

a herald of Christ's presence

THE DAWN

**"IN DUE SEASON
WE SHALL REAP,
IF WE FAINT NOT."**

Galatians 6:9

may 1957



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NEW JERSEY

Israel in History and Prophecy

THE NAME "Israel" today is one of international prominence, and has been for a number of years. It is also prominent in the Bible, appearing in the sacred record more than two thousand times. Prof. Strong interprets it to mean, "He will rule as God." This name first appears in Genesis 32:28, where it was given to Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, by the angel with whom he had wrestled through the night. The angel said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

From then on "Israel" became the national name of the descendants of Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob, applying to all the twelve tribes of Jacob. The only exception to this was for a time after the division of the nation into the northern and southern kingdoms, when the ten-tribe segment occupying northern Palestine was known as Israel, and the two tribes in the south as Judah. This continued from the death of Solomon until the captivity in Babylon. Those who returned from this captivity, regardless of the tribe to which

they belonged, were again known as Israelites, or the people of Israel.

This was a name the descendants of Abraham used among themselves, and of which they were proud, for they believed, and rightfully so, that it had been given to them by their God, Jehovah. Predating the conferring upon this historic people the name Israel, they were known as the Hebrew people; and, indeed, they are still frequently referred to as Hebrews. This name first appears in the Bible in Genesis 14:13, where we have the expression, "Abram the Hebrew." Abram, or Abraham, was a direct descendant of Eber.—Gen. 11:14-26

The name Hebrew signifies "crossed over," or "the other side." Abraham and his family seem to have been called Hebrews—partly at least—to express a distinction between the ancient races east and west of the Euphrates River, Abraham having "crossed over" to the West on his journey to the land which God had promised him. Generally speaking, we might say that outside nations referred to Abraham's descendants as Hebrews, but Israel became the name more especially used and loved within the

nation. The name "Jew" is a derivative of Judah.

The Promise to Abraham

God's special dealing with this people began with Abraham, their father. The first recorded promise made to Abraham reads, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."—Gen. 12:1-3

Three points should be noted in this promise. (1) Abraham's posterity was to become a great nation. (2) He was to have a "seed" which would be a channel of (3) blessing to all the families of the earth. In Galatians 3:8 the Apostle Paul refers to this promise and uses the word "nations" instead of "families." Actually there is little or no difference in the meaning of the words "families" and "nations," as viewed by Abraham, for the "nations" of his day were largely family, or tribal, groups.

In the 7th verse of this 12th chapter of Genesis, the Lord added, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." And in chapter 13, verses 14 and 15, we read in a promise by God to Abraham, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which

thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever." Here, then, is a fourth aspect of the promise made to Abraham; namely, that the land of Canaan was to be his and his children's for an everlasting possession.

Not Unconditional

In the light of the Bible's testimony it is clear that in his promises to Abraham God revealed his plan for the ultimate blessing of all the families of the earth with peace and health and life. This divine purpose was arbitrary, and was certain to be carried out. On the other hand, it is equally clear that those who would be used by God in the implementation of this purpose must qualify for this high position in the divine plan by proving their worthiness through obedience to God's will.

This was true from the very start of God's dealings with Abraham. "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation," the Lord said. Had Abraham not left his own people, and his father's house, and gone to Canaan, the promise to make of him a great nation would not have been fulfilled.

This principle is revealed in connection with the name Israel itself. Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, was the twin brother of Esau. Esau was the firstborn, and according to the prevailing custom of the time, the family right of in-

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heritance belonged to him. But the Lord chose otherwise. Before the children were born, the Lord said to their mother, Rebekah, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger."—Gen. 25:23

The "younger" referred to here was Jacob and his descendants. God had chosen him in preference to Esau, even as he had previously chosen Abraham, but it still was necessary for Jacob to prove worthy of this choice. He had to make his calling sure. The fact that he did is highlighted in connection with the changing of his name from Jacob to Israel. As the angel with whom Jacob wrestled all night explained, he had prevailed with God; that is, he had proven his worthiness, and was now given a name in consonance with this fact.

God's selection of those who were to represent him had previously been shown in regard to Isaac, the son of Abraham, and father of Jacob. Abraham had another son, Ishmael, whom he considered qualified to be his heir. He said to the Lord, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" But God replied, "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." (Gen. 17: 18, 19) Later God said to Abra-

ham, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called."—Gen. 21:12

The Lord established this choice of Isaac as the progenitor of the promised "seed" at the time when Sarah, his mother, demanded that Ishmael, Abraham's son by his Egyptian bondmaid, be cast out of the home. However, Ishmael's life was spared, and he became the titular head of the Arab race, or Arabians, who are also so prominently in the news today. Ishmael persecuted Isaac, and even now hatred still exists between the descendants of these two boys. Esau married one of Ishmael's daughters, and his descendants, the former Edomites, became more or less intermingled with the descendants of Ishmael, the Arabs.

In Egyptian Bondage

Through an intriguingly interesting sequence of circumstances, including the selling of Jacob's young son, Joseph, into slavery in Egypt, all the Hebrew people found themselves serving as slaves in that country. The Lord overruled in the experiences of Joseph and he became virtual ruler of Egypt, especially with respect to the food supply during a seven-year famine. It was in connection with his position of high favor in the Egyptian government that his father, Jacob, and the remainder of the family, moved to Egypt.

Their number was small at the time, but increased rapidly. Jacob, or more properly, Israel, died in Egypt. Before he died he blessed his twelve sons, conferring upon all

of them some recognition of the fact that God would deal with them. (Gen. 49) It was at Jacob's death that his sons became the nucleus of the nation of Israel. Thenceforth, God dealt with them, not as individuals, but as a family, a family which, according to the standards of the time, was to become a "great nation."

When Israel and his family first moved to Egypt they were treated well. Joseph was highly placed in the government, and the then reigning Pharaoh, due to what Joseph had done for the country, was kindly disposed toward them. But this Pharaoh died, and Joseph died, and the Israelites became an oppressed people, and they longed for deliverance.

Moses

It was at this juncture in their experience that Moses, by the Lord's overruling providences, was raised up to deliver them. The circumstances were unusual. In order to prevent the Israelites from becoming too numerous and a menace to the safety of Egypt, a decree had been issued ordering the destruction of all male Hebrew babies as they were born. The mother of Moses chose to disregard this decree, and hid her child in a basket placed in the bulrushes in the shallow edge waters of the Nile River.

Moses' sister concealed herself nearby to watch. Soon Pharaoh's daughter came to the river to bathe, and the baby was discovered. She was endeared to it, and decided to

take the child into the royal household to be reared. The sister then came forward and offered to secure a nurse for baby Moses. The offer was accepted, and Moses' own mother was thus chosen to be the nurse.

In this manner Moses became a well educated man, and well equipped to be a great leader of his people. At the age of forty he became distressed over the difficult plight of his people and endeavored to do something about it. But the Lord's due time had not come for their deliverance, and Moses was obliged to flee from Egypt into the land of Midian, where he remained in seclusion for forty years.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses at the "burning bush," and commissioned him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, and to freedom. Some of the most outstanding miracles recorded in the Bible were performed under the direction of Moses in connection with this deliverance. Altogether there were ten plagues brought upon the Egyptians to obtain Pharaoh's consent for their release, the tenth being the death of Egypt's firstborn. Israel's firstborn were spared, being under the protection of the blood of the passover lamb. The Israelites to this day continue to commemorate this miraculous event in their national history.

There was also the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, and the falling of the manna from heaven—the food which sustained the lives of the Israelites during their for-

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ty years' wandering in the wilderness of Sinai. There was also the sweetening of the bitter waters, and the obtaining of the water from a rock. During that forty years' wandering their shoes did not wear out—another miracle. The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob was caring for them because they were his people.

The Law

Soon after Moses led the Israelites through the Red Sea, and into the wilderness, he was used by God to give the nation his Law. This was at Mount Sinai. The Law was epitomized in the Ten Commandments. The giving of the Law was a most significant event in Israel's experience. God promised that anyone who could and would keep the Law inviolate would live thereby. (Lev. 18:5; Neh. 9:29; Ezek. 20:11) What this meant was that such a one would not become decrepit and finally die, as did all other people.

In a New Testament reference to the significance of this, the Apostle Paul wrote, "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." (Rom. 5:14) Adam sinned wilfully, and brought directly upon himself the penalty of death. All his children since have died because of his transgression.

The Law served to prove the inability of the fallen human race to obtain life by their own righteousness. While the test was made with but this one little nation, the

results would have been the same with other nations and races. All are imperfect and sinful. All are dying and need help from God if they are to gain life.

The Law served still another purpose with respect to Israel. Through Moses, the Lord said to the people, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."—Exodus 19:4-6

As we have noted, "Israel" means one who rules as God, that is, as his representative. The thought is that the people to whom God gave this name were chosen to represent him in the earth—to teach, and to rule, and to bless, in keeping with his promises and plan. But this was not an arbitrary selection. In order to enter into this heritage of prominence in the divine arrangement, the children of Jacob must first prove their worthiness by their sincere and determined efforts to obey the voice of the Lord and to be faithful to the covenant into which they had entered with him—the Law Covenant.

Six Periods

Beginning with the Exodus and the giving of the Law, Israel passed through six phases of national existence before the nation was de-

stroyed and the people scattered throughout the earth.

(1) The first of these was the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Because of their rebellious attitude, displayed particularly in rejecting the minority report of the spies as to their ability to conquer Canaan, the Lord decreed that all the males of the nation who were twenty years of age or older when they left Egypt must die in the wilderness. The only exceptions to this were the two faithful spies, Caleb and Joshua.

Upon the death of Moses, Joshua became the leader of the nation, and under him they crossed over Jordan into the Promised Land of Canaan. This began another phase of their national experience. It had mostly to do with the division of the land among the twelve tribes, and the conflicts involved in possessing the assigned portions. Joshua was a faithful leader—faithful to his people and to the Lord.

(2) After Joshua's death there followed the period of the judges, when the nation was not ruled by a central government, and everyone was free to do as he wished, subject, of course, to his own sense of responsibility to the terms of the Law given at Sinai. The department of the people under this arrangement was far from salutary. When they became too engrossed in sin, particularly the sin of idolatry, the Lord would punish them through the invasion of surrounding nations, such as the Midianites, and others. Then, when they cried to the Lord

for help, "judges" would be raised up by the Lord to deliver them.

(3) The last of the Judges was Samuel who also served as prophet. During his tenure of office, the people clamored for a king. They wanted to be like other people. The Lord told Samuel to warn the Israelites of the difficulties they would encounter under the rulership of kings. But they still insisted upon having a king, and the Lord instructed Samuel to anoint a king over them. Their first king was the notorious Saul who because of his wickedness was rejected by the Lord, and ignominiously died as a suicide.

David was chosen to succeed Saul. God spoke of David as a man after his own heart. (Acts 13:22) The Lord chose the Davidic family as the one through which the great Deliverer of Israel and of the whole world would come—the Messiah. Referring to David's son Solomon, who succeeded him on the throne of Israel, the Lord said, "My mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever."—II Sam. 7:15

This promise is referred to in the Bible as the "sure mercies of David." (Isa. 55:3) It is thus described because its fulfillment called for exercise of mercy. Not only Solomon, but other successors in the Davidic line were gross transgressors of God's law, yet he did

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not remove the kingdom from this family. The wonderful manner in which the Lord protected the Davidic heirs to the throne throughout the period of the kings makes interesting and faith-strengthening reading.

After the death of Solomon there was a division of the kingdom. Rehoboam was the rightful heir to the throne, but under the leadership of Jeroboam, ten of the tribes broke away from Judah and Benjamin, and thereafter the Davidic line of kings ruled over these two tribes only. But this did not change God's original purpose concerning the great king and Messiah whom he promised to send; for this One of destiny was to come from the tribe of Judah.—Genesis 49:10

Without exception the kings of the ten-tribe segment of the nation were wicked, and in due course they were conquered by the Assyrians and taken captive to Assyria. Some of the Davidic line of kings who ruled the two-tribe kingdom were faithful to the Lord, and some were not. The last of these is referred to in Ezekiel 21:25 as a "profane wicked prince of Israel," and the declaration made that the "day is come, when iniquity shall have an end."

This was in the year 606 B. C., when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, completed his conquest of the Holy Land, destroyed Jerusalem, and took the king, Zedekiah, and the people, captive to Babylon. At first glance it would appear at this point that God's

promise had failed that the "sceptre" would not depart from Judah and that the Davidic line of kings would be preserved. But not so. The Prophet Ezekiel said, "It shall be no more, until he come whose right it is," implying that the kingdom was merely suspended for a time, and that later it would be restored.

(4) The next phase in Israel's national existence was the period of captivity in Babylon. This lasted for seventy years. The nation was not destroyed, although it had lost its national independence. And when the captivity ended and the people were given their liberty to return to Palestine, the nation did not regain its full freedom. It continued to remain a vassal nation.

One of the outstanding personalities in Israel's history came into prominence during the Babylonian captivity. This was the Prophet Daniel. Not only did Daniel serve God faithfully as a prophet, but he became prime minister of the empire, second only in control to the king. This high position in government was continued by the king of the Medes, who conquered Babylon. It was Daniel's refusal to obey the edict of this king that caused him to be cast into a den of lions, where his life was miraculously protected.

(5) It was the conclusion of the seventy years of captivity that King Cyrus issued a decree permitting the Israelites to return to their land, and authorizing the rebuilding of their temple in Jerusalem. In II Chronicles 36:22

and Ezra 1:1 we are told that the Lord "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia" to issue this decree. Since Daniel lived over into the reign of Cyrus, it was probably through him that the Lord aroused Cyrus to take this action so favorable to the Israelites.

In the books of Ezra and Nehemiah we have a fairly full account of the first years after the captivity officially ended. In this record there appear the names Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, and others used by the Lord, first in rebuilding the temple, and then the city of Jerusalem and its walls, which had been destroyed when the nation was taken captive to Babylon.

Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah there was a rededication of the people to God, the Law being read to them by Ezra. (Neh. 8) In Nehemiah, chapter 10, is recorded a solemn covenant into which many of the people entered, under the direction of their leaders. This went somewhat beyond the demands of the Law, and some scholars believe that it was the small beginning of what later became the Talmudic writings which are so influential in the lives of many Israelites even today.

Beyond the experiences pertaining to the rebuilding of the temple and the city and walls of Jerusalem, the Bible contains virtually no information relating to the nation from then until the birth of Jesus. The Apocrypha books of the Maccabees tell of the

heroic efforts of the Maccabean family to throw off the Assyrians as oppressors of the Israelites. Kings were established in Jerusalem for a short period, but this short-lived dynasty was brought to an end by the conquering Romans.

