

THE DAWN



A HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

APRIL 1948

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OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

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One Dollar a Year

Our Front Cover

A SUMMER morning sunburst glorifies the historic Plain of Ahma hard by the famous Horns of Hattin or traditional Mount of the Beatitudes, where it is believed Christ stood when he gave to the world one of his greatest sermons, on the heights above blue Galilee. In the picture a storm is threatening on the sea below. This is the ancient route of the caravans passing between the Valley of Jezreel on the south and the foothills of the Lebanons on the north on their way to Damascus and the East. Eleven camels, "iambic, bearing each its mystic load," are shown crossing the Plain of Ahma. It was here in 1187 A. D. at the Battle of Hattin that the Crusaders under Guy of Lusignan, last Latin King of Jerusalem, were disastrously defeated by Saladin following which the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem came to an abrupt end. Photograph by Adelbert Bartlett.

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With Fury Poured Out

*"As I live saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand,
and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured
out, will I rule over you"—EZEKIEL 20:33*

PALESTINE is a mere dot on the map, and the Jewish people, since so many of them were killed by their oppressors in Europe, now total only a few million, but the Jewish problem is the number one worry of most of the major powers today. Why is this so? It is a fulfilment of prophecy. Earliest of the Old Testament prophecies related to this problem is the promise God made to Abraham concerning Palestine—"I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, . . . all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession."—Gen. 17:8; 48:4

Hundreds of years after this promise was made the overruling providences of God brought the descendants of Abraham—then known as the "children of Israel"—into the Promised Land. This followed their deliverance from Egyptian bondage and their forty years' wanderings in the wilderness. However, while they were still wandering in the wilderness their lawgiver, Moses, prophesied that they would not be permitted to remain in the land even though they would cross over Jordan to possess it. "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day," Moses said, "that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land. . . . And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen [nations], whither the Lord shall lead you."—Deut. 4:26, 27

Moses also prophesied that in the "latter days" God would "turn" the "captivity" of his people, and would gather them from the nations whither he had scattered them, and would bring them again into the land which he gave to their fathers. (Deut. 4:30; 30:1-6; 31:29) On different brief occasions during the pre-Christian era the Israelites were driven from their land and taken into captivity by one or another nation. The last of these captivities

was in Babylon. At that time they were away from their land for seventy years, being permitted to return when the Babylonian Empire fell to the Medes and Persians. It was in 536 B. C. that Cyrus, the Persian king, issued a decree granting this liberty.

But none of these captivities fit the prophetic picture of a scattering among "all nations." Only since their dispersion from the land by the Roman armies in A. D. 70 has this been true. That was the beginning of a scattering that has driven this persecuted people into all parts of the so-called civilized world. It is the regathering from this age-long scattering that so many of the prophecies describe, and these prophecies present a wonderfully clear explanation of the Jewish problem as it confronts the nations today.

"TIMES OF THE GENTILES"

Let us turn back into prophecy again for a moment to pick up another thread of thought. In warning the Israelites of the dire calamities which would come upon them if unfaithful to the Lord, Moses speaks of a final period of punishment, which he describes as "seven times more." (Lev. 26:18, 21, 24, 28) This is recognized by Bible scholars as descriptive of a period of time 2,520 years in length. It is apparently to this very period that Jesus alludes when he prophesied, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."—Luke 21:24

Jerusalem was trodden down of the Gentiles in Jesus' day even though the Jews themselves were still permitted to dwell in the land. The reference is evidently to the fact that the nation was not free, being at that time subject to the Roman Empire. This loss of national independence occurred in 606 B. C., when their last king, Zedekiah, was overthrown and the nation taken into captivity to Babylon. That was when and how the "times of the Gentiles" began. They were to continue for 2,520 years, which would bring their termination in A. D. 1914.

Before noting developments which began in 1914, let us turn back to the prophecy of Ezekiel for a description of just what occurred with relationship to God's plan when Zedekiah, the last Jewish king, was overthrown. We quote, "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off

the crown: this shall not be the same: . . . and it will be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him."—Ezek. 21: 25-27

The kingdom of Israel was the kingdom of the Lord. Of Solomon it is written that he "sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father." And in a prayer to Jehovah, David said, "Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all." (I Chron. 29:23, 11) When, therefore, the Lord said to Zedekiah, "Take off the crown," it meant the end for the time being of divine rulership in the earth, the typical kingdom of Israel having come to an end. This coincides with the statement made to Nebuchadnezzar by the Prophet Daniel—"The God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, . . . and wheresoever the children of men dwell, . . . hath he . . . made thee ruler over them all."—Dan. 2:37, 38

This was to be "until he come whose right it is." In other words, with the termination of the "times of the Gentiles" the Lord would again establish his authority over Israel, and the Gentile nations would no longer rule by a divine mandate. God ruled over Israel during the pre-Christian age through Saul, David, Solomon, and others, Zedekiah being the last of that line of representatives. But the prophecies foretold that when the Lord again became Ruler over his ancient people it would be through another representative, even Jesus, the Messiah, the One "whose right it is."

Jerusalem was to be trodden down by the Gentiles, having no king of her own, but absolutely subservient to the nations among which the people were scattered, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This clearly implies that when the "times of the Gentiles" were fulfilled the status of the Israelites would change, that then, through him "whose right it is," Jehovah would begin again to rule over them. Has there, then, been anything in the experience of the scattered people of Israel, beginning with 1914, which indicates that this has been the case? If so, we have another definite and irrefutable proof that 1914 was the correct date for the end of the "times of the Gentiles."

The time prophecies pertaining to the "double" period of punishment* point out that returning favor upon Israel was due to come in 1878. The Berlin Congress of Nations in that very year

*See chapter vii in "Thy Kingdom Come."

and the birth of the Zionist movement in 1897, representing a budding of their national hopes, indicate clearly that even at that early date the "fig tree" did indeed begin to show signs of life. But not much progress was made so far as actually possessing the Promised Land was concerned, nor was there any widespread interest among the Jews concerning the prospect of returning to Palestine.

Throughout the long period of their dispersion, until the turn of the twentieth century, the Jews had almost continuously been a persecuted people. But this picture began to change. In America, in Great Britain, in Germany, and finally even in Russia, they began to be recognized, and on their part the Jews in these countries began to feel secure. The growth of modernism among the Gentiles also had its effect upon the Jews so that a large percentage of them became agnostics, having little or no faith in the prophecies of the Old Testament. They had found, as they thought, their "Promised Land," so they were not interested in going to Palestine. Hence the appeal of the Zionists had little effect upon them.

Then came the first World War, a war which toppled crowns from the heads of many of Europe's rulers, notable among them being the Czar and the Kaiser. Thus began the disintegration of the hereditary Gentile Times' rulership. But even more noteworthy is the fact that out of that war came the Balfour Declaration, recognizing the right of the Jews to the Holy Land. That declaration was implemented by the League of Nations. While the United States did not join the League, she did concur in this one act. Thus for the first time since the overthrow of King Zedekiah in 606 B. C., Gentile nations officially recognized the right of the Jewish nation to a free and independent existence; and the right of the nation also to the Promised Land.

There was a furore of excitement in Jewish circles over this for a time. Millions of dollars of Jewish money were poured into Palestine, and several hundred thousand Israelites went there to live and to reclaim the land. But only a minority—a pitifully small minority—of the Jews were interested. Foreknowing this lack of interest, the Lord prophesied that he would send "hunters" among his people to drive them back to Palestine. In this hunting expedition four million Jews were killed.—Jer. 16:14-16

Some students of prophecy have argued that while undoubtedly

what has been occurring in connection with the Jews and Palestine throughout these tragic years since 1914 has some relationship to God's purposes, there is yet no evidence that his favor has actually returned to them, such as we would expect to see had the "times of the Gentiles" actually ended in 1914. Those who have this viewpoint fail to take into account all that the prophets have written on the subject. There are many prophecies which show that Israel's return to Palestine would be during a severe time of trouble among Gentile nations, and that they themselves would suffer many hardships in connection with their final exodus from the nations. One of these prophecies is that of Ezekiel 20:32-38. We suggest a careful study of this entire prophecy. Here we will call attention only to certain vital facts which it states.

Verse 32 reads, "And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen [nations], as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone." Here is a clear-cut expression of the attitude of most of the Jews the world over prior to the experiences through which they have passed as a result of the "hunters" being among them. They wanted to be as the people among whom they dwelt, that is to be assimilated, to lose their identity. They wanted to worship the gods of the nations, principally, the god of mammon. After declaring that the Israelites would not be permitted to become as the nations in which they were sojourning, the prophet quotes the Lord as saying,

"As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face, like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you saith the Lord God."—Ezek. 20:33-36

The 38th verse completes the prophetic picture of the manner in which the Lord is now dealing with his ancient people. It reads: "And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord."

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

In this prophecy we are told that when the time came for the Israelites to be gathered out of the nations where they had been scattered the Lord would accomplish it with "fury poured out," and that in doing this he would be ruling over them. Other translations use the term "king," saying that the Lord would be King over his people while gathering them from among the nations.

Here, then, is vital evidence proving that the Gentile Times have ended, that the Lord is again ruling over his ancient people—not through Saul, or David, or Zedekiah, but through Christ—the One whose right it is, and because he has come. And how reasonable that this should be so! In the outworking of the divine plan God's blessings are offered to the Jew first. It was thus at the first advent of Jesus. The high privileges of this Gospel age were first offered to Israel. And now again, in the opening of the Millennial age the remnant of the natural house of Israel are the first to have the blessings of Messiah's kingdom presented to them. But these blessings are to be offered in Palestine, in their Land of Promise; so it is first necessary to get them back into that land, and the rulership of the Lord, the kingdom authority of the new age, is shown in this prophecy to include the execution of measures by which they are uprooted from the nations and brought back to the Holy Land.

To believe, then, that the experience through which we see the Jews passing today represents the beginning of the Lord's reign over them, is merely a matter of accepting this literal statement of fact just as the Lord himself sets it forth. True, it is by no means as yet a peaceful reign. On the contrary, it is a very furious one, as the slaying of millions of Jews within a few years so vividly testifies. But this should not shake our faith in the reality of what the Lord states, namely, that this fury would be a manifestation of his rulership over them. God ruled over this people when he brought them out of Egypt, but nearly a whole generation of them died in the wilderness without reaching the Promised Land.

And so it is now in this modern exodus from the nations. The Lord himself compares the two experiences, explaining that as he led them into the wilderness in the first instance, so now he would bring them out from the nations and into the "wilderness of the people," and that there he would purge out the rebels from among them, not permitting these to enter into and remain in the land of their fathers.

What a true picture this is of the situation of the Jews today. As a result of the "hunters," practically all the remaining Jews in Europe have been uprooted from the lands in which they had been sojourning. This people who, when the Gentile Times ended, were neither ready nor willing to go to Palestine, are now insisting that they must go there. Hence, even if they could, they refuse to settle down in Europe again. They are "displaced persons," homeless wanderers, existing as best they can in that "wilderness of the people" which is war-torn and starving Europe. And all of this while the Lord is ruling over them to purge out the rebels and gradually to prepare a remnant of them for the blessings that will soon begin to flow out from Jerusalem like a river.—Zech. 14:8, 9

Yes, through the returned Christ, divine sovereignty is again operative in the earth after having been withdrawn during the period of the "times of the Gentiles." That which is occurring among the Jews, which the Lord himself says would evidence his rulership over them, is so clearly in fulfilment of the prophecies that there can be no room for doubt. He "whose right it is" has come! The divine purposes of his reign are beginning to be accomplished, hence with greater conviction and enthusiasm than ever before we can proclaim to all that "our King is marching on."

Through the Prophet Zechariah, the Lord tells of a time when he will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and that then he shall "go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." (Zech. 14:2, 3) This is a further development in the Jewish scene, and one which continues to represent the Lord's rulership over his people. He says, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle." It is not that these nations are gathered against Jerusalem contrary to his will, for he does the gathering.

The purpose of this is two-fold. It serves as a further preparation of his people to recognize and receive their King; and it puts the Gentile nations in a position where the Lord will humble them in preparation for the kingdom blessings which later will be theirs. "The Lord shall be King over all the earth in that day," the prophet tells us. (Zech. 14:9) Furthermore, "It shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."—Zech. 14:16

Praise God, then, for this additional assurance that "he whose right it is" has come! Long before he took unto himself his great power to reign, he came to the "household" of faith to serve them "meat in due season," and to reckon with his servants. We are still rejoicing in that feast of truth. He came also as the "chief reaper" to supervise the harvest work. It is still our privilege, being among those who "are alive and remain," to have a small part in that work. (I Thess. 4:15, 17) As the "feet of Him," it is also our privilege to proclaim "good tidings of good," and to say "unto Zion, thy God reigneth."—Isa. 52:7

Surely the Lord's people today are a favored people. To be living now and know the significance of events in this transition period when our present Lord and reigning King is "dashing the nations to pieces like a potter's vessel," when he is ruling over natural Israel in fury to purge them and to restore them to the land of their fathers, is a high honor. Blessed indeed are our "eyes" if we can see these things, for it is one of the proofs of our sonship in the divine family—"Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." (I Thess. 5:4) But knowledge brings responsibility, a responsibility which is clearly summed up by Peter, saying, "Seeing then that all these things shall be [now we can say, "are being"] dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"—II Pet. 3:11

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

APRIL 1—"Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."—Mark 14:38 (Z. '03-119. Hymn 183)

APRIL 8—"If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him."—Hebrews 10:38 (Z. '95-93. Hymn 261)

APRIL 15—"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."—Luke 23:46 (Z. '99-128. Hymn 86)

APRIL 22—"I say unto you, That every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."—Matthew 12:36 (Z. '96-32. Hymn 267)

APRIL 29—"He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him."—Psalm 91:15 (Z. '96-31. Hymn 294)

Love's secret is to be always doing things for God, and not to mind because they are such very little ones.

Your Questions—Scripturally Answered

EVOLUTION VS. THE BIBLE

GENESIS 1:26—"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

How can one harmonize this statement with the instruction which we receive in school that man was not created perfect, but is rather a product of evolution from lower animals?

THIS question, which evidently comes to us from a student in school, should make every Christian do some thinking. In our opinion it is impossible to harmonize the theory of evolution with the teachings of the Bible concerning man's creation in the image of God. Many of the teachers who have the responsibility of instructing our children do not have faith in the Bible as the Word of God, and some do not even believe in the existence of a supreme intelligent Creator. They attack the scriptural declaration that man is the special creation of God. Some may say, "Well, what difference does it make, let them teach what they choose, let us not enter into disputations upon controversial subjects, but rather make the best we can of what we are." This may sound like wisdom, but it is not a

wise attitude at all, for it ignores God and the wisdom that "cometh from above."

The sooner Christians realize that the theory of evolution is not a proven science, but merely a theory, human guesswork, supported by insufficient evidence, the better for them. To accept the idea that man is a product of evolution is not merely a reliance upon guesswork, but worse than that, it results in the rejection of the entire system of divine truth furnished us in the Bible. It is in conflict with every proposition of the Word of God respecting man's creation and redemption; so violently in conflict that if one be true the other is false.

There is a difference between the Bible's description of the creation of the plants and the lower animals, and the creation of man. For instance, Genesis 1:11 reads, "And God said, Let the **earth bring forth** grass, the herb yielding seed and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind," and Genesis 1:20: "And God said, Let the **waters bring forth** abundantly the moving creature that hath life." (Please read also verses 21 and 22.) Again in Genesis 1:24: "And God said, Let the **earth bring forth** the living creature after its kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind; and it was so."

Here it is stated that the "waters bring forth" and the "earth brings forth" its creatures and its fruitage. Even the evolutionist will

agree with this wording and with the progress of creation here presented in the Bible. But when it comes to the creation of man there is no suggestion that his creation was a "bringing forth," or a development. On the contrary, the account is most explicit, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Gen. 1:26) The distinction in these statements implies that there was a difference between the development of plant life and the lower animals during these early epochs of creation and the special creation of man to be the lord of earth.

When God created Adam he endowed him with certain qualities. He was given, in his original perfection, the qualities of justice and judgment, of mercy and love. He was not created in the bodily image of God—physically man is adapted to the earth—but mentally and morally he reflected these God-given qualities. Surely in this way he was created in the image of his Maker, and physically he was also perfect. As God exercises supreme authority over the universe, he invested Adam with authority over earth and its affairs, as we read, "After our likeness . . . let them [male and female] have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth." Thus Adam was installed lord of the earthly creation.

The Psalmist describes the position Adam originally held as follows: "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy

hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Psalm 8:5, 6) All this glory of perfection and rulership was given to Adam to be used to the honor of his Maker; and being perfect he was in complete harmony with God.

