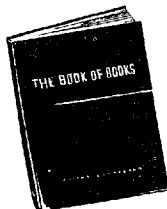


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The Everlasting Gifts of God

**"If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"
—Matthew 7:11**

ANOTHER year is rapidly drawing to a close. Embarrassed by the unhappy events that have marred its tenure, the year 1974 seems to be hurrying off the world stage to seek refuge behind the kindly curtain of time. But no matter how hard it tries to hide, the events of this year will not soon be forgotten, for truly it has been a most remarkable period. Here in the United States the most electrifying event was the resignation of Mr. Nixon from the presidency—an event unprecedented in the two hundred years' history of this great country. This was followed immediately by the elevation of the rather recently installed vice-president, Mr. Ford, to the vacated office of the presidency. And once more the nation was left without a vice-president.

Looking at the world scene, we find double-digit inflation threatening to work havoc with the economies of many nations, even the richest of them. The high cost of petroleum (virtually controlled by a mere handful of Arab nations, and the very lifeblood of so many of the industrial nations) is creating serious balance of payment problems whose solution seems to be beyond the understanding of the leaders of the many affected nations.

The year saw yet another revolution in Latin America (Chile); the toppling after 44 years of the reign of the Emperor Haile Selassie, the so-called Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, (whose lineage is claimed to go back some 3,000 years to King Solomon's first son, whom the Queen of Sheba is supposed to have borne); and the disintegration of one of the very last of the formerly great colonial powers, as Portugal prepares to grant independence to her vast African possessions.

Worrisome instability in the Mid-east, continuing war in Indo-China, a brand new conflict between Greece and Turkey, drought and starvation in North Africa, poor crops in the "breadbasket" of America, a tottering Great Britain, a near-bankrupt Italy—these continue to plague the world, and contribute to its ever mounting fears for the future. All this, and more, at that time in the final days of the year, when the so-called Christian world for many centuries has been wont to joyously celebrate the birth of the world's Redeemer. Truly, the Christmas season this year will be bleak and joyless for vast numbers of our fellow men, not only in Christian lands, but throughout the earth.

When Was Our Lord Born?

The Word Christmas means Christ's Mass; that is, a special Mass in recognition of Christ's birth at the supposed time of its occurrence. We are told by some authorities that the observance of Christmas as a religious holy day began about the year A.D. 200, while others suggest that it did not predate the fifth century A.D.

It is interesting to note that the commonly observed 25th day of December as the date of Christ's birth was chosen by its proponents because that date was sacred to the Romans in connection with their worship of Mithra, the pagan god of Iran and India. Mithraism dates from some five centuries before Christ, and in the second century after Christ it was more generally accepted in the Roman Empire than Chris-

tianity, hence the selection of December 25 as the date of Christ's birth, in the hope that it might advance the effort to convert pagans to Christianity.

We know from the Scriptures, however, that Christ lived for thirty-three and a half years; and since he was crucified in the Spring of the year, it is obvious that he must have been born about the beginning of October. In any case, while our Lord told his followers they were to memorialize the date of his death, the Scriptures nowhere instruct us specially to observe the date of his birth.

The sacrament of the Mass, as performed in the Catholic Church, asserts that the bread and the wine that are used miraculously turn into the very body and the very blood of Christ himself, upon pronouncement by the officiating priest of the words, "This is my body," and "This is my blood," the elements being used in the ceremony merely seeming to retain the appearance of bread and wine. This is known as the doctrine of transubstantiation. Were this true, we would find, appallingly, that our Lord Jesus, who gave himself on Calvary's cross almost two thousand years ago, is being "sacrificed" afresh, world-wide, more than 100,000 times each day!

Believers who partake of the Mass are said thereby to have attained to union with Christ, and with one another.

Christ Died Once for All

There is, of course, no scriptural authority for the sacrament of the Mass. The Scriptures clearly state that Christ offered himself once, and once only, on behalf of all mankind; and that single offering of himself is efficacious for all time. The Apostle Paul writes, "For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. **Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly**, . . . for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But . . . he has appeared once for all at the end of

the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Heb. 9:24-26, RSV) Pursuing the matter further, Paul says, “When Christ had offered **for all time a single sacrifice** for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet. For by a **single offering** he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.”—Heb. 10:12-14, RSV

Coming into the Body of Christ

Furthermore, the mere participation by a worshiper in the ritual of the Mass does not bring about his unity with Christ. No mere ceremony, be it ever so elaborately garnished with befuddling, mysterious and unscriptural ritualism, could ever accomplish that. Priestly ministrations are not necessary to bring one into the body of Christ. Coming into Christ is wholly a matter between the Lord and the individual. It is the result (on the basis of one's recognition and confession of his own sinful condition, and his acknowledgment of Christ as his Redeemer) of offering oneself and life in complete consecration to the Lord, and the acceptance by the Lord of that full consecration. Paul speaks of this as being “baptized into Christ.”—Rom. 6:3, 4

This wholehearted consecration of the believer to the service of the Lord is beautifully symbolized by water immersion, wherein the candidate indicates the burial of his own will into the will of the Lord, his being raised up by the immerser picturing his rising to newness of life, thenceforth to do the will of the Lord.

Having thus presented himself as “a living sacrifice,” he is no longer to be conformed to the things of this world, but transformed by the renewing of his mind into the image of his Lord. (Rom 12:1, 2) This is a full-time task, for every day of one's life. Jesus outlined this transaction in simple words when he said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose

his life for my sake, the same shall save it.' (Luke 9:23, 24)
Only thus may one come into Christ.

In the course of time various other customs came to be associated with the observance of Christmas—the burning of the Yule log, the Christmas tree, Christmas cards, the crib, the giving of gifts, and especially feasting. None of this is in any sense scriptural; indeed the present-day trend seems to be continually away from any true religious significance, and toward more and more commercialization, with a holiday, rather than a holy day, atmosphere as the dominant theme. It is interesting in this connection to learn that the observance of Christmas was banned for a time in Scotland, and it was suppressed also in New England until the 19th century—perhaps for some of the reasons above set forth.

A Wellspring of Hope

But does this mean that we should wholly banish observance of Jesus' birth? We think not. While today most people give little or no thought to the rich and far-reaching significance of our Lord's birth in that lowly setting in Bethlehem almost two thousand years ago, yet there are many good and sincere people whose hearts are made happy by their simple meditation on that great event. The giving of little gifts to one another can be a real blessing if it serves to call to mind the giving to the suffering and dying world by the Heavenly Father of that greatest gift of all time, the gift of his only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, in this present life or in the age to come, might have life. If the hearts of even just a few of sorrowing mankind are lifted up ever so little by their contemplation of this great gift, may we not rejoice? If the season serves in the smallest measure to mellow the hearts of even the most fallen, are we not gladdened?

We rejoice for any occasion that brings hope to a grieving heart; that replaces a tear with a smile. What can be a greater power for hope and joy than being reminded of God's

great love for mankind, manifested through the gift of his Son to be the Redeemer and Blessor of all mankind—reminded, not just one day of the year, but every day! What wondrous blessings are to be showered upon the world as a result of that great gift!

The Gift of the Truth

The Apostle Paul writes, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” (I Cor. 2:9, 10) What unspeakable treasures the Heavenly Father has made available through the priceless gift of his own dear Son!

Some of these treasures, yea, the most glorious by far, are even now attainable by those whose hearts are in the right attitude; those whose spiritual eyes have been opened to view these gifts, and to lay hold on them. One of these jewels is especially cherished in this present troubled world by those who have given themselves to the Lord. It is the priceless gift of the truth. In explaining the Parable of the Sower to his disciples, the Lord said to them, “Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.” Luke 8:10

This understanding of God’s loving plan and purpose on behalf of fallen mankind is a very present blessing, as we witness day by day the increasing chaos that baffles the world’s wisest men and threatens to destroy civilization itself. How comforting it is to know that even in this great time of trouble the great Creator is in complete and constant control of the conflicting forces at play in the world, and that all things shall ultimately be resolved for the blessing of mankind! But this knowledge, this comfort, is the special and unique joy, today, of the Lord’s people. And it is their privilege to make known these glad tidings to a troubled world as they have opportunity—“good tidings of great joy,

which shall be to all people" as a result of God's great gift to the world of his only Begotten Son.—Luke 2:10

What Manner of Love!

Another of these gifts—indeed, one of the most precious—is the gift of sonship; sonship to the Heavenly Father, the great Creator of the universe. Unbelievable! But there it is, before our very eyes; we have but to reach out, and claim it! "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God"! (1 John 3:1) Where can be found an earthly prize to match that?

Sonship, in turn, carries with it the matchless privilege through Christ of entering into the presence of the Heavenly Father; of communing with him; of unburdening our hearts to him, and of seeking his comfort and guidance, even as did our Lord Jesus. Just as Jesus was strengthened and directed in the way of sacrifice, so also will we, his privileged sons, be encouraged. Our Father's eye is ever upon his every child, his ear attuned to their earliest cry, his love aware of their every need. And even before we ask, he is ready to answer, to supply, to guide, to encourage, to bless.

The worried and fearful world does not know the meaning of the storms raging about; it has no inkling of the glorious outcome. But the Lord's people know! The Heavenly Father's children understand, and they have peace in their hearts, even in these trying days. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." (Isa. 26:3) What a glorious gift is this understanding, this perfect peace!

The promise, if faithful, of gaining immortality, and of reigning with Jesus in the kingdom for the blessing of the world—is not that a marvelous present joy? Does not its daily contemplation stir us to overcome weariness, and encourage us daily to faithfulness to continue in the way of sacrifice? Truly the Heavenly Father has opened a bountiful hand, and

poured out upon his **people blessings and joys** and gifts beyond measure and price—not just for one day in the year, but for every day in the year, and for all of the days of our lives!

But the great Lord of the universe does not stop there! Indeed, the whole purpose of granting these great blessings to his special people in this age—the footstep followers of Jesus, the little flock—is that these may be prepared for the great work of blessing all the remainder of mankind in the Kingdom Age, which we believe is shortly to come into being. What marvelous gifts has the Heavenly Father in store at that time for all who have ever lived on this earth!

