

a herald of Christ's presence

THE DAWN

"FOR, BEHOLD, I BRING
YOU GOOD TIDINGS
OF GREAT JOY,
WHICH SHALL BE TO
ALL PEOPLE."

--Luke 2:10

December 1964

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CONVENTIONS

This Year, And the Last Fifty Years

THE year 1964 has been one of distress and uncertainty the world over. Heads of state and ambassadors of nations have endeavored energetically to discover ways of easing cold war tensions which grip the people of essentially all nations, with but little success. Indeed, early in August a brief shooting war broke out in North Viet Nam, and in September Russia announced the possession of a weapon of destruction more terrible than even the hydrogen bomb. In Russia, also in October, the government changed hands.

The Civil Rights Bill was passed by the Congress of the United States, and signed into law by the President. But this did not end the tensions between the races. There has been a rash of race disturbances throughout a great portion of the year. In the United States and Great Britain there were bitterly contested national elections. In the religious field, denominational churches have continued to seek a better understanding among themselves. These are but a few of the events which have marked the year 1964.

This year is the fiftieth since the outbreak of the first World War. This properly gives rise to reflections on what has taken place throughout the earth during these fifty years. **U. S. News & World Report** stated in its July 6th issue concerning these fifty years that "there has never been anything like it in history." And to this is added the observation that the world which existed prior to 1914 is "unrecognizable now."

With the exception of the United States, the world of fifty years ago was largely one of great empires, with the British Empire the largest of them all. Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, and Turkey also had their colonial possessions. Africa, which today is made up of many small and supposedly independent nations, was ruled almost entirely by colonial powers prior to 1914. The mighty colonial powers of that time were ruled by kings, emperors, and czars. With the exception of Great Britain and the U. S., the people had little to say in government. Where parliaments existed they functioned largely as "rubber stamps" for dictatorial rulers.

At the outbreak of the first World War the population of the United States was approximately 90,000,000, and this nation was far from being the leading nation of earth as it is today with a population of almost 200,000,000. However, the United States did play an important role in helping to defeat Germany in that first war, thus bringing the war to a close. This was also true with respect to the second World War.

Following the first World War, rapid changes began to develop in the old European world. There was the communist takeover in Russia, and the rise of dictators Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy. Czars and emperors were gone, and while brave efforts were made to establish a republic in Germany, a democratic form of government soon succumbed to the rising power of Hitler. In due course Hitler and Mussolini joined forces, ostensibly to combat communism, but in reality to bring the whole world under the heel of the rising power of Nazi-fascist dictatorship.

Meanwhile Great Britain and the United States were helping to arm Germany against attack by Russia, only to find later, to their horror, that the arms were used against the ones who supplied them. Despite all the efforts of the United States and Great Britain, in 1939 the second World War broke out. One of the battle slogans used to encourage soldiers and others in the first World War was that it was "a war to end wars," but in this the 1914 war was a dismal failure. For not only has the world witnessed the most devastating of all wars in the one which began in 1939, but smaller wars—sometimes called "brush

fire wars"—have been going on in one or more countries almost continuously ever since.

Changes in Warfare

In the first World War the fighting was done largely by soldiers who faced soldiers, across trenches at times, and at times in the open fields. This sort of warfare is still practiced in the "brush fire" wars. But now, should a full scale World War again break out, it will be quite different. Nuclear warfare will be the order of the day, and instead of transporting troops across oceans, the death-inflicting nuclear explosives will be carried to target, for thousands of miles if need be, mostly by rockets.

Fifty years ago the United States, from the standpoint of power and prestige, was a second-rate nation as compared to Great Britain, and practically isolated, as far as having a voice in world affairs was concerned. Now the United States is the leading nation of earth, making her influence felt around the world, with air and naval bases located within easy striking distance of any part of the globe.

Along with this rise to power has come an almost unbelievable increase in the national debt, from a little over a billion dollars in 1914 to more than 300 billion dollars in 1964, and even this colossal figure is still mounting. The value of the United States dollar now, as compared with its 1914 value, is about thirty-three cents.

While fifty years ago only a small percentage of the people of this country indulged in installment buying, it is now the general rule. The whole country, including the government, is doing business on credit. The time was when a reasonable down payment was expected on household appliances, and other items, but now many business firms are offering to deliver their goods without a down payment, assuring the prospective purchasers that there will be nothing to pay for three months. The 1964 world is truly a world of credit.

The income tax in 1914 was one per cent, and this modest amount applied only after a liberal exemption, which left the average worker with no tax at all to pay. The peak tax is now seventy per cent, and this was only recently reduced from

ninety-two per cent. The lowest rate today, since the recent cut, is fourteen per cent. But the attitude of the people toward income taxes of any sort has not changed. The people were just as unhappy over the one per cent tax of 1914 as they are over the much higher taxes of 1964.

Travel

In 1914 the world was still in the "horse and buggy" days. The automobile had put in its appearance, but there were very few on the roads. Indeed, there were few roads suitable for automobiles fifty years ago. So seldom was an automobile seen, especially outside of the cities, that many accidents were caused by frightened horses bolting off the road to get away from these strange, new, and noisy contraptions.

Now in the U. S. A. and elsewhere horses are a rarity on the roads and automobiles are the order of the day. Millions of new automobiles are now being produced every year, and in the cities particularly, the streets are becoming so congested with traffic that movement is greatly retarded, often to a standstill. New superhighways are being constructed throughout the country, but the construction of these new roads is not keeping pace with the increasing number of new cars which are appearing, most of them bought on the credit plan.

Fifty years ago airplanes were used almost exclusively on reconnaissance missions as the eyes of the armies at war. They were not used at all in a commercial way. There were no airlines fifty years ago. That was the day when the railroads were the principal means of long-distance travel and for the adequate transportation of freight. Today, airplanes, together with automobiles and buses, are crippling the railroads so far as their income from passenger travel is concerned, and transportation of goods by trucks is taking away a large portion of freight revenue from the railroads.

Who could have envisioned fifty years ago that today there would be thousands of planes in the air at all times, night and day, hurrying from city to city, and from country to country at 600 miles an hour? And the end is not yet. We are informed that the time is near when the speed of travel by air will be greatly increased over what it is today. Truly the world is changing!

Communications

Fifty years ago the telegraph and telephone were in use. The telegraph was relied on mostly for long distance messages; telephones were used largely for local communications. Communication of the news to the general public was limited to the newspapers and magazines. Think of how the world has changed in this respect since 1914! Now much of the nation's business is transacted by long distance telephone. Indeed, international telephoning is a potent factor in world trade today.

Now, also, for the communication of news we have the radio and television. Who could have foreseen fifty years ago that in 1964 people generally could sit in their own homes and see action pictures of important happenings, oftentimes only a few minutes after they have occurred—indeed, many times while they are occurring?

And now, fifty years after the outbreak of the first World War, billions of dollars are being spent exploring outer space with the view of traveling to the moon. It was in 1964 that the United States succeeded in crash-landing a rocket on the moon which, just before the crash, sent back thousands of photographs of the moon's surface. While these efforts are being made, professedly, for peaceful purposes, there are many who think that they are at least indirectly related to the hope of ultimately attacking from outer space any nation desired. Certainly the nation that could do this would control the earth, either for good or for evil.

Political Changes

We believe it would be safe to say that there is no government on earth that has not undergone radical changes in the last fifty years. Think of Russia, of divided Germany, of Italy, of France, of England, and even the United States. Social security was not even thought of fifty years ago, nor socialized medicine as in Great Britain. Who would have thought, fifty years ago, that a Civil Rights Bill could be enacted into law in the United States?

What do all these changes mean? It is natural to expect that the population of the world would greatly increase in fifty years,

but even this has been greatly accelerated by the progress being made in medical science, particularly as related to the health of children and infants. But in this, as well as in many of the other changes, we have evidence of the prophetic "increase of knowledge." (Dan. 12:4) As **U. S. News & World Report** observes, there has never been a fifty-year period in history like the one ending in 1964.

Many times, when endeavoring to call attention to the fulfillment of prophecy, the remark will be made that everything which is happening is simply a matter of history repeating itself. There have always been wars, it is said, and revolutions, and upheavals of other sorts, and there always will be. But most of the outstanding events of the last fifty years are quite new and different from anything that has ever happened before. In this respect, think of what has occurred in the ancient Holy Land. Is that a matter of history repeating itself? When before did the world have radio and television; hydrogen bombs and long-range missiles? When were the people able to travel through the air at 600 miles an hour, and crash-land a rocket on the moon?

Is there any record on the pages of history of a time when almost half the world was dominated by communism behind an "iron curtain," with the nations of the other half of the world united to prevent communism from spreading its blight still farther? When did the powerful nations of earth ever before have it within their ability to destroy the human race with hydrogen bombs? Fifty years ago these situations were unheard of, but today they represent the abnormal shape of the hectic, fear-filled world in which we live.

A Different World

We are surely living in a different world today than that which existed fifty years ago. With all the marvelous things produced by science and invention, it could be a much better world than it is. But, alas, greed and selfishness wield such a powerful influence in human affairs that the enjoyment of the good things of the world resulting from the "increase of knowledge" in this "time of the end" is often spoiled by the

realization that the progress of this day of science and invention might well lead to the destruction of what civilization is left, and possibly of the human race itself.

It is wonderful to think of traveling at 600 miles an hour, but when one thinks that bombing planes can also travel that fast, and faster, and that destructive long-range missiles can be shot through the air at thousands of miles an hour, the joy of living in the world of today is considerably diminished. This is true at least for the serious-minded who do not know the prophetic meaning of the times in which we are living.

As students of Bible prophecy we realize that the changed world of today is but a phase of the transition from the old world of yesterday into God's new world of tomorrow. While the pre-1914 world has come to an end, what has happened to date is not the complete fulfilment of the Bible's prophecies relating to the end of man's selfish social order. What has thus far occurred is merely a part of the necessary transitional period which eventually will lead to the complete breakdown of human efforts to maintain peace and security. This will be followed by divine intervention in the affairs of men through the establishment of Christ's kingdom.

In this connection it is revealing to note that while marvelous progress has been made along scientific lines to make the world in which we live a better world, during the last fifty years there has been a decided loss in man's ability to rule himself. Law and order have broken down on every hand, both within nations and internationally. Crime, even in the United States, is increasing rapidly. Internationally there are almost endless distressing situations for which the brightest minds in the political world are unable to find solutions. The increase of knowledge has not helped man properly to rule himself, with the result that the spirit of anarchy is increasing, resulting in ever-increasing trouble in the foretold "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation."—Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21, 22

Thus, while the world of today is in many respects a fantastic one from the standpoint of its many advantages over the world of fifty years ago, it is a crumbling world. The elements of peace, security, righteousness, and sobriety, which are es-

sential in any world society for the people to be truly happy, are lacking. There is a mad rush for pleasure and riches on the one hand, and riotous demands for freedom from inequality and oppression on the other, and very few are satisfied with the results.

The Future

What can we say about the future? Worldly wisdom sees the next fifty years as a continuing period of transition, with the population of the United States and of the world doubling; the speed of travel continuing to increase; visits to the moon, and the probability of further wars. Looming above all this in the minds of the world's thinkers is the dark cloud of global nuclear warfare, with its almost universal destruction of human life.

The Bible does not provide the detailed, year-by-year developments in this chaotic situation, leading ultimately to divine intervention, but the Bible assures us that the worst fears of the people are unfounded, for Jesus said that this time of great tribulation will be brought to an end before all flesh is destroyed. Matt. 24:21, 22 This does not mean that millions may not yet be destroyed in war, but it does mean that there will not be the total destruction which scientists and militarists now claim is possible if nuclear power gets out of hand.

We cannot say what the next fifty years will hold for mankind. Indeed, we do not even know what to expect for the one year 1965. What the prophecies do reveal is that the transition which began fifty years ago will eventually—and we trust much sooner than another fifty years—terminate in the manifestation of the kingdom of Christ in power and great glory. That kingdom, the Scriptures indicate, will begin to exercise its authority in the ancient Holy Land; its visible representatives being the resurrected ancient servants of God, beginning with righteous Abel and ending with John the Baptist.

If we think of the marvels of human accomplishments, as seen in television, speedy travel, journeys to the moon, what about divine accomplishments through the agencies and power of Christ's kingdom? Startling indeed will be the announcement which will one day go out from Jerusalem that Abraham, Isaac,

Jacob, and all the prophets, together with all the faithful of that ancient time, have been raised from the dead, and are assuming the rulership of Israel, and preparing to extend the control of the kingdom to all nations.