Let us note how consistent the biblical account is in its every detail. It tells not only of man's perfect beginning, but also of his trial; of his failure through disobedience to God's law; of his condemnation to death, and of his inability to give his children perfection because he had already lost it himself. Therefore we have all been born in sin and shapen in iniquity, and are as prone to sin as sparks are to fly upward. (Psalm 51:5; Job. 5:7) The Bible also teaches that we need a Redeemer before we can be reconciled to God; and how God provided a Redeemer in the gift of his only begotten Son who is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. (I John 2:2) And thus through the Redeemer will man be brought back to his original dominion and restored to the image and likeness of God.

THE COMMUNION SUPPER

Do you believe that Christians should partake of the communion supper? If so, how often should one partake?

AT THE time our Lord ate his last meal with his disciples, he instituted that which is known among many as the Memorial Supper, or Communion Supper. The account of this is given in the Gospels of

Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The account of Matthew 26:26-29 reads, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." In Luke's account of this event (Luke 22:15-20) Jesus instructed his disciples, "This do in remembrance of me." We believe, therefore, that our Lord thus instructed his brethren to partake of the supper which he there instituted, a supper of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine.

It is a memorial of our Lord's death, and it is proper that we remember his death, until the time comes when we shall be changed and share with him in the glories and blessings of the first resurrection, for it is the very foundation of all our faith and obedience. We know that some partake of this communion and its emblems every week, others every month, and others less often. Since it is a memorial of our Lord's death, and as the Scriptures do not state that it should be kept more often than on the anniversary of his death, we believe that it should be observed with all solemnity once a year, (even as had been the custom with respect to the Jewish Passover) on the memorial date of the original supper of the Lord

with his disciples. This year that date will be on the evening of April 22.

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

What is the relationship between the Passover of the Jews at the time of their deliverance from Egypt, and the death of Christ as our Passover?

IF WE had to restrict our answer to one sentence we would say that it is the relationship of the type to the antitype. We all no doubt are more or less acquainted with the account of the Passover of the children of Israel and their subsequent deliverance from Egyptian bondage. We suggest to those who are not familiar with this great event in Jewish history that they read the 12th chapter of Exodus which records it. The events here told would be merely historical to the Christian were it not for the New Testament. The light of the New Testament has vitalized this experience of the Jews and has made it one of the greatest of types.

Pharaoh ceases to be Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and becomes Satan ever on the alert to destroy God's children.

The firstborn of Israel become the "church of the firstborn," whose names are written in heaven, for the true church is a kind of first-fruits unto God of his creatures.

Israel ceases to be Israel, and becomes a type of the world of mankind.

Blessed are those whose eyes can see that Jesus is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of

the world. And as the Jews fed upon the literal lamb of the Passover, we feed upon and receive strength for our Christian journey by feeding upon "Christ our Pass-over" Lamb.—I Cor. 5:7, 8

The unleavened bread becomes to us the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Instead of the bitter herbs with which the Jews whetted their appetite, we are served with bitter trials which help to wean our affections from earthly things and stimulate our appetite for the things of God. The girdle of the Passover picture is to us the symbol of the service of the truth; the shoes a symbol of our walking in the newness of life; and the staff becomes the Word of God, the source of the Christian's comfort and support.

There are many other pictures in this wonderful type, but one more will suffice here. Only the firstborn were in danger that night in Egypt, long years ago. It was a matter of life and death to the firstborn of Israel as to whether or not they remained in the house behind the sprinkled blood of the lamb of the Passover; and just so now, only the members of the "church of the firstborn" are in danger in the antitypical picture; for only as we remain in the household of faith, and under the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, will we escape eternal death and enjoy the blessings of life in him.

And just as Moses the next day led the children of Israel from bondage, soon The Christ will deliver all the willing and obedient from the bondage of sin and the corruption of death into the glori-

ous liberty of the children of God; and, as a result of his reign of righteousness and peace, all evil and evildoers pictured by the hosts of Egypt will be destroyed in the second death, here pictured by the Red Sea.—Rom. 8:19-22

JESUS' FLESH AND BLOOD

One of the sayings of the Master hard for me to understand is the following: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:53, 54) What do these words mean?

THE Lord was here endeavoring to teach his disciples a great truth. We do not believe that he was referring to his literal blood, for at the time he instituted the Memorial Supper, teaching the same truth, and while he was still alive he referred to the bread and the fruit of the vine as being his flesh and his blood. He was teaching what his flesh and his blood represented in the fulness of their significance. In verse 51 of this 6th chapter of John containing our questioner's text, we read, "My flesh . . . I will give for the life of the world." He sacrificed his perfect humanity; he poured out his soul unto death. "This is my body, . . . broken for you." "This is my blood shed, for you."—Matt. 26:26-28; I Cor. 11:23-26

His broken body and his shed blood were both tokens of a perfect life, sacrificed for us and for all mankind.

*An Encouraging Article
Appropriate to the Memorial Season*

Overcoming the World

*"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer;
I have overcome the world."—JOHN 16:33*

AS JESUS drew near to the close of his ministry in the flesh, he was more than ever solicitous for the welfare of his disciples. He knew that without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit they would not be able to understand fully the meaning of the seemingly tragic events which were fast closing in around him, yet he endeavored to prepare their minds and hearts as fully as possible, lest they be completely stumbled and thus not be ready to enter into the privileges of the Gospel age which were to open up with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. He not only ministered to them directly, but prayed for them to this end.

Already the disciples had learned that being a follower of the lowly Nazarene did not bring them the good will and plaudits of the world, particularly the religious world of that day. True, there were times when the multitudes flocked around their beloved Master, but too often the motive turned out to be the "loaves and fishes" of material benefit which they hoped to receive from him. Few were interested to the point of being willing to make sacrifices in order to be disciples of Jesus; and often there was out-and-out opposition manifested toward him.

Before Jesus was crucified his disciples probably thought that in some way he would overcome this opposition and become the accepted leader and King of Israel, and ultimately of the whole world. Had not the prophet written concerning him that of the "increase of his government and peace" there would be no end? (Isa. 9:7) As yet they did not know that first of all it was necessary that he suffer and die for the world ere the prophecies concerning his kingdom glory would be fulfilled. And it was their

hope to share in the Master's glory, which they believed was near.

Jesus did not, of course, withhold from his disciples the fact of his imminent death, but somehow they felt that what he had said to them pertaining thereto must have another meaning. "My flesh I give for the life of the world," he had said. (John 6:51) He told them also that he must go to Jerusalem where he would suffer many things, and finally be killed. When hearing this, Peter said, "Be it far from thee, Lord," indicating that he thought Jesus was wrong in estimating the strength of his enemies, or else that he could be dissuaded from recklessly exposing himself to danger.—Matt. 16:22

But Jesus meant literally what he said concerning his rapidly approaching death, even though the disciples could not bring themselves to believe that it would actually occur. Jesus knew that they were still viewing their privileges of discipleship too largely from the standpoint of the material advantages of glory they hoped to attain from being associated with him. True, they loved him, and they loved the messianic cause of which they were convinced he was the divinely appointed leader, but they did not yet know as clearly as they understood later that there was to be suffering and death associated with that cause, as well as glory and honor. The prophets had foretold the "sufferings of Christ" as well as the "glory that should follow," but thus far they knew only of the promised glory, and in that glory they hoped to share.—I Pet. 1:11

Jesus knew this, so in the closing days of his ministry he endeavored to prepare them for what he foresaw would yet be their experience. "If the world hate you," he said, "ye know that it hated me before it hated you." Again, "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; . . . but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." (John 15:18-20) "These things have I spoken unto you," the Master continued, "that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."—John 16:1, 2

There would seem to be no way of misunderstanding the meaning of statements such as these, for they were pregnant with impending tragedy. In addition to telling his disciples that death

might be their reward for following him, he also warned, "The hour . . . is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." (John 16:32) Such warnings as these, coming from a reliable source, would certainly be liable to engender fear and a fretful foreboding of future disaster, but Jesus explained, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—John 16:33

What a strange way of cheering people and of quieting their hearts! But it is well to note that it was not so much the warning of coming persecution that was calculated to give the disciples peace and good cheer, but rather the fact that when it came they would understand its meaning and realize that they were having the privilege of suffering with him. He wanted them to know also that he overcame the world and that they too would be given strength to overcome the world if they continued to be his disciples. With this assurance of victory they could have "good cheer" despite the opposition and persecution of the world. Knowledge that they were suffering with their Master, while not lessening the pain, would nevertheless give them courage to continue on.

THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE

In the example set by Jesus' own life and ministry, and through his teachings as well as the teachings of his apostles, it is clear that the Christian life is one of struggle against opposition, a warfare, as it were, in which we are engaged in deadly combat with formidable enemies, enemies which most certainly would overpower us unless we were given divine strength to overcome them. Satan, the devil, is the chief of our enemies, and his allies are the world and our own fallen flesh. As new creatures in Christ Jesus we find ourselves at enmity with all three of these, and this struggle will continue as long as we are in the flesh.

Descriptive of our efforts to subdue the flesh are such scriptural terms as "mortify" and "crucify." (Col. 3:5; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14) Speaking of himself, the Apostle Paul wrote, "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection." (I Cor. 9:27) On the other hand, the term "overcome" is used in the New Testament to describe the Christian's victory over the devil,

over the 'devil's world, and over the principle of evil which is the foundation of the world of which Satan is the prince. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," writes Paul. (Rom. 12:21) John speaks of overcoming "the wicked one." (I John 2:13, 14) He also writes that he who "is born of God overcometh the world."—I John 5:4

Apparently the Apostle John was greatly impressed with what the Master said about overcoming the world, for not only did he make a record of it in his Gospel (Matthew, Mark, and Luke do not), but he enlarges upon this theme in his epistles. Incidentally, it is also interesting to note that John is the only apostle who writes specifically about overcoming the world. John also seemed to appreciate greatly the thought of divine love as it was manifested in the sending of Jesus to be man's Redeemer—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," he records. (John 3:16) And with reference to our privilege of joint-heirship with Jesus he writes, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us."—I John 3:1-3

It will be helpful, we think, in considering the matter of overcoming the world, to remember that there are two great principles operating in the earth, and have been operating since man's original sin. These are love and selfishness, or good and evil. It was probably the Apostle John's clear vision of divine love, and what it means to God's creatures, that helped him to discern the importance of the Master's statement concerning the matter of overcoming the world, that it meant he had been victorious over the evil, selfish spirit of the world.

Jehovah, the Creator, our Heavenly Father, is the Author of the principle of love, and throughout the ages has been its sponsor. Satan is the sponsor of selfishness. These two principles have been at war with each other since the fall of man. The people of God, those whom he has called to serve him and who have been faithful to the terms of their calling, have been motivated by love—during this Gospel age, "begotten of God," that is, by his Spirit—while the remainder of earth's millions have gone through life with the principle of selfishness largely controlling them. Not that all have been wilfully wicked, or unjust, or unkind. Man was created in the image of God, and traces of this image still remain and manifest themselves in deeds of kindness on the part of many.

But it is not the occasional kind deed, nor the adventitious act of charity—however much these are to be commended—that constitutes overcoming the world and its spirit, as Jesus set us the example. Rather, it is a matter of a changed viewpoint on the objective of life, a conversion from the principle of living for self to the principle of living for God by devoting our lives to his service. “Self-preservation,” it is said, is “nature’s great law,” and this is undoubtedly true with respect to all the lower orders of God’s creatures here on the earth, and properly so; but it is only because of sin and the misrule of Satan that it has been adopted by human beings as the dominating motive of life.

Nevertheless, it has been adopted by the human race and has become so much a way of life in the world that it is considered normal and commendatory. Self-interest, broadened to include one’s immediate family, is the principle which rules the world—this “present evil world” over which Satan is the prince. (Gal. 1:4; John 12:31) This was also true during the world before the flood. It has been true throughout the more than four thousand years of “this world.” There have been a few exceptions. Some, instead of drifting with the tide of selfishness which sweeps the masses along to inevitable destruction, have gone against it, giving their lives unselfishly in causes which they hope might eventually turn the tide, or at least alleviate the sufferings of those who were unable to help themselves. These will have their reward in God’s due time.

The only “cause” which actually will do away with selfishness and establish love throughout the whole earth as the motive of life is the divine plan of redemption through Christ. The only ones, therefore, who can overcome the world in the scriptural sense are those who follow faithfully in his footsteps of sacrifice. Before the first advent of Jesus there were some who caught the spirit of the messianic cause and gladly gave their lives for it. Paul lists a number of these in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. Moses was one of them—“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, 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 Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.”—Heb. 11:24-26

John wrote that the victory which overcometh the world is faith. (I John 5:4) On this basis Moses was an overcomer. As the world views matters, it would have been in every way to Moses' advantage to remain in Egypt and accept legal membership in Pharaoh's family. From the standpoint of self-interest he had everything to lose and nothing to gain by leaving, and espousing the cause of his people. But, as the apostle explains, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." (Heb. 11:27) Moses had faith in the promises of God and was confident that a course of life consistent with those promises would be to his best eternal interests, even though it meant the loss of practically all temporal advantage.

JESUS, THE GREAT EXAMPLE

In Jesus we have our greatest and most comprehensive example of love as a way of life. He not only gave us an example, but enjoined love upon his followers, saying, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you." (John 13:34) But this viewpoint was not understood nor appreciated by the people of Jesus' day, and not until Pentecost did his own disciples grasp its real import. When the rich young ruler was told to sell all he had and give to the poor, he went away sorrowful. In following the law of self-preservation he had accumulated those goods as a protection against a "rainy day" and he wasn't prepared to abandon the idea that after all it *might* "rain" and he would need his wealth.

Even the disciples were perplexed at this advice to the rich young man, which seemed to reflect so reckless an abandoning of all self-interest. Commenting on the incident, Jesus explained to his disciples that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Then they asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus did not answer this question directly, observing merely, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Peter, wishing to get at the bottom of a philosophy so different from anything to which they were accustomed, asked, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?"—Matthew 19:16-27

The import of Peter's question is obvious. "We have left all," he said. In other words, he was reminding the Master that as his disciples they had complied with the conditions of discipleship he sought to impose upon the rich young ruler. True, their "all" was probably not as much as his "all," but the principle was the same, and having made this sacrifice, they naturally wanted to know what they could expect to get out of it. This was the point of Peter's question. It reveals that as yet he had not caught the real spirit of discipleship. To him it was still more or less of a business proposition, one which he hoped would net him greater returns, at least in honor and prestige, than his fishing business. Instead of being a humble fisherman, he had hopes of a prominent position in Messiah's kingdom, to be a ruler, a prince, a great one among men.

When Jesus announced to his disciples that he was going to Jerusalem and that he expected to be arrested there and put to death, Peter admonished, "Be it far from thee, Lord," or, as the marginal rendering puts it, "Pity thyself." (Matt. 16:22) Jesus' reply to this well-meant advice was to the point—"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." (Matt. 16:23) Peter was attempting to persuade the Master that he should permit self-interest to influence him and not go to Jerusalem where he knew his enemies had set a trap for his arrest. In doing this, Peter was espousing the cause of Satan, who always encourages men to consider self first.

"Thou savorest not the things that be of God," Jesus explained, "but those that be of men." Men of the world—the world over which Satan is the prince—just naturally think of self first. It is openly and avowedly their way of life, and has been since the days of Eden; but it is not God's way. It is the way of men in Satan's world. Now Jesus was introducing a new way, the way of love. In God's world, "wherein dwelleth righteousness," it is the only way which will be permitted to continue, but now it is the way merely of Jesus' disciples, introduced by him at the beginning of the age.—II Pet. 3:13

Jesus said, "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." (Matt. 16:24, 25) Peter advised Jesus to save

his life, but Jesus explained to Peter that those who endeavor to save their lives shall lose them, but that those who lose their lives in sacrifice shall save them. It is doubtful if the disciples understood the depth of this remark at that time, but it was simply one method by which Jesus explained the difference between the way of selfishness—self-interest—and the way of love, a love that is manifested by a self-sacrificing interest on behalf of others.,

Jesus was even then losing his life sacrificially for others—for the whole world of mankind. Later, to the women at his empty tomb, the commission was given to go and tell the disciples that he had been raised from the dead, and in that commission special mention was made of Peter—"Go . . . tell his disciples, *and Peter.*" (Mark 16:7) When Jesus explained to Peter that those who lose their lives in the divinely directed service of God shall save them, Peter probably comprehended but little of what it meant. But now it would seem that Jesus was driving the lesson home to Peter's mind and heart by calling his special attention to the fact of the resurrection. Tell Peter, yes, tell him that my life has been saved. He wanted me to save it by selfishly avoiding the privilege of sacrifice. Like men of the world, he considered it foolish that in an emergency I should think of anyone but myself. He thought I should protect myself; but when you tell him that I have been raised from the dead, he will realize that my life has been saved—saved in God's way, not by following the worldly principle of self first.

