

a herald of Christ's presence

THE DAWN

"THE GOVERNMENT
SHALL BE UPON
HIS SHOULDER."

--Isaiah 9:6

December 1958



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DAWN PUBLICATIONS

East Rutherford

NEW JERSEY

This Has Been a Year

NOW that 1958 is drawing to a close, it is fitting that we glance backward briefly over the months to ascertain what sort of year it has been—not from the standpoint of politics, but of the manner in which the chaotic events of “this present evil world” reveal the need of the kingdom of Christ, and as “signs of the times” have indicated the near approach of that kingdom. As is true of every year, 1958 inherited many unsolved problems of the year before, and they are still unsolved. To these have been added other vexing situations which help to maintain and to increase the fear which is in the hearts of the people as they look ahead to the things coming upon the earth.

Nineteen fifty-eight will go down in history as the year in which man succeeded in thrusting several small “moons” into orbit around the earth, although the first feat of this kind was accomplished by the Russians late in 1957. It will also go down as the year in which man attempted to send a rocket to the moon, and almost succeeded, hav-

ing sent it hurtling toward the moon to the tremendous distance of seventy thousand miles.

As soon as it was demonstrated possible to project missiles beyond the earth’s atmosphere, there at once began much discussion of eventual interplanetary travel, with some jokesters beginning to sell real estate on the moon. This speculation seemed to be welcomed by many, perhaps with the thought that eventually there would be a way to escape the tensions, the chaos, and the fear with which earth’s inhabitants are so continuously plagued.

So far as we know, the prophecies of the Bible say nothing about these modern efforts of man to travel through outer space and to go skipping about among the planets, except that in this “time of the end” there would be a phenomenal increase of knowledge, with many running to and fro. (Dan. 12:4) From this standpoint 1958 has been a remarkable year, in that the increase of knowledge has been further demonstrated.

However, as we have emphasized

many times before, this does not imply that man's intelligence is increasing. It is simply that through modern means of communication, including the printed page, the accumulated knowledge of one generation can be passed on to another, and that which is learned by individuals and groups can be shared, thus adding to the total "know how." This is true today in all fields of human endeavor.

Because human intelligence is not increasing, the "increase of knowledge" has a direct bearing on the distressing times in which we are living. If the great nations of earth did not possess the many deadly methods of destruction made available by the prophetic "increase in knowledge," the world would not now be so filled with fear.

Every informed person knows that the ability to put satellites into orbit around the earth, and eventually around the moon, means also the possibility, from thousands of miles away, of sending projectiles of destruction into the principal cities of all nations. And students of history and of human misbehavior know that there is no criterion of the past which would give us any reason to believe that this will not happen. So the nations continue to be distressed, and the fear in the hearts of people increases. For this, 1958 has been outstanding.

The Middle East

Nineteen fifty-eight has been a

year in which a major crisis developed in the Middle East, a crisis in which the Arab nations and Israel were the ones directly concerned. But the nature of this crisis was such that the great powers of both East and West took a hand and began "growling" at one another. As is nearly always the case in this day of world trouble, the underlying issues which gave rise to this crisis were not settled, although some of the tension was temporarily lessened.

There are two principal issues involved in these Middle East tensions. One of them concerns the oil-rich land owned and controlled by certain of the Arab nations. In this day of mechanized warfare, oil is one of the most important sinews of war, and the Western powers are determined that the supplies in the Middle East will not fall into the hands of the communists.

Besides this, there is the hatred of Israel by the Arabs. There are weak denials by some of the Arab nations, but fundamentally the entire Arab world resents the presence of the State of Israel in Palestine and has a long-range policy of eventually destroying it. The attempts of Nasser to organize a solid block of Arab nations is related to this policy.

As students of prophecy we are naturally interested in any and all developments relating to the re-establishment of the Jewish people in Palestine. Unlike other "signs of the times," which have to do large-

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ly with the destruction of man's social order of selfishness, the events pertaining to Israel are in the constructive column. They represent a beginning of the work of the new age in which Christ's government of peace, beginning at Jerusalem, will extend its righteousness and peace to the whole world of mankind.

The prophecies do not reveal all the details of experience through which the restored Israelites will pass ere the kingdom of Christ is fully established. From Ezekiel 38: 21-23 it is obvious that a powerful aggressor will come against the people in Israel, and will be defeated by means of divine intervention.

But just what may happen prior to this intervention by God on their behalf, the Bible does not reveal. However, because we are living in the day when the prophecies pertaining to the restoration of the Jewish people to their own land are being fulfilled, we are vitally interested in all that occurs in that part of the world; and certainly 1958 has been a year in which much has happened in and about the Holy Land.

The Far East

Nineteen fifty-eight has been a year in which a serious crisis developed in the Far East, mainly in connection with the Chinese communists who control the mainland of China, and the Chinese nationalists who control the island of Formosa. The dispute was over the tiny islands just off the mainland

of China. These islands are heavily armed by the Formosan government, but the communists want to control them, so a crisis arose.

If this was merely a controversy between two groups of Chinese, the peace of the world would not be threatened. But the Western nations—particularly the United States in this case—are determined to prevent further expansion of the communists, particularly in southeast Asia, so are backing up the Formosan government against the forces of the communist mainland.

Here, again, our interest is not centered in the dispute between the Chinese, but in the extent to which the communist world might get control of Asia, and from there, allied with Russian communists, extend their control farther and farther into the West. It is just this that is feared by the Western powers, and while there has been a temporary easing of the tension in the Far East, as President Eisenhower stated in a national radio and television address, trouble spots are bound to erupt in other places. The communists will see to that.

While the prophecies do not present too many details as to how it will come about, they are explicit in assuring us that all the false religions of the earth are to be destroyed, and not all of these are in Asia. The communists are committed to the destruction of religion; this we know. We deplore their

tactics, and basically, their aims are selfish and cruel.

But religions which teach that God is a demon, who has prepared a large place of fire and brimstone in which to torture those who, in their ignorance or confusion, did not worship him before they died, are also merciless and cruel, and it is interesting to watch world developments in this "time of the end" with the view of ascertaining how all the things which are out of harmony with God will be set aside and destroyed. And 1958 has been a year in which there has been much to watch.

The "Exploding" Population

Nineteen fifty-eight was a year in which the United Nations issued a most sensational report pertaining to the rapidly increasing population of earth. It has taken all the thousands of years from creation to 1950 for the population of earth to reach two and one-half billion. According to the report, in just forty short years from then, eight of which have already passed, there will be five billion humans living on this tiny earth.

The UN report reveals that at the present rate of increase, in six hundred years there will be only about one square yard of land surface for every man, woman, and child in the world. Concerning this the UN report observed: "It goes without saying that this can never take place; something will happen to prevent it."

What that "something" will be

the UN does not suggest, and for the very obvious reason that those presenting the report did not know. But those who know the plan of God, and understand the prophetic meaning of the times in which we are living, this UN population report is most interesting and revealing, for it is one of the strong evidences that we have indeed just about reached the end of the reign of sin and death, and the time when the authority and power of Christ's kingdom will be manifested in the affairs of men.

When our first parents were created, God commanded them to multiply and fill the earth. (Gen. 1:28) Many have failed to note that this command is limited to the filling of the earth. Tradition has it that the earth is merely a place where humans get their start, and that at death they migrate from here to some other place, such as heaven, hell, or purgatory. The thought is that as long as the earth exists it will continue thus to serve as a sort of human incubator. According to tradition, the population problem will be solved by the destruction of the earth, and also, of course, of the human race itself.

But this is not the explanation given to us in the Word of God. As noted, the command to our first parents to multiply contained a limit, that limit being the adequate filling of the earth. Even if we had nothing more than this to guide us, we would know that there is no danger of the earth becoming over-

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populated, for the same great Creator who gave man the ability to reproduce his species can and will, when the need arises, withdraw that power. We do not need to speculate as to just how this may be accomplished. It is sufficient to know that it will be done.

The UN report on population increase did not take into account the divine provision for the resurrection of the dead. While today there is plenty of room on earth for all the living and for all who have died, the fact that in so short a time, with nothing occurring to change the situation, the earth would be overcrowded with only the living, is one of the strongest proofs we have that the kingdom of Christ and the resurrection of the dead are near at hand.

When the Sadducees of Jesus' day endeavored to trap him with their question about the woman who had seven husbands, asking which one of these would be her husband in the resurrection, Jesus replied, "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are [in this respect] as the angels of God in heaven."—Matt. 22:30

There are various ages and dispensations in the plan of God leading up to the recovery of mankind from sin and death. These periods of time are properly referred to as "days," and in a number of places in the Bible the resurrection is foretold as taking place in the "last day." For example, Mary said

to Jesus concerning her brother Lazarus, "I know he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." —John 11:24

This does not mean the "last day" of time, but that final period in the divine plan when mankind will be restored from the dead, and all will be given an opportunity to believe, obey, and live forever in a global-wide earthly paradise. At, or near the beginning of this "last day," a sufficient number of humans will have been born to fulfil the command to Adam concerning the filling of the earth. There will be no need for those awakened from the dead to continue this temporary function of humans of procreation; so, as Jesus said, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage.

The UN report reveals that in six hundred years from now, at the present rate of increase, there would be only nine square feet of space for each person; but if we accept the Bible's date for the creation of man, and suppose that the present daily death rate began there and has continued ever since, we could take this enormous total, add it to the present population of the earth, and we would have approximately thirty-three square feet of space for each one, in the state of Texas alone.

Obviously, this method of figuring gives us many times the actual total of the living and the dead. At the same time we have reached that period in human experience, and in

the outworking of the divine purpose in the creation of man, as the UN report says, something must happen; and we believe that that "something" will be nothing short of divine intervention in the affairs of men to bring the matter under control. Yes, 1958 has been a year in which we have been forcefully reminded in this way that the kingdom of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead, are near.

A Pope Dies

Nineteen fifty-eight was a year in which the highest dignitary in the largest church organization in the world died, Pope Pius the XII. There seems to be general agreement that the late pope was a good and kindly man—"the Pope of Peace," as he was styled. There is no other view that we can take except that he was sincere in what he believed and practiced. Time may also show the same true with

respect to the newly elected pope.

But sincerity does not mean that one is right. Saul of Tarsus was sincere when he was persecuting the disciples of Christ, but he was entirely wrong, and in this respect later referred to himself as the chief of sinners, not worthy to be called an apostle. There are millions of sincere people in the world who are wrong. One of the principal goals for which every Christian should strive is to be both sincere and right.

When the late pope died, announcement was made that he was the two hundred and sixty-first in the line of direct spiritual rulers to sit on the "throne of St. Peter." This was wrong, so very wrong, and for the very simple reason that St. Peter never sat upon a throne, spiritual or otherwise. Peter was a hard-working itinerant servant of Christ in the days of the Early Church, who went about preaching



Hear

"FRANK AND ERNEST"

DISCUSS THE TOPIC

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JANUARY TOPIC: On Sunday, January 18, "Frank and Ernest" will discuss the topic, "Man's Creation and Final Destiny." As usual, appropriate circulars will be available for advertising this special broadcast. You are invited to send for as many as you can use. They are suitable for distributing from door to door, for mailing, or for handing to friends and neighbors. Please order your supply of January circulars as early as possible.

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the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and emphasizing the **Headship** of Christ over himself and over all the other disciples.

The late pope proclaimed the dogma of the Ascension of Mary to the throne of heaven, and encouraged all Catholics, perhaps as no other pope had ever done, to pray to and venerate Mary in their worship. The Apostle Peter, on the other hand, in all his reported discourses, and in his epistles to the Early Church, did not even mention Mary's name.

The late pope reaffirmed the Catholic teaching of purgatory, but the Apostle Peter said nothing about purgatory, either in his sermons or in his epistles. The doctrine of purgatory was unknown in the Early Church, even as was also the even more cruel teaching of eternal torture. These human traditions were developed and introduced in the professed church of Christ centuries after the Apostle Peter fell asleep in death.

Nor were masses said for the dead in the days of the Apostle Peter. Peter did not practice this, nor did any of the other apostles. They knew nothing about it. Jesus had not taught it, nor were any such instructions contained in the Old Testament. Here was another tradition which developed long after the Apostle Peter, the alleged first pope of the Catholic Church, finished his course in death.

Many do not understand the significance of the Mass. With the death of the pope, masses were celebrated on his behalf throughout every Catholic community in the world. To many, this simply signified a tremendous display of respect for the pope and sympathy for his family. But actually, those masses implied that in the belief of the cardinals, bishops, and priests of the church, their beloved Pius had gone to purgatory, and was suffering continuous and excruciating pain, pain that could be lessened and shortened by the saying

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

DECEMBER 4—"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"—Luke 11:13 (Z. '01-271 Hymn 205)

DECEMBER 11—"My son, give Me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe My ways."—Proverbs 23:26 (Z. '01-324 Hymn 104)

DECEMBER 18—"The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."—Hebrews 13:6 (Z. '02-45 Hymn 87)

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

of masses by his friends still alive on earth.