The Birth of Jesus

(6) When Jesus was born, the nation of Israel had been without any special manifestation of favor from God for several centuries. Malachi was the last of the prophets, and he served during the time of Nehemiah. But despite this lack of special prophetic instruction, many in Israel maintained their interest in the Word and Law of the Lord, so much so that when John the Baptist began his ministry the people wondered whether or not he might be the promised Messiah. --Luke 3:15, 16

It is reasonable to suppose that the priests and doctors of the law in Israel were acquainted with the prophecy recorded in Daniel 9:25 in which a period of sixty-nine symbolic weeks is mentioned as marking the time for the coming of Messiah. In prophetic time this was a measurement of 483 years. It was to begin with the decree to rebuild the city and walls of Jerusalem, 454 B. C. If the religious rulers of Israel had any understanding of this prophecy at all, they would know that they were living in the very time when the Messiah was to appear.

An angel of the Lord said to Mary, the mother of Jesus, "Be-

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hold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."—Luke 1:31-33

Should there be any doubt as to how, and by whom, the promises of God concerning the perpetuation of the throne of David were to be fulfilled, here we have the answer. And this statement of the angel to Mary confirms the truth set forth in a prophecy of the birth of Jesus, which reads, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:6, 7

Messiah—The "Anointed"

The word "Messiah" means the anointed. So does its New Testament counterpart, "Christ." Jesus became the Anointed One at the age of thirty, when he was baptized in the River Jordan by John the Baptist. The Old Testament custom of anointing kings and priests into office by use of holy

anointing oil was typical, and was now to be superseded by its anti-type, the anointing of the Holy Spirit. At Jordan, John the Baptist was given an outward demonstration which proved to him that the Holy Spirit, or power of God, had come upon Jesus.

Soon after this, Jesus visited a synagogue in Nazareth, his home town. Given the Scriptures to read, he opened to the 61st chapter of Isaiah, and read, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he [Jehovah] hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and a recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."—Luke 4:18, 19; Isaiah 61:1-3

Jesus went throughout Palestine proclaiming this message of the Gospel, or good news. It was the good news of the kingdom; that is, the good news that the kingdom, or government, which God had promised was actually to be established and that through its agencies the sick were to be healed, the dead raised, and peace and security established for Israel and for all nations. He was assisted in this ministry by twelve apostles, and later by seventy others called evangelists.

Together these labored for more than three years in that little country of Palestine. In addition to their oral message of good news, they demonstrated the practical

meaning of what they said by miracles of healing, even raising the dead. These were the blessings promised to come to the people through the messianic kingdom; and the miracle-working power bestowed upon Jesus and his co-workers was, or should have been, a convincing witness to the fact that he was the Messiah of promise.

But few of the nation accepted Jesus as the Messiah. The religious rulers particularly were antagonistic toward him. John wrote, "He came unto his own but his own received him not." (John 1:11) It became necessary at times for Jesus to plan his course of action so as not to come into too close contact with those of Israel who were opposing him. But toward the close of his ministry, when Jesus realized that the due time had come in the divine plan for him to die as the world's Redeemer, he returned to the Judean district where the opposition to him was strongest, and in these closing days he made some very revealing statements. One of them was:

"Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these

things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that 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. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." —Matt. 23:34-39

It must be admitted that Jesus was a true prophet of what was to befall the nation of Israel within the lifetime of the generation to which he ministered. It was less than forty years after Jesus uttered the prophecy just quoted that Jerusalem was destroyed and the people of Israel scattered throughout the world, marking the beginning of what is known to the Israelites as the Dispersion.

This also marked the end of the sixth phase of their national history as recorded in the Bible. It began with the return of the exiles from Babylon and ended in A. D. 70-73, when the severest and longest lasting of all their national calamities came upon them. Beginning with the Dispersion, the Bible continues to describe many of the experiences of this chosen people of God, not as history, but prophetically; or, if you wish, history in advance.

But meanwhile another feature of the divine plan for human redemption and recovery from sin

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and death unfolds; one in which the name Israel continues to be prominent. When John wrote concerning those who rejected Jesus, that "his own received him not," he added, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power [margin, right, or privilege] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John 1:12) Today the expression, "son of God" is used in rather a loose manner. Many claim that the entire human race are children of God. It is true that the human race is God's creation, and indeed Adam is referred to in the Bible as the "son of God." (Luke 3:38) But this relationship was lost through sin.

However, John had much more in mind when he said that believing Israelites were given the privilege to become "sons of God." In the Bible the sons, or children, of God are those chosen to be members of God's ruling house, his kingdom family. Paul wrote, "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."—Rom. 8:17

Individual Israelites who accepted Jesus as the promised Messiah and became his footstep followers, were the first "sons" to become joint-heirs with him. The apostles were among these. On the Day of Pentecost three thousand believed, and there were many others. But the number of believing Israelites was not sufficient. Revelation 7:4 and 14:1 reveals that this ruling family of God was to contain 144,000 children, those who would have the

Father's name written in their foreheads; but the number of Israelites who believed came far short of this.

Then, for the first time, God turned to the Gentiles. In Acts 15:14 it is referred to as "visiting" the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for his name." So it was not long before the Early Church was an admixture of believing Israelites and converted Gentiles.

"An Holy Nation"

As we have noted, God promised the Israelites shortly after leaving Egypt that they could be a "kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." (Exod. 19:5,6) This was conditional upon obedience to him and his Law. This condition was not met, and when the nation failed in its final test Jesus said, "Your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23:38) It was Israel's "house" that was left desolate, or destitute of any further claims of being God's "kingdom of priests," his "holy nation."

Jesus had previously said concerning Israel, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21:43) The Apostle Peter identifies this new "nation" for us. He wrote, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; . . . which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God—I Pet. 2:9, 10

The language here used by Peter is very similar to that employed in God's promise to the Israelites, and he is saying that a people who had been aliens to the promises of God

had now become the people of God to whom these kingdom promises belonged. Here, then, is the "nation" mentioned by Jesus, to whom the kingdom had been given when taken away from Israel.

The Commonwealth of Israel

In writing to the Church at Ephesus, made up of both Israelites and Gentiles, Paul said of the Gentile converts, "Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise." And again, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."—Eph. 2: 12, 19

Thus Paul explains that the promises of God which once belonged exclusively to the natural descendants of Abraham were now shared by believing Gentiles. God had not made a new arrangement for the Gentile converts, but was inviting them, through belief in Christ, to share the "commonwealth" of Israel, to become a part of the "household" of God, his ruling family, Israelites indeed.

Broken Branches

In the 11th chapter of Romans Paul presents a lesson pertaining to the Israelites in which he uses an olive tree and its branches as an illustration, the unbelieving Israelites being as branches broken from this tree. The purpose of the illustration is to show that God's original purpose pertaining to Israel had not changed, but that Gentiles had been

given an opportunity to share in that purpose.

In verse 2 Paul says, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." This is not out of harmony with Jesus' statement to Israel, "Your house is left unto you desolate." Jesus' reference was to the exclusiveness of the nation of Israel as God's ruling house. No longer could the natural descendants of Abraham, known as the nation of Israel, claim to be God's ruling nation.

But this did not mean that God had cast away Israel as a people, nor that he had taken from them as individuals the opportunity to qualify as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. To prove this Paul uses the experience of Elijah as an illustration. Elijah felt that in his day all Israel had rejected Jehovah, and had bowed the knee to Baal. But he was wrong. The Lord said to him. "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal."—vs. 4

Applying the illustration, Paul says, "Even so then at the present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." (vs. 5) This remnant was made up of those mentioned in John 1:2, who had accepted Jesus, and had been given the privilege of becoming the sons of God, members of his ruling house. It also included the three thousand who accepted Christ on the Day of Pentecost. Indeed, it includes all the natural descendants of Abraham throughout the age who have accepted Jesus.

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This surely proves, as Paul argues, that God had not cast away his people, or discriminated against them in any way. He had simply removed the exclusiveness of their opportunities. In verse 7 Paul adds, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." All Israelites were the elect people of God, but the remnant, the believers among them, had secured their election by their belief and faithfulness. These "obtained" what they were seeking for; namely, a place in God's family, or ruling house.

"And the rest were blinded," Paul explains. Their blindness, their unbelief, resulted in their being broken off from the Israelitish tree, and in their places believing Gentiles were grafted in. In verses 8-24 of this remarkable chapter Paul emphasizes the necessity of belief and obedience in order to have a part in God's arrangements. While believing Gentiles benefited greatly because the breaking off of the natural branches made room for them, they should remember that unbelief on their part would also result in being severed from the tree.

In verse 24 Paul states that the grafting of wild Gentile "branches" into the Israelitish tree was "contrary to nature." When branches of fruit trees are grafted onto other varieties—"wild" or cultivated—they bear the same variety of fruit as the tree from which they were severed. According to "nature" the sap and nutriment of the

tree onto which they are grafted does not change the characteristics of the ingrafted branches. But with the ingrafting of Gentile "branches" onto the Israelitish tree it is different. The result is "contrary to nature" for in this case the "branches" are changed. They become like the tree which bears them; that is, they become Israelites.

This is why in Revelation 7:4-8 the ruling family of God, his kingdom household, are described as coming from the twelve tribes of Israel; the point being that the name Israel continues to be associated with those whom God is calling, selecting, and proving during the present age to live and reign with Christ. All the original ones of this family were natural descendants of Abraham, and the remainder become Israelites by virtue of being grafted into the Israelitish tree.

The "Seed" of Blessing

As we have noted, God promised Abraham that through his "seed" all the families of the earth would be blessed. Ishmael was Abraham's son, and he had other children by his second wife, Keturah. But the Lord said to Abraham, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Paul refers to this in the 9th chapter of Romans and explains its spiritual significance. He speaks of having great "heaviness and continual sorrow" of heart over the fact that all Israel had not accepted Christ, and thus made their calling and election sure to joint-heirship with Christ.

Then he adds (6th verse), "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect." This does not mean, in other words, that God's plan through Israel had failed. How could it? God's Word never returns to him void. (Isa. 55:11) Then Paul explains why this was true in connection with the case in point. We quote, "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children, but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called."—vss. 6,7

Isaac was in reality a faith seed, and used, as Paul indicates, to typify the faith seed of Abraham during the present age of faith. In Galatians 4:28 Paul wrote, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." In verse 7 of the same chapter he wrote, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ," members, that is, of the divine ruling house.

And then again, in Galatians 3:27-29 we read, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." What could more conclusively prove the fact that when God made the promise that Abraham's "seed" would bless all the families of the earth he was speaking of the faith "seed" of the Gospel age, made up of Jews and Gentiles, and that the

matter of being one or the other has no bearing on one's acceptability for this high position in the divine arrangement?

A Spiritual Ruling House

In order for those divinely chosen to rule in the messianic kingdom they must be raised from the dead. This was true of Jesus, who, after his resurrection, said to his disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18) When Jesus was raised from the dead he was highly exalted "above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come."—Eph. 1:21

This exaltation was not only in authority and in power, but also in nature. He was no longer human, having given his flesh for the life of the world. (John 6:51) He is now the "image of the invisible God," which means that he possesses the divine nature. (Col. 1:15) From this high position of glory and authority Jesus said, "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

In the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians Paul speaks of those who will be exalted to this high position as then having "celestial," or heavenly bodies. In this chapter Paul speaks of Christ's kingdom, saying that he must reign until all enemies are put under his feet. (vs. 25) The resurrection of those who

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are to reign with Christ is essential to the full establishment of this kingdom, and in the resurrection these are to be given "celestial," or spiritual bodies.—vss. 39-44

This divine plan for a spiritual, invisible ruling house of sons on the divine plane of life is not one that was suddenly developed as an alternative when the nation of Israel failed to accept Jesus and thereby qualify to be God's "kingdom of priests" and his "holy nation." This had been God's plan from the beginning, but it was not the due time to reveal it until the Messiah came.

God also planned from the beginning that believing Gentiles should be fellow-heirs to kingdom glory with believing Jews. It was simply that previously it had not been made known—"which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel." Eph. 3:5, 6

"Out of Zion"

King David established his government on the hill of Zion in Jerusalem. God accepted this kingdom of Israel as his kingdom, and used it as a type of the real messianic kingdom of promise. Thus in the prophecies of both the Old and New Testaments, "Zion," or "Sion," symbolizes the rulership of Christ and his joint-heirs. In

Revelation 14:1, they are shown together on "mount Sion."

In Micah 4:2, and Isaiah 2:3, we are told that in the kingdom of the Messiah, when the ruling "house of the Lord" is established, the law shall go forth out of "Zion." It is this same symbol of the spiritual phase of the kingdom that is referred to in Romans 11: 26 and 27, where we read, "All Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

As Paul explains earlier in this 11th chapter of Romans, only a "remnant" obtained what all Israel sought for, that is, joint-heirship with Christ, the Messiah of promise, and the "rest were blinded." But this does not mean that God ceased to love these blinded ones in Israel. It is merely that they failed of the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14) Blindness "happened to Israel, [only] until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"—that is, until sufficient Gentile believers should prove their worthiness to fill the places of the "natural branches" which were broken off. And then, after this, "all Israel shall be saved."—vss. 25, 26

When the "fulness of the Gentiles" is "come in," it will mean that the spiritual Sion class is completed, and exalted to heavenly glory. And then, from "Sion" will begin to flow the blessings of the

long-promised kingdom, and these blessings will first come to "all Israel," in keeping with the covenant which God made with them to take away their sins.

"As concerning the Gospel" Paul continues, "they are enemies for your sakes";—that is, as a result of their enmity toward Jesus and his Gospel of the kingdom, Gentile believers received an opportunity for the great prize of joint-heirship with Jesus—"but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes; for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."—vss. 28, 29

The word "election" in this text is interesting and revealing. Abraham was elected by God to be the father of natural Israel, and to inherit the land of Canaan. His natural seed was to be typical of the faith seed of the Gospel age, which was to be exalted to glory, honor, and immortality, and be the promised channel of blessing to all the families of the earth. But Abraham had to make this election sure. The first test was his willingness to leave his own country and his father's house. He obeyed. (Heb. 11:8) His final test was the giving up of his son Isaac as a burnt offering to the Lord. In this also his faith triumphed.