OVERCOMING THE WORLD

Overcoming the world, then, means that in living up to the terms of our consecration we stand up against the principle of selfishness with which we are surrounded on every hand, and continue to lay down our lives unselfishly in the service of God, of the truth, and of the brethren. Jesus said, I have called you out of the world, so we are to remain separate from it, and not permit ourselves to be influenced by its self-interest viewpoint. We cannot reform the world nor change any of its institutions from the viewpoint of self first to that of the sacrifice of self, the denying of self; so the test upon us is to continue separate from the world while, by abandoning the self-first viewpoint, we endeavor to lose our lives in the cause of divine love.

Overcoming the world has far more serious implications than merely to refrain from participating in some of the pleasures of the world. The whole world is largely wrong, for it is Satan's world, and we cannot take part in any of its arrangements, nor should we be influenced at any time by its viewpoint. The world has its pleasures, and even these are selfishly inspired, hence should be shunned by those who are endeavoring to overcome the world. But let us not think that we are faithful overcomers simply because we stay away from the world's pleasures.

As followers of the Master we are being prepared to share with him in the rulership of God's new world, hence we are being trained in the principles of love. Under the influence of love we are losing our lives in sacrifice. This does not mean that we have no joy in life; for if we are living up to our privileges the joy of the Lord will be ours. If we have not learned to appreciate the way of love and sacrifice sufficiently to find in it, and in the promises of God associated with it, a fully satisfying portion which more than compensates for all the trifling joys of this world, we should examine our hearts to find out what is wrong. If we have to go to the world and its pleasures to find "diversion" while we lay down our lives for God, we might seriously question whether or not we are as victorious as we should be in overcoming the world.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation," said the Master, "but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." The tribulation we have in the world will be in proportion to the degree that our course in life runs counter to the spirit of the world. The world loves its own, Jesus explained, and if the world does not find anything in us, or in our way of life that is contrary to its own, then we may well question the course we have been taking or the degree of our overcoming.

But if we are overcoming the world, we are bound, at some point, and in some way, to feel its opposition—"In the world ye shall have tribulation." Nevertheless, we can be of "good cheer"—not because we rejoice in trouble, but because of this evidence of divine approval and because of our faith in God's promises that although we are now losing our lives, giving up everything which the world considers valuable, we are sure to find it, for by "patient continuance in well doing" we are seeking for "glory and honor and immortality, eternal life."—Rom. 2:7

THE BREAD AND THE CUP

During those closing days of the Master's earthly ministry he taught his disciples a great deal concerning his impending death and its meaning to him, to them, and to the world. One of these lessons was in the "upper room" where he inaugurated the Memorial Supper. "This is my body, which is broken for you," he said concerning the bread. (I Cor. 11:24) "This is my blood, . . . shed for many," he explained with respect to the cup. (Matt. 26:28) And he invited his disciples to partake of these emblems, thus signifying that they not only were to benefit from that which they represented, but also that they would share in it. This latter point was afterward emphasized by Paul when he wrote about the common union of the body and blood of Christ as pictured by the bread and the wine.—I Cor. 10:16, 17

There are many vitally important and practical lessons we can get from our meditations on the Memorial bread and cup. A new and richer than ever blessing awaits the Lord's people each year as they commemorate the death of Jesus. For the moment, let us think of them as picturing our privilege of overcoming the world, for they represent sacrifice, the breaking of Jesus' body and the shedding of his blood through his adherence to the principle of love, the love which called for the sacrifice of his all that the world might live. In that sacrifice we have the privilege of sharing, being "planted together in the likeness of his death."—Rom. 6:5

The world of Jesus' day hated him, and finally put him to death. We should expect no better treatment from the world today. For, as Jesus explained, the servant cannot expect to be above his Master. But the reason the world hated Jesus was that his way of life was contrary to theirs. By his example of sacrifice he condemned their way of selfishness, and by his teachings he exposed their popular errors, the while teaching unpopular truths himself. So he was hated.

And now we hear his call, "Follow me!" (Matt. 4:19) To follow Jesus means more, much more, than merely to admire him. To follow him faithfully means that our experiences in the world will be similar to his. But "be of good cheer," he said, "I have overcome the world." And we too can overcome the world if, like him, we keep before us the great objective of the divine will and

confidently rely on the Heavenly Father's promised grace to help in time of need.

So as we partake of the Memorial emblems this year, let us rejoice more than ever in what they mean as symbols of divine grace toward us, and also remember that they picture our privilege of dying with Jesus by denying ourselves and laying down our lives in doing God's will. If we are faithful in this we will be true overcomers, and can apply to ourselves the promise of the Master, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."—Rev. 3:21

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

Well has the apostle delineated the spirit of love, saying, "Love suffereth long and is kind"—to the wrongdoer. "Love envieth not" the success of others, seeks not to detract from their honor nor to pull them back from it. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," and consequently never seeks to detract from the splendor of others to make self shine by contrast. It "doth not behave itself unbecomingly," immoderately—it has no extreme and selfish desires and avoids extreme methods. Love "seeketh not that which is not her own"—does not covet the honors or wealth or fame of others, but delights to see them blessed, and would rather add to than detract from these blessings. Love "is not easily provoked," even to render just recompenses: remembering the present distress of the entire race through the fall, it is sympathetic rather than angry. Love "thinketh no evil"; it not only will not invent and imagine evil, but is so disposed to give the benefit of any doubt that "evil surmisings" are foreign to it. (Compare I Tim. 6:4) Love "rejoiceth not with iniquity, but rejoices with the truth [rightness]": hence, it would delight to uncover and make known noble words or acts, but would take no pleasure in, but avoid, exposing ignoble words or deeds. Love "covereth all things," as with a mantle of sympathy—for nothing and nobody is perfect, so as to stand full inspection. Love anticipates and has her mantle of benevolence always ready. Love "believes all things"—is not disposed to dispute claims of good intention, but rather to accept them. Love "hopes all things," disputing the thought of total depravity so long as possible. Love "endures all things"; it is impossible to fix a limit where it would refuse the truly repentant one. "Love never faileth." Other graces and gifts may serve their purposes and pass away; but Love is so elemental that, attained, it may always be ours—throughout eternity. Love is the principal thing. (I Cor. 13:4-13)—Studies in the Scriptures

*He is my meditation
day and night*

"Songs in the Night"

*"The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become
my salvation."*

APRIL 1

**Let us go forth therefore unto Him
without the camp, bearing His reproach.
—Hebrews 13:13**

A LITTLE while and all the sufferings of all the members will be at an end. There will never be any more sin-offerings for Adam and his race, no more burnings without the camp, no more walking in the narrow way of self-sacrifice. Thank God for the privileges brought to us in this way, and thanks be to his name also for the blessed assurances that the whole world shall, in consequence of divine favor thus bestowed, be brought into fullest opportunities for reconciliation to the Father.—Z '07-3918 (Hymn 261)

APRIL 2

**Comfort yourselves together, and
edify one another, even as also ye do.
—I Thessalonians 5:11**

ONE channel of blessing and instruction which the Lord has provided and commended for the saints, and which surely has proven a blessing to all of the household of faith in running for the "mark," is the assistance which the Lord supplies to us through the brethren. Sometimes it is, "A word in season; how good it is!"—perhaps a word of counsel, perhaps a word of reproof, perhaps a word of instruction. Perhaps it is merely the testimony of the daily lives of the brethren, as we see them patiently enduring hardness as good soldiers, without murmuring—taking with joy, with thankfulness, with faith, with confidence, all things which divine providence may permit, assured that they are all

working out future blessing.—Z '10-4663 (Hymn 218)

APRIL 3

**We glory in tribulation also: knowing
that tribulation worketh patience;
and patience, experience; and experience,
hope.—Romans 5:3, 4**

THIS does not mean we get all of our patience first, then all of our experience, and then all of our hope; but they are all developing together. We have a good courage and are desirous of pleasing the Lord; we are not ashamed to be his children. And the reason we are not ashamed is that with this hope, we have the realization of God's love; and we are able to say, "If I had tribulation, I now have more hope and more patience. I am getting results in these tribulations in the fruits of the Spirit." Whoever escapes experiences that would develop the fruits of the Holy Spirit will never gain a place in the kingdom.—Z '15-5779 (Hymn 19)

APRIL 4

**For I reckon that the sufferings of
this present time are not worthy to be
compared with the glory which shall
be revealed in us.—Romans 8:18**

WHAT great Christian courage St. Paul's words and deeds manifest! He that endured so many hardships, a veritable thrashing-machine experience, nevertheless writes: "We faint not; for though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Ah, that was the secret of the matter—the renewing of the in-

ward man, the new creature! The inward man had God's assurance that if God were for him the opposition of all others would be as nothing. He had the assurance that God would overrule all of his experiences for his highest welfare. He had the assurance of the Lord, too, that the glories of the future would be proportionate to the trials faithfully endured.—Z '16-5951 (Hymn 92)

APRIL 5

The Lord will command his loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me.—Psalm 42:8

IF WE are not ready to praise God where we are, and with our conditions and circumstances as they are, we should not be likely to praise him if we were differently circumstanced and our conditions just those which now seem to us most desirable. Daniel could sleep better in the den of lions than Darius in the royal palace; he who could not find rest in a lion's den, when that was the place for him, could not gain rest by a mere removal to a palace. It is the man's self which must be changed, not his circumstances or his possessions, in order to his having a heart overflowing with joy and praise.—Z '02-3123 (Hymn 236)

APRIL 6

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image . . . even as by the Spirit of the Lord.—II Corinthians 3:18

A FULL transformation into a likeness of character to our Heavenly Father should be the constant effort of every true child of God. It is not enough that we gain a knowledge of his plan and a pleasurable realization of his mercy and grace toward our unworthy race, but that we joyfully tell the good news to others; and it is not enough that we exert ourselves with uncommon zeal to bless others with those good tidings of great joy for all people, for we may do all of these

things and more, and yet if we do not let our Heavenly Father's goodness and grace have its due effect upon our own hearts, our knowledge, and even our good works, will profit us but little.—Z '05-3655 (Hymn 299)

APRIL 7

Beloved, . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure—Philippians 2:12, 13

IT IS by painstaking care that we work out our great salvation. God has provided the way—made all the arrangements for us. There is nothing lacking so far as God is concerned. The whole matter lies with ourselves. God has begotten us of the Holy Spirit. All the influences necessary for us are at our command because at his command, because we have been called, because we have been accepted, because we have been introduced into his family through the merit of the great Advocate.—Z '13-5304 (Hymn 20)

APRIL 8

In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.—Proverbs 3:6

WHEN the Lord's people find themselves in difficulty, they should reason like this: What is the Lord's will? What does his providence indicate? He has said that all things shall work together for good to me because I love him; therefore, having confidence in God, I am sure that all things shall indeed work out for my good. I have faith in his wisdom and his power and his love. He could have protected me from this difficulty had he seen best. So the fact of its reaching me proves that he saw fit to permit it for a wise reason. He has promised that he will not suffer me to be tempted, tried, beyond what I am able to bear. As he is faithful, he will never fail to keep that good promise. So then, I will not cast away my confidence, "which hath great recompense of reward."—Z '14-5595 (Hymn 242)

APRIL 9

That we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.—Hebrews 6:18

THE saints have indeed in every sorrow and grief a blessed consolation of which the world is wholly in ignorance. None but the child of God can know it. What is this consolation? It is the gentle whisper of hope and love and courage when heart and flesh are almost failing. This is the divine consolation, the only consolation that has in it any virtue of healing or refreshment. It is reserved alone for those noble souls who are faithfully bearing the burden and heat of the day in the service of the King of kings; while those who listlessly drift with the current of the world and the downward tendencies of the carnal nature can never have an intimation of its sweetness.—Z '15-5803 (Hymn 328)

APRIL 10

For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.—Jeremiah 31:25

THE most happy condition of mind conceivable is the one of full rest and confidence in the Lord—satisfied with God's appointments and provisions. And this is especially appropriate to the spiritual Israelites, and particularly the royal priesthood, who have made a full surrender to the Lord, a covenant by sacrifice, which includes all earthly rights and interests. Happy is it for such if they can sing with the spirit and with the understanding also:

"Content whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis my God that leadeth
me."—Z '13-5306 (Hymn 96)

APRIL 11

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.—Galatians 6:2

THERE are times in the experience of almost everyone when the surges of trouble roll high, and the timid, shrink-

ing soul is almost overwhelmed by them. And then how soothing is the sympathy and counsel of a fellow-member of the body of Christ! Worldly-minded friends may sympathize, but their counsel is almost sure to be wrong. Hence the necessity of fellowship in the body of Christ, and of dis-fellowship with the world.—Z '05-3646-3647 (Hymn 154)

APRIL 12

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.—Luke 18:1

LET no child of God hesitate to come to him often or to tarry long in communion and fellowship with him. It is our privilege to enter into our closets and shut the doors and pray to our Father who seeth in secret, who will reward us openly. (Matthew 6:6) And not only so, but he will go with us through all the business and hurry and commotion of the day; and at any instant, in the midst of cares and perplexities we may turn our prayerful thoughts to him for wisdom, for strength and Christian fortitude or for comfort and consolation for ourselves or others.—Z '95-1865 (Hymn 35)

APRIL 13

Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth.—John 17:17

THE word sanctify has the significance of set apart, made holy. There are two parts to this work of sanctification. The first is that which we do, in the very beginning, when we set ourselves apart, with the desire to know and to do the will of God. The second is that part which comes gradually—the teachings and instructions which set before us things that we did not perceive before—certain principles of righteousness which we did not previously recognize. This is the deeper setting apart, and is done by God, inasmuch as it is done by the Father's arrangement. . . . So the Lord's people are to be more and more sanctified through the truth.—Z '13-5319-5321 (Hymn 105)

APRIL 14

The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.—I Peter 3:12

THE Lord knew how necessary to our spiritual life would be this communion with himself. Tempest-tossed and tried, how much we need our Father's care and comfort and consolation which his presence and sympathy, when realized, impart. And have not all the meek and contrite in heart the promise not only of the occasional attentive hearing, but of the abiding presence of both the Father and the Son, our Lord Jesus? Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."—Z '95-1865 (Hymn 306)

APRIL 15

Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.—Exodus 15:17

CAN we not all realize how patient and merciful the Lord has been to us in our various experiences in life? Can we not see how he would have been fully justified in canceling our covenant long ago, and that only by his mercy and love have we been permitted to come thus far on the way toward the heavenly kingdom? Surely a realization of these things should make us both humble and trustful.—Z '07-4056 (Hymn 321)

APRIL 16

Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow.—Matthew 6:32-34

OUR Lord assures us that if the main thought of our hearts is concerning his service and the promotion of righteousness and the attainment of the kingdom which God has promised to them that love him, then we need

carry no anxious cares respecting the future. As his disciples we shall have trials and tribulations enough day by day, and shall need daily to lean upon the Bridegroom's arm as we seek to walk the narrow way. Sufficient for each day will be the evil of itself; and thanks be to God, we have also his promise that daily his grace shall be sufficient for us.—Z '11-4871 (Hymn 176)

APRIL 17

Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.—Psalm 45:10, 11

WHAT wonder is it if, when we receive such a message, we hesitate and feel that we are unworthy; that in our imperfection there can be no beauty in us that he should desire us, passing by even the angels in their purity and glory. Surely there must be some mistake! Has not the invitation come like the vision of a dream to be dispelled when sound judgment has awakened to realities? Ah, no! hearken again, and be reassured of the voice of Jehovah, our God; for long ago he led his inspired prophet to pen these lines for us, and now by his Spirit he unseals our understanding and brings the matter to us with all the freshness of his own personality.—Z '95-1820 (Hymn 283)

APRIL 18

Without faith it is impossible to please Him.—Hebrews 11:6

FAITH may be said to have in it the two elements of intellectual assurance and heart-reliance. Both the head and the heart—the intellect and the affections—are necessary to the faith without which it is impossible to please God. With some, faith is all emotion; with others, it is all intellectuality. But neither of these elements alone can withstand the fiery tests to which faith is subjected. Both must be present and remain, if our faith be that which will

endure to the end and be found unto praise, honor, and glory at the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.—Z '12-5114 (Hymn 197)

APRIL 19

Let all your things be done with love.—I Corinthians 16:14

GOD is the very personification of sympathy and love. As the Scriptures declare, "God is love." And all who will be God's children, developed in his likeness, will be loving children. As St. John says, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." (I John 4:16) In proportion as we develop strength of character as new creatures, this quality of love increases. In addition, we should find our judgment also becoming more accurate. Those who are developed in the Spirit of the Lord have better judgment than they formerly had. As the days go by, they know better how to sympathize with the world; how to deal with mankind; they are getting more and more of the wisdom which cometh from above.—Z '14-5417 (Hymn 306)

APRIL 20

I thank God, whom I serve . . . that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.—II Timothy 1:3

THOSE whose hearts are loving to their enemies, and loving to the household of faith, and above all, loving to the Lord, these would indeed be exceedingly sensitive if their hearts got into any attitude in which they would not be seeking the welfare of others, and praying for them. In such hearts there would be no room for anger, bitterness, strife, envying. In such hearts the love of God is shed abroad as represented by the holy anointing oil, the unction from the Holy One, which lubricates all of the sensibilities, smoothing not only the countenance, but also the tongue and the heart; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and bitter water cannot come from a pure fountain.—Z '08-4201 (Hymn 239)

