

Planet Earth, God's Footstool

***“I will make the place
of my feet glorious.”
—Isaiah 60:13***

PLANET EARTH—THERE is nothing like it in the sun's planetary system, nor do we know of any equal elsewhere in the heavens. It is a place with an abundance of life, from the tiny microbe

to the elephant in the animal kingdom, and the whale in its oceans. This is man's home prepared for him by the great, and grand, Supreme Creator of the universe, known in the Old Testament as Jehovah, God of Israel. All the conditions for sustaining life are in an exact controlled range. It is not too hot, nor too cold. The air composition of 21% oxygen and 79% nitrogen is the correct mix for supplying essential oxygen, so as not to burn up life dependent upon it and yet not to suffocate it as well. There is an ample supply of water, nutrients, and those ingredients necessary to sustain life. Only a great and brilliant mind as possessed by our Heavenly Father could have brought forth such life upon earth.

Unfortunately, all people do not think of God, nor of his wonderful handiwork all around us. Many of the best minds in the world believe that life came forth by chance, through an evolutionary process, and not by a plan. They do not accept that the plan was successfully executed by an intelligent, great Supreme Creator. Therefore, they continue in their quest for evidences of the evolutionary process elsewhere in our solar system. The *New York Times* in its May 27, 2003 issue announced in its Science Section, “*Soon Three New Travelers to Mars.*” The first of these is a lander from Great Britain named the Beagle II. The other two are identical rovers to be launched by NASA called MER A and MER B. The article said:

“Though Mars has long intrigued humans, especially those who dream of extraterrestrial life, it has repeatedly humbled anyone rich and venturesome enough to send metallic proxies across millions of miles of space to try to learn its secrets.

“The United States and Russia spent billions on a dozen or so robotic craft meant to land on the planet and radio back their findings. Only three succeeded—two Viking probes in 1976 and Mars Pathfinder in 1997.

“Now comes a bold new contender. Its goal is not only to do basic science but, for the first time in a quarter-century, to look for concrete signs of extraterrestrial life, ancient or modern.

“The disklike craft is the Beagle II, built on a shoestring by Britain, in partnership with the European Space Agency, and named after the ship whose voyages fed Darwin’s theorizing about evolution.

“The British craft weighs just 73 pounds, about 5% of Viking’s weight and 8% of Pathfinder’s. Stripped of unessential gear and even backup systems, it cannot send out a rover to explore the local terrain but must instead rely on a single robotic arm to probe the site.

“‘We didn’t have any money, so we had to think harder,’ said Dr. Colin T. Pillinger, the project’s lead scientist at the Open University in Milton Keynes, England.

“The lander, though small, about a yard wide when folded for travel through space, is nonetheless loaded with sensors, cameras, test chambers, a microscope, a rock grinder and a sampling arm that in theory can dig down five feet into the Martian soil. Getting under the weathered surface is a high priority because the harsh atmosphere of the planet (which produces its rusty color) is judged likely to destroy any life.

“Beagle II is to soar into space atop a Russian rocket in early June and land on Mars in late December. If everything goes as planned, it will explore for six months and will vie for public attention with two American craft, identical rovers that are to land in January. All three robots are to arrive more or less simultaneously because the orbits of Mars and Earth, as happens periodically, are coming into unusually close alignment.

“Alternately skeptical and admiring, American experts call the British lander audacious. Its mission is extremely difficult, they say, and the lack of British know-how in the business of exploring Mars and making planetary probes raises the odds of failure.

“‘We have lots of experience in how difficult it is,’ said Dr. Bruce C. Murray, the former director of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, who

is now at the California Institute of Technology. 'The Beagle mission is taking on a very large challenge.' As a result, experts say, even partial success will be a major achievement. 'If they pull it off, it will be a real coup,' said Dr. John M. Logsdon, director of the Space Policy Institute at George Washington University.

"The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has about 23,000 employees. Britain has no similar agency. So making Beagle involved enlisting universities, trusts, syndicates, firms and even the British National Lottery, which is helping to finance the lander's mission control center.

"Mars has long been considered not only difficult to explore, but alluring, given its reputation as the most likely spot in the solar system to harbor extraterrestrials. Recent hints of running water, modern volcanism, and a molten core have only increased its appeal, suggesting that Mars may now be geologically alive and able to support life.

"Beagle II's developers say their relative poverty and inexperience have worked in their favor, helping them solve old problems in new ways. On the other hand, they add, whenever possible they have learned from their predecessors. For instance, Beagle II has a system of parachutes and air bags developed for landing in rough terrain, adapted from the Pathfinder system.

"'We're not ignoring past experience by any means,' said Dr. Alan Wells, director of the space research center at the University of Leicester, which is in charge of mission control for Beagle II.

"The British hope that the small craft will find not just fossils but live Martians dwelling in rocks and soil.

"In the past decade or so, deep inside Earth, scientists have discovered a rich microbial fauna and have theorized that Mars may be similar. Its interior, after all, is thought to be wet and warm, potentially a microbe heaven. The idea took wings in 1996 when NASA announced that a Martian meteorite carried what appeared to be microscopic fossils. The claim has been subject to heated debate ever since.

"Scientists agree that the discovery of even a single extraterrestrial microbe would be historic, illuminating how life began and the odds of its arising elsewhere in the universe.

“NASA’s Viking spacecraft, the only previous lander to probe for signs of life, found none in soil samples. Scientists now suspect that the harsh atmosphere made the soil sterile.

“Scientists at the Open University, where Dr. Pillinger directs the Planetary Sciences Research Institute, have long searched meteorites known to have originated on Mars for the building blocks of life. The institute’s laboratories are considered some of the world’s best for studying extraterrestrial samples for signs of carbon, considered an ideal basis for life because of its easy bonding with other atoms.

“The British lander project had its origins in 1997 when the European Space Agency announced an orbiter mission called Mars Express, Europe’s first effort to explore the planet. Dr. Pillinger lobbied hard to add a lander. Money was scarce. But he, the Open University, and its partners received approval to proceed, even though they had to raise much of the money themselves.

“In an interview, Dr. Pillinger declined to disclose the lander’s benefactors and total cost, estimated publicly at about \$60 million—a pittance by industry standards. Each of the new NASA rovers cost \$400 million, including launching and operations.

“Beagle II’s main contractor is Astrium, a European conglomerate with much experience in satellites but none in planetary probes. Because of Beagle’s small size, weight and budget, the company was forced to innovate.”

The article went on to describe the cost-saving features of the Beagle II, and the scientific equipment it would carry to Mars. It also explained in detail how the lander will function, with a robotic arm, and how they plan to get around obstacles that they believe hampered the Pathfinder from finding any life on Mars. They hope to find carbon in the samples and will analyze with sophisticated equipment for the ratio of carbon 12 to carbon 13. If they should find carbon in the samples, a Harvard Geochemist said, “It would be strong evidence [of life] but not proof.” Also included in the exploration by Beagle II is sampling the Mars atmosphere to detect methane, given off on earth by peat bogs, rice paddies, and ruminant animals. A mass spectrometer will analyze the atmosphere for signs of methane. However, methane is not expected to

survive very long in the Martian atmosphere, so if any is found it would indicate freshly generated methane.

In another part of the Science section of the *Times*, a brief description was given of the two rovers NASA plans to launch in June. The article captioned, "*A Hunt for Clues to a Dry Planet's Watery Past*" said:

"NASA calls its two Mars rovers 'robot geologists.' They are to find and analyze rocks, rolling up to a half a mile from their landing sites to investigate wide terrain. Unlike the British Beagle II lander, the NASA rovers have no way to look for chemical signs of Martian life.

"NASA's overall strategy is for its Mars efforts to be incremental and thorough, especially on the issue of life. Viking was a costly failure that left many questions unanswered. Now NASA aims to tackle the hardest questions last, after years of preliminary work to help scientists understand if the environment of Mars was, or still is, conducive to life.

"Today, the main tactic is what NASA scientists call 'following the water,' a main prerequisite to virtually any form of life.