Through Moses, God covenanted with Israel to make of them a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation," but there was a condition: "If ye will obey my voice." (Exod. 19:5, 6) By virtue of his foreknowledge, God knew that the Israelites as a people would not

obey his voice in a real and continued sense. After this became apparent, the Lord promised to make a "new covenant" with them. This covenant was phrased during the time when the nation was divided, one part being principally designated as "Israel" and the other as "Judah." God wanted them to know that he loved all Israel, so the promise reads:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—Jer. 31:31-34

It is to this promise that Romans 11:27 refers—"This is my covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins." It is to this covenant that Paul refers, when he wrote, "The gifts and calling of God are

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without repentance," or change. (Rom. 11:29) The previous covenant, as God himself declared, had been broken. Israel had failed to qualify for what that covenant provided. God had not changed, but they had failed to meet the conditions, and the covenant to make of them exclusively a "kingdom of priests and an holy nation" became null and void.

So God, in his love, promised to make a "new covenant," a covenant which provided life, but not rulership and glory. And, as Paul explains, this covenant is due to be made with Israel as soon as the "fulness of the Gentiles be come in." And then, the principal agency in making the "new covenant" with Israel will be the divine Christ, constituting the spiritual phase of the kingdom—"Out of Zion" shall come the Deliverer, and "shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob [whose name was changed to Israel.]"

The Time Is at Hand

Our interest in Israel, and in all that the name Israel implies, is heightened today by world events—events which reveal with increasing clearness that we have reached the end of the Gospel age and are even now in the transition period leading to the full establishment of Messiah's kingdom. Important among these events are the developments in Palestine—the fact that a million and a half of Israelites have gone there, that they have their own government, which is a free, independent state,

a nation among the nations of the world.

The prophecies of the Bible reveal that preparatory to making the promised "new covenant" with Israel this scattered people would first be gathered back to the Promised Land, and that there God would fulfil his promise to them—his promise to write his law in their "inward parts." This purpose of God is clearly and beautifully stated by the Lord through the Prophet Ezekiel. We quote:

"I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen [Gentiles], whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen [Gentiles], whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen [Gentiles], and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will

give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. 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.”
—Ezek. 36:21-28

The prophecy of Jeremiah 30, verses 3 and 5, indicates that the returning of the Israelites to their Promised Land would not be without difficulties. We quote, “Lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. . . . For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.” It was the hope of the Israelites that the establishment of the new state of Israel would bring them peace; but instead of being blessed with peace they have been plagued by fear.

In this prophecy the Lord states that he would “cause” his people to return to their land. In chapter 16, verses 14 to 16, we are informed that the Lord would send “fishers” and “hunters” among his people to impel them to return to the land which he gave to their fathers. Another very vividly stated prophecy conveying a similar thought is Ezekiel 20:33-38. It reads:

“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. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: 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.”

A number of interesting points appear in this prophecy. First, the Israelites were to be uprooted from the countries wherein they sojourned by the Lord’s “fury,” denoting troublous circumstances which would bring about their departure. Our generation has witnessed these circumstances.

Next, instead of at once being brought into a state of peace and security, they were to find themselves in what is described as the “wilderness of the people.” This suggests that this modern Exodus and return to Canaan [Palestine] would be at a time when the world at large would be in a condition of insecurity and apprehensiveness such as was the experience of the

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ancient Israelites when they left Egypt and crossed over the Red Sea into the wilderness. Surely today the world is in such a "wilderness," and the Israelites are sharing the fear that fills the hearts of all as they look ahead to the things coming upon the earth.

Further, the Lord says that he would "plead" with his people as he pleaded with them in the "wilderness of the land of Egypt"; also, that he would cause them to "pass under the rod." We may understand from this that the difficulties through which the returned Israelites have passed, and are still passing, are designed by the Lord to be disciplinary in nature, and for the purpose of preparing them to later enter into the "bond of the covenant"—that is, the "New Covenant."

And lastly the Lord tells us that he would "purge" out from the Israelites those who were rebels; that is, those who refused to enter into the "bond of the covenant," when given every opportunity to do so. Concerning these the Lord says, "I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel."

The Hebrew word here translated "enter" is one which, according to Prof. Strong, means "to go or come (in a wide variety of applications)." In Numbers 31:23 it is translated "abide." The reference is to certain metals that would "abide" in fire and be purified thereby, and not be destroyed. This evidently is the thought in-

tended in the prophecy under consideration.

The "rebels," as the Lord calls them, return to the Land of Promise together with the others, but they do not prove worthy to remain there. They do not "abide" the fiery tests which the Lord, in "pleading" with his people, permits them to experience. Instead of being brought to the Lord by these experiences, and into the "bond of the covenant," they refuse him and the loving provision he has made for Israel and the world, and are destroyed. Peter said, "It shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."—Acts 3: 23

Steps of Progress

The 37th chapter of Ezekiel is another prophecy assuring us of the restoration of natural Israel. In this prophecy the house of Israel is depicted as a valley of dry bones. In the vision given to Ezekiel he was commanded to prophesy, and he says,

"As I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then he said unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these

slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.”—vss. 7-10

While the promises of God give abundant assurance that there is to be a resurrection of the dead, both for Israel and the whole world, this prophecy is not one of those promises. However, when we see the beginning of its fulfillment we may know that the resurrection is near. Paul wrote, “What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?”; that is, the restoration of Israel, once begun, will continue until even the dead are restored to life and given an opportunity to participate in the blessings of Messiah’s kingdom.—Rom. 11:15

In Ezekiel’s picture of gradual restoration, from the first rustling of the “bones” until there is “flesh” and “skin” on them, and life-giving “breath” is provided, we are told of a “noise,” a “shaking,” and the blowing of “four winds.” This seems again to suggest that the restoration of Israel takes place during a time of great disturbance in the earth, a “time of trouble” which is climaxed by “four winds.” The life-giving breath is said to come from the “four winds,” or during the time they are blowing.

To Ezekiel God said, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.” The fact that the “bones” say this indicates

that it is not a picture of actual death, but of the withered hopes of Israel. However, the Lord promised that this condition would be changed. “Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.”—vss. 11, 12

The “graves” in which Israel had been buried during the centuries of the Dispersion are evidently the different countries, or nations in which they have been domiciled. “We are cut off for our parts,” they say, which has been true. Some have been in one “grave,” and some in another, but all have been “dead” insofar as their national hopes were concerned.

But already most of the national “graves” have been opened, and the Israelites have poured forth from them to the number of one and one-half millions, and have been brought into the land of Israel. As yet, however, very few of them realize the significance of what is taking place. They do not know that what has happened has been done for them by the Lord, nor will they know this until the last phase of the restoration is accomplished; that is, until they receive breath from the “four winds,” or as explained in verse 14, the Lord puts his Spirit in them and they live.

The opening of their “graves,” their return to the Promised Land and their receiving of the Lord’s Spirit, are all necessary before they recognize that the Lord has performed this great thing for

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them. Then they will know, and rejoice. Then the nations generally will also know that the Lord has been working for Israel. Then they will dwell in their land with peace and safety, and the anti-typical David, even their Messiah of promise, will rule over them as king.—vss. 24-28

Aggression from the North

Following, in chapters 38 and 39 of Ezekiel, we are given some of the details of the trouble through which Israel passes before the Spirit of the Lord is received. In chapter 38 an assault against Israel is there described as coming from the "north," under the leadership of one called "Gog." Under his direction there are such allies as Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, and Togarmah. These are ancient names, and it may not be possible accurately to identify their counterparts today. This is not essential in order to understand the main point of the prophecy.

This attack is made after Israel has been brought back from the sword, and dwelling safely in the land. It is therefore still future. Israel has not yet been "brought back from the sword." (Ezek. 38:8) They have assured themselves of the possession of the land they occupy by means of military might. They are not dwelling safely. They are in continual danger of attack. What international developments must intervene before Israel dwells safely we can know only as they unfold.

But when that time comes the

final aspect of Israel's experiences under the Lord's "rod," will begin. The prophecy reads, "Thus saith the Lord God: in that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?" This is addressed to Gog, indicating that this mighty force from the "north" would know of the helplessness of Israel's position. The prophecy continues:

"And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses [a highly mobile army], a great company, and a mighty army: and thou shalt come up against my people Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen [Gentiles] may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes." Ezek. 38:14-16

"Surely in that day, there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel," the prophet says. (Ezek. 38:19) This is doubtless the "shaking" which occurs as the "bones" come together and flesh appears on them, as mentioned in Chapter 37: 7. It will be a most distressing time for Israel, perhaps worse than anything through which they have yet passed in connection with their repossessing the Promised Land. But the Lord will intervene on their behalf. He says:

"I will call for a sword against him [Gog and his armies] throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother." (vs. 21)

This suggests the development of a state of confusion among the various allies who join in this final assault against Israel. In view of the crisscrossing of purposes and objectives among the nations of earth today, it is not difficult to see how serious conflicts could arise in connection with this aggression against Israel. The Lord continues:

“I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.”—vss. 22, 23

We may not be able to interpret the symbolism here used. However, they describe divine intervention on behalf of Israel at a time so critical that, left to their own resources, they would be completely defeated and probably even driven from their land. It is not necessary that we understand just how this will be done. It is enough to know that it will be done, and that by this mighty display of miracle working power the eyes of many nations will be opened to recognize the hand of God in the affairs of his ancient people.

The first six verses of the next chapter (39) reveal the devastating results of divine intervention against the enemies of Israel. Then the next verse reads, “So will I make my holy name known in the

midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One of Israel.”

This will be a remarkable time for Israel, and for all nations. Up until this time Israel's eyes are blind to the real significance of what is taking place. The spirit of nationalism and the desire for economic security will have been the motives for many of them going to Palestine to live. Others will have gone there because, uprooted from “graves” in other countries, there simply was no other place they could go.

Whatever their motives for being in Palestine, they will have witnessed the animosity of their neighbors against them, and the poorly concealed determination of the Arabs to destroy them and to repossess the land which they claim does not belong to Israel. Israel will have witnessed and endured the border raids, and will have felt the pressure of threatened economic sanctions by the United Nations which they joined for security.

Through all of these harrowing experiences they will have witnessed little to convince more than a handful of them that they could depend upon anything else except their own shrewdness and military might. Finally, having enjoyed a short season of peace and safety, and feeling probably that at last they have conquered the obstacles in their path to security and hap-

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piness, they will suddenly be confronted with the most ominous threat of their existence as a new and struggling nation. Fear and despair will take over.

And then the miracle—the “pleading” of God on their behalf with the symbolic pestilence, great hailstones, and fire, and brimstone (perhaps not too symbolic at that). What an enlightening experience it will be! Thus will the Lord make his holy name known in the midst of his people Israel.

The closing verses of this chapter (23-29) summarize the facts set forth in chapters 36 to 39. And then in the last verse comes the final assurance to Israel. The Lord says, “Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.”

The Kingdom’s Earthly Phase

This miraculous deliverance of Israel will mark the beginning of kingdom blessings flowing out to Israel and the world. From then on, the kingdom will be functioning, and in full control of affairs in Israel, quickly spreading its sphere of influence and control throughout the world. It will be then that the human representatives of the spiritual Christ, the “Zion” of the prophecies, will put in an appearance.

And who will these be? Jesus answers this question. He said to the Israelites of his day, as recorded in Matthew 8:11, 12, and Luke 13:28, 29, that the people from the

east, west, north, and south—the world over, that is—would sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom, and that the “children of the kingdom” would be “cast out.” This means that the worthy ones of the past will then be raised from the dead.

During all that long period of time, beginning with Abel, and ending with John the Baptist, God was testing and training these ancient worthies for the responsible positions they will occupy as the human representatives of the kingdom. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews we are given an account of their trials, and of how they faithfully endured, inspired by hope of a “better resurrection.”

In Psalm 45:16 these faithful ones of the past are referred to as the “fathers,” who will become “children,” and be made “princes in all the earth.” They will be the “children” of the divine Christ because they will receive life through him. They will not reign as kings, but will be constituted “princes.” In a reference to the spiritual Israelites of the present age, and comparing their reward with the reward of the ancient worthies, Paul wrote that God had provided some “better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”—Heb.11:40

The “better thing” attained by the followers of Jesus is their spiritual inheritance of glory and honor and immortality—the honor and glory of reigning with Christ,

and the immortality of the divine nature. (Rom.2:7; II Pet. 1:4) When these have all proved faithful "unto death," and have been raised from the dead in the "first resurrection," and made a part of the heavenly, or spiritual, phase of the kingdom, then will come the resurrection of the ancient worthies to represent the kingdom on earth.

It seems reasonable to conclude that this mighty miracle will take place about the time the Lord intervenes to save the people of Israel from destruction by their enemies, or very soon thereafter. Since the defeat of their enemies by divine intervention will open the eyes of the Israelites to know the Lord, they will be amenable to, and will need instruction and direction in the ways of the new kingdom; and the ancient worthies will be on hand to do this work.

"Zion" and "Jerusalem"

Jerusalem was the capital city of ancient Israel, but as we have noted, the government was located on mount Zion in Jerusalem. Just as the Lord uses "Zion" to symbolize the spiritual phase of the kingdom, so he uses "Jerusalem" to represent the earthly phase which will be under the control of the ancient worthies. So we read that the "law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Micah 4:2) Yes, the "Word of the Lord," the interpretations and instructions as to the proper applications of the laws of the kingdom, which will emanate

from "Zion," will be given by the ancient worthies.

This is what Jesus meant when he said that in the kingdom the people from every part of the earth would "sit down" with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets. The purpose of thus "sitting down" with the ancient worthies in the kingdom is revealed by Jesus' further statement that the "children of the kingdom" would then be "cast out." The conditional promise to Israel was, as we have seen, that they would be a "kingdom of priests"; instructors and blessers of the people. They failed to meet the conditions, and while they will not lose the opportunity of attaining life under the kingdom laws, their coveted position as teachers will be in the hands of the ancient worthies.

"Making" the New Covenant

The experiences of Israel during the present transition period leading into the kingdom are preparing them for the blessings of the promised New Covenant. The Lord wants them in their own land when the time comes to make that covenant with them, for in the divine arrangement they are to be the first to have the blessings of the kingdom offered to them. We may assume, therefore, that the making of this covenant will begin very soon after that mighty miracle by which they are delivered from their enemies.

But let us keep in mind the nature of this covenant. The Lord said that it would not be "according to the covenant" which he

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made with them when they left Egypt. God's laws never change. The laws of the New Covenant will not be different. The difference will be in the way the covenant is made.