Come, Ye Blessed of My Father

When the called-out class, the little flock, has been fully tested and taken home, and the marriage of the Lamb has taken place, then all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and come forth; for Christ did not die for the few, but for all mankind. (John 5:25-29; I Tim. 2:3-6) These will be given an opportunity under the righteous laws of the kingdom then in operation to gain everlasting life here on earth. (Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 3:19-23) Then there shall be no more sickness, suffering, and death. The blind shall be made to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk. There shall be no more wars; and there shall be economic security for all, for the earth shall blossom as the rose, and every man shall have shelter.—Isa. 35:1, 5-7; 65:21-25; Micah 4:1-5

Yes, the world is weary of sorrows and sufferings; it has long been satiated with wars, and hunger, and blindness and disease and death, and is almost ready for the new order. Unconsciously, unwittingly, it is yearning for the time when the Creator himself will pour out these foretold gifts of life, and joy, and peace. Even in Paul's day the apostle described the world as groaning and travailing in pain, pointing out that they were waiting for the time when those who are called out during this age to be God's sons, shall be reigning in the kingdom with Jesus. He said the world is waiting for the

manifestation of the sons of God.—Rom. 8:19-22

So also is the Heavenly Father himself waiting for that glorious day! Even as an earthly father tenderly wipes away the tears from the face of his sorrowing child and eagerly watches for the smile of joy to come, so also the Heavenly Father is looking to the time when this present evil world order will have been banished along with all its sorrows, and he can pour out his bounteous gifts of everlasting life, of peace, of heavenly fellowship, and of love upon the whole restored world of mankind.—Rev. 21:1-5

The Prophet Isaiah foretold the birth of Jesus as the Redeemer and Blessor of all mankind some seven centuries before that wonderful event occurred. He wrote, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

He then briefly described the righteous government that would be established in the earth as a result of Christ's glorious thousand-year reign. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." Christ's rulership shall be world-wide, and the resulting peace and joy shall extend to the ends of the earth, and justice shall be meted out to all of resurrected human-kind! To assure the fulfilment of this glorious promise, the great God of the universe himself affixes his seal to it, saying, "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:6, 7; Rev. 20:6

As a result of that kingdom reign the ultimate purpose of God sending his Son into the world will finally be accomplished, and that purpose is the re-establishment of that at-one-ment between God and man which was lost when Father Adam transgressed. Of that time the Prophet Jere-

miah writes, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And 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: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—Jer. 31:33, 34

Truly these are priceless treasures, glorious gifts—made available through that greatest of all gifts of all time—the gift by the Heavenly Father of his only Begotten Son. Precious gifts, not for just one day in the year, not merely for a season—but forever!



MOVING MOUNTAINS

Jesus said to his disciples, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." (Matt. 17:20) Bible Students generally understand this statement to be largely symbolic, "mountains" representing extremely difficult situations in a Christian's life which stand in the way of his serving the Lord. It has been observed that in such situations, if the Lord does not remove the "mountain," he will give us strength to climb it and thus to continue our progress in the narrow way.

Bible Study

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 1

Anticipating a New Beginning

MEMORY VERSE: "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his Word do I hope."—Psalm 130:5

ISAIAH 40; GALATIANS 4:1-6

THERE is a sense of anticipation in the psalmist's words for a new beginning for Israel, for, having cried out to the Lord in the depths of despair that his words would be heard and that the message of his heart would be considered, he proclaims that his soul waiteth for the Lord more than they who anticipate the dawning of a new day.

There is, however, a manifestation of faith that God will indeed forgive those who fear him, forgiveness being one of the grandest and most impressive features of the Heavenly Father's character. And, there is great trust in the Word of God as the source of all hope.

Time is an important element in all of God's plans, and those who desire to know and serve him must learn this fundamental aspect of the divine will. In

this week's study we note that the Prophet Isaiah longs for the time when the exiled Israelites would return to their city of Jerusalem to start a new life. His words (vss. 1, 2) refer to the period of time that the nation of Israel would have to endure before receiving of the abundant grace of God: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare [marginal translation, 'appointed time'] is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received . . . double for all her sins."—Isa. 40:1, 2

As a nation, Israel had been especially blessed of God, having been called his peculiar treasure above all other people of the earth. Separated from the rest of the world they received

abundantly of divine favor from the beginning of their national existence until the time that they rejected their Messiah, when, five days before his crucifixion, Jesus rode into Jerusalem as their king and proclaimed to them, "Your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23:38) Their period of divine favor continued, however, until Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman army several years later.

Today, the nation of Israel has been partially restored to its former possession, but they still wait, unknowingly, for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an answer to their long-awaited hopes. No lasting blessings can come to them, or to anyone else, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; that is, until all of the members of the body of Christ, who will participate with our Lord in that millennial kingdom, will have been found faithful unto death. With this thought in mind each of us may look forward with anticipation as we pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) That will surely be a time of blessing for all the families of the earth!

The greatest blessing ever extended to Israel as a nation was

the opportunity to become joint-heirs with Christ in his millennial kingdom. However, because of blindness and hardness of heart this grand privilege was taken from them as a nation, and extended to Gentile believers. God's promise to remove their blindness and lead them into earthly blessings, therefore, cannot occur until the full number of the called-out ones from among the Gentiles will have been completed.

Turning our attention to another portion of the background texts in this week's lesson, let us consider the words of the Apostle Paul in the fourth chapter to the Galatian brethren. Verses 4 and 5 read, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The most important feature of God's plan concerns the gift of his Son, our Redeemer, who was sent forth that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. Our Lord died not only to redeem Israelites who were under the law, as well as the whole world of mankind, but he also opened a new way for those who would seek to lay down their lives beside his.

Preparing the Way

MEMORY VERSE: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."—Matthew 3:3

MALACHI 3:1-4; MATTHEW 3:1-12; JOHN 1:6-8, 19-28

THIS week's study takes up the ministry of John the Baptist, who, as the honorable servant of God, had the privilege of announcing the Savior of the world. As the last member of the "house of servants" John prepared the way for Jesus by declaring him to be the long-promised Messiah and King of Israel, who would select a bride class to be his joint-heirs in his kingdom.

John the Baptist realized the special nature of his office and that he was not eligible to be of the bride class that our Lord was about to select; however, he discharged his duties with a deep sense of humility, saying (Matt. 3:11), "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear." And again (John 3:29), we note the humble attitude of this great man of God who proclaimed that "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth

and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled."

From his birth—he being six months older than Jesus—John had been specially prepared by God to accomplish the task that lay before him. Upon reaching the age of maturity he wasted no time in rendering his consecrated service to God, but began at once to proclaim the arrival of the world's Savior. While engaged in this ministry he abstained from earthly comforts, subsisting on the plainest of foods and attired merely with a camel's hair girdle about his loins. Therefore he succeeded in devoting his entire attention and strength to the mission that had been given him.

This mission began at exactly the right time to introduce the Lord Jesus to the Israelites, who had been waiting for centuries for the fulfilment of the promise

given to Abraham that "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 22:18) He announced that God's kingdom was to be established, and that sanctification of the hosts of Israel was necessary that they might be prepared for the long-awaited fulfilment of the promise given to Abraham. As a mark of that preparation water immersion symbolized the turning away from sin and the return to covenant relationship with God. Although many responded to the call to repentance only a few did so with the proper spirit of full devotion to God.

Among the Pharisees and Sadducees and other religious leaders of Israel were those who were not of the proper heart condition, and John, recognizing that they were full of pride and arrogance, spoke out against them and declared that their repentance was not genuine. As the offspring of vipers they could expect no special favors from God or any share in the kingdom simply because they happened to be the natural children of Abraham.

The Messiah came unto his own even as John proclaimed, but the Jewish people did not

receive him. They learned, through bitter experience, that divine favor had been cut off from them, and the privilege of striving to become a part of the spiritual seed extended to the Gentiles. Nevertheless God has a plan for their full recovery to favor, which will come about through the establishment of the kingdom, in due time.

There is a clear distinction between those who received divine guidance in the years prior to Pentecost, who were often known as the friends of God, and those who lived after Pentecost who were called the sons of God. John's mission was directed to the nation of Israel, telling them that their Messiah had indeed come; that the time for the preparation of the long-promised kingdom of God was at hand, and that if they, as a nation, desired to have a share in it in harmony with its regulations they should prepare themselves for it without delay.

Jesus prepared the way for this part of the divine program, and those who are faithful in their response to this invitation will be part of the mediatorship of the New Covenant which will bring blessings for all the families of the earth in that future millennial kingdom.

Celebrating the Promise

MEMORY VERSE: "He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name."—Luke 1:49

LUKE 1:39-55; JOHN 1:1-5, 9-18

OUR attention is inevitably drawn during this season of the year to God's great gift to mankind, the Savior of the world. Although we cannot agree as to the date that is generally set aside to mark the birth of our Lord, it is only proper that we turn our thoughts to a deeper appreciation of that most blessed event.

The above memory text, as recorded by Luke the historian, is a portion of the remarkable song of thanksgiving uttered by Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus, on the occasion of her visit with Elisabeth, her cousin and mother of John the Baptist.

Luke indicates (1:28, 30, 42) that Mary was indeed most blessed among women, having found favor with God to have been given such a wonderful privilege. The Scriptures also inform us that Mary was full of faith and joy to be so used as an instrument in the great plan of God for the eventual recovery of

the human family from the ravages of sin and death. And Mary said (1:46-48), "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior; for he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." Furthermore Mary, a virgin, did not fear the incriminating reproaches of the world regarding her purity, but instead dedicated her life to serving God in full assurance of faith.

Most of the so-called Christian world celebrates the birth of Jesus in one way or another; and many have a deep sense of devotion concerning the events that surround the humble circumstances of that scene in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago; but there are only a few—one here and one there—who understand the full significance and value of our Lord's life, to say nothing of our Heav-

only Father's great love in providing his Son to be the Redeemer of the world. That promise is indeed something to celebrate!

The scriptural texts in the first chapter of John indicate that our Lord Jesus previously existed as a spirit being with an exalted nature and condition. Using the Emphatic Diaglott interlinear reading in verses 1-3 as a basis for this conclusion we note: "In a beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word was with **the** God [ho theos], and **a** god [theos] was the Word. This was in a beginning with **the** God [ho theos]." "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." When we examine this text in the light of the Greek article appearing in one place and not in the other, we can see that originally there was but the "one God," the "self-existing One," and that the Word (Logos) was the beginning of the Heavenly Father's creative work.

Through a miracle the Word, Jesus, the Son of God, became flesh, that he might in turn sacrifice that flesh for the life of the world; for by man, Father Adam, had come the death penalty because of disobedience to the divine law as established in the Garden of Eden. Jesus

was transformed from the spiritual nature to the human nature, so that in giving his life for the world's redemption he would provide the exact equivalent, or corresponding price, for that which was lost in Eden—a perfect human life.

This thought is expressed in verse 14 of the first chapter of John, and better understood from the Diaglott rendering, from which we quote: "And the Logos became flesh." As it was the Logos that became flesh, all thinking people must admit that our Lord's birth was no ordinary occasion. The thought is that the Son of God, the beginning of the creation of God, the only begotten of the Heavenly Father, gave up that glorious condition that he had enjoyed as a spirit being,

It was when he made his consecration at thirty years of age and symbolized it with water baptism that Jesus received his begetting of the Holy Spirit to a new nature, a spiritual nature. From that moment on he became the Anointed One, and in death, while exclaiming on the cruel cross "It is finished," our Lord completed the work that the Father had given him to do, and he became the Savior of promise.