Paul asked a Roman governor if he thought it should be considered a thing incredible that God should raise the dead. Of course it should not! The fact is that God's kingdom plan for the salvation of the human race during the thousand years of Christ's reign is predicated on the fact that he will restore the dead to life. The death of Jesus would have been of little value to redeem the world from death if he had not been raised from the dead. His followers are likewise to be raised from the dead in the "first resurrection" to "glory and honor and immortality." (Rom. 2:7) In due course, also, the Ancient Worthies will be awakened from the sleep of death.

The followers of Jesus will be exalted to live and reign with him in the spiritual, the invisible phase of the messianic kingdom. The Ancient Worthies will be the human representatives of the kingdom. After establishing peace among those still living at the close of the great time of trouble, there will begin the general resurrection of all who are asleep in death. What a glorious work that will be, and how the name of the Creator will be glorified as one generation after another is brought forth from the great prison of death, enlightened concerning the true God and his will for them, and given an opportunity to travel over the "highway" that leads to holiness and life!—Isa. 35:8

As students of prophecy our chief interest is not so much in what will take place during the next fifty years, but in the fact that soon Messiah's kingdom will be set up in power and great glory, and that through its agencies all the present distressing problems of the world will be permanently solved. This means that soon there will be peace on earth, because God's good will toward men, having been demonstrated nearly two thousand years ago through the gift of his Son to be man's Redeemer, will again be plainly evident in the establishment of that kingdom which eventually will cause his will to be done in earth as it is now done in heaven.—Matt. 6:10

THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV SCHEDULE

ALABAMA

Florence WOWL-TV Channel 15
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.
Montgomery WKAB-TV Channel 32
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00 p.m.
Selma WSLA-TV Channel 8
Sundays, 3:30 p.m.

ARKANSAS

El Dorado KTVE-TV Channel 10
Sundays, 7:30 a.m.
Little Rock KTHV-TV Channel 11
Sundays, 11:00 a.m.

CALIFORNIA

Fresno KAIL-TV (Time and day to be announced.)
San Jose KNTV-TV
Sundays, 8:30 a.m.

CONNECTICUT

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

FLORIDA

Orlando WESH-TV Channel 2
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.
St. Petersburg WSUN-TV Channel 38
Sundays, 10:30 a.m.

IOWA

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

KANSAS

Salina KSLN-TV
Sundays, 12:30 p.m.

KENTUCKY

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

MASSACHUSETTS

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

MICHIGAN

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

MINNESOTA

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

MISSISSIPPI

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

MISSOURI

Kansas City WDAF-TV Channel 4
Sundays, 10:30 a.m.
Springfield KYTV
Sundays, 8:00 a.m.

NEBRASKA

Hayes Center KHPL-TV Channel 6
Sundays, 3:00 p.m.
Holdrege KHOL-TV Channel 13
Sundays, 3:00 p.m.

NEVADA

Los Vegas KORK-TV
Sundays, 10:00 a.m.

NEW YORK

Binghamton WBJA-TV Channel 34
Sundays, 2:30 p.m.
New York WOR-TV Channel 9
Sundays, 8:30 a.m.

TV BROADCAST

Rochester	WROC-TV	Channel 8	TEXAS		
Sundays, 10:00 a.m.			Big Spring	KWAB-TV	Channel 4
Syracuse	WNYS-TV	Channel 9	Sundays, 10:30 a.m.		
Sundays, 10:00 a.m.			El Paso	KTSM-TV	Channel 9
			Sundays, 10:00 a.m.		
NORTH CAROLINA			Fort Worth	KTVT-TV	Channel 11
Asheville	WISE-TV	Channel 62	Sundays, 10:30 a.m.		
Saturdays, 7:00 p.m.			Odessa	KOSA-TV	Channel 7
			Sundays, 10:00 a.m.		
OHIO			San Antonio	KWEX-TV	
Cambridge	WHIZ-TV	Channel 80	Sundays, 10:30 p.m.		
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.			Temple	KCEN-TV	Channel 6
Coshocton	WHIZ-TV	Channel 71	Sundays, 11:00 a.m.		
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.					
Lima	WIMA-TV	Channel 35	UTAH		
Sundays, 10:30 a.m.			Salt Lake City	KUTV	Channel 2
Zanesville	WHIZ-TV	Channel 18	Sundays, 11:00 a.m.		
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.					
OKLAHOMA			VIRGINIA		
Elk City	KSWB-TV		Bristol	WCYB-TV	Channel 5
Sundays, 5:30 p.m.			Sundays, 12:00 p.m.		
Oklahoma City	KOCO-TV	Channel 5	Lynchburg	WLVA-TV	Channel 13
Sundays, 10:30 a.m.			Sundays, 3:00 p.m.		
Tulsa	KVOO-TV	Channel 2			
Sundays, 3:30 p.m.			WEST VIRGINIA		
			Huntington	WHTN-TV	Channel 13
PENNSYLVANIA			Sundays, (Time to be announced.)		
Erie	WSEE-TV	Channel 35	Oakhill	WOAY-TV	Channel 4
Sundays, 10:30 a.m.			Sundays, 7:30 a.m.		
Pittsburgh	WTAE-TV	Channel 4	Parkersburg	WTAP-TV	Channel 15
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.			Sundays, 9:30 a.m.		
Wilkes-Barre	WBRE-TV	Channel 28			
Wednesdays, 6:30 a.m.			WISCONSIN		
			Milwaukee	WITI-TV	Channel 6
SOUTH CAROLINA			Sundays, 7:30 a.m.		
Charleston	WUSN-TV	Channel 2	CANADA		
Sundays, 11:30 a.m.			Dawson Creek, B. C.	CJDC-TV	
Columbia	WCCA-TV	Channel 25	Wednesdays, (Time to be announced.)		
Sundays, 3:00 p.m.			Montreal, Que.	CBMT-TV	
			Sundays, 12:00 p.m.		
			Thompson, Man.	CESM-TV	
			Sundays, 5:30 p.m.		

"Frank and Ernest"

BROADCAST SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

ALABAMA

Decatur WMSL 1400 12:15 p.m.
Haleyville WJBB 1230 12:00 p.m.

ARIZONA

Phoenix KUEQ 740 8:30 a.m.

ARKANSAS

Jonesboro KBTM 12:30 10:05 a.m.

CALIFORNIA

Chico KPAY 1060 10:35 a.m.
El Centro KICO 1490 10:30 a.m.
Los Angeles KGLM 740 10:30 a.m.
Napa KVON 1440 10:35 a.m.
Reading KVCV 600 7:45 a.m.
San Diego XERB 1090 9:45 a.m.
San Francisco KSAY 1010 9:45 a.m.
Santa Clara KGBA 10:35 a.m.
Tulare-Visalia KCOK 1270 10:35 a.m.

COLORADO

Denver KIMN 950 9:30 a.m.
Fort Collins KZIX 600 10:05 a.m.
Pueblo KDZA 1230 10:05 a.m.

DELAWARE

Wilmington WTUX 1290 10:15 a.m.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Washington WOL 1450 11:00 a.m.

FLORIDA

Palatka WSUZ 800 11:05 a.m.
Tampa WFLA 970 9:30 a.m.

IDAHO

Lewiston RLRC 1350 9:35 a.m.

ILLINOIS

Chicago WEAU 1330 10:00 a.m.
LaSalle WLPO 1220 9:45 a.m.
West Frankfort WFRX 1300 9:15 a.m.

INDIANA

Gary-Hammond WJOB 1230 8:30 a.m.

Indianapolis WIBC 1070 10:30 a.m.
Muncie WLBC 1340 8:45 a.m.

IOWA

Clinton KROS 1340 7:15 p.m.

KANSAS

Goodland KLOE 730 7:45 a.m.

KENTUCKY

Bowling Green WLBj 1410 12:05 p.m.
Louisville WAVE 970 8:15 a.m.
Newport WNOP 740 9:00 a.m.
Winchester WWKY 1380 10:30 a.m.

MAINE

Bangor WABI 910 12:00 noon

MASSACHUSETTS

Morlboro WSRO 1470 12:05 p.m.
New Bedford WBSM 1420 10:45 p.m.
Orange WCAT 1390 9:15 a.m.

MICHIGAN

Detroit CKLW 800 6:00 p.m.
Grand Rapids WMAX 1490 10:00 a.m.
Saginaw WSGW 790 10:30 a.m.

MINNESOTA

Duluth-Superior WAKX 1480 12:15 p.m.
Minneapolis KEVE 1440 11:00 a.m.

MISSISSIPPI

Biloxi WLOX 1490 10:05 a.m.
Waynesboro WABO 990 2:00 p.m.

MISSOURI

Joplin WMBH 1450 6:05 p.m.
Farmington KREI 800 9:00 a.m.
Kansas City KCMO 810 9:35 a.m.

MONTANA

Miles City KATL 1340 9:15 a.m.

BROADCAST SCHEDULE

NEBRASKA

Grand Island KRGI 1430 10:15 a.m.

NEW JERSEY

Newark WJRZ 970 9:30 a.m.

NEW MEXICO

Silver City KSIL 1340 10:05 a.m.

NEW YORK

Albany WEEE 1300 8:00 a.m.

New York WJRZ 970 9:30 a.m.

NORTH CAROLINA

Beaufort WBMA 1400 9:00 a.m.

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

Elizabeth City WGAI 560 12:05 p.m.

Leaksville WLOE 1490 12:05 p.m.

OHIO

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

Cincinnati WNOP 740 9:00 a.m.

Columbus WBNS 1460 10:05 a.m.

Piqua WPTW 1570 11:30 a.m.

Zanesville WHIZ 1240 11:45 a.m.

OREGON

Astoria KAST 1280 10:35 a.m.

Lebanon KGAL 920 9:00 a.m.

Portland KYMN 1520 10:00 a.m.

The Dalles KODL 1230 9:15 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown WHOL 1600 10:45 a.m.

Connellsville WCVI 1340 12:05 p.m.

Pittsburgh WWVA 1170 9:30 a.m.

Pottstown WPAZ 1370 8:30 a.m.

PUERTO RICO

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

SOUTH DAKOTA

Yankton KYNT 1450 11:05 a.m.

TEXAS

Livingston KVIL 1220 8:45 a.m.

Lubbock KDAV 580 9:45 a.m.

Pampa KPDN 1340 10:05 a.m.

San Antonio KBOP 1380 7:15 a.m.

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

Wichita Falls KWFT 620 10:15 a.m.

UTAH

Brigham City KBUH 9:05 a.m.

Logan KLGN 9:05 a.m.

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

VIRGINIA

Richmond WLEE 1480 10:10 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Bellingham KPUG 1170 11:15 a.m.

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

Olympia KGY 1240 10:35 a.m.

Seattle KAYO 1150 9:45 a.m.

Tacoma KMO 1360 9:45 a.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

Wheeling WWVA 1170 9:30 a.m.

WISCONSIN

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

Janesville WCLO 1230 11:05 a.m.

WYOMING

Cheyenne KVWO 1370 10:05 a.m.

CANADA

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

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

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

Oshawa CKLB 1350 9:45 a.m.

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

Vancouver CKLG 730 9:00 a.m.

Winnipeg CKY 580 7:15 p.m.

RADIO TOPICS FOR DECEMBER

6—"Truths Concerning Prayer"

20—"More Blessed to Give"

13—"The Penalty for Sin"

27—"Peace and Good Will"

Righteous Living

GOLDEN TEXT: "And let our's also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."—Titus 3:14

TITUS 1:15—2:10

IN THE days of the Early Church the standards of righteousness adhered to by its members, especially its new members, probably varied somewhat according to the background of the converts. The Jewish converts, with the background of the Mosaic Law, would view matters differently than would the Greeks and other Gentiles, who knew little or nothing about the Law of Moses.

This meant that servants in the church had the task of helping all to see and to practice Christian standards. Paul speaks of some who he says "profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate [margin, or, void of judgment]." These, seemingly, were professed believers who were mingling with those who had made greater progress in the way of holiness. Paul does not say that these could not change, and indeed, it was the privilege of those who

served in the church to encourage them to change.

"Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine," Paul wrote to Titus. The word "doctrine" simply means teaching, and here the teachings referred to by Paul were evidently those pertaining to Christian conduct and character. Paul continues: "That the aged men be sober, [margin, or **vigilant**], grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience." Here the doctrines of the divine plan are referred to as the "faith," the most holy faith which was first delivered to the saints.

