the work of republishing the six volumes of Studies in the Scriptures. Early in December the first volume will go to press; and by the time this announcement is read, the type setting on the second volume will be nearing completion.

For the benefit of any who may not be acquainted with the arrangements for republishing the volumes, we reiterate here that the project is being financed through the advance sale of 1,000 sets at \$5 a set. Orders may be sent in at any time for one or more of the republication edition, and these will be filled as soon as the sets are complete. As previously announced, the volumes are being published in the pocket size; and the type will be good size and very legible.

* * *

KINGDOM CARD WORK BEING BLESSED

THE Lord's blessing continues to be manifested upon the work of distributing Kingdom Cards. As the troubles of the world increase, a larger number of people are inclined to give ear to what the Scriptures may have to say as to the world's destiny. This, as Brother Russell said it would, affords a golden opportunity to let our light shine.

The three Kingdom Cards proving most effective now are entitled, "God Has a Plan," "Hope of Universal Peace," and "Has Democracy Failed?" These are furnished in two styles— one style for house-to-house or other general distribution, and the other for mailing. In ordering, specify for which purpose you desire them. In lots of 1,000 or more, we will be glad to furnish them with imprint of local Ecclesia address. These cards have also been adapted for use in advertising public meetings; and we are glad to furnish them for that purpose, in any quantity.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

Isaiah 61:1.

COMING CONVENTIONS

HARVEY, ILL., December 3. This gathering is arranged by the Junior Bible Students of Harvey. Sessions 9 A. M. to 5 P. M., in the Odd Fellows Hall, corner of 155th Street and Lexington Avenue.

JERSEY CITY, N. J., December 10. Arranged by the Associated Bible Students of Jersey City. Convention opens at 10 A. M., and all sessions will be held in Lawyers Building, 880 Bergen Avenue. There will be a public meeting at 3 P. M. A cordial invitation is extended to all believers in the Ransom for All.

SCHENECTADY, N. Y., December 17. Sessions from 2 to 5 P. M., in Odd Fellows Hall, 955 State St., corner of Hawk St. A public meeting at 3 o'clock.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., December 31. This is the regular 5th-Sunday gathering in Brooklyn. The opening session will be at 2 P. M., and the program will continue on into the evening to include a Watch Night service. There will also be an immersion service. All sessions except the immersion service will be held in the regular meeting place of the Ecclesia, which is the Lecture Room in the Church of the Pilgrims, corner of Henry and Remsen Streets. For details concerning immersion service, etc., address, William Josiah, 117-34 123rd St., S. Ozone Park, L. I. N. Y.

CHICAGO, ILL., December 30, 31, and January 1. This General Convention is sponsored by the Chicago Bible Students. All sessions will be held in the Cen-

tral Masonic Temple, 910 North La Salle Street. The program will include two public meetings, and a Watch Night service. For further particulars address the Secretary, I. C. Foss, 5944 N. Knox Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

SEATTLE, WASH., December 30, 31 and January 1. All sessions of this gathering, except the public meeting, will be held at 1703 Market Street, Seattle. The public meeting, at 3 P. M., Sunday, December 31st, will be held in Moose Hall, 8th Avenue, between Union and University Streets. For further information address the Seattle Ecclesia of Bible Students, Mrs. C. R. Miles, Secretary, 1703 Market Street.

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA., February 9-11. The St. Petersburg Ecclesia of Associated Bible Students are arranging this general convention for the South. It is hoped that a goodly number will be able to attend, and a hearty welcome is assured for all. Address enquiries to the Secretary, Mrs. H. H. Herron, 1096 Sixteenth Avenue, North, St. Petersburg, Fla.

SEATTLE, WASH., Labor Day Period, 1940. Advance notice of this 4-day gathering is requested. The convention will be sponsored by the Ecclesias of Vancouver, B. C., Lynden, Wash., and Seattle, Wash. It is hoped that this advance announcement will encourage some to make their vacation arrangements to include the Seattle General Convention for 1940.

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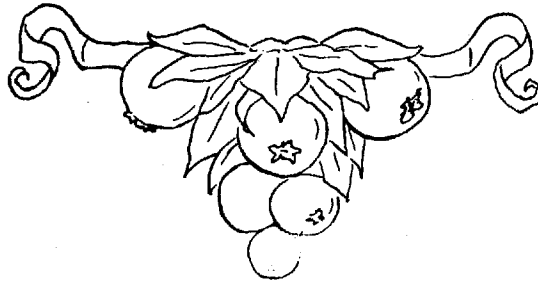
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To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach

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

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

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

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

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

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