"While the surface of Mars now holds no obvious liquid water, large flows appear to have sculptured the planet long ago. In theory, its current rocks, minerals and landforms hold many clues to the planet's watery past. Certain rocks and minerals, including carbonates, form in the presence of water, and the rovers are to seek them out.

"The twin craft, to be launched from Cape Canaveral, are similar to the smaller robot of the 1997 Pathfinder. Each weighs about 400 pounds, over five times as much as Beagle.

"The two landing sites, south of the equator, are the Busev Crater, a giant scar that appears to have once held a lake, and the Meridiani Planum, a wide outcropping of a gray mineral, hematite, that on Earth usually forms in the presence of liquid water.

"The wheeled robots will carry tools to analyze and manipulate the environment: a panoramic camera, a microscopic imager, a drill to cut the rind off rocks, and three spectrometers to determine rock composition. Unlike Beagle, the rovers have no gas analyzer, ovens or mass spectrometer to hunt for life signatures.

“The rovers are to study the rocky terrain and travel up to 130 feet a day. Solar panels will recharge the batteries. The rovers are to report discoveries about Martian rocks for three months, and possibly longer.

“American plans for Mars exploration are, in some ways, less bold than those of the British. But many experts say that NASA’s strategy, which calls for missions of increasing complexity and ambition in the next decade, is ultimately more likely to succeed at unveiling the secrets of the planet.”

It is interesting to note that a summary was included in this section of the many attempts to explore Mars, and the few successes. Three countries have sent missions to fly by, orbit, or land on Mars. These were mainly the United States, and USSR, Russia. Japan launched one (an orbiter) in the 1990’s and Britain and the European Space Agency have launched the Beagle on June 5. In the 1960’s the USSR launched six. None were successful. The United States launched four. One flyby was successful, sending back 21 photos. In the 1970’s the USSR launched seven, of which two landers arrived. One was destroyed in landing, the other sent back little data. The United States launched four. The twin Viking landers launched in 1975 sent back more than 50,000 photos. The USSR launched two in the 1980’s and Russia launched one in the 1990’s. None were successful. The United States launched five and three were successful. The Mars Global Survey is orbiting Mars and still on its mission. The Pathfinder was a lander which completed its mission in 1997. The Sojourner was a rover that completed its mission in 1997.

An estimated forty billion dollars has been spent, in which the main objective has been to find extra terrestrial life. The last time that the scientists in the United States and NASA were planning the sending of probes to Mars for this purpose in 1997, an editorial appeared in a prominent newspaper in the United States with the title, “*Let’s Not Toss Dollars at Mars Too Quickly,*” and a subtitle, “*Notion of life on another planet is exciting, but what about life on Earth?*” The editorial went on to discuss the funding of these planned programs, saying, finally, “Evidence—no matter how inconclusive—that life may exist elsewhere in our solar system is exciting news. But it’s hardly a good reason to make life more difficult for some of earth’s neediest citizens.” The final statement in this editorial says, “More likely is the troubling possibility that NASA’s startling find will send this nation hurtling at warp speed

toward a bad decision—a heightened search for life in space that will have a devastating effect on the lives of millions of Americans.”

Even though the editor’s words were so true, the conditions on earth that he alluded to should not be. When God prepared the earth for habitation he pronounced everything he had done as being good. And good it was. The creation of man and all other life upon earth was indeed very good. It was perfect. This was his plan. Imperfection came with man’s disobedience. But God plans to restore the perfection of earth.

When the earth was prepared for habitation by our Heavenly Father, the great Supreme Creator of the universe, he was dwelling in the heavens. When man wanted to build a dwelling for God (such as a temple), he said through Isaiah, “Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” (Isa. 66:1,2) No one can do anything for God who dwells in the heavens. He has made the tiny earth his footstool. In size and place it is properly described as God’s footstool. It is a lowly place, but it is to be respected. It is the first place where God has permitted lower forms of life to be created. As a lowly place it is not a place where pride should arise. For that reason, God says through Isaiah, “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.” (vs. 2, *New International Version*) Rotherham translates the last portion as one who “careth anxiously for my word.”

How appropriate it is for all mankind to recognize that they dwell in a remarkable place but lowly in God’s Creation. We should never demean this lowly place of God’s handiwork. Jesus said as much in his sermon on the mount, when he said, “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’ But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.” (Matt. 5:33-37, *NIV*) In this commentary Jesus was not only indicating that the earth is to be respected as God’s footstool, but was

also admonishing us to exert care in our thoughts and in making vows that they not be of pride instigated by Satan. We are to be humble which means we are to have a sober estimate of ourselves and to recognize that we are a lowly creation and live in a lowly place. All the mighty of earth's society are to be brought low, as God promised to his Son when he said through David, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."—Ps. 110:1

Why are scientists so eager to find the smallest trace of life in another place, other than earth? It is because they believe so strongly in the evolution of life upon earth. As they believe that life evolved from the smallest living cell so also man is evolving to a higher form of life, whatever they believe that to be. Whereas the Bible tells of man's original creation in the image of God. (Gen. 1:26,27) He was a mental and moral image of God and created to be a king over earth's domain. He lost all that through disobedience and, with the penalty of death, degradation set in. Instead of evolving to a higher plane of existence, mankind is being debased through pride and the wiles of the Devil. In the plan of God, all of this is to be changed.

Our theme text says (God speaking), "I will make the place of my feet glorious." (Isa. 60:13) How will this promise be fulfilled? Its fulfillment will come through the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth. Then it will be possible to remove all those opposed to God. (I Cor. 15:25) Satan will be bound. (Rev. 20:1-3) Life, peace, security and health will be restored to mankind. All will be brought back from the grave (John 5:28,29), and will be given perfect bodies. (I Cor. 15:38) The imperfection of earth will be removed and God will make all things new. (Rev. 21:5) A preview of this glorious earth was given in the book, *"The Divine Plan of the Ages"*, and we quote from it. "Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay—not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures and comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect

humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth's society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete.—Rev. 21:4”

The earth, as God's footstool, will become a glorious place. It still will be a footstool and mankind in their perfection are never to forget this and become proud and vainglorious again. Seeking their Father's help along this line, they will not fall anymore. The sentiments of Psalm 99 will become engrained in them. “The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. The Lord is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy. The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.”—vss. 1-5

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Peril of Pride

Key Verse: “The day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.” —Obadiah 15

Lesson Scriptures: Obadiah; Jeremiah 49:14-17

OUR LESSON FOR TODAY revolves around a dream which Obadiah had. This dream concerned Edom. The Edomites, who were descendants of Esau (Gen. 32:3), were called dwellers in the “clefts of the rock.” (Jer. 49:16) The name Obadiah means ‘Servant of God.’ In his dream he saw the coming destruction of Edom and his part as an ambassador of the Lord in forecasting their doom.—Obad.1

Obadiah’s vision is almost word-for-word like that of Jeremiah, chapter forty-nine, where we read, “I have heard a rumour from the Lord, and an ambassador is sent unto the heathen, saying, Gather ye together, and come against her, and rise up to the battle. For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord.”—Jer. 49:14-16

The lesson of Obadiah is about pride and hatred. The Edomites had a long-standing grudge against Israel since the days of Jacob and Esau. They imagined that Jacob had cheated their ancestor out of his birthright. (Gen. 25:31-34; 27:41) Later, they refused Israel passage through their country. (Num. 20:14-21) Finally, they rejoiced when Israel was captured by their enemies and the city of Jerusalem taken. (Ps. 137:7) As brethren, they should have felt remorse and pity for Israel, and have gone to their aid.

Living in the clefts of the rocks these people imagined themselves better than, and safer from, other nations around them. Today there are

many nations whose pride puffs them up. Edom's hatred for Israel, coupled with their pride and arrogance, caused God to say, "The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, 'Who can bring me down to the ground?'" These 'clefts of the rocks' represent the great financial and religious institutions of power in today's world. "'Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,' declares the Lord." (vss. 3-4, *New International Version*) Eagles live in the high places overlooking all below, making their nests among the stars.

