

The Dawn

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The quotation is a statement the LORD made concerning creation—how he had arranged and limited the “great deep” at the time when Earth was being prepared as a habitation for man—when earth and seas were divided. At times, when we have watched in awe as a terrifying thunderstorm descended over the ocean, has not the thought entered our minds of the devastation that would occur if no limits had been put upon those fierce and powerful waves? What if they should break forth from the invisible barrier which holds them in place and engulf the shores along the seacoast? Or worse—if they would only stop when the highest mountains contained them! The Scriptures assure us that the Heavenly Father himself controls the seas. Though storm clouds may gather and waves may threaten, they may boil and fume, but they have had their boundaries set. No matter how huge or powerful, they can go no further than God has decreed: “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” Thank God for this assurance!

When we study God’s Word we find that in all aspects of life the LORD has had control. This was true in his dealings with his people of the past, and it is true even today. The LORD has set bounds, and bars, and doors to everything. Anything that may attempt to go beyond the boundary which he has set for it will fail.

God Controls the Material Universe

For instance, our solar system—including the sun and its retinue of planets—all move within their decreed orbits. The earth cannot approach nearer to the sun than the LORD has decreed. The LORD prescribed that every one of Earth’s planets which revolve around our sun would have its own boundaries set—“Hitherto, thus far shalt thou go and no further!” There is no power in the universe which could swerve any of these planets one iota of an inch outside the LORD’s decreed orbit. And scientists are aware of this accuracy and dependability attested to by the heavens, and they utilize it for

measurements with complete assurance that it is indeed correct.

But occasionally we run across an article written by a scientist who attempts to convince us that sometime in the future the earth will get too close to the sun, and it may burn up, becoming nothing but a cinder. How foolish it is for us to worry needlessly about such a possibility. Only those who lack understanding and faith in God will find themselves full of such fears. All the wonders of nature attest to his great power and wisdom.

When we recognize the fact that the Creator has set the bounds for the movements not only of our own solar system, but also for the countless number of solar systems that make up the galaxy in which we are located—then to consider that there are countless galaxies in the vast expanse of the limitless universe, and that they are all whirling around in space each within a given orbit—we will realize that one who could create such a multitude of worlds is certainly also powerful enough to control them. These galaxies move through the heavens so silently, so beautifully, so accurately that their positions can easily be calculated for a thousand years! And never an interruption or deviation occurs from the set bounds the LORD has mandated.

Population of Earth Under God's Control

When the LORD created Earth, he made it just the right size for his purpose. "Thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else." (Isa. 45:18) When he placed our first parents in the Garden of Eden God told them to be fruitful, and multiply, and *fill* the earth, to its perfect capacity. (Gen. 1:28) This process has been going on for over six thousand years. Millions upon millions of people have lived and died.

The population explosion occurring in our day has become a matter of deep concern to thinking people. Articles in

newspapers and magazines report the alarm which has gripped the minds of men as they contemplate what they call the 'demographic explosion'. They fear that if this earth continues for another one hundred years with the present rate of increase of population continuing, we will have extreme food, housing and employment shortages.

Even today in this country, many who need food are unable to obtain it. But in many third-world countries food availability has developed into a desperate situation. This is the case despite the paradox that there are billions of dollars' worth of foodstuff stored, which governments are holding back in order to keep the market from being glutted and prices from plummeting on those items. Many millions of dollars are also spent in building and maintaining more storage space for this food surplus. And yet those who study world developments still fear that if the rate of increase of population continues at the normal pace there will be a severe shortage of food worldwide for the people who will be living in the middle of the 21st century.

Yes, there is concern, and from their viewpoint they have good reason to be concerned about the increase of the earth's population in these, our days. In China families are limited to one child. Any children begotten after the first child, by law must be aborted. We feel certain that our Heavenly Father has a better solution than this heartbreaking one. Yes, we have confidence that our Heavenly Father has set the bounds and the bars in this matter of great importance to his human children. He has decreed the total, perfect number of people who will occupy this planet Earth.

When God's kingdom—for which we continually pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"—is established, not only will those who are alive at that time have many needs to be met, but additionally, those resurrected from the dead will have many, varied needs. The Bible assures us that everyone who ever lived upon this earth, every child of Adam, will return from death. (John 5:25,28; Acts 15:16,17) These will have both immediate and continuing needs that must be supplied.