The laws of the former covenant were written on stone, and the people agreed to obey those laws, while God promised to bless them if they were obedient. The writing of the law and the agreements in connection with it, constituted the making of that covenant. But the making of the New Covenant will not be done in that manner, for the promise is that its laws will be written in the hearts of the people, and in their "inward parts."—Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:24-28

This cannot and will not be accomplished in a few hours, or a few days. It will require much time, much instruction, much discipline, and much application. The writing of God's law in the hearts of the people—all the people even those who have died, and who will then be raised from the dead—will, in reality, be the work of the entire thousand years of Christ's reign. This is a work of "restitution," for when God's law is written in the hearts of the people it means they will have reached perfection, the perfection that was enjoyed by Adam before he transgressed God's law.

The fact that the Israelites in Palestine will suddenly, and as the result of a miracle, have their eyes of understanding opened to know the Lord, does not imply that the law of the New Covenant will thus

suddenly be implanted in their hearts and in their "inward parts." The prophecy states that the Gentile nations, even those who will fight against Israel, will also have their eyes opened by the same miracle; but with these too it will be but the first step toward coming fully into harmony with the kingdom, and having the laws of the kingdom engraved in their hearts.

The Jew First

The Apostle Paul, in referring to the punishments God metes out to mankind, and the blessings he bestows, wrote, "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God."—Rom. 2:9-11

To "the Jew first." God had entered into a covenant with Israel, a covenant which they had broken. That is why the destroying trouble came upon that nation in A. D. 70-73—"first." The counterpart upon the Gentile world is the "time of trouble such as never was" which is being experienced by the present generation.

So when the blessings of the kingdom begin to flow out to the people they will go to "the Jew first." But the same blessings will quickly reach the Gentile world also, for as Paul wrote, "There is no respect of persons with God." As the Israelites come into harmony with the righteous laws of

the kingdom, and those laws become, as it were, a part of them, they will have the opportunity of co-operating with the ancient worthies in the great project of "restitution." So also will the Gentiles.

This assurance is given to us by Jesus in his Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. (Matt. 25:31-46) In this parable "all nations" are before the "Son of Man" when he sits "upon the throne of his glory." The people of all nations are separated "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." To the "sheep" on his right hand the "Son of Man" says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

This is the "kingdom," or dominion, that was given to our first parents—a dominion over the earth. Jehovah is the Ruler of the whole universe, and he constituted man his representative to exercise dominion over the earth. Thus man, in his original perfection, ruled as or for God. This "kingdom" is to be restored finally to the willing and obedient of "all nations," and so all these will rule for God. Since this is the meaning of the word "Israel," it indicates that all who gain everlasting life on earth will be "Israelites."

And upon what basis will they attain this position of honor in the Lord's arrangements? First, of course, by accepting the provision of life through the redemptive work of Christ Jesus; and by obedience to the laws of the kingdom. But it will have to be more

than an outward obedience. The law will need to be in their "hearts" and in their "inward parts."

All the laws of God reflect his glorious character of love, of unselfishness, of sacrificing interest in others. So those of "all nations" in the parable who as "sheep" hear the welcome words, "Come, . . . inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," qualify for this blessing by the fact that they help to care for the needy. In other words, they show an interest in others besides themselves. They co-operate in the work of the kingdom; a privilege, as the parable shows, which will be enjoyed by "all nations."

A Summary

In Acts 15:14-18 we are given a summary of God's plan for reconciling the world to himself. Verse 14 reads, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." This, as we have seen, was to fill up the foreordained number of those who were to live and reign with Christ in the spiritual phase of the kingdom. These, together with the remnant of natural Israel who accepted Christ, become spiritual Israelites—"heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

Verses 15 and 16 read, "To this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up." The original and typical tabernacle

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of David was built under unusual circumstances. During the latter part of the period of the judges the Ark of the Covenant—originally kept in the tabernacle built by Moses—fell into the hands of the Philistines. This was understood to mean that the “glory of the Lord” had departed from Israel, the ark being a symbol of God’s presence with them and his favor upon them.

The presence of the ark among the Philistines brought trouble upon them, and they returned it to the Israelites. Little attention was given to it during the reign of Saul, Israel’s first king, but when David came to the throne he built a tabernacle to house the ark, and had it returned to his seat of government and placed therein. There was great rejoicing in Israel over this, for it meant that now the presence of God was properly represented among them.

David’s throne was not set up in this tabernacle, although a prophecy evidently pertaining to the antitypical throne of David, which is occupied by Christ, states “In mercy shall the throne be established; and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.” (Isa. 16:5) This seems clearly to be a prophetic reference to the “tabernacle of David” which is built “again,” (Acts 15:16) with its former purpose used to symbolize returning favor to natural Israel through the messianic kingdom.

The Scriptures definitely affirm

that Christ, in his kingdom glory, sits upon the antitypical throne of David. The angel said to Mary concerning Jesus, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David. (Luke 1:32) In Isaiah 9:6 we read concerning Jesus that he will sit “upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.”

In Ezekiel 21:26, 27, Jesus is referred to as the One “whose right it is” to re-establish the divine rulership which was represented in the Davidic line of kings. In this passage the “diadem” and “crown” are said to be “removed” and “taken off.” This happened when Zedekiah, the last of the Jewish kings, was overthrown. The Lord then said, “It shall be no more, until he come whose right it is: and I will give it him.”

It is at the conclusion of the Gospel age, when the needed number from among the Gentiles have been selected to make up God’s “holy nation,” his divine ruling house of sons, that this One “whose right it is” is established upon the “throne of David.” With him will be his joint-heirs from among both Jews and Gentiles. And it is the establishment of this divine authority in the hands of the antitypical David class, that results in the return of God’s favor to the “residue” of Israel.

It is this that seems to be symbolized by the king establishing

his throne in the "tabernacle of David," "that the residue of men"—or "the" men, as it is in the Greek text—"might seek after the Lord." This is a quotation from Amos 9:11, 12. The full statement in the prophecy is, "that they may possess the remnant of Edom." This ("remnant of Edom") is the "residue" of which Jesus speaks. And who are these?

The Edomites are the descendants of Esau, who sold his birthright. In Romans 9:8 Paul explains that in Israel there were two classes. First, "the children of the flesh." These he explains, "are not the children of God"—not of those who believed and were given authority to become the "sons of God." Then there are "the children of the promise," whom, he explains, "are counted for the seed." That is, these are the "seed" promised to Abraham, through whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

Paul then relates these two classes to God's foreknowledge and overruling in the affairs of Israel which, he indicates, were illustrated by his dealings with Jacob and Esau. "It was said unto her [the mother of these twins] that the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (vss, 12, 13) In the parallel thus drawn by Paul the "residue" of Israel who did not accept Christ are shown to be those represented by Esau—the Edomites in the prophecy of Amos.

Returning to James' presenta-

tion it therefore seems clear that the "residue" he mentions, who at the close of the age are given an opportunity to seek after the Lord, are all of the Israelites who at the first advent and since have not accepted Christ. With these given the first opportunity to seek after the Lord, "all the Gentiles" will then be given a similar opportunity, James affirms.

And James adds a further thought—"all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called." Just as the witness was given specially to the Jewish nation at the first advent, it has also gone out to the Gentile world throughout the age. But this has not constituted their only and final opportunity to believe and receive God's promised blessings. As with the Jews, so with the Gentiles, a further opportunity is to be given to them during the reign of Christ.

And when they seek after the Lord they will find him. Isaiah 60: 1-3, reads, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come [margin, "be enlightened, for thy light cometh"], and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, [prior to this] the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

Simeon spoke of Jesus as a "light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." (Luke 2:32) Yes, Jesus, that true "light that lighteneth every man

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that cometh into the world" will, during his reign, dispel the darkness that has blinded both Jews and Gentiles. It will be then that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Simeon's statement is in part a quotation from Isaiah 42:6, 7. The 7th verse of this prophecy says that this "light of the Gentiles" will not only "open the blind eyes," but also bring out the "prisoners from the prison." This is a reference to the prisoners of death. The enlightenment and restoration of Israel and of the Gentiles would come far short of the divine purpose if it did not include those who have died. Even those who rejected and persecuted Jesus are to be raised from the dead, and they will say of him, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."—Matt. 23:39

The restoration of God's favor means that ultimately death will be completely destroyed—"There shall be no more death" when the "tabernacle of God is with men"—that is, when God's favor is being showered upon Jews and Gentiles through the reigning Christ. "Neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."—Rev. 21:4

Consummation

With the preponderance of those first receiving the blessings of the kingdom being the natural seed of Abraham, living in Palestine, the people of the other nations will recognize that the Lord is blessing

his ancient people. They will note also that the Lord's blessing is upon the Israelites because they have made themselves subject to the authority of Christ's kingdom as it will then be vested in the hands of the resurrected ancient worthies. Seeing this, they will want to follow the same course. The Lord foretold this, saying,

"It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts at Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him who is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."—Zech. 8:20-23

This does not imply that the people of all nations will literally travel to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. The thought is, rather, that in their minds and hearts they will recognize the kingdom authority of the Lord emanating from there, through the resurrected ancient worthies, and will give their allegiance to it, happy to share in the rich blessings of restitution which they will see being showered upon the Israelites.

Gradually the opportunity to share those blessings will be uni-

versal. In Zechariah 14:14-21, we have a sort of finale picture of what is to result from the full establishment of Messiah's kingdom. First, it reminds us of those who "came against Jerusalem," as described in detail in Ezekiel, chapter 38. These also are to have the opportunity to "go up" and worship the Lord. Indeed, this will be the only way to receive the blessings of the kingdom, for we read, "It shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain."

In the former League of Nations, and now in the United Nations, plans were, and are, made to apply economic sanctions to nations not complying with the demands of these organizations. To use this language, we might say that the Lord will apply "rain sanctions" against those who will not conform to the regulations of the new kingdom. The Prophet Micah said that the Lord will "rebuke strong nations afar off." (Micah 4:3) These rebukes, or sanctions, will be administered to any and all who do not worship the King, the Lord of hosts.

"The family of Egypt" is mentioned particularly in this connection. The explanation is given that "this shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." That Egypt will finally conform and be blessed, as well as co-operate indis- pensing blessings, is shown in Isaiah

19:24, 25, which reads, "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."

"In that day," Zechariah says, "shall there be upon the bells [margin, bridles] of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD." What a glorious consummation of the divine plan for Israel and for all nations! "In that day there shall be no more the Canaanite," nor Asians, nor Europeans, nor Africans, nor Americans, for by then all will be Israelites.—Zech. 14:20, 21

With the law of God written in their "inward parts," the people will have the dominion of earth restored to them. Together they will share in the responsibilities of that kingdom, ruling with God in this earthly domain of the great universe of which he is the Emperor supreme and everlasting.

This is the final destiny of Israel and of all nations—those who are living now, and those who, throughout the centuries, have fallen asleep in death. But the inheriting of this destiny will depend upon belief in the atoning work of Christ, and obedience to the laws of his kingdom. Thank God however, that all are to have this opportunity to believe and obey.

What a glorious solution this will be for the problems of the whole world!

"Who Is Worthy?"

"Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"

—Revelation 5:2

THE knowledge of God's purposes is due only to those able and anxious to co-operate with him in their development, for God does not display his plans to satisfy mere idle curiosity. First, then, if we would comprehend what is revealed within the scroll we must have faith in what is written on the outside—the promised redemption through the precious blood of Christ—and must be sincerely desirous of knowing the details of God's plan in order to an earnest co-operation with it. In other words, there must be the earnest inquiry arising from a heart grateful for the promise of life through the Redeemer—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Such, and such only, are worthy to know, and such only ever come to see, in the sense of understanding and appreciating, the deep things of God written within the scroll. Such are the called according to the divine purpose, to be educated in and to serve the truth. Such are the righteous for whom the light (truth) is sown. Such was our Lord's attitude when he said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." (Heb. 10:7) He was meek and lowly of heart and ever ready to render implicit obedience to the

will of God; and it is to those who are similarly meek that he was sent to preach the good tidings—to open the scroll. "The meek will he guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way." (Ps. 25:9) If any man have this evidence of worthiness—this acquaintance with the truth—let him rejoice in his privilege and by his works manifest his continued worthiness.

The Power of Truth

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

The truth has a sanctifying power in the heart because it fills the longings of the heart. Every heart has talents and appeals which demand operation, activity. Something must be supplied to meet the hungerings and thirstings of these various talents and qualities of the mind. If the exceeding great and precious promises of the divine Word be not received into the heart to satisfy its cravings or longings, it will feed upon other things; and the world, the flesh, and the Devil are all crowding upon it, offering various attractions, some of which will be received if the heart be not filled and kept filled. Thus our Lord's parable represents a heart swept and garnished, with the Devil cast out, and then that heart, still empty, is

represented as being re-entered by seven devils. Our hearts need not only to be cleansed from sin through justification of life, through faith in Christ, but they need also to be filled with the Lord himself; and our Lord, who calls himself the truth, furnishes to our hearts various truths as foods, as nourishment, as filling our hearts and satisfying our cravings, and by thus filling he sanctifies those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and thus separates them completely, and keeps them separate from the world, its spirit, its hopes, its aims, its ambitions.

The Satisfying "Water"

"Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

—Revelation 22:17

OUR text is part of a picture in Revelation which represents not the conditions of the present time, but those of the future—those of the millennial age. It pictures the church, the bride of Christ, complete and glorified, as the New Jerusalem, filled with the glory

of God; it pictures the water of life proceeding from this glorified New Jerusalem, the church in kingdom glory—flowing as a river with the trees of life on either side of it bearing fruits, whose leaves are for the healing of the heathen. It pictures the Spirit and the bride in the future, saying, "Come"—inviting whosoever will to come and take of the water of life freely. There is no such river of the water of life at the present time, and no one is commissioned to use the words of our text now. Now, as the Lord himself declares, "No man can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him." The present, therefore, is the time for the special drawing of a special class to the Savior. It includes only those who have the ear to hear and the eye of faith to appreciate the grace and blessings which are now being offered. Blessed are our eyes, for they see, and our ears, for they hear! We rejoice, however, that by and by all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped, and all shall then have the opportunity for drinking of the water of life to their satisfaction continually.