Even so, purgatory, to which essentially all Catholics go when they die, represents a vast improvement over the Protestant view of eternal torture. When the reformers protested against the Catholic doctrine of purgatory, insisting that it was not taught in the Bible—which it was not—they actually protested against that which did by comparison show a semblance of mercy, and something, moreover, which, as the Catholics saw it, served a worth-while purpose.

The reasoning on this is that those who go to purgatory, including the popes of the church, are purified by their suffering, and eventually are transferred to heaven. Hundreds of years are usually required for this, but eventually the suffering, having served its purpose of purification, comes to an end, and the purified soul then enjoys peace and happiness forever.

But with the removal of purgatory from their teachings, the Protestants have no alternative for those not good enough for heaven, but think of them as having gone to a place of eternal torture, where no good whatever is accomplished; where sinners shriek curses against God forever. The utter falsehood of this view is highlighted by the Apostle John, when he wrote of the ultimate destiny of God's human creation, saying, "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the

sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."—Rev. 5:13

Apparently John had not heard of those who some claim are cursing God in a place of torture. None of the apostles had. This blasphemy against God is not taught in the Bible. So, nineteen fifty-eight has been a year in which, by the death of a pope in Rome, we have been led once more to reflect on the beauties of the truth as taught in the Word of God, and to rejoice in the assurance that in God's due time, which we believe is soon, the true knowledge of God will be caused to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. How the hearts of millions will be caused to rejoice when they learn that the cruel teachings of eternal torture and of purgatory were merely the inventions of man, and that Jehovah, our Heavenly Father, is a God of love and mercy.

As we come to the close of 1958, let us resolve that during the coming year, and as long as we have breath, we will continue to exalt the name of our God among the people by doing all we can to dispel the mists of superstition and the practice of idolatry, which have hindered men and women from seeing and knowing him. May nineteen fifty-nine be a stepping-stone to more self-sacrificing activity in bearing witness to the truth!

Jesus' Matchless Power

GOLDEN TEXT: "Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."
—Mark 5:19

MARK 5:1-13

THE "country of the Gadarenes,"—the geographical setting of today's lesson—was situated along the southeast bank of the Sea of Galilee and extended southward beyond the lake called a sea. The miracle occurred southeast of Capernaum, which was on the other end of the lake. It was from this general vicinity that Jesus and his disciples had made the crossing by ship. It was while crossing Galilee on this occasion that a storm arose. Jesus "rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."—Mark 4:39

This was a startling experience even for Jesus' disciples, and they asked, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (vs. 41) But another great miracle was about to be witnessed. When they reached the eastern shore of the lake—"the country of the Gadarenes"—they

were met by one "out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains."—ch. 5:1-3

Modernistic interpreters of the Bible insist that those referred to as being possessed by evil spirits were cases merely of mental illness, most of which could have been cured by the services of a psychiatrist. But this is not true, for the records distinctly speak about both the sick and those possessed by evil spirits.

The man in our lesson had lost all control of his own faculties and was compelled to do the bidding of the evil spirits which held him completely in their grasp. This is apparent even when he came out of the tombs and addressed Jesus. He said to the Master, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not."
—vs. 7

This man, who had never seen Jesus, and probably never heard of him—and certainly in his condition would have no understanding of who Jesus was—would not, of his own knowledge, have been capable of addressing him as the “Son of the most high God.” Nor would he know that Jesus had the power to “torment” him. Had he possessed this much knowledge, he would have known that Jesus could deliver him, and he would have rejoiced.

Here, then, we have a clear case of evil spirits controlling a human organism, even the powers of speech. When Jesus asked, “What is thy name?” the answer was, “My name is legion: for we are many.” (vs. 9) Then these demons pleaded with Jesus not to send them away out of the country. Nearby was a herd of swine, and “the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.” This request was granted, and under the influence of the demons the swine “ran violently down a steep place into the sea (they were about two thousand), and were choked in the sea.”—vss. 10-13

These “devils” were not the departed spirits of dead humans. They were the “angels that sinned” at the time of the Flood, and because of their disobedience have since been restrained in “chains of darkness.” (I Pet. 3:19, 20; II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6. See also the booklet entitled “Spiritualism,” a Dawn publication. First copy is free.) The booklet “Spiritualism” shows that

QUESTIONS

Where was the “country of the Gadarenes”?
What great miracle preceded the one in today’s lesson?

Who were the devils who possessed the man who came out from the tombs to meet Jesus?

What will divine power accomplish for mankind during the Millennium?

these demons are powerful, yet invisible. In Jesus’ day their most pronounced activity was in taking control of the minds of the unwary. They do that today, and also masquerade as the “spirits” of the departed dead in an effort to interest people in spiritism and to attempt to prove Satan’s lie that “there is no death.”

The fact that Jesus could deliver the man who was being used by a legion of these demons demonstrated the fact that in God’s due time even the prince of devils himself can, and will, be brought under control and, indeed, ultimately destroyed. Divine power through the agencies of Christ’s kingdom will heal the sick, deliver mankind from the influences of the Devil and his angels, and restore the dead to life. Could we ask for more?

The miracle performed, Jesus and his disciples returned to their ship, and the man who had been delivered from the devils wanted to join them. But, as our Golden Text states, Jesus told him to go home to his friends, “and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.”

Jesus Shares His Ministry

GOLDEN TEXT: "And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things."—Mark 6:34

MARK 6:6-13

IN JOHN 1:9 Jesus is described as "that . . . true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said to his followers, "Ye are the light of the world." (Matt. 5:14) The thought is that Jesus' disciples represent him in the world, and serve as his ambassadors. (II Cor. 5:18-20) Jesus set the pattern for this arrangement when he sent into the ministry, first his twelve apostles, and later "the seventy," who are often referred to as evangelists.—Luke 10:1

Essentially the same instructions were given to the seventy as were given to the twelve. Both groups were to go out wholly on the basis of faith, taking with them no extra clothing or money. One of the first lessons they were to learn was to depend upon the Lord. Besides, this arrangement helped to highlight the fact that the servants of God during the age then beginning, the Gospel age, were to be a sacrificing

class. Their treasures were to be laid up in heaven, not on the earth.—Matt. 6:19, 20; 19:21

In the "upper room" the night before Jesus was crucified he said to his apostles, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? The apostles replied that they had lacked nothing. (Luke 22:35) Then Jesus said to them, "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." Learning that the group already possessed two swords, Jesus said that this was sufficient. As for the other possessions, these later instructions would indicate that the original restrictions were not to be continued. We know that after Pentecost they were not observed.

In sending out his representatives Jesus equipped them to conduct an impressive ministry. They were to heal the sick, and cast out devils, even as he was doing. Yet Jesus knew that in many places they

would not be favorably received. Concerning those who rejected the message, Jesus said, "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city."—Mark 6:11

This is a remarkable statement. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by the Lord because of their wickedness, and yet Jesus told his apostles that it would be "tolerable," favorable, that is, for them in the day of judgment—more so than for the cities of Israel that rejected his message. The scriptural principle involved here is that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah lacked the needed information to make them responsible before God so far as their opportunity to gain eternal life was concerned. The people who rejected the ministry of Jesus and his followers would be sinning against greater light, hence would be more blameworthy.

However, the fact that it would be "more" tolerable for one group than the other implies that tolerance would be shown to both groups, in the sense that they would then be given an opportunity to repent and to reform. Truly, "There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea."

Obviously Jesus as well as his apostles needed rest, and they attempted to get it. They embarked on a "ship privately" with the view of crossing the lake to a desert place on the other side. But their attempt failed, "for the people saw them departing, and many knew

QUESTIONS

How many did Jesus send into the ministry? Why did he instruct them not to take extra money or clothing?

Why will it be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for those who rejected the Gospel in Jesus' day?

Relate the circumstances associated with our Golden Text.

him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him." (vs. 33) The thought is that this multitude reached the landing place of the "ship" before it arrived, and were waiting for Jesus.

It is at this point that our Golden Text applies. Finding "much people" waiting for him, what did Jesus do? He had gone there to rest. Did he direct that the people be sent away so he could rest? No, he "was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things."

But this was not all. As evening drew near, Jesus' disciples said to him, "Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat." (vs. 36) Jesus did not consent to this. Although weary to start with, and having taught them "many things," he continued to serve. This was the feeding of the five thousand. (vss. 37-44) What a wonderful example!

Joy at the Savior's Birth

GOLDEN TEXT: "Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior."
—Luke 1:46, 47

LUKE 1:46-55; 2:4-7

OF NECESSITY, Mary, the mother of Jesus, takes a prominent place in our hearts in connection with our commemoration of the birth of Jesus. Great should be the rejoicing of everyone who is used in any capacity in the outworking of the Creator's plan for the salvation and blessing of the sin-cursed and dying race; and surely Mary was used in a wonderful way. Mary's first knowledge that she was to be so highly honored by the God of Israel came when the angel announced to her that she was to give birth to the Savior, the Messiah, the One who was to be given "the throne of his father David"; the One who was to rule over the house of David forever; "and of his kingdom" there would be "no end."—Luke 1:32, 33

Following the Annunciation, Mary visited Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and it was to her that she poured out her heart

in praise, magnifying the Lord for the great honor he had bestowed upon her. It is not necessary to conclude that she spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, even though she did express profound truths concerning the divine plan and the relationship of her unborn Son to that plan.

In connection with the now assured coming of the promised Messiah, Mary said, God "hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy." (vs. 54) God's prophets had foretold the coming of this great One of Israel; and although the nation had not proved worthy to receive him, it would be all the more true that his coming would be an expression of divine mercy. Here Mary may have had in mind the words of the psalmist, "He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God."—Ps. 98:3

In the Annunciation, as we have seen, the angel spoke of Jesus as

the antitypical David, the One who would sit on David's throne. This recalls God's covenant of mercy to David, and the assurance that his throne would be established forever. (Isa. 55:3; II Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 89:1-4; 27-37) It is not to be supposed that Mary understood all the details of how the messianic kingdom would be established by Jesus. It was enough to make her heart rejoice to realize merely that she was to give birth to THE One who would establish the throne of David forever.

In verse 55 of our lesson Mary speaks of the promise made to Abraham. Thus, and properly, she associated her coming child with the Abrahamic promise; that is, that through the "Seed" of Abraham all the families of the earth would be blessed. Here again she would not understand all the details involved in the outworking of the divine plan for the blessing of the people, but she rejoiced to realize that she was having a part in that plan.

Jesus was born in a "manger," because, as the record states, "there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7) There is no need to blame the innkeeper for turning Joseph and Mary away. To him they were no different from others. His inn was filled to capacity, so what could he do? He did not consciously turn away the Son of God and Savior of the world.

The circumstances surrounding

QUESTIONS

What relationship did Jesus have toward the promises God made to Abraham and David?

When will the good news of Jesus' birth be known and appreciated by all mankind?

Explain the statement of the angels, "Good will toward men,"

Jesus' birth are in a way paradoxical. While he was born in a stable, an angel announced his birth. It would be supposed that the birth of One important enough to have it announced by an angel would first of all have been made known to the religious rulers of Israel; but God chose humble shepherds instead as the ones to whom the angel would proclaim that happy message, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2:10, 11.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (vss. 13, 14) Notice this does not say good will "among" men, but "toward" men. The thought is that through the birth of Jesus, God's good will was being expressed toward men. First Jesus died to redeem men; and during his second presence he will reign over men to give them peace and life.

Jesus Acknowledged As Christ

GOLDEN TEXT: "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."
—Matthew 16:16

MARK 8:27-35

THE geographical setting of today's lesson is Caesarea Philippi, the northernmost point visited by Jesus, about thirty miles north of the Sea of Galilee. The city was in a valley near the base of Mount Hermon. This was considerable distance from Jerusalem, where Jesus knew that his enemies were plotting to kill him. However, realizing that the time in the divine plan for him to die as the world's Redeemer was near, he was contemplating returning to where his enemies could and would arrest and kill him.

Jesus was interested to learn what the result of his ministry had been, a ministry in which eighty-two others had actively participated for probably, by this time, at least three years. Even with the slow methods of transportation available at that time in such a small country, eighty-three workers—including Jesus himself—all zealously proclaiming the Gospel for three years and all empowered to perform miracles, would of ne-

cessity give the country a thorough witness.

Since all this activity pertained to Jesus, he was interested to learn what opinions the public had formed concerning him. "Whom do men say that I am?" Jesus asked his disciples. The report they gave to Jesus was a good one. Some of the public had decided that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead. Herod thought this. (Mark 6:14, 15) Some believed that Jesus was the promised "Elijah." (Mal. 4:5) Still others thought that he must be one of the other prophets. These were favorable reports, for they revealed that the people generally had concluded that Jesus was a man sent of God, even though they were not certain just who he might be.

"But whom say ye that I am?" Jesus inquired of his disciples. "Peter answered and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ." Mark does not record Jesus' direct reply to Peter, but Matthew does—"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in

heaven." (Matt. 16:17) In other words, while the opinions of the general public concerning the identity of Jesus were based on human reasoning, Peter's conclusion had been inspired by God, and therefore was the truth.