As we study the Scriptures, and read about the unfolding of God's plans and purposes as they will operate during the Millennial Age we find many texts which describe that glorious day. But we do not find even one text of scripture which might in any way indicate that overpopulation will be one of the problems which will require special resolving. Even in this matter the LORD has said, "Adam, you and your offspring can increase thus far, but no further. I have prepared this earth to house a particular number of your children, and when my plans and purposes are fully completed you will see that just the right number were born. Just enough to 'fill the earth', to inhabit this planetary paradise in joy and plenty and comfort—and no more or less—will be brought forth."

God's Command over Dispensational Features

The length of the different ages and dispensations in God's plan were designed by him to be a specific number of years in length, and no longer or shorter. The period from Creation to the Flood was 1,656 years long. The LORD decreed that the first dispensation would end just then—not a year earlier—not a year later. It accomplished God's purpose in his permission of evil, and then a new dispensation began to teach its particular lesson. The lesson of the first world was that angels could not solve the problems caused by man's fall into sin and death without God's help. In fact, the first 'world' became so wicked that God destroyed it in the great Flood.—II Pet. 2:4,5; Gen. 6:5,6

We find that the succeeding ages were also precisely as long as the LORD wished them to be, to accomplish his purpose for that period of time. The Patriarchal Age was just long enough to record the great covenant that God made with Abraham—"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18), confirmed to Isaac, and then passed on to Jacob. At the death of Jacob, his twelve sons became the nation of Israel, and a new age began—just on time! The Jewish dispensation, which continued for many centuries with its helpful "types and shadows" (Heb. 8:5) illustrating a new, greater

work of God still to come, ended at precisely the right time in God's plan of the ages. Next the Gospel Age opened up and began the fulfillment of the types and shadows of the Jewish Age. With the First Advent of God's only begotten Son as our Redeemer, the Gospel Age brought with it the invitation to walk in his footsteps. It, too, arrived just on time, as foretold by the prophets of old!—Dan. 9:25-27

God as it were, had stated to each age and its work: "Thou shalt go thus far and no further."

Permission of Evil Limited by God

Again, we see this principle so beautifully exemplified in the permission of evil among men. With the entrance of sin into the world, and its corrupting influences upon mankind, we have a clear picture of the doleful result of wickedness. Yet we firmly believe that Satan has never had complete mastery over the minds of the human race. No, as we study bits of history we find that often wonderful principles came to the fore for short periods of time. Good, kind monarchs ruled to the best of their knowledge and ability.

Sometimes in the past (and this still occurs in our day) an exceedingly corrupt regime came upon the scene, forcing men into an abyss of oppression. Yet even these evil rulers were permitted to exist only for just so long, and then the LORD held evil in check by permitting a more principled leader to arise and crush the corrupt element to the dust. In some instances, an evil leader would rise up in an attempt to replace a wicked one already in control. He would seek to completely crush the one who had been in power. In the struggle, both forces would find their strength and their power dissipated, causing each side to go out of existence, thereby making room for a better element of society to assume authority once again.

In Daniel we read: "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." (Dan. 4:17) In some

instances this has been the method utilized in the providential overruling of the great Creator—to serve the particular purpose he has in mind—to teach a specific lesson. But “only thus far shalt thou go and no further” still applies. “Here shall thy proud waves be stayed,” is still the watchword! How happy we are to recognize that it is the God of heaven who actually rules among the children of men, though he sometimes permits for a time even the basest of individuals to hold sway in one part of the globe or another, for a particular purpose, and for a limited amount of time.

Man, who was in the beginning created in the image of God, became impaired to a greater or lesser degree by his fall into sin, but rarely has that original image been erased completely from his mind and heart. No, the LORD would not permit this, because he had a plan—a purpose, which involved man’s restoration to perfection. When given a full chance during the Millennial reign of Christ to return to man’s original perfection, by far the majority will choose to accept the opportunity to turn to righteousness. Having learned of the exceeding sinfulness of sin through many painful, tragic, unforgettable experiences throughout the past six thousand years, man, when placed under the favorable administration of a “new heavens and a new earth” (II Pet. 3:13), will rejoice to walk in the way in which they can serve the Heavenly Father in righteousness, peace and fidelity.—Isa. 2:2-4

God’s Control Over the Counterfeit Church

During the middle centuries of the Gospel Age when the counterfeit church held Europe and its monarchies in its death grip, their power was exercised in large degree to “wear out the saints of the Most High.” (Dan. 7:25; II Thess. 1:4-12) The message is clear in Thessalonians, in Daniel, and in Revelation, that the LORD planned to allow that power to continue unabated only for a limited amount of time. “How long, O LORD, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6:10) How long, O LORD are you going to allow this wicked imposter to continue to

persecute and kill your saints? If its ruling power had been permitted to continue much longer than it did, it would seem that all the saints would have been 'worn out', completely destroyed, by the persecuting power of the counterfeit church.