APRIL 21

And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.—Mark 14:27

OUR Lord's faith stood the test of all these trying hours which he knew to be so near to the time of his apprehension and death. The fact that he rendered thanks to God for the bread and for the cup are indicative of a joyful acquiescence in all the sufferings which the breaking of the bread and the crushing of the grapes implied. He was satisfied already with the Father's arrangement, and could give thanks, as by and by he will greatly rejoice. In line with this was the singing of a hymn as they parted, a hymn of praise, no doubt, thanksgiving to the Father that his course was so nearly finished, and that he had found thus far grace sufficient for every time of need.—Z '01-2773 (Hymn 301)

APRIL 22

The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread; . . . and said. Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.—I Corinthians 11:23-25

LET us eat and drink reverently, devotedly, thoughtfully, prayerfully, tearfully perhaps, as we each think of our Redeemer's love and sacrifice, and pledge ourselves afresh to be dead with him. Oh! what a thought: that if faithful in the present privilege of drinking of his cup and being broken with our Lord as his body, we with him will soon be that church of the first born ones whose names are written in heaven, and as such constitute the royal priesthood, which, under our great High Priest, will lead out of the Egyptian bondage and slavery to sin all those slaves of sin whose groanings and prayers for deliverance have entered the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Z '93-1505-1504 (Hymn 122)

APRIL 23

Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.—Luke 24:29

IF OUR hearts fail to burn with responsive love and zeal and appreciation, the blessing will pass from us and we will fail to reach the climax of joy in a full recognition of who our teacher has been. While the Lord draws nigh to us with his grace and truth, without solicitation, he passes us by unless his message is appreciated so that we shall constrain him, urge him to abide with us, to continue the conversation—unless we shall proffer him in turn our hospitalities, our temporal things, in endeavoring to make some slight recompense for the spiritual favors showered upon us.—Z '01-2801 (Hymn 153)

APRIL 24

At evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.—John 20:19

MANY are so situated that they are unable to gratify the desires of their hearts in respect to assembling frequently with others of like precious faith, to talk over the good things of the Lord's Word of promise; but the isolated should not feel disappointed that the Lord's Word says that he will meet with the twos and threes, and does not promise the same to the solitary. They should rather look about them to see what provision the Lord has made whereby at least two can meet and discuss his Word together. . . . We may be well assured that those who have opportunities for meeting together, and speaking together, and who fail to use the opportunities, are manifesting a lack of interest in our great salvation, and that such are very likely to lose the remainder of their interest, and failing of the Lord's instructions given to such, may fail also to be among the "jewels" whom he will gather. If on the contrary one feels little interest in the heavenly

things, little disposed to discuss the features of the divine plan and its promises, and happy only when conversing on worldly matters, business, etc., it is an unfavorable sign. The Lord is not likely to approach such and open their understanding respecting the Scriptures, as he surely is pleased to do to those who are hungering and thirsting after truth.—Z '01-2802-2801 (Hymn 329. 1)

APRIL 25

Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.—John 21:3

IT IS interesting for us to note thus that while our Lord was invisible to the disciples they were visible to him, and all their plans, arrangements, and doings were fully known to him; and he was ready to take advantage of every circumstance and to make all things work together for their good. We know not what is for our highest welfare. Sometimes those things which we crave and desire to grasp, considering them to be good, might really be to our disadvantage. Blessed are they who are able by faith to pierce the gloom of every trial and difficulty and perplexity, and to realize that "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and that he is causing all things to work together for their good.—Z '01-2806 (Hymn 293)

APRIL 26

He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.—Isaiah 40:29

THIS was the secret of our Lord's composure. He had given his life, his all; he had surrendered to the Father his every interest; he had confidence in the Father's love and wisdom, and was willing, therefore, to drink of the cup which the Father had poured, rejoicing to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish the work. So with the Lord's followers throughout this

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age—in proportion as they, like him, have been enabled to realize the fullness of their consecration and at heart have been filled with his Spirit and loving submission to the Father's will—in that same proportion they have been able to be calm under the most severe and trying ordeals, so that the world even has marveled at their composure and self-control, the peace of God passing all understanding ruling in their hearts.—Z '06-3895 (Hymn 305)

APRIL 27

In the world ye shall have tribulation.—John 16:33

SUFFERINGS in the present time, for the truth's sake, we are to reckon a part of our wages, and all who think they are running for the heavenly prize of our high calling should look for these wages as a proof that they are so running as to obtain that prize. (I Cor. 9:24) Do you experience but little or none of the sufferings of Christ now? Do you begin to count the time of suffering over? . . . It is the fatal error with which he [Satan] has lulled the nominal church to sleep, from whose condition we have just escaped. Jesus and Paul ran and suffered to the very end of the race, and Jesus said that the disciple or follower is not above his Lord and teacher.—Z '82-347 (Hymn 13)

APRIL 28

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—Philippians 3:14

THE severest temptations come after we have reached the mark—temptations to slackness in service of God; temptations to withhold parts of our sacrifice; temptations to deal unkindly, uncharitably, unlovingly with the brethren, or unjustly with our neighbor, or ungenerously with our enemies. All of these must be resisted as we prize our eternal life, as we prize the promise

of joint-heirship and fellowship with our Redeemer in his kingdom. Whoever sees this subject clearly must realize that as a Christian he has to do with the great proposition which will thoroughly test his loyalty, his courage, his zeal, his love.—Z '09-4470 (Hymn 20)

APRIL 29

Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.—Matthew 11:29

GOD is seeking a very special class for the kingdom. He desires those who will be absolutely loyal to him, loyal to his Word, faithful not only in some great thing, but also in the smallest affairs of life—faithful in thought, word, and deed. Whoever is thus faithful, whoever exercises care in all these respects, will be fitting and preparing himself for the kingdom. Whoever is careless and inattentive to little things is not fit for the great honor the Lord has in store for the wholly faithful. He is watching us closely, but with a kindly eye.—Z '15-5740 (Hymn 279)

APRIL 30

Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.—John 16:24

WHY should the Lord wish us to ask before he would give his blessing? For a wise purpose, we may be sure! He would have us feel our need, he would have us appreciate the privilege, he would have us look for the response, and in all these experiences he would develop us as his sons of the new creation. Therefore we are to ask and seek and knock if we would find the riches of God's grace, and have opened to us more and more the wonderful privileges and mercies and blessings which he is so willing to give to us as we develop in character and in preparation for his mercies.—Z '06-3807 (Hymn 298)

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EZEKIEL 1:1-3—In these opening verses of the Book of Ezekiel, we are told of the time and manner in which the Lord chose this ardent servant to represent him as a watchman over Israel and a prophet to his people. Ezekiel was already serving as a priest, and it was doubtless because of his faithfulness in this lesser service that God honored him with greater opportunities. In any case, we have in Ezekiel an example of what the Psalmist had previously declared, that true promotion in divine service comes only from the Lord, that he "putteth down one, and setteth up another."—Psalm 75:6, 7

God's dealing with Ezekiel in preparing him to be a prophet and a watchman was outstanding, although in principle it was the same as in the case of all who are called to be ambassadors of the Most High. "The heavens were opened," says Ezekiel, "and I saw visions of God." In Matthew 3:16, we read that the "heavens were opened" to Jesus, and while the account does not state that he saw visions of God, Matthew 3:17 informs us that there was a voice out of heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Ezekiel's experience, then, was very similar to that of Jesus. The heavens were opened to both of them, and in the case of both this made them realize that they were in very close touch with their God. Ezekiel saw visions of God, which revealed his majesty and glory. Jesus did not need this particular experience, as he already knew of his Heavenly Father's glory, and

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April 4

he knew that he had come into the world to do his Father's work. At Jordan he had presented himself in consecration to God, and from the opened heavens he received the blessed assurance of his Father's smile.

But Ezekiel, unlike Jesus, was not so thoroughly acquainted with the marvelous glory and majesty of Jehovah, yet such knowledge is an essential background of acceptable service to God. We are not to suppose that it is ever necessary for God to use servants whom he cannot enlighten with an adequate knowledge of himself and of his plans. It was essential for Ezekiel to know the God whom he was to serve in such a special capacity, so the "visions" were given to him for that purpose—the open heavens symbolize the revealing of truths pertaining to God and to his plans.

EZEKIEL 3:11—In this text is the definite commission given to Ezekiel to "go" and "tell" the children of Israel the message the Lord had given to him. "Thus saith the Lord," was to be the introduction to his message. It is important that all who speak in

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GOLDEN TEXT: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel."—Ezekiel 3:17

the name of the Lord give him the credit for their message. But to do this, the message must indeed be from the Lord's Word. God has not authorized anyone to preach that which is not in his Word.

And Ezekiel was to present the message whether or not the Israelites were willing to receive it—"Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." Here, too, is an important principle for us to keep in mind. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Lord wants us to refrain from bearing witness to the truth simply because very few are willing to accept it.

EZEKIEL 3:17-21—"I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel," the Lord said to Ezekiel, "therefore hear the word of my mouth, and give them warning from me." This passage emphasizes the great responsibility that rests upon those who are used of the Lord as message bearers to his people. Ezekiel was to be held responsible for the wrong course of those who erred should he fail to warn them.

There is no less responsibility resting upon those whom the Lord has set in the body of Christ to be

teachers of his people. Wolves in sheep's clothing are ever trying to enter in among the flock, and it is the business of the elders to keep a watch over the flock and to do what they can to protect them from harm. If harm comes to any of the Lord's little ones despite our best efforts to protect them, then the responsibility is not ours. But if we take the position that we have no responsibility in the matter of protecting the Lord's people against false doctrines and other evils, then we are responsible if they are led astray. This is the import to us of the instructions given to Ezekiel.

EZEKIEL 4:1-3—In this passage there is outlined to Ezekiel a method by which he might give the Israelites a very vivid realization of the coming doom upon Jerusalem. In miniature he was to portray the city in a state of siege. This was to be a "sign" to the house of Israel, a sign of what was to befall them in reality. It was not a pleasant message the prophet was to deliver, and the remainder of the chapter reveals that there were to be many hardships involved in his carrying out of the divine commission.

QUESTIONS:

What relationship did Ezekiel's visions of God bear toward his subsequent service as a prophet and watchman?

Are we to determine the Lord's will in the matter of witness work on the basis of the results obtained?

Does the Lord always provide methods of service which are pleasant to the flesh?

GOD'S MESSAGE TO EXILES

April 11

GOLDEN TEXT: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."—Ezekiel 36:26

EZEKIEL 18:1-4—The prophet's message to the captive Israelites recorded in today's lesson will not be fulfilled until the "times of restitution"—the thousand-year reign of Christ. Until then it will be true that "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." This proverb illustrates the hereditary results of sin. The most comprehensive example of the outworking of this principle is that explained by Paul when he wrote, "As in Adam all die."—I Cor. 15:22

Our lesson is addressed particularly to the Israelites, and with no people of the earth has the principle set forth in the proverb of the sour grapes operated more tragically. Those who rejected Jesus at his first advent said, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children," and it has worked out that way; for they have been a desolated and suffering people throughout the centuries since.—Matt. 27:25

But it will not always be thus. The Prophet Jeremiah also tells of a time coming when the sour-

grapes proverb will no longer be true. He locates that time as being when the Israelites are restored to their own land, and when God will make a new covenant with them, and take away their sins. (Jer. 31:27-34) The Apostle Paul quotes a part of this prophecy and shows that its fulfilment follows the work of this Gospel age.—Rom. 11:26-28

The sour grapes of sin lead to death. This is in harmony with the general teachings of the Scriptures that the "wages of sin IS death." (Rom. 6:23) In the prophet's statement of this fundamental truth he robs those of their argument who claim that the death which is the wages of sin refers only to the body, that the soul does not die. Ezekiel leaves no doubt on this score, for he says the "soul" that sinneth "it" shall die. It is strange that many should study the Bible so earnestly, yet overlook this plain statement of truth.

The soul, of course, is the whole being. When the soul dies, the whole being is dead. Concerning those in the Millennium who eat the sour grapes of sin and have their own teeth set on edge, the Apostle Peter says, "It shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."—Acts 3:23

EZEKIEL 34:11-16—Here is another of God's reassuring promises to the natural house of Israel that the time would come when he would gather them from all the lands in which he scattered them. In this promise particular emphasis is laid upon God's tender love

for his "lost sheep," and for those which are lame and otherwise incapacitated. In this there is a good lesson for us. To the extent that we are like God we too will take an interest in his scattered people. In these last days spiritual Israel has been scattered, and glorious is the privilege of co-operating with the Lord in finding these, and binding up their wounds with the oil of joy—the truth and its spirit.

In this passage also we have proof that the prophet is not in these various scriptures foretelling the return of the Israelites from their captivity in Babylon, although the prophecy was written during this period of exile. But at that time they were held captive in only the one country, Babylon, whereas the prophecy speaks of their being gathered from all the lands whither they had been scattered. They did return to Palestine from their Babylonian captivity—at least many of them did—but centuries afterward they were again driven out of their land and scattered among all the nations.

EZEKIEL 36:25-28—Here again we have a promise to the natural house of Israel which definitely applies to the Millennium. It refers to a time when the Lord will put a new spirit in his people, and take away their stony hearts. He promises also to take away their sins. This promise has not yet been fulfilled, but the Prophet Jeremiah tells us that it will be, at a time when the Lord will "make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah."—Jer. 31:31-34

As we have already noted, the Apostle Paul places the fulfilment of this promise of a new covenant after the completion of the church. Then, he explains, "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (Rom. 11:26-29) Many who do not understand the full scope of the divine plan are inclined to spiritualize these promises to Israel, and they suppose that the "new covenant" has been in operation during the Gospel age. But this view does not harmonize with all the facts.

Ezekiel 36:28 declares, "And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." The only people to whom God promised to give a land are the natural descendants of Abraham, and throughout the prophecies these are encouraged to set their affections upon that land. But to spiritual Israelites the apostle writes, "Set your affections on things above, not on the things on the earth." (Col. 3:2) How glad we are that God's ancient people are again to rejoice in his favor, and that they will have the privilege of dwelling in their own land forever.

QUESTIONS:

When will the proverb of the sour grapes no longer be true?

What lesson can we draw from God's tender love for the "lost sheep of the house of Israel"?

When will the new covenant be made with Israel?

THE RETURN FROM EXILE

April 18

GOLDEN TEXT: "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."—Luke 9:62

THE experiences of the Israelites, and God's providences over them in connection with their return from captivity in Babylon, convey many inspiring lessons which should be of great benefit to spiritual Israelites of this age. One of those lessons is summed up for us in our Golden Text. It is a lesson of constancy, of endurance, of not becoming weary in well-doing. Many failures along all lines of human endeavor are due to a lack of that quality which enables one to stick to a project until it is accomplished.

Momentary enthusiasm for an undertaking, which quickly diminishes when the novelty wears off, is of little value, either in the ordinary walks of life or in our service of God. But there is much of this lack of constancy, even among Christians. This is noticeable even in the little things of life. Probably most Christians find it very difficult to continue doing faithfully that which they have undertaken for the Lord. But the Lord is looking for those

who, having put their hands to the plow, never turn back.

EZRA 1:14—Jeremiah prophesied that after seventy years' desolation of the land of Judea the Israelites would be permitted to return from their captivity in Babylon, and our lesson calls attention to this when telling us of the decree issued by Cyrus giving freedom to the Israelites, and authorizing them to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. (Jer. 25:12) By this time Babylon had fallen into the hand of another people. The golden head of the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream had given place to the breast and arms of silver, which represented the Medo-Persian Empire. Cyrus was king of Persia, and the Lord used him to give the initial authority necessary in order for those Israelites who still longed for their homeland to return.—Dan. 2:31-45

EZRA 4:24—The decree of Cyrus covered only the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem. It made no mention of building the city itself, nor the walls of the city. The enemies of Israel, however, succeeded in having even the work on the temple stopped. This work was held up for considerable time, but finally, "in the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia," it was resumed. While the Israelites took up the work again, continuing despite attempted interference, their enemies appealed to Darius for an injunction to stop the work, but upon investigation he found a copy of the decree issued by Cyrus, so he ordered the work continued, much to the joy of God's people.

Daniel 9:25 tells of a decree that would be issued in connection with the return of the Jews from exile, and shows that this particular decree would mark the beginning of a prophetic time measurement—69 symbolic weeks, or 483 years—to the coming of “Messiah the Prince.” Students of the Bible who have not been sufficiently discerning have erroneously associated this prophecy with the decree issued by Cyrus, failing to notice that it authorized only the building of the temple. The decree referred to by Daniel was 82 years later by Artaxerxes.—Nehemiah 2:7, 8

HAGGAI 1:2-8—As we have seen, work on rebuilding the temple was halted by the opposition of the enemies of Israel. This proved to be a severe test of their faith, and they decided that the Lord’s time had not yet come for this work to be done. They evidently must have concluded that there was some mistake about the decree issued by Cyrus. In any event, they ceased work and justified their lack of determination with the claim that it was not the Lord’s due time. This sounds familiarly like arguments still being advanced by some among the Lord’s people who wish to find excuses for lack of zeal in his service. They argue either that the time is past for the work to be done, or else that it is not yet the due time.