We have in this incident a sort of pattern which can be discerned throughout the entire age since. There have literally been millions who have considered Jesus to be a great man of God. They have believed in and on him as such, and have endeavored to follow his precepts and example. From this standpoint the life and teachings of Jesus have exerted a wholesome influence; to some extent even changing the course of the world.

But the opinions of these millions as to the exact identity of Jesus have differed widely. Many have thought and taught that he was God himself, ignoring and confusing the plain teachings of the Bible that he was the Son of God. These would have us believe that Jesus prayed to himself, and that he only appeared to die, for, after all, how could the great God and Creator of the universe actually die!

Others, going to the opposite extreme, have looked upon Jesus as being merely a brilliant but good man, a wonderful leader and teacher who was blessed by God. His suffering and death, these say, have no meritorious value to us except as an example of loyalty to a righteous cause, an example which all would do well to follow.

QUESTIONS

At what time in the ministry of Jesus did the incident of today's lesson take place?

What was one of the main differences between the viewpoint of the public with respect to Jesus and the one expressed by Peter?

Have these differences of viewpoint continued throughout the age?

Between these two extreme and erroneous viewpoints have been many variations and modifications of one or the other, but all based on human reasoning, each one honoring Jesus as a man of God, and paying tribute to him. But throughout the age, even as in Jesus' day, there have been a few—although very few—whom God has honored with a true knowledge of Jesus, and of his purpose in coming into the world. These few, like Peter, have recognized that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Yes, Jesus was the Messiah, and also the "Son" of God. Only those whose eyes of understanding have been opened by God, as were Peter's, have understood this great truth and its implications. These have recognized Jesus as the Logos who was "made flesh" in order that he might give his flesh, his humanity, for the life of the world. (John 1:14; 6:51) These rejoice in his redemptive work thus accomplished, and rejoice that in the resurrection Jesus was highly exalted to the right hand of the throne of God.

The World, the Flesh, and the Devil

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves."

—Matthew 10:16

CONDITIONS in the world are somewhat different today than they were when Jesus sent his disciples out into the ministry and said that they would find themselves in the "midst of wolves." Nevertheless, our enemies as Christians are like wolves, willing to devour us. These enemies are definitely desirous of destroying our spiritual lives. They are enemies of God, enemies of Christ, enemies of the truth, enemies of the kingdom, enemies of the proclamation of the message of the kingdom. These, our enemies, are the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

The World

Why is it that the world is our enemy? The world is our enemy because it has a wrong set of values, and because its spirit is one that will not help us make our calling and election sure. It is a spirit that will hinder us in our endeav-

ors to overcome the things that are of little worth. This point is very plainly and very strongly set forth in the words of I John 2:15-17, which read:

"Love not the world, neither the things in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

A proper appraisal of true values has emphasized in our minds the truth of the scripture that says, "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (II Cor. 4:18) Every one of us recognizes as Christians that this is a true presentation of values. We might also

say that the things of the world are temporal, while the things of God are eternal.

The spirit of the world as we come in contact with it today has emphasized in our minds that pertaining to the things of God it is the spirit of indifference. If that spirit should enter into the church it would find its expression in the spirit of lethargy, in the spirit of complacency, the spirit of taking things for granted, the spirit of Laodicea's lukewarmness, being neither cold nor hot—unconcerned, indifferent to God and the kingdom, indifferent to battling against our enemies, the world, the flesh and the Devil.

The cares of this life are the cares of the world. In Matthew 13: 22 our Lord made this statement: "He that receiveth seed among the thorns is he that heareth the Word; and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the Word, and he becometh unfruitful." In this parable the Master tells us of two very definite enemies which we meet in the world. The care of this life is a frontal attack from the enemy. Every one of us has the cares of this life. We cannot avoid having the cares of this life. The question is, what do we do with them? Then there is the deceitfulness of riches. We can have the deceitfulness of riches whether we possess the riches or not.

Our Lord told us to watch out for these two "generals" in the army of this world, because if we do not, they will outsmart us, and win the

battle. They will have us so completely surrounded by thorns that our spiritual life will be choked out. Therefore they must be fought wherever they are found.

The cares of this life are found in the homes, they are found in our social activities, they are found in our neighborhood contacts, they are found in our business life, and they have to be fought wherever they are found. It is easy to become involved in so many things, and so easy also to justify our involvement in them. We owe it to our husband, we say, or we owe it to our wife, or we owe it to our children as long as they are in school, we owe it to our business and to our business associates. And, of course, we do! We owe something to every one of these.

But the main question, the question that we have to answer as we fight the world, is, are we depriving God of something that he has a legitimate right to expect? Because we owe something to God too. Are we rendering unto Caesar more than is his meet? Are we rendering unto God less than is his meet? That's the question.

In I Corinthians 2:12, the Bible makes this statement: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." If success in the affairs of this life, or if success in the deceitfulness of riches to any extent seduces us from our consecration and devotion

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to God, then, as Christians, we are failures.

There have been many "successful" failures among the brethren. But also there are many whom the world may and does classify as failures who will be able to tell a real "success" story as they sit with Christ upon his throne, partaking of glory, honor, and immortality, eternal life.

If we want to know how rich we really are, we should not ask ourselves the question, how much will we leave when we die? The important question that we have to ask is, how much will we take with us when we die? That will be very important then. Let us be rich toward God.

Let us be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse world, among whom we shine as lights in the world. If we have fought the battle against the world to the extent that we have become lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life, then we have attained some success; we have gained some victory over the world.

The Flesh

The flesh is an enemy—with its ambitions, its passions, its human desires, its dreams. The flesh is subject to temptation from without and so prone to weaknesses from within. Our battle is not merely to control the urges of fleshly gratification. It is more than that. It is a battle of human nature against spiritual nature. It is the proper,

wholesome aims and ambitions—to which the world has a legitimate right—versus the aims and the desires and the hopes and the prospects of the child of God. It is the battle of self-will against the doing of God's will.

Again it is the proper appraisal of values, because again the things of the flesh are temporal. The things of God are eternal. Here is a very common text of Scripture to us as Bible students. Every one of us loves it—Romans 12:1, 2. It says: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 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."

How can we avoid being conformed to the world? How can we stimulate the work of being transformed into the image of God's dear Son? This is a work that must go on in our life. The 3rd verse helps us to understand that. It reads, "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." This is a wonderful text. And another one is the 16th verse of the same chapter, because here, in concluding his argument, the apostle says: "Be not wise in your own conceits." And in Galatians 6:7, 8 Paul also says: "Be not deceived; God is

not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Some people just naturally love possessions. Consequently they have to especially fight the world and the spirit of the world and the inordinate desire to gain possessions. And then again there are some people who love themselves. They have to fight themselves. We all have to fight ourselves to a degree. We have to fight pride. We have to fight natural selfishness.

People in the world do not have that fight. They want to be masters of their own destiny. That is based upon pride. As children of the Lord, in humility, we depend upon the providences of God in our life because we know that he giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And again, in Philippians 3:3, we read these words: "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." And in the 2nd chapter and the 3rd verse, he says: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." To do this is to control the natural pride and the natural selfishness of the flesh. To do this it is essential to be good children of the Lord. It is essential if we would win our battle against that enemy which we call our flesh.

The Devil

Besides the world and besides the flesh, there is always the Devil. He is a very sly foe. He convinces some people that he doesn't exist at all. That is very disarming. Then again he tells others that even though he exists, he is bound and helpless, and has been for many years. That is also disarming!

The Devil is busy all the time. The Word of God says: "Your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist stedfast in the faith." (I Pet. 5:8, 9) This text of Scripture tells us one of the ways in which we must resist the Devil; one of the ways in which we can fight him, because he is a lion seeking whom he may devour. We are to resist him, "stedfast in the faith"—a very simple weapon, a very effective weapon, a very necessary weapon. Hence the importance of remaining "stedfast in the faith."

Our faith is being assailed today—every truth that has separated us as a people of God; every truth that has given us an understanding of the lengths and the breadths, and the heights and the depths of God's love; every truth that has been used to reveal to us the justice, wisdom, love, and power of God as it is expressed in the divine plan of the ages—every truth is being assailed at the present time. We are not ignorant of Satan's devices. Let us "put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand

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against the wiles of the Devil," Paul says. (Eph. 6:11) Let us remain steadfast in the faith! Let us stand for the purity of the Gospel of the kingdom!

In Luke the 8th chapter and the 12th verse, our Master says: "Then cometh the Devil, and taketh away the Word out of their hearts." He has done that to individuals. Most of us could name individuals to whom that has been done. He has done it to whole organizations. And he can do it to us if we do not remain steadfast in the faith. "Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."—Heb. 2:1

And so we must fight the world, the spirit of the world, the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of the world, the lethargy of the world, the complacency of the world. Yes, we must fight all of these things. We must also fight the flesh with its pride, with its selfishness, with its desire to be somebody, with its desire to honor self instead of honoring the Lord. Then, also, we must fight the Devil with his attempts to confuse the issues of the truth, and to stand by the Word of God; because if we do not, the Devil will take the Word of God out of our hearts.

This is a battle, but we are not in the battle alone. If we were in this battle alone we would be defeated almost before the fight started. Let us, therefore, consider our comrades in this fight, the ones upon whom we can depend—the

Lord, the truth, and the brethren. "With us is the Lord our God, to help." (II Chron. 32:8) That is one reason the fight is worth while.

"The Lord is my strength." "I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Heb. 13:6) "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Joshua 1:9) Is there not great consolation in these words? We realize that it is in his strength that we will win the conflict. Because the conflict rages, decisions have to be made, and sometimes it seems that we fight alone; but brethren, we have never fought alone! No one fights the good fight of faith alone. Even though we walk through the "valley of the shadow of death," we will "fear no evil: for Thou art with me."

"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Yes, in this battle the Lord is always there—"whithersoever thou goest." And it is because of our knowledge of this that the battle is really worth while. It gives us courage to know that we are fighting under the banner of the Captain of our salvation, and to do his bidding and to keep his commandments is the desire of our hearts.

There is dew on one flower and not on another simply because one flower opens its cup to receive the dew and the refreshment that comes with the dew, while another closes its cup and permits the dew

to fall away. So also with us. If we open our hearts to the promises of God, the promises of help and strength for every time of need, the promises of the providences of God, then we will go forth strong in the realization of the goodness of our God toward us, of his understanding, of the assurances of his mercy and of his grace; and also in the strength that these promises have always given to all the people of God. It is because of these promises that we do not shrink from the battle.

The Truth

And we also have the truth. What a sanctifying power the truth has been to us in our life. It has helped us not to be conformed to this world because it has given us an understanding of true values, and it has helped us in our transformation into the likeness of God's dear Son. It has told us what the will of God is, what is good and well-pleasing and perfect in his sight.

Every one of us has thrilled with the words of the song, "Truth, how sacred is the treasure! Teach us, Lord, its worth to know. Vain the hope, and short the pleasure, which from other sources flow." Yes, if we hold on to the truth, the truth will hold on to us.

If the Devil cannot take the truth from us by injecting erroneous doctrines into our minds, he will try to do so by making us complacent. He will try to do so by making us forget that we are Bible students. One of the pressures to-

day is conformity to a pattern. This is not searching for truth. This contains within itself the seeds of indifference. The Lord has given us fundamental doctrines. These fundamental doctrines are the truths of the harvest. They are the truth. They will never change. Let us study that we might grow in grace and in a knowledge of the truth, because, as we grow in an understanding of the truth we will undoubtedly keep within the framework of this harvest message.

Let us never be afraid of the light of God's Word. And on the other hand, let us never submit to teachers who do not put a proper evaluation upon the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God, because we realize that it is only as we appreciate these fundamental doctrines of the truth that we are able to realize the privileges that we have in connection with them.

The Brethren

And then we also have the brethren. We have each other to help us in this fight. The apostle chose his words well when he wrote, "to them that have obtained like precious faith." (II Pet. 1:1) Just think of the beauty of those words, and think of the beauty of that truth as it has affected us! What a blessing it is to have fellowship with those of like precious faith. It has been a source of encouragement to us that we have others who can share our fellowship and participate in our mutual love for the Lord and for the truth and for the

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brethren. The brethren have been a source of stimulation many times when zeal and faith have lagged.

Oh, we know that the brethren are also a source of trial and testing. We will do everything within our power to get one acquainted with the truth and after he has made the truth **his own** and become one of us, then, thoughtlessly we will do much to discourage him. This is a part of the testing. It is part of the battle. Let us who are in Christ bear one another's burdens and thus fulfil the law of Christ. Let us stand shoulder to shoulder encouraging our brethren as they fight the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

In Malachi 3:16, 17 we read, "Then they that feared [reverence] the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

We know for whom this text of Scripture was written. It was written for us. We speak often one with another because we need the help, and the encouragement of one another. We forsake not the assembling of ourselves together because we need the fellowship of one another. Even when there are only two or three, nevertheless they can rejoice because they know that he

says, "They shall be mine . . . when I make up my jewels" [margin, my 'special treasure'], and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Our battle will be won or lost, not by the big things we do, but by the little things—little sacrifices; overcoming pride and self-will; small expressions of sympathy; little acts of unselfishness; considering others better than ourselves; little victories over little temptations; taking **advantage** of small opportunities to witness to someone sitting beside us on the bus, to someone over the back fence, to a casual acquaintance—small sacrifices, in unity with others, by which the greater witness to the kingdom can be given. Brethren, if we take care of the little things in this battle, the big things will be taken care of by the Lord.