The wise man Solomon wrote, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." (Prov. 16:18) God hates pride (Prov. 6:17), and the Bible tells us about the pride of Lucifer, called "The day star." (Job 38:7) This beautiful spiritual being became Satan, the one who brought sin, sickness, and death to all mankind. His pride and desire to become like God caused his downfall.—Isa. 14:12-14

Edom's pride, likewise, was its downfall. The lesson for us is to erase pride from our hearts, and replace it with humility. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (James 4:6) In the last verse of Obadiah we find Israel being saved from its heathen neighbors. The "saviours" mentioned are Christ and his church. (Zech. 14:9; Neh. 9:27) These saviors will eradicate all pride and bring in a kingdom of righteousness.

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Call for Repentance

***Key Verse: “‘Even now,’
declares the LORD,
‘return to me with all
your heart, with fasting
and weeping and
mourning.’ Rend your
heart and not your
garments. Return to the
LORD your God, for he
is gracious and
compassionate, slow to
anger and abounding in
love, and he relents
from sending calamity.”***

***—Joel 2:12,13, New
International Version***

***Lesson Scripture:
Joel 1,2***

JOEL WAS THE SON OF Pethuel (Joel 1:1) and nothing is known of his descent, or of his family. What is important is his message. Joel prophesied in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, around 800-750 B.C. He was among a long list of prophets who saw in vision the judgments to come from God and the deliverance of Israel. Joel begins his prophecy by telling of a great famine caused by swarms of locusts. These locusts were familiar to the Holy Land, as well as in other parts of the world. The plague of locusts was seen as God’s judgment of Judah and his punishment for their sins. This story would be told to the children of Israel and to their children in coming generations.—ch. 1:1-4

The Lord describes the punishment, saying their food would be destroyed, even the meat and drink offerings would be denied. The beasts of the field would suffer because there would be no water. The remedy was to “Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, ... into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord.” This great time of trouble was called, “The day of the Lord,” in which destruction from the Almighty would come.—vss. 10-20

This prophecy has far-reaching implications, not only in the days of Joel, but in the future. The locusts picture a great army that is to come against the nation of Israel, an army that sweeps away everything in its

path. However, God intervenes and stops the trouble before Israel is totally destroyed, and peace comes.—Ezek. 38,39

Joel goes on in chapter two to call this time, “The day of the Lord.” It is described as “A day of darkness, ... thick darkness.” (vs. 2) There never is to be another time like this. Just like the locusts, these are devouring forces. All the symbols forecast extreme trouble in the earth.—ch. 2:1-11

The call goes out for Israel to repent from their sins and turn to the Lord with all their hearts, because “the Lord your God: ... is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness,” and perhaps he will take away the evil.—vss. 12,13

At the time of this great tragedy, a call goes forth to blow a trumpet in Zion (Israel), a call for national prayer to the Lord to intervene. (vs. 15) This prayer is to be given, asking God not to forsake his heritage, but to take away the reproach of the heathen that rule over them.—vs. 17

God answers this prayer by telling them he pities his people and will restore to them their former condition of national prominence. He will “No more make you a reproach among the heathen.” (vs. 19) In verse twenty, God describes a picture of a northern army coming against Israel and being defeated. A total reformation of the nation of Israel will be made at that time when God intervenes.

In verses twenty-eight through thirty-two God’s future kingdom is pictured. The Holy Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh, and all who call upon the Lord will be saved.

Different Destinies

***Key Verse: “Then shall
ye return, and discern
between the righteous
and the wicked,
between him that
serveth God and him
that serveth him not.”
—Malachi 3:18***

***Lesson Scriptures:
Malachi 3:1-4, 16-18;
4:1-6***

MALACHI’S PROPHECY speaks of a coming time of the Lord in which justice will be administered. The prophet asks a very personal question regarding this sudden return, “Who can endure the day of his coming?” (chap. 3:2, *New International Version*) Malachi speaks of a messenger to be sent, John the Baptist. In Isaiah we read, “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord” (Isa. 40:3), which is mentioned in Matthew 3:3.

John’s message was very forceful when speaking of Jesus. He said, “Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”—Matt. 3:12

As prophesied, John did bring God’s message to his people, natural Israel. However, only a few heard the message and changed their ways. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (John 1:11,12) The majority ignored John’s message and in time Jesus uttered the words, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”—Matt. 23:37,38

Now was fulfilled our Key Verse, ‘Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.’ (Mal. 3:18) A few years later, A.D. 70, Titus’ army destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple, and Israel was scattered into

all parts of the earth, losing its identity among the nations. “Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?”—Mal. 3:2

Malachi’s prophecy has a twofold fulfillment. Although Israel was not prepared for our Lord at the First Advent and did receive of God’s judgments, this prophecy is having its intended fulfillment now. Our Lord is invisibly present now, sitting as a refiner and purifier of gold and silver, picturing the church, the “sons of Levi,” the firstborn with whom our Lord is now dealing during his Second Presence. (vs. 3) To this class he is like a ‘refiner’s fire’ and ‘fullers’ soap.’ (vs. 2) The refiner’s fire heats an ore to such a high temperature that impurities are vaporized away from the metal. The fullers’ soap cleanses and bleaches away all impurity from the metal.

This analogy well pictures the trials that are needed to develop a pure class, cleansed from all impurity. In chapter four of Malachi, we are told that this day will “burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble.” (vs. 1) We see this great fire already burning. Today the proud are happy and those that work wickedness are set up. On the other hand, God’s people are said to speak often one to another, and that a “book of remembrance” is being written for those that reverence the Lord. God will “spare them” when he makes up his jewels.—Mal. 3:15-17

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Certainty in an Uncertain World

Key Verse: “In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”

—Daniel 2:44

***Lesson Scripture:
Daniel 2:26, 36-45***

DANIEL AND HIS THREE friends had been taken captive after the armies of Nebuchadnezzar had overthrown Israel. (Dan. 1:1-3) They came to work in the palace of the king, picked because of their knowledge in the sciences. (vs. 4) Daniel was brought into favor and tender love with the prince of eunuchs.—vs. 9

In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign he had a dream that greatly disturbed him. When he called for his wise men, astrologers and sorcerers, they told the king that unless he made known what he saw in the dream no one would be able to interpret it. The king was so angry he condemned them to death

along with Daniel and his friends.—Dan. 2:12,13

Daniel hearing of the king’s decree spoke to his captain about the matter. With wisdom Daniel asked Arioch, “Why is the decree so hasty?” (vs. 15) Arioch then tells Daniel the matter of the king’s dream. Daniel immediately went to the king to ask for time and told him that he would reveal the dream to him.

A great lesson on the power of prayer follows. Daniel went home, told his friends about the matter, and asked them to pray to the God of heaven regarding the king’s dream. That very night the dream was revealed to Daniel as he slept. “In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”—Phil. 4:6

Daniel thanked and praised God, saying, “He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.”—Dan. 2:22

Another wonderful character trait is that of mercy. Daniel could have asked for his life and that of his friends, but he asked that the king's magicians and astrologers be spared. (vs. 24) We are advised to be merciful as "your Father also is merciful." (Luke 6:36) "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth."—Ps. 25:10

Arioach, the king's captain, brought Daniel before the king who asked him if he could interpret the dream. Daniel told the king that his wise men could never have interpreted the dream, that only the God of heaven held the key to unlocking his plans and purposes.—Dan. 2:27,28

Daniel revealed the king's dream, saying that he saw a great image with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron and part clay. (ch. 2:32-33) He pointed out that the king was this head of gold and that three other kingdoms would follow his rule. In time, a stone would be cut out of the mountain without hands and smite the image on his feet, and that the image would fall, be ground into pieces, and a wind would blow it away. The stone then grows into a great mountain filling the earth.

In symbolic language Daniel revealed the times of Gentile rule, and that this rule was to be replaced by the rule of God's Messianic kingdom. All God's people have been taught to pray for the establishment of this kingdom.—Matt. 6:9-13

Final Rewards

Key Verse: “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.”

—Daniel 12:2, New American Standard

***Lesson Scripture:
Daniel 12:1-9***

THIS LESSON IS ON THE “time of the end.” (Dan. 12:9) Daniel eleven closes with the death of Napoleon Bonaparte, a French military figure introduced in Daniel 11:40, who was born in 1769 and died in 1821 in exile in Elba, a small island off Italy.