But after one thousand long years of the saints' crucible of testing experiences, the LORD raised up upon the scene a very significant individual by the name of Napoleon. He was ambitious and wanted to become a great military man who would rule the entire world. For a short while he reached his goal, and it was through this man that the LORD brought to an end the persecuting power of the counterfeit church. "Only thus far shalt thou go!" The LORD here again expressed his power and control over all things! "I have set the bars thus far."

Satan's Power over Job

In the Book of Job, from which our theme text is taken, Satan suggested to the LORD that Job served God faithfully only because Job received abundant blessings from the LORD. To paraphrase Satan's words, he said, "Why certainly Job is faithful to you! Look what you have done for him! He is a good servant only because he knows you will bless him abundantly above all men upon the earth; but begin to take some of these blessings away, and you'll see how soon Job will serve you no



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longer." In this allegory, God permitted a test of Job's faithfulness to him. The LORD said, "All right, Satan, touch him with troubles, but do not kill him."

So one by one, his family, his possessions, his friends, his wife, his health, were all swept away, almost overnight. "But don't touch his life, Satan! No, only thus far shalt thou go, Satan—don't touch his life." We see even here, in permitting the testing, the trial of Job's faith, the proud waves of Satan's persecution could go only so far, and no further.

The LORD set the limit upon Job's trial. It was difficult, a severe experience, filled with loss and suffering, but we know the result. Job proved himself faithful to his Heavenly Creator under extremely adverse circumstances. In the end he was even more abundantly blessed than in the beginning! He received far more temporal blessings at the LORD's hand than he had previously possessed and lost.

God Will Limit the "Time of Trouble"

In the severity of the time of trouble which we are presently experiencing, we find that the same principle also operates. We read in Matthew 24:21 and 22, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be [again]. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." The LORD permits the angry waves of world unrest, wars and rumors of wars, economic calamities, political upheavals, terrorism, crime, drugs, disease, etc., to almost totally engulf the whole earth, bringing it to the very brink of complete disaster. But God said, "Except those days be shortened. . . ." Yes, except the bounds, the bars, set up by the LORD himself—"Only thus far shalt thy proud and angry waves go, and no further," man would push himself over the precipice of everlasting destruction! But the LORD will calm the sea—the storm of human strife and passion—and bring about the 'afterward' of peace.

For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. "Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and

in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." (Isa. 49:8) Although the LORD will intervene to prevent the total annihilation of mankind and his home—the Earth—the church will inherit a "desolate heritage." But Earth will indeed abide forever. (Eccles. 1:4) It will be the church's inheritance, and they will have the privilege to "establish the earth," to bring it back to the original perfection enjoyed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden!

When the church is complete, and the New Jerusalem established as God foretold (Rev. 21:1-4), when the nation of Israel has been snatched from the hands of their enemies because God has decreed, "Thus far Armageddon shall be permitted to go, and no further," then Christ's kingdom will begin to pour out its majestic blessings upon the world of mankind!

"Thou shalt come up against my people of 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 may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. . . . And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the LORD God, that my fury shall come up in my face. . . . 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." (Ezek. 38:16, 18, 23) "Only thus far shalt thou go, Gog and Magog, and no further! Here will your proud waves be stayed." When the LORD fights the battle for Israel, they will be stayed. When the LORD steps into the fray to save Israel from utter destruction, Gog's knees will begin to tremble and shake, and they will be powerless against God's people of old.

The Vision Is for an Appointed Time

The Prophet Habakkuk wrote these words over 2,500 years ago: "The LORD . . . said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For 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. 2:2,3) The great vision which inspired all God's holy prophets since the world began—the establishment of the kingdom of Christ upon earth—has indeed seemed to tarry, has it not? Why is this so?