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MAY 2—"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."—II Timothy 3:12 (Z. '03-164, 165 Hymn 134)

MAY 9—"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."—Colossians 2:6, 7 (Z. '03-199 Hymn 200)

MAY 16—"Thou shalt be called by a new name, . . . Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God."—Isaiah 62:2, 3 (Z. '03-164 Hymn 6)

MAY 23—"Ye also ought to wash one another's feet."—John 13:14 (Z. '97-243 Hymn 154)

MAY 30—"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation."—Romans 12:12 (Z. '95-20 Hymn 125)

God's Plan and Man's Response

GOLDEN TEXT: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." —Isaiah 55:7

GENESIS 1:27, 28; 6:5-8; 8:20-22

GOD'S purpose in the creation of man is clearly stated. Man was to multiply and fill the earth and have dominion over it. God said nothing to our first parents about one day being transferred to another part of the universe. The earth was to be man's eternal home. Centuries later, God declared that he created the earth not in vain, but "formed it to be inhabited."—Isa. 45:18

The word "replenish" in Genesis 1:28 is an incorrect translation. The earth had never been inhabited by man, so could not be "replenished." The Hebrew text gives the proper thought, which is, "to fill." (Dr Strong) The earth was created to be man's eternal home, and man was to continue multiplying until it was properly filled, and "subdued"; that is, made like the sample God provided for our first parents in Eden.

David, in the 8th Psalm, refers to man's original creation, and the fact that he was given dominion over the earth, and in Hebrews 2:8 we read, "But now we see not yet all things put under him."

Man lost his dominion, and even the right to continue to live. This was because he transgressed God's law. Following his transgression he was sentenced to death and driven out of Eden into the unfinished earth to die.

But this did not change God's purpose with respect to the earth and his human creation. The command to fill the earth has been in process of fulfilment throughout the ages, although each generation, because imperfect and condemned, has fallen asleep in death. But through divine love a way has been provided for escape from death; and all God's prophets foretold that there would come "times of restitution."

So while Paul says, "We see not yet all things put under" man, we do "see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb. 2:9) Jesus became a substitute in death for Adam, and in and through Adam for the entire human race, and in God's due time all will be awakened, and those who then obey will

have the lost dominion restored to them.—Matt. 25:34

Following the original transgression the growth of evil was rapid. In Noah's day "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (ch. 6:5) In verse 6 we read that it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth. The basic meaning of the Hebrew word here translated "repented" is "to sigh," or to "feel sorry," in a favorable sense, to "pity," or unfavorably, to "avenge."—Prof. Strong

God realized that sin had resulted in much suffering for his human creation, and that to curb its rapid development drastic steps were necessary which would result in additional sorrow. He knew that the Flood was necessary, but he pitied those who would have to suffer on account of it. God is not a vengeful monster.

God did not feel sorry for having created man in the sense of concluding that he had made a mistake in doing so. He was fully aware in advance of the downward course of sin, and that it would lead into ever deeper depths of degredation. Had God decided that he made a mistake he would not have made provision to keep man alive on the earth. Such a provision he did make through Noah, who found grace in his sight.

The account of Noah and his family, and their being brought through the Flood in the ark, is well known. Upon coming out of

QUESTIONS

What was God's purpose in the creation of man?

How and when will this purpose be fully accomplished?

Did God decide, at the time of the Flood, that he had made a mistake in creating man?

How did God reveal after the Flood that he had not changed his purpose toward man?

the ark, "Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar." (ch. 8:20) Of the clean animals—that is, those deemed suitable for human food—seven each of males and females were taken into the ark. This made possible the immediate use of some of these to offer in sacrifice to the Lord.

The Lord was pleased with this evidence of appreciation and devotion, and "in his heart" said that he would not again destroy all flesh—the margin says, "though the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." (vs. 21) "While the earth remaineth," this was to be true, and in Ecclesiastes 1:4 we are assured that "the earth abideth forever."

God's purpose had not changed. In the opening verses of chapter 9 we are told that he blessed Noah and his sons and commissioned them to multiply and replenish (Hebrew, "fill") the earth. The glorious climax of the divine purpose will be realized in the "times of restitution of all things."

Abraham and His God

GOLDEN TEXT: "Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths."

—Psalm 25:4

GENESIS 12: 1-3; 17:1-9

ABRAM—or Abram, as his name originally was—dwelt with his family in Ur of the Chaldees when God first spoke to him. (Gen. 11:28) Higher critics of the Bible at one time claimed that no such place as Ur ever existed, that the whole account of Abraham and of God's dealing with him was merely a story, a myth. However, archeologists have discovered the ruins of ancient Ur, and many relics of this original home of Abraham are on display in the British Museum.

Archeologists have established that the natives of Ur were, for the most part, worshipers of the moon god. Seemingly Abraham was one of the few, perhaps almost the only one, who worshiped the true God, the Creator of heaven and earth. He doubtless had knowledge of creation and of the world before the Flood. For example, Shem, who was saved in the ark, lived contemporaneously with Abraham for a time.

Abraham's faith was put to the test when God said to him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: ...and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou

shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."—ch. 12:1-3

Abraham's faith stood the test. Hebrews 11:8 reads, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Apparently the Lord did not give Abraham any advance information as to just where the Promised Land was located.

Abraham's faith was also tested in another way. He was promised a seed, yet his wife, Sarah, was barren. Later he had faith sufficient to believe that if it were necessary God would raise his son Isaac from the dead. (Heb. 11:19) Evidently from the beginning he believed that God could perform a miracle and cause Sarah to bear him a seed.

In leaving Ur, Abraham did not immediately enter into Canaan, but sojourned at Haran until the death of his father, Terah. His nephew, Lot, went with him when they journeyed from Haran to Canaan, and of course, their families and their flocks. (ch. 12:4, 5) Some years

passed from the time the promise of a seed was first made to Abraham, and Sarah remained childless.

Then the Lord spoke to him, saying, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." (ch. 15:1) In view of the circumstances, this seemed a little strange to him, and he replied, "Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?" It seemed to him that the one great blessing he desired from the Lord was being withheld.

Then Abraham explained that he had made the steward of his house, "Eliezer of Damascus," his heir. But the Lord explained to Abraham, "This shall not be thine heir: but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir."—ch. 15:3, 4

Thus Abraham's faith was tested still further. It was after this, and at the suggestion of Sarah, that he became the father of Ishmael by his bondmaid, Hagar. God had said that the promised seed must come from his own "bowels" so he supposed this arrangement would surely be satisfactory.

But the Lord appeared unto Abraham again, as recorded in Genesis, chapter 17, verses 15 and 16, and assured Abraham that Sarah would bear him a son. He must not only be the father of the seed, but Sarah must be the mother. "Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?" (vs. 17) This was a severe

QUESTIONS

What was the first real test of Abraham's faith in the true God?

How was Abraham tested in connection with the promised seed?

How did Abraham endeavor to co-operate with the Lord in the fulfilment of the promise?

Who is the faith seed of Abraham, and when will he become the father of many nations?

test of Abraham's faith, but in due time God fulfilled his promise.

Paul tells us that the promise to Abraham to bless all the families of the earth through him and his seed was a pre-statement of the Gospel. (Gal. 3:8) Paul also explains that Christ is that promised seed, and that those who are baptized into Christ are also a part of the seed. (Gal. 3:16, 27-29) Paul's reference is to the seed which was to be the channel of blessing to all nations.

But God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. In Romans 4:16-18 Paul reveals that there is a seed "which is of the law," and also a "seed which is of the faith of Abraham." In verse 17 Paul speaks of God who "quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." Here is an indication that the complete fulfilment of God's promises to Abraham involves the resurrection of the dead. The faith seed are raised from the dead to be the channel of blessing to the world; and all nations will be raised from the dead and become the children of Abraham, and in this way receive the blessings promised.

Abraham and His World

GOLDEN TEXT: "Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations."
—Psalm 82:8

GENESIS 18:20-33; 19:29

THE setting of today's lesson is unique and interesting! Three angels representing the Lord, visited Abraham to reassure him that Sarah would bear him a son. At first Abraham looked upon these visitors as strangers, yet he was hospitable and provided them with a meal. (Gen. 18:1-15) Paul draws a lesson from this, saying, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."—Heb. 13:2

In ancient times God spoke to his servants through his angels, who, when necessary, materialized in human form. The accounts of these occurrences often read as though the Lord spoke directly to his human servants, even though the angels served as intermediaries. This is the case in connection with the three angels who visited Abraham. After imparting the Lord's message to him that Sarah would bear a child, they were about to leave when they decided that they would disclose to this "friend" of God a further mission upon which they were embarked; namely, an inspection of conditions in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and possibly their destruction.

Then follows Abraham's petition

to the angels that they spare these cities if fifty righteous persons could be found therein. This number, by stages, was finally reduced to ten, and he was promised that even if such a small number of righteous persons could be found in the city it would be spared. As it turned out, Abraham's nephew, Lot and his family were the only ones who professed to be righteous, so Sodom and Gomorrah were both destroyed.

It is explained that the Lord considered Abraham's feelings in connection with these cities because he was to "become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth" were to be "blessed in him." (vss. 17, 18) Evidently the Lord was testing Abraham's interest in people other than his own immediate family. Abraham's world was a small one, but he showed his interest in it. The Lord desires all of his people to have a sympathetic love for the sin-cursed and dying race.

The Prophet Ezekiel and Jesus furnish us with some very interesting information in connection with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Ezekiel reveals that they are to be restored to their former estate, which is the prophet's way of saying that they will be raised from the

dead. And Jesus said that it would be more tolerable, or favorable, for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than it would be for certain Jewish cities who rejected him and the kingdom message which he proclaimed.—Ezek. 16:48-63; Matt. 10:14, 15

Our Golden text is closely related to the promised "seed" of Abraham. He did not realize it fully, but even Isaac, Abraham's miracle son, was not the real "seed" of promise, but merely a type of that seed. In Galatians 3:16, 27-29 Paul reveals that Jesus and his body members are the true "seed" of promise.

The body members of Christ participate with him, as "heirs according to the promise," because they are planted together in the likeness of his death, suffering and dying with him sacrificially. These are described in the 82nd Psalm, just two verses before our Golden Text, as "gods," and as "children of the most High." These are the Gospel-age sons of God to whom the promise is given that if they suffer and die with Jesus they will also live and reign with him. Jesus quotes this text and applies it to himself and his disciples as the sheep who hear his voice.—John 10:34, 26-29

These all "die like men, and fall like one of the princes." (vs. 7) Although these are justified to life through the merit of Christ, nevertheless they die, seemingly like all others. Actually, however, they die "like one of the princes," that is like Prince Jesus, who died a sacrificial death; not like Prince Adam who died under condemnation.

QUESTIONS

How did God speak to his servants in ancient times?

Explain Abraham's interest in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Will people of these cities have a future opportunity?

What relationship does the Golden Text have to the lesson?

And the promise is that if they are faithful unto death, they will also be in the likeness of his resurrection. Jesus promised, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10) Jesus also promised, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken."—Rev. 2:26, 27

Apparently it is to these that our Golden Text applies. The thought is somewhat obscured by the translator's use of "God" in the singular. Actually it is the same word in the Hebrew text as that which is translated "gods," in the statement, "I have said, Ye are gods." (vs. 6) These are the "gods" who fall in death, sacrificially, like Jesus, and who, in fulfilment of promise, are summoned forth from death to live and reign with Christ—"Arise O gods, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations." Together with Jesus, these "gods," these "children of the most High," will be the future judges of the world, and together with him, as the "seed of Abraham," they will inherit all nations."

A Man of Peace in a World of Strife

GOLDEN TEXT: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."
—Matthew 5:9

GENESIS 26:17-29

THERE is considerable lapse of time between the setting of last week's lesson and today's. In due course God fulfilled his promise to Abraham, and Isaac was born. When this long-awaited-for son was a young man God asked his father to offer him up as a burnt offering, which Abraham showed his willingness to do, having faith to believe that God would raise him from the dead.

Later Sarah died and Abraham sent his trusted servant, Eliezer, back to his native country to seek a wife for Isaac, and Rebecca was found. Sometime after, their twin sons, Esau and Jacob were born. Then "there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar." (Gen. 26:1 The Lord warned Isaac not to go down into Egypt, but to "sojourn in this land," promising, "I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father."
—vss.2,3

Then the Lord confirmed the

covenant with Isaac which he had made with Abraham, that through his seed "all the nations of the earth" would be blessed. (vs. 4) Besides giving him this promise, God blessed Isaac along material lines, and "the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: for he had possessions of flocks, and possessions of herds, and great store of servants."—vss. 13, 14

Isaac's prosperity brought trouble to him. The Philistines, who lived nearby in the same territory, envied him. Abimelech was evidently the ruler of the Philistines, and Abraham had had dealings with him in this same territory. The Philistines had also been unfriendly to Abraham, and had filled in wells which he had dug to procure water for his flocks.

Now Isaac and his herdsman proceeded to reopen these wells, giving each of them the same name as had been given by Abraham. But this resulted in a continuous strife between the Philistine herdsmen and the herdsman of Isaac. Finally Isaac decided that the best thing to do was to move far enough away so that the Philistines would not be interested in interfering.

Doing this, his servants dug

another well, giving it the name "Rehoboth," meaning room. Here the Philistines did not interfere, and there was peace. Isaac went from there to Beer-sheba, and "the Lord appeared to him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy Father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. He builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well."—vss. 24,25

The peace-loving Isaac had voluntarily removed from the scene of strife, giving up claim to the wells which had been previously dug by his father's servants. Because of this "surrender" he received the Lord's blessing. Then followed another test. Abimelech approached him, expressing the desire to make a covenant of peace with him. This was all right, except that Abimelech endeavored to make it appear that his herdsmen had forced Isaac's herdsmen to move out of their territory instead of acknowledging that it was a voluntary move in the interest of peace.

True, Abimelech acknowledged that the Lord's blessing was upon Isaac, and this peace-loving son of Abraham accepted this acknowledgement and entered into a covenant with Abimelech. Here is an example which every follower of the Master might well follow. In this world of imperfection and sin we cannot expect that the rightness of our cause will always be ac-

QUESTIONS

Explain how Isaac was a man of peace.

Was Isaac one of the children of God mentioned in the Golden Text?

Explain the manner in which Christians are now peacemakers, and how this ministry will be enlarged.

knowledge. They said unto Jesus, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Jesus was the Son of God, but he did not attempt to justify himself before his enemies. Instead, he died under this cloud of misrepresentation.

In principle, our Golden Text fits with the example set for us by Isaac, but actually it applies to the Gospel-age house of sons, the followers of Jesus, the ones Paul referred to when he wrote that we are the children of God, "if so be that we suffer with him," that is, with Jesus. (Rom. 8:17) Those who suffered in the divine cause prior to the coming of Jesus will be highly rewarded, but they will not be joint-heirs with Jesus in his kingdom (Heb. 11:39, 40). These will be the human representatives of the kingdom of Christ.