Daniel, chapter twelve, begins by saying, “At that time [or around that time] shall Michael [he who stands for God, that being Christ Jesus] stand up [be present].” Many indications of Christ’s Second Presence would take place during the ‘time of the end.’ When the kingdom of God is about to be

established, there would be a great “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.” (Dan. 12:1) This ‘time of trouble’ would be so great that if God would not stop it no flesh would be saved. (Matt. 24:21,22) Then Israel would be delivered.

Daniel gives other indications of events during Christ’s Second Presence. Our Key Verse tells of the coming resurrection of mankind, saying, ‘many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.’ These represent the “just” and the “unjust,” from all classes of mankind.—I Pet. 3:18

Concerning the church at that time, the “wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” (Dan. 12:3) As a further indication of the events to take place during Christ’s Second Presence, before the establishment of the Messianic kingdom, verse four says, “Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” Today we see a

fulfillment of this. Both the running ‘to and fro’ and the great increase of ‘knowledge’ are realities.

Even now we see the winds of strife increasing. The economic, political, and social structures of life are collapsing. The religious systems of earth are shaking. Not many see that the signs around them are indications of the Lord’s Second Presence. We read, “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens [religious systems] shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements [the social fabric of the earth] shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works [its evil works] that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” (II Pet. 3:10-11) “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens [the spiritual heavens] and a new earth [one free from sin and evil], wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—vs. 13

Daniel asked when these things would take place. God’s answer was that it would not be in his time. Three distinct time prophecies leading up to Christ’s Second Presence were then given in Daniel 12:7,11,12. The time spans indicated by these prophecies were 1260, 1290, and 1335. Bible students understand that all three time spans begin with A.D. 539 and end by A.D. 1874 with Christ’s return.

How thankful we can be that the God of heaven, through Daniel, has made known to us the nearness of the kingdom so long prayed for.

Dawn Bible Students Association

The Ministry of Salvation

AT THE AGE of thirty, Jesus entered into the ministry which he had come to earth to perform—that service which ultimately was to lead to an opportunity for “all the families of the earth” to rejoice in the salvation which God had promised. (Gen. 28:14) It is with interest, therefore, that we take note of his teachings as they relate to the Divine purpose centered in him. Revealing among these are his instructions to the rich young ruler, and his subsequent discussion with his disciples based upon what he had said to the young man.

THE PROMISED SALVATION

This young man, an Israelite, approached Jesus and asked, “What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” (Matt. 19:16) Here is a question piercing to the center of the whole issue of salvation, and what it involves. This man wanted to live eternally. To him, as to all mankind, the idea of growing old and finally dying was not appealing. It would be much better, he was sure, to continue living.

The man had good reason for approaching Jesus with this question, for had not Jesus been healing the sick, even raising the dead? One who could perform such miracles, and who was also such a wonderful teacher, could certainly outline a formula for retaining youth. Surely it would not be more difficult to keep one well than it was to restore the sick to health, so the question, ‘What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?’

Nor was this man wrong in his conception of what Jesus was able to do for him. When all the ends of the earth see the salvation of God—that salvation which he has provided through Christ—they will experience exactly what this young man desired and asked for—they will no longer grow old and die.

Since this young ruler was an Israelite, Jesus referred him to the Law, which had been given to the nation at the hands of Moses, the Law that was epitomized in the Ten Commandments. The promise was that anyone who kept the Commandments would “live in them.” (Lev. 18:5) Many

Israelites endeavored faithfully to live up to the requirements of the Law, but none was able to do so perfectly, hence none gained life under that arrangement.

There was a wise purpose, however, in giving the Israelites an opportunity of securing life through their own efforts, for the necessity of a Redeemer from sin was thereby established. The young ruler explained to Jesus that he had kept the Commandments from the time of his youth, and then asked, “What lack I yet?” (Matt. 19:20) He realized that there was something lacking, for he knew that just like everyone, he was growing old, and that if this continued he would one day die.

Jesus replied to the man, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” (vs. 21) In his sermon on the mount, Jesus said to his disciples, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” This admonition follows the explanation that our “Father which is in heaven: ... maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matt. 5:44-48) To be perfect, therefore, as God is perfect, implies a self-sacrificing interest in all mankind, not merely in ourselves and our immediate loved ones. If we are to be ‘perfect’ as our Heavenly Father is perfect, we are to do what we can to bless even our enemies.

For the rich young ruler to bestow his goods to feed the poor and become a follower of the Master who was laying down his life for all mankind, called for too radical a change for him to make. He loved himself too much. He wanted to live, but he wanted to live in his own way, without too much concern as to how those around him were faring. The price was too high, so he went away sorrowful.

Nor did Jesus’ reference to the compensating portion of ‘treasure in heaven’ have any special significance to this young man. He had not asked how he could invest in heavenly treasures. Indeed, being an Israelite, the promises of God, as he understood them, made no reference to life or treasures in heaven. He had asked what he could do to live, but was invited to give up his worldly possessions and die with Jesus. This was too much—more than the offer of treasures in heaven could offset in the mind of this young man who was seeking a way to live everlastingly.

THE DISCIPLES AMAZED

The disciples heard the discussion between Jesus and the rich man, and the record is that they were “amazed.” In a further explanation to them Jesus said, “A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”—Matt. 19:23,24

When the disciples heard this, in their amazement they inquired, “Who then can be saved?” (vs. 25) These disciples had accepted Jesus as the promised Messiah. They believed that he was the One whom God had promised to send, the One through whom “all the ends of the earth” would “see the salvation of our God.” (Isa. 52:10) How could salvation become available to all the families of the earth when the conditions were made so difficult that this sincere young man who was seeking the way to life was discouraged and turned away? No wonder they asked, ‘Who then can be saved?’

Jesus did not give the disciples a direct answer to his question, but simply said, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” (Matt. 19:26) In other words, Jesus explained to his disciples that although it appeared to them that the Divine plan of salvation for all the families of earth as promised by the prophets could not be accomplished along the lines which he was pursuing, yet it was God’s way, and with him all things were possible.

But this did not satisfy the disciples, so they questioned Jesus further. Speaking for the group, Peter said, “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee”—we have complied with the conditions you imposed upon the young rich man whom you turned away sorrowful—“What shall we have therefore?” (vs. 27) It is apparent from this question that the disciples had been confused by what Jesus said to the young man concerning the treasures in heaven.

The disciples, like the young man himself, had no knowledge of heavenly promises. In becoming followers of Jesus it was with the thought that he soon would be enthroned as king of Israel, and that in fulfillment of the Messianic promises his kingdom would extend its sphere of influence until it embraced all nations. They expected to be associated with him in that government which was to rest upon his “shoulder.”—Isa. 9:6

Now they were puzzled. Jesus had said to the rich man, ‘sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.’ What did he mean? They thought they were to receive treasures on earth—royal, kingly treasures. That is why they gladly gave up all—their business, their time, their strength, everything—and associated themselves with the One whom they believed to be the promised Messiah, that glorious One who was destined to rule “from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.”—Ps. 72:8

Jesus’ promise of treasure in heaven, instead of reassuring the disciples that their expectations in becoming his disciples would actually be realized left them wondering, so they inquired, ‘What shall we have therefore?’ In other words, they wanted to know what Jesus meant by treasure in heaven, and whether or not their own hopes were now to be set aside in favor of this new outlook.

In reply to this question, Jesus gave the disciples an answer which reassured them, and at the same time brings into focus for us God’s great plan of salvation, both for the followers of the Master and for all mankind. He said, “Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matt. 19:28) Jesus wanted his disciples to realize that their expectations concerning his kingdom were not, in principle, wrong. The time was coming when he would sit upon ‘the throne of his glory.’ He wanted them to know also that they would be enthroned with him, and that this would be ‘in the regeneration.’

What did Jesus mean by regeneration? This is one of the words used in the Bible to describe the great objective of God’s plan of salvation. The real significance of the word is in its prefix ‘re.’ There is to be a regeneration of those who previously have experienced ‘generation.’ The Bible uses a number of words to convey this general thought involved in God’s plan of salvation. Resurrection is one of them, restitution is another. These words also describe recovery or restoration to a former status, or condition.