The aged women also were to be encouraged along similar lines, and additionally exhorted not to be accusers of others, and to be "teachers of good things." Their teaching was to be particularly among the young married women in the church, exhorting them to love their husbands and children. These young women also were to be "discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands,

that the Word of God be not blasphemed." The young men were likewise to be exhorted along the lines of soberness of mind, or, margin, to be discreet.

In thus exhorting others Titus was to show himself a pattern of good works: "in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity." This is an important point. It is of little use to teach others the course of life they should follow if we do not practice what we say.

In chapter 3, verse 3, Paul presents thoughts worthwhile for us all to keep in mind when we are endeavoring to help others to walk in the way of holiness. He wrote, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Perhaps all of us do not fit into each of these categories of imperfection and misconduct, but Paul does present a good cross section view of the unregenerate world of unbelievers, and at one time or another we were all in this world. How thankful we are to have been called out of this unregenerate world, and have our feet firmly established in the narrow way of righteousness!

We do not attain salvation through what is generally understood to be righteous living, but by the saving power of Christ's blood. Those who accept Christ and consecrate to do the Lord's

will, should automatically have their lives cleansed. If this is not the result, then we could very well have serious doubt as to whether or not the Lord has given us of his Holy Spirit.

The doctrines of the divine plan are important, and the Scriptures admonish the Lord's people to maintain soundness in these doctrines. But soundness in doctrine alone does not bring salvation. Soundness of doctrine is the result of God's saving grace having taken hold of us, and drawing us to him. If we corrupt these doctrines it would be an evidence that we are resisting the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

We are to bear witness to the truth, and to show our appreciation of divine love, because we have been commissioned to be witnesses for Jesus, his ambassadors. The faithful witnesses of Jesus will live and reign with Christ in his thousand-year kingdom.—Rev. 20:4, 6

QUESTIONS

What standards of conduct might well have existed in the Early Church?

Does the word "doctrine" apply to Christian standards and living, as well as to the divine plan?

Relate Paul's instruction to Titus concerning aged men and women in the church.

How do we attain salvation?

On Behalf of a Slave

GOLDEN TEXT: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."—Galatians 3:28

PHILEMON 8-21

IN ANCIENT times slavery was quite generally practiced. Even in the Jewish nation one could become a slave through failure to live up to certain obligations, which usually involved money, or property, or both. Philemon, to whom Paul addresses his letter, was a slave owner, and Onesimus was one of his slaves.

Onesimus had run away from his master, and had journeyed to Rome, where in due course he sought out Paul in prison, and was converted by Paul's preaching. Without doubt Paul had visited the home of Philemon before he was imprisoned, and possibly had been served by Onesimus. The entire household, including the slaves, would probably know that Paul was now in a Roman prison, which would explain why the runaway slave so readily found him there.

The conversion of Onesimus presented a problem for Paul, for Philemon, and for Onesimus. Although Onesimus had escaped from Philemon, he was not free, for his owner could still claim him in the event he was found. And, according to Roman law, a runaway slave was to be returned

to his master, and the master, in turn, had the legal right to punish him in any way he wished, even to putting him to death.

Paul knew this, and he knew therefore that he had a legal obligation to send Onesimus back to Philemon, even though he had now become a Christian. Onesimus, now understanding the Christian principles involved, knew that there was nothing for him to do but to return to his master. He now realized that he had done wrong in running away from Philemon.

Paul decided to write a letter to Philemon, and send it back to him by Onesimus. He evidently had observed the very deep spirit of devotion and consecration manifested by Onesimus, and was sure that he could trust him to return to Philemon without sending someone along to guard him. For the runaway to return of his own accord would in itself be likely to make a favorable impression upon Philemon.

It would seem that Onesimus had served Paul in prison for at least a short time, and the apostle had come to appreciate this service, and indicates in his

letter that he would be glad to have him return and continue serving him. But he expresses this wish in a very diplomatic way. He observes that Onesimus had been unprofitable to his master, but now was in a position to be profitable not only to him but also to Paul, by returning to be his servant.

Paul explains that he could have kept Onesimus in Rome for this purpose, but realizing that he belonged to Philemon, he could not do this without obtaining his consent. So he is sending the slave back to his master, but now as a brother in Christ, with the indication that Philemon, if he desired, could of his own free will send him back to Paul, implying that this might be done without any special punishment to Onesimus.

Paul realized that the escape of Onesimus meant a loss to Philemon. Perhaps he had already purchased another slave to take his place. So he wrote, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." At the time, although a prisoner, Paul was living in his own hired house, so apparently, during this brief period of his life, he had some means. It would seem that Philemon may have been caring for his financial affairs, so he bids the slave owner to make the necessary adjustment on his books to make up for any loss he had incurred as a result of Onesimus.

What more could Paul do? He entreated Philemon to receive his slave as a brother, and to treat him as a brother. The record does not state what Philemon's attitude turned out to be. But Paul had confidence in him, even as he had confidence in Onesimus. He believed that he would have joy in the Lord from the act that Philemon would conduct himself as a real Christian should.

Our Golden Text is significant. From the Lord's standpoint, all slaves and freemen are alike. Jews, Greeks, or Gentiles are alike. Indeed, in the body of Christ, the individual is not accepted because of sex, or any consideration other than that each one is called of God, and in response to that call makes a full consecration to do God's will.

Paul knew that Onesimus had been called, and had witnessed his spirit of complete devotion to the Lord, so he knew that he was one of the fellow members of the body of Christ. What better credentials could he send back to Philemon? How wonderful it will be in the kingdom when all become brothers under Christ!

QUESTIONS

Relate the circumstances of today's lesson, and point out some of the highlights of Paul's letter to Philemon.

What application does the Golden Text have to the lesson?

The Birth of Jesus Christ

GOLDEN TEXT: "And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."—Matthew 1:21

MATTHEW 1:1, 18-25

THE birth of Jesus was an outstanding development in the out-working of God's great plan of salvation. Beginning at the time of man's fall into sin and death, and continuing throughout the Old Testament period, God had been making promises concerning the coming of a Savior and Deliverer. In a statement made in the Garden of Eden this One is spoken of as the "Seed" of the woman. (Gen. 3:15) In the Patriarchal Age the promise was that the "Seed" of Abraham would bless all families of the earth.—Gen. 12:3; 22:18

This Great One was also to be "Shiloh," of the tribe of Judah, the One later identified as "the lion of the tribe of Judah." (Gen. 49:8-10; Rev. 5:5) Isaiah foretold the birth of this Great One, and assigned to him such titles as "The Prince of Peace"; "The mighty God"; and others, explaining that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." (Isa. 9:6, 7) Isaiah also foretold that this Savior of the people would be born of a

virgin, and that his name should be called "Immanuel," meaning "God with us."—Isa. 7:14

These, and many other promises of God, gave the devout of Israel a definite hope that one day the Messiah would appear; that their nation would be delivered from the Roman yoke, exalted to a position of authority throughout the earth, and bring blessings to all mankind. But until Jesus was born this hope was based entirely upon promises. Now these promises began to be fulfilled, and those in Israel who understood the significance of what was taking place, and had faith to believe that God was actually fulfilling his promises, had great cause for rejoicing.

The angelic announcement of Jesus' birth emphasizes this fact of fulfilment: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10, 11) To the former generations of Israelites the Messiah had been promised, but now he

was born, and that indeed was "good tidings of great joy."

The birth of Jesus was miraculous. He was not son of Joseph, but the Son of God, and was known in his prehuman existence as the "Logos," or Word of God. (John 1:1-5) In order to be the Redeemer and Savior of the world it was necessary for the Logos, God's Son, to be made flesh. He did not assume a body of flesh—he became flesh; a perfect human being, who could give his humanity in death as a substitute for the forfeited life of Adam, and through Adam the entire human race.

Paul explains that Jesus gave himself a "ransom," meaning a corresponding price, for all. (1 Tim. 2:4-6) To do this it was essential that Jesus be the exact equivalent of father Adam before he sinned. Man was created a little lower than the angels, and we are told that Jesus, as a human, was also a little lower than the angels, crowned with human "glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Ps. 8:5; Heb. 2:9) Thus, as Paul explains, "By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." —1 Cor. 15:21, 22

The prophecy of Isaiah (7:14) foretold that this Messiah would be called "Immanuel," meaning "God with us." This does not imply that Jesus was God incarnate

in flesh. It simply denotes that his birth and ministry manifested the presence and favor of Jehovah with his people, that the messianic promises which he had made were being fulfilled. While this one prophecy of Isaiah stipulated that the name "Immanuel" should be given to this child of promise, there is no record to indicate that he ever went by this name. It is simply one of the titles which helps us to realize more fully the purpose and scope of his ministry.

The Scriptures give no indication that the followers of Jesus should commemorate his birth, although it is always appropriate to remember this unspeakable gift of God, through, whom all might have life. December 25 is not the true date of Jesus' birth. Since his ministry was three and one-half years in length, and he was crucified in the spring, this would bring his birth to about October 1. But the main thing is to rejoice that the Savior was born, and that he gave his life that we might live.

QUESTIONS

Name some of the Old Testament promises concerning the coming of the Messiah.

Why was it necessary for Jesus to be made flesh?

Explain the meaning of the name "Immanuel."

What is the true date of Jesus' birth?

The Visit of the Wise Men

GOLDEN TEXT: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."—Isaiah 60:1,3

MATTHEW 2:1-12

TRADITIONALLY, the wise men arrived in Bethlehem on the same day that Jesus was born. Many illustrations, such as those on Christmas cards show the wise men and the shepherds together worshipping the babe Jesus in the manger. But this view does not agree with the Scriptures. The record shows that the wise men went to Jerusalem, not to Bethlehem. They inquired, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

When Herod learned of their presence in Jerusalem "he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born." Here is an undertaking which denotes a lapse of time, which in itself would indicate that the wise men did not reach Jesus on the night he was born, as the shepherds did.

Learning that according to the prophecies Christ was to be born

in Bethlehem, Herod inquired of the wise men when it was that they saw the star which they believed indicated that a king was born to the Jews. Then he sent them to Bethlehem to seek the child and inform him of his whereabouts so that he might also worship this new king. The shepherds were guided to the babe Jesus, but in this instance of the wise men he no longer is called a babe, and they do not find him in a manger, but in a house. (vs. 11) And they did not return to Herod, as instructed by him, for God had warned them in a dream to return to their country by another route.

Then Herod, realizing that he had been "mocked," and did not learn the whereabouts of Jesus, nor his identity, gave instructions that all the male children of the district, two years of age and younger, be destroyed. The record states that this age had been determined on the basis of what the wise men told him concerning the time that the star appeared. Apparently they had informed Herod that they had seen this star two years before their

arrival in Jerusalem, indicating that at that time Jesus could be two years old.

When Jesus was eight days old he was circumcised, "and when the days of her [Mary's] purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord." (Luke 21: 22) Following the ceremony, which took place in the temple, "they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth." (Luke 2:39) Let us remember that after the visit of the wise men Joseph and Mary and the young child fled to Egypt.

Back in Nazareth "the child grew, and waxed strong, . . . filled with wisdom." We are told also that "his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover." (Luke 2: 40, 41) It would seem, then, that the wise men found Jesus in Jerusalem perhaps the next year, or even when his parents had taken him there the second year at the time of the passover.

These details may not be too important, but it is well to obtain a correct understanding of the chronology of these events, even as it is important to understand other details of the Bible correctly. We are not to suppose that the wise men were involved in the plot to destroy Jesus. They were no doubt sincere in their desire to worship the King of the Jews. The record of the inci-

dent is recorded in the Bible to point out the great effort that was made by Satan, through Herod, to destroy the "Seed" of promise.

The Golden Text refers to Jesus as the "Light" of Israel, and indeed of the whole world. Through Jesus the glory of the Lord had arisen upon Israel at that time; but as a nation they rejected that light, and became a scattered people. But it will not be so when Jesus appears in power and great glory as a divine King to rule over them.

Then, as the work of the messianic kingdom continues, the Gentiles also will come to Jesus, the great light of Israel and of the world. What a glorious light that will be! Malachi foretold that Jesus will then be as "the Sun of Righteousness" which shall "arise with healing in his wings." (Mal. 4:2) All mankind, Jews and Gentiles, will rejoice in the healing powers of this wonderful Savior and Deliverer. Ultimately there shall be no more pain and death, for the former things shall have passed away.—Rev. 21:4

QUESTIONS

How do we know that the wise men did not arrive in Bethlehem the night Jesus was born? Trace the scriptural evidence.