In the case of the Israelites, God sent the Prophet Haggai to straighten out their misconception, to make it clear to them that the time had come for the temple

to be rebuilt. The message of the prophet seems to have been given to Zerubbabel, and he relayed it to the Israelites and set them to work again. With the message of the prophet to back them up, they continued despite the opposition they encountered, and finally, as already noted, the matter came to the attention of Darius and he stood by the decree issued by Cyrus, and saw to it that the work was finished.

HAGGAI 1:13, 14—There is no greater source of strength for the accomplishment of difficult tasks by God’s people than the assurance that they are doing his will, and that he will be with them in what they undertake to do for him and his cause. It was this assurance that God gave to the Israelites through the Prophet Haggai. “I am with you, saith the Lord,” was the message Haggai relayed to them.

“And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, and the spirit of Joshua, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God.” Blessed indeed are those whose spirits have been stirred up by the Lord, through his message of truth, to work for him.

QUESTIONS:

What is the difference between the decree issued by Cyrus and the one which later was issued by Artaxerxes? Which of these decrees is referred to in Daniel 9:25?

What is one of the greatest sources of strength to those who serve the Lord under difficulties?

ZECHARIAH PLEADS FOR RIGHEOUSNESS

April 25

GOLDEN TEXT: "Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother."—Zechariah 7:9

ZZECHARIAH 1:1-4—God's message to the returned exiles which he gave through the Prophet Zechariah was begun only two months later than that of Haggai, the later being dated in the sixth month of the second year of Darius, while that of Zechariah was in the eighth month of the same year. The Lord gave a further message to Zechariah two years later, or in the fourth year of Darius.—Hag. 1:1; Zech. 7:1

Both of these prophets served Israel just at the time when they had returned from Babylonish captivity, and both messages are related to the essential rebuilding program. Through Haggai the Lord directed that work on the temple should continue, while Zechariah's message seems to deal more particularly with Jerusalem, as a literal city, and also as a type of the Jewish polity. An important phase of both messages was their exhortation for the Israelites to rebuild their fidelity to God and to his law. The calamity of the exile had befallen them because of

their sin, and there was no point in rebuilding their city and temple unless they also reconstructed their way of life.

A unique feature of both these prophecies is the fact that while they had to do first of all with conditions in Israel at that time, and with the reconstruction work immediately at hand, they also take occasion to foretell a future and much more significant return from captivity, and the building of a more glorious temple and city of which the literal city of Jerusalem and its temple were types, that is, the kingdom of Christ.

In Haggai 2:6-9 we read of the antitypical temple and its marvelous glory—a temple through which all nations will approach unto God and serve him when "the desire of all nations shall come." We know that this passage is a reference to the establishment of Christ's kingdom because the Apostle Paul so applies it in Hebrews 12:26.

Zechariah, on the other hand, through the direction of the Lord, uses the circumstances associated with the work then in hand as an occasion to tell of a greater Jerusalem yet to be constructed, a Jerusalem from which "living waters" would flow for the blessing of all nations. And in that day, the prophet explains, the Lord "shall be king over all the earth." The Jerusalem of that wonderful "day of the Lord" will be so important in the divine arrangements "that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth . . . to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain."—Zech. 14:8, 9, 17

The Lord instructed Zechariah

to say to Israel, "Turn ye unto me, . . . and I will turn unto you." The Israelites had turned far from the Lord, and apparently their long exile in Babylon had not wrought the repentance in their hearts which warranted the Lord in showing them his full favor. The entire history of that nation was largely one of backsliding and unfaithfulness. This was climaxed when they rejected their Messiah and put him to death.

Then followed the beginning of their age-long dispersion from the land and scattering among all nations, from which they are only now beginning to return. And now, even as when they returned from Babylon, the Lord's full favor will not be upon them until they turn to him with their whole heart. And with the Gentiles, even as with the Jews, this will be the condition upon which they may expect to receive the blessings of the kingdom.

ZECHARIAH 7:8-14—This passage is a further enlargement of the thought already expressed concerning the need of turning to the Lord and of obeying him in order to have his blessing. Here the Lord stresses the importance of that part of his law which has to do with the relationship of his people to one another. They were to execute "true judgment," "show mercy and compassions every man to his brother" as our Golden Text states, and they were not to oppress the "widow," the "fatherless," the "stranger," nor the "poor." And besides, they were not to "imagine evil" against one another.

This is a high standard of human relationship, and quite out of harmony with the inclinations of the fallen flesh; so much so that they did not want to hear it. They turned away from these instructions, the Lord says, and because of that he turned away from them, refusing to hear, even when they called to him. This is why he had allowed them to go into exile. He had "scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not," and their land became "desolate."

ZECHARIAH 8:16, 17—In the passage cited above, the Lord explains to Israel why they had been driven out of the land. It was because they had not given heed to his statutes. Now that they were back from captivity he admonished them to obey those same statutes. God's law does not change. It was not because his statutes were faulty that the Israelites had gone into captivity. It was because they had failed to obey them—And if now they were to enjoy his continued blessing it would be necessary for them to make an earnest effort to keep his law—Thus they would honor him and deal unselfishly with one another, and his blessing would be upon them in all their ways.

QUESTIONS:

At what period in Israel's history did Zechariah serve them as prophet?

Compare briefly the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah.

Upon what conditions may any people at any time be justified in expecting God's blessing?

THE THREE WAYS

April 4

¶ Frank, would you say that the way of salvation is so plain and understandable today that the general public, even those who have not made a study of the subject, can clearly understand the issues involved?

¶ No, Ernest! The Apostle Paul, in II Corinthians 4:4, tells us that Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of the people. It is very evident to me, from conditions all around us, that the scriptural viewpoint on the subject is a very accurate one. Doesn't it seem that way to you?

¶ Yes, it does. In view of all the religious confusion that is everywhere apparent, I should think it would be very different for anyone to decide just what constitutes truth, and what is necessary in order to please God and obtain salvation. But how do you harmonize these facts with certain statements in the Bible?

¶ For instance?

¶ Well, take this passage in Isaiah 35:8. I'll read it, and then you'll see my difficulty—"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Now, Frank, am I right in concluding that the way of holiness referred to in this passage is the road to salvation?

¶ Yes, I believe that's right.

¶ Very well, but notice what it says. It declares that this way is so plain that wayfaring men, though fools, need not err therein. Has the way ever been plain and easy as described in this text?

¶ No, Ernest, it hasn't, and if you read the next verse you will find a description of still other conditions that have not as yet been realized by mankind. Verse 9 continues describing conditions on the highway of holiness, and it says: "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there."

¶ Frank, what is meant by the promise that no lion shall be there, and that no ravenous beast shall be on the highway of holiness?

¶ This, of course, is pictorial language, the lions and other beasts picturing the fierce enemies of those who love righteousness and endeavor to live in a way that is pleasing to God.

¶ There are certainly many frightful lions now in the way of those who endeavor to forsake sin and pursue righteousness.

¶ Indeed that is so! There is the lion of degenerate public sentiment, which deters many from venturing to obey the dictates of conscience, even in the matters of everyday life.

¶ And how about the lion of temptation to strong drink, which hinders thousands who otherwise would be glad to walk in the way of righteousness?

¶ Yes, Ernest, and the greatest lion of all is the devil himself. The Apostle Peter says of him that he goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

¶ But, Frank, when you speak of the devil as being one of the lions, that raises the question as to how this wonderful prophecy of Isaiah could ever be true. Won't Satan the devil, always be going about as a roaring lion, seeking to ensnare and devour and entrap the Lord's people?

¶ No, Ernest, he won't, thank God! There are definite promises in the Scriptures to assure us that the time is coming when Satan will be restrained, or bound. Revelation 20:1, 2 tell of this, and show that Satan, the great lion adversary of God's people, and of mankind in general, is to be bound for a thousand years, and later in the same chapter we are assured that he will finally be destroyed.

¶ Are we to understand from that, Frank, that the highway of holiness promised by Isaiah is a way of righteousness not yet available to the people, but that it is a promise to be fulfilled following the establishment of Christ's kingdom in the earth?

¶ That's the thought exactly, Ernest. It is the only way the promise of Isaiah can be understood in harmony with the facts and with the divine plan of salvation. The language used in the promise of the highway of holiness puts it in the future. It says there "shall" be a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness. It is not a description of what is true now, but a prophecy of that which will be true later, when Christ and his church reign over the earth for a thousand years.

¶ Well, what's happening now, Frank? Isn't God doing anything at the present time to enlighten the people, and to make the way of salvation easy for those who want to walk in it?

¶ There IS a way of salvation open at the present time. It was opened by Jesus at his first advent.

¶ Is it what Jesus describes as the "narrow way"?

¶ Yes. It is mentioned in Matthew 7:14. Professor Benjamin Wilson translates this text to read, "How narrow is the gate of life! how difficult that way leading thither! and how few are they who find it!"

¶ But what is it that makes the narrow way so narrow and difficult?

¶ Because it is a way of sacrifice and suffering.

¶ Why should those who serve the

Lord now be required to do so under such difficult circumstances, while those of the next age will have a highway provided for them in which the way will be made plain and easy?

¶ In God's balances of justice and love the difference is determined by the rewards at the end of the way. The narrow way of the present time leads to what the Scriptures describe as "glory, honor, and immortality." Those who walk successfully in this way are to be highly honored in that they will be joint rulers with Christ in the administration of the affairs of his thousand-year kingdom. Because the reward at the end of the narrow way is so great, divine wisdom has decreed that the tests of faithfulness imposed upon those who walk in this way shall be severe and exacting.

¶ What will be the reward of those who travel successfully over the highway during the millennial age?

¶ It will be a very wonderful reward, Ernest. It will be restoration to human perfection, and the opportunity to live forever on a perfected earth. This, of course, is not such a great reward as will be given to the faithful followers of Jesus in this age. These obtain what the Apostle Paul refers to as the "great salvation, which . . . began to be spoken by the Lord." (Hebrews 2:3) The way to this great salvation is indeed a rugged, steep, and narrow way. Were it not for the strength furnished for each successive step of the journey, we could never reach the goal.

¶ Well, I can see the logic of that, Frank. If the special hope of this Gospel age is so surpassingly glorious, then the way that leads to it naturally should be correspondingly difficult. I presume, also, that it's because the way is so difficult that few are able to find it, as Jesus indicates would be the case. But, Frank, I notice that in Matthew 7:13, Jesus speaks of still another way. He describes it as a "broad way, that leadeth to destruction," and says that many enter upon and travel in this broad road. That really makes three ways mentioned in the Bible—doesn't it?

¶ That's right, Ernest—the broad way, the narrow way, and the highway.

¶ How long has the broad road been open, Frank?

¶ Oh, that's a very old road, Ernest, very old! Millions who have traveled on that road are now dead.

¶ Well, it leads to destruction, doesn't it?

¶ That's what Jesus said. Adam and Eve were the first to travel on this road. The entrance to the broad road leading to destruction is disobedience to God's law, and our first parents were the original transgressors. The broad road leads to destruction because the wages of sin is death. It is described as broad in order to give us a vivid picture of the fact that all mankind are going down into death because of sin.

¶ I understand, of course, Frank, that the Scriptures use the thought of highways, and broad ways, and narrow ways merely as illustrations. But in keeping with this pictorial language, would we say that the narrow way of this age, and the highway of the next age, branch off from the broad way?

¶ I wouldn't put it just that way, Ernest. They are in reality **return** roads to life. The narrow way is rugged and steep, but those who by divine grace are able to travel all the way to the end, attain to the high plane of immortality, the divine nature. The highway of the next age will lead back from death through the green valleys of human restoration, until full perfection and glory of the human nature is attained. So you see, Ernest, the position of those who are traveling over the broad road that leads to destruction is not hopeless. There is a way of getting back to life. That way, primarily, both now and in the next age, is through Christ.

¶ I notice, Frank, in Isaiah's prophecy of the highway, it says that the unclean shall not pass over it.

¶ That's true, Ernest, but it also says, "It shall be for those." You see, it is a way that leads to holiness. The thought is that the unclean, which is

all mankind, born in sin and shapen in iniquity, by entering upon this road and traveling over it, make progress toward holiness. Thus it is true that the unclean shall not pass over it—that is, all the way over it, because they become clean as they travel.

¶ Frank, what does it mean in the next verse which says that "the redeemed shall walk there"?

¶ A similar thought is expressed in the last verse of this wonderful chapter, where it speaks of "the ransomed of the Lord." The ransomed of the Lord, or the redeemed, are those for whom Christ died, that is, all mankind. The last verse of the chapter assures us of the fact that the highway over which the redeemed travel is indeed the return road from death, for it says, "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, . . . with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH

April 11

¶ Frank, what is wrong with heaven that there should be need for God to create a new one? The Lord says, "Behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." (Isa. 65:17-22) I can understand why there might be need to create a new earth—or at least to create new conditions on the old earth—but why should there be "new heavens"?

¶ That's a very interesting question Ernest, especially in view of the fact that Jesus taught his followers to pray for God's will to be done in earth as it is now done in heaven, for that would seem to indicate that conditions in heaven are already quite ideal.

¶ And that's just the point of my question, Frank.

¶ Before coming directly to your question, Ernest, I would like you to notice the next verse of the prophecy, which says, "But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."

¶ What does that have to do with it?

¶ It indicates that the "new heavens and new earth" which God promised to create is also described as being the "new Jerusalem." In the 21st chapter of Revelation these same two symbolisms are associated. The Revelator writes, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." Then he adds, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven."

¶ Frank, in that passage you have just quoted the Revelator says that the holy city came down from God out of heaven. Is this the same heaven, the "new" heaven which God will create?

¶ I was hoping you would ask that question, for I quoted the passage with the thought of calling attention to the different ways in which that word "heaven," or "heavens" is used in the Bible. The "heaven" from which the holy city is said to come is evidently the spiritual realm of the universe in which God dwells; but when he promises to create a "new heavens" the reference is not to a new spiritual realm. In this case the term is used to symbolize spiritual ruling powers over the affairs of men. That is why the new heavens is said to be the "holy city, the new Jerusalem," for a city is also used in the Scriptures to symbolize a government.

¶ And what government is symbolized by the "holy city"?

¶ The government, or kingdom of the Lord.

¶ Are you sure of that, Frank?

¶ Yes, Ernest, very sure. In Isaiah's prophecy, after the Lord makes his wonderful promise to create a "new heavens and a new earth," and tells of the blessings which will come to

mankind as a result, he then adds a word of explanation. This is in the 1st verse of the next chapter, and reads, "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool."

¶ I should think it would be more correct to say that the Lord's throne is IN heaven.

¶ But that's not the thought, Ernest. This seems to be a reference to the new heavens of promise, and the Lord is explaining that this new heavens is in reality his throne; that is, a new governmental control over the affairs of men. This "throne" of God is mentioned in the Book of Revelation (22:1), and there the promise is that the river of life will flow out from this throne, bringing blessings of life to all mankind.

¶ Well, this poor old world needs such blessings now, all right. But Frank, what is there about the heavens and earth that God should use them to symbolize his kingdom arrangements for the blessing of the people?

¶ Ernest, so far as this planet is concerned, all life on it, animate and inanimate depends in one way or another upon the heavens. The seasons, the tides, the weather, are all subject to the sun, moon, and stars—to their powers of control, shall we say. So the Lord uses this relationship of the physical heavens and earth as a symbol of a divine control which will be set up over man, a control which is described in the Bible as the kingdom of Christ, and also as the kingdom of heaven and of God. It will be a government which will have two phases, as it were, a spiritual and a human phase, and these are symbolized as the "new heavens" and the "new earth."

¶ Frank, did you say the Bible also speaks of Christ's kingdom as a "holy city"?

¶ That's right, a "holy city, new Jerusalem."—Rev. 21:2

¶ Then it won't be an actual city that will come down from God out of heaven?

¶ Of course not! The old Jerusalem

was the capital city of the Jewish nation, hence in the minds of the Israelites God's government was associated with that city; so one of the symbols used to depict the thousand-year government of Christ is that of the "new" Jerusalem. It is also called a "holy city," in contrast with a very unholy city that is described earlier in Revelation, an unholy city which is used to symbolize a counterfeit kingdom of Christ which would be set up in the earth. Most students of the Bible agree that this unholy city, called Babylon, is used in the Scriptures to depict the now decadent church-state systems of Europe.