The Apostle Peter explains that the plan of God calls for the “restitution of all things,” and declares that this had been promised by all

God's "holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21) The Apostle Paul assures us that there is to be a resurrection of the dead, "both of the just and unjust." (Acts 24:15) Jesus said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall ... come forth."—John 5:28,29

One of the Old Testament promises of restoration for the human race says that "the ransomed of the Lord shall return ['re'-turn] ... with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." (Isa. 35:10) In a promise of the restoration of children the statement is made that they shall "come again" from death, and shall return ['re'-turn] "to their own border," that is, to the earth.—Jer. 31:15-17

It was in keeping with this Divine plan to restore the dying race to life on earth that Jesus used the word regeneration. It was also in harmony with God's plan of salvation as set forth in the Bible, that the time for this work is when Christ sits upon the throne of his glory during the time of his reign. This, indeed, is the purpose of his kingdom. By reassuring the disciples concerning the fact of his kingdom, and its great purpose in the Divine plan, Jesus was informing them that in promising 'treasure in heaven' for those who would suffer and die with him, he was not overlooking God's plan to bless 'all the families of the earth' on the earth.

The Prophet Isaiah associates the thought of regeneration with God's promise that all the ends of the earth shall see his salvation. He describes the suffering and death of Jesus as the world's Redeemer, saying that he would be "cut off out of the land of the living." Because of this the prophet asks, "Who shall declare his generation?" Then he adds, concerning Jesus, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."—Isa. 53:8,10,11

Thus does Isaiah explain that although from the natural standpoint Jesus was cut off in death with no children, no generation to succeed him, yet there is to be a generation having Jesus as its Head, for he 'shall see his seed,' and will be satisfied with the 'travail' of his soul—the travail of suffering and death as the Redeemer of the human race. The reason

that he shall see his seed is because ‘the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.’

What is the pleasure of the Lord Jehovah? Surely it is that which he has said so much about in his Word, that loving plan of salvation spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. It was a pleasure for our Heavenly Father to plan for the blessing of all the families of the earth. He has taken delight in having his prophets record so many promises concerning this good news to all people, and his joy will be complete when, through Jesus, ‘all the ends of the earth shall see’ his salvation.

This salvation will be realized through the dead human race being regenerated by Jesus. In I Corinthians 15:45, Paul speaks of the “first” Adam and the “last” Adam. The human race was generated in a dying condition by the ‘first’ Adam, but will be regenerated and given an opportunity to live forever by the ‘last’ Adam. And Jesus’ seed will be the regenerated human race, those for whom he travailed in death that he might have the opportunity to give them life. And this great work of giving life to mankind will be during the time of regeneration when Jesus sits upon the throne of his glory.

TWO SALVATIONS

Thus indirectly, and in this very revealing manner, Jesus answered the disciples’ question, ‘Who then can be saved?’ When they saw the rich young ruler turn aside because Jesus had made the terms of discipleship so difficult, they wondered how all the ends of the earth could ever see the salvation of God. But now it was explained to them that this general salvation of all mankind was for a future age, the Kingdom Age, the time when the Son of man would sit on the throne of his glory.

As for the treasure in heaven which Jesus promised the young rich man, this was explained to be the great privilege his followers would enjoy of participating with him in his glorious reign, and in his work of regenerating the human race; for they were then to ‘sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’ This was in keeping with the disciples’ expectation that first the promised kingdom of the Messiah in which they hoped to share would begin with the Jewish nation—the twelve tribes of Israel—then expand until all the nations of the earth

would come under its beneficent rule and receive the promised blessings of salvation.

The hope of thus being joint-heirs with Jesus when he sits upon the throne of his glory, is described by Paul as that “great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.” (Heb. 2:3) How true that the glorious prospect of joint-heirship ‘first’ began to be made clear by Jesus. Evidently, when he mentioned treasure in heaven to the rich young ruler, it was the first time that even the disciples had grasped the fact that Jesus meant something different than restoration to life on the earth under the rulership of the promised Messiah.

But not until after the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting disciples at Pentecost did they grasp clearly the difference between the hope of salvation held out to the followers of the Master in this age, and the prospect of regeneration, of restitution, of resurrection for the world in general during the time when Christ sits upon the throne of his glory. Then they realized that for those who were willing to give up all and follow Jesus there was a “crown of life” “reserved in heaven.” (Rev. 2:10; I Pet. 1:4) They then understood clearly what Jesus meant on another occasion when he said that upon his return he would receive them unto himself that they might be with him. (John 14:3) The Apostle John wrote about this saying, “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”—I John 3:2,3

Thus we see that in reality, in God’s great plan, there are two salvations—a spiritual, or heavenly, salvation for the followers of Jesus in this Gospel Age; and an earthly salvation—a restoration to life on the earth for all the families of the earth during the Millennial Age to come. And associated with and a part of the reward to those who now give up all and follow Jesus into death, is that glorious hope of participating with him in the work of regenerating the human race and giving all an opportunity to live forever on a perfected earth.

Paul clarified this point, and gave us reassurance concerning it, when he wrote, “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ... And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:27,29) As we have seen, one of God’s

assurances of salvation for all mankind is the promise he made to Abraham that through his seed all nations would be blessed. There are two parts to this promise. One is that a seed would be developed, and the other that through this seed would come blessings of life to all people, and Paul explains that if we have been ‘baptized into Christ’ we are a part of that promised ‘seed, and heirs according to the promise.’

This is simply another way of saying that those who give up all and follow Christ will share in his kingdom glory and participate with him in dispensing kingdom blessings. To be baptized with Jesus simply means to be buried with him, or to go down with him into death. It was this that he invited the young ruler to do. It is this that all true followers of Jesus must do if they are to live and reign with him. The terms of this “narrow” way to life are thus seen to be rugged and difficult. (Matt. 7:14) Only by Divine help is it possible for anyone to meet these requirements. But with God all things are possible, Jesus assured the disciples, and the Lord has promised to give his people grace to help in their every time of need.

Among the greatest sources of help which we get from the Lord are his many glorious promises of future joy in the work of the kingdom. Concerning Jesus, who walked in this way before us, Paul wrote that for the “joy that was set before him” he “endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:2) This same joy is set before us, to give strength in our every time of need.

It is the joy of seeing all mankind restored to life and atonement with the Creator, when those ransomed by Jesus return from death “with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads,” and when “sorrow and sighing shall flee away,” that energizes the Master’s followers to press on faithfully in his steps of self-sacrifice. (Isa. 35:10) This Gospel of Christ, this good news of salvation through him, is indeed a “power” in the life of every faithful Christian, the ‘power of God unto salvation.’—Rom. 1:16

The Hidden Life

***“Ye are dead, and
your life is hid with
Christ in God.”
—Colossians 3:3***

IN THE APOSTLE’S LETTER to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse, he approaches the subject of holiness in quite an open and somewhat personal manner, but helpful to all desiring to complete their consecration to the Lord in faithfulness and

in triumph. In the first verse of this chapter Paul reasons thus, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” That is, lift your thoughts and affections to things above, things which are heavenly, and seek to dwell in thought and affection where Christ is, at the right hand of God.

Similar language is used by Paul in writing to the Ephesian brethren. He [God] “raised us up together, and seated us together in the heavenlies.” (Eph. 2:6, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*) In these remarks we are exhorted to appropriate to ourselves the heavenly citizenship, and by so doing enliven our heavenly or spiritual aspirations, and to set our affections on things above, not on things of the earth.