Interpreting the Christ Event

MEMORY VERSE: "After that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."—Galatians 3:25-26

MATTHEW 1:1—2:6; LUKE 3:23-38; GALATIANS 3:23-26

CHRISTIAN men and women throughout the world are celebrating the birth of Jesus during this, another Christmas season, and it is our obligation to interpret this great event within the context of our memory verse.

Although it has become custom to set aside December 25 as the date for this event we should, as Bible students, understand that its occurrence was around the early part of October. Further study of the Scriptures in this connection shows that our Lord Jesus began his ministry when he was thirty years of age, and that it continued for three-and-a-half years until his crucifixion, which occurred during the pass-over season around the early part of April. Therefore it is a simple matter to calculate the time period of Christ's birth as occurring in the autumn rather than the generally accepted date in December.

Millions of people have been

born into the world, lived their lives, and then died without ever really knowing anything about the precious name of Jesus. Few have understood God's original law as it was written in the very heart of man when he was created perfect in the Heavenly Father's image, or have they known about God's covenant with Father Adam as being one of eternal life based on continued obedience to that law, any infraction of which would result in the penalty of disobedience, death.

God did provide special arrangements with the children of Israel whereby they could be reckonedly lifted up or separated from the rest of mankind and its penalty for sin. However, the death sentence had passed upon all, for neither the Israelites nor anyone else could perfectly keep God's laws and receive everlasting life as a reward.

With this thought in mind we note the Apostle Paul's emphasis on the fact that our Lord Jesus had indeed come into the world and had put an end to the Law Covenant. But the expression "put an end to the Law Covenant" is one that needs further clarification, because Jesus did not in the literal sense eliminate the perfect law of God that will always be in existence. That law states, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . and . . . thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt. 22:36-39) The covenant that God gave to Israel was often known as the Law Covenant, so therefore both concepts became interchangeable in the minds of those who spoke or wrote concerning them. In this sense Jesus made an end to the law; that is, the covenant based upon that law.

This was accomplished by our Lord's fulfilment of the law and all of its obligations pertaining to life as a human. He thus became the heir of God to the arrangements which the law had provided for the one who could keep it. The Jews, on the other hand, those who could not keep the law, are still under its curse and will continue to be until the New Covenant is established. And, as the apostle explains in

the context of our lesson, we have the opportunity of becoming children of God because of our faith in Christ Jesus.

What a wonderful blessing is offered to those who will, by faith, lay down their little all on the altar of sacrifice while yet in this life, that they may become joint-heirs with Jesus!

Believers of the present age—the footstep followers of our Lord—are free from their former condemnation; are justified by their faith in the Redeemer, and have received of his spirit of love and obedience. As long as they continue to abide in him they are free, and their best heart intentions are acceptable. Those who come into Christ, therefore, submit themselves to his will and make it their law, voluntarily. We see, then, that since God could not give an imperfect law, and we could not obey a perfect one, we have of necessity been freed from all law, and instead have been accepted by faith in the merit of our Lord's fulfilment of the perfect law of God.

To those who have consecrated their lives to God with this view in mind the interpretation of the Christ event means more than life itself—it means the rededication of all they possess in the service of the Most High God, and that faithfully unto death.

The Man of Compassion

MEMORY VERSE: "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted."—Isaiah 49:13

LUKE 4:14-21; 5:17-26; 13:10-17

PICTORIAL language is often used in the Scriptures to teach valuable lessons, and the Prophet Isaiah, in the words of our memory text, uses this method to emphasize the great jubilation which will take place when the kingdom of Christ is established in all the earth for the eventual blessing of the whole world of mankind.

The central figure in this plan for the recovery of the human race from the ravages of sin and death is our Lord Jesus, who, as the man of compassion and the greatest teacher who ever lived, will be fully qualified to carry out that divine purpose. And he will have unlimited power to do so.

During Jesus' earthly ministry he displayed a measure of that power which will be used in the future times of restitution. Having given himself in unreserved consecration to the Heavenly Father he was, in

turn, filled with the Holy Spirit and equipped with power from on high for the great work which he immediately set out to do. He taught the people as one who had authority, and, with his great sense of compassion, the people who bore him witness marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. Luke the historian records this (4:14, 15), saying, "And there went out fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all."

No wonder the people were astonished at the ministry of this man, for he was the Son of the Most High God. Luke records a prophecy from Isaiah which our Lord himself quotes, setting forth his commission from the Heavenly Father: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor;

he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." What a thrilling prospect for the poor groaning creation!

As Jesus went about on his earthly mission he healed the sick and the lame and the lepers, cast out devils, and indeed even raised the dead with the great power which had been given him. The supporting texts to this lesson indicate the degree of faith that many had in the Great Physician's power to heal (5:17-26), and the blessings that were received by those who exercised that faith. Although the ransom price had not yet been paid, Jesus forgave sins as a manifestation of his acceptance by God, forgiveness of sins being the first and foremost blessing to be conferred.

In due time, during the future thousand-year kingdom, Jesus and the body members of The Christ will exercise power and dominion throughout the world, and these miracles of grace that were demonstrated to the Jewish nation will be totally eclipsed by the wonder-working power and authority of The Christ in

glory. At that time all of the blind eyes shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, the sick and the lame made well, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing praises unto the most high God. And in that day there shall be no more death.

On another occasion Jesus demonstrated his great power in healing a woman who had been under the influence of a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years and was unable to stand upright. (13:10-17) Jesus healed her straightway, but because it was on the sabbath day that he did so the ruler of the synagogue was indignant and said unto the people (13:14), "There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." Jesus no doubt intended a valuable lesson for us, as the true meaning of the sabbath day relates to the rest of faith which God has provided for his people—and this is indeed a great blessing.

We look forward with joy to that great day when the world of mankind will receive their blessings and have the opportunity of attaining unto everlasting life here on earth. We may look forward with full assurance of faith that the glorious time of the restitution is near!

The Lord's Requirements

“What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”—Micah 6:8

BASICALLY the Lord's righteous requirements of his people in every age are the same although the details in each age will differ. God's people in the Jewish Age were required to render obedience to the Law. In the present age they are called upon to bear witness to the Gospel, and thus to show forth the praises of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. And there are other differences of detail in what God requires of his people from age to age, but these are to be accomplished within the framework of those righteous requirements stated in our text—to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

In so far as the followers of Jesus are concerned, there are many varied allurements which might entice them away from the path of righteousness. One of these is highlighted in the two verses preceding our text. We quote: “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” Then follow the words, “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good,” implying that the outline just stated is not considered good by the Lord, and what the Lord does consider good is to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with him.

Satan is too wily a foe to suggest alternatives to the will of God which are related in no way to instructions which God has given. What Satan does is to distort those instructions to give them a meaning which the Lord never intended, and thus to lead the righteous away from the true path of righteousness. The question, "Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?" takes us back to some of the requirements of the Law. God had indicated that under certain circumstances burnt offerings would be acceptable to him—an evidence of the true heart condition of those who presented them. He also indicated that calves of a year old could be offered acceptably to him as sacrifices.

But the question implied here is, since this is true, could we be pleasing to the Lord simply by presenting burnt offerings to him, or calves of a year old? Certainly that would be a simple way of discharging our responsibility toward the great Creator of the universe. But the Lord never intended that any of his people should take this viewpoint of his requirements and ignore every other aspect of his will.

The next question is, "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" Here is a subtle suggestion indeed! In God's dealings with Israel under the Law he did require, in connection with the tabernacle services, the offering of rams, and indicated that this would indeed be pleasing, and in accordance with his will. But this did not mean that all the Lord required was the continual bringing to him of rams to be sacrificed.

The Lord required oil in connection with the typical services of the tabernacle and in the anointing of Israel's kings. But that did not suggest that one could discharge his responsibility to the Lord simply by offering huge quantities of oil—described in the text as "ten thousands of rivers of oil."

The Lord's people of the present age are not asked by him to

bring rams and oil as sacrifices. We are invited to present our own bodies as living sacrifices, with the assurance that they are holy and acceptable to God. (Rom. 12:1) There are various facets of the Lord's will in respect to the manner in which we present ourselves in sacrifice, and if we are not watchful the subtle suggestion will appeal to our minds to make a hobby of one or more of these and ignore the others.

The Lord, for example, has indicated clearly that it is pleasing to him for his people to study his Word, that they might become well acquainted with his will and be able to serve him acceptably. But this does not mean that serving the Lord consists entirely of Bible study. Indeed, Bible study itself is but a preparation for the Lord's service, enabling the Lord's people to know what he wants done, and when and how. So, symbolically speaking, if the Lord has asked us to bring one ram for a sacrifice, let us not suppose that he will be pleased if we bring a thousand rams and ignore everything else which he requires.

Oil is sometimes used in the Bible as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts produces the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, brotherly kindness, patience. This is, indeed, a beautiful facet of the Christian life. But being a Christian includes other things. There is work to be done—hard work, and loads to lift—heavy loads.

Simply being joyful in the Lord is beautiful, and one of the present inheritances of the new creation, but it is not supposed to supplant the work which the Lord wants us to do in his service. He does want us to have the Holy Spirit, and to pray for more of the Holy Spirit, but he would not be happy if we thought that bringing him ten thousand rivers of oil would fulfil his will toward us.

Doing Justly

The Lord says that one of his basic requirements of right-

eousness in connection with his people is to do justly. This is simply an expression of the principle of justice as exemplified in the Golden Rule. We might at first be inclined to think that we have already passed this test; that for a long time we have practiced justice in our dealings with one another. But are we sure of this?

The Golden Rule speaks of doing unto others as we would that they do unto us. Perhaps it would be well to ask ourselves each day whether or not we have adhered to this principle. Have we refrained from doing unto others what we would not have them do unto us? Perhaps a sincere effort to do this would make each day one in which we would not only be happier ourselves, but would be a great blessing to those with whom we come in contact. How vital indeed is this requirement to do justly!

Loving Mercy

The second requirement of righteousness mentioned in our text is to love mercy. Mercy itself is a noble and godlike quality, but the Hebrew word here translated mercy is in many other instances translated loving-kindness. This gives us the unique expression of loving loving-kindness. Are we so fully in harmony with God's righteous quality of loving-kindness—unselfishness—that we can say that we are in love with it?

The things with which we are in love take first place in our hearts. We consider them of the greatest importance. Does the love of God take first place in our hearts? We are told that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. This means that one of the manifestations of love is unselfish giving, and in the case of our Heavenly Father it was the giving of the dearest treasure of his heart. Are we in love with that thought, and is this love influencing us to loving sacrifice that others might be blessed? How exacting indeed

is the requirement "to love mercy," or loving-kindness!