Selfishness is attractive only to one's self. But these little expressions of love and sympathy and understanding, these little sacrifices, the willingness to suffer with him, to die with him, attract the Lord into our lives.

We have deeper and sweeter fellowship with him. They attract the truth into our hearts with a deeper appreciation of its beauty. Teach us, Lord, its worth to know! It also attracts the brethren into a deeper and closer fellowship with us. So, then, together with the Lord, the truth, and the brethren, we continue to fight and by God's grace we shall gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the Devil!

“Unto Us a Son Is Given”

—Isaiah 9:1-7

OUR study relates to a subject which has thrilled the civilized world for centuries—a subject which will never grow old—a subject which, on the contrary, shall to all eternity be a theme of angels and of men. The birth of Jesus, to be rightly understood and esteemed, must be considered from the standpoint of a gift of love divine. Any other view of the matter is merely the casket without the jewel. The Scriptures give us the key to the thought: “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16

The world was under sentence of death; mankind had been dying for more than four thousand years. God had pitied humanity from the first. Yea, before sin entered, divine wisdom saw the end, and would not have created man, or would not have permitted the condition which led to sin and the sentence of death, had divine wisdom not

foreseen and arranged in advance for human redemption.

God had purposely arranged the matter so that it would require the death of a perfect man to redeem Adam and the race which lost life in and through him. God knew from the beginning that no such perfect man could be found, because all men were of Adamic stock and had a share in Adamic weakness, imperfection, and condemnation. From the beginning God in the divine plan contemplated that the Only Begotten of the Father, the Logos, the active agent of divinity in the work of creation, should be granted the great privilege of being man's Redeemer, and thereby securing a great reward—“Glory, honor, and immortality,” the divine nature, through a resurrection from the dead.

The First Step of Redemption

The primary step in man's recovery necessarily was that the Logos should be made flesh and dwell amongst us and taste death,

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by the grace of God, for every man. (John 1:14; Heb. 2:9) It is this first step that we celebrate at this season of the year—the birth of Jesus. He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be reclaimed.

Today's study points out that the ministry of Jesus would be in Galilee; that those people of the Jews who at the time were supposed to be in greatest darkness would see the great light of divine truth, as represented in Jesus and his ministry. This had a primary fulfilment in Galilee, where the major portion of the mighty works of Jesus were performed. But its real fulfilment lies in the future, when the great light of the millennial kingdom, "the Sun of Righteousness, shall arise with healing in its wings." Before that glorious Sun, sorrow and sighing will flee away; ignorance and superstition will vanish; sin and darkness will be no more; every knee will bow and every tongue confess: Jesus is the great center of that Sun of Righteousness, but, as he points out, the bride class, in process of selection during this age, is to be with him in the morning, shining forth his glory. They shall sit with him in his throne. After the "wheat" of this age is gathered into the "garner" by the power of the first resurrection, the bride of Christ will shine forth with the bridegroom, to heal earth's sorrows and to scatter earth's night. (Matt. 13:43) All this will come to us because "unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is

given"; because "the government shall rest upon his shoulders"; because "his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

The Fall of Babylon

We are to understand verses 3 to 5 as referring not to natural Israel, but to spiritual Israel—nominal. The holy nation has phenomenally increased without increasing the joy. There are many "tares" in the wheat-field. But in the harvest time of this age there will be a joy; the faithful "will rejoice as they that divide the spoil." The burdensome yoke of the creedal superstitions will be broken, and the rod of the oppressor, Satan, will be broken as in the day of Midian, when Gideon with his little band put to flight the army of the Midianites and set the people free. Verse 5 intimates that the fall of Babylon and the breaking of the yoke and the rod will be in the great "time of trouble." "For all the armor of the armed men and the turmoil and the garments rolled in blood shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire."

Messiah's Many Titles

Our great Redeemer, highly exalted, is eventually to bear many titles in commemoration of the many wonderful offices he will fill and services he will accomplish. But these are yet future. His great work in the past, the Redemption work, was the foundation of all his

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dom over to God, even the Father," that he may be the great "All in all."

"Upon the Throne of David"

Messiah's kingdom is styled "the Throne of David" for two reasons: first, the name of David signified Beloved; and the Messiah, as the Beloved of God, of the Father, is the antitype of David, even as Messiah's kingdom will be the an-

titype of David's kingdom. David merely "sat upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord"; it was not his. So the greater than David will sit upon the Throne of the kingdom of Jehovah, to order it and to establish it to completion, during the thousand years of his reign. Then he will deliver it up. "The zeal [love] of Jehovah of Hosts will perform this," operating through Messiah.—Reprint, 1912

Our Savior's Birth

*Oh, Natal happy day of old!
When humble shepherds there were told,
"That unto us a child is born"
To bring to earth a better morn;
That "unto us a son is giv'n,"
To bless the world with strife so riv'n.*

*Portentious news of long ago
"Good tidings of great joy;" We know
The multitude of heav'n did sing
Of time prophetic yet to bring
God's kingdom to the earth—and then,
Its "Peace on earth good will to men."*

*Why doth delay God's Word of yore?
While peace seems further than before.
The reason for the need delay,
That first the ransom Jesus pay,
And from the world his church shall call,
Then will God's blessings flow to all!*

Restoration in the Kingdom

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”
—Malachi 4: 5, 6

THE expression, “great and dreadful day of the Lord,” is one which is used in the Bible to describe a time in the outworking of the divine plan for human salvation when the Lord would no longer permit the human race to continue in its selfish and sinful ways unhindered by him. The prophecies also speak of this period as the day of God’s “vengeance.” (Isa. 34: 8; 63: 4) It is also referred to as a “day of clouds and of thick darkness.” (Joel 2: 2) Jesus, quoting from Daniel 12: 1, describes this “day” as a time of great “tribulation.”—Matt. 24: 21, 22

A prototype of this “great and dreadful day of the Lord” came upon the nation of Israel in the destructive trouble which followed their national rejection by the Lord. For several hundred years after Malachi—last of the Old Testament prophets—delivered his message to the Jewish people, there was no special indication that the Lord was taking any particular notice of the people’s waywardness; not until the appearance of John the Baptist, and following him, Jesus.

Through the ministry of these two servants of God, Israel was called to repentance and reformation, but the call was not heeded except by the few. John foretold that as a result of the failure to respond to this call to repentance and to accept their Messiah, dire calamity would come upon the nation. Speaking particularly to the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, John said:

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“O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.”—Matt. 3: 7-11

Thus is prophetically described a “great and dreadful day of the Lord” as it was experienced by Israel in the years A. D. 70-73. It came upon the nation as a manifestation of God’s displeasure over the sin and idolatry of the people from which they did not repent, even when a full and final opportunity was given. The “vengeance” of the Lord thus displayed resulted in the destruction of the nation, and a scattering of the Jewish people throughout the world which was to last for nearly two thousand years.

But the “time of trouble” upon Israel was but a miniature of the great “tribulation” foretold for this end of the age, a “time of trouble” which is already upon the whole world. In a more general way this larger manifestation of God’s “vengeance” is also because of the unbridled selfishness of the people, particularly those who have professed to be his people, that great body of nominal Christians which has made up “Christendom.” These, even as the Israelites, have not lived up to the teachings of the Bible which they have professed to believe. They have not adhered to the teachings and example of Jesus whom they claim to follow and worship. They have promoted and participated in war. They have worshiped their creed idols rather than God. For a long time it seemed as though God was paying no attention, but finally the time has come for him to act, to intervene in human affairs, and the result is a “time of trouble”—the “great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

Our text declares that prior to the coming of this “day of the Lord” “Elijah the prophet” would be sent to attempt a work of reformation. Every devout Israelite looked for the coming of the promised Messiah, and to the divine government which the prophets foretold he would establish in the earth. But here, seemingly, was another important personality, a “prophet” who must also come and

accomplish a vast work of reformation prior to the "great and dreadful day of the Lord."

There was still another personality, as the Israelites understood it, who had been promised in the writings of Moses. In Deuteronomy 18: 15-18 the Lord speaks of a "prophet" like unto Moses, a prophet who would give the people that which they desired at Horeb, which was the ending of God's "voice" against them in order that they might live. This great one the Israelites were accustomed to speak of as "that prophet."

Thus when John the Baptist began his ministry the Jews sent priests and Levites to interview him for the purpose of learning just who he claimed to be. John denied that he was the Messiah. Then these messengers inquired, "Art thou Elias?"—or Elijah—having in mind the prophecy of Malachi. John's straightforward reply to this question was, "I am not." Then the messengers asked, "Art thou that prophet?" Again John said, "No."—John 1: 19-21

However, as far as John the Baptist's being the foretold Elijah was concerned, his negative answer to the priests and Levites did not entirely settle the matter. The angel who prophesied the birth of John said, "Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him [the Lord] in the spirit and power of Elias [Greek for Elijah], to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."—Luke 1: 16, 17

This prophecy comes short of definitely identifying John the Baptist as the foretold Elijah. It simply states that he would conduct his ministry in the "spirit and power of Elijah." The Prophet Elijah had been fearless and courageous in the conduct of his work of reformation in Israel, and it was in this same spirit and power that John called the nation to repentance. In many respects John's work was similar to Elijah's, and certainly the courageous manner in which he conducted it was identical.

In a reference to John the Baptist, Jesus said to the multitudes, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias [Elijah], which was for to come." (Matt. 11: 7, 14) Here again we have a qualified identification of John—"If ye will receive it." Evidently what Jesus meant was that to those who were reached and reformed by John's ministry he was the promised "Elijah." This would seem to indicate that the

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"Call His Name Jesus"

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."—Matt. 1:21

OUR text sums up the entire work of our Lord Jesus, and indicates that it is all implied in the meaning of the name Jesus, Savior. We sometimes refer to our Lord as the Savior of sinners, and properly so, because we are all sinners through our share in the adamic fall. We sometimes speak of him as the Savior of the world, and properly so, because the whole world was lost through Adam's disobedience, and the whole world was redeemed and is to have the glorious opportunity of reconciliation to the Father through their Redeemer. But it is also appropriate that we note the statement of this text, "He shall save his people from their sins." This statement, that only the Lord's people are to be saved from their sins, is in full agreement with the other statements that he is the Savior of the world, because although his salvation must extend to and embrace every member of Adam's race, yet only those who when they know of the great salvation and of the opportunities accorded them accept the same and become his

people—only they shall get the full salvation and be delivered completely from death, and attain to the life everlasting, which is the gift of God to all those who obey him, and to no others.

"The Light of the World Is Jesus"

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."—Isa. 9:2

WE ARE still in the time when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. True, there is a measure of light in the world; true, also, that light emanated from our dear Redeemer, his words and his works, and still shines forth from all those who are truly his, and whose hearts are illuminated by his promises and his Spirit. But this is not the light of the world scattering all of earth's darkness, and causing all to appreciate the glory of God. That glorious day cannot come until the Lord shall first have found the members of his body, who together with himself are to constitute the Sun of Righteousness. The glorious prospect is that soon the church will be complete, soon the Sun of Right-

eousness will shine, and its rays will light to the uttermost parts of the earth, and that every child of Adam, sharer in his curse, shall ultimately be a sharer in Messiah's great work of blessing by being brought under the influence of that great Light which shall constitute the millennial age, a day of blessing and of glory and of knowledge of the Lord. "This is the true Light which [ultimately] lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—John 1:9

"Unto Us a Child Is Born"

"Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2:11

CHRISTMASTIDE always brings some lesson associated with our Savior and the great salvation, the gift of God, provided through him. Its scope is far beyond the Jewish nation, and can only be applied to the world-wide blessings which follow the second coming of Christ and the establishment of his glorious kingdom in power and great glory. The expression, "Unto us a child is born," thus indicates the humble beginning and earliest manifestations of the great Light, the Sun of Righteousness, which has not yet arisen, but whose day-star is now shining in the hearts of the faithful. Instead of the Lord's empire being a typical one over a little nation of Israelites, it will be the antitypical one in which Im-

manuel shall be King over all the earth, and his name great to the ends of the earth. It is the joy of this great people that is described; it will be not merely a quiet joy of satisfaction, but a hilarious joy, as of men who are in the midst of plenty, in a harvest season; and as men rejoicing when dividing the fruits of victory. But what will be the cause of the rejoicing? The answer is given. Because from off their shoulder the great burden has been removed: the burden of sin and its curse will have been removed, and the rod of the oppressor, Satan, will be broken, and he himself will then be a captive, no longer permitted to oppress and deceive and blind mankind.