Our affections are important to us. They are a disposition of the mind which is directed to certain objects, or to persons. They are also emotions of the heart, and therefore a state of feeling, of friendship toward another, of good will, warm attachment, love, and sympathy, as the apostle again suggests, “Be kindly affectioned one to another.”—Rom. 12:10

We set our “affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:2,3) These two statements appear contradictory, but are not when properly understood. We are ‘dead’ as human beings in the sense that we have devoted our humanity to sacrifice, and it is as spirit-begotten New Creatures (II Cor. 5:17) that we are hidden with Christ in God. By faith we reckonedly ‘died’ with Christ at consecration. There we covenanted sacrificially to change our viewpoint of life from self to God, and henceforth to seek to do his will in all our ways.—Rom. 12:2; 6:11

Our viewpoint of life is now eternal. We are still the same person, but with a changed purpose in life. This change makes us a new and different individual in character, or personality. The change is toward righteousness, truth, peace, and love for God and for Christ Jesus our Lord, and for all who are of a like purpose of life. “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh” with its affections and its corrupted desires.—Gal. 5:24

What, then, is our responsibility as New Creatures in Christ? First, it is to mortify—put to death—our earthly inclinations, or our “old man,” as Paul states it. (Rom. 6:6) Second, we are to nurture, cultivate, and bring to maturity the “new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”—Eph. 4:24

For the ‘new man’ only is there hope for a future life, and that hope depends upon growing up into Christ in all things. (Eph. 4:15) There can be no future life for the ‘old man.’ The Scriptures declare, ‘They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh.’ The life which we now live as New Creatures in Christ, we live by faith. This new life is in God’s keeping, and only by our own unfaithfulness is there danger of its destruction.

“Wherefore, my 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.” (Phil. 2:12,13) We need to ‘work’ with God that we might know definitely what it is, with God’s help, that we have to accomplish. In this chapter the apostle gives us clear instructions and helpful advice for this work.

We are at war with our old man. Paul wrote, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.” (Col. 3:5) “Put off the old man with his deeds.” (vs. 9) The great favors, which God has already bestowed upon us, do not in any way relieve us of these matters—rather the reverse—and we should be careful not to allow them to lull us to sleep in vain imaginings. Paul warned, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”—I Cor. 10:12

Let us redouble our efforts to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh. (II Cor. 7:1) In so doing we will demonstrate our true heart intention and be helped in building up character. This is our personal responsibility. Therefore let us seek to do as the Apostle Paul advises; that is, to “put on the new man.” (Col. 3:10) Let us endeavor daily, as

“the elect of God,” with all sincerity and dignity, to put on “bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, ... And above all these things put on charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, ... and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; ... And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him.”—Col. 3:10-17

When all the elect of God so live, and so express their personality as New Creatures, what a happy and blessed family it is! It represents the joint, the participated life, we now enjoy with others of the Christ family in which there is one Head, one spirit, one hope, and one life. It is, in reality, a foretaste of the fuller life that awaits us. (I John 3:1-3) “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” (Col. 3:4) Meanwhile, let us adorn the “hidden man of the heart” with what is incorruptible, “a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”—I Pet. 3:4

It is encouraging to know and realize that God, our Lord, and all the holy angels, are greatly interested in our welfare as New Creatures. Every fitting and proper assistance is rendered to help us to be successful. Yet the matter of our continued existence is our personal responsibility. It is only those who “endure unto the end,” that shall be saved.—Matt. 24:13

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF FAITH

The hidden life is one of faith. “The just shall live by faith.” (Heb. 10:38) “Without faith it is impossible to please him [God].” (Heb. 11:6) Therefore without faith there can be no hidden life. The apostle says, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”—Gal. 2:20

What was true of the Apostle Paul is equally true of us. The faith of Jesus Christ brought us justification, a condition of being made right with God. The faith of the Son of God has brought us life, the hidden life which we now enjoy, as a result of our consecration to God.—Rom. 5:1

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF HOLINESS

Without holiness, we read, “no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14) Jesus said the pure in heart “shall see God.” (Matt. 5:8) The Apostle John says, “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (I John 3:3) And those enjoying the hidden life are not of the world. (John 17:16) Consequently they avoid all unnecessary contact with it, particularly everything calculated to hinder their life of faith. Paul exhorted, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.”—II Cor. 6:17,18

We have sympathy for the world, and look forward to the appointed time when we will have the privilege of dispensing God’s blessings to suffering humanity. Meanwhile, we are striving to qualify for this honor by seeking truth in the inward parts—righteousness, godliness, holiness. Our ambition is to glorify God in all things and to become conformed to the image of his dear Son.—Rom. 8:29

We seek to practice love, sympathy, patience, faith, and all those traits of character represented in the Lord. Those virtues, Peter said, will make us to “neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ... For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (II Pet. 1:6-11) All who would nurture the hidden life, all who seek to walk with God and hold communion with him and with his dear Son, as friend converses with friend, will find that they do so only on condition of holiness of heart.

So long as one would cherish any unworthy thing, or voluntarily indulge in any known sin, he erects a wall of separation between himself and his Father to whom he has become attached. “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.” (Hab. 1:13) The hidden life can prosper only by complete surrender to God, in harmony with our consecration vows.

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF PRAYER

It is inconceivable to think that we might enjoy to the full those precious truths we have considered, except through prayer. Have we noticed how the promises attached to prayer are so definite? “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” (John 16:24) “Let your requests be made known unto God.” (Phil. 4:6) These words should encourage us to be “instant in prayer.” (Rom. 12:12) Indeed our whole

life should be one of prayer. “Pray without ceasing,” says the apostle, in I Thessalonians 5:17.

There are, as we are aware, certain conditions to be observed regarding prayer. It must be a prayer of faith. It must be offered in God’s appointed way, in the name of Jesus. (John 16:24) It must be subject to God’s will, and it is noticeable that God seems specially to favor secret prayer. “When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father ... and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee.” (Matt. 6:6) God’s children have a right to pray and are promised beforehand that the answer is assured. Just as our faith is true and constant, even so our prayers should be fervent and continuous to be acceptable.

A LIFE OF TRUST

The hidden life of the New Creature is also one of implicit trust. God’s children endeavor to persevere along an even tenor of their way, undismayed by things around them, undisturbed by the events of life, exercising a constant trust in their Heavenly Father’s overruling providence, realizing that of themselves they can do nothing. (John 15:5) At the same time, knowing that all things are possible to the Lord, they are a childlike, trustful folk, “Simply trusting every day; trusting through a stormy way; even when my store is small—trusting Jesus, that is all.”—Hymns of Dawn, no. 263

‘Simply trusting’ is only possible to God’s dear children because of his revelation of himself to them through the knowledge of his Word. They know him whom they have believed and are persuaded that he is able to keep that which they have committed to him against that day. Hence they implicitly trust him.—II Tim. 1:12

BASED ON LOVE

The hidden life is based on love. It must be love of the right kind. If our love for God is based merely upon what we may hope to receive from him in return, it shows quite clearly that our love is, after all, a love of self and not a love of God. Whereas, if we love him without measure because he is God, then it will be our delight to know him, to do his will, and to glorify him. Such love will lead one to eternal life; whereas, a love

of self may, or can, lead to death. Thus the truest love for self is expressed in supreme love for God.—I John 4:19; 3:16

Our life is hid with Christ in God because God loves us. Our life already is where God would have us—hid with Christ. Even now we know something of the effect of the hidden life which leads to joy and pleasures otherwise unknown. We find elevating, ennobling, purifying experiences of peace, joy, and happiness of which the world can know nothing.—John 17:13; 14:27

ENTIRE SUBMISSION

Folded and protected in the arms of boundless love and infinite power, we give our all to God and take all from him, as dear children, willing to let our Heavenly Father guide us in everything; willing to have little or much as he sees fit; willing to know and not to know; willing to go or to stay; willing to sit down or rise up; to be silent or to speak; willing to be honored or dishonored; to be on the mount of joy or in the valley of sorrow; to be anything or nothing, just as God wills. Our heart's song is "I love thy will, O God, Thy blessed perfect will, In which this once rebellious heart lies satisfied and still."—Hymns of Dawn, no. 114

A LIFE OF WARFARE

The apostle exhorts those enjoying the hidden life to "put on the whole armour of God" that they "may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:11,12) Everything connected with our old nature is opposed to the hidden life. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other."—Gal. 5:17

What a constant warfare it is as we strive to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling! (Phil. 2:12) Not only have we the desires of the flesh to contend with, but additionally the attractions of the world, which at times seem to impose themselves upon us the more we seek to escape them.