When will Jesus, the light of Israel and the whole world, "arise with healing in his wings"?

Strengthening the Brethren

WHEN Jesus and the Twelve were together in the upper room the night before the crucifixion, he said to Simon Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22:31, 32) Peter was a firm believer in Jesus. He was convinced that his beloved Master was the foretold Messiah. Hence when Jesus spoke of his future conversion he did not mean a change from being an unbeliever to being a believer. Rather, the reference was to a change of viewpoint which was to take place in Peter's understanding of the full scope of his Master's place in the divine plan, and of the position to be occupied by his disciples.

Peter was a rugged fisherman, and accustomed to carrying out his own plans in life quite as he wished. It was natural for him to assume that the great Messiah of promise would be no less capable of accomplishing what he desired, hence the consternation that filled the heart of this ardent apostle when Jesus let it be known that he was going to Jerusalem where he expected to be arrested and put to death. To Peter this must have seemed like surrendering to the enemy, so he said to his Master, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." —Matt. 16:22

Jesus replied to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (vs. 23) And then, addressing his disciples in general, Jesus added, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (vss. 24, 25) To the disciples this must have seemed like a strange viewpoint. Peter had advised Jesus not to expose his life to danger, but Jesus

explained that in this Peter had expressed a human viewpoint, which indeed it was.

The generally accepted human viewpoint is that one must protect his own interests, and the interests of those near and dear to him, at almost any cost. The idea of deliberately choosing a course that leads to suffering and death is frowned upon by those who are guided by the wisdom of this world. This was the case with Peter. Not only did he endeavor to dissuade Jesus from going to Jerusalem where his enemies were waiting for him, but later even tried to prevent his arrest, going so far as to cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest.

Peter was in this frame of mind that night in the upper room when Jesus said to him, "Satan hath desired thee, that he may sift thee as wheat." Satan was working hard with Peter in an attempt to wrest him away from his Master's leadership. He had found a slight area of difference between them, and was laboring on this point of difference to drive the wedge of separation deeper if possible. But Jesus assured Peter of his prayers, and said to him, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Jesus had confidence that Peter would come through this experience, and would ultimately gain the right viewpoint, which he did.

Enlightened

Peter was not "converted" until Pentecost. Then he received the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and was able to see the reason for Jesus' suffering and death. Indeed, in his pentecostal sermon Peter called attention to prophecies pertaining to Jesus' death and resurrection. If he had discerned the meaning of these prophecies when he was with Jesus, Peter would not have endeavored to prevent his crucifixion. But now he knew, and without doubt, that his previously wrong viewpoint, and the experiences to which it had led, was a special preparation, enabling him to appreciate the truth on the subject more clearly than might otherwise have been possible.

Thus Peter was well prepared to strengthen the brethren along the line of Christian suffering, and the place it occupies in the outworking of the divine plan. This comes to light in Peter's first epistle, an epistle that Peter may well have written with his Master's admonition to strengthen the brethren par-

ticularly in mind. And all the Lord's people need strengthening along this line. Suffering is not pleasant, and the flesh will endeavor to avoid it whenever possible, whether it be physical pain, or mental discomfort due to the frown of our neighbors and of the world in general. To face up to suffering and death, when perchance we could choose a more pleasant course, requires faith and courage, a courage which is the outgrowth of conviction that we are doing that which is well-pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

Let us note the manner in which Peter, in his first epistle endeavors to strengthen the brethren. First he reminds us that we are not seeking for earthly blessings, but heavenly. He reminds us that we have been begotten again "unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you [margin, or, **for us**], who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."—ch. 1:3-5

It is in the hope of this inheritance that we have our chief cause for rejoicing, not in the material good things of life which might be ours if we bent our energies to secure them. Yes, we "greatly rejoice," Peter explains, "though now for a season if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."—ch. 1:6-8

How beautifully does Peter thus emphasize that the Christian's joys are based, not upon the abundance of the things which he may possess in this life, but upon his faith in the heavenly inheritance to which he has been called—that inheritance which will include the joy of being with the Lord Jesus, and with the Heavenly Father. Thus does Peter prepare us to see more clearly the privilege of suffering and dying with Jesus, even though this will mean for us, as it did for Jesus himself, the foregoing of material good things; at times, indeed, even surrendering our rights and earthly advantages as we follow in the footsteps of the Master.

Continuing, Peter wrote: "Receiving the end of your [Gr., **the**] faith, even the [Gr., **a**] salvation of your ["your" omitted in oldest MSS.] souls, of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ [the words, "of Christ," omitted in Vat. MS.] which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (ch. 1:9-11) Here Peter is reminding us that the "sufferings of Christ" had been foretold by God's holy prophets. Peter did not know this when he was opposing the crucifixion of Jesus. But the Holy Spirit had revealed it to him, and thus he knew that it was a part of the divine plan for Jesus, and also for Jesus' disciples, the body members of the larger Christ company.

Peter then explains that our redemption and salvation is due to the fact that Jesus, in keeping with his Father's will as set forth in the Old Testament, gave up his life on our behalf. He says that we are "redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (ch. 1: 19) Note here how Peter refers to the Old Testament symbolisms, and pictures Jesus as a "lamb without blemish and without spot." Yes, he was indeed "the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—John 1:29

To Offer Sacrifice

And then, in chapter 2, the converted Peter presents another line of thought, to remind us that following Jesus in the true sense does not lead to material advantages. In verse 5 he explains that we are a spiritual house, a "holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices." In Old Testament times the priests of Israel offered animals in sacrifice, but not so with the holy priesthood of the present age. We offer ourselves to be consumed upon the antitypical altar, where our sacrifice is made acceptable through the blood of Christ. We go to him without the camp, bearing his reproach. (Heb. 13:10-13) We need only to think of the burning animals in the type to realize that in the offering of ourselves there will be suffering, and eventually death, into which we voluntarily enter.

Paul wrote, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mer-

cies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1) When Peter endeavored to prevent the crucifixion of Jesus he did not know that the messianic purpose of God called for sacrifice and suffering before the Messiah and his followers could enter into the promised glory of the kingdom. He was thinking only of the powerful and glorious reign of Christ, and his human reasoning told him that a dead Messiah could not set up a powerful and glorious government in the earth, such as had been indicated by God's prophets.—Isa. 9:6, 7

Peter thought of Jesus as a King, not as a priest to offer sacrifice; certainly not the sacrifice of himself. He hoped to be with Jesus in the kingdom, to share his rulership, but he did not expect to suffer and to die in order to attain to this high position of glory. But now, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, he had a clear vision of this aspect of the divine plan. Now he could strengthen the brethren to endure their suffering, so he wrote, "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us [margin, Some read, **for you**], leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself [margin, or, **his cause**.] to him that judgeth righteously."—ch. 2:19-23

All the Lord's people need to be strengthened in order to take patiently the suffering that is inflicted upon them unjustly; that is, when they have done no wrong which would justify the trials which have been inflicted upon them. This was the position of Jesus. He spent his life going about doing good. He never harmed anyone, and yet his enemies reviled him and put him to death. This is the example which we are invited to emulate. This is the course laid down for us by the footprints of the Master. This is what it means truly to be one of his disciples.

The nominal church, on the whole, has gotten far away

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from this concept of the Christian life. Membership in a church is looked upon as something that will result in material gain. The social gospel claims that evidence of God's favor is success in business, or in securing the best employment, enjoying good health, and having many friends in the social world. But this was not Jesus' viewpoint, nor the viewpoint of the apostles and those in the Early Church who followed their teachings. Suffering for well-doing, and taking it patiently, without any disposition to fight back, is what results in God's favor, Peter wrote. Surely we need strength to walk in a way of this sort, and to continue in it faithfully unto death!

Among Ourselves

Since this is to be our viewpoint toward the outside world, it must of necessity be the same in our association with the brethren. On this point Peter wrote, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous [Gr., **humble**]: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."—ch. 3:8, 9

Since we are in the world but not of the world, we find ourselves surrounded by coolness and opposition. It is most fitting, therefore, that all who are walking in this narrow way together should be of one mind, and have compassion one for the other. Due to our fleshly imperfections misunderstandings will occur, but those who are laying down their lives doing good, and are not returning evil for evil so far as the world is concerned, will surely want to be guided by this same Christian principle in their dealings one with another. These will realize that having their own way is not nearly so important as endeavoring to be all of one mind, and sympathetic toward those who, according to the flesh, are different from themselves.

And then Peter continues to strengthen the brethren by reminding them that God will not permit them to be harmed as new creatures if they continue to follow the right path of sacrifice. He wrote: "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled."—ch. 3:13, 14

Looking back to Jesus, our Exemplar, we can see that he was not harmed. True, he was reviled; his enemies spat upon him and placed a crown of thorns upon his head. They nailed him to a cross, and let him hang there until he died. They inflicted much suffering upon the Master, but they did not harm him as a new creature, for his suffering and death was his way to glory, honor, and immortality. It is the same way with us. Suffering inflicted upon us by our enemies can harm us only if we permit such experiences to embitter our hearts so that we will begin rendering evil for evil. This might result in temporary satisfaction to the flesh, but if continued will lead to the loss of our inheritance with Jesus in the heavenly phase of his kingdom.

Continuing his message of encouragement, Peter wrote, "For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (ch. 3:17, 18) Prior to Peter's conversion to the right viewpoint, he surely would not have admitted that it is better to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. He knew that Jesus' entire life was one of well-doing, and he rebelled at the thought that such a man would be made to suffer and to die. But now Peter knew the purpose of his Master's suffering and death, and he knew that we, his followers, have the privilege of suffering and dying with him. And to know why we suffer, and to be assured that this is the will of God for us, is surely a great source of strength in facing our experiences.

Again, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." (ch. 4:1) To be armed is to be rendered strong in our resolution that we will endure grief, suffering wrongfully, if this is the will of God for us. If we are determined in this viewpoint, and recognize that in taking this position we will be following the example of Christ, we will be able to endure much more victoriously than if we should endeavor to sidestep the privilege of suffering and dying with the Master. True, it is easy to talk about suffering with Christ, but the real test is not merely in talking about it, but of enduring joyfully when the opportunity comes to us.

Not Strange

Continuing to strengthen the brethren, Peter wrote, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (ch. 4:12, 13) To Peter, before Pentecost, it was very "strange" indeed that fiery trials should come upon Jesus, leading to his crucifixion. But since he had learned that this was God's plan for him, and it had been foretold by the prophets, he realized it was not strange. Nor should we think it strange when fiery trials come into our lives, for, as Peter explains, we are partakers of Christ's sufferings. And, if we partake of his sufferings, and endure courageously and faithfully unto the end of the narrow way of suffering, we will share in his glory.

And how strengthening it should be to our faith to realize that the trials which come to us as a result of faithfulness to the Lord, to the truth, and to the brethren, are not due to our Heavenly Father's lack of interest, but because he is supervising our experiences to prepare us for joint-heirship with his beloved Son in the kingdom! The human mind is prone to say, "How strange that this great trial has come into my life!" But Peter says that we should not reason in this manner, but rather, rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings.

It requires faith to take this viewpoint, a faith that is based on an understanding of the reason that the narrow way is so difficult. True, we do not always understand in detail just why certain experiences are permitted to come into our lives, but we know the plan of God in arranging for us to suffer with Christ, and the details we can leave in his hands. If the way of the cross seems hard, we have the assurance of divine grace to help in our every time of need, and our faith should enable us to say that we would rather walk in the dark with God than go alone in the light.

For Righteousness' Sake

Not all suffering is acceptable to God. Sometimes our trials may be due to our own imperfections, imperfections which cause us to say and do things that are contrary to the will of God.

Peter calls our attention to this, saying, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."—ch. 4:15, 16

From the Lord's standpoint we could become murderers through the assassination of a person's character by evil speaking. By misrepresentation we could "steal" another's good name and reputation. Those who do these things frequently find themselves embroiled in trials and difficulties, but they cannot properly rejoice in such experiences on the grounds that they are the sufferings of Christ. These are sufferings which result from wrongdoing, and are a cause for shame on the part of those who experience them. Only those who suffer for righteousness' sake can be assured of the Lord's approval, and look forward to receiving their inheritance with Jesus in the kingdom of heaven.