Walking Humbly with God

To walk humbly with our God means to be so fully dedicated to the doing of his will that we will not knowingly take a step in life's journey that would be displeasing to him. As long as we are in the flesh we will need to contend with the selfish desires of the flesh, and these desires are almost always contrary to the will of God. If we allow these desires to override the will of God as we go our own way, then we are not walking humbly with him.

To walk humbly with our God means earnestness in our study of his Word to know his will; it means determination to do that will no matter what the cost may be; it means the willingness to give up time, and strength, and money in the service which he has committed to his people in this age; it means doing all these things in the spirit of humility and joy— not rebelling against anything which the Lord indicates in his Word to be his will. All this the Lord requires!

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

DECEMBER 5—"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Joshua 24:15 (Z. '01-284 Hymn 299)

DECEMBER 12—"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."—Proverbs 23:7 (Z. '01-325 Hymn 198)

DECEMBER 19—"Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off."—I Kings 20:11 (Z. '94-155 Hymn 183)

DECEMBER 26—"Be thou strong and very courageous."—Joshua 1:7 (Z. '02-285 Hymn 266)

Sowing the Seeds of Truth

**“In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.”
—Ecclesiastes 11:6**

IN THE literal sowing of seed we have a very fitting illustration of the Christian's privilege of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, the good news of his kingdom. It is an illustration which properly applies to any and all efforts we may make to tell the glad tidings to others. Our text indicates that it is proper to do this sowing at all times—in the morning and in the evening.

We could consider this as meaning the literal days which make up our lives, and throughout each and every one of these we should always be on the alert to use every possible opportunity to bear witness to the truth. Or, in a more general way, we could think of it as a reference to the entire Gospel Age—its morning time, or beginning, and its evening, or close. Whichever application we make, the lesson is that we should constantly be on the alert to sow the seeds of truth whenever and wherever we can.

Dispensationally speaking, the Scriptures give us a progressive picture of the Gospel Age, in which there is a sowing in the beginning and a reaping at the end. “The harvest is the end of the age,” the Master declared. (Matt. 13:39, Diaglott) However, in the actual outworking of the divine plan, even the harvest work at the end of the age is accomplished largely by sowing the seeds of truth. We are to thrust in the sickle of truth and reap, but this is done by making known the truth; by proclaiming the message far and

wide, so that those who have a "hearing ear" may hear and be blessed.

Thus we see that the general illustration of sowing is applicable at all times, and there is no reason why the truth should ever be withheld when an opportunity presents itself to proclaim it. But some do find reasons not to "sow." The Lord foresaw this and called attention to it in the chapter from which our text is taken. Verse 4 reads, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." In ancient times sowing was done by hand, and apparently when the wind blew, much of the seed would be lost—carried to places where it was not intended to go. Because of this, one who was expecting to sow would most likely hold back from doing it if the wind were blowing.

Whether or not this was a wise procedure on the part of the sower need not concern us, but the prophet indicates that it is not the right course for those who would sow seeds of truth. It suggests the finding of excuses not to sow. And oh how many excuses can be found to withhold the truth from others if we yield to the desires of the flesh to find them! The apostle speaks of "every wind of doctrine," or teaching. (Eph. 4:14) For the most part it is this sort of wind that influences us not to sow the seeds of truth.

These winds of false teachings are many and varied. Some say that the time is past for sowing, and we should now be reaping, forgetting that the reaping work is accomplished by the dissemination of the truth. Others say that the "door" to the high calling is closed, so we should no longer preach the truth, forgetting that they have no definite knowledge concerning the door being closed, and that even if it were closed we should continue bearing witness to the truth. Still others may say that this is not the time to convert the world, hence we should confine our activities among ourselves, thus working out our own salvation, forgetting that no truth-enlightened Christian has every supposed that the world would be converted in this age, and forgetting also that the

very best way to prepare ourselves for the kingdom is to be actively engaged in making known the glad tidings to others.

The prophet also says that those who watch the clouds will not reap. How well this describes the viewpoints and experiences of some as applied to the reaping work in this harvest time at the end of the age. Clouds are a symbol of the great time of trouble with which the Gospel Age comes to an end. We might be inclined to decide that since these clouds are hanging ominously over the world today, we should not endeavor to do any more reaping. But is this the proper attitude for the Christian?

In verse 5 we are reminded of how little we really know of the workings of the Spirit of God and of what the Lord has designed to accomplish through our sowing and reaping. The prophet says, "As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all." How humble a statement of this kind should make us before the Lord!

It is so easy for us to decide what the Lord can do, and what he ought to be doing. We should be thankful that the Lord has revealed to us the general outlines of his plan, but let us not attempt to fill in details which are not revealed in the Bible, and decide that the Lord's work must be confined to the pattern we have set. Let us remember that we know not the way of the Spirit, and that it is not for us to determine just what might be accomplished by the work the Lord has given us to do.

And there is no mistaking the Lord's commission, for it is simply stated, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand." This is what the Lord has asked us to do. But because we do not know the way of the Spirit, or what will be accomplished by the Spirit through the truth, so also we do not know "whether shall prosper, either this or that." What may be accomplished by our sowing is

not our responsibility. The Lord has asked us to sow, disregarding the winds and the clouds which, should we follow the dictates of human wisdom, would tell us that it is not the proper time for either reaping or sowing.

The Parable of the Sower—Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23

While the Lord does not from day to day reveal to us what may be accomplished by our self-sacrificing efforts to make known the glad tidings of the kingdom, in the Parable of the Sower he has given us a broad outline of what to expect. In the parable we learn that the "seed," when sown, falls on various types of ground—by the wayside, on stony ground, among thorns, and on good ground. This indicates that much of the effort we put forth brings little or no tangible results. Only that seed which falls on good ground produces plants which bring forth fruit.

In Jesus' explanation of this parable we have some very interesting facts brought to light. First, there is the seed which falls "by the wayside." This class of hearers receive the truth into their hearts temporarily, but do not understand it. Not understanding it, they have no real desire to hold it, and thus the Adversary is able to snatch it away before it has a chance to take root. How much in keeping this is with what often occurs when the truth is proclaimed! There are many, of course, who pay no attention at all, but these do not seem to be represented in the parable.

But there are many others who pay some attention. They may pick up a tract and read part of it, and say to themselves, "This seems reasonable." Perhaps they find a kingdom card and send for the booklet which it offers, but before it arrives forget they sent for it. They might hear the truth over the radio or television and be sufficiently impressed to send for literature, but lose interest even before the literature arrives. It might be one of our neighbors to whom we try to explain the truth. He listens attentively, and we rejoice, thinking we have found a hearing ear, but a few days later when we meet

this neighbor there is no interest and he indicates that he would rather talk about something else.

This "wayside" group has existed throughout the entire Gospel Age. It is not a new experience today to find that the vast majority of those to whom we witness and who show some measure of interest at the moment never make progress in the truth. They are not hypocrites—the truth sounds good to them to the extent that they understand it. Jesus said that the seed is sown in their hearts—appeals to their emotions—but since they do not understand the real import of the message, Satan is able to snatch it away from them, and then their interest is gone.

The importance of this lesson is that it should prevent us from becoming discouraged when seemingly so few take a deep interest in the Gospel of the kingdom. It is very easy to conclude that because the results of our efforts are so meager we should cease sowing. This is the wrong viewpoint, for the results have always been small. Most of the seeds of truth which have been sown throughout the entire age doubtless have fallen by the wayside, yet the Lord wants his people to keep right on sowing, regardless of visible results, for we know not which will prosper, this or that.

On Stony Ground

The "stony ground" hearers of the message are those who at first really rejoice in the message. They accept it as the truth. They acknowledge that it is the most wonderful thing they have ever heard. When we see them in their homes, or at the meetings, it is all they want to talk about. Perhaps they will attend several meetings and give every evidence of fully embracing the truth. They begin to tell their neighbors and friends about it. If they have heard the message over the radio or television they tell their friends to be sure to listen to the programs. They may even get a supply of literature to give to others, for they have found that which satisfies their

(Continued on page 34)

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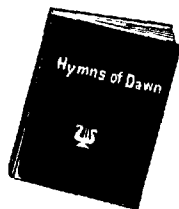
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longings as nothing else could do, and they want to share it with others.

Then we notice that they no longer come to the meetings. Thinking they may be sick, a brother or sister calls on them, only find that their interest in the truth has cooled off. What has happened? Exactly what Jesus points out in the parable — “tribulation or persecution” has arisen, and they did not have sufficient depth of “soil” in their hearts to stand up under the opposition. Like the tender plant rooted only in the shallow earth between the stones, which withers under the heat of the sun, so these wither under the sun of persecution.

When they first hear the truth and become interested in it, these do not realize that the vast majority of their friends will treat them coolly because of it. It never occurred to them that someone might even say they were “going crazy on religion.” They did not expect that even their pastor might be opposed and would warn them against heresy and the danger of being damned forever. But when some or all of these situations develop they are unprepared for them, and wilt, choosing to give up the truth rather than their friends. So let us not be discouraged if we find that some whom we believed to be “coming right into the truth” turn out to be “stony ground” Christians. Jesus gave us the Parable of the Sower in order that we might be prepared for experiences of this kind.

Among Thorns

“Some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them,” Jesus said. His explanation is that this is a class which permits the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches to choke the growing plant and prevent it from becoming fruitful. Here also is an illustration which fits many who for a time have rejoiced in the truth and enjoyed the fellowship of the Lord’s people. Most of us have doubtless observed cases of this kind; cases of brethren who have

manifested great enthusiasm for a time. They were not affected by persecution. The enmity of the world did not wither them at the start. The "roots" became reasonably well embedded in a sincere and honest condition of heart, but the time came when they lost interest. What happened?

Jesus explains that "the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the Word," hindering their continued growth in grace. Here are influences which, if permitted, will destroy the life of the new creature at almost any stage of its development. Observation has proven that these "thorns" can grow even after one has been in the truth for many years, hence we should all be on guard. It is not a case of suddenly turning from the truth to worldly things, nor abruptly from laying up treasures in heaven to laying up treasures on earth. It is more subtle than that. Thorns do not grow up overnight. They are of gradual development.

So in actual experience, the Christian may at first conclude that he has been a bit one-sided in connection with his consecration; that he should give a little more consideration to the comforts of life. He begins to take time from the Lord's service and devote it to "the care of this world." He may even decide that it would be well if he could earn a lot of money "for the Lord," and thus would the deceitfulness of riches consume so much of his time that there would be very little left for the truth. Thus, in an endeavor to carry out these new objectives—or old ones, perhaps, which have been but temporarily suppressed—he gradually loses interest in his spiritual development, and the new creature plant "brings no fruit to perfection."—Luke 8:14

While it is regrettable that anyone who once rejoiced in the truth and its service should permit worldly cares and ambitions to choke his interest, we can be thankful that Jesus has foretold that this would be the case, for thus we know that it is not something for which the sowers are to blame, nor is it an indication that nothing is to be gained from sowing, simply because some who accept the truth do not remain faithful to it.