God has a reason behind the 'tarrying'. This age must continue until the work designed by him has been completed. Then he will say, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further." The Gospel Age will continue until the culmination of the time of trouble—Armageddon—and the establishment of the kingdom here upon earth will bring in the new age—the Millennial Age. Even though it seems to tarry, we are to wait for it patiently. It will bring with it all the joys and blessings of life, peace, health and happiness the perfect human heart could desire!

Why Do Our Blessings Seem to Tarry?

In our personal experiences there are tests of patience, of one kind or another, that the LORD permits to come upon us to try the metal of our character. God will determine by our reactions whether we are prepared for the place he has in mind for us in the kingdom, or whether we need still more lessons, or guidance along a particular line. Some of these experiences are permitted for a short time—others are of longer duration—as our needs may be. This is the measure used by God to determine what trials and testings are necessary for us to endure. When our need and God's purpose has been fulfilled and satisfied, we can rest assured that easement will come to us. This was true in the case of the Prophet Job, and the LORD has guaranteed just such a personal overruling and guidance in every one of our individual lives.

Every consecrated believer is precious to the LORD and he deals with each on a person-to-person basis. Yes, he does work with us as ecclesias of his people as we assemble to worship him at our Sunday and weekday gatherings, pouring out upon us his Holy Spirit of truth, and revelation, and inspiration. (Heb. 10:23-25) But the basis upon which we will

make our calling and election sure is exclusively an individual one.

God suits our trials and tests according to our individual needs. Just as a builder shapes a stone or a piece of wood to fit into a specific spot in the home he is constructing, so God has a particular place in mind for each one in his 'temple'. (I Cor. 3:16) A carpenter or stonemason does not randomly form a piece of building material, and then hunt for a place for it to fit! No, it is cut and shaped and sanded and planed, or is hewn and carved, so that it will exactly fit the place for which it was intended.

Indeed sometimes our trials seem so oppressive, so difficult to bear, but if we remember that we are being shaped for the Master's use, and by his magnificent design, we will have the fortitude to be submissive and learn the lessons he has for us in the experience. Sometimes audibly, but more often inwardly, our cry goes up, "O LORD, how long, how long?" Let us take comfort in the fact that "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful,"—what a beautiful thought—God is faithful! "who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."—I Cor. 10:13

The LORD says to our trials, "Only thus far shalt thou go, and no further!" The LORD decides—and his decisions are perfect!—when our trials have accomplished the development of the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and of perfecting the character he is looking for in each New Creature. The great God of the universe, who has all things under his control, is directing every one of our daily experiences. They will never be permitted to go so far in our individual lives that we would be damaged by them. Only "thus far" will our ordeal be permitted to continue, and "no further."

How precious this thought is to those whose hearts and minds are stayed upon the LORD. □

LESSON FOR JANUARY 6**How Do You Hear the Word?**

KEY VERSE: *"But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the Word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*—**Matthew 13:23**

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23*

JESUS SAID TO his disciples, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear." Then he explained "that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see these things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." (Matt. 13:16,17) There is a due time for every detail of the divine plan to be accomplished, and it was not then the due time for the "many prophets and righteous men," mentioned by Jesus, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

"The seed is the Word of God," Jesus said. (Luke 8:11) "When anyone heareth the Word of the kingdom,

and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside." (Matt. 13:19) This is a prophecy as well as a parable. The truth of the kingdom has been presented to millions throughout the age who have not understood it, as Jesus foretold; 'the wicked one' removed it.

Even though the sowers have been forewarned what to expect, this is a difficult fact to accept. Those who proclaim the truth often wonder if their failure to get the message over is not due to their own inability to present it plainly. It is proper that we present the truth with as great clarity and force as pos-

sible; but, let us remember that nearly 2,000 years ago Jesus foretold that much of the seed sown would fall by the wayside and be snatched away by the "fowls of heaven."—Ps. 104:12

Still, some of the seed of the parable fell on 'good ground', and this is most important. Jesus explained that, "he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the Word and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."—Matt. 13:23

Luke's account omits reference to the percentage of fruit that is borne by the 'good ground' believers. He describes them as "they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."—Luke 8:15

Much patient endurance is required to bring forth the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The 'good ground' Christians are subjected to the heat of persecution, and they would be 'scorched', even as the 'stony ground' believers, except that their roots of faith lay hold

firmly on the promises of God from which they receive the strength to endure.