¶ All of which is very interesting, Frank. But getting back to Isaiah's prophecy, I notice the explanation is given that after the new heavens and new earth are created infant mortality will cease. Perhaps I had better read the text. It says, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." Now, what does all that mean?

¶ That is one of the prophetic descriptions of the vast changes which will take place in human experience as a result of the coming into power of Christ's kingdom. It says that babies will not then die. Infants die now, not because they have committed sin, but because they are members of a sinful and dying race.

¶ Is that what the Bible means where it says that "the fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge"?

¶ Yes, that proverb is found in the 31st chapter of the prophecy of Jeremiah, and the prophet adds that a time is coming when this will no longer be true as it is today, and explains that when that time comes every man shall die for his own iniquity, not for the sins of another. (Jer. 31:29, 30) Infants are not in themselves sinners, so when Christ's kingdom is governing the affairs of the world, they will not need to die.

¶ I get that point all right. But Frank, what is meant by the statement that as a child shall one die who is a hundred years old, and that a sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed?

¶ Well, that's rather a vague translation of the original Hebrew text, but the real thought is that the only ones who then die at all will be those who are wilful sinners, who sin against the full light and knowledge which will then be available. But even these will not die until they are a hundred years old. In other words, during the thousand years of Christ's kingdom every individual will be given a hundred years of trial, a hundred years in which to turn from sin to righteousness. If after a hundred years one still prefers sin to righteousness, he will be cut off in death. Peter says that he "shall be destroyed from among the people." —Acts 3:23

¶ What about the child who dies at a hundred years of age?

¶ Well, that simply means that those who die after a hundred years of trial because they continue to disobey the laws of the kingdom will be merely infants in comparison to the length of time they could have lived had they turned to God and to righteousness.

¶ Frank, how long will the people live when Christ's kingdom is established in the earth? A noted scientist claims that with the aid of atomic energy people will be able to live as long as Methuselah, which I believe was something over 900 years.

¶ Ernest, even Methuselah, who lived 969 years, would seem like a mere child compared with the ages of those who obey the laws of the kingdom of Christ, because they will live forever.

¶ Will that be right here on the earth, as human beings?

¶ Yes, right here on the earth as human beings. And why not? The whole Christian world believes in everlasting life, and why should it be difficult to believe the promises of God which assure us that the human race will be given the opportunity to live forever on the earth? After all, God created the

earth for man, and he created man to be the king over the earth.

¶ Evidently you are right, Frank, for I notice that the Prophet Isaiah says of that time that "they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them." (Isaiah 65:21) I can't imagine that the angels will be building houses in heaven, nor planting vineyards, can you?

¶ Hardly, and besides the next verse says that "they shall not build, and another inhabit," and not "plant, and another eat." This obviously is descriptive of the great change in human experience which will be brought about as a result of Christ's kingdom. Now everything is temporary. In comparatively few years after a family becomes established in a home, its members begin to die off, and finally some one else occupies the home. But in the new age there will be permanency—they shall "long" enjoy the work of their hands, writes the prophet.

¶ How long, Frank? I notice that the prophet says, "As the days of a tree are the days of my people." What does that mean?

¶ Many of the trees of ancient Palestine were very long-lived, continuing to live through many generations of human beings. While men died, the trees continued to live, hence they are used in this prophecy as a symbol of continuing life. This will be true of all who become God's people during the millennial reign of Christ.

¶ Another question, Frank, if you don't mind. God says in the prophecy, "Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." Who are God's elect?

¶ This is a reference to the spiritual seed of Abraham, and the Apostle Paul identifies them as Jesus and his faithful followers, who together with him will be the channel of blessing for all mankind. But Ernest, these are not the ones who will build houses in the next age, and inhabit them, and plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.

¶ But the prophecy seems to give that impression, Frank.

¶ Only because of a poor translation. The translators have suggested a better rendering in the margin, which reads, "Mine elect shall make them long enjoy the work of their hands."

¶ What does that mean?

¶ Well, as we have seen, the "elect," or the chosen people of God, are Jesus and his church. They will be the new spiritual rulers of that world to come.

¶ The "new heavens"—is that the thought?

¶ Correct. Jesus will, of course, be the chief among these, the great King who shall rule from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth. (Psa. 72:8) It will be under the administration of this divine kingdom that the people of all nations will be blessed with life and happiness. Thus it will be that God's elect, those whom he has chosen to be the spiritual rulers of that time, will cause the members of the restored human race long to enjoy the works of their hands.

HAS CHRISTIANITY FAILED?

April 18

¶ Ernest, has it ever occurred to you that the generally accepted ideas of Christianity cannot be harmonized with world developments as we see them today?

¶ Do you mean the idea of peace on earth and good will among men?

¶ That, Ernest, is only a part of it. Almost the entire outlook of Christianity will have to be revised if the world is to be made to realize that Christianity has not failed.

¶ I don't know that I follow you too well, Frank.

¶ Well, my question was suggested by that wonderfully reassuring passage

from the prophecy of Isaiah 55:8-13, where the Lord tells us that his Word shall not return unto him void, but it accomplishes that for which he sends it into the earth.

¶ But what does that have to do with present world conditions?

¶ Ernest, let's take a broad view of the matter and see what we find. It has been the general understanding of nearly all professed Christian people that beginning with Pentecost the Gospel of Christ was sent out into the world to bring about its conversion to Christ, and that ultimately the whole world would accept pure Christianity, assuring peace on earth and genuine good will among men. There have been nineteen centuries of Gospel preaching, but what is the condition of the world today? If we view the matter honestly we will have to admit that the world is no nearer to the true principles of Christianity than it was at the beginning of the age.

¶ Which would seem to imply that God's Word has failed to accomplish the purpose for which it was sent. Is that the point you are making?

¶ Exactly, and Ernest, this apparent failure of Christianity is a challenge to the professed Christian world of today. If that challenge is not properly met the proportion of unbelievers will increase. Churchianity, in its struggle to maintain civilization, has come to grips with atheism, and never in the history of the church has it been more important to recognize the issue involved and to explain to the world what constitutes real Christianity.

¶ That's true enough, Frank, and certainly truth should be more powerful than error; but in just what ways would the truth of the Bible offset the arguments of the atheists of today?

¶ I think of one point which I believe would help a great deal. You probably know that one of the arguments of organized atheism as it sweeps over the world from Eastern Europe is that Christianity is merely an opiate for the people, something that has been used to keep the poor in subjection to the rich; that the threat of future punish-

ment in a hell of fire has been held over the people like a whip to make them obey the dictates of church and state.

¶ Frank, how does the Bible answer that argument?

¶ Well, in the first place, the Bible doesn't teach eternal torture. In this enlightened day of ours, this is one of the first smirches on the name of true Christianity which should be removed. How can we consistently condemn totalitarian atheism for its cruelties in punishing political enemies while we continue to worship a god who according to the creeds intends to torment his enemies forever in a hell of fire?

¶ But Frank, very few believe that any more!

¶ That may be true, but most people take for granted that it is taught in the Bible, so they don't know what to do about it—at least, many do not. Millions are losing faith in the Bible because they have never been told that it does not teach this grotesque theory of the Dark Ages. If representatives of all the great churches of the world would get together and draw up a manifesto telling the nations that the God of the Bible is a God of love, not a torment deity, much would be accomplished to restore faith in the Bible, and the most effective arguments of the atheists would be taken away from them.

¶ But Frank, is it your thought that if a God of love were proclaimed to the nations, the world could thereby be converted to Christ? In other words, has the failure to convert the world and establish peace on earth been due to the preaching of a wrong message?

¶ Ernest, the real reason the whole world has not yet been converted to Christ, and peace and good will established in the earth, is that the present age in the plan of God has not been for that purpose. Jesus gave his disciples a commission to go into all the world to preach the Gospel, not to convert the world, but to make disciples from among all nations. James explains it, saying, "To take out of the

Gentiles a people for his name."—
Acts 15:14

¶ What does that mean?

¶ Well, briefly, Ernest, what it means is this: throughout the Old Testament there are many, many promises of God to send a Christ, a Messiah, a King, who would establish a divine rulership over all the nations of earth and bless them with peace and joy and everlasting life. Jesus was, and is, that great King, but the Bible reveals that representatives from all the nations of the earth were to be selected and prepared to reign with him. These were to share the glory of his great name as members of the divine family. The first ones to be chosen for this high position in the divine plan were from the Jewish nation, and then the disciples were commissioned to go to all nations with the Gospel message with the objective of reaching others who would, through full devotion to God, qualify to reign with Christ. Together, these are the "people for his name" mentioned by the apostle.

¶ Frank, was it the plan of God that those who accepted the Gospel and became followers of Jesus should try to reform the governments of earth, and in a general way regulate the civil affairs of the world?

¶ No! They are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and he did not join hands with the world in any way. The world despised him, and finally crucified him. He taught his followers to be subject to the powers that be, rather than to try to reform them.

¶ Frank, didn't the Apostle Paul teach that servants were to be subject to their masters?

¶ That's right!

¶ Is that where the anti-Christian world gets the idea that Christianity is merely an opiate for the people to keep them in subjection to capitalistic overlords?

¶ I believe that is one of the Scriptures they cite, but they overlook the remainder of the passage which instructs Christian masters to love their servants, and to treat them as true brothers in Christ. Instructions of this

kind emphasize the point I was making that the business of Christians has not been to change the status quo of world affairs in any way, but to be faithful messengers of the Gospel, thus letting their light shine in a dark world and thereby proving their loyalty to the Lord and to his truth, even though it cost them their lives. And then, in the end, they will be rewarded by being raised up in what the Scriptures call the "first resurrection," to live and to reign with Christ in his thousand-year kingdom.

¶ And that divine purpose for this age has not failed, is that the thought?

¶ That is the thought, Ernest. God's Word has gone forth throughout the centuries to attract the true followers of the Master, and to encourage them to faithfulness in walking in the narrow way of sacrifice, the footsteps of Jesus. His Word has not returned to him void. It has accomplished this purpose, although the world has never known what has been occurring.

¶ I guess the world has viewed Christianity from the standpoint of the imposing church-state systems of Europe, and of the countless millions of dollars that have been spent to convert the world, all of which have failed. But Frank, the Scriptures state that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are the Lord's ways higher than man's ways. How does that thought work out in connection with man's efforts to convert the world?

¶ In a very interesting manner, Ernest. In another of the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the great success of Christ's kingdom in the earth, the assertion is made that "the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:7

¶ Do you mean that God doesn't appreciate anything we try to do for him?

¶ No, I didn't mean that at all. God has invited his people to serve him, but if they are to have his blessing they must work according to his plan, not their own.

¶ Frank, would you say that the difference between God's plan and the ways of man is that in the divine plan

BROADCAST SCHEDULE

Frank and Ernest programs—Sundays unless otherwise noted.

N. F. TIME **STA. KC. P.M.**
St. John's, N. F. (Thurs.) VOCM 1006 9:00

Fort Worth, Texas **KWBC 970 2:15**
Waukesha, Wis. **WAUX 1510 3:15**

EASTERN TIME **STA. KC. A.M.**
Akron, Ohio WADC 1350 9:45
Augusta, Ga. WGAC 580 10:15
Baltimore, Md. WFBR 1300 9:15
Bay City, Mich. WBCM 1440 10:00
Binghamton, N. Y. WNBF 1290 10:00
Columbus, Ohio WHKC 610 9:30
Hamilton, Ont. CHML 900 9:45
Knoxville, Tenn. WBIR 1240 8:45
Lawrence, Mass. WLAW 680 10:15
Martinsburg, W. Va. WEPM 1340 10:30
Philadelphia, Pa. WIP 610 9:30
Pittsburgh, Pa. WWSW 1490 9:45

» » P.M.

Dayton, Ohio WHIO 1290 12:15
Detroit-Windsor (Sat.) CKLW 800 4:45
Grand Rapids, (Thurs.) WLAV 1340 10:00
Jacksonville, Fla. WJHP 1320 2:45
New York, N. Y. WINS 1010 10:15

CENTRAL TIME **STA. KC. A.M.**
Anderson, Ind. WHBU 1240 9:45
Birmingham, Ala. WSGN 610 10:00
Clinton, Iowa KROS 1340 9:45
Grand Forks, N. D. KILO 1440 9:15
Jamestown, N. D. KSJB 600 10:30
Louisville, Ky. WGRC 1370 8:45
Medford, Wis. (Wed.) WIGM 1500 9:45
Minneapolis, Minn. WTCN 1280 9:15
Muscatine, Iowa KWPC 860 9:45
St. Louis, Mo. KXOK 630 10:00
San Antonio, Tex. KMAC 1240 8:45
Shenandoah, Iowa KMA 960 9:15

» » P.M.

Chicago, Ill. WAIT 820 1:30

MOUNTAIN TIME **STA. KC. A.M.**
Caldwell, Idaho KCID 1490 9:30
Douglas, Ariz. KAWT 1450 8:45
Globe, Ariz. KWJB 1240 10:15
Phoenix, Ariz. KPHO 1230 9:45
Prescott, Ariz. (Sat.) KYCA 1490 8:45
Safford, Ariz. KGLU 1450 9:45
Tucson, Ariz. KVOA 1290 8:45
Wallace, Idaho KWAL 1450 10:15
Yuma, Ariz. (Sat.) KYUM 1240 9:15

» » P.M.

Kalispell, Mont. KGEZ 1460 4:45
Prince Albert, Sask. CKBI 900 12:15

PACIFIC TIME **STA. KC. A.M.**
Albany, Ore. KWIL 1240 10:45
Berkeley, Calif. KRE 1400 9:00
Blythe, Calif. KUCB 1400 9:00
Brawley, Calif. (Sat.) KROP 1300 12:45
Brawley, Calif. KROP 1300 10:15
Calexico, Calif. KICO 1490 7:00
Indio, Calif. (Sat.) KREO 1400 12:45
Indio, Calif. KREO 1400 10:15
Lewiston, Idaho KRRLC 1400 8:15
Long Beach, Calif. KGER 1390 8:45
Riverside, Calif. (Sat.) KPRO 1440 12:45
Riverside, Calif. KPRO 1440 10:15
Riverside, Calif. KPOR FM 10:15
San Diego, Calif. KFMB 1450 8:45
Seattle, Wash. KJR 950 7:45
Spokane, Wash. KREM 1340 9:45
Stockton, Calif. KGDM 1140 9:30
The Dalles, Ore. KODL 1230 9:15
Vancouver, B. C. CKMO 1410 10:30
Vancouver, Wash. KVAN 910 9:15
Victoria, B. C. CJVI 900 10:00

God himself assumes the responsibility of success, and therefore it is sure to succeed; while with human plans, we undertake to work matters out as we think they should be, hoping that God will bless us, even though he seldom does?

¶ That just about sums it up, I think. And how glad we are that it is that way! The world is in the chaotic state that it is today because human plans have failed. And think of all the foolish things that have been attempted in the name of the Lord. We should be glad that God has not blessed them all. On the other hand, what a consolation it is to realize that despite the crumbling of our twentieth century civilization, Christianity has not failed; that the time is near when the world will see, and will rejoice in the glorious triumph of Christianity, which will be the full establishment of the kingdom of Christ.

CHRIST'S SECOND PRESENCE

April 25

¶ Frank, are we justified in expecting that God will use his power to intervene in world affairs to save the race from annihilation?

¶ Ernest, that outlook is just as sure as the promises of God!

¶ Well, it always has been a suffering world, and the easiest thing to believe is that it always will be. Don't you realize that it would require miracle-working power to establish a world government that would actually control the affairs of the nations, and thus establish peace and security for all mankind?

¶ Yes, I know that, but we as Christians believe in the miracle-working power of God, and it is only upon the basis of such a belief that the promises of God can have real meaning for us. Don't you believe those promises, Ernest?

¶ Oh, I believe the Bible all right, but there are so many things that seem so very difficult to understand. Time and again you have told me about Christ's return, and about his kingdom that is soon to be established. But as you know, there is a widespread belief in the world that when Christ returns this earth is to be destroyed. Many are wondering now if atomic power may not be the means to bring about this destruction.

¶ The difficulty with many has been a misunderstanding of the purpose of Christ's return and of what the Bible means in its prophecies concerning the end of the world. Ernest, have you read the booklet I gave you recently dealing with the subject of Christ's second coming?

¶ Yes, and it has been a great help. But there are some points I would like to discuss further with you concerning the second coming of Christ and

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTS

| Vic. and N. S. W. Time | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Geelong | 3GL 222 metres 10:00 A. M. |
| Sydney | 2KY 294 metres 8:15 A. M. |
| Western Australian Time | |
| Perth | 6KY 227 metres 10:15 A. M. |

POLISH BROADCASTS

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Ashtabula, Ohio | WICA 8:45 a.m. |
| Boston, Mass. | WORL 10:30 a.m. |
| Chicago, Ill. | WGES 8:45 a.m. |
| Niagara Falls, N. Y. | WHLD 9:45 a.m. |
| Springfield, Mass. | WSPR 10:00 a.m. |
| Stevens Point, Wis. | WFHR 10:30 a.m. |

its relationship to the end of the world. There are a number of prophecies on this subject which seem to contradict one another.