Real Thanksgiving

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."—Ps. 103:2

WHOEVER presents to the Lord real thanksgiving with lips of praise will follow his lip service with something more substantial; and this is intimated in our text by the words, "O my soul." The appeal is not merely to the lips, but to the entire being. And so we find it with ourselves and others today; whoever is truly thankful to the Lord and offers him praise, remembering his benefits, will seek to render substantial thanks also in deeds that will be acceptable and pleasing to the Lord.

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work of reformation described in Malachi's prophecy is the key to its understanding rather than some certain individual or individuals who might perform, or undertake to perform that work.

The expression, "undertake to perform," is used advisedly, for the prophecy itself implies the possibility of initial failure, and explains what the consequences of failure would be—"lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." In other words, if the work of reformation described as turning the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children should fail, then a great curse would come upon the earth, ostensibly as a punishment to those who failed to heed the message of the reformer.

We have an illustration of this in the case of John the Baptist and his ministry in Israel. Many gave heed to his call to repentance, and in doing so were blessed. However, the vast majority of the nation did not. Not having heeded John's message, they were not prepared to accept Jesus as their Messiah, and were willing and ready to crucify him. In the outworking of the divine plan this led to disaster for the nation. Within the generation, and involving the very ones who rejected John and called for the crucifixion of Jesus, the foretold "curse" fell. This was the destruction of their temple and city of Jerusalem, and later their being scattered throughout the earth.

Continued Call to Repentance

Since, as Jesus explained, John the Baptist was the foretold "Elijah" to those who could receive it, and not the Elijah to those who did not respond to his message, it is evident that we cannot properly look for the fulfilment of Malachi's prophecy in and through a single individual. Rather, the name "Elijah" is used in the prophecy merely as symbolic of a work similar to that accomplished by the original Elijah. This was a work of reformation calling for repentance in which the people of Israel were called upon to return to their God, and to acknowledge his sovereignty in the nation.

So the foretold Elijah work would be a calling upon the people to repent, to reform, and to recognize that the "kingdom of heaven" was at hand. John the Baptist began such a work, but it was by no means concluded with him. Matthew 4:17 reads, "From that time

[when John's ministry was stopped] Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was the same message as delivered by John.—Matt. 3:1, 2

In Mark 6:12 we read that when the disciples of Jesus went out into the ministry they "preached that men should repent." After the Holy Spirit came upon the church at Pentecost, the call to repentance was still preached. In his Pentecostal sermon Peter said to his audience, "Repent, and be baptized." (Acts 2:38) In a later sermon he said, "Repent . . . and be converted." (Acts 3:19) In his sermon on Mars' Hill Paul said that now the Lord commandeth all men everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30) Explaining his ministry to Agrippa, Paul said that he "showed first unto them of Damascus and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."—Acts 26:20

It is evident from these scriptures that the call to repentance continued right on from John the Baptist, Jesus as well as his followers participating in it. This was the foretold Elijah work. Jesus commissioned his disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, which clearly implies that the "Elijah" work was to continue through the ministry of the church. Thus the prophecy that "Elijah" would come before the "great and terrible day of the Lord" has been fulfilled. It has been particularly fulfilled at this end of the age because the Elijah class in the flesh has given a wide witness that the "kingdom of heaven" is at hand, and that soon its blessings will begin to flow to "all the families of the earth."

World Not Converted

But throughout the age, and now, the world has not heeded the message of the "Elijah," even as the nation of Israel did not give heed to John the Baptist. Instead, the world has continued on in its wicked, selfish ways, unmindful of the "curse" that unbridled human selfishness would inevitably and finally bring upon all nations—that great "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation," suggested by Malachi as an alternate fulfilment. Thus, just as the "curse" fell upon Israel as a result of failure to repent, so now the wicked, unrepentant world is already in the throes of a time of distress and tribulation which, but for divine intervention, might well lead to the destruction of the human race.

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The world has not been converted by the Gospel. Darkness still covers the earth, and "gross darkness the people." (Isa. 60:2) But this does not mean that the world never will be converted and that the foretold "Elijah" work never will be successful. God has wanted the world to have witness to help demonstrate that nothing short of the "iron rule" of the messianic kingdom could succeed in establishing the divine will in earth even as it is in heaven. Now that this demonstration has been given, and we are already in the midst of the foretold "curse" that would come in the event of failure, we can confidently look forward to the near establishment of that glorious kingdom of the Messiah which will enlighten the world, and cause the people to say, "This is our God; we have waited for him, . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."—Isa. 25:9

A Vision of the Kingdom

In the Transfiguration Vision shown to Peter, James, and John we have a further clarification and confirmation of the Elijah symbolism in the prophecies. (Matt. 17:1-17) In the last verse of the preceding chapter Jesus said, "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." Then in the next verse, the first of the following chapter, we read, "After six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart." This was the Mount of Transfiguration.

When Jesus said that some standing among them would not taste death until they saw him in his kingdom, he evidently meant that they would be given a vision of the kingdom, which three of them were given just six days later. This was Peter's understanding for in the 1st chapter of his second epistle he speaks of an abundant entrance into the "kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (vs. 11) Then, concerning this glorious hope, he adds, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming [presence] of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his Majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."—II Pet. 1:16-18

It is clear that Peter, James, and John were given a vision of

Christ's kingdom, and it is significant that in this vision they should see Moses and Elijah with Jesus. It would seem to be the Lord's way of saying that the prophecies concerning Elijah, and "that prophet," who was to be "like unto Moses," would have their real and complete fulfilment in the kingdom. Other scriptures reveal that this is the divine plan.

When Peter, who was inspired by this vision of the kingdom, preached his well-known sermon on the "times of restitution of all things," adding that it had been spoken by the "mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began," he cited as one of his proof texts the promise the Lord made to raise up a great prophet like Moses. Thus Peter understood that the prophecy recorded in Deuteronomy 18:15-18 would be fulfilled during the "times of restitution of all things."

On the Mount of Transfiguration Jesus said that Elijah "shall come, and restore all things." (Matt. 17:11) In the King James Version this reads "first come," but the word "first" is spurious. The Revised Version translates the text correctly, and reads, "Elijah indeed cometh." In this statement Jesus is referring to the ultimate accomplishment of the "Elijah" work during his kingdom reign.

Through John the Baptist, there was a beginning of the "Elijah" work, but he was rejected by the majority. Then Jesus was rejected and put to death. This work has continued throughout the age, but those giving the message have likewise been rejected and persecuted. Not until the kingdom is established in power and great glory, as so graphically portrayed in the Transfiguration Vision, will the foretold Elijah work finally be accomplished. It will be then that God's will will be restored in the earth, and when all mankind, released from the adamic condemnation, will be awakened from the sleep of death and given an opportunity to be restored to perfection and live forever.

Two Phases of the Kingdom

It was fitting from another standpoint that Moses and Elijah should be shown together with Jesus in that marvelous vision of the kingdom. Moses, as lawgiver and prophet, is a fitting symbol of all the faithful servants of God during the Law dispensation, and even before. All the ancient worthies were God's representatives during the time preceding the first advent of Christ. They upheld the principles of divine righteousness in a sinful world, suffering and

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dying for righteousness' sake. But the world was not impressed by their presence and ministry.

But it will be different in the kingdom. This class of ancient and faithful servants of God will then be raised from the dead and become the human representatives of the divine Christ, the earthly phase of the kingdom. Then they will be rewarded by seeing that for which they stood become triumphant in the earth. Through the authority and power of "that prophet," the greater than Moses, they will see the knowledge of the Lord fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Then the righteous will not be persecuted. On the other hand, the rebuke of God's people will be taken away, and "every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."—Isa. 25:8; Acts 3:23

Since the Lord used Elijah and his work of reformation to symbolize the call to repentance and to the acceptance of earth's new King which began at the first advent, we may properly think of him as symbolizing the spiritual phase of the kingdom, the preparation for which began with the coming of Jesus. The message proclaimed to the world by these throughout the Gospel age has not turned the "heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers." The actual accomplishment of this work awaits the full establishment of Christ's kingdom in power and great glory. How beautifully this is shown by Elijah's appearing with Jesus in that vision of the kingdom.

Unique in the experiences of the original Elijah was the fact that at the close of his ministry he was lifted up from the earth. Although he did not actually go to heaven, as many suppose, his experience readily suggests or symbolizes the fact that the antitypical Elijah class, after proving their faithfulness by witnessing for the truth regardless of the cost to them, are in the resurrection exalted to heavenly glory, to participate with Jesus in the spiritual phase of his glorious kingdom.

Thus in the Transfiguration Vision we have a marvelous portrayal of the earthly and spiritual phases of the messianic kingdom, that kingdom in which Jesus himself will be the supreme Head and Ruler, the "King of kings, and Lord of lords." It will be through that kingdom that the "Elijah" work of reconciling the world to God will finally be accomplished. With this work completed, the kingdom will be turned over to the Heavenly Father, that he may be "all in all."—I Cor. 15:25-28

Divine Secrets Revealed

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear [reverence] him; and he will show them his covenant."—Psalm 25:14

I S THERE any secret in connection with the divine plan? Are not all God's arrangements so plain that a wayfaring man, though unlearned, need not err therein? Are not all of the steps of the plan of salvation so simple that even a child may understand them? Very evidently not, because everywhere we find the utmost diversity of opinion respecting the divine purpose.

In harmony with this is the fact that all the prophets have spoken more or less obscurely, and in parables, not excepting the Great Prophet, our Lord Jesus, who taught the people in parables and dark sayings: "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them." (Matt. 13:34) He promised, nevertheless, that in due time the Holy Spirit would be granted as a guide and instructor to his true disciples: "He [the Father's Holy Spirit] will

guide you into all truth," ... and "show you things to come."—John 16:13

Some of the mysteries of God were due to be understood at once, and some more gradually down through the age, but the great unfolding of the divine mystery, we are expressly told, was reserved until the close of the Gospel age, when "the mystery of God should be finished."—Rev. 10:7

To the extent that the divine plan was due to be revealed by the Holy Spirit, and to be understood step by step during the Gospel age, this was intended only for a special class, and not for the world in general. The Apostle Paul emphasized this when he declared: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep [hidden, obscure] things of God."—I Cor. 2:14, 10

We are to fully realize the distinction between those who fear or reverence the Lord, and those who fear or reverence man, and the works of man—sectarian systems and their creeds. "The fear of man bringeth a snare," and hinders growth in grace and in knowledge, and hinders an appreciation of the

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“secret of the Lord.” But, “The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Prov. 29: 25; Ps. 111:10) And this wisdom, if continued, leads to fuller knowledge of God; to greater confidence in him, and to that degree of intimate friendship and sonship, which is the key to the understanding of the “secret of the Lord.”

Abraham was called “the friend of God” (James 2:23) because he manifested such full confidence. God made known unto him certain things that he did not reveal to others. “The secret of the Lord” was with Abraham so far as that secret could be communicated to anyone at that time. For instance, in the matter of the destruction of Sodom the Lord said: “Shall I hide from Abraham [my friend] that thing which I do?”—Gen. 18:17

And it was because Abraham was the friend of God that he also made known to him something of the divine plan for human salvation. The apostle declares that God “preached the Gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” (Gal. 3:8, R. V.; Gen. 22:15-18) While it was not possible for Abraham to comprehend this statement fully, yet it contained the whole Gospel in the same sense that an acorn contains a great oak tree.

So likewise our Lord at his first advent spoke in parables to the nominal house of Israel, “because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they un-

derstand; . . . for this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed.” (Matt. 13:13, 15) Yet, a certain few, full of faith and obedience and consecration to the Lord, were treated as “friends” and had much explained to them.

Our Lord said to his disciples when they inquired concerning the significance of a parable, “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.” (Mark 4:11) And again he said to the same devoted disciples: “I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”—John 15:15

Our text speaks of those who merely “fear” or “reverence” the Lord, but this reverence, if it is continued, leads into the very deepest work of grace obtainable—to a fulness of consecration to the Father’s will and service. It is of this class who fear (reverence) the Lord, that we read: “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared [reverenced] the Lord, and that thought upon his name [esteeming his name, his honor, his will, above any earthly, sectarian name or work]. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of

hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."—Malachi 3:16, 17

"His Covenant"

A divine promise is contained in our text. It is so stated as to indicate that it is a very important matter to see, or clearly understand, God's covenant. And it is a matter that is very important, because God's covenant is really the key to the entire divine plan. What God promised to Abraham in the covenant—"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18)—included directly and indirectly all the riches of divine grace. Yet how few see this!

But with our eyes anointed, and our hearts fully consecrated to the Lord and fully desirous to know just what is his will and purpose, we look at the great covenant, and, behold, it opens gloriously before us, into three parts: (1) All the families of the earth—every member of the human family—are to receive a blessing. (2) The "seed" of Abraham is to be the "channel" of these divine blessings to every creature. (3) This "seed" in its primary sense is our Lord Jesus Christ, but in its secondary sense it includes the "bride," the "Lamb's wife," his "joint-heir" in this covenant and in all the divine mercies.—Gen. 22:15-18; Gal. 3:8, 16, 27-29

With this thought in view, we realize at once that none of the spiritual blessings of this covenant

were possible until Christ Jesus, the Head of the seed, had finished his course, and had been glorified. And we see that the Lord's work since that time has been the gathering of the "elect" church, to be the "bride," the "body" of Christ. We see also that the work of blessing "all families of the earth" cannot begin in its proper sense until this entire "seed" is complete and glorified.