God Cares

While the way of the cross is a difficult one, its joys far outweigh its sorrows. These joys are largely in the assurance of our loving Heavenly Father's love and care. Peter wrote, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world"—ch. 5:6-9

We are to humble ourselves before the Lord and accept without question the experiences which he permits. If we rebel, it means that we have not properly learned the needed lessons pertaining to our walk in the narrow way. But we can humble ourselves with the full assurance that the Lord's loving care is over all our ways, that he is our constant caretaker, even though at times the flesh might well reason that he has forgotten us. The One who cares for us is never weary; his eye is watchful for our every need; and his ear is ever open to our cry.

Besides, our Heavenly Father is abundantly able to do for us more than we can possibly ask or think, and will do so, if we

continue humbly to look up to him in thankfulness for all the blessings which his love provides—even for our trials. These latter also are blessings in disguise, because they have a part in preparing us for glory. Our great Adversary will try to tell us otherwise, but knowing the purpose of our sufferings, and maintaining a clear vision of this purpose, we will have strength to resist Satan, and to go on in the narrow way, following the Lamb even unto death. How precious is the promise, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10

How thankful we are that Peter was faithful to the commission Jesus gave to him to strengthen the brethren by giving them the assurance that Christian suffering is God’s will for them, and an evidence of divine favor!

REMEMBER GOD’S UNCHANGEABLENESS

Rather than becoming forgetful hearers of the Lord’s precious and encouraging promises, and thereby losing confidence in the faithfulness of our Master, and becoming discouraged in our running, let us take to ourselves the Lord’s comforting words to typical Israel and “remember all the way the Lord thy God hath led thee.” (Deut. 8:2) Remember the Lord’s unchangeableness; and that unfavorable and trying experiences are a part of the Lord’s leading as much as the favorable and encouraging ones which come to us. Rather than be discouraged by the shadows which cross our pathway, allowing them to hinder our running, may we say with the Psalmist, “I will never forget thy precepts; for with them thou hast quickened me” (Ps. 119:93); for it is goodness and mercy which will follow us all the days of our life. And when our present light affliction is over, may faith enable us to say, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”—Psalm 23:6

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Christ Is Born

ABOUT October 1, nearly two thousand years ago, an angelic announcement to a group of shepherds watching their flocks by night signaled an outstanding step forward in the outworking of the divine plan of salvation. We read that "the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. and this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—Luke 2:9-14

Previous to this, the coming of the Messiah was in the realm of promises, so one of the very important aspects of this message of good news is the fact the Messiah was born that day. The word "Gospel" means good news, and Paul informs us that the Gospel was preached before to Abraham when God promised this ancient friend that through his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Gal. 3:8; Gen. 22:18) Paul identifies Jesus in this connection as the promised "Seed." (Gal. 3:16) It was good news to Abraham that his progeny would be the channel of blessing to all mankind. However, this was good news which was based merely upon a promise. Later this promise was confirmed by God's oath, but it was still just a promise.

Later this promise was confirmed to Isaac, and to Jacob, but it was still only a promise. Shortly before his death, when pronouncing blessings upon his twelve sons, Jacob prophesied that out of the loins of Judah there would come one who would be called Shiloh, a peaceful one, and that unto him would the

gathering of the people be. (Gen. 49:9, 10) This was another promise of the coming of a Messiah, one to whom the people would be gathered, and through whom they would receive the blessings of peace.

Moses, in his day, clung to these wonderful promises that the God of Israel would send a Great One, a Messiah, to bring deliverance to his people, and a blessing to all mankind. Evidently the mother of Moses, while caring for her child in the court of Pharaoh, told him of the promise to father Abraham, and what it implied, for we read that when he was come to years he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of [margin, or, **for**] Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." --Heb. 11:24-26

Christ is the New Testament name for Messiah, and Moses evidently understood God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and to Jacob to mean that he would send a Messiah, and he gladly cast in his lot with the people of God to whom these promises had been made. Later, after the Law had been given to Israel at the hand of Moses, he was instructed to say to this people that the Lord would raise up unto them a prophet like unto himself, and that all would be called upon to hear and obey that prophet. (Deut. 18:18, 19) In the New Testament this is applied to Jesus during the period of his second presence.—Acts 3:22, 23

Many Prophecies

Isaiah prophesied that "a virgin would conceive, and bear a Son," and that his name would be called Immanuel. (Isa. 7:14) Another of Isaiah's prophecies reads, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 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 forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:6, 7

Again Isaiah prophesied concerning the coming Messiah: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove [margin, or, **argue**] with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."—Isa. 11:1-5

In Daniel 9:25 there is another assurance of the coming of the Messiah. In this prophecy a time measurement is given indicating when he would come. The prophecy reads, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks." At the time Jesus did appear as the Messiah many were in expectation of him, and this expectation might well have been based in part at least upon this prophecy recorded by Daniel.—Luke 3:15

In Micah 5:2 there is a prophecy which identifies the place where the Promised One would be born. The text reads, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting [margin, Heb., the days of eternity]."

And then in Malachi 4:2 we read, "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

These and other promises and prophecies relative to the coming Messiah served as a great inspiration to the devout of Israel. The people did not realize that they would not all be fulfilled at once. They failed completely to grasp the meaning of certain prophecies which told of the Messiah's suffering and death as

the Redeemer of Israel and of the world. They did not know that he would be raised from the dead and return to heaven, and re-visit mankind at the end of the Gospel Age. They simply had in mind the many assurances of Jehovah that a Messiah would come, that Israel would be exalted, and all the families of the earth blessed.

Yes, the "Israelites indeed" were well aware that God had promised to send a Messiah. Many names and titles of this Great One were mentioned in the prophecies. He was to be the "Seed." He was to be "Shiloh." He was to be a Prophet greater than Moses. He was to be called "Immanuel," "Wonderful," "Counselor," "The mighty God," "The everlasting Father," "The Prince of Peace." The Messiah was also to be a "root out of the stem of Jesse," and a "Branch" was to grow out of his roots. He was to be the "Sun of Righteousness" with "healing in his wings."

Throughout all the long centuries of Israel's waiting, the Messianic feature of the divine plan remained in the realm of promises, but at last the time came for those promises to begin to be translated into reality, so the angel announced, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ [Messiah] the Lord." Now these promises began to take on substance—the Messiah was born.

Nine months earlier Mary had been given the assurance that she was to be the mother of the One who would become the great Messiah and Deliverer of Israel and the world: "The angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."—Luke 1:30-33

In this announcement by the angel we are reminded of Isaiah's prophecy in which he foretold that the Messiah would sit "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." (Isa. 9:7) The typical kingdom of David had fallen in 606 B. C. Because David was so greatly

beloved by Jehovah, he arranged that the future messianic kingdom should be looked upon as the rebuilt kingdom of this man after God's own heart. (I Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22) Jesus is the antitypical David, and through his mother was an actual descendant of David.

Humble Circumstances

From the announcement made to her by the angel Gabriel, Mary would know that she was to be the mother of the Promised One, and possibly wondered why God permitted those circumstances to arise which led to the birth of Jesus in a stable. However, even a stable must have seemed like a palace to Mary, a king's palace, since God had permitted her holy child to be born there. But while Jesus' birthplace was humble, and his mother a comparatively unknown person in Israel, his birth was announced by the angels. This was appropriate. The Lord had used angels on many occasions to convey to the ancients his plan to send a Messiah, and now that the time had come to fulfil those promises it was fitting that both the conception and birth of this Great One would also be announced by angels.

The birth of Jesus was a turning point in the outworking of the divine plan, for it meant that God's plan had moved out of the promise stage and into the era of performance. True, through his New Testament servants the Lord continued to make promises, but now the central figure both of the Old and New Testament promises had come, and his birth in Bethlehem had been announced by the angels.

The shepherds to whom this announcement was made must have been awed, and at the same time made glad. To them the first thought was to go to Bethlehem and verify what they had heard. We read, "And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger."—Luke 2:15, 16

The shepherds were thoroughly convinced. We read, "When they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard

it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds." The shepherds' desire to tell as many as they could about the good news which had been given to them was natural and praiseworthy. We should have the same desire today. At this time the Lord's people are privileged to understand the divine plan more fully than did the shepherds. The good tidings of the birth of Jesus, and all that it means in connection with the divine plan as a whole, should impel us to do all we can to tell out this message far and wide, and by every means at our disposal.

Not Yet the Messiah

The birth of Jesus was truly important as an advance step in the plan of God, but actually as a babe he was not the Messiah. The word "Messiah" means anointed, or "the anointed one." The significance of the word derives from the custom in Israel of anointing kings and priests to office. The anointing was the official designation to office. It pointed forward to the anointing of the Holy Spirit which came upon Jesus at the time of his baptism, and upon the church at Pentecost.

At the time of Jesus' baptism he heard his Heavenly Father speaking to him from heaven, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22) Jesus' birth was announced by the angels, but as a babe he would not know about or appreciate this. At the age of twelve he was found in the temple with doctors of the Law, endeavoring to learn what he could about his mission. But not until he came to Jordan, when he dedicated himself to the doing of his Father's will, in the public phase of his ministry, did he receive this blessed assurance of his sonship, and learn that his Heavenly Father was well pleased with him. Now he was the Messiah of promise.

This was thirty years after Jesus' birth. Perhaps the shepherds to whom his birth had been announced had passed away. Certainly many to whom they had conveyed the good news had died. Whatever the reason, the fact is that no mention is made of the angelic announcement after Jesus began his ministry. It could well be that the Lord wanted to emphasize that the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus are the important considerations. True, Jesus' birth was necessary as the means to an end, but the Lord does not want us particularly to adore

the babe Jesus, but to take up our cross and follow the anointed Jesus in his steps of suffering and death.

God's Gift

The promises pertaining to the coming of the Messiah emphasized that he would be one sent by God. This thought is carried over into the New Testament, and in John 3:16 Jesus is referred to as God's gift. "God so loved the world," we read, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Paul speaks of Jesus as God's "unspeakable gift." (II Cor. 9:15) Words are wholly inadequate to describe this gracious and costly gift which our Heavenly Father made to us, and to the whole world of mankind.

And since the first evidence of this gift was manifested in the birth of Jesus, it is appropriate that this feature of the divine plan should beget in us the desire unselfishly to give for the blessing of others. First of all, when we come to know of God's great gift of love for us, we should willingly give our all to him. He had invited us to give him our hearts, and when we respond to this invitation, it means that everything which we have and are is really surrendered to him, with the understanding that he can use it in whatever way may be pleasing to him. This is consecration. This is presenting our bodies a living sacrifice as mentioned by the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:1.

A Savior

When the angel announced to the shepherds that the Messiah was born he referred to him as a "Savior." To the shepherds this possibly meant no more than being saved from the Roman yoke of bondage under which the nation of Israel was living at the time. But to us it means much more. It means that through his death as man's Redeemer Jesus would provide an opportunity of salvation from death for all mankind. The Heavenly Father knew that in giving his Son for the salvation of mankind it meant giving him up to suffer and to die. What a costly gift this was, and if we are to emulate the Father's love in giving we must be willing to suffer and to die even as Jesus did.

After the one angel announced the birth of Jesus, "suddenly there was . . . a multitude of the heavenly host praising God,

and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (vss. 13, 14) Surely all who love the Lord, and rejoice in his great plan of salvation, will likewise give glory to God, and praise him for the gift of his Son.

We know that the birth of Jesus will yet lead to "peace on earth." True, nearly two thousand years have passed since this glory song of the angels was heard, and still there is no peace on earth. But this does not mean that the divine plan has failed. It simply means that a further preparatory feature of God's great plan has been in the course of development, which is the calling out from the world of those who are invited to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, suffering and dying with him, that they might live and reign with him. There is every reason now to believe that this work is about complete, which means that soon Messiah's kingdom will bring peace to the nations, and that Jesus will be recognized by the people of all nations as truly "The Prince of Peace."

Jesus will also then serve as peacemaker between God and the estranged human race. After all, there can be no lasting peace between the nations unless the people are at peace with God. Our first parents decided to take a course contrary to God's law, and brought upon themselves the sentence of death. By heredity their entire progeny has been born in sin and misshapen in iniquity. The whole unbelieving world is thus alienated from God, and under condemnation to death. Jesus gave himself in death as a substitute for Adam and his race, and this opens the way for a return from death, and a reinstatement of the human race into the favor of God. This glorious provision will become effective during the thousand years of the messianic kingdom through the arrangement of the New Covenant promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

It will be then that Jesus will be "The everlasting Father," the father, that is, who will give everlasting life to all those who, through belief and obedience, prove worthy of it. And how glorious is this prospect! It will mean the end of sickness and pain and death. How true was the angel's announcement that the son born to Mary would be a "savior"! As we contemplate the birth of Jesus, we should not overlook this glorious outcome of the divine plan of salvation.