Then there are the snares of the Adversary so subtly set to entangle us. At times they seem to bewilder us. Yet God, who is greater than all our enemies, loves us. He has given us great and precious promises for our

encouragement to offset all the allurements around us. (I Pet. 3:4) “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.”—Ps. 62:5

LIFE OF COOPERATION

We must cooperate with the Lord and with his people, or our service will not be acceptable. It is not for us to determine the station of our service, or the work we do, but all must be done to the glory of God our Father. Our attitude should ever be of silent, sincere waiting, that we might learn to know what he would have us do, in what manner, and the time when it is to be done. Jesus was our great example in this, for he always sought to please his Father in what he said, what he did, and the hour for it to be accomplished.—John 2:4; 12:33

Only in this way can we hope to avoid all bias and all thought of self in our service. Let us freely acknowledge and bear in mind the fact that of ourselves we can do nothing. (John 15:5) It is necessary that we be but empty vessels to be filled with his Spirit, for only in this way can we hope to render acceptable cooperation with God. “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?”—I Cor. 4:7

It is well to remind ourselves of these things from time to time, and so keep ourselves wholehearted for all that God has for us to do in serving his purposes and each other. All who are thus united to God in Christ Jesus should expect to have evidences of being under the influence of the Holy Spirit and realize that their life is hid with Christ in God. “Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.”—Ps. 144:15

Let us see this in another figure. It is necessary to our happiness and success in our service to the Lord that our service to others now, or in the future, be in accordance with what we absorb from our great Master. Jesus revealed this to his disciples when describing the fruitfulness of the vine, the true vine, and the branches, under the care of the husbandman. It is that which we receive from God, and not what we provide, that counts. Let us not forget this principle of true life from God. But what of our future life and hope? It is this, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”—Col. 3:4

MANIFESTATIONS

One manifestation of the hidden life is evidenced in a profound love for the Bible as the source of spiritual life, inspiration, and repose. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”—John 6:63; Matt. 4:4

Another is to be seen in a fervent love for the brethren. (I Pet. 1:22; I John 3:16) If any one lacks in this, he should realize that he falls short in one very important element. “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”—I John 4:20

Another manifestation might be seen in our sufferings for righteousness’ sake. Jesus said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” (John 16:33) No truly devoted child of God escapes from some form of tribulation. All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (II Tim. 3:12) There are sorrows of mind, as well as sufferings of body, for each one to endure, made necessary that the naturally corrupted heart become purified and acceptable to God.

It is when all human supports are removed that faith is tested and tried, and valuable lessons are learned. Certainly those possessing the hidden life have their peculiar trials and temptations, and like all temptations, the attack is first made upon the intellect, by thought or perception. Our Lord’s noble example in the wilderness should assist us to see the importance of resisting at this point. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7) How much pain of heart, of grief, and sorrow we would save ourselves if we but followed the Lord’s example!

When the apostle says, ‘Ye are dead,’ he does not mean that we are literally, actually, in such a state that we cannot sin. It is the overcoming of temptation that will gain the crown—“He that overcometh.”—Rev. 3:21

It has been suggested that the more holy the life, the more violent the temptations. Satan will make us sin if he can. Let us bear in mind that the Lord is with us, and we will not turn to him in vain. God is faithful! He will not suffer us to be “tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (I Cor. 10:13) Prayer to him brings instant relief, if not entire escape. Very few, if any, have become strong in faith who have not passed through severe trials.

Another manifestation or evidence of possessing the hidden life will be the desire always to avoid unnecessary familiarities with the world. We should be pursuing a lowly, retired course, following the precepts and example of our Savior. Our life is a sealed book except to those who share it with us. God knows those who are his, which is all that is necessary.

“If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” (John 14:23) To experience this is a human thrill known only to those who are dead and their life is hid with Christ in God. And then, “Christ in you,” says the apostle is “the hope of glory.”—Col. 1:27

The joy and peace and rest of faith are such valuable treasures that even martyrdom becomes insignificant in comparison with being with the Lord, sharing his glory and honor and service; the thought of when he shall appear has been the incentive and delight of our entire walk of faith. The exceeding great and precious promises, their sustaining power, the Heavenly Father’s graciousness, and the supervision of all our affairs, will complete the triumph. ‘When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.’

The birth of the hidden life will eventually be accomplished. Then, in “thy presence” will be “fulness of joy; at thy right hand” there will be pleasures (delightfulness) evermore. (Ps. 16:11) It will be the end of any human warfare, the consummation of all our hopes, and the receiving of that ‘new name.’ It will mean the fulfillment of that delightful love song of the Song of Songs. It will be the revealing of that hidden treasure, for which one sold his all to secure, buying the field in which it was hid. It will be the completion of the desired habitation of God himself. It will bring the greatest thrill of all prospective brides—“the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:9), and the crown of life, with that great assurance that presently everything that hath breath shall praise Jehovah!

Sanctification

***“This is the will of
God, even your
sanctification.”
—I Thessalonians 4:3***

THESE WORDS ARE addressed to the church, the saints of God. This is God’s will for his people, his desire, his design—their full setting apart from the world to himself and his service—complete devotion to him.

The Lord requires a sanctified class for a special position, and for a very exceptional and important work. When, by Divine grace, the High Calling of God is revealed to us, including its marvelous visions of the heavenly glory, and the work to be accomplished when the glorified church is with her Lord, we see that we can no longer have the spirit of the world.

We cannot live any longer for worldly hopes, aims, and ambitions, and we must sacrifice these. We must be separated from them, as the Levites in the wilderness were separated. (Deut. 18:1,2) We are not only to be separated from the things of earth, but separated unto God, having a constantly growing desire for fellowship with him and for the beauty of his holiness.

The words sanctification and consecration, although sometimes used almost interchangeably, have a certain difference of meaning. The word consecrate has the thought of surrender, a definite step which has been taken. It is the yielding up of the will to God. Whoever has not thus definitely surrendered himself to the Lord has never made a real consecration. Surely there is no step more necessary to be seen clearly by God’s professed people than this one, and none more necessary to be made plain to others. The word sanctification not only contains the thought of this definite and complete consecration, but also takes in the subsequent entire process of transformation of character, and preparation for the heavenly kingdom. It progresses on and on in the Christian life until the character is developed and ripened.

TWO PARTS TO SANCTIFICATION

There is a setting apart that takes place first. The Lord said to the people of Israel, “Sanctify yourselves ... I am the Lord which sanctify you.” (Lev. 20:7,8) This would be their setting themselves apart as one experience, and God’s sanctifying them as another.

Concerning the call of the Gospel Age, no man cometh unto the Father but by the Son, and no man cometh unto the Son except the Father shall previously have drawn him. (John 14:6; 6:44) First comes the drawing of the Father through his Word of Truth, through personal study of the Scriptures.

Our willingness to respond and receive the Lord is merely the first step in response to this drawing. As we come to enter the Christian way we learn that it is narrow and difficult. Because of this, many turn away at this early stage. These people do not go to eternal torment, as taught by the creeds. Such a teaching is unscriptural and untrue.

God is now especially seeking a sanctified class to be the “bride” of Christ. (Rev. 21:2) These do not become discouraged and offended because of the narrowness of the way. Formerly, we may have thought that acceptance of Jesus met all requirements for one to be considered a follower of the Lord.

The Scriptures, however, teach that we are to go on to make a full consecration to God. We sanctify ourselves, and he accepts us and sets us apart for himself. He gives us the indication of this acceptance in the begetting of his Holy Spirit. We soon begin to realize that we have a new mind, a new disposition, a new heart.

This acceptance by the Father is only the beginning of the deep, sanctifying work, and it is his will that this work should continue and progress. This sanctifying work is to affect our minds, hands, feet, eyes, ears, and tongues—our all—that we may be fully used by the Lord. It is the will that is given up at first, and the will includes the service of our mortal body.

But this body has natural tendencies of its own. The giving up of the will means that the individual will seek to bring every thought, word, and deed into subjection to the will of God. It is one thing for the will to be made holy, and another thing to bring the mind and the body fully into line with this holiness of the will. The will is present with us, but “how to perform” is the problem. (Rom. 7:18) Not only are our wills to

maintain this sanctified state, but we are to broaden our appreciation of the Lord's will for us, and thus have more and more of the Master's spirit of loving sacrifice.