This spiritual seed of Abraham (Christ and the elect church) has indeed been the salt of the earth throughout the Gospel age, and has helped to preserve the world from utter deterioration. However, this is but a small part of the great blessing which God designs to send through the church to the world. The "light" of truth as it has been dimly shining during the long night of sin and death can be properly compared to a candle or lamp; but the "light" of the church glorified in the kingdom during the Millennium is properly represented as a shining forth of the sun.—Matthew 13:43

The covenant, then, shows us our great privilege at the present time of becoming "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. 8:17) And it shows us the object of this trial to be a work of mercy, blessing, helpfulness, towards the remainder of mankind.

The covenant is broad. It does not promise merely that all the families of the earth who will be

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so fortunate as to be living at the time when the seed is complete will receive a blessing. Neither does it merely say that all the families proceeding from Abraham, dead and living, will receive a blessing; but comprehensively it promises a blessing to "all families of the earth"—those who have fallen asleep in death, as well as those who will be alive at the time of the establishment of Christ's kingdom.

To this end our Lord Jesus became Master or "Lord of the dead" (Rom. 14:9) as well as of the living. He bought "all" with his own precious blood. "He is the propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins (the church's sins): and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (I John 2:2) And, as the true church received a blessing as the result of his ransom, so in God's due time "all families of the earth" will also receive a blessing because of the ransom. It is from this standpoint that the church is called a "kind of firstfruits" unto God of his creatures. (James 1:18) The church is not the entire harvest. The firstfruits are to be used of the Lord as his instruments for blessing the remainder.

And, in the coming blessing of all families of the earth, the natural seed of Abraham are to be given a place, or preference, a priority, over others—"to the Jew first." As the spiritual blessings were offered to them first, so the earthly favors are to be offered to them first. They

shall obtain mercy "through your [the church's] mercy." (Rom. 11:31) And after Israel shall have obtained mercy, then, in turn, the light will shine upon others—"all families of the earth." In due time the promise shall be fulfilled that Christ, as the true Light, shall enlighten "every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:9) Oh glorious covenant, luminous with divine love and wisdom!—Rom. 11:33

Sure and Lasting

God took special care to so state this covenant repeatedly to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to repeat it through the prophets, to give us full assurance that it was absolutely his word on this subject. But lest this should not be thought conclusive, God gave not only his word but also his oath, that we should have complete reliance upon, and the consolation of his word. "God, wishing to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the immutability of his purpose, interposed with an oath; so that by two unalterable things, in which it is impossible for God to deceive, we [the church] might have strong consolation, having fled away to lay hold of the proposed hope, which we have as an anchor of the life, both sure and firm, and entering the place within the veil, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, entered."—Heb. 6:17-20, **Diaglott**

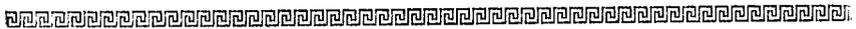
Those to whom the Lord has disclosed his secret, and the signifi-

THE BRITISH SECTION

cance of his covenant, should see to it that these divine favors lead their hearts to still greater reverence for him. For we may be assured that if the reverence is lost the secret will slip from us, and the covenant become more and more dim. Where the spirit of the Lord has been implanted, there the increase of knowledge of the divine secret and covenant will bring increasing blessings of heart, of mind, and of daily life. The precious Holy Scriptures are to be our daily careful and prayerful meditation; a divine lamp to our feet, and light to our path; a sanctifying influence in our life, assisting us to be faithful in all that we shall be called

upon to endure, and to accomplish, as footstep followers of the Master.

Having regard to the very rich blessings that are bestowed upon those who are obedient to God's Holy Word, may we strive more and more to retain and to cultivate that true "reverence" for the Lord, which is not only "the beginning of wisdom," but also its end. Through it may we have the benefit and helpful assistance of all the gracious provisions which God has made for the progress in knowledge and in character of those who love him. In due time may we inherit the promises and share the glories of our dear Father and his beloved Son!



*Lord Jesus, in the days of old,
Two walked with thee by waning light,
And love's blind instinct made them bold
To crave thy presence through the night;
As night descends, we too would pray;
O leave us not at close of day!*

*Day is far spent and night is nigh;
Stay with us, Savior, through the night;
Talk with us, teach us tenderly,
Lead us to peace, to rest, to light;
Dispel our darkness with thy face,
Radiant with resurrection grace.*

*Nor this night only, blessed Lord,
We, every day and every hour
Would walk with thee Emmaus-ward,
To hear thy voice of love and power,
And every night would by thy side
Look, listen, and be satisfied.*

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

G. A. FORD
 Letchworth January 25

J. LESLIE MC KEOWN
 Belfast December 21

J. H. MURRAY
 Oxford December 7
 Southend January 25

E. TERRY NADAL

Letchworth December 14
 Liverpool January 25

W. E. PAMPLING

Dewsbury December 1
 Kettering 2
 Guildford 14
 Southend 28
 Letchford January 11
 Lufon 25

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Remembrance

Ecclesiastes 12:7 reads: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." When the "spirit" returns to God, does it remember the past life?

NO, IT does not! The "spirit" which returns to God is merely the breath, or power of life. It has no consciousness apart from the body which it animates. It requires the union of the spirit, or breath of life, with the body in order for there to be a living, conscious being, or soul. (Gen. 2:7) The thinking part of the body is the brain, and when the brain is no longer alive there are no thoughts, no remembrance. This is confirmed by Psalm 146:4, which reads, "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

The word "return" is very significant in the text under consideration. The body is said to "return" to the dust. That is because it came from the dust, or the elements of the earth. The "spirit" returns to God, because the breath of life, the animating power of life, came from God. "In him we live, and move, and have our being," said Paul. (Acts 17:28) When the "body" re-

turns to the original elements of the earth, and the power of life returns to the Life-giver, the person is as though he had never existed, except that God has promised to restore him to life in the resurrection.—Acts 24:14, 15; I Cor. 15:15-18, 20-22

Kingdom Not Established at Pentecost

Was not the kingdom of Christ established at Pentecost by the coming of the Holy Spirit into the hearts and lives of the disciples of Christ?

THE marvelous experience of the disciples at Pentecost was an essential preparation for the kingdom, but not its actual establishment. For thousands of years God had been promising to send a great King to establish a kingdom or government of righteousness. So when Jesus, the King, came at his first advent, John the Baptist announced, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand"; or, as a more literal translation of the Greek text would read, "The Royal Majesty of the heavens has approached." (Matt. 3: 2, **Emphatic Diaglott**) Jesus and his disciples also preached that the kingdom of heaven was **at hand**. They did not mean that the kingdom had been established, and was

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ruling in the earth, but that its preparation had begun.

Isaiah had foretold the birth of the great King, that his name should be called, "Wonderful counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah further wrote concerning this great Ruler that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." (Isa. 9:6, 7) The birth of Jesus was the beginning of the fulfillment of this prophecy, but its complete fulfillment was not due in the divine plan until the second coming of Christ.

Jesus related a parable to his disciples in which this thought was illustrated—the parable of a "certain nobleman [who] went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and then to return." (Luke 19:12) During the interim between the first advent of Jesus and his return and full establishment of his kingdom, a "little flock" of footstep followers are called from the world and given an opportunity to prove their worthiness of reigning with him. Paul speaks of these as being "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."—Luke 12:32; Rom. 8:17

The Holy Spirit, or power of God is given to these followers of Jesus to guide and comfort them as they suffer and die with Jesus. The Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost upon those ready to receive it, and it has continued with all the true disciples from that time until now. It does not give them authority and power to reign as kings, but

strength to suffer and die as by following in the footsteps of Jesus they prove their worthiness to live and reign with him.

Because these are being prepared to be rulers in the kingdom, the Bible speaks of them as being associated with the kingdom. Colossians 1:12, 13 reads, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." The "inheritance" here referred to is our prospective joint-heirship with Christ, to live and reign with him. It is to this that every true disciple of Christ has been called. But each must make his "calling and election sure." While doing this, we are properly represented as being in, or associated with, the new kingdom.—II Pet. 1:10, 11

A similar thought is presented to us in Hebrews 12:28, which reads, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." The sacrificing disciples of Christ throughout the age have been "receiving" a kingdom; their worthiness actually to reign with Christ when his kingdom is established throughout the earth being the great issue of their lives. Only the "called, and chosen, and faithful" will be with Christ when his kingdom is fully set up in power and great glory.—Revelation 17:14

Blood Transfusions

Are blood transfusions forbidden in the Bible? Can one who has received a blood transfusion be forgiven?

BLOOD transfusions are not forbidden in the Bible. Since they are not forbidden in the Word of God, a Christian who has received a blood transfusion has not violated the law of God, hence needs no forgiveness in this respect. A more detailed discussion of this question will gladly be sent to anyone who requests it.

Jesus' Prehuman Existence

Did Jesus exist before being "made flesh"?

YES, the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus had a prehuman existence. In Colossians 1:15-17 we read concerning Jesus, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, . . . thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

In Revelation 3:14 Jesus is referred to as "the beginning of the creation of God." In John 1:14 Jesus, in his prehuman life, is described as the "Word"—Greek, Logos, meaning mouthpiece, or representative—of God, the Crea-

tor. In this text we are told that the "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." These texts of Scripture definitely establish the fact of Jesus' prehuman existence. The purpose of his coming to earth as a human being was that he might give his humanity as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.—John 6:51; Heb. 2:9; I John 2:2

Destruction of False Gods

Isaiah 26:14 reads, "They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish." Does this not prove that the wicked dead, those who have died in unbelief, will never be resurrected?

NO, FOR the reason that this text is not discussing wicked people, but false gods who have deceived and misguided the people. This is apparent from the preceding verse, which reads, "O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name." It is these "other lords" that perish, and are forgotten.

The Israelites were continually confronted with the temptation to worship and serve false gods. Frequently they yielded to this temptation, and when they did, the false gods took dominion over them. Throughout the Gospel age the Lord's professed people have also frequently been worshipers of false

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gods who have made slaves of them. There have been, for example, the torture deity, the trinity god, and others. Many have worshiped the god of gold and silver, others the god of pride, or the god of pleasure.

Then, throughout all the ages, there have been the various heathen gods which have been worshiped by millions who have been enslaved to them. Actually, of course, none of the false gods have been other than the figments of imagination in the minds and hearts of the people—fantasies to which, in many instances, idols of wood and metal have been erected in an effort to make them seem real.

Thank God, all these “other lords” are to perish from the minds and hearts of the people. Their destruction will be brought about by the fact that the knowledge of the true God will, through the agencies of Christ’s kingdom, be caused to fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11: 9) Through the “pure language,” or message, which will then be turned to the people, they all “call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.”—Zeph. 3:9

It is because the teeming millions of earth have, throughout the ages, been deceived by the myriads of false gods which have plagued them, that they are to be awakened from the sleep of death and enlightened concerning Jehovah, the true God, and the loving provision of life he has made for them through the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Let us rejoice that

God, in his love, understands the situation, and knows that those who have been held in restraint through deception and fear, have not had a real opportunity to know and serve him; and therefore he has provided such an opportunity beyond the sleep of death. Then with his “judgments” abroad in the earth, the “inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”—Isa. 26:9

“Among You”

In Luke 17:21 Jesus is quoted as saying, “The kingdom of God is within you.” What did Jesus mean?

THE marginal translation of this text reads “among you” instead of “within you.” A more correct translation of the entire text gives the thought that the One who is King in the kingdom of God is “among you.” The Emphatic Diaglott translation speaks of this great King, who is Jesus, saying “God’s Royal Majesty is among you.” See John 1:26; 12:35, 36.

It is evident that the King James translation is faulty, because this statement by Jesus was made to the scribes and Pharisees whom he described on various occasions as hypocrites and children of the Devil. There could be no sense in which the kingdom could be “within” them. But Jesus had come to be the great King in this kingdom, and he was in the midst of these hypocrites, or “among them,” although they rejected him.

The Test of Time

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.”

—Hebrews 10: 35-38

WE HAVE come to the end of another year. To every faithful follower of the Master it has been a year of rich spiritual blessings. There have been joyous experiences, and there have been trials. There have been successes and also failures. But in every experience faith has given the victory in proportion as we have been assured that “all things” have worked together for our highest spiritual interests as new creatures in Christ. The year 1958 has therefore been a blessed one, and as disciples of Christ we should be able to look back and “praise the way he has led us day by day.”