In ancient times the sower of literal seed was doubtless confronted with all the difficulties mentioned in the parable, yet he sowed his seed faithfully just the same, for he knew that some of it would fall on good ground, where it would grow and bring forth the "fruit" which he needed. So with us as sowers of the seeds of truth, our responsibility is to keep on sowing, knowing that in the Lord's providence some of the grain will find its way to "good ground," and that from this there will be a fruitage which will redound to the glory of the Lord.

The Good Ground

The good ground, or proper heart condition to receive the truth and bring forth fruit means, as Jesus explains, that the truth is not only heard, but understood. (Matt. 13:23) It is clear from this that an intellectual grasp of the great fundamentals of the Gospel is essential in order that the Christian may maintain his standing in the truth and before the Lord as one who bears fruit unto eternal life. In other words, accepting the truth and devoting oneself to the Lord is much more than an emotional feeling, for it must be based on an understanding of the Word. We must know on whom we have believed, and why, and be persuaded, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."--Rom. 8:38,39

Only those who are thus deeply rooted and grounded in the truth and in whose hearts the love of God has been shed abroad, are able to withstand the heat of persecution and the allurements of the world, and become fruit-bearing Christians. Only such will give evidence that the Holy Spirit, operating through the Word of truth, is transforming their lives and making them daily more like the Master and more like our loving Heavenly Father. The apostle speaks of the

“fruit of the Spirit,” and it is this fruit that manifests itself in the lives of “good ground” Christians. (Gal. 5:22, 23) He explains that this fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace,” etc.—all elements of Godlikeness and Christlikeness.

It has been truthfully said that love is the sum of all the Christian graces; so if a Christian is bearing the fruit of love he is fulfilling the mission for which he was called. “God is love,” and as we grow to maturity in Christ we will become more like God, the fruit of love becoming more and more manifest in our daily lives. (I John 4:8; 3:16) As we become more like God, our zeal for the things of God will increase. His viewpoint will become our viewpoint. As he is continually seeking the good of his creatures, we will be watching for opportunities to bless our fellow creatures. Thus not only will the fruit of the Spirit develop into a luscious ripeness in our own lives, but as it does it will bring joy to the lives of others.

Peter admonishes us to add to our “faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love.” Then he declares that if these things be in us and abound they will prevent us from being barren (margin, idle) or unfruitful “in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:5-8

Nominal churchianity thinks of the number of converts one makes as the “fruit” that is borne by the “good ground” Christians. This, of course, is the wrong viewpoint, for love is the fruit of the Spirit. Nevertheless, as Peter shows, if love and the other elements of Christian character are in us and abound, they will not permit us to be idle Christians. Like faith, which without works is dead, where genuine fruit of the Spirit abounds, there is sure to be a reaching out for the blessing of others. Thus the seed of truth that reaches the good ground multiplies itself in that the fruit-bearing plant which it produces, in turn becomes a sower of the seed of truth, the glorious Gospel of Christ, which is the power of

God unto salvation.

All "good ground" hearers bear fruit and obtain an abundant entrance into the kingdom; but since they have been affected in different ways by the fall, the Holy Spirit does not control their lives to the same degree. Their hearts are right and pure, and the seed finds a ready reception and sufficient depth of soil to grow and bear fruit—"some an hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty." The Lord knows about our handicaps, and when we do the best we can to crucify the flesh that the Spirit may have free course in our lives, his blessing is upon us and we can continue to rejoice.

Let us endeavor, however, not to permit the flesh and its interests to quench the Spirit and thus stunt the growth of fruit which otherwise would manifest itself in our lives. And if we are truly bearing the fruit of love we will want to be sowing the seed of truth, that others might be reached and comforted by a knowledge of God and of his beloved Son. We will want to sow in the morning and in the evening. We will want to hold forth the Word of life in season and out of season. And we will be faithful in sharing the joys of the truth irrespective of any visible results.

So here we will leave it, happy in the love of God which he has revealed to us, and glad that he has commissioned us to tell the glorious message to others. When we get beyond the veil, we will probably discover that in the great economy of God not a single sincere effort that was made by his people to tell forth the glad tidings of the kingdom was in vain; that in his wise and loving providence both the morning sowing and the evening sowing were "alike good."



Have Faith in God

“FOR we walk by faith, not by sight.”—II Cor. 5:7

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.”—Prov. 3:5

“That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”—I Cor. 2:5

“As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.”—II Sam. 22:31

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”—Heb. 11:1-3, 6

“O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”—Ps. 34:8

Jesus said to his disciples, “Have faith in God.” (Mark 11:22) Faith is not superstition, faith is not credulity. What then is faith? True faith is a reasonable conclusion based upon a logical premise. For example, we see in the whole realm of nature, the movement of the planets, and on our earth the succession of the seasons, the cycle of evaporation, and rain to water the earth that it should bring forth vegetation for the sustenance of the family of man. All give evidence of intelligent planning, so irresistible that we must accept the truth that there is behind all things that exist an

(Continued on page 44)

The BIBLE ANSWERS

ALABAMA		Darien	CATV
Birmingham	WBRC-TV Channel 6	HAWAII	
Dothan	WDHN-TV	Hilo	KPUA-TV Channel 9
Florence	WOWL-TV Channel 15	3:07 a.m.	
Geneva	CATV	Honolulu	KGMB-TV Channel 9
Mon.—Fri.		4:08 a.m.	
Tuscaloosa	WCFT	IDAHO	
Lanett	CATV	Boise	KTVB
Selma	WSLA	ILLINOIS	
ALASKA		Kankakee	CATV
Anchorage	KIMO	Thursdays, 3:30 p.m.	
Fairbanks	KFAR	Champaign	WCIA
ARKANSAS		12:30 a.m.	
Little Rock	KARK	INDIANA	
Springdale	CATV	South Bend	WSBT
CALIFORNIA		Terre Haute	WTHI-TV Channel 10
Salinas-Monterey	KMST	Sundays, 11:00 a.m.	
El Centro	KECC-TV Channel 9	IOWA	
Sun. 9:30 a.m.		Urbandale	CATV
Fresno	KMJ-TV Channel 24	KANSAS	
Sundays, 7:30 a.m.		Overland Park	CATV
Los Angeles	KTTV Channel 11	KENTUCKY	
Sundays, 6:30 a.m.		Bowling Green	WBKO
Sacramento	KTXL Channel 40	Louisville	WDRB
7:00 a.m.		Sun. 9:30 a.m.	
San Jose	KNTV	Nicholasville	CATV
Sun. 7:00 a.m.		LOUISIANA	
COLORADO		New Orleans	WGNO
Montrose	KREY	Alexandria	CATV
Grand Junction	KREX	MAINE	
9:30 a.m.		Bangor	WABI
Puebla	KOAA	MARYLAND	
8:00 a.m.		Salisbury	WBOC
FLORIDA		MASSACHUSETTS	
Tampa	WLCY	Needham-Boston	WCVB
Fort Lauderdale	CATV	7:30 a.m.	
Gainesville	WCJB	MINNESOTA	
9:00 a.m.		Duluth	CATV
Key West	CATV	MISSISSIPPI	
Mon.—Fri.		Greenwood	WABG
Miami Beach	WCKT	Biloxi	CATV
Panama City	WDTB	12:30 p.m.	
Pensacola	CATV	Columbus	WCBI-TV Channel 4
Fort Pierce	WTUX	Sundays, 7:30 a.m.	
GEORGIA		MISSOURI	
Augusta	WATU	St. Joseph	CATV
Columbus	CATV	Springfield	KMTC
Macon	WCWB	MONTANA	
11:30 a.m.		Great Falls	KFBB
West Point	CATV		

Television Schedule

Kalispell 7:00 a.m.	KCFW-TV Channel 9	TENNESSEE Knoxville	WTVK
Billings	KULR	9:00 a.m.	
NEBRASKA		Chattanooga	WRIP
Lincoln	CATV	Sun. 7:00 a.m.	
North Platte	KNOP	Oak Ridge	CATV
NEVADA		Nashville	WDCN
Reno	KCRL	TEXAS	
NEW MEXICO		Lufkin	KTRE
Carlsbad	KAVE	Lubbock	KSEL
NEW YORK		Port Arthur	CATV
Central Islip	WSNL	Pampa	CATV
Watertown	CATV	Pharr	CATV
Levittown	CATV	Corpus Christi-Athens	
NORTH CAROLINA		CATV & KEDT	
Charlotte	WCCB-TV Channel 18	El Paso	KELP
9:30 a.m.		Del Rio	CATV
Raleigh	WRAL	Dallas	KXTX
OHIO		UTAH	
Lima	WLIO	Salt Lake City	KUTV
Ashland	ACTV-CATV	VIRGINIA	
Cincinnati	WCPO-TV Channel 9	Richmond	WXEX
Thursdays, 1:58 a.m.		WASHINGTON	
Louisville	WJAN	Seattle	KTVW-TV Channel 13
Zanesville	WHIZ-TV Channel 18	1:30 p.m.	
Canton	WJAN	Tacoma	CATV as Programed
Wed. 8:30 p.m.		WASHINGTON DC	WHFV
OKLAHOMA		WEST VIRGINIA	
Tulsa	CATV	Bridgeport	WDTV
Muskogee	CATV	Huntington	WMUL & WCHS
Mondays, 8:00 p.m.		6:30 a.m.	
OREGON		Oak Hill	WOAY-TV Channel 4
Salem	KVDO	Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m.	
La Grande	KTVR	Wheeling	WSTV
PENNSYLVANIA		8:30 a.m.	
Du Bois	CATV	WISCONSIN	
Huntingdon	CATV	Eau Claire	WEAU-TV Channel 13
Philadelphia	WPVI	Fridays 6:30 a.m.	
Pittsburgh	WTAE	Rhineland	WAEO
Sun. 9:30 a.m.		CANADA	
SOUTH CAROLINA		Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.	CATV
Anderson	WAIM-TV Channel 40	Toronto, Ont.	Cable
Mondays, (Time to be announced.)		WEST INDIES	
Ashville	WANC	St. Kitts	ZIZ-TV Channel 5
7:00 a.m.			
SPANISH RADIO BROADCASTS			
TEXAS		URUGUAY	
San Antonio	KUKA 1250	Montevideo	Radio El Espectador
ARIZONA		810 kc.	Saturdays, 1:30 p.m.
Tucson	KXEW 1600 kc. 8:30 a.m.		

"**FRANK and ERNEST**"

SUNDAYS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

ALABAMA

Mobile WMOO
Sheffield WSHF 1290 1:30 p.m.