This deeper setting apart is by God, inasmuch as it is done by his arrangement. The disciples of old had left all to follow Jesus, and were set apart in the sense that they desired to know and do the will of the Father. Our Lord desired that the work of Divine instruction should go on in them, as it is written, "They shall be all taught of God." (John 6:45) Jesus prayed that his disciples should come under Divine providential instruction, which he indicated would come through the Holy Scriptures.

GOD'S WORD

Jesus, who knew and loved his Father's Word, prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17) This is the key to the procedure of the work of sanctification. The general tenor of our Lord's life throughout his earthly ministry was, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." (Heb. 10:7) It is a great honor and privilege to be able to read, and understand, the Holy Scriptures, even as Jesus did. Additionally, we now have the New Testament. This Holy Word is a "lamp" unto our feet and a "light" unto our "path."—Ps. 119:105

The one who consecrates to God does not at first have a full knowledge of the Divine will. He is helped onward by the power of the revealed Word, by the message of Truth, illuminated to his mind by the Holy Spirit. God is working in us both to will and to do his good pleasure. He gives us in his Word exceeding great and precious promises, also Divine counsel and admonition.

We are indeed begotten again, "not from corruptible, but from incorruptible seed, through the living and enduring Word of God." (I Pet. 1:23, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) The preciousness of this inspired Word is also described in Ephesians 5:25, 26, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

Our minds are opened to understand the Scriptures and the things that are needful for us as we read our Father's Word and apply the lessons to ourselves. We thus grow in knowledge, grace, and understanding, that we might be used at the present time in our Father's service, and in the

future also, beyond the veil, for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

God's holy Truth is a wonderful sanctifying power, and it is very important that we should live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4) We are to seek and feed upon God's Word in its purity, remembering that sectarian creeds and catechisms are so many attempts to teach "for doctrines the commandments of men."—Matt. 15:9

There are around us today subtle, and severe, challenges to our most holy faith. These tend to draw us away from the sacred condition of sanctification. These temptations are to be rejected, thus making sure the Word of God. "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17), is a vital part of the wonderful armor which our Father supplies, and we must put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.

We may, by Divine grace, be blessed with a knowledge of present Truth, yet in this blessed condition we must not encourage any feeling of ease, complacency, or self-satisfaction—merely drifting along in the Christian life. Our mind must be continually stirred up "by way of remembrance."—II Pet. 3:1

The new mind, begotten by the Holy Spirit through the Word of Truth, is in a frail earthly tabernacle. Therefore, while we may know the Lord's will, and the many exceeding great and precious promises, we must not be negligent to put ourselves and others always in remembrance of these things.—II Pet. 1:12

Under the guidance and blessing of our present Chief Reaper, the building up of the body of Christ is still a work of vital importance. Grains of wheat are still being gathered, and are being prepared for the heavenly garner, through the proclamation, and holy influence, of the true Gospel as revealed in God's Word.

THROUGH CHRIST JESUS

As members of a fallen race, we were born in sin and shapen in iniquity. We were not sanctified in the beginning, but were children of wrath, even as others. Without the riches of Divine grace we could not sanctify ourselves, but the offering of the body of Jesus, the sacrifice of

his untainted life for us, was the basis whereby we might become God's sanctified people.

Paul taught, "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb. 10:10, *WED*) No amount of consecration could have made us the people of God unless, first of all, the foundation for this should be made in the sacrifice of Jesus. His ransom sacrifice opened the way. His merit cleansed us and made us acceptable to the Heavenly Father.

As the merit of Christ was necessary for our justification, so his acceptance of us as members of his body, and his continued aid, are indispensable to the making of our calling and election sure. Our Lord points out the necessity of our continuance under his care saying, "Abide in me, ... As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. ... without me ye can do nothing. ... If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."—John 15:4-7

When we present ourselves in consecration, we are next accepted and begotten by the Spirit through the Word. The Spirit of the Truth inspires us and guides us in the heavenly way. It first showed us that we were sinners, needing a Savior. Then it revealed how to present ourselves to God. And after we had taken these steps and were accepted as sons of God, it led us step-by-step toward the fullness of the stature of men in Christ.

PROGRESSION

While sanctification includes our part of full consecration, also God's part of acceptance, it has, additionally, an element of progression. We are to grow in sanctification daily. It is for us to manifest that continued consecrated condition of heart in which we will hunger and thirst after the sanctifying Truth, feeding upon it daily, and be thereby enabled to grow strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. That the depth and sincerity of our sanctification be proved, we are disciplined and tested by God. If we endure his discipline, our Father will deal with us as with sons; and this is very wonderful.—Heb. 12:5-10, *WED*

Throughout our Christian life we are to seek as best we can to bring every thought, word, and deed into captivity to the obedience of Christ. We are not to be conformed to this world, but "transformed" by the

renewing of our mind, that we “may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Rom. 12:2) It is explained in Titus 2:14 that the Lord Jesus “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” We are willingly to submit to this cleansing work.

“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” (II Tim. 2:21) Under Divine care we can grow stronger with each wind of adversity, and with each battle with selfishness and sin. Testings, however, will come as to the degree of our faithfulness before the Lord, and in his service, to see how much of besetments we are able to endure, how strong a wind of false doctrine we can stand, and how much of the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the Adversary we are willing to bear without being unsettled and driven away from the Truth.

There are forces opposing our way in this privileged life of sanctification. We wrestle not merely “against flesh and blood, but against ... the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph. 6:12) “We are not ignorant of his [Satan’s] devices.” (II Cor. 2:11) On no account are we to become offended by tribulation or persecution which arises because of God’s Word. We need always to be on guard lest “the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word,” and we become unfruitful.—Matt. 13:21,22

Because of our faithful sanctification in Christ Jesus, our foes may be of our “own household” (Matt. 10:36); or our “own familiar friend,” in whom we have trusted, which did eat of our bread, “hath lifted up his heel” against us. (Ps. 41:9) We may experience that the workers of iniquity “whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.”—Ps. 64:3

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings.” (I Pet. 4:12,13) “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my

sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”—Matt. 5:10-12

We must have intensity of aim and purpose as we press along the line toward the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus, for we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. We need to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ (II Tim. 2:3), and “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.”—Rev. 2:10; 3:11,21

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Jesus was sanctified and sent into the world for the benefit of the whole human race. (John 10:36) His true followers, members of his body, are set apart for the same glorious purpose. Jesus prayed, “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”—John 17:18-21

Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12; 9:5), and to his disciples he said, “Ye are the light of the world.” (Matt. 5:14) The footstep followers of Jesus clearly understand that the true Gospel of the kingdom is to be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations. (Matt. 24:14) They also fully appreciate that concerning these glad tidings the world is still a dark place.

Erroneous, unscriptural teachings, including everlasting hell torment, are still widespread, and much confusion results. People are inwardly perplexed and unnecessarily fearful. It is almost impossible for them to escape the “fear” taught by the precepts of men. (Isa. 29:13) This spirit of error and fear, instead of accomplishing sanctification, hinders full devotion to God and the true worship of him, which, as Jesus said, is to be “in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23) Misunderstanding of the character of God, or the fundamental features of his glorious plan of salvation, obstructs true sanctification.

The possession of the Truth brings with it great responsibility. Shall we prove faithful to it? Shall we show to the Father our deep appreciation of his loving-kindness in granting us knowledge of his wonderful message of salvation, his glorious plan with its times and seasons? The Lord is seeking those who are valiant for him, for righteousness, and for Truth. Should we prove ourselves unworthy, we shall not be fit for the kingdom.

How earnestly, and with what painstaking care, should we give heed to the word spoken unto us. Let us be faithful in proclaiming the true Gospel, telling forth the words which the Lord has put into our mouths, whether others hear or forbear, whether our faithfulness brings us favor or disfavor of those around us. Let us always speak the Truth in meekness and love, leaving the results with our present Lord Jesus, the Chief Reaper.

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