The servants of God in every age should endeavor to be peacemakers. They should radiate peace and good will under all circumstances. The children of God of this age are peacemakers in a still higher sense, in that they are called to be ministers of reconciliation between God and men. (II Cor. 5: 18, 19) This ministry is at present accomplished through the dissemination of the Word of truth.

The Glory of God

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”—II Corinthians 4:6, 7

WE HAVE chosen for our consideration one of the main subjects of divine revelation—the glory of God. We shall touch only the fringe of two of its features in this treatise; namely, God’s works and ways as manifested in Jesus Christ. None but God’s Son, Jesus Christ, can reveal the glory of the Father, the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God.”

Modern uses of the term glory have robbed it somewhat of its true value, as it pertains to our mighty Creator and to our beloved Redeemer, the “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” (Rev. 19:16) It is something more than that which gives splendor, or a symbolic mantle as an insignia of high office. It may, of course, include these, as with the robes of glory and beauty of the high priest of Israel. The shekinah light signified the appearance of God with Israel in a restricted sense.

The glory of God must be explained as the august contents of God’s own nature embracing the

aggregate of all his attributes, according to their undivided yet revealed fulness. It is not merely an attribute of God, or one feature of his revelation, but the goodness of all and every feature of his fulness and perfection. It is the fulness of God, promised and in store for those who turn to him, as John’s Gospel records: “We beheld his glory” (Jesus), which reflected the glory of the Father, “full of grace and truth.” “And of his fulness have we all received.” By what means, we may ask? In the face of Jesus Christ.—John 1:14, 16

Sometimes in referring to the glory of God we think of the great works of creation. At other times, of God’s ways with man; his character or personality of splendor, magnificent as expressed in his mercy, graciousness and love, his compassion and faithfulness. “The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” (Exod.

34: 6,7) "His way is perfect."—
Ps. 18:30

There are these two great aspects of the glory of God as revealed in the Scriptures. His works of creation disclose to men and angels his wisdom and power. But God's ways are held secret except as he is pleased to reveal them to others. Jesus said: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."—Matt. 11:27

The words of the apostle, "For God, who commanded the light to shine," take our thoughts back to Genesis, chapter one. "God said, Let there be light and there was light." "God's Spirit "moved upon the face of the waters," that is, God's attention and interest operated to create the planet as a home for man who was yet to be created.

"God divided the light from darkness," and subsequently the remainder of creation was brought into existence. We are all aware of the order of creation, of God's day to day performance; the light, the firmament, the bringing forth of grass, herbs, trees, the sun, moon, and stars; creatures that hath life; fish, fowl, beast. Finally God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

In all God's creation, whether in the heavens or on the earth, his works are manifest. All men everywhere can behold those creations, and by such observation should be drawn in adoration and worship to their Creator to whom worship

and praise are due. David was clear on this. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." (Ps. 90:2) Again, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, O Lord my God, thou art clothed with honor and majesty."—Ps. 104:1

That which may be readily known of God's works is open to the eyes of all everywhere. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech, nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.—Ps. 19:1-4

The character and the ways of God are withheld from man until he is pleased to reveal them. Paul wrote, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33) In speaking through Isaiah, God says: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—Isa. 55:8, 9

It was at Pentecost, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples gathered in the upper room, that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shone in the face or person of Jesus

THE DAWN

Christ. Because of this, God's ways were then more readily comprehended, and to a remarkable degree. "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."—Eph. 1:17, 18

There are three great and important aspects of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. These virtues are found in God's beloved Son, and should be reflected in all who follow him and claim God as their Heavenly Father. They are: light, life, and love. God is the source of all light. God is light. He formed the light in the natural world and he gives spiritual light and truth to those seeking to understand his Word and way. He that willeth to do his will shall know of the teaching.—John 7:17

Light is everywhere in the Scriptures an emblem of knowledge, purity, truth; as darkness is the emblem of ignorance, sin and death. Habakkuk speaking of God, says: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil." (Hab. 1:13) Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. (John 3:19) John tells us that Jesus "was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:9) Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness,

but shall have the light of life."—John 8:12

The Pharisees in their prejudice said, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, his brethren James, Joses, Juda, and Simon? and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him?"—Mark 6:2, 3

Jesus read in the synagogue on the Sabbath, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord...And the eyes of all...were fastened on him...And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power." (Luke 4:18-22,32) Here again was manifested the glory of God, in the person of Jesus Christ.

While the face of Jesus, the perfect man, must have been radiant with beauty, and an inspiration to behold, Paul probably had more than this in mind when he spoke of God's glory being revealed in the "face of Jesus Christ." After all, only the first disciples had the privilege of seeing Jesus' face; and even of these Paul wrote, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him so no more." (II Cor. 5:16) Jesus

came to reveal God's grace and glory—as symbolized by the face in contrast with the back. Thus through his teachings and his sacrifice for the sin of the world, God's glory has shined into our hearts.

Moses earnestly desired to see the glory of God in all its perfection. He said, "If I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee...and consider that this nation is thy people." The Lord replied, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Moses said, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. . . . I beseech thee, show me thy glory." The Lord answered, "I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name." (Exod. 33:17) "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live." (vs.20) "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." (vs.19) I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen."—Exod. 33: 12-23

Let us pause and meditate and praise God, for the fulness of good in all his divine perfection as expressed to Moses in these gracious terms! The glory of God should induce every beholder to stand and recognize and acknowledge the wonders and virtues of the Creator. The question forces itself on one's

mind, What constitutes the glory of God? It embraces everything to be known of him. None but his Son Jesus Christ our Lord can reveal the glory of the Father, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

It is, brethren, a very great honor to have the illumination of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Grace with us has preceded glory and God hath bestowed upon us the sacred secrets of himself, before giving these to the world of mankind. How wonderful to realize, however, the promise, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—Hab. 2:14

What a privileged it is to realize this graciousness! How so many of God's children, by faith, have reveled in his promises and been delighted with the fulfilment of many of them in our daily lives! We have "eaten" his words and have been sustained these many years in hope faith, and confidence.

Another great virtue and power of God is life. It is also by and through Jesus Christ that life may be obtained. The prerogative of God is to give life, to raise the dead, and he endowed Jesus with power to give life and to raise the dead: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth; even so, the Son quickeneth whom he will." (John 5:21) Jesus told the people, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10) "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."—John 6:33

THE DAWN

Jesus is now the fountain of life for man—natural life, spiritual life, eternal life. He purchased life by his redeeming sacrifice, and prepared it by entering triumphantly into the presence of God for us. (Heb. 9:24) He promised it to his followers during the Gospel age (John 17:3) and will presently, as the everlasting Father of the human race in the age to come, bestow it upon all the willing and obedient. (John 5:28, 29) Jesus also explained to Martha and Mary, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—John 11:25

Love is also a predominating virtue of God. God is Love, divine and inexpressible. God's love for believers in the sacrifice of his beloved Son, and in his loving sacrifice for all mankind is of the highest and broadest, and surpasses knowledge. (Eph. 3:19) "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) God's love is everlasting: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."—Jer. 31:3

God's love is boundless, sovereign, free, and all these virtues of love are manifested to us in the face of Jesus Christ. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (I John 4:9, 10) Jesus being the

brightness, the effulgence of God's glory and the "express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power, . . . sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."—Heb. 1:3

Whatever the height of God's glory, as seen in all his attributes and perfections, the same glory is manifested in Jesus. There is not one of the divine perfections which has not its counterpart in him. If the divine character is to be seen at all, it is to be seen in and through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All spiritual thought and saving light to man has come through the revealed truth of God. Man lives not by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4) "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."—John 6:63

Jesus explained to his disciples, as he was about to leave them "I am the way, the truth, and the life. . . . If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him." Philip said: "Show us the Father, and it will suffice." Jesus replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"—John 14:6-10

How thrilled both Tomas and Philip must have been when, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon them and brought to their remembrance all things that Jesus had said. The full beams of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shone out in splendor and magnificence before their vision of

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the One they had followed and whose teachings they had embraced! So completely was the glory of God manifested in Jesus that despite all the criticism of Pharisee and Jew, he was able to pray, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."—John 17:4, 5

All these perfections, brethren, these virtues or attributes of light, life, and love, we, as followers of Jesus, are admonished to attain by his grace. We are the receivers of the gift of light of the knowledge of the glory of God which Moses was not permitted to enjoy. Let us, then, seek earnestly to become more completely copies at heart of God's dear Son, and make our theme and quest in this life the quest and theme of the Apostle Paul: "Jesus Christ whose I am, and whom I serve." (Acts 27:23) May we with him, in the spirit of love and service for each other, be "determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."—I Cor. 2:2

This will involve doctrines and teachings to be embraced or discarded; principles of life to be observed; dispensations and signs to be carefully weighed. But all for one purpose—to be "in Christ." "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:3, 4) "God has not given us a timid spirit but a spirit of power and love and dis-

cipline.—II Tim. 1:7, Moffatt

The spiritual understanding disclosed and imparted to the disciples, all of whom manifest in a remarkable way the light of the glory of God, reveals so marvelously the emotions and character of God. As we have looked into the face or person of Jesus, we have seen God. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," said Jesus. (John 14:9) It is all revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, shed abroad in our hearts, and in this way we have come to know God personally, and Jesus Christ our Lord.—Rom. 5:5

To some, Christ is a creed, and a pattern, not a personal friend. There are so many who know the historic Christ, to whom he is a person who lived more than 1900 years ago, they read of him as they read a book. But all such miss the blessedness the sweetness of really knowing him, which inner conviction is attained, as the Apostle Paul suggests, by the grace and vision of God's glory in Jesus Christ. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory, to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."—II Cor. 3:18

Let us then, brethren, keep in mind the importance of our theme, "The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Let us copy Paul in his confession, Jesus Christ "whose I am and whom I serve." (Acts 27:23) We have received of his grace, let us attain to his glory: "The glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father."—John 1:14

The Needs of the Christian

"His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." —II Peter 1:3

FOR our encouragement, the Apostle Paul gives us the assurance, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:19) We, as the Lord's followers, realize that our needs, in harmony with the Apostle Peter's words quoted above, are of two kinds—temporal and spiritual—certain material things needful for the present life; and needs of another kind helpful to the development of godliness.

Life

Jesus sent out his disciples to preach the good news of the kingdom without purse, and taking with them only one coat, etc. On their return, he said, "Lacked ye anything?" They assured him they had experienced no lack. (Luke 22:35) Here our Lord evidently referred to temporal needs, the things of the present life. These, as they went from place to place holding forth the Word of Life, had all been provided by the special and loving dispensations of divine providence.

The same kindly provisions are the portion of all who, in response

to the Father's drawing, have fully consecrated themselves to him, and have been begotten again as new creatures in Christ Jesus. We have "the promise of the life that now is," is Paul's triumphant assurance; that is, true piety, reverence "is profitable unto all things," both now and for our hope of the everlasting future. (I Tim. 4:8) Our Lord while with his disciples was continually impressing this thought upon them. He says (Luke 12:15), paraphrasing his words, Do not covet earthly things, temporal blessings, for a man's true life consists of more important things than even great material possessions. Again he says (V.22), "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on."—R. V.

Then he mentions as an example the ravens, who possess no storehouse or barn of even the smallest or most temporary character where food or other necessities might be stored. Again he says, "Consider the lilies," how beautifully they are clothed, and that without any toiling or spinning on their part, or the spending of more money than can be really afforded—a frequent weakness in frail humanity. As a climax to the argument, Jesus says, "Fear not, little flock [Do not be fearful regarding your earthly needs. Why?] for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—Luke 12:32

If he is going to give you such a wonderful honour and position; namely, that of exercising the authority of the millennial kingdom for a thousand years for the blessing of all the families of the earth, you may have every assurance that you will have all the comparatively small needs of the present life provided if, in harmony with your consecration, you continue to seek first the interests of the kingdom and its righteousness.

So in these various ways our dear Redeemer sought to strengthen our faith that the Father, in his love and wisdom, will supply the things we need for the few rapidly passing years of the present life. This provision of our earthly needs is sometimes multiplied many times beyond our personal requirements, that as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, we might distribute to others in need, as well as contribute to the general work of the Lord's vineyard.

Godliness.

The other, and even more important phase of our needs concerns the spiritual one; those things which will build us up as New creatures in Christ Jesus, and help us to be fruitful in every good work in the service of our God. These needs, our Master, as the Father's representative, provides by first of all giving us such spiritual food as will cause us to grow thereby. This must have been preceded by a knowledge of our lost condition by nature, that we were sold under sin and under the con-

demnation which passed upon all in Adam.

This, in the case of those whom the Lord calls, leads to repentance and sorrow for the past, followed by justification, spirit-begetting, and sanctification. This development of godliness or godlikeness, holiness, sanctification, is brought about in large measure by the truth, the truth concerning the divine character and plan; for the new creature, prompted by the Spirit of God, searches out all things, even the deep things of God—John 17: 17; I Cor. 2:10

Further, the Lord supplies the things that pertain unto godliness or godlikeness, by giving us opportunities of witnessing in his name; for, by speaking the truth in love, we grow up into him in all things. (Eph. 4:15) We further grow in godlikeness and Christ-likeness by laying down our lives for the brethren, seeking to follow the example of our Master who laid down his life for us. Although the Lord has promised to supply all these means for growing in grace, developing godlikeness and Christ-likeness, they are not forced upon us; but it is for us to make use of them as they come within our reach, seeking in all ways open to us to be faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Finally, let us not overlook the fact that, as the apostle expresses it in our text, it is "His divine power" which provides us all these temporal and spiritual blessings.

THE DAWN

What care, thoughtfulness, watchfulness, this implies on the part of our heavenly Father and our Redeemer! Truly, all things are for our sakes, and are working together for good to those called according to his purpose. May our gratitude and thankfulness for all that is being done for us prompt us to do our part by making use of every means of grace, and continuing to present our bodies a living sacrifice, our reasonable service, inspired by the precious promise, "My God shall supply all your need according to his infinite wisdom and love by Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4:19

The Laws of the Spirit

Recent years have added enormously to man's knowledge of the laws governing sound waves and light vibrations which make it possible for the voice to be transmitted over vast distances, and for pictures to be sent over lesser distances. Many of the marvels of radar and the intricacies of nuclear power still remain untapped. These marvels so long kept secret, but which man has been permitted to discover during the days of the increase of knowledge, "the time of the end" (Dan. 12:4), and particularly during the days of the bright-shining of the presence of the Son of Man, should help us to realize that the laws which govern and operate in the development of the spiritual life of the Christian are still more wonderful.