"Good Will Toward Men"

In the glory song of the angels they used the expression, "good will toward men." Many who do not know the plan of God for human salvation think of this as meaning good will "among" men. This viewpoint places a great strain upon their faith because they know that there has been no more good will among men since Jesus was born than there was before. They have thought that God wanted them to convert the world to Christ and his teachings and thus bring about a state of good will among men. We rejoice to realize that in God's due time, which will be during the thousand years of the messianic kingdom, the world will be converted. Then the Lord's Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh, and under its enlightening influence the people will be led away from selfishness, and will learn to love and serve one another.

An incorrect understanding of this text is revealed in other translations. The Revised Version reads, "peace among men in whom he is well pleased." Others render it "peace among men of good will." But there is no basis in the Greek text for these translations. They are simply attempts to harmonize the angelic message with what the translators, in their limited understanding of God's plan, suppose the angels meant.

But how beautiful is the text when taken as it properly reads in our Common Version translation. It is good will "toward" men, and the reference is to God's good will as it was even then being expressed through the birth of his Son whom he had sent into the world to be the Redeemer and Savior of mankind. God's good will was thus expressed toward men because he loved them. Even though the human race was alienated from God through wicked works, he still loved the people; loved them so much that he gave his Son to serve as Redeemer and Mediator to restore them to life and to harmony with him.

Jesus' death and resurrection were further evidences of God's good will toward men. The selection of the "little flock" to share in the kingdom rule with Jesus is also an evidence of God's good will toward the adamic race. The return of Christ to establish his kingdom also manifests God's good will toward the people. Indeed, God's good will is expressed in every detail of his loving plan for the blessing of all the families of the

earth. In view of this, how appropriate that we join with the angels in singing, "Glory to God in the Highest"!

It was a marvelous experience for the shepherds to be told by angels that the Great One whom the God of Israel had been promising for so long had at last been born. It is even more wonderful to be living now, and to have the assurance that Christ's second visit to earth is a reality; that he is now present establishing his kingdom through which peace and health and life will be assured to all people. To the unbelieving world it seems incredible that we are living at the threshold of such a golden age of peace, security, health, and life. Probably many disbelieved the report of the shepherds concerning the birth of the Messiah, and the people for the most part will ignore our message today. But it is our privilege to proclaim the good tidings, and in doing so, to show our joy and enthusiasm for the message of the angels to the shepherds in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago. May this glorious message never become commonplace in our lives!



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

DECEMBER 3—"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."—Revelation 3:10 (Z. '01-118 Hymn 174)

DECEMBER 10—"Them that honor Me, I will honor."—I Samuel 2:30 (Z. '01-318 Hymn 35)

DECEMBER 17—"Beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do

of his good pleasure."—Philippians 2:12,13 (Z. '97-147 Hymn 205)

DECEMBER 24—"Thou shalt call his name **Jesus**; for he shall save his people from their sins."—Matthew 1:21 (Z. '00-8 Hymn Appen. T)

DECEMBER 31—"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now, in the presence of all his people."—Psalm 116:12-14 (Z. '99-286 Hymn 259)

Boldness of God's People

THE word "bold" is found only once in the Old Testament Scriptures; namely, in Proverbs 28:1. Here the wise man is permitted to say, doubtless from personal experience, "The righteous are bold as a lion." This is an appropriate illustration, for a lion is a noble creature with a complete absence of fear.

If God speaks in the Old Testament of boldness as one of the qualities possessed by his people whom he has accounted righteous, we may be sure the same thing must be true of those in the New Testament the Lord designates as "righteous." Those who in this age have been drawn by the Father to Jesus as their Redeemer and have consecrated themselves to him, and who, because of being justified through their faith in the ransom, and begotten of the Holy Spirit, have become new creatures in Christ Jesus.

All these must seek to possess the quality of boldness, not only as a primary characteristic

prompting them to confess the Lord and his truth, but by growing in this grace and attaining more and more of the characterlikeness of the Master who, although meek and lowly of heart, possessed in a superlative degree this quality of boldness. Jesus did not recklessly endanger his life as he sought to go forward in the work the Father had given him to do, or fail to take into consideration the dangers and difficulties of the way, but rested in full assurance of faith in the Father's wisdom and power. So, we would follow the example of our Master in perfect faith in the presence and keeping power of our Heavenly Father, and in the many assurances given in the Law and the Prophets of his providential care over his faithful people. Indeed, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Ps. 34:7

Never, at any time during the three and a half years of his ministry, did Jesus show the least sign of fear, or lack of confidence in what was written concerning him, or anything short of a humble boldness in doing his Father's will, and in bringing to a completion the work he had been given to do. Some, however,

may consider as an evidence of a measurable lack of boldness and good courage our Lord's words in Gethsemane when, knowing that his course was very near its end, and that he had but a few hours more to wait ere the dreadful ordeal of crucifixion would be his experience, he cried out, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."—Matt. 26:39

It seems clear, however, that the "cup," or experience from which Jesus prayed to be spared, was not his crucifixion, since he had come into the world to die for sin, even to experience this curse of the Law; for as Paul points out, in order to accomplish this, possibly crucifixion was necessary, in harmony with the scriptural intimation, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."—Deut. 21:22, 23; Acts 5:30; Gal. 3:13

It has been suggested with very good reason that in the Gethsemane experience Jesus began to wonder whether his work of sacrifice had been perfectly performed. He knew that if he had come short, even in the smallest particular, he could not hope for a resurrection, and the thought that he might never see his Father's face again apparently was the cup he prayed might pass. This agonizing reverential fear and sense of the responsibility resting on him seemed more than he could bear. Hence Jesus

prayed earnestly that he might be spared from enduring longer the sorrow and mental anguish he was then experiencing, even that of going to the cross in uncertainty as to whether his work had been perfectly performed up to this time, for upon this rested his hope of a resurrection. This going into death in uncertainty as to his future would then, it seems, be the cup from which Jesus prayed to be spared—"Let this cup pass from me."

With reference to this, **Hebrews 5:7**, **Diaglott**, reads: "He who in the days of his flesh, having offered up both prayers and supplications, crying aloud with tears to him who was able to deliver him out of death, was heard for his devotion [or piety]." Here we are shown how the Father gave our Lord the assurance that up to this time all was well, and on receiving this assurance Jesus endured trustingly, and met his greatest and most crucial experience with humble boldness.

This quality of boldness, or courage, begotten of faithful trust, is repeatedly shown in the New Testament records as one of the special characteristics of the Early Church, and especially of the immediate disciples of the Master who were given the privilege of continuing the work the Lord Jesus had begun, as he said to them, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."—John 20:21

In the accounts of the beginning of the great work of taking out "a people for his name" (Acts 15:14) to be the bride of Christ, we are repeatedly told of the boldness of the early disciples manifested in their faithful proclamation of this great salvation. (Acts 4:19, 29; 14:5-7; 18:24-26; 19:6-8) Note in the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul's earnest desire for more of this special spirit of the Master in which he asks them to pray for him: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel."—Eph. 6:18, 19

Paul does not speak here of his message which he delighted to proclaim with such good courage as though it were something very difficult to grasp and understand—"a great mystery"—but as it has been often pointed out, the Greek word translated "mystery" means, not something very mysterious or difficult to grasp, but something that is kept secret or covered up for a time, and then is uncovered, made plain, and is therefore no longer a mystery. Hence important truths for a time kept secret, when uncovered are no longer mysteries, but things simple and easy to understand.

And as the Lord's people today well know, the mystery that Paul speaks of is that feature of the Gospel message which discloses that the Messiah, the Christ, Jehovah's Anointed who is to be used to bless all the families of the earth with salvation from sin and death, is not a single individual, but a company of which Jesus is the Head. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, . . . so also is Christ."—I Cor. 12:12

Boldness in Proclaiming the Message

Surely such a wonderful message should be proclaimed boldly to all who have an ear to hear! In this connection Paul, when a prisoner in Rome, wrote to his beloved brethren in Philippi, where years before he had preached the Word and with such good results. (Acts 16:10-40) He told them how the same boldness, confidence and love of his truth had caused the Lord to bless his message to many in Rome. He writes, "My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace ['throughout the whole pretorian guard,' R. V., from which regiment pairs of soldiers were taken who guarded Paul night and day], and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear."—Phil. 1:13, 14

We thus see how Paul's faithfulness in proclaiming his Master's message whatever the consequences to himself, had inspired many of the brethren to similar boldness and faithfulness in letting their light shine to the glory of their Master. In this way the Lord richly blessed the results of his efforts.

Boldness in Prayer

The Scriptures exhort, "Let us . . . come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16) We note therefore that in addition to manifesting boldness in proclaiming the Lord's message, we must be bold—full of humble confidence—to take advantage of all the means of grace including that which is here mentioned; namely, that there should be boldness in prayer.

It is possible that, at times, on account of weaknesses or failure, we might hesitate to draw near to the Lord to ask for forgiveness, or even to pray for grace that weaknesses might be overcome. And this is doubtless a condition into which the great Adversary if possible would endeavor to lead us. At such times, we need more than ever to come to the throne of grace to obtain mercy—the mercy provided in Christ whose merit will cleanse us from all sin, directly or indirectly, resulting from the fall.

(I John 1:7) And "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the spirit"—to what extent the new creature has been loyal and faithful to all the principles of truth and righteousness. —Rom. 8:27

Boldness in the Living Way

Again Paul tells us that we should have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Heb. 10:19) Or, as the **Diaglott** more correctly renders the passage, "Having, therefore, brethren, confidence respecting the entrance of the holies, by the blood of Jesus." Further, "Let us draw near with a true heart and in full assurance of faith." (Heb. 10:22) We should, indeed, have full assurance of faith regarding the new and living way to life that has been opened up by our great High Priest, Jesus. It is not a way such as it was under the Law Covenant, which only brought condemnation, but a way made possible by him who "tasted death for every man," and who has now "appeared in the presence of God for us," and who "ever liveth to make intercession" for us who are "in Christ Jesus."—Heb. 2:9; 7:25; 9:24; Rom. 8:1

If at any time we feel we are failing to take advantage of the steps of grace, and the means of grace, by not coming with boldness, with confidence, to the throne of grace—that place from

whence the Lord dispenses his favour, his grace—we should remember that the Lord knows all about us, our weaknesses, our failures, better than we know them ourselves. "He knoweth our frame [to what extent we should be able to resist temptation]; he remembereth that we are dust." (Ps. 103:14) We should remember, too, that it was the humble publican rather than the self-confident Pharisee who was the more acceptable of the two. —Luke 18:10-14

Boldness in the Day of Judgment

Finally, John speaks of having boldness in the day of judgment. He says, "God is love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." (I John 4:16, 17, R. V.) John's mention of boldness in the day of judgment reminds us that the Gospel Age is the church's day of judgment—the time when she is on trial for life. And it would be surely true to say that we could not pass our trial successfully, could not be pleasing to the Lord and enjoy his approval without confidence in his goodness, his love, and his power to assist and protect his people, and supply them with grace to help in every time of need.

If a child loves his father very much, he has confidence in his kindly providences and even in his disciplinary treatment, believing that they are intended for his good. So, John indicates that if the love of God has been perfected in us, we shall have full confidence in the One who has placed us on trial for life, or, as he expresses it, "boldness in the day of judgment."

The Greek word here translated "boldness" actually means "free utterance." This reminds us that utterance unhampered by fear is surely a desirable, almost necessary requirement in our witnessing for the Lord, for this will surely have the desired kind of influence upon those who hear, and who observe the way the witness is given. Note an illustration of this given in the account of an occurrence but a few days after Pentecost, when the faithful and very forceful witness of the Master was still fresh in the minds of the Jewish leaders. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13) And, we might surely add, "And learned of him." May we ever keep near to the Lord, and learn of him in respect of boldness, courage.



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Not the Spirit of Timidity

"God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."—II Timothy 1:7

THERE is one kind of fearlessness which is begotten of self-esteem, lack of humility. This is not the kind enjoined upon the Lord's people. They are to be both tender-hearted and humble-minded. The spirit of courage possessed by the saints is based largely upon their faith in the Lord. Realizing the divine love and providential care, these can apply to themselves the gracious assurance that "the Father himself loveth" them, and that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to his purpose." It is this realization of divine all-wisdom and all-power that gives the strength of heart referred to in our text. It will be readily seen, then, that this courage is based upon faith, though of course the faith must have a foundation of knowledge.