¶ You doubtless remember we learned in a recent discussion that the purpose of Christ's return is the restoration of the entire human race, including all who have died down through the ages, to life upon the earth. This is one of the great fundamentals of biblical prophecy. Whatever of detail concerning Christ's second coming is portrayed in the prophecies must be in harmony with this great fundamental purpose of his return.

¶ Well, that certainly would mean that Christ does not return to destroy the earth. But while we are on the subject, Frank, I would like to ask about some scriptures which are puzzling to many. For instance, in Revelation 1:7 we are told that when Christ comes it will be in clouds, and that every eye shall see him. On the other hand, Jesus himself said that he would return as a thief in the night. This prophecy seems to be directly opposite in meaning to the one which declares that he will come in the clouds and every eye shall see him. Does the Bible explain this seeming contradiction?

¶ Yes, Ernest. And that booklet on the subject of Christ's return calls attention to the manner in which the Bible interprets its own prophecies relating thereto. For example, these prophecies reveal that to start with Christ's presence upon the earth will be as a thief in the night, in the sense that mankind in general will not know that he has returned. It will be later that his presence will be revealed to all mankind.

¶ Will the people then literally see Jesus as a human being in the clouds of heaven?

¶ Ernest, when you read that booklet on the subject, you will find that the Scriptures use the term "see" to denote discernment, or understanding. The Apostle Paul, for example, says, "We see Jesus." (Heb. 2:9) Neither the apostle nor those to whom he wrote these words saw Jesus literally at that

time. What he meant was that all Christians discern Jesus to be the Redeemer and Savior of the world.

¶ Well, I can understand that, all right. But there are still other prophecies which also seem difficult for many to understand. I have marked one here which says that Christ will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. (I Thess. 4:16) Now I know that a thief doesn't shout and blow a trumpet.

¶ That's quite true, but at the same time this passage is fully in harmony with the prophecy regarding the thief-like presence of the Lord.

¶ I know it must be, but there are still other prophecies about the second coming of Christ which are different from any I have mentioned. One of them says that he will come riding on a horse; another says that he will come and serve food to his followers. Another, that his feet will stand upon the mount of Olives, and that there will be an earthquake that will split the mountain in two, and that one of his feet shall stand on one part of the mountain, and the other foot on the other part of the mountain. How could Jesus stand on the mount of Olives and be up in the clouds at the same time? Frank, these are serious questions to many people. How can all these prophecies concerning Christ's second coming be harmonized? Does that booklet on Christ's return deal with all these prophecies I have mentioned?

¶ Yes, Ernest, it does. And, as I have already said, the Bible itself harmonizes its own prophecies when we study them in their proper relationship to one another. We must recognize that the prophecies of the Bible concerning Christ's second advent are descriptive of a whole series of events which cover a period of a thousand years. They do not all refer merely to the moment of his coming.

¶ Would you mind explaining that point a little more fully?

¶ A good illustration of what I mean is the manner in which the Old Testa-

ment prophecies foretold the first advent of Jesus. Some of those prophecies told of the Savior's birth, some told of his suffering and death, some told of his riding into Jerusalem on an ass, some told of lots being cast for his garments, etc. Now, all these prophecies were different, yet they were all fulfilled in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The point is that each one referred to a different time and a different experience in connection with Jesus' first advent.

¶ But how does that illustrate the manner in which the prophecies of the second advent are to be fulfilled?

¶ In the sense that it shows how impossible it would be to harmonize the prophecies which describe the work of a whole thousand years should we try to apply them to a single event, such as the arrival of Christ at his second advent. It was not the exact moment of Christ's birth which is described in the many prophecies of his first advent, and likewise it is not the exact moment of his second advent to which the prophecies refer. This fact has been concealed to considerable extent by a mistranslation of the Greek word *parousia* used in many of the prophecies of the New Testament concerning Christ's second advent. It is mistranslated coming. Its real meaning is presence.

¶ How does that affect one's understanding of the prophecies concerning Christ's return?

¶ It reveals that the prophecies refer to the thousand years of his presence rather than to the moment of his arrival. That, in turn, helps us to see the harmony of the prophecies.

¶ Well, how does that harmonize the prophecy which declares that Christ comes as a thief in the night with the other that he blows a trumpet, and comes with a shout?

¶ We won't have time to go into that phase of the subject in any detail. The booklet answers the question, however. But another point we need to remember in this connection is that God often talks to us through his Word in pictorial language, just as we often

speak to one another. We might say, for example, that the whole world is upside down, but would not mean it literally.

¶ Are we to understand that Christ will blow a literal trumpet when he returns?

¶ No! A trumpet is used in the prophecies to symbolize a message, or an announcement. In the case of our Lord's second presence, this announcement or message is the truth concerning the divine program for the blessing of the world during the thousand years of Christ's kingdom. Those kingdom blessings were foreshadowed by God's dealings with the nation of Israel. There was an arrangement whereby every fiftieth year was to be a jubilee year, during which there was a general share-the-wealth program inaugurated, when the people had their lost homes and lost property restored to them. This jubilee year was introduced by the blowing of the jubilee trumpet.

¶ And there is to be a whole thousand years of jubilee blessings for the world, is that it?

¶ Yes, and man's lost home in Eden is to be restored to the human race, and the whole earth will become a veritable paradise in which the people will live in happiness forever. You know, Ernest, this is almost too big a subject to discuss properly at one sitting. I feel that I should urge you to read that booklet that I gave you some time ago. I have already mentioned it, but I wonder if you really appreciate the valuable information it contains on this all-important subject of Christ's second coming. Now that we have entered what the world calls the atomic age, an understanding of the second coming of Christ and the manner in which his coming will solve the problems created by human selfishness becomes more important than it has ever been before.

LITERATURE OFFER April 4, "Hope" Dawn; April 11 and 18, "Plan" Dawn; April 25, "Christ Has Returned" booklet.

Jesus' Trial of Faith

ON THURSDAY evening, April 22, Christians throughout the world will commemorate the death of Jesus as the Redeemer of the church and all mankind. This annual commemoration has become familiarly known to thousands as the "Memorial Supper," and in partaking of the emblems of bread and wine these see in them that which represents the death of our Redeemer, and also a symbol of the privilege we have of suffering and dying with him. The Memorial Supper gathering is therefore without doubt the most important meeting of the year for the consecrated.

Naturally, as we approach the date for this important meeting, our minds dwell more than ever upon the example of our Master, and particularly those events in his life which have a direct bearing on the circumstances which led to his crucifixion, and the tests of faith and obedience these circumstances imposed upon him. As we are endeavoring to walk in his steps the manner in which he passed through his trials encourages us by revealing the way of sacrifice and assuring us of divine grace to help in every time of need, even as the Heavenly Father gave strength to Jesus.

In our Christian Life article for this month the matter of overcoming, as exemplified in the life of Jesus, is discussed. Other points concerning the Memorial are discussed in The Question and Answer columns. Here we would like to note briefly the manner in which the Master's faith was tested in connection with his relationship to the Heavenly Father as a Son. Paul speaks of the great contradiction of sinners against Jesus, and these contradictions can be seen in connection with the fact of his being the Son of God. (Heb. 12:3) This issue arose in Jesus' life at the very beginning of his ministry. At the time of his consecration and baptism his Heavenly Father assured him of his sonship—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. 3:17

But this blessed reality was not to go unchallenged. Forty days later, as Jesus came out of the wilderness following his long fast, he was tempted by Satan, who began his campaign of contra-

diction by raising the question of the Master's sonship—"IF thou be the Son of God." This was suggesting to Jesus that it would be well for him to establish his claim of sonship. There was subtlety in this, for Satan doubtless knew that according to the Jewish viewpoint such a claim was considered to be blasphemy, and blasphemy was punishable by death.

Jesus knew this viewpoint of the Jews as well as Satan did, but he also was assured of his sonship, and would not tempt his Father by seeking additional proof. Besides, he knew that the principal feature of his ministry was to die for the sin of the world. Why should he then deny the great truth of his relationship to God in order to safeguard his life? Jesus resisted the tempter, but the campaign of contradiction was continued, and it comes to light particularly toward the close of his ministry, at a time which is very closely associated in our minds with the commemoration of his death. It was when he was brought before Israel's high priest. The religious rulers of the nation evidently had the plan all worked out in advance believing that they could trap Jesus on the point of his claim to being the Son of God, so the question was put to him, "Art thou then the Son of God?"—Luke 22:70

One of the methods by which the Heavenly Father furnishes strength to those who are faithful to him is by preparing them in advance for the trials which he knows they will experience. It was so with Jesus, and particularly in connection with this matter of his sonship. It was only a short time before this that the Heavenly Father had reassured him concerning it. This was on the Mount of Transfiguration. At his baptism, the voice from heaven had said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased," and now, in connection with the transfiguration vision, the faith-strengthening statement was heard again, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matt. 17:5) Undoubtedly Jesus heard these words as well as the disciples; and being such a short time prior to his appearance before the high priest, they would be very vividly remembered, hence when he was asked, "Art thou then the Son of God?" the Master was able with great fortitude to answer, "Thou hast said!"—Matt. 26:64

It required both faith and courage to reply in this direct, truthful manner. It required faith in the assuring words of the Heavenly Father, and courage to face the certainty of the death

sentence which would be imposed on the strength of this confession of "guilt." But Jesus passed the test, and became an example for us. We may never be called upon to give a testimony concerning the truth which will directly result in a death sentence, nevertheless, in ways less dramatic there are issues which arise almost daily to test the sincerity of our consecration and that give us an opportunity to answer either in a way to avoid or to accept the privilege of sacrifice. A Christian should never meet the issues of life with the thought of determining which course will be best for him according to the flesh. The deciding factor in meeting every situation should be, What is the will of God? And the will of God is not always the most pleasant for the flesh.

Satan's campaign of contradiction continued. Even when Jesus was hanging on the cross we hear the Adversary speaking through the mob—those who "watched him there" (Matt. 27:36)—"If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Matt. 27:40) There can be no doubt as to who prompted these words. They are almost identical with those used by Satan when tempting Jesus at the beginning of his ministry. Then the proposition was, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down" from the pinnacle of the temple. (Matt. 4:6) Jesus refused to yield to the temptation then, so now at the cross Satan returned to the attack, thinking that under the circumstances Jesus might attempt to prove his claim to sonship, hence he incited the crowd to shout, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."

This is as though Satan had said to the Master, "You would not make good your claim three and one-half years ago when I gave you the opportunity. Now you are in real trouble as a consequence, but I will give you one more chance. You refused to leap from the pinnacle of the temple, but perhaps you will come down from the cross, that is, if you really are the Son of God." Jesus was indeed the Son of God—this was one of the great realities of his life—but Satan was contradicting this truth.

However, Jesus was firm in his stand of faith. He knew that he was the Son of God. He knew that the time would come when all men would know it. But he also knew that God's will for him then was to remain on the cross and to die. It mattered little to him that his failure to prove his claim would allow the mob to believe that he was a deceiver. He knew that in God's due time they

would understand, so he allowed them to think what they would. Here again is a wonderful example for us. When facing trial let us always realize that it is much more important to do the will of God than it is to vindicate ourselves in the eyes of the world, or even in the eyes of the brethren. Let us not be over concerned if we are "contradicted." If we are truly right the Heavenly Father knows it, and after all, that is the important consideration. If he knows and understands, nothing else matters.

While Jesus was hanging on the cross, another cry went up from the crowd that was watching him die. They shouted, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." (Matt. 27:42) How very little did they realize that by his refusal to save himself he was providing the opportunity for everlasting salvation, not only for them, but for all the families of the earth. After all, this was the real purpose of his coming to earth as a man; that is, that he might give his flesh for the life of the world.—John 6:51

Only a few days before this, Jesus had said to his disciples, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it." (Matt. 16:25) How unfaithful he would have been to this great fundamental truth which he understood so well, if now, when the real test was upon him, he should endeavor to save his life by coming down from the cross. How glad we are that Jesus was faithful to the truth, and faithful to the terms of his consecration! But the real value of this example is in the encouragement it should give us similarly to be faithful.

The Memorial season should remind us of our consecration to be dead with Christ. We should remember that our consecration was not, and is not, merely a beautiful theory, nor merely something to talk about when we are with the brethren, but something which should be the inspiration of a life of sacrifice as we lay down our lives serving the Lord, the brethren, and the truth.

By refusing to save himself Jesus provided salvation for all mankind, and, if we are being planted together in the likeness of his death, we too are being baptized for the dead. We are not helping to provide the ransom, nevertheless, our death baptism, if we are faithful in it, will accrue to the benefit of mankind when, together with Christ, we will serve as the world's great High Priest. With profit we can meditate upon these and related thoughts as we approach the Memorial season.

Serving Our Brethren Abroad

THE efforts of Dawn readers to assist consecrated brethren in the war-torn countries of Europe by sending food and clothing is very much appreciated by them, as their letters clearly indicate. Surely the Lord is also pleased with this evidence of the love of his people for their brethren in this time of great need, and we are confident that the sending of both food and clothing will be continued as the friends are able.

The truth literature being sent is also proving to be a sustaining source of strength to the foreign brethren, and they are rejoicing in the opportunity again to have printed matter to use in their ministry of the truth. The secretary of the committee which represents our brethren in the Russian Zone wrote us that the packages of literature which they had received were by far the most important to them of anything which had reached them from America.

We hope to be able to increase this flow of literature, because what we have been able to send thus far has been merely as the proverbial "drop in the bucket" compared with the need. The brethren are asking for Manna Books and "Studies in the Scriptures," in addition to tracts and booklets. In Germany, the brethren had practically everything in the way of truth literature taken from them—in many instances even their Bibles—so we can realize the spiritual famine conditions which exist among them.

On the matter of food and cloth-

ing, there is some information which our overseas brethren wish to relay to the friends here. One point has to do with names in the Russian Zone of Germany. Several months ago we received long lists of names from elders of ecclesias in the Russian Zone, and these are the names which we have been sending to the brethren in this country in response to requests received from them. All of these have now had one or more packages of both food and clothing sent to them. Meanwhile, the assistance thus given to these brethren has created a bit of a problem as to who should receive this help from us. Hearing that food and clothing are reaching the Bible Students from America, numbers are coming into the ecclesias hoping to receive a share; and we regret to say professed Bible Students have now associated with other groups where apparently the supplies of material aid are more generous.

So our brethren in charge of distribution in the Russian Zone are preparing a new list, and have asked that nothing more be sent to the names we now have in that zone. In harmony with this request we ask those who now have addresses in the Russian Zone not to continue sending packages to them. Requests for new names may be sent to us, and they will be filled as soon as we receive the new list. This applies to the Russian Zone only.

Apparently many of the brethren have been including food in the

bundles of clothing. This is fine, but the overseas brethren write us that frequently the covers have come off of boxes of sugar and other foods, and the contents wasted. So when sending food together with clothing, make sure that it is properly packed. These bundles evidently get very rough treatment before they are finally delivered.

In many cases brethren sending bundles of food and clothing have given their own addresses as the senders. Now many of these are receiving letters of appreciation from the friends in Europe who received their gifts, which no doubt is a great encouragement. In some cases, however, letters are being sent to brethren in this country soliciting additional supplies, either for themselves or friends. Also, the names of American brethren have been passed on to others over there, who too are writing for help. Our representatives in Germany are asking that all such letters be ignored, or at least that nothing be sent until an investigation can be made. Naturally we would like to help everybody in Europe if we could, and particularly all of our own brethren. But since the help is limited, it is desirable that it reach the most worthy, and the only way that this can be determined is through our

representatives over there.

We have mentioned "Multi-purpose" food in previous announcements. This is an all-purpose food, scientifically prepared, which can be used to good advantage as a supplement to the regular daily rations of the brethren. The Dawn Overseas Service Committee is sending supplies of this, and reports indicate that it is working out very well. The cost is less than that of the ordinary foods which might be sent. A package (including some raisins) containing enough Multi-purpose food to supplement seventy-two meals, can be sent for \$4.25. This food is not procurable in regular food stores, but supplies can be obtained by the committee, and it is what is being sent by The Dawn. This food contains all the essential elements of nutriment except Vitamin C.

As previously stated, any who desire to send food or clothing packages direct should obtain new names and simplified instructions by writing to The Dawn. This method is desirable because it saves double postage and handling. Others, however, may prefer to contribute to the Overseas Fund, indicating their wishes that these amounts be expended for foreign literature, or for food and clothing.