Here God's laws are not operating in connection with inanimate

objects, but upon those whom he has blessed with mind and free will, and yet in spite of what might be hinderances, are successfully accomplishing his purpose of grace. The first sixteen verses of Psalm 139 might well be examined in the light of the foregoing, and the thought of their having reference to the ways the laws of the Spirit operate in connection with the new creature in Christ Jesus.

In verse 15, the psalmist says, "My form was not hidden from thee, when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lower parts [the lower condition] of the earth. Thine eyes did see mine imperfect substances. And in thy book were all my members written [the members of the body of Christ], which day by day [gradually] were fashioned [from the time, that is, from Pentecost] when as yet there was none of them" (R. V.), and from which time the members of Christ began to be selected.

The Apostle Paul, getting a glimpse of the wonderful providences relating to the development of the New Creation, exclaims, "If God be [thus] for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31) May we diligently and gratefully co-operate with him in this stupendous work of grace in all reasonable ways; seeing that we do nothing by the exercise of self-will or in any other way to hinder or frustrate its gracious operation. "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall." II Pet. 1:10, 11

THE BRITISH SECTION

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

SAMUEL BAKER			
Portrush	June	8/10	
C. A. CORNELL			
Coventry	May	26	
Portrush	June	8/10	
Anerley		30	
G. A. FORD			
Anerley	May	26	
T. R. LANG			
Clonelly	June	2	
Portrush		8/10	
J. LESLIE MC KEOWN			
Belfast	May	23	
Portrush	June	8/10	
W. J. MERCER			
Portrush	June	8/10	
Latchford (Warrington)		30	

J. H. MURRAY

Guildford	May	12
Letchworth		26
Portrush	June	8/10
Eastliegh		30

E. TERRY NADAL

Latchford (Warrington)	May	12
Southend-on-Sea		26
Portrush	June	8/10
Letchworth		30

W. E. PAMPLING

Luton	May	5
Liverpool		19
Portrush	June	8/10
Southend-on-Sea		30

CONVENTION AT PORTRUSH, N. IRELAND, WHITSUN JUNE 8/10, 1957. Write Mr. T. R. Lang, 41, Clooney Terrace, Waterside, Londonderry, N. Ireland for accommodation and other details. ..

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THE DAWN

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Jesus' Prehuman Existence

Please explain Jesus' words recorded in John 8:58—"Before Abraham was, I am."

This is simply Jesus' way of saying that he had a prehuman existence. A prophecy of Jesus' birth confirms this. It reads, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."—Micah 5:2

The Apostle Paul wrote concerning Jesus, saying, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."—Col. 1:15-17

John refers to Jesus in his prehuman existence as the "Logos"—translated "Word," in the King James Version. In this reference a literal translation of the Greek text reads, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with

God, and the Word was a God. The same was in the beginning with the God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made."

This association of the Logos with Jehovah, the Creator, and our Heavenly Father, is indicated in the Genesis account of creation by the use of the plural pronouns "us" and "our." "God said, [to the Logos], Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness." It seems clear from these inspired statements of the Bible that the Logos was the only direct creation of God. Jesus refers to himself as the "beginning of the creation of God." (Rev.3:14) He was associated with the Father in all the remaining works of creation.

Predestination

Please explain the doctrine of predestination.

THE one who asked this question does not indicate whether it pertains to the doctrine of predestination contained in some of the creeds which have come down to us from a darker past, or whether the desire is to learn what the Bible teaches on this subject. Briefly, the predestination of the creeds is the teaching that the eternal destiny of every human being is determined by God in ad-

vance of birth—that some are predestinated to be lost, which, according to this view, means to suffer eternal torture; while others are predestinated to be saved and spend eternity in heaven. This doctrine is not taught in the Bible.

However, the Bible does teach that God is selective with respect to those whom he calls to be co-workers with him in the outworking of his plan of salvation. In Isaiah 51:2 we are informed that God called Abraham alone. To him and no one else he made the promise, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."—Gen. 12:3

The natural descendants of Abraham became a select, or chosen, people of God. During this Gospel age, the followers of Jesus are referred to in the Bible as being "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience." (I Pet:2) In Romans 8:29 we read, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

As Peter explains, God's program of "election" is in keeping with his foreknowledge, and Paul shows that in his foreknowledge God predestinated that all who would be associated with Jesus in his kingdom must be conformed to his character likeness. Thus it is not an arbitrary selection and predestination of the individual. Rather it is the foreordination of a class, and a determination made in ad-

vance that everyone in that class must reach up to certain standards of character, certain qualifications.

This is a far cry from the notion that some are predestinated to spend an eternity in a fiery hell, while others are foreordained to an eternity of bliss in heaven. Instead, it means that those who prove worthy of the divine calling will be instruments associated with Jesus in the work of blessing all mankind during the thousand years of his kingdom.—Gal. 3:27-29; Rev. 22:17

The Unpardonable Sin

Jesus said, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Matt. 12:31, 32) What is this unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit?

IN ORDER to find the answer to this question we must first take into consideration what the Holy Spirit is, and how it operates. This aspect of the question is fully discussed in the booklet entitled, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," a

THE DAWN

copy of which will be supplied free upon request. Briefly, the Holy Spirit, is the holy power of God, utilized by him for the accomplishment of all his purposes. It was exercised in creation, it shapes the providences of God for his people, and it works in their hearts and lives to will and to do of his good pleasure.

On the occasion when Jesus said that speaking against the Holy Spirit could not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come, he had just employed the power of the Holy Spirit to heal a man who was possessed of a devil and was blind and dumb. (Matt. 12:22) The people were amazed, but the Pharisees charged that Jesus had performed this miracle by the power of "Beelzebub the prince of the devils." (vss. 23, 24) Jesus was referring to this viewpoint of the Pharisees in making his statement about speaking against the Holy Spirit.

The connection is obvious. The holy power of God had been manifested in miraculously healing a man. A good work had been performed which the Pharisees could not condemn. Nor could they claim that what had been accomplished was other than a miracle. The afflicted man was beyond human help. But they refused to acknowledge the truth. They spoke against what had been so clearly demonstrated, saying that this good work was done, not by the holy power of God—the Holy Spirit—but by the power of the Devil.

Thus they spoke against the Holy Spirit.

We are not to conclude, however, that just one wilful act of this nature would of necessity lead to eternal destruction. True, as Jesus said, it could not be forgiven—it must be punished, but not necessarily with an everlasting cutting off from life. It would be only a continuance of this wilful denial of the truth made so plainly evident that would lead to the "second death."

On another occasion Jesus said, "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. (Luke 12:47, 48) This sets forth the principle involved. Doubtless the Pharisees will receive "many stripes," but they may yet, in the next age, have their hearts softened and turn to the Lord. Jesus said that the time was coming when they would say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Matt. 23:39

Applying this principle we could say that sin against the Holy Spirit is any wilful opposition to revealed truth. To the extent that we have been enlightened and know that a certain attitude, or course, is wrong, yet persist in it, we would be sinning against the Holy Spirit. Very few, if any, who are not fully consecrated to the Lord are today sufficiently enlightened to thus sin

YOUR QUESTIONS

wilfully against the known will of God. The position of the Pharisee was unusual in that Jesus, the Son of God, was personally in their midst, and through him they were given many demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The consecrated followers of the Master who have received the begetting and anointing of the Holy Spirit are in a different position than are the unconsecrated of the world. These have devoted themselves to the doing of God's will, and the great desire of their hearts is to please and honor him.

Through the Word of truth, these have received the Holy Spirit in their hearts, and the power of God is working in them to accomplish his good pleasure. The Holy Spirit has also enlightened their minds, so that wilful transgression of the will of God on their part would be a sin against the Holy Spirit.

Concerning these we read, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."—Heb. 6:4-6

In Hebrews 10:26, 27, Paul writes in similar vein, saying, "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery in-

dignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Both of these passages in Hebrews reveal clearly that it is possible for those who were "once enlightened," and who have received the Holy Spirit, to commit wilful sin, which, if continued, would lead to the full and eternal penalty of sin, the "second death."

Such wilful sin on the part of the consecrated people of God does not usually come about suddenly. The Prophet David prayed, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults, keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be innocent from the great transgression—Ps. 19:12, 13

"Secret faults" may lead to "presumptuous sins." A presumptuous sin is wilful sin, and if persisted in until the heart becomes hardened, will lead to the "great transgression," the "sin unto death," the "second death."

Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone;
As Thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring loved ones, lost and
lone.

O lead me, Lord, that I may lead
The wandering and the wavering
feet;

O feed me, Lord, that I may feed
Thy hungering ones with manna
sweet.

O strengthen me, that while I stand
Firm on the Rock, and strong in
Thee,

I may stretch out a loving hand
To wrestlers in the troubled sea.

The 1957 General Convention

THE General Convention Committee reports that plans are well under way for the 1957 gathering scheduled to be held in Bloomington, Indiana, August 3-9, inclusive. Reports from brethren in the field indicate that there will be a large attendance. We are confident that all who attend will receive a rich spiritual blessing, which will, in turn, be communicated to many others when they return to their local ecclesias. David wrote, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." (Ps.122:1) Surely many of the Lord's people will likewise be glad as they contemplate going "into the house of the Lord" in Bloomington, to enjoy communion with one another and the Lord for seven hallowed days.

While the program has not yet been completed, the outline submitted by the committee reveals that much is in store for those who find it possible to attend. The theme text for the convention is a very timely one—Galatians 6:9, the latter part—which reads, "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not." One of the essential qualities of every Christian character is patient, cheerful endurance. Jesus said, "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved."—Matt. 10:22; 24:13

The context from which the convention theme is taken is very revealing. "Be not deceived," Paul wrote, "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."—Gal. 6:7-9

Paul is here writing to consecrated Christians. His statement, "He that soweth to the flesh," does not, therefore, refer to gross immoralities, but to the ordinary selfish ways of the flesh which run counter to the best interests of the new creature in Christ

Jesus. If we have presented our bodies "a living sacrifice," any tendency to withdraw from the "fire" which consumes our sacrifice, any catering to the desire for ease, or comfort, or worldly pleasure, which would interfere with the consuming of the sacrifice which we have presented to the Lord, would be a sowing to the flesh.

Sowing to the Spirit, on the other hand, would be the pursuing of the life of sacrifice which we have covenanted to do. This means to "mortify the deeds of the body" which we have presented in sacrifice. And if we do this, Paul wrote, we "shall live." (Rom. 8:13) But it is not enough merely to agree to offer ourselves in sacrifice. The real test is to endure, patiently, and unto the end, the fiery trials which the Lord permits to come upon us to consume the offering.

Nor is the matter of sowing to the flesh a negative attitude. It is more than simply refraining from yielding to the selfish desires of the flesh. Rather, it is the use of our abilities—our time, our strength, our means, our all, unselfishly in the service of the Lord. After saying, "Let us not be weary in well-doing," Paul continues, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."—vs. 10

Sowing to the Spirit, therefore, is doing good to all as we have opportunity, and especially to the Lord's people, our brethren for whom Jesus admonished us to lay down our lives. Just as Jesus laid down his life for us and for the world, so we lay down our lives for the brethren and participate in the great sin-offering work on behalf of the world, being baptized for the dead."—I Cor. 15:29

To follow such a course of sacrifice is not pleasing to the flesh. Therefore, as Paul wrote, it is necessary to keep the body under, and to bring it into subjection. (I Cor. 9:27) To continue to do this requires strength and determination. It is not enough that we sacrifice the flesh today, and perhaps tomorrow. It is only those who continue in the way of sacrifice faithfully unto death who will receive the "crown of life."—Rev. 2:10

In selecting this theme text, the convention committee believed it would be timely because of the emphasis it places on the "due season" aspect of the divine plan, and of our privileges therein. The outworking of God's purposes has always seemed slow to the finite mind. The Prophet Habakkuk wrote, "O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear?" (Hab. 1:2) The question,

THE DAWN

"How long?" has intruded itself into the thinking of most of the Lord's people at one time or another.

God's answer to Habakkuk was that "the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie, though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." (Hab. 2:3) We are unquestionably now living in this foretold "appointed time" of the "end." There is every assurance that this prophetic vision of present truth has spoken, and it has not lied. Nevertheless, it is necessary to "wait for it," that is for its complete fulfillment.

However, the fact that we are given the admonition to "wait for it" denotes that there would be a seeming tarrying, and so there has been. There will be those at the General Convention this year of 1957 who expected to reach the end of the "narrow way" of sacrifice at the close of the Gentile Times in 1914. Since then various other time limits have been suggested, but many of the "feet members" of the "body" are still this side the veil, still having the opportunity of sowing to the Spirit that they might prove worthy of reaping the promised reward of "glory and honor, and immortality."—Rom. 2:7

This does not at all indicate that the Lord's plan has failed. It simply means that his "due season" has not arrived for the glorification of the last members of the "feet of him." And it is the waiting for the Lord's "due season" that calls for patient endurance. If we could be sure that there was just one more year to serve and sacrifice it would not be too difficult to bolster our courage to go forth zealously and even rejoicingly for that last final effort. But to keep up our zeal and "faint not" with no definite time limit in sight calls for that patient endurance which will make us worthy of ultimately hearing that "well done" from the Lord for which we all so longingly wait.

One of the characteristics of the fallen human nature is the lack of constancy. It is common knowledge, for example, that most new year's resolutions are soon forgotten. But the Lord's people have help which the world knows not of—the help of the Lord. And it is only by his grace and strength that we can continue in a course which is so contrary to the desires of the flesh. It is the Lord's presence and help that transforms the narrow way of sacrifice and suffering into a pathway of joy, and makes the Christian way of life one of continuous rejoicing.

TALKING THINGS OVER

There are various ways in which the Lord gives strength unto his people. One of them is the privilege of fellowship he permits them to enjoy with one another. This will be impressed upon the brethren who attend the General Convention with blessed reality. We venture to say that despite the hardships of the narrow way the Lord's people are the happiest people in the world today. Conventions of all sorts will be held this summer, but there will not be a gathering of people anywhere so filled with joy as the one which will meet in Bloomington, Indiana, August 3-9.

There are many things which contribute to the joy of the brethren. One of them is their knowledge of present truth. The hearts of those who do not know the truth are filled with fear. They may try to drown their feelings in worldly pleasures of one sort or another, but deep down in their hearts most people today are worried. They fear what they see so inevitably coming upon the earth. But how different it is with those who know the joyful sound of the truth!