Nineteen fifty-eight has been a very unsettled year for the world. There has been no abatement of the fear with which the people look ahead to the things coming upon the earth. This fear is due to a lack of understanding of what is taking place. The world does not realize that the plan of God is moving forward into a new age. Indeed, the world does not know that God has a plan, and many of the worldly-minded doubt that there is a God. No wonder, in the face of threatened destruction by hydrogen bombs, their hearts are filled with fear

But how different is the position of truth-enlightened Christians! The situations and circumstances incidental to the collapse of Satan’s

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social order, instead of filling the hearts of the Lord's people with fear, give them increased faith and confidence in the fact that the full establishment and manifestation of the kingdom of Christ as the supreme ruling authority in the earth is very near at hand. So, as Jesus admonished them to do, they "look up," and they "lift up their heads," knowing that their deliverance draweth nigh.—Luke 21:28

In view of the "signs of the times" which are so plainly visible all around us today, there is no reason at all why we should even think of casting away our confidence, as Paul admonishes us not to do. However, this danger is always present, and largely because we so often fail to realize that a "thousand years" are to the Lord merely as "yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." (Ps. 90:4) We are so prone to measure time from the standpoint of our own short span of natural life that waiting another year, or a few more years, for the kingdom becomes a severe test of faith and patience.

The Will of God

Paul says that it is after we "have done the will of God" that we have need of patience in order that we might receive the fulfilment of the "promise." The "will of God" here mentioned is evidently our original consecration to do God's will, which was the acceptance of Jesus' invitation to take up our cross and follow him into sacrificial death. In that dedication of ourselves to do God's will we promised to give our all to the Lord—our time, our talents, our strength, our means, everything. "Nothing, Lord, would I withhold," is the promise we made.

Having thus placed our all upon the altar of sacrifice, had the Lord manifested his acceptance by consuming our offering wholly and completely in a short time, and while our enthusiasm was high, we would have rejoiced. But it has not been so. Instead, the Lord expects his people to demonstrate the genuineness of their dedication to him by a prolonged consuming of their sacrifice, and it is in this that they have need of patient endurance.

This test of patience from the standpoint of time has, with many of the Lord's people, been related to their expectations with respect to the outworking of the divine plan. It is this that Paul had particularly in mind when he said that we "have need of patience," "for,"

he continued, "yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10:35, 36) The particular test of time here mentioned was in waiting for the return of the Lord and the establishment of his kingdom.

The hope of Christ's return was very precious and inspiring to the Early Church. To them it meant their own exaltation to joint-heirship with Christ in his thousand-year kingdom, and it meant the blessing of all the families of the earth through Christ's kingdom. It meant their own participation in the "first resurrection," and it also meant the general resurrection of all the dead. To them the plan of God would fail entirely of its purpose if Christ did not return, so it was natural that they should desire this glorious event to take place speedily, and when it did not occur as soon as they had hoped, their faith and their patience were tested.

James wrote, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." (James 5:7, 8) To this James adds, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."—vs. 10

Paul wrote, "Yet a little while," and James wrote, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." This has been the viewpoint of all God's people in every age. The Old Testament prophets, whom James admonishes us to look upon as examples of patient endurance, hoped for the speedy fulfilment of God's promises to them. They did not have the full understanding of the divine plan as it has been given to the Lord's people in this "harvest time" at the end of the age, but they did believe that God would send a great Deliverer, the Messiah, and that unto him would the gathering of the people be. (Gen. 49:10) But they all died in faith not having realized the fulfilment of the messianic promises God had made to and through them.

When Jesus, the Messiah, did come, his disciples had their faith tested from the standpoint of time. They believed that the messianic kingdom would be established immediately. Because of this, Jesus related a parable to them concerning a "certain nobleman" who went into a "far country" to receive a kingdom, and to return. (Luke

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19:11, 12) From this they learned, seemingly, that Jesus was to go away, and that his kingdom would not be established until he returned. So, a little later, on the Mount of Olives, they asked him concerning the signs of his return and second presence, and the end of the world, or age.—Matt. 24:3

As we well know, it was in answer to this question that Jesus outlined the major world events now taking place. These are the signs which give us so much confidence that now, at long last, the kingdom is, as it were, “immediately” to appear. But the disciples at that time did not understand that many centuries would elapse before the return of their Lord. When he was taken away from them in death they were bewildered and confused. Their hopes were somewhat revived by Jesus’ resurrection, and on the occasion of his last appearance to them they made bold to ask, “Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”—Acts 1:6

To this Jesus replied, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” (vs. 7) This was very true in the experience of the Early Church. While, through the inspirational power of the Holy Spirit, the apostles realized that Jesus would not return in their day, even so they believed that this great event in the outworking of the divine plan was near, and they encouraged the Early Church along these lines. It was well that they did, otherwise many of them might have cast away their confidence.

Times and Seasons Revealed

Jesus’ statement to his disciples that the “times” and “seasons” of the divine plan had been put in the hands of the Heavenly Father did not imply that the Father would never reveal any of them. It was just that they were not to be revealed to the disciples at that time. We have now reached a period in the divine plan when a number of the time features of the divine plan have been revealed, and to the great joy of the Lord’s people. (See Volumes 2 and 3 of “Studies in the Scriptures.”)

Even so, the year 1914 is the latest date the prophecies of the Bible point out to us. That was the end of the “times of the Gentiles,” and it is since then that we have been watching a world fall apart. But there is nothing in the prophecies of the “times of the Gentiles” to indicate the exact date when we could expect God’s

new world to be fully ushered in, or when the last member of the body of Christ would pass beyond the veil to live and reign with him. Forty-four years have passed since that memorable year when the outbreak of the first World War signaled the beginning of that series of distressing and world-shaking events which has brought the nations to their present dilemma.

It is probably safe to say that some, and probably many, of the Lord's people since 1914 have thought that each passing year would surely see the full fruition of their hopes. "Things can't go on much longer," we keep saying, yet here we are at the end of another year, the forty-fourth since the last known authentic date pointed out to us in the Word of God. Thus again, even as with the disciples of old, the Heavenly Father is keeping the "times" and "seasons" of his plan within his own power insofar as letting us know when the full manifestation of the kingdom, in power and great glory, will become a reality.

Nevertheless, it is still true that "the time is short" in which to make our calling and election sure. Paul wrote, "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." That "little while" proved to be nearly nineteen centuries—a long time to us, but less than two "days" by the Lord's view of time. And now those centuries are in the past. He who was to come has come, so we can surely now say with Paul that the remaining time before the full glorification of the church is indeed just a "little while."

In giving the church the assurance concerning the "little while" of waiting, Paul quoted in part from the prophecy of Habakkuk, chapter 2, verses 2 and 3. It is this prophecy which speaks of a "vision" which was to be made plain "at the end," when it would "speak, and not lie." The prophecy adds, "Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Actually the fulfilment of the "vision" only seems to "tarry," and that is because of our very restricted viewpoint of time. From God's standpoint it does not tarry at all, for we know that every detail of his great plan of the ages is carried out exactly on time.

The fact that this prophecy speaks of the seeming tarrying, and then assures us that there would be no actual delay, is in itself encouraging, for thereby is revealed that the various disappointments of the Lord's people with respect to the time features of the

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divine plan were foreknown by the Lord, and foretold. The Lord has wisely permitted his people to have these experiences in order that their faith and patience might be the more fully tested. It is a wholesome experience also, in that it helps us to realize how truly limited we are in the understanding of God's plans and purposes, that we can know only those things which he is pleased to reveal to us. And while it has been given to us to know some of the "mysteries of the kingdom," it is obvious that there are some which are not yet revealed.

In permitting his people to be tested pertaining to time, the Lord has in no way been unfair to them. Whether at the beginning of the age, or at the end, for each individual saint of God the time has indeed been short, no longer in any instance than the natural life span. Hope's fruition is realized at once by all who prove faithful unto death. Those who slept in death throughout the age were not conscious of the passing of time. Their awakening in the resurrection was to them like the next second after they had finished their course in death. And now, of course, we have had revealed to us that "mystery" mentioned by Paul concerning the fact that in this time of the Lord's second presence the faithful would not need to sleep in death, but would be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."—I Cor. 15:51, 52

So the time IS short, very short, especially for those who have been waiting and praying and toiling in the Lord's vineyard from before and since 1914. Nor should those who have embraced the truth and started to run for the prize of the high calling in more recent years conclude that they have plenty of time in which to make their calling and election sure, even though they may be young in years. No matter how we may view the "signs of the times" today, it becomes increasingly evident that man will soon finish the destruction of his world, and be ready to say, "Let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord."—Micah 4:1-4

We have now reached the time in the divine plan when it is only a "little while" for all the consecrated to prove faithful unto death. "A few more years, or more or less," and all of us "shall have crossed the wilderness." But we do have need of patience! Having done the "will of God" in presenting ourselves in full consecration to him, let us continue to carry out the terms of our dedication. May we never turn back, nor become weary in well-

doing, for in God's "due season" we "shall reap, if we faint not."—Gal. 6:9

A Good Year

Looking back upon the year which is now closing, we find that it has been filled with blessings for the Lord's people as a whole. Information reaching us from various parts of the country, and of the world, indicates that 1958 will go down as a year of wonderful conventions. The attendance at essentially all the annual gatherings has been larger than in previous years; and the blessings received through the discourses and through fellowship with the brethren have overflowed. Every convention has crystallized in the hearts of those in attendance the determination to continue on faithfully in the narrow way until they hear the Master's, "Well done."

The year 1958 has also been one of rewarding activity in the Lord's service, both in America and in other lands. The Lord's people are more and more on the alert to use every opportunity possible in bearing witness to the truth. And in this the Lord has abundantly fulfilled his promise that those who "water" shall "themselves also be watered." And how truly refreshing it is to make known to others the glorious Gospel of the kingdom! The truth never means so much to us as when we sacrifice time, strength, and means in bearing witness to it.

Your colaborers at The Dawn have enjoyed the share they have had during the year in helping to provide truth literature for the brethren to use in their witness work and in their meetings. This applies also to the brethren laboring with us in the various countries overseas. And we want to continue in this service, and once more place ourselves at the disposal of the brethren everywhere to do all we can to supply their needs. We came far short of doing all that we would like to do, and realize that many times the brethren "have need of patience" with us. But by the Lord's grace we will keep on trying, daily seeking his guidance and strength.

We can also speak for the brethren who have served in the pilgrim work, that they have appreciated the privileges they have enjoyed of fellowshiping with you. We are confident that all who have served in this field will gladly say from their hearts, "Lord, if I may, I'll serve another day." Those who have served as pilgrims have brought many rich blessings to the Lord's people throughout

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the year. Let us thank God for the pilgrims, and bear them up before the throne of heavenly grace, seeking the Lord's blessing upon their continued labors of love on behalf of the Lord's people, both here and overseas.

It has also been a "good" year for those engaged in the follow-up work, and in the distribution of free literature. From the standpoint of the individuals engaged in these services, there have been discouraging experiences, but when viewed in the light of the total effort it is quite different, for many have thus been introduced to the truth, while others have been encouraged to study the Word more thoroughly that they might become better acquainted with the divine plan, and with our loving Heavenly Father who is revealed through that plan.

The co-operative efforts of the Lord's people in presenting the Gospel of the kingdom over the radio have also brought joy to all who have in any way participated. Through your co-operation there are brethren here and abroad now rejoicing in the truth who prior to 1958 had never heard the glorious Gospel of love. This has also helped to make 1958 a blessed year.

The television work is very new, and as yet, limited, but those participating in this effort, in Chicago and elsewhere, can testify to the blessings received. In this new field we are proceeding very cautiously, endeavoring to observe carefully the Lord's leadings, as we endeavor to learn the best methods of presentation and the best approach to the TV stations upon which we depend to present our programs. As a result of our initial efforts we are encouraged to hope that a number of stations will televise our programs without charge. This has been one of the encouraging developments of 1958 for which we give praise to our loving Heavenly Father.

The Coming Year

Yes, we expect that there will be a "coming year" during which most of us will have the privilege of continuing to lay down our lives in the Lord's service—another year of that "little while" during which we are waiting for the full establishment of the kingdom. Because "the time is short" it is appropriate that we determine now to make the best possible use of every moment and every day of 1959 in showing forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

There is every reason to believe that the radio work will continue through another year. During 1959 special efforts will be made to get The Dawn Magazine into the homes of those who listen to the witness over the radio. We believe that there is no better way to maintain and nourish interest in the truth than through the month-to-month visits of The Dawn. It is the next best thing to a personal call, in that it keeps the interested ones reminded of the truth. And in The Dawn they are brought into contact with all the other literature, including "Studies in the Scriptures." Through the convention announcements and speakers' lists the interested are brought into contact also with the brethren.

During 1959 we will send The Dawn to as many Sunday School teachers and superintendents as possible. If you can send us the names and addresses of some or all of these in your locality, we will be glad to receive them. There is no charge. Provision has already been made to send The Dawn for three months to as many names in this group as we can secure. Your co-operation in sending the names will be appreciated.

We do not know what 1959 holds for us with respect to the television effort. As already explained, we are endeavoring to become more familiar with the various aspects of this work, and will go forward with it as the Lord seems clearly to indicate his will. The brethren as a whole are much interested in this work, and this we take as an indication that the Lord wants us to proceed with it. We suggest that this new effort be made a matter of special prayer by all the brethren.