Jesus commissioned his followers to preach the Gospel, and this commission has never been withdrawn. What the LORD does through his faithful people varies. (Matt. 13:39; 28:19,20; Acts 1:8) But in all our efforts to bear witness to the truth, let us remember Jesus' introduction to this parable, in which he emphasizes that it is only those who have eyes and ears to see and hear who will respond to the Gospel of the kingdom. The only ones in this category are those whom the LORD is drawing.

Remembering this, we will not be discouraged when the wayside hearers turn away, as they did with Paul, saying, "We will hear thee again" at another time. Nor will we be surprised when some who at first show appreciation do not continue in the way of truth. We will regret that some allow the cares of this life to hold them back, but we will rejoice that one here and there responds, and with a good and honest heart brings forth fruit with patience. □

How Are You Preparing?

KEY VERSE: "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour."—Matthew 25:13

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:1-13

IN THIS PARABLE, the wise virgins picture the living members of the 'bride class' at the end of the Gospel Age, while the foolish virgins, being less watchful, well represent the 'great multitude'. —Rev. 21:9; Rev. 7:9

The parable was not given to identify the bride of Christ, but to emphasize the need to watch. The role of the maidens in ancient Jewish wedding customs lent itself well to teach this lesson. Faithfulness on their part was revealed by their possession, not only of oil in their lamps, but also an extra supply in their vessels.

Since this is what the virgins required in order to perform their role faithfully, the oil would represent what we need in order to be faithful watchers who are spiritually alert and prepared to go along with our heavenly Bridegroom and to enter the wedding home with him.

In the Bible oil is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In this association, possession of the Holy Spirit in large measure is a vital necessity for every faithful watcher. Retention of the Holy Spirit implies the need of continued faithfulness along all lines of Christian endeavor.

To possess the Holy Spirit calls for a full surrender of our hearts to the LORD, a complete denial of self, and a dedication of ourselves to the doing of our Heavenly Father's will. The possession of the Holy Spirit by the consecrated requires the continual study of the truths of God's Word, and their application in the daily affairs of life, regardless of difficulties encountered.

Possession of the Holy Spirit impels us to faithful activity in the LORD's service, and, by our faithfulness, we receive God's Spirit in ever-increasing measure. Jesus

said that our Father was more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him than an earthly father is to give good gifts to his children. (Luke 11:13) Prayer, then, is a means of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

No wonder the wise virgins of the parable could not give their oil to the foolish virgins, but told them to go into the marketplace to obtain their own supply. The 'marketplace' of experience involves time to live the consecrated life, time to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, time to study, to serve, and to pray.

The parable emphasizes that the wise virgins are invited into the wedding, but that the door of opportunity is closed to the foolish virgins. The bridegroom addresses these as strangers, and they are greatly disappointed. Because there are two classes of virgins does not suggest that one class is righteous and the other wicked. They were all virgins who together went to meet the bridegroom, and to accompany him to his home. But five were 'wise', and the others were not.

How the wise virgins displayed their faithfulness is the vital lesson of the parable to us. Certainly in every part of the harvest of this age, it has been important for the virgin class to be alert and watchful. The length of the harvest period has been so much greater than at first was expected, and so the quality of patient endurance has been required in order to avoid becoming spiritually lethargic.

The cry, "Behold the Bridegroom," has gone out ever since our Lord's return, and the seeming delay in the establishment of the kingdom is a test upon our faith and patience. But let us rejoice in the fact that everything is 'on time' with God!

A little spiritual drowsiness on our part might make us think we have plenty of time to prepare to be faithful 'virgins', when, in fact, the time may indeed be short! But if we are daily faithful in the use of all the means by which our vessels are kept filled with the Spirit, we will be ready at any time when the Bridegroom extends his invitation, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—Matt. 25:21

Do You See People's Needs?

KEY VERSE: *"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."* — Luke 16:31

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Luke 16:19-31*

THIS IS ONE parable which Jesus did not explain, so we should not be dogmatic about its meaning, although certain statements in the parable itself serve as clues as to what it teaches.

The Scriptures are explicit that the only ones up to Jesus' First Advent 'taught by Moses and the prophets' were those of the nation of Israel. "You [Israel] only have I known of all the families of the earth," God said. (Amos 3:2) In this same verse, the LORD explained that because of this he would punish them for all their iniquities.