THE SEED OF PROMISE SERIES

Article 1—Genesis 22:15-18

The City of God

"By faith he [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God."—Hebrews 11:9, 10

THE first record we have in the Bible indicating that God's purpose toward humanity would be carried out through a "seed" is the statement he made to the "serpent" in the Garden of Eden to the effect that the "seed" of the "woman" would "bruise" its head. (Gen. 3:15 Various statements in the New Testament reveal that this foretold "bruising" is to be accomplished by Christ and his faithful followers when exalted to glory, and reigning in the messianic kingdom.—Rom. 16:20; Rev. 20:1-4

In the gradual unfolding of the divine plan, a more meaningful promise was made by God to Abraham when he told him that through his "seed" all the families of the earth would be blessed. This promise of blessing was first made to Abraham while he lived in Ur of the Chaldees. It reads, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."—Gen. 12:1-3

After Abraham had entered the land of Canaan, the Lord said to him, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust

of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shalt thy seed also be numbered.”—Gen 13:14-16

Later, after Abraham had demonstrated his faithfulness by showing his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac as a burnt offering, God confirmed his promise to him by his oath. This promise concerning the “seed” and the blessing is now often referred to as God’s oath-bound covenant. (Gen. 22:15-18 When the covenant was confirmed by God’s oath, an item was added which reads, “Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.”

In the various statements of this covenant a number of points may be noted. There was to be a seed of blessing; all families of the earth were to be blessed; the land of Canaan was promised to Abraham and his descendants, and his seed was to “possess” the gate of his enemies. In examining these various aspects of the covenant as they are touched upon throughout the Scriptures it becomes apparent that the entire plan of God for human redemption and salvation is thus foretold.

Our text informs us that Abraham “sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, . . . for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” Abraham originally lived in the city of Ur, and apparently had been prosperous. He subsequently lived in tents, or “tabernacles,” not because he had suddenly become poor and could not afford a better home, but rather, he was waiting for God to build a city for him, a city which he could occupy in keeping with his understanding of the promise which God had made to him.

Cities in Abraham’s time were not like the cities of today. Usually they were small, and often surrounded by a wall. In many instances they were composed of people who were largely members of one family, or tribe, with a responsible head of the family as the ruler. The people of Ur were, for the most part, worshipers of the moon god, and Abraham found himself almost alone in his worship of the true and living God. In this position he would have little to say in the government of the city.

But God had promised that Abraham was to have a “seed” of his own, one who would exercise authority and power, as implied

in the statement that this seed would "possess the gate of his enemies." Apparently Abraham visualized his family becoming large and powerful, with its strength concentrated in a "city," a city which eventually would extend its sphere of influence over other families and cities, and beneficently extend God's promised blessings to them. Abraham, of course, in whatever extravagant conclusions he may have reached concerning the meaning of God's covenant, came far short of the reality, and he died in faith, not having received the fulfilment of the promise.—Heb. 11:13, 14, 35, 39, 40

A city is used in the Bible to symbolize a government, or kingdom. Nineveh, Babylon, and other great cities of the past were viewed as governmental centers. So was the city of Jerusalem, and particularly Mount Zion in Jerusalem. It is not to be supposed that Abraham could possibly realize all the implications of the promise which God made to him, but the fact that he looked for "a city" does suggest that he understood God's promise to him to mean that one day God would set up a governmental control over all the families of the earth, and that his "seed" would be used by the Lord in this government.

Isaac and Jacob also had great faith in the promise made to Abraham, and on his deathbed Jacob prophesied that "Shiloh," a peaceful one, would arise in the family of his son Judah, and that "unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Jacob foretold that "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." (Gen. 49:10) This language implies the coming of a great ruler as the "seed" of Abraham.

Hundreds of years later this royal line of promise was narrowed to the family of David. The Lord said to him, "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever." (II Sam. 7:1) In response to this promise David said to God, "Thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come."—vs. 19

David came closer to being right than he realized in making this remark, for hundreds of years later the angel Gabriel revealed that the real heir of David's throne was Christ. He said to Mary, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his

father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”—Luke 1:32, 33

The Faith Seed

In the New Testament we find the principle of obedience emphasized in connection with the promised “seed”—that principle expressed in connection with the promise to Abraham when God said, “Because thou hast obeyed my voice.” The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day, who were natural descendants of Abraham, were informed by Jesus that they were not in reality the children of Abraham, but of the Devil, for they did the works of the Devil.—John 8:39, 44

Paul also emphasized that simply being a natural descendant of Abraham did not in itself constitute one a part of his “seed” of promise. “I could wish,” Paul wrote, “that myself were accursed [margin, or, **separated**] from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Not as though the Word of God had taken none effect, for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”—Rom. 9:3-8

In this statement Paul also reveals that the true faith seed of Abraham are also children of God. This agrees with John 1:11, 12, where we read that Jesus came unto his own according to the flesh, the natural seed of Abraham, but “his own received him not.” John explains that as many as did receive Jesus were given the power, right, or authority “to become the sons of God,” his children, and a part of the true seed of Abraham because of faith and obedience.

Another interesting truth comes to light in the New Testament concerning the seed of Abraham, which is that upon the basis of faith and obedience to God, Gentiles as well as Israelites are considered to be a part of the “seed.” Indeed, as Paul explains

the matter, nationalities do not enter into it at all. We quote: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—Gal. 3:26-29

Children of God

Thus does Paul explain clearly that the children of God of this age are also the "seed" of Abraham, that seed through which all the families of the earth are to be blessed. Jesus is the chief of these. (Gal. 3:16) He is the Head over what Paul describes as his "house." We quote, "But Christ as a son over his own house; which house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope."—Heb. 3:6

Here the word "house" carries the same connotation as when the Bible speaks of "the house of David." It is a royal, or ruling house, in which every consecrated follower of the Master can be a member "if" he "holds fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope." The followers of the Master are called upon to be faithful even unto death, and only if they are faithful will they be rewarded with "the crown of life."—Rev. 2:10

Paul wrote, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. 8:16, 17) The words "heirs" and "joint-heirs" as used here by Paul pertain to the throne, or kingdom of Christ, the antitypical kingdom of David. Paul explained further, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us."—II Tim. 2:11, 12

In Hebrews 12:22 the Apostle Paul associates the hope of the children of God, the faith seed of Abraham, with "mount Zion," and "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Based on the promises made to him Abraham looked for this city, but did not, of course, comprehend the full truth concerning it.

However, Abraham had faith to believe that through his "seed" God would establish rulership over the earth, a rulership of justice and righteousness which would result in all the families of the earth being blessed.

Mount Zion

David established his government on Mount Zion, which was a part of the earthly Jerusalem of his day. So the Bible shows those who constitute the antitypical ruling house of David as being in mount Sion [Greek spelling]. The Apostle John wrote, "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."—Rev. 14:1

The "Lamb" of God is Jesus, this symbolism being used to remind us that it was first necessary for him to suffer and to die for mankind before he could rule from the antitypical mount Sion. And this is also true of those who are shown with the Lamb on mount Sion. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," John wrote, (vs. 4) There is no other way to be on mount Sion with the Lamb, to live and reign with him, than to follow him there by walking in his footsteps of sacrifice faithfully unto death.

The Gospel Age is the period set aside in the plan of God for the calling and preparation of those who will be on mount Sion with the Lamb, to share in the rulership of his kingdom. Peter testified that "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name"; that is, the people who have the Heavenly Father's name written in their foreheads, and who are brethren of his beloved Son, Christ Jesus, and one day will be the "bride," the "wife," of the "Lamb."—Acts 15:14; Rev. 19:7, 21:2

These are partakers of a "heavenly calling." (Heb. 3:1) Their hope is to be with Jesus, who promised, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2, 3) The Apostle John also wrote, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—I John 3:2

A Spiritual Priesthood

Those who partake of the heavenly calling, and eventually will be with Jesus in glory to live and reign with him as the antitypical house of David, must first sacrifice all fleshly and earthly interests, even life itself. Peter wrote, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up . . . sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 2:5) Peter also wrote, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar [margin, or, **purchased**] people; that ye should show forth the praises [margin, or, **virtues**] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."—I Pet. 2:9, 10

Peter's observation that those to whom he wrote had not in the past been God's people is in keeping with the divine arrangement that Gentiles, by their faith and devotion, could qualify to be the children of God, and members of his ruling house of sons. In the verses just preceding, Peter speaks of those who were disobedient and had rejected "the chief cornerstone" which the Lord had laid in Sion.—vss. 6-8

This is a reference to the prophecy of Psalm 118:22, 23. Jesus referred to this prophecy, and declared that because of the unfaithfulness of Israel as a nation in failing to accept him, the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the proper fruits of righteousness. (Matt. 21:42, 43) Peter's reference to this in connection with his statement, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," is a positive identification of the "nation" to which "the kingdom of God" was given when taken away from the nation of Israel.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly, however, that faithfulness to the Lord is the condition upon which anyone may hope to be a member of this new nation to which the privileges of rulership in the kingdom of God are given. No one comes into this glorious inheritance by birth, and no one is kept out on racial grounds.

This new nation, this holy nation, this ruling nation, is made up of faithful individuals, beginning with Jesus, its Head. Many

proved worthy of this exalted position as members of the royal "seed" of Abraham during the years of the Early Church. There have been some in each generation since. There are still some in the world today who are earnestly endeavoring to make their "calling and election sure" to a place in the future ruling nation.

Only when all the individuals comprising this nation have proved faithful, will it be brought together as a ruling house. This takes place at the end of the age, and the assembling of all the faithful individuals is made possible through the resurrection of the dead—the "first resurrection" of those who will live and reign with Christ a thousand years.—Rev. 20:6

Then, under Christ, and as the ruling "seed" of Abraham, this kingdom class will make up that "city" for which Abraham looked, that city whose "Builder and Maker is God." It is that "holy city, the New Jerusalem," which John saw "coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. 21:2) This "holy city" is the ruling seed of Abraham which will fulfil God's promise to bless "all the families of the earth." Concerning this John wrote:

"I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."—Rev. 21:3-5

Could we have a better description of divine blessings being dispensed to all the families of the earth? In it we see death destroyed, and no more sickness and pain. Tears are wiped away, implying that happiness reigns supreme throughout the earth. Truly God has made it crystal clear as to the extent to which the ruling seed of Abraham will bless all the families of the earth.

God promised Abraham that his seed would "possess" the gate of his enemies, meaning to subdue and control them. The ultimate and complete fulfilment of this promise is described by

the Apostle Paul. He wrote that Christ, the Head of the ruling seed of Abraham, must reign until all enemies are put under his feet, and that the last enemy to be destroyed is Death. (I Cor. 15:25, 26) It was not possible for Abraham to visualize this glorious fulfilment of God's oath-bound promise, but how he will rejoice when he comes to a realization of God's wonderful provision for all the families of the earth!

The Lord foretold, "Be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her [as it was in the natural and typical Jerusalem], nor the voice of crying."—Isa. 65:18, 19

John wrote of this city, "The nations . . . shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory . . . into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory . . . of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."—Rev. 21:24-27

Here the Holy City, whose builder and maker is God, is shown functioning as a government, with its subjects being drawn into its environs and being blessed. Even though the city is founded in heaven, its subjects are earthly, and in order to receive the blessings as such they must be purified, and wholeheartedly accept the rulership of the "city" over their lives. Truly this is a bright prospect for the dying world of mankind, which so much needs the favor and blessing of our loving God!

"Say among the heathen [the nations, R.V.] that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."—Psalm 96:10-13

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

Encouragement from an Ecclesia

"Dear Brethren: Greetings of Christian love to all our brethren at The Dawn. May the grace and peace from on high be multiplied unto you!

"A couple of days ago we received our October issue of The Dawn, and as we read the article in 'Talking Things Over' we rejoiced together with you in considering the blessings and favor that the Lord has bestowed upon the brethren and upon their co-operative efforts of service and public witness throughout these years.

"At the annual business meeting of the Orlando Ecclesia held yesterday it was voted unanimously to express to all the brethren at The Dawn our appreciation for all their services and assistance, which have meant so much to us in the years past and without which our small efforts to serve the Lord would be almost useless. We are continually thankful for your co-operation and for the spirit in which it is rendered; and we appreciate the sacrifice and labor of love of each brother and sister there.