The Lamb's Wife

"Come hither and I will shew thee the bride."—Revelation 2:9

THE word "bride" in the Hebrew is *kallah*, which is from a primitive root meaning "to complete," also "a son's wife." The Greek word used in the New Testament is *numphe*, and means "a betrothed girl," "a son's wife." We read in Genesis 2:18 that Eve was made to be a helpmeet for Adam; in other words, to complete Adam; for while he remained alone, he was not from God's standpoint complete. Different illustrations are used in the Scriptures to convey the thought of the unity of Christ and the church. The term bride particularly applies to the marriage day, but no one picture can adequately reveal all the glories that will come to the church. During the Gospel age, the church is the body of Christ, called unto his eternal glory, after that they have suffered awhile, and have been made perfect to do God's will.

Paul in II Corinthians 11:2, says, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." God does not want the affections of the church turned to the world. The term chaste suggests that we should not set our affections on any one else, or al-

low them to stray to the world; for does not James 4:4 say that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Paul feared that as the serpent beguiled Eve through subtilty, so we might be allured from our Lord. (II Corinthians 11:3) Satan's attack on Eve was, "Hath God said, Ye shall not eat? God doth know that in the day ye eat, thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods." (Gen. 3:1-5) Similarly Satan seeks to beguile the church by suggesting doubts regarding the fulfilment of the divine Word. Let us see that we are not corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

In Genesis 24 we have the account of Abraham's servant seeking a bride for Isaac. Abraham admonished him not to seek a bride from the people of the land, but to go to Abraham's own people. This illustrates the selection of the bride of Christ. Rebekah made the journey to the bridegroom she had not seen; so also it is written of the church in relationship to her Lord. "Whom, not having seen, ye love; but believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and glorious." (I Peter 1:8, Diaglott) In Revelation 19:7 we read, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Upon the robe provided by her Lord the needlework of the approved character must be worked out. She proves herself faithful and to her is "granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen,

clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Revelation 3:4 says of those in Sardis who had not defiled their garments, "They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." All the overcomers will be worthy because of their faithfulness, and on the marriage day, in glory and beauty arrayed, will be manifested as the bride of Christ. The panorama of Revelation can only be seen by those in the Spirit during the Lord's day (Rev. 1:10), and so we read in Revelation 21:10, "And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city"—for the bride had become the holy city, and as stated in verse 2, John saw the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

The illustration of the bride specifically refers, as we have seen, to the marriage day. Thereafter the bride class has become the new heavenly government for the blessing of humanity. The term bride alone could not adequately show the splendour of the church glorified. This is better portrayed under the heading of a city having the glory of God, and of which the Lamb is the light thereof, where God dwells. This will be the capital, the centre of world government, and the nations being saved will walk in the light of it, for there shall be no night there. It will be for the salvation of humanity. Should we not thank our Heavenly Father for having invited us to be of the bride class, and as the espoused, watch carefully every step that would draw us away from our Lord, remem-

bering that the Adversary is very subtle and would lead us away from the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Palestine -- A World Problem

THE United Nations organization faces a crisis of survival. The Arab nations, although members of the organization, threaten to use force to prevent the decision of the United Nations to partition Palestine. The Committee of five nations announced that "a dangerous and tragic precedent will have been established if the threat of force can prevent the decisions of the organization from being carried out." Mr. Byron Price, Assistant Secretary General, said, "We must look facts in the face that one first class failure might wreck the entire effort of international co-operation. In order to enforce partition, an international army will be needed."

There are, however, many difficulties in the way. Britain has stated that she will not send troops to enforce partition, and other European nations are not willing to send military forces. The U. S. A. does not wish to send American troops to enforce this scheme on the Arabs. Further, Mr. James Forrestal, the U. S. Secretary of Defense, states that the U. S. is quite unable to service a fleet, or an air force, without oil from the Middle East. If American soldiers are sent, the Arab governments will cancel the oil

concessions held by American corporations. Russia might send troops, but this would not suit either the United States or Britain.

So Palestine becomes a world problem, as the Scriptures indicated. The League of Nations fell and ceased to be, because it could not enforce its decisions. Will the United Nations fall for the same reason? The Scriptures say, "Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought." (Isa. 8:10) With the fall of the League of Nations, World War II was precipitated. Will the failure of the United Nations cause the great and final trouble that ushers in the kingdom of God?

Knowing the Way

**"Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"
—John 14:5**

THE Christian way has always been a mystery to the world, and it was not until after Pentecost that the understanding of this "way" was made clear to the apostles. Jesus said, "I am the Way," and the way he trod was a way of sacrifice. (John 14:6) He was then about to complete the sacrifice, suffering unto death, even death on the cross. At his death the veil of the temple was rent in twain, indicating that as a result of his death the way into the "holiest" was made manifest—as the apostle puts it, "by a new and living way, which he hath con-

secrated [margin, new made] for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." (Heb. 10:19, 20) Paul states that we should present ourselves "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, a reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1) We cannot be a living sacrifice and be apathetic or lukewarm. The Revelator says, "I would thou wert cold or hot." (Rev. 3:15) Saul persecuted those of this way (Acts 8:3; 9:1) because they were active in presenting the divine message.

The vision of the kingdom, in these last days, as shown by the Revelator, is not given to the lukewarm, for these could not appreciate it; but the vividness and clearness of the vision is made known to those who are "in the Spirit on the Lord's day." (Rev. 1:10) These can say with Peter, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables," but have become "eye witnesses of His majesty." (II Pet. 1:16) Are we in the Spirit? If not let us arouse ourselves from complacency and be living sacrifices, vitalised in the service of the truth.

Let us remember that the "narrow way" of sacrifice and the "high calling of God," were made known to us through the Studies in the Scriptures. (Matt. 7:14; Phil. 3:14) There are errors prevalent to-day due to misconceptions, which would vanish if we studied the Scriptures with these helps. Jesus was the Way, the beginner, and will be the perfecter of our faith if we look unto him with trust and confidence.—Heb. 3:6, 14; 10:35; 12:1, 2

THE BRITISH SECTION

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

C. E. DICKINSON

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Leigh, Lancs. (Afternoon) . April | 25 |
| Warrington (Evening) | 25 |
| Liverpool May | 23 |

J. E. HUMPHREY

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Beckenham | April 4 |
| Oxford | May 23 |

H. R. KIPPS

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| Anerley | May 30 |
|---------------|--------|

F. LINTER

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Leigh, Lancs. (Afternoon) .. May | 30 |
| Warrington (Evening) | 30 |

J. Y. MAC AULAY

| | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Warrington | March 28 |
| Shotton | 30 |
| Heswall Hills | 31 |
| Liverpool | April 1 |
| Broughton-in-Furness | 2 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Glasgow | 3, 4 |
| Dundee | 6, 7 |
| Edinburgh | 8, 9 |
| Gateshead | 10, 11 |
| Lincoln | 14, 15 |
| Dewsbury (Maple Mount) | 17, 18 |
| Dewsbury (Foundry Street) | 19 |
| Hyde | 21 |
| Stockport | 22, 25 |
| Cardiff | 26 |
| Pontypool | 28 |
| Ipswich | May 1, 2 |
| Birmingham | 15 |
| Ilford (Labour Hall) | 16, 17 |

J. H. MURRAY

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Dundee | April 11 |
| Anerley | 25 |
| Yeovil | May 2 |
| Maidstone | 9 |

W. E. PAMPLING

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Pontypool | April 11 |
| Peterborough | 25 |
| Dewsbury (Foundry Street) May | 2 |
| Beckenham | 23 |

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Speakers' Appointments

W. A. BAKER

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------|--------|
| Sacramento, Calif. | April | 2 |
| Oakland, Calif. | | 3, 4 |
| Stockton, Calif. | | 5 |
| Fresno, Calif. | | 6 |
| Los Angeles, Calif. | | 7-11 |
| Phoenix, Ariz. | | 12, 13 |
| Tucson, Ariz. | | 14 |
| San Antonio, Tex. | | 16-18 |
| Galveston, Tex. | | 19, 20 |
| Corsicana, Tex. | | 21 |
| Dallas, Tex. | | 22 |
| Oklahoma City, Okla. | | 23 |
| Wichita, Kans. | | 24, 25 |
| Topeka, Kans. | | 26, 27 |
| Kansas City, Mo. | | 28, 30 |
| St. Joseph, Mo. | | 29 |
| St. Louis, Mo. | May | 2 |

W. T. BAKER

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| Minneapolis, Minn. Mar. 30-April | 1 |
| Ostrander, Minn. | 2 |
| Owen, Wis. | 4, 5 |
| Wausau, Wis. | 6 |
| Stevens Point, Wis. | 7 |
| Appleton, Wis. | 8 |
| Green Bay, Wis. | 9 |
| Milwaukee, Wis. | 10, 11 |
| Port Washington, Wis. | 12, 13 |
| Waukesha, Wis. | 14 |
| Madison, Wis. | 15 |
| Elkader, Iowa | 16-18 |
| Clinton, Iowa | 19, 20 |
| Moline, Ill. | 21 |
| Canton, Ill. | 22 |
| Quincy, Ill. | 23 |
| Hannibal, Mo. | 24 |
| St. Louis, Mo. | 25 |
| Mattoon, Ill. | 26, 27 |
| Vincennes, Ind. | 28, 29 |
| New Albany, Ind. | May 2 |

FRED A. BRIGHT

| | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| Wallingford, Conn. (Morning) | April 4 |
| Hartford, Conn. (Afternoon) | 4 |

CHARLES CHUPA

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Wilmington, Del. | April 17, 18 |
|-----------------------|--------------|

JENS COPELAND

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| South Bend, Ind. | March 31, April 1 |
|------------------|-------------------|

O. D. DEIFER

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Philadelphia, Pa. | April 11 |
| York, Pa. (Evening) | 24 |
| York, Pa. (Morning) | 25 |
| Lancaster, Pa. (Afternoon) | 25 |

DAVID DINWOODIE

| | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Brooklyn, N. Y. (3 p. m.) | April 25 |
|---------------------------|----------|

EDWARD FAY

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Santa Ana, Calif. | April 25 |
|------------------------|----------|

WILLIAM J. HOLLISTER

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Paterson, N. J. | April 4 |
| Wilmington, Del. | 17, 18 |

JOHN HULL

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Riverside, Calif. (Morning) | April 18 |
| Pomona, Calif. (Afternoon) | 18 |

C. W. JANKE

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Toronto, Ont., Can. | April 24, 25 |
|--------------------------|--------------|

GEORGE O. JEUCK

| | |
|----------------------|----------|
| Melbourne, Fla. | April 11 |
|----------------------|----------|

GEORGE S. KENDALL

| | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Sarasota, Fla. | April 29 |
| St. Petersburg, Fla. | April 30-May 2 |

ROBERT A. KREBS

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Roseland, Ill. | April 4 |
| Gary, Ind. | 5, 6 |
| Chicago, Ill. | 7 |
| Urbana, Ill. | 8 |
| Danville, Ill. | 9 |
| Indianapolis, Ind. | 10, 11 |
| Muncie, Ind. | 12, 13 |
| Richmond, Ind. | 14 |
| Cincinnati, Ohio | 15, 16 |
| Dayton, Ohio | 17, 18 |
| Piqua, Ohio | 19, 20 |
| Columbus, Ohio | 21, 22 |
| Worthington, Ohio | 23 |

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

New Philadelphia—Canton, Ohio 24-30
Shadyside, Ohio May 1, 2

ARTHUR H. KRUMPOLT

Wilmington, Del. April 17, 18
Waterbury, Conn. 22

R. J. KRUPA

Saginaw, Mich. April 11
Toronto, Ont., Can. 24, 25

LUDLOW P. LOOMIS

Ithaca, N. Y. April 18

E. R. MAC JILTON

Wilmington, Del. April 17, 18

EDWARD MAURER

Duquesne, Pa. April 4

EVERETT MURRAY

Richmond, Ind. April 22

LEON H. NORBY

Paterson, N. J. April 18
Groton, Conn. 22
New Bedford, Mass. 23
Providence, R. I. 25

HARRY PASSIOS

Shadyside, Ohio April 4
Washington, Pa. 18

G. R. POLLOCK

Whittier, Calif. April 18

V. E. SAMUELS

Reading, Pa. April 25

M. A. STAMULAS

Rochester, N. Y. April 4

C. A. SUNDBOM

Toronto, Ont., Can. April 24, 25

J. H. L. TRAUTFELTER

Wilmington, Del. April 17, 18

J. I. VAN HORNE

Monessen, Pa. April 25

F. S. WASSMANN

Groton, Conn. (Evening) .. April 17
Groton, Conn. (Morning) 18
New London, Conn. (Afternoon) 18
Tonawanda, N. Y. 23
Toronto, Ont., Can. 24, 25

C. R. WEIDA

Schuylkill Haven, Pa. April 22
Lehigh, Pa. 25

G. M. WILSON

Brooklyn, N. Y. 3 p. m. April 11
Laurelton, L. I., N. Y. 15
(130-33 228th St.)
Wilmington, Del. 17, 18
Toronto, Ont., Can. 24, 25

W. N. WOODWORTH

Hackensack, N. J. 8 p. m. April 4, 11
360 Main St.
Paterson, N. J. 3 p. m. 11
Wilmington, Del. 17, 18
Toronto, Ont., Can. 24, 25
Rochester, N. Y. 26

C. W. ZAHNOW

Atlanta, Ga. April 2
Augusta, Ga. 3, 4
Greensboro, N. C. 7
Enfield, N. C. 8
Richmond, Va. 9
Washington, D. C. 10
Baltimore, Md. 11
Rutherford, N. J. 13
Brooklyn, N. Y. 8 p. m. 14
253 Washington Ave.
Wilmington, Del. 17, 18
Reading, Pa. 19
Allentown, Pa. 20
Lehigh, Pa. 21
Hazleton, Pa. 22
Wilkes Barre, Pa. 23
Binghamton, N. Y. 24, 25
Syracuse, N. Y. 27
Buffalo, N. Y. 28, 29
Tonawanda, N. Y. 30

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CONVENTIONS

ROCHESTER, N. Y. April 4—For details, write the secretary, Mrs. D. Violante, 41 Grape Street.

SAGINAW, MICH., April 11—Regular monthly gathering in the Woman's Club, 311 N. Jefferson Street.

WILMINGTON, DEL., April 17, 18—Pre-Memorial Convention to be held in the Jr. O. U. A. M. Hall, 907 Tatnall St. For reservations, write the secretary, Mrs. Peter Kolliman, 404 W. 31st St., Wilmington 218, Del. The speakers will be Brothers C. Chupa, W. J. Hollister, A. H. Krumpolt, E. R. Mac Jilton, J. H. L. Trautelter, G. M. Wilson, W. N. Woodworth, and C. W. Zahnow.

ITHACA, N. Y., April 18—Home of Miss R. Mae Holmes, 205 East Falls Street.

TORONTO, ONT., CAN., April 24, 25—"All sessions will be held in the Purdy Auditorium, 55 Queen Street East, Toronto. Convention opens at ten o'clock Saturday morning. For accommodations, write Mr. D. H. Copeland, 4 Albert Street, Toronto, Ont., Canada, as early as possible. The speakers will be Brothers W. N. Woodworth, G. M. Wilson, F. S. Wassmann, R. J. Krupa, C. A. Sundbom, C. W. Janke, and D. H. Copeland."

CHICAGO, ILL., April 25—All day gathering in the Central Masonic Temple, 910 N. LaSalle Street.

CICERO, ILL., May 15, 16—Convention will be held in the Parkholme Community Bldg., 1820 S. 51st Ave., Cicero, Ill. For details, write Mr. W. Urban, 1823 S. 48th Court, Cicero, Ill.

NEW HAVEN, CONN., May 16—Y. W. C. A., 48 Howe Street.

TOLEDO, OHIO, May 16—Fort Meigs Hotel.

ALLENTOWN, PA., May 29, 30, 31.

CHICAGO, ILL., May 29, 30, 31—All sessions will be held at 910 N. LaSalle Street. Write the secretary, Mr. Theodore Hack, 5619 S. Oakley Ave., Chicago, 36, Ill., for reservations.

SAN ANTONIO, TEX., May 29, 30, 31.

VANCOUVER, B. C., CAN., May 29, 30, 31—"Our Convention will be held in the Knights of Pythias Hall, 303 E. 8th Ave. For reservations, write the secretary, Mrs. Henry Burdett, 2591 E. 20th Ave., Vancouver, B. C., Can."

CINCINNATI, OHIO, May 30, 31.

TOPEKA, KANS., May 30, 31—"The Convention will be held at the New Municipal Auditorium. All inquiries may be addressed to the secretary, Mrs. E. H. Randall, 739 Kellam, Topeka, Kans.

WEATHERFORD, TEX., May 30.

PIQUA, OHIO, June 19, 20.

FOURTH OF JULY

Los Angeles, Calif.

Detroit, Mich.

GENERAL CONVENTION: Chautauqua, Ohio, August 1-8—It is not too early to begin making your plans to attend this convention. Details concerning rooms, meals, etc., will be published later. Meanwhile, all inquiries should be addressed to the convention secretary, Mr. Ernest G. Wylam, 3718 W. Dickens Avenue, Chicago 47, Illinois.

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

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

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

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

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