The 'rich man' fared sumptuously every day, we are told. The nation of Israel did have their table laden with the good (symbolic) food furnished by the Law and the prophets. Paul wrote that they had great advantage in every way over the Gentiles, because to them were given

the oracles of God.—Rom. 3:2; Heb. 5:12

The purple robe of the rich man represented the royal hopes of the nation; his fine white linen depicted the standing of righteousness the nation enjoyed as a result of the typical sacrifices offered year-by-year for them. While this righteousness was merely typical of the righteousness to be enjoyed by spiritual Israel, those eventually called out through the blood of Christ, nevertheless, it gave them, as a nation, a standing with God not held by other nations.

But the nation of Israel 'died' and lost all the rich blessings provided by the LORD. However, individuals comprising the nation continued to live. Because of their loss of God's exclusive favor as a royal nation, each generation throughout the centuries has suffered, being members of a 'dead' nation.

The poor man also 'died' to the condition of alienation from God which was held prior to the First Advent of Christ. Beginning shortly after Pentecost, God 'visited the Gentiles'—by the proclamation of the Gospel to them they were given an opportunity to enter into his favor. This change of position is represented by the beggar being carried into Abraham's bosom. The believers among them were given the opportunity to embrace the faith of Abraham, that through his seed all the families of the earth were to be blessed.—Gal. 3:8, 16, 27-29

The exclusive right of becoming the promised seed of Abraham came to an end for Israel as a nation when they were cast off from favor, although individuals from that nation continued to be accepted. The call was then extended to Gentiles, many of whom were already in an attitude of heart to readily accept the Gospel message. The need for preaching the open door of opportunity to Gentiles was deeply felt by Paul and other apostles, and teachers of the Early Church,

and, indeed, mighty efforts were made throughout the Gentile world of their day to extend the call to all who had an ear to hear. They were the 'angels', or messengers, of the parable who brought the poor man to Abraham's bosom. The parable strongly implies that an understanding of the Scriptures prepared by Moses and all the prophets, and the New Testament testimony based on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, is the way in this Gospel Age to special covenant favor with God.

The need for proclaiming this "acceptable time" is still apparent, and it is our privilege to promulgate the truth of the Gospel as far and as wide as possible—not with the expectation of worldwide conversion, but as agencies of the LORD for finding those who are being called to the special favor of becoming part of the Abrahamic seed.

When this aspect of God's plan is complete, the 'torment' of the rich man and his brothers will come to an end, as all of the world are called into the true kingdom. □

How Faithful Are You?

KEY VERSE: *“Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.”—Luke 19:17*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Luke 19:11-27*

IN THE PARABLE of the pounds, each servant received the same amount of money—one ‘pound’. This illustrates blessings received from the LORD which are common to all his servants—assets which enable them to render acceptable service in his cause.

The pound represents something which is furnished by the nobleman—the LORD—to his people. We were first drawn to the point of full consecration by the power of the truth, and after this we received the begetting and anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is this anointing which authorizes us to take part in the work of the LORD. To make our labors acceptable despite the imperfections of our flesh, we receive for our justification the robe of Christ’s righteousness.

Through the proclamation of the truth, God’s work is ac-

complished in the earth during the Gospel Age. What is that work? Paul wrote, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”—II Cor. 5:19, 20

When Jesus appeared to his disciples before his ascension, he said to them, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) Previously Jesus had promised to send the Holy Spirit, which, he said, would guide his disciples into all truth.—John 16:12-15

Jesus' reference to the Holy Spirit as the "Spirit of truth," was indeed correct. We cannot receive the truth into our hearts or be guided and strengthened by it without the aid of the Holy Spirit. Nor can we possess the Holy Spirit apart from the truth. Because of this, when the gift of the Holy Spirit was bestowed upon the waiting disciples at Pentecost, it enabled them to understand the marvelous teachings of Jesus which previously they could not 'bear'. It was through the Holy Spirit that the mysteries of God became theirs to use as the LORD's stewards.

Throughout the Gospel Age those who are endowed with the Spirit of truth to the extent that their service has contributed to the implanting of the same Spirit of truth in the minds and hearts of others, could be considered as having made an 'increase'.

We notice the rewards administered to the faithful ones of the parable: the one who gained ten pounds was given authority over ten cities; the one who gained five pounds was given authority over five cities. These are promises of

rulership, symbolized in the Scriptures by a 'crown'.