"The class here has rejoiced through the years in the various avenues of witness that the Lord has opened up, and we have sought through prayer his blessing and overruling in all these efforts. Most recently our hearts have been thrilled at the results of the booth

at the World's Fair, as well as the far-reaching effect of the TV programs.

"We want to assure you that as you continue on in the efforts to serve the Lord, the truth, and the brethren, our prayers are with you, for our hopes are the same as yours; namely, that we might do his will in all things, and may prove faithful in whatever privileges and opportunities he places before us.

"Asking a continued interest in your prayers, and with warm greetings in the Lord to you all, we are, your brethren in Christ, The Orlando, Florida, Ecclesia, Sister Helen Jeuck, Secretary."

At the Right Time

"Many thanks for 'The Divine Plan of the Ages.' We find that it is beautifully written. It seems to have come to us at the right time. God's Spirit does indeed govern everything in our lives when we sincerely consecrate ourselves to him."—England

A Blessing

"Dear 'Frank and Ernest': Greetings in the name of Jesus. I really find your programmes a wonderful blessing. I do enjoy your explanations of the Bible, and shall be glad if you will send me a copy of The Dawn Magazine as offered in your broadcast yesterday. May God continue to bless you richly."—South Africa

From Spanish Language Listeners

"I listen regularly to your programs. I was an unbeliever. I am very much interested."—Peru

"I congratulate you for your programs, and for your love for your neighbor in your work of making known the good news."—Argentina

"I greet you with congratulations. Believe me, my interest is greatly awakened."—Peru

"I am writing to you with great pleasure. I congratulate you for your Sunday programs. They have brought me great joy."—Dominican Republic

"I am very much interested to study with you. Please give me more information."—Mexico

"I listen every time to your program broadcast by Radio America of Peru. I am a member of the Pentecostal Church."—Chile

Richly Blessed

"Dear 'Frank and Ernest': Thank you for your wireless programmes, and for explaining the Bible so beautifully that we are able to understand it clearly, and to be blessed thereby as never before. In these days of world-wide fear and distress there is no other source of comfort and assurance than that declared in God's Word. I listen regularly to your broadcasts from Lourenco Marques, and shall be pleased to have the last booklet offered. Yours sincerely."
—South Africa

Still Rejoicing

"I am still rejoicing in the truth that I first heard some years ago through the 'Frank and Ernest'

programmes broadcast from Radio Luxembourg. Since then, through my reading an ever increasing light has shone upon the Scriptures. I am still experiencing all joy and peace in believing, and am thanking and praising God each day for his great mercy in bringing me out of the darkness of error into the glorious light and liberty of the children of God."—Ireland

From a Minister

"Dear Sirs: I have found much help in listening to your TV program that comes to us on Sunday mornings. I think the conversational presentation is very effective. God bless you. I would like to have ten copies of your booklet, 'God and Reason.'"
—Ohio

"So Real"

"Dear Friends: I was glad to find you back on TV. Yesterday's program was wonderful. I would love to have it word for word. I learn more from those three men than I ever get from going to church. The men portraying Bible characters are also wonderful, and it helps so much. It all seems so real. I love them all, and God bless them."
—Wisconsin

From South America

"Dear Brethren in the Lord and Savior: Here in Greater Buenos Aires suburbs there are a few brethren and some interested ones, and we are studying 'The Divine Plan of the Ages.' The dialogues on Radio Carve, Uruguay, are heard by us, and we feel happy that the good news of the kingdom can be heard well in this part of South America, as well as in the greater

part of the country, and of course in Uruguay and some neighboring countries. If you have some advertising matter for the programs please send us some for distribution. I receive The Dawn in the Italian language. With Christian greetings."—L. V.

Appreciation

"Gentlemen: You will never know what the truth has done for me. It saved my sanity, and I believe my health, after the loss of our precious twenty-one-year-old son. In the name of our Lord Jesus I ask God's blessing on all at The Dawn for proclaiming the wonderful plan of God for all of us. Thank God that he opened my eyes and ears, and also my heart, to that wonderful message. Enclosed find a small token of my appreciation for finding out what God is really like."—Indiana

Comforted

"My husband passed away this month. I received a booklet called 'Hope,' which was a great comfort to me. Please send me the free booklet called, 'God and Reason,' which is advertised in 'Hope.'"—Missouri

Growing Interest

"Dear Sirs: I am enclosing one dollar for two more copies of your book, 'The Divine Plan of the Ages.' I have been deeply impressed by reading this book, and I have two close friends to whom I would love to give copies. I have never read a book which I thought was so in harmony with the Lord's ways and plans as this one. I intend to read it over again, and

pray for the Lord's wisdom in this new way of thinking. May the Lord's work continue to be your rarest blessing in this Gospel Age, that many more may have the opportunity of learning while we are still in this age."—New York

Stirred

"Dear Brethren: I would like to receive your booklet, 'Jesus the World's Savior.' We really enjoy your television programs. A couple of Sundays ago we saw how Elisha awakened a little boy from the sleep of death, and it brought tears to our eyes. It was as though our own little boy, who passed away twenty-four years ago, was the one Elisha called from behind the curtain to appear before his mother after he was awakened. It really stirred us. Keep up the wonderful work."—Wisconsin

Changed

"Gentlemen: The day I heard my first 'Frank and Ernest' program was a day I will never forget. It changed my life, and opened the door to real Bible understanding."—Virginia

Thinks It a "Must"

"The booklet, 'Science and Creation,' was a gift to me, and our whole family has enjoyed it, especially the girls in high school and college. I think this booklet is very easy to understand, and everyone should have the opportunity to read it. I think it is really a 'must' for every science teacher, especially those who are regular churchgoers. We enjoy the 'Frank and Ernest' broadcasts every Sunday."—Colorado

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

FRED A. BRIGHT	Houston, Tex.	8	Bellingham, Wash.	12
Allentown, Pa. Dec. 27	Lake Charles, La.	10	Langley, B. C.	13
	Shreveport, La.	13	Cumberland, B. C.	16
O. D. DEIFER	Little Rock, Ark.	15	Nanaimo, B. C.	17
Gettysburg, Pa. Dec. 5	Brinkley, Ark.	16, 17	Duncan, B. C.	18, 19
York, Pa. 6	Memphis, Tenn.	20	Victoria, B. C.	20
	Birmingham, Ala.	22, 23		
G. M. JEUCK	Montgomery, Ala.	24		
	Louisville, Ala.	27	C. A. SMITH	
New London, Conn.	Orlando, Fla.	30, 31	New Haven, Conn.	
Dec. 20			Dec. 27	
	M. C. MITCHELL		Waterbury, Conn.	27
A. H. KRUMPOLT	Sayville, N. Y. Dec. 6		RICHARD SURACI	
Catawissa, Pa. Dec. 13			Wallingford, Conn.	
	H. W. PRICE		Dec. 13	
R. J. KRUPA	Albany, Ore. Dec. 1			
Philadelphia, Pa. Dec. 20	Salem, Ore.	2, 3	F. S. WASSMANN	
	Portland, Ore.	4-6	Baltimore, Md. Dec. 27	
J. Y. MAC AULAY	Onalaska, Wash.	7		
	Tacoma, Wash.	8	W. N. WOODWORTH	
Lamesa, Tex. Dec. 3	Bremerton, Wash.	9, 10	Paterson, N. J. Dec. 13	
San Antonio, Tex. 6	Seattle, Wash.	11		

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

GEORGE BALKO	NICK BARACOS	WALTER Blicharz
Connellsville, Pa. Dec. 13	Duquesne, Pa. Dec. 6	Flint, Mich. Dec. 6
MIKE BALKO	East Liverpool, Ohio 13	Chatham, Ont. 20
Duquesne, Pa. Dec. 27		DAVID A. BRUCE
	JULIUS BEDNARZ	Whittier, Calif. Dec. 27
JOHN BARACOS	Minneapolis, Minn.	C. M. CHUPA
Connellsville, Pa. Dec. 20	(Fillmore St.) Dec. 6	London, Ont. Dec. 13

L. PAUL DAVIS Stockton, Calif. Dec. 5 Sacramento, Calif. 6	EDWARD G. LORENZ San Luis Obispo, Calif. Dec. 20	NORMAN F. RICE Fullerton, Calif. Dec. 20
IRVING C. FOSS Whittier, Calif. Dec. 6 Bakersfield, Calif. 13 Tehachapi, Calif. 13	D. J. MOREHOUSE Gary, Ind. Dec. 20	GEORGE P. RIPPER Whittier, Calif. Dec. 13
EARL L. FOWLER Riverside, Calif. Dec. 20 Ontario, Calif. 20	KENNETH M. NAIL Monterey, Calif. Dec. 20	ALBERT SHEPPELBAUM Milwaukee, Wis. Dec. 13
JOHN G. HULL, JR. Fresno, Calif. Dec. 13	G. R. POLLOCK San Diego, Calif. Dec. 13 Whittier, Calif. 20	GEORGE TABAC St. Louis, Mo. Dec. 20
S. W. JEUCK Miami, Fla. Dec. 13	LEO POST LaSalle, Ill. Dec. 6	J. I. VAN HORNE Monessen, Pa. Dec. 27
	R. A. RAWSON Adrian, Mich. Dec. 20	IRWIN WYSOCKI Connellsville, Pa. Dec. 6

SPANISH RADIO BROADCASTS

SUNDAYS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

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

PARAGUAY

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

PERU

Lima Radio America 7:00 p.m.

URUGUAY

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

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles KWKW 1300 8:15 a.m.
San Diego XERB 1090 9:00 p.m.

TEXAS

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

CONVENTIONS

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., Dec. 6—2601 Fillmore St. N. E. Mrs. C. R. Newham, 678 40th Ave. N. E.

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

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., Dec. 13—I.O.G.T. Hall, 2922 Cedar Ave. Mrs. Edward Borowiec, 223 S. Fifth St., Delano, Minn.

SAGINAW, MICH., Dec. 13—Saginaw

Woman's Club, 311 N. Jefferson. Mrs. C. A. Sundbom, 207 Alice St.

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

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

CHICAGO, ILL., Jan. 1-3

PHOENIX, ARIZ., Jan. 1-3

MORE BLESSED TO GIVE

To be discussed by

"FRANK AND ERNEST"

WIBC—1070 kc.—10:30 A. M.

Sunday, December 20

Hear "Frank and Ernest" discuss this timely subject, and send for a free copy of the booklet, "Gad and Reason." Address:

"FRANK AND ERNEST"

Box 60, Dept. N, General Post Office
New York, N. Y.

For Your Newspaper

To the left is a suggestion for a small advertisement in your local newspaper. This outline is designed for two inches in one column.

JANUARY TOPIC: On Sunday, January 17, "Frank and Ernest" will discuss the timely topic, "When a Man Dies." This topic always arrests a lot of attention, for many are very much concerned over what will happen to them when they die. The topic should be well advertised, and special circulars will be available for this purpose. You are invited to send for as many of these circulars as you can use. They are free. Address your request to, The Dawn, East Rutherford, New Jersey.

An Excellent Gift
Especially for Children

GOD'S PROMISES COME TRUE

This is a book of Bible stories for children—forty-eight illustrated stories, many in two colors. The stories, beginning with creation and including the more important episodes recorded in both the Old and New Testaments, are told in a style which makes them easily understood by children, and also interesting to grown-ups. Above all, they are free from the traditional errors of the Dark Ages. This Gospel-pure book is appropriate for every gift occasion.

255 PAGES 7x10 INCHES, CLOTH BOUND \$2.00

The first of these "keys" to the Bible was written more than seventy-five years ago, the last in 1904. They continue to be the outstanding text books on the Bible for our day.

**Studies
in the
Scriptures**

• The Divine Plan of the Ages, cloth, 50 cents, ten or more 40 cents each; paper, 30 cents, ten or more 23 cents each.

• The Time Is at Hand, cloth, 50 cents each.

• Thy Kingdom Come, cloth, 50 cents each.

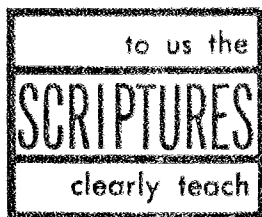
• The Battle of Armageddon, cloth, 85 cents each.

• The Atonement Between God and Man, cloth, 85 cents each.

• The New Creation, cloth, 85 cents each.

Question Books for Volumes 1-3, 10 cents each;
Volumes 4-6, 15 cents each.

SIX VOLUMES, OVER 3,000 PAGES, CLOTH BOUND, \$3.75



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

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

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

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

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

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