CALIFORNIA

El Centro KICO 1490 10:30 a.m.
Los Angeles KBIG 740 9:00 a.m.
Redding KVCV 600 7:45 a.m.
Sacramento KGMS 1380 8:30 a.m.
San Francisco KNEW 910 8:00 a.m.

COLORADO

Montrose KUBC 580 8:15 a.m.
Englewood KQXI 12:15 a.m.

DELAWARE

Wilmington WTUX 1290 10:15 a.m.

FLORIDA

Tampa WFLA 970 9:30 a.m.

IDAHO

Coeur d' Alene KVNI 1240 9:15 a.m.
Lewiston KRLC 1350 9:35 a.m.
Sandpoint KSPT 1400 10:15 a.m.

ILLINOIS

Granite City WGNU 920 9:45 a.m.
La Salle WLPO 1220 9:45 a.m.
Rockford WRRR 1330 8:30 a.m.
West Frankfort WFRX 1300 9:15 a.m.

INDIANA

Indianapolis WIBC 1070 8:00 a.m.
Muncie WLBC 1340 7:00 a.m.
Gary-Hammond WJOB 1230 8:30 a.m.

KANSAS

Goodland KLOE 730 7:45 a.m.

KENTUCKY

Bowling Green WLBJ 1410 8:00 a.m.
Louisville WAVE 970 8:15 a.m.
Winchester WWKY 1380 10:30 a.m.

MICHIGAN

Detroit CKLW 800 6:15 a.m.
Grand Rapids WMAX 1480 8:45 a.m.
Saginaw WSGW 790 10:15 a.m.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis KQRS 1440 10:15 a.m.

MISSOURI

Farmington KREI 800 9:00 a.m.

MONTANA

Baker KFLN 960 8:00 a.m.
Great Falls KEIN 1310 8:06 a.m.
Miles City KATL 1340 10:15 a.m.

NEW JERSEY

Salem WJIC 1510 9:45 a.m.

NEW YORK

Buffalo-Niagara Falls
WHLF 1270 12:00 noon
Kingston WKOT 1550 8:15 a.m.
New York WNCN 104.3 FM 7:45 a.m.
Patchogue WSUF 1580 9:45 a.m.
Rochester WBBF 950 9:00 a.m.
Mineola WTHE Sat.

NORTH CAROLINA

Beaufort WBMA 1400 9:00 a.m.

OHIO

Zanesville WHIZ 1240 6:40 a.m.

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma City WNAD 640 10:00 a.m.

Radio Broadcast Schedule

OREGON

Lebanon KGAL 920 9:00 a.m.
Portland KLIQ 1290 9:30 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown WHOL 1600 10:45 a.m.
Pittsburgh WARO 540 12:00 noon
Pottstown WPAZ 1370 12:45 p.m.

PUERTO RICO

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

TEXAS

Dallas KNUS 98.7 F.M. 6:15 a.m.
Hamilton KCLW
Lubbock KDAV 580 9:45 a.m.
Pleasanton KBOP 1380 7:30 a.m.
Shamrock KBYP 1580 10:15 a.m.

UTAH

Salt Lake City KSOP 1370 8:45 a.m.

VIRGINIA

Richmond WRGM 1540 9:15 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Bellingham KPUG 1170 9:30 a.m.
Seattle KAYO 1150 7:15 a.m.
Spokane KUDY 1280 9:30 a.m.
Tacoma KMO 1360 9:45 a.m.
Yakima KUTI 980 7:15 a.m.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee WEMP 1250 8:45 a.m.
Neillsville WCCN 1370 9:15 a.m.

WYOMING

Sheridan KWYO 1410 12:00 noon

CANADA

Camrose, Alberta CFCW 10:45 a.m.
Corner Brook, Nfld.

CFCB 570 10:30 a.m.
Oshawa, Ont. CKLB 1350 9:45 a.m.

Port au Choix Nfld. CFNW 10:30 a.m.
Port aux Basques, Nfld.

CFLW 1230 10:30 a.m.
Prince Albert Sask.

CKBI 900 10:30 a.m.
Regina, Sask. CKRM 7:45 a.m.

Stephenville, Nfld.
CFGN 910 10:30 a.m.

St. Thomas, Ont.
CHLO 1570 10:45 a.m.

Vancouver, B.C. CJVB 1470 9:45 a.m.
Yorkton, Sask. CJGX 940 10:00 a.m.

VIRGIN ISLANDS

St. Croix (Sun.) WSTX 970 9:00 p.m.

MALDIV ISLANDS

Radio Maldives (Tues.) 4740 9:00 p.m.

PANAMA

Panama City HOQ 1250 10:30 a.m.

SOUTH AFRICA

Johannesburg SWAZI

LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg Wed. 10:30 p.m.

NIGERIA

Ibadan WNBS Wed. 10:45 p.m.

CEYLON

Radio Srilanka Sat. 9:45 p.m.

URUGUAY

Montecideo Radio El Espectador

RADIO TOPICS FOR DECEMBER

1—"Peace Through Christ's Kingdom"
8—"The Gospel of Christ"
15—"Christianity Versus Heathenism"

22—"God So Loved"
29—"Peace on Earth"

intelligent, wise, and powerful Creator. This conclusion causes us to have faith in God.

There is nothing more common among men than the exercise of faith, and to constantly act upon such faith. We till the soil, we sow seeds, in full faith that there will be a harvest. After the seed is sown, we have faith that the sun will give its heat and the rain will give the moisture, so that in time the mature fruit of the earth may be reaped and gathered. We have faith in these laws of nature; let us look beyond the laws of nature and recognize them as the laws of an intelligent God, and thus have faith in him.

The farmer who would not plant his field because of lack of faith in the sun or the rain would be rightly classified a fool. The fool says in his heart, "There is no intelligence behind the laws of God"; and such doubt and unbelief is just as unreasonable as saying that there is no God. The farmer knows that faith is the only reasonable thing to exercise where the ground of faith is so well established. And just so, when we become acquainted with God through a study of his plan as expressed in his Word, to walk in unbelief would be foolish; rather, we have our faith established in truth and proceed in the affairs of life in perfect confidence. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." But faith, "the conviction of things not seen," becomes the basis for our confidence in the overruling providences of God in the lives of his children.

The farmer has confidence in his harvest even before there is any evidence which he can see. And just so, also, we have faith in the assurances of blessings which God has promised in his Word. We know that they will come in due season, and that the harvest will be great.

Faith is an active principle. It is based on understanding and it is an act of the will to believe. Faith is confidence in the promises of God. The heroes of the Bible acted in faith and

reliance upon God, and so should we. Salvation requires faith in the Redeemer. The disciples of Jesus, realizing their need for a stronger faith than they then possessed, "said unto the Lord, Increase our faith."—Luke 17:5

Faith is associated with hope and love, as the three cardinal requirements of discipleship. We enter into a more abundant life as our faith develops. So let us draw near to God "in full assurance of faith," knowing that "he is faithful that promised."—Heb. 10:22, 23

The Inspired Word of God

"EVERY scripture inspired by God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."—II Tim. 3:16, 17 RSV, footnote

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth."—II Tim. 2:15

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—John 8:32

"And . . . take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."—Eph. 6:17

"And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."—Deut. 8:3

"And God spake all these words. . . . And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord."—Exod. 20:1; 24:4

The Bible annually is the world's best seller, and is recognized by millions as the torch of civilization. Many of its friends have unintentionally beclouded the clear message of

the Book by claiming that it supports the traditions of Dark-Age religion, which it does not.

The light of our own intelligence leads us to expect God to give a fuller revelation of his purpose in our creation than is found in the laws of nature. This he does in his Word, which presents our Creator to us as a God of love.

The Bible is the oldest book in existence and has survived unparalleled efforts to destroy it, which is circumstantial evidence, at least, that God, who is its Author, has also been its preserver. It is the message which the Book contains that makes it precious. It is not merely to be read, although those who do read it in the spirit of humility and devotion are blessed. But the richest treasures of truth concerning God's purposes for the family of man do not lie upon the surface, but are found by those who study the Word carefully and thoughtfully.

The message of the Bible concerning human destiny begins in Eden, with our first parents enjoying fellowship and communion with their Maker. Through disobedience to God's law this favored position was lost, and every generation from Eden until now has felt the sting of death, for it is written, "in Adam all die." But the message of the Word of God does not forecast man's ultimate end to be death. Throughout its pages the Book speaks of blessings to come through the "Seed" of Abraham. (Gen. 22:15-18) It then presents us with the true understanding that the Seed of Abraham was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. His work of redemption on behalf of all mankind, including all who have gone down into death, will result in the promised blessing of "all the families of the earth."

The Bible speaks of the true church of God—not a building made by human hands, but composed of his true followers who become the "temple of the living God." His true disciples have been prepared, one here, one there, since Jesus Christ became the world's Redeemer and the chief cornerstone of his temple. The Bible shows that when the members

of the true church, as "living stones," are all made ready to be part of his temple, then the kingdom of God shall bring about the restoration of all things. This message of divine goodness toward the human family is spoken of by God's "holy prophets since the world began." The theme that is common to all of them is a grand and noble one, which emphasizes the greatness of God and his attributes of goodness.

Should We Fear the Day of Judgment?

"BUT the Lord shall endure forever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment."—Ps. 9:7

"Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment."—Ps. 72:1, 2

"Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him."—Ps. 72:11

"Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously."—Ps. 96:10

"For he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity."—Ps. 98:9

"Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."—Acts 17:31

The average person thinks of the day of judgment with fear. He has been taught that it is a doomsday for the earth and those who dwell on it. But this is not so! This tradition of a darker past is not supported by the Word of God. The texts that head this article are prophecies that the judgment day will be a time for establishing righteousness and equity in the earth; a time of rejoicing.

The conventional idea that the eternal destiny of each member of the human family is unalterably fixed at his death is scripturally unsupported. If this were true one would have to ask, just what purpose will be served by a future day of judgment? But if, on the other hand, the future day of judgment is a period, not of twenty-four hours, but of one thousand years, during which the whole family of man will be put on probation and then judged worthy or unworthy of a home and everlasting life upon this earth, we can see how all can rejoice in the prospect of that judgment day. And even though that prospect is not commonly believed, it is nevertheless true, according to the Bible.

Jesus said, "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I come not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."—John 12:47, 48

The Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 6:2 asks the question, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" This is part of their special reward for faithfulness. Primarily, their reward will be a resurrection to spiritual life. After that they will reign with Christ, which means that they will be associated with Christ in the future work of judging the human family. Only thus can we understand the apostle's question regarding the saints of this Gospel Age judging the world, in the last day.