Let us note what Paul wrote to the brethren at Philippi: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, among a crooked and perverse nation, . . . holding forth the Word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." — Phil. 2:14-16

The Apostle Peter confirms Paul's view of Christian stewardship, and also exhorts to faithfulness in the use of the gifts with which we have been endowed by the Holy Spirit. He said: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever."—I Pet. 4:10,11 □

PART TWO OF TWO-PART SERIES—Our Lord's Return

The Kingdom and Its Blessings

THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE of our Lord's return is the establishment of a worldwide kingdom, or government, which will assure the people of peace, and the opportunity to enjoy health and everlasting life. Concerning Jesus and his place in the divine plan, the Prophet Isaiah wrote, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. . . . The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:6,7

What will this new government be like? Will it be merely a holy influence that will sweep over the earth? It will indeed be such an influence, but in addition it will have a definite kingdom personnel. Christ will be the king, the invisible ruler. The church—all those who, throughout the age now closing, have faithfully followed in his steps—will be associated with Christ in the spiritual, or invisible, phase of that kingdom. The promise to these has been that if they suffer with Christ they shall also reign with him.—II Tim. 2:12

God's promises to the faithful followers of the Master are spiritual, or heavenly. Jesus said to his disciples, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2,3) Misunderstanding the intent of these promises, many have concluded that it has been God's purpose to take as many of earth's inhabitants to heaven as believe on Christ in this life, and that all those who do not believe would be forever

lost. But now it is seen that in preparing the followers of Jesus to reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom, the LORD has merely been getting ready to save and bless mankind in general, and will restore them to perfect human life here on earth.

The Scriptures reveal that while Christ and his church, exalted to heavenly glory, will be the invisible rulers of the world in the coming new social order, there will be present on the earth the human, or visible, representatives of this heavenly government. Just as Satan, the invisible prince of the present evil world, has operated chiefly through visible agencies, so Christ and his exalted followers who are brought forth in the first resurrection to live and reign with him, will have visible representatives.

The Bible tells us who these will be. Jesus explained that in the kingdom, men will "come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God," with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets. (Luke 13:28,29) In Psalm 45:16 those of this same class are described as "fathers," and the prophecy states that they will become the "children" of the Christ, and will be made "princes in all the earth." This class will be made up of all the worthy ones of past ages, from righteous Abel to those at the first coming of Jesus. In Isaiah 32:1 both the heavenly and earthly phases of the messianic kingdom are identified. The prophecy reads, "Behold, a king [Jesus] shall reign in righteousness, and princes [the Ancient Worthies] shall rule in judgment."

Possible with God

Let us not say that the establishment of such a kingdom is impossible. For the worthy servants of God of past ages to become the visible phase of the millennial kingdom means that they will have to be raised from the dead. Is it too much to believe that God is able to do this? Is it not a fundamental of the Christian religion that there is to be a resurrection of the dead? Surely if we are looking to the Bible for a solution of the world's problems, we should be prepared to believe that God

is able to do all that he has promised to do; and he has promised to restore his ancient servants to life in what is described as the "better resurrection."—Heb. 11:35

This better resurrection of the Ancient Worthies awaits the completion of the church class, made up of the Master's faithful followers. Paul explained that "they [the Ancient Worthies] without us should not be made perfect," that is, restored to perfection of life as humans. (Heb. 11:40) As for the faithful followers of Jesus being raised to spiritual life with him, and with him reigning as invisible rulers for a thousand years, surely we should have no difficulty in believing this. Have not most Christians believed in spiritual existence after death, and that those possessing it are invisible to human eyes?

However, some have erroneously supposed the spiritual existence described in the Bible to be a natural outcome of the "cycle of life." This is not so! "The wages of sin is death," and "the dead know not anything." (Rom. 6:23; Eccles. 9:5) The Scriptures teach that the hope of life after death for both the church and the world depends upon a resurrection of the dead. The Scriptures also clearly teach that in the resurrection some are given spiritual bodies. Thus Christ was exalted, and the same is true of his faithful followers. Together, these powerful spiritual beings will, through their human representatives, the Ancient Worthies, exercise control over mankind throughout the thousand years of the messianic kingdom.

While the Law of the messianic kingdom will go forth from Zion, the word of the LORD will go forth from Jerusalem, Micah declares. When Jesus said that in the kingdom the people would "sit down" with the Ancient Worthies, the thought is of pupils sitting at the feet of their teachers, or masters. These teachers will communicate the word of the LORD as they receive it from the exalted Zion class, and this is evidently what is meant by the word of the LORD going forth from Jerusalem. Besides, we think it quite possible that the visible phase of the messianic kingdom might have its headquarters in or near the site of the ancient city of Jerusalem.