One of the very interesting parts of the Bible is the Book of Acts, or The Acts of the Apostles. This is a stimulating and inspiring book because it presents the experiences of the brethren in the days of the Early Church. Today also it is interesting to know something of what the brethren throughout the country and the world are doing, the kind of experiences they are having, and how the Lord is blessing their efforts to make known the glad tidings of the kingdom.

With this in mind, our brethren in Great Britain propose to publish a Bible Students' newspaper once, perhaps twice, during 1959. Realizing the blessings received by the brethren from a similar paper which we published several years ago, we believe that again the brethren will be refreshed to read of the experiences being en-

THE DAWN

joyed by those of like precious faith in various parts of the world. This paper will be distributed free to all regular subscribers to The Dawn Magazine. We look forward to it as one of the added blessings of 1959. The publishing date of the first issue has not yet been determined.

Let us enter the new year with full assurance of faith, believing that he who has led and helped us in the past will continue to do so. May 1959 be our most enthusiastic year in carrying out the terms of our consecration. May our "first love" enthusiasm for the Lord, the truth, and the brethren be increased. Instead of becoming weary, may we gather strength as we continue to run for the prize of the high calling. May every moment of that "little while" still remaining be utilized to the Lord's glory!

.....

BOOKS OF LASTING INTEREST

THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES—This 350-page book was first published more than seventy-five years ago, and it has blessed many with a satisfying understanding of the Bible. Your collection of religious books is not complete without it. Fifty cents a copy, cloth bound.

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DAWN PUBLICATIONS EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

Handicapped But Serving

Dear Brethren: Greetings in Christ! I enclose postal order for renewal of The Dawn Magazine for another year. I am a "shut-in" and cannot help myself, but a lady calls each month for my "Dawn." She has her own, but likes to have mine as well, after I have read it, to pass on with her own to others. Different people get them each month, with a little note I give her, asking that they listen in to "Frank and Ernest." God bless your work in his service. With Christian love.—England

Blessed by Convention

Dear Brethren: I suppose that all who attended the General Convention at Bloomington, Indiana were blessed in some manner, but here is the way it affected me: It was a most convincing demonstration of Christianity in action. There was no pomp or show, no one person or group exalted above another, and it was clearly made manifest that One is our Master, and that all we are brethren. There was no carping criticism of the sects, nor of the way the government is being run. I saw no act of discourtesy. In short, what I saw and heard was very much what I would expect to hear and see if I could somehow

go back into the past and assemble with the early Jerusalem church. All this had a profound effect upon me. I have been watching my thoughts and actions more closely, and I have a greater tolerance for those who differ with me, both in and out of the truth. Our Father in heaven is good and kind and gentle to the wicked as well as to the righteous, and we are to strive for this perfection of love. Yours with thankful heart and Christian love.—Kentucky

The Old Paths

Dear Brethren: Christian greetings! Writing to you has brought unspeakable joy to my mind as I have recalled the old days—as far back as 1916, during the life of Pastor Russell. Had it not been for the doctrine of the ransom, and of restitution, I would not have been able to see the love of God. I have continued to hope and to look for a group that teaches along the same line. By God's favor your publications have reached me, and have satisfied my longings as nothing else could do. I am in possession of many pieces of your literature, which I am distributing in my home town and country. I want to get from you a liberal supply of free tracts. I am, Yours in him.—British Guiana

Understands the Bible

"Dear 'Frank and Ernest': I am writing to let you know how much I appreciate the literature you have sent me. It has surely given me a lot of light on the Bible. Now I know the truth, and can understand it when I read it in my own Bible. Keep up the good work, and pray for us that we may learn more truth and be able to live closer to God all the time."—Missouri

Not Alone

Dear Brethren: This is a reunion letter! We turned on the radio and happened to hear "Frank and Ernest." To me it was a discovery. For years I supposed that I was one of a small few who remembered Pastor C. T. Russell and his wonderful "Studies in the Scriptures." I was explaining my beliefs to my sister when she turned on the radio and we heard "Frank and Ernest." "Why," observed my sister, "that is exactly what you have just been saying!" My prayers go with you.—Ohio

While Dressing for Church

Gentlemen: I hardly miss a Sunday listening to your program while I eat breakfast and dress for Sunday School and church. Please send me your booklet, "The Truth About Hell." I have received your order slip for The Dawn Magazine, and shall fill it out for my subscription, and I also wish to subscribe for a

friend. I get such a blessing from your broadcasts, and now also from your booklets, that I shall continue to listen and read every chance I get.—Mississippi

More Clearly

Dear Sirs: I have just been listening to "Frank and Ernest." I have them to thank for my being a reader of The Dawn Magazine. They have been instrumental in helping me and my friends to understand the good Book more clearly.—Kentucky

Wish to Learn

Gentlemen: Would you please send some explanatory literature concerning your fundamental teachings. We are a group of young adult people who make up a Wednesday evening Bible class. We wish to learn all that is possible about your teachings.—Missouri

In Time of Need

"Dear Radio Friends: As per your offer, please send me your 'Hope Book.' I have recently lost my husband, and I desperately need help. I believe your book may answer my questions."—Calif.

A Teacher Inquires

"The Dawn: Enclosed you will find \$1.00 for a new subscription to The Dawn Magazine. I am a Sunday School teacher, and I want to learn more about the Word of God."—Arkansas

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

Enjoys the Service

Dear Brethren: I wish to tell you how much we appreciate and rejoice with you in the work you are doing in dispensing the truth. The tracts and booklets we receive are so helpful to us in letting our light shine, and we are much encouraged by the response we have received from the consolation folders and special broadcast circulars. How we look forward to the time "when they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord. May God continue to richly bless you in all your efforts. Yours in the Master's service.—E. B., Michigan

Had to Write

Dear Sirs: I had to write this note to let you know that I have read your booklet, "God and Reason." I wish now to thank you for the hope which this book has brought to me. It is something for which I have been searching for years. I am still young, and newly married. We have a son just ten months old. The new hope and understanding that this wonderful book has brought to me can be put to use all through my life. Now I truly pray, "Thy kingdom come." I feel the renewed hope coursing through me and filling me with a resolve to live as my Lord wishes, to the

best of my ability. I thank God that I was listening when he sent his message to me. I had strayed, but now I am "home" again. God bless you in your work.—Ohio

Oldtimers

The Dawn: I am writing you a few lines on my birthday. I am eighty-two years old today. My father accepted the truth back in 1885. I was paralyzed eight years ago, and it is difficult for me to write, but I love to read The Dawn Magazine, and I listen to "Frank and Ernest" every Sunday. Your friend.—Missouri

A Blessing

Dear Sirs: I heard your program this morning for the first time. It was a blessing to my heart, since I have not been able to attend the services in my own church regularly. Both my husband and I are definitely interested in prophecy, and believe that we are seeing much of it fulfilled in these days.—Georgia

Invites Others

Dear "Frank and Ernest": Please send me a copy of "Our Lord's Return." Your message is very inspiring, very different, and very intriguing. Of late we have been inviting friends in to hear you. Our discussions afterwards are, to say the least, exciting.—Wisconsin

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

HENRY E. ANDERSON		EUGENE BURNS	
Paterson, N. J.	December 14	Wallingford-Hartford, Conn.	December 14
SAMUEL BAKER		L. PAUL DAVIS	
La Salle, Ill.	December 1	Chico, Calif.	December 14
Chicago, Ill.	2	ORLANDO D. DEIFER	
Gary, Ind.	3	York-Lancaster, Pa.	December 21
Elkhart, Ind.	4	EDWARD E. FAY	
Jackson, Mich.	5	San Luis Obispo, Calif.	December 21
Detroit, Mich.	7	IRVING C. FOSS	
GEORGE BALKO		Whittier, Calif.	December 7
Connellsville, Pa.	December 7	Fresno, Calif.	14
Monessen, Pa.	21	G. HOMER HAMLIN	
MIKE BALKO		Sonora, Calif.	December 14
Monessen, Pa.	December 14	JOHN G. HULL, JR.	
JOHN BARACOS		Ventura, Calif.	December 14
Duquesne, Pa.	December 7	ARTHUR H. KRUMPOLT	
JULIUS BEDNARZ		Wilmington, Del. (Saturday Evening)	Dec. 13
La Salle, Ill.	December 7	Baltimore, Md. (Morning)	14
Minneapolis, Minn.	14	Philadelphia, Pa. (Afternoon)	14
J. BURTON BROWN		Boston, Mass.	28
Whittier, Calif.	December 14	RAYMOND J. KRUPA	
Bakersfield, Calif. (YWCA)	28	Allentown, Pa.	December 14
Tehachapi, Calif.	28	LUDLOW P. LOOMIS	
DAVID A. BRUCE		Catawissa, Pa.	December 14
Whittier, Calif.	December 28		
ALFRED BURNS			
Milwaukee, Wis.	December 14		

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

EDWARD G. LORENZ			
Bakersfield, Calif. (YWCA) .	December	7	
Tehachapi, Calif.		7	
JOHN Y. MAC AULAY			
New Haven-Waterbury, Conn. .	Dec.	14	
Groton-New London, Conn.		21	
CLIFFORD E. MILES			
Sacramento, Calif.	December	6	
Stockton, Calif.		7	
ROY E. MITCHELL			
Wilmington-Seaford, Del. .	December	14	
HARRY PASSIOS			
East Liverpool-Steubenville, Ohio	Dec.	14	
Washington, Pa.		21	
E. K. PENROSE			
Detroit, Mich.	December	28	
G. R. POLLOCK			
Santo Ana, Calif.	December	28	
		L. B. POST	
Gary, Ind.	December	21	
		FRED W. RICE	
San Diego, Calif.	December	14	
		NORMAN F. RICE	
Whittier, Calif.	December	21	
		MICHAEL A. STAMULAS	
Reading, Pa.	December	21	
		AUGUST SWANSON	
Riverside-Ontario, Calif. .	December	21	
		J. I. VAN HORNE	
Monessen, Pa.	December	28	
		FELIX S. WASSMANN	
New Brunswick, N. J.	December	21	
		CLAUDE R. WEIDA	
Boston, Mass.	December	21	
		GEORGE M. WILSON	
Miami, Fla.	December	28	

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DAWN PUBLICATIONS EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY

CONVENTIONS

For Mutual Fellowship, Edification, and Service

The following conventions are sponsored by local ecclesias. Full information concerning room reservations and the convention program can be obtained by writing to the name listed.

COLUMBUS, OHIO, December 14—The Southern Hotel, South High and East Main Streets. Mrs. Josephine Ewing, 273 South Algonquin Avenue.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, December 14—I. O. G. T. Hall, 2922 Cedar Avenue. Mrs. C. R. Newham, 678 40th Avenue, N. E.

SAGINAW, MICHIGAN, December 14—Woman's Club, 311 North Jefferson Street. Mrs. C. A. Sundbom, 207 Alice Street.

CLEVELAND, OHIO, December 21—YMCA Building, Prospect Avenue and East 22nd Street. Mrs. Ian Cipperley, 1539 Genessee Road, South Euclid, Cleveland 21. Speaker: Brother John Baracos.

SALEM, OREGON, December 21—2339 State Street. Mrs. Jerry Andrus, 3745 June Avenue.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, December 31-January 1—Watchnight Service. All day gathering on New Year's Day at 912 N. LaSalle Street. Mr. Albert Sheppelbaum, 5739 South Normandy Avenue.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, December 28—Maccabees Building, Woodward Avenue at Putnam. Mr. Daniel Kaziak, 20171 Binder Avenue.

PHOENIX, ARIZONA, January 1-4—Osborn School Auditorium, 3415 North Central Avenue. Mr. Zygmunt Roguski, 2936 West Rancho Drive.

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA, January 18—The St. Petersburg Ecclesia will hold this convention in their new meeting place—Craft Village, 2710 Fourth Street, North. Mrs. Chris Dodd, 1000 30th Avenue, North.

LAKELAND, FLORIDA, APRIL 4-6.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

—Hebrews 10:25

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 The Church—32 pages, 5 cents.
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 What Can a Man Believe?—32 pages, 5 cts.
 The Blood of Atonement—32 pages, 5 cents.
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 Spiritualism—32 pages, 5 cents.
 Jesus, the World's Savior—32 pages, 5 cents.
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 The Truth About Hell—64 pages, 10 cents.
 The Grace of Jehovah—64 pages, 10 cents.
 Creation—112 pages, 10 cents.
 Hope Beyond the Grave—96 pages, 10 cents.
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 When a Man Dies—48 pages, 10 cents.
 Hope—With envelopes, 12 for 25 cents.

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 "Behold Your King"—cloth, 50 cents.
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POLISH: The Divine Plan of the Ages—cloth, \$1.00, paper 50¢. Daily Heavenly Manna—\$1.00. "Behold Your King"—50¢. God's Kingdom—10¢.

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

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

That the basis of hope for the church and the world lies in the fact that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God tasted death for every man," "a ransom for all," and will be "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," "in due time."—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; 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; II Pet. 1:4

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

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