The judgment day is not a time for gloom and sadness, but a wonderful time of triumphant happiness for both the living and the dead, except for the few who reject the way of the Lord under full light and knowledge. To understand the day of judgment is to know that there is hope for the unsaved dead, who will be awakened from the sleep of death when the gloom of tradition will have given place to the time when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—Hab. 2:14

The Things Which Remain

“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.”—Revelation 3:2

THESE words are addressed to the church in Sardis, yet we may, by the Lord's help, receive some blessing and benefit by applying them to ourselves. In I Corinthians 13:13 (Diaglott) it is recorded, “Now these three remain—faith, hope, love.”

Faith can die, therefore strengthen faith.

Hope can die, and if it die, what happens? Are we not saved by hope?

Supposing love dies, what remains? Without love “I am nothing.”

We are to be vigilant and keep awake. We are exhorted to be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain.

Faith

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” (Rom. 10:17) “This is the victory that overcometh the world,

... our faith.” (I John 5:4) If we would overcome the world, it will be necessary for us to have such a strong faith in Christ Jesus as our personal Lord and Saviour, and such a strong faith in the precious promises of God, that when we lay hold upon Christ and the divine promises, and claim them as our own, our spiritual vision will become so strong and so clearly defined that it will supersede the desires of the flesh and the spirit of the world.

If asked to describe our faith, doubtless we would, in glowing terms, speak of the many features revealed to us in the inspired Word which we believe, and value very dearly, including:

Our implicit trust and confidence in our Heavenly Father and his beloved Son.

Our belief in God's holy Word, rather than the traditions of men.

The basis of our faith is that Jesus Christ by the grace of God

tasted death for every man—a ransom for all, a corresponding price; a legal satisfaction. A grand philosophy, wherein we see how God, who is just, is also the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. We are greatly privileged to be thus justified (declared right) by faith.

Having entered the narrow way of self-denial and self-sacrifice, we know that our consecration to God has been accepted by him.

We have been begotten by the Holy Spirit through the Word of truth. Thus we are sons of God, and if faithful unto death we shall, in the first resurrection, actually be born on the spirit plane to the divine nature.

It is a great favour indeed to experience this wonderful high calling of God in Christ Jesus. To those who overcome will Jesus grant to sit with him in his throne, and take part with him in raising earth's dead millions, and establishing completely the glorious kingdom of God in earth.

Our faith also traces the out-working of God's prophetic Word that has so accurately forecast the progress of his vast redemption programme, as well as much of the history of men and nations down to this our day.

The signs of the times today are very wonderful, including the assembling of the nations; the tremendous increase of knowledge; running to and fro; distress of nations with perplexity; "times of the Gentiles" fulfilled; natural Israel returning to the land which God promised to give them. In Christendom, "wheat" (the true children of the kingdom, fully consecrated to God) being gathered, and the "tares" (those not begotten of the truth) being bundled together.

These and many other happenings speak to us unmistakably of the Lord's presence; the nearness of our deliverance, and that soon will come the completion of the glorified church.

With the eye of faith we see some of the grandeur of the heavenly phase of the kingdom, and its great and grand future work. We have evidence of spiritual realities which are not seen with the natural eye.

As indicated in Hebrews 11:1, faith is a basis, or substance, substratum, of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Faith is that which "stands under." It is the foundation upon which all our joys and hopes are builded. By it, things and conditions that are not yet seen become as tangible and

real to our minds as the things that are seen.

This important quality of faith is not to be of the intellect alone, although that faculty is essential. It is to be also a matter of the heart, "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (Rom. 10:10) Indeed, the heart has to be in the right attitude toward God, otherwise the intellect is easily biased toward its own preferences, which to the carnally minded are contrary to the righteousness of God.

Both the head and the heart; that is, the intellect and the affections, are necessary elements of a faith which is pleasing to God. Neither of these elements alone will stand the test of fiery ordeals. They must abide together if they are to endure to the end. There must be intellectual assurance and heart reliance, also faithfulness and steadfastness. All these qualities are included in the word faith.

If an attack is made upon the intellectual aspect of our faith, we should have a "thus saith the Lord" for every item of our belief, thereby letting the Word of God settle every question. Additionally, we must look closely into the condition of our heart reliance. A faith that has

stood severe tests and come off victorious is very precious in the sight of our Father.

Every time we pass through a conflict, and still retain, not only our knowledge of the truth, but also our joyful and grateful confidence in God, and full reliance upon all his promises, our faith is made stronger, enabling us to continue labouring untiringly in the Master's service, thus manifesting that we have a living faith.

Let us be watchful and, by the Lord's help, strengthen our faith, so that the words of II Thessalonians 1:3 may be true in our case: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet [or proper], because that your faith groweth exceedingly."

Hope

Out of our faith there is born a glorious hope, and this quality also may be said to be comprised of two elements; namely, a genuine desire for all that is promised and believed, and a deep assurance of their realisation.

The hopes which the world offers are uncertain. When people in the workaday world say, "Yes, I hope so," there appears to be an element of doubt expressed. But for God's chil-

dren to possess a strong, sure, and certain hope is a great privilege granted by the favour of God, who "hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." (II Thess. 2:16) It is a rich favour from the Heavenly Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This hope has a firm basis, for it springs from a sound faith. Our hope—our fervent desire and confident expectation—is the outgrowth of all the exceeding great and precious promises relating to the heavenly spiritual kingdom; and also God's promises pertaining to the blessing of all families of the earth, and the share we will have in the kingdom through which those blessings will reach the people.

God has made, through his beloved Son, full provision for all his wondrous promises to be fulfilled. And if we have a living and strong faith in our Father, and in his great and eternal divine plan, as revealed in his Word, we have a living and strong hope. If our intellectual assurance and heart reliance in these sublime and holy matters are living and strong, and we are faithful and steadfast, then our desire and assurance of their being realised also will be living and strong.

"Blessed be that God and

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and unfading, preserved in the heavens for you." (I Pet. 1:3, 4, Diaglott) There is not the slightest shadow of a doubt about our hope; it is indeed both sure and steadfast. It is our Heavenly Father who has made the wonderful provisions and promises in which our hope is centered, and we know that he cannot prove false to his Word.

This hope we have as an anchor of our life. In order that we safely outride the storms of our earthly journey and do not suffer shipwreck, we, by the Lord's grace, have a hope "both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." (Heb. 6:19) It is made firm by being fastened within the veil—the antitypical most holy—even heaven itself, where Jesus our Forerunner has already entered.

We are assured that we shall be made joint-heirs with Christ if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end. (Heb. 3:6, 14) Let us then be watchful, and strengthen hope. Indeed, may we "abound in hope, through

the power of the Holy Spirit.”
—Rom. 15:13

Love

“But now these three remain—faith, hope, love—but of these the greatest is love.” (I Cor. 13:13, Diaglott) Someone might ask, Is not faith the all-important thing, because I John 5:4 states, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith”?

Faith is essential; it is vital. We have no standing before God without it. We know that without faith it is impossible to please God. (Heb. 11:6) But we also note the statement in I Corinthians 13:2, “Though I have all faith, . . . and have not love, I am nothing.”

Here, then, is a possibility of shipwreck. Faith and love must go hand in hand. (Gal. 5:6) This love is not to be superficial, a mere putting on some of the gentleness, patience, and kindness of love, just as one might attach grapes to any wild bush or tree.

Trying experiences in the world today often reveal how thin is the polished veneer of politeness and gentleness. But with the Lord's people there is to be a love which is an out-working of the righteous influence produced by the Holy

Spirit filling and expanding within one's own heart. It is to be that self-sacrificing love so beautifully described in I Corinthians, 13th chapter.

Verses 4 to 7 (Weymouth) read: “Love is patient and kind. Love knows neither envy nor jealousy. Love is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited. She does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandize herself, nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs. She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth. She knows how to be silent. She is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance.”

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” (II Tim. 1:13) Jesus had a wonderful faith in his Father, and it was a faith which worked by love. Jesus came to a very unloving world. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. His would-be murderers were round about him, yet he continued to walk in love. Love glowed from his innermost being, and emanated from his presence.

His was a deep, sweet well of love, bubbling up of its own accord, because of its fullness.

And it overflowed to the end of his course, even in the most trying and difficult circumstances which culminated at Calvary. Indeed, love held him there upon the cruel cross.

In all that Jesus said and did we see the love of his Heavenly Father beautifully portrayed. And we are exhorted, "Become therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as the Anointed One loved us, and delivered himself up on our behalf." Be watchful and strengthen love. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all."—I Thess. 3:12

Vigilance

The consecrated children of God are exhorted in the Scriptures to be awake, vigilant. We are to be watchful and co-labour with God and the Lord Jesus, ever delighting to consider attentively the gracious offer made to us—the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, which is the most wonderful invitation ever known in all creation. Ours is a very special and precious opportunity.

We are to be alert to discern even the slightest encroachment of the world, the flesh, and the Devil; on guard against every ensnarement of the Adversary.

We are also to resist the stupefying influences of this world and its spirit. We are not to sleep, or even become drowsy, in the Christian life. Lukewarmness, so prevalent today, can easily overtake the unwary.

There is an urgent need that we be watchful always, especially during our testings and trials. It is possible for one to appear to run well in the narrow way for years, but later to fail because of a weakness within, not previously thoroughly tested and tried.

We may yet be proved in qualities within us which have not so far been fully tested. Therefore be watchful to see that, by the Lord's grace, we do not fail, even in some trivial matter. There may be divisions and varying opinions around us; if so, we are to react aright, maintaining our Master's spirit, and walking in truth. In all this the approved will be made manifest. "Let him who is thinking that he has stood, take care lest he fall." (I Cor. 10:12, Diaglott) Be watchful, and strengthen those sterling qualities that are ready to die.

Strengthen

Some of the means by which our faith, hope, and love may be strengthened are:

Prayer: We urgently need

the Lord's help, so we let our request be made known unto God. We are to pray together as the Lord's people; also in our homes, as families; and we are to pray in secret, in private. We are to have the spirit of prayer in all that we say and do, our hearts going out continually to the Lord.

Our full consecration is to be maintained. "I delight to do thy will, O my God." We are to know what it is to live daily and hourly in the Lord's presence—living for him. "Not my will, but Thine be done."

Continued study of God's Word, constantly feeding our mind upon it and confidently relying upon all its promises, becoming so familiar with the Scriptures that when answering a challenge we shall have a "thus saith the Lord" for our defence.

Meditation—daily and private meditation at the feet of our Lord, meditating upon some portion of the Scriptures with the sole purpose of nourishing and strengthening our spiritual life.

An increasing measure of the Holy Spirit. This will involve emptying ourselves more and more of self, and developing more and more the fruit of the Spirit; that is, love, joy, peace,

longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control.