New Heavens and Earth

The two phases of the messianic kingdom are also pictured in the prophecies of the Bible as a "new heavens and a new earth." Through the Prophet Isaiah, the LORD said, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. . . . Be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed."—Isa. 65:17-20

In vision the Apostle John saw the fulfillment of this wonderful prophecy. (See Rev. 21:1-4) The "Jerusalem" which is identified in Isaiah's prophecy with the new heavens and new earth is seen by John to be the exalted church class, described as "the bride, the Lamb's wife." (Rev. 21:9, 10) The former heaven and earth, symbolic of Satan's social order, is seen to pass away, and then "a new heaven and a new earth" appear—symbolic, as we have seen, of the heavenly and earthly phases of the messianic kingdom.

With the new heaven and new earth functioning, and the "new Jerusalem" established, God's favor will be manifested toward the people through this governmental arrangement, with the result that "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

The symbolisms of the Bible are always appropriate and fitting. The literal heavens and literal earth bear a certain relationship to each other which well illustrates the operation of the spiritual and the earthly phases of the messianic kingdom. The heavens, for example, control earth's tides, atmospheric conditions, and seasons. Just so, the earthly arrangements of Christ's new government will be under the direct influence and control of the spiritual, or heavenly phase of that government.

This is true also of the present symbolic heavens and earth. The social and governmental affairs of men have always been more or less under the influence of spiritualistic forces over which Satan has been the prince. (Eph. 2:2) These have frequently exercised their influence through false religious systems. Indeed, it has been chiefly through the religious emotions of men and women that Satan has held control over the world. In this social order, false religion has been the medium, or the connecting link between "the god of this world" and the social and governmental affairs of the people. One outstanding illustration of this has been in the union of church and state. Through this system "holy" wars have been fought, and the holy inquisition employed to control the people through fear of torture.

The Apostle Peter, writing of events which would occur as a result of Christ's second visit to earth, tells us that "the heavens and the earth, which are now, . . . are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment and perdition [destruction] of ungodly men." (II Pet. 3:7) In this same prophecy Peter speaks of the heavens and earth which were before the Flood as passing away, so we know that he is not discussing the literal heavens and earth, for these have never passed away, and never will. We read in Ecclesiastes 1:4 that "the earth abideth forever," and in Isaiah 45:18 that God created the earth "not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited."

In Peter's prophecy, speaking again of the destruction of Satan's social order, he said that we should be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," and adds, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (II Pet. 3:12,13) Yes, this coming "new heavens and new earth" will be established in fulfillment of the word or promises of God; and when the work of this new kingdom is completed, and the incorrigible, and Satan, destroyed, then shall come to pass the promise that "there shall be no more death." This is a glorious outlook, and

will be the final result of our Lord's return, his second visit to earth.

The River of Life

In Revelation 22:1-3 we are presented with another meaningful symbol, or picture, of the messianic kingdom and the blessing which, through its beneficent rule, will flow out to the people. John wrote, "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Here the kingdom is symbolically described as "the throne of God and of the Lamb," the Lamb symbolizing the sacrificial aspect of Jesus' ministry on behalf of the people, the fact that he gave his flesh in sacrifice for the life of the world. It is this sacrifice, providing the redeeming blood of the Lamb, that makes available the blessings symbolized by the "river of water of life."

John sees the tree of life growing by the river, bearing twelve manner of fruit, and yielding its fruit every month. This is a meaningful symbol of the fact that through the two phases of the messianic kingdom, health and life will be provided for all the willing and obedient of mankind. John wrote that the "leaves" of the symbolic tree of life will be "for the healing of the nations." How sorely in need of healing are the people of all nations today, and we rejoice that the loving God of heaven, through the returned Christ, has made such a grand provision for them.

Revelation 22:17 again mentions the "water" of this river of life, and in this text also we are given a wonderful assurance. We quote: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Here again, the "bride" refers collectively to those who are the faithful followers of the Master throughout the present era in the divine plan. Revelation 19:7 speaks of the marriage of the Lamb that takes place after his "wife hath made herself ready." The making ready of the bride class is still in progress, although we believe it will soon be completed. Then, with these "made

ready" ones, united with their Lord as his bride, there will be a