The psalmist wrote, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." —Psalm 46:1-5

Yes, God is in the midst of his people. One of the evidences of this is the vision of truth with which he has rejoiced our hearts at this time when the symbolic "earth" is being "removed," and when the "mountains" are being carried into the midst of the "sea." And the Lord is helping us. What a wonderful help it is to know the truth. But further help is ahead, the "help" which Jesus spoke of when he said that world conditions such as we see all around us today would be an evidence that our "redemption [deliverance] draweth nigh." —Luke 21:28

The psalmist wrote that this ultimate "help," even deliverance from the flesh, and exaltation into the kingdom, would come "right early," the marginal translation being, "when the morning appeareth." The "morning" is appearing. The "Day Star" has arisen in our hearts. The joy of realizing this gives us strength to continue on. The

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General Convention will augment this joy for all who can attend, and the blessings will overflow to thousands of others through the "convention echoes" which will be relayed to them by those who do attend; and, we trust also, through the report which will later appear in *The Dawn*.

In the June issue we will present a further preview of some of the features of the convention program. But if you have not already made your plans to attend, begin thinking about it now, and ask the Lord to indicate his will for you in the matter.

Encouraging Letters

Encouraged

Dear Friends: I have just sent my renewal for *The Dawn Magazine*. During the past year *The Dawn* has been the greatest spiritual inspiration—together with the Bible—I have ever had. It lifts you up, and keeps you there. I would not want to be without it. There is nothing so powerful as the truth, and I know that you will at all times tell the people the truth. May God bless, guide, and be always with you in your most worthwhile endeavor. Sincerely yours in Christ.—New Hampshire

In Right Direction

Dear "Frank and Ernest": I listen to your broadcasts, and read "God and Reason," "Behold Your King," and *The Dawn Magazine*. One just can't lay these books down, and I read them over and over again! I have given them to my friends to read. They have helped me so wonderfully, and I

truly feel that for the first time God is moving my life in the right direction. I feel as though I am living a more Christian life, and would like to know what way I can help further this work. God bless your work.—Illinois

Thankful

Dear Sirs: We heard your talk over the radio Sunday, and my wife and I would like to have your free booklet, "When a Man Dies." Your talk Sunday answered a lot of questions we have always wondered about. One never hears these questions answered in church, and we were thankful that we tuned in just as we did. May God bless you in your work, and we will be waiting for your booklet.—Indiana.

Effort Blessed

Dear Friends: Greetings in our dear Redeemer's name. Just a few words about our work here. We have sold thirty-two First Volumes through our follow-up on the sympathy folder effort. I truly believe that if there is a class which

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

is not doing this work it is missing a great opportunity. May God continue to bless you, one and all, in my prayer. Your fellow-servant.
—Indiana

Fellowship Renewed

Dear Brethren: This is to inform you that I would like to get some of your publications as advertised in the booklet, "The Grace of Jehovah." It seems like someone coming from the dead to read that blessed truth again. I have had Pastor Russell's teachings since 1914. I remain your loving brother.
—Canada

Truth Revealed

Dear "Frank and Ernest": For two or three years now I have enjoyed your literature, and have found it to be sound Bible truth. I have just finished reading "Studies in the Scriptures," and they are truly wonderful, and bring out so plain the precious truths that are

hidden from so many. I do thank God for the truths of his blessed Word which have been revealed to my heart. Sincerely in Christ. —
Canada

Gaining Knowledge

Dear Sirs: Please send me the booklet, "When a Man Dies." I listen to you every Sunday. Your talks are helpful and inspiring and I am beginning to have a better understanding of the "Book of Life." Yours truly.—Kansas

The Holy Spirit Series

Dear Friends in Christ: I feel led to write you on the wonderful writings you have on the Holy Spirit in the last three issues of The Dawn. In our neighborhood it is a lively topic since we have the Pentecostals in our area, who are presenting a very different version of the Holy Spirit—how it operates, and how to obtain it. In His name.—Vermont

For Your Newspaper

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

JUNE TOPIC: The advertised topic for June 19 will be, "The Hope of Immortality." Adequate supplies of the new radio circulars will be available for advertising this broadcast. This circular is proving to be very effective. Hundreds write for literature each month as a result of their distribution. Order your June supply early. There is a rich blessing in this service.

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Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

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Grand Rapids, Mich.	May 5	TED HACK	
Jackson, Mich.	6, 7	Gary, Ind.	May 19
Flint, Mich.	8	E. H. HERRSCHER	
Saginaw, Mich.	12	Asilomar, Calif.	May 30-June 2
Detroit, Mich.	13, 14	JOHN HULL	
Toledo, Ohio	15, 16	Asilomar, Calif.	May 30-June 2
Elyria, Ohio	17	GEORGE M. JEUCK	
Cleveland, Ohio	19	New Brunswick, N. J.	May 5
Erie, Pa.	20	EDMUND JEZUIT	
Buffalo, N. Y.	21, 22	Milwaukee, Wis.	May 12
Rochester, N. Y.	23, 24	PETER KOLLIMAN	
Pulaski, N. Y.	26	Philadelphia, Pa.	May 12
JOHN BARACOS		Chicago, Ill.	26
Duquesne, Pa.	May 5	ARTHUR H. KRUMPOLT	
JULIUS BEDNARZ		Wallingford, Conn.	May 12
Aurora, Ill.	May 12	Wilkes Barre, Pa.	19
WALTER BLICHARZ		RAYMOND J. KRUPA	
London, Ont. Can.	May 12	Lancaster, Pa.	May 5
FRED A. BRIGHT		Wallingford, Conn.	12
Allentown, Pa.	May 19	Harrisburg, Pa.	19
TRACY BUNDY		C. STUART LIVERMORE	
Albany, N. Y.	May 12	Catawissa-Mahanoy City, Pa. ..	May 12
EUGENE BURNS		LUDLOW P. LOOMIS	
Wallingford, Conn.	May 12	Philadelphia, Pa.	May 12
CHARLES M. CHUPA		Wilmington-Seaford, Del.	19
Flint, Mich.	May 5	JOHN Y. MAC AULAY	
Toledo, Ohio	19	Lincoln, Neb. area	May 2-5
L. PAUL DAVIS		Barnes City, Iowa	7, 8
Asilomar, Calif.	May 30-June 2	Clinton, Iowa	9
ORLANDO D. DEIFER		Albany, Ill.	10
Coshocton, Ohio	May 1	La Salle, Ill.	12
Monessen, Pa.	2, 3	Champaign, Ill.	13
Pittsburgh, Pa.	5	Mattoon, Ill.	14
Baltimore, Md.	26	St. Louis, Mo.	16
THOMAS C. FAY		West Frankfort, Ill.	17
Tehachapi, Calif.	May 25, 26	Henderson, Ky.	19
Bakersfield, Calif.	26	New Albany, Ind.	20, 21
IRVING C. FOSS		Columbus, Ind.	22
Sacramento, Calif.	May 5	Indianapolis, Ind.	23
Asilomar, Calif.	May 30-June 2	Chicago, Ill.	26
EARL L. FOWLER		ADAM MISKAWITZ	
Tehachapi, Calif.	May 4, 5	Minneapolis, Minn.	May 12

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

NICK MOLENAAR

Whittier, Calif. May 19

DANIEL J. MOREHOUSE

Covert, Mich. May 5
 Glendale, Calif. 29
 Asilomar, Calif. May 30-June 2

EVERETT MURRAY

Columbus, Ohio May 2
 Steubenville, Ohio 3, 6
 Lancaster, Pa. 5
 St. Louis, Mo. 23
 Kansas City, Mo. 25, 26
 St. Joseph, Mo. 27
 Topeka, Kans. 28

HOWARD W. OSTRANDER

Asilomar, Calif. May 30-June 2

LELAND PARSONS

Asilomar, Calif. May 30-June 2

HARRY PASSIOS

East Liverpool, Ohio May 12
 Shadyside, Ohio 19
 Monessen, Pa. 26

ERNEST K. PENROSE

Flatwoods, Pa. May 26

G. RUSSELL POLLOCK

San Diego, Calif. May 12
 Tehachapi, Calif. 18, 19
 Bakersfield, Calif. 19
 Asilomar, Calif. May 30-June 2

S. E. RANGER

Vancouver, B. C. Can. May 18-20

KENNETH W. RAWSON

Paterson, N. J. May 19

RAYMOND RAWSON

Adrian, Mich. May 12

GILBERT L. RICE

Asilomar, Calif. May 30-June 2

NORMAN F. RICE

Tehachapi, Calif. May 11, 12
 Bakersfield, Calif. 12

W. W. RYBA

Covert, Mich. May 5

MICHAEL A. STAMULAS

New Haven-Waterbury, Conn. May 19

W. W. STROMBERG

La Salle, Ill. May 19

CHESTER A. SUNDBOM

Pittsburgh, Pa. May 1
 Toledo, Ohio 2

AUGUST SWANSON

Santa Ana, Calif. May 26

JOHN H. L. TRAUTFELTER

Phoenix, Ariz. May 22
 Tucson, Ariz. 23
 Yuma, Ariz. 24
 San Diego, Calif. 25
 Los Angeles, Calif. 26
 San Luis Obispo, Calif. 27
 San Jose, Calif. 28
 Asilomar, Calif. May 30-June 2

CLAUDE R. WEIDA

Wallingford, Conn. May 12
 Washington, D. C. 19

W. NORMAN WOODWORTH

Piqua, Ohio May 5
 Philadelphia, Pa. 12
 Reading, Pa. 26
 Asilomar, Calif. May 30-June 2

ERNEST G. WYLAM

Covert, Mich. May 5
 Henderson, Ky. 19

CHRISTIAN W. ZAHNOW

Tucson, Ariz. Apr. 30, May 1
 Phoenix, Ariz. 2-5
 Yuma, Ariz. 6, 7
 San Diego, Calif. 8, 9
 Santa Ana, Calif. 10
 Los Angeles, Calif. (Morning, 116th St.) 12
 Los Angeles, Calif. (Afternoon, Foresters) 12
 North Hollywood, Calif. 14
 Long Beach, Calif. 15
 Covina, Calif. 16
 Huntington Park, Calif. 17
 San Bernardino, Calif. 18
 Riverside, Calif. (Morning) 19
 Ontario, Calif. (Afternoon) 19
 Glendale, Calif. 20
 Bell Gardens, Calif. 21
 Whittier, Calif. 22
 San Fernando, Calif. 23
 El Monte, Calif. 24
 Los Angeles, Calif. 26
 Asilomar, Calif. May 30-June 2

CONVENTIONS

For Mutual Fellowship, Edification, and Service

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

ANTIOCH, CALIFORNIA, May 5—I.D.E.S. Hall, on 10th Street, across from the park. Mrs. C. H. Garrison, 2948 Willow Pass Road, Concord.

COVERT, MICHIGAN, May 5—Hall on West Lake Street. Mrs. J. Klyzek Route 2, Box 285, Bentan Harbor, Michigan.

LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA, May 5—YMCA Building W. Orange Street. (Front Hall, third floor, elevator service.) Mrs. Edna Miller, Box 25, Maytown.

PIQUA, OHIO, May 5—YWCA Building, 418, N. Wayne Street. Mrs. Eva Peddemors, 222 Wolker Street.

COLUMBUS, OHIO, May 12—Women's Benefit Association, 53 E. Goy Street. Mrs. Josephine Ewing, 273 S. Algonquin Avenue.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, May 12—I. O. G. T. Hall, 2922 Cedar Avenue. Mrs. C. R. Newham, 678 40th Avenue, N. E.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, May 12—YWCA Building, 2027 Chestnut Street. Mrs. Otis R. Barrall, 42 Fairfield Road, Havertown, Pennsylvania

SAGINAW, MICHIGAN, May 12—Woman's Club, 311 N. Jefferson Street. Mrs. C. A. Sundbom, 207 Alice Street.

WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT, May 12—50 N. Main Street. Mrs. S. Wawrzyeniok, 49 Scrub Oak Road, North Haven 2.

MUNCIE, INDIANA, May 26—YWCA Building Charles and Jefferson Streets. Mrs. J. Harold Atkinson, 403 Riverside Avenue.

VANCOUVER, B. C. CANADA, May 18-20—Vancouver East Community "Y", 788 Commercial Drive, Corner Adanac. Mrs. W. A. Mc Nee, 6569 Argyle Street.

CLEVELAND, OHIO, May 19—YWCA Building, Prospect Avenue and East 22nd Street. Mrs. I. Cipperley, 1539 Genessee Road, South Euclid, Cleveland, 21.

HENDERSON, KENTUCKY, May 19—Administrative Building, Corner Dixon and Fagan Streets. Mr. Jack Roll, 1160 E. Riverside Drive, Evansville 14, Indiana.

SALEM, OREGON, May 19—2339 State Street.

WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS, May 19—Holt Hotel, 604 8th Street. Mr. George Wilmott, Route 1, Box 405, Saginaw, Texas.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, May 25, 26—YMCA Building, 404 E. 10th Street. Mrs. C. Nagel, 4309 Floro Avenue.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, May 26—Central Masonic Temple, 912 N. La Salle Street.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, May 26—Moccabees Building, Woodward Avenue at Putnam.

FLATWOODS, PENNSYLVANIA, May 26—Grange Hall. Mrs. Raymond Siesky, Route 2, Box 497, Connellsville, Pa.

READING, PENNSYLVANIA, May 26—Stouffer's Hall, Sixth and Franklin Streets. Mr. E. K. Snyder, 521, N. 12th Street.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, May 30-June 2—Asilomar Convention Grounds, Asilomar, California. Miss Nannette Kiddoo, 365 9th Avenue, San Francisco 18.

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, June 1, 2—Claridge Hotel.

JACKSON, MICHIGAN, June 2—Odd Fellows Community Lodge Temple, 1226 East McDevitt Avenue.

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, June 30.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, June 30—YWCA Building, Twenty-third Street near Seventh Avenue.

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, June 30.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, July 4-7.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, July 4-7.

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY, July 6, 7.

BIBLE PROPHECY BOOKLETS

Armageddon—32 pages, 5 cents.
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GREEK: The Divine Plan of the Ages—50¢. "Behold Your King"—25¢. Hymns of Dawn, without music—25¢. God and Reason—10¢.

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

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SLOVAK: God's Kingdom; The Day of Jehovah—5¢.

FINNISH: Grace of Jehovah—10¢.

SPANISH: Hope Beyond the Grave—10¢.

All 5 cent booklets, 25 for \$1.00; 10 cent booklets, 12 for \$1.00

DAWN PUBLICATIONS, East Rutherford, N. J. Orders not acknowledged unless requested.

to us the
SCRIPTURES
clearly teach

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

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

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

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

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

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