Spiritual exercise: Just as surely as a limb of the human body will wither and become useless if not used or exercised, so also faith, hope, and love, if not exercised or used, will wither and die. "Exercise thyself unto godliness."—I Tim. 4:7

Service: We are to enter into and enjoy the Lord's service, labouring in his vineyard with a growing, loving, and untiring zeal; faithfully exercising our ambassadorship, and not shunning to declare the whole counsel (or will) of God. We are to be shining lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life.

Assembling together: We should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but make use of every such available means of grace. We can thus encourage and strengthen one another's faith, hope, and love as we mingle our prayers and praises together, and testify concerning the Lord's continued grace and goodness, reminding one another also of our Father's great and glorious plan of the ages.

Consideration for others: While holding fast the profession of our faith, we are to con-

sider carefully each other's disposition, with a view to avoiding saying or doing anything that would unnecessarily wound or stir up anger. "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works."—Heb. 10:24

The right use of our combativeness: Our "fighting spirit" is to be rightly directed. The Adversary would rather that we fight everything and everybody, even fellow Christians, more than sin and error and the powers of darkness. We are first to judge ourself lest we cast a stumbling block before others. We are to fight down the wrong spirit in our own heart. As we defend the truth it must not be from motives of self-glorification, but from pure love for the truth, for the Lord, and for his people. Let "the sword of the spirit" (the Word of God) do all the cutting. We are to speak the truth in love.

Endure God's discipline: We are to realise fully that we have difficulties which are of the Father's cup. If our trials and difficulties came to us fully labeled, "With love from the Father," we would doubtless submit and learn the lessons more readily. We are daily meeting with experiences which test the sincerity and depth of

our consecration to God; also proving whether or not we have a genuine operative faith, a "patient hope," a deep and real labourious love. The Lord who has begun a good work in us will carry it on to completion if we humbly and faithfully submit ourselves to his leading and discipline.

Self-discipline: While God disciplines us, we must also discipline self. The Apostle Paul wrote: "I so strike, as not beating the air, but I severely discipline my body, and make it subservient." (I Cor. 9:26, 27, Diaglott) Figuratively speaking, Paul buffeted his body. He struck, as it were, one blow after another at his old nature until it should be completely overcome. Such is the human element with which we daily have to fight. Through the Holy Spirit we are to put to death the deeds of the body. Nor should we overlook the fact that we wrestle not merely against flesh and blood, but also against spiritual wickedness in high places.

By doing "these things" we will never fall. This assurance, together with the "things" referred to, is recorded in II Peter 1:5-11. (Diaglott) We are to give all diligence and superadd to our faith fortitude and knowledge. If in our Christian walk we

stopped here, it would be a calamity. We have to furnish abundantly also self-control, patience, piety, brotherly-kindness, and the all-embracing quality of love.

Verse 8 reads, "For these things being in you and abounding, they will not permit you to be inactive nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus

Christ." Verse 10 adds, "Therefore brethren, more earnestly endeavour to make your calling and election sure; since by doing these things you will never fall." Verse 11 concludes, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—A.V.



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Looking Backward

WE HAVE reached the end of another year, and the next Dawn will be dated January 1975. As Christians we have been blessed with many assets with which we can, and do, serve the Lord. Our minds and hearts, which appreciate the Lord and his truth, should be directed in ways that will rebound to the glory of our Heavenly Father. Most of us have a certain degree of strength that can be used in the Lord's service, and some have financial means.

And there is another asset which belongs to all the Lord's people, and that is time. We need time to make known the glad tidings of the kingdom. We need time to lay down our lives for the brethren. We need time for everything that we do in the Lord's service. We need time to study his Word and to fellowship with his people. So it is appropriate at the end of another year to give some consideration to how we have used our time. Have we used our time in some avenue of divine service? Have we sought out new ways of making known the glad tidings of the kingdom? As we recall the experiences of the year now ending, are we satisfied that we have really done the best we could in showing forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light?

The work of the Lord, which through the years has been promoted by the brethren at The Dawn and the brethren in the field who have been co-operating with them, has had every evidence of the Lord's blessing upon the efforts. We rejoice in this but realize also that the best and most enthusi-

astic efforts of all the Lord's people leave us in the category described by Jesus as unprofitable servants. There is so much more that could have been done, yet the Lord is not judging us by what we have accomplished, but by our heart intentions of using all that we have as his servants—the servants of the truth and the servants of one another.

Perhaps we fail in our intentions to serve the Lord wholeheartedly in all things along the line of time more than in any other way. The Apostle Paul speaks of "redeeming the time." (Eph. 5:16) To this he adds, "Because the days are evil." Certainly at no time in this age have the days been so evil as they are now, and this is increasingly so. This should have a definite bearing on our use of time in the Lord's service, because it indicates that, if faithful, our time for serving the Lord while still in the flesh is very short. Hence the importance of redeeming, or buying back, from other pursuits of life as much time as possible to devote to the service of the Lord and his people.

Paul admonishes us not to be "unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." To this he adds, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." (vs. 18) Paul continues with an explanation of what our real source of joy should be; "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

What a beautiful symbolic description this is of that which brings the greatest joy to the hearts of the Lord's people! It is, in short, fellowshiping with his people in things pertaining to the Lord and to the truth. This, in turn, begets within us a burning desire to continue laying down our lives in his service, making use of all the time we can possibly make available for that purpose.

A New Avenue

The January issue of *The Dawn* will, the Lord willing, carry

a brief report of all the various activities in which we have been engaged during the year 1974, and in which the brethren have co-operated with us. By now, we think that all have come to realize the great extent to which the Hope booklet is being used in funeral homes. We sent a letter and a sample of the booklet to many thousands of funeral homes, getting the names and addresses from a mailing list which we were able to purchase, and from this effort more than 600,000 (over half a million) of the booklets were ordered. Many of the funeral homes have sent in repeat orders. But upon checking we found that a large percentage did not respond to our original letter. Then we suggested to the brethren that it would be an opportunity of service to secure names and addresses of funeral homes in their own areas and send out another invitation. This also is bearing much fruit. One funeral director over a thousand miles from The Dawn, after hearing about this booklet through a local brother, telephoned us to get more information and was delighted with what he heard.

Our thought is that here is an opportunity of service in which all the brethren can participate who wish to assist in making known the glad tidings of the kingdom. Some of the brethren are even calling on their local funeral homes, with gratifying results. Others are mailing them letters of invitation and a sample of the Hope booklet. We will be glad to furnish these in any quantity desired to any of the brethren who would like to use them. Do not hesitate to order as many as you can use. This service is calling attention to the message of comfort from God's Word to those who need it most.

The Film Service

During the past year many of the brethren have been making use of our television films in their public witness work—in some instances for specially advertised meetings, and in other instances to show in convalescent homes and

other institutions where they are in the habit of making arrangements for the encouragement and education of those whom they serve. During this year the brethren in our West Coast distribution center learned of a publication known as "Educator's Progress Service Guidebook." They found that they could list the Dawn films in this book free of charge, and they did so. Writing to us about it, the brethren said, "Orders received as a result of our listing in the Educator's Guide to Free Films have come from about sixty different institutions—public school systems, Lutheran schools, Catholic schools, youth development centers, hospitals, academies, camps, churches, movie clubs, state reformatories, etc. In addition to this, the managers of two television stations—one in Nashville, Tennessee, and one in South Bend, Indiana—have asked for the films for use on their stations. In addition, our regular distributing agents have secured many hundreds of bookings for us during the year.

In speaking of the activities of the brethren generally, and especially at The Dawn, we would like to say at this time that we can use additional help at The Dawn, particularly for work in the home. If you would like to serve at The Dawn for a period of time, we would appreciate very much hearing from you.



The Recorded Lecture Department announces that two special music tapes are now available. Each music tape consists of approximately 100 hymns from Hymns of Dawn, two verses of each, played on piano only. A listing of the hymns will be included with each tape. They will be available on either C90 cassettes or reel-to-reel (7-inch—1200 ft.) tapes. The cost is \$3.00 for each tape. When ordering, please specify quantity desired and whether cassette or reel-to-reel.

Speakers' Appointments

S. ALLEN			H. PASSIOS	
Sayville, NY	Dec. 8	Pittsburgh, PA	Dec. 1	
		West Newton, PA	8	
K. M. FERNETS		Duquesne, PA	15	
New Haven, CT	Dec. 8	Monessen, PA	22	
G. JEUCK			L. POST	
Baltimore, MD	Dec. 8	New London, CT	Dec. 15	
Philadelphia, PA	8			
K. NAIL			G. RICE	
Catawissa, PA	Dec. 15	Nigeria	Dec. 1—Jan. 14	
G. PASSIOS			F. WASSMAN	
Allentown, PA	Dec. 8	York, PA	Dec. 8	

Conventions

MINNEAPOLIS, MN, Dec. 1—2601 Fillmore St. N.E. Mrs. Mike Nekora, 2601 Fillmore St. N.E. 55418

CHICAGO, IL, Dec. 28, 29—Forest View High School, 2121 S. Goebbert, Arlington Heights, IL. Mr. Albert Shepelbaum, 5739 S. Normandy Ave. Chicago 60638

PHOENIX, AZ, Dec. 28-30—Phoenix Women's Club, 302 W. Earll Drive, Mrs. E. W. Enteman, 542 W. Southern Ave. 85041

MIAMI, FL, Dec. 29—Simpson Garden

Club, 55 SW 17 Rd., Mrs Don Roark, 6482 SW 39 St. 33155

DETROIT, MI, Dec. 31 (Watch-Nite Service)—Armenian Hall, Northwestern Hwy at Southfield Frwy, Southfield. Mr. Frank Nemesh, 25354 Cunningham, Warren 48091

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, Jan 12—Heilman Mobile Home Park, 8300 Seminole Blvd (Alt 19), Seminole. Mrs. Lloyd Hagensick, 518-81 Ave. N., St. Petersburg 33702

COVINA, CA, March 2

"I Wish I Knew What To Do"

HOW often we hear this statement made by those who are zealous for making known the glad tidings of the kingdom. May we suggest that one thing practically all can do is send one or more Dawn gift subscriptions to their friends. Just think one gift subscription means that The Dawn enters the home twelve times during the year as your messenger of truth. Isn't this something worthwhile doing? Each subscription is only one dollar, and you can have six entered for five dollars. And it is simple to do when you use the coupon.

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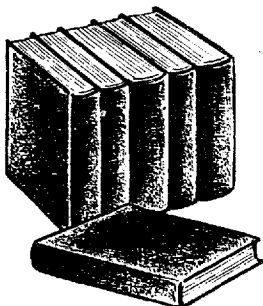
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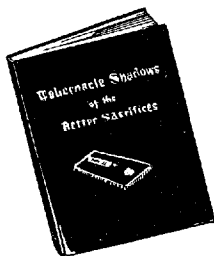
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To us the SCRIPTURES CLEARLY TEACH...

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

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

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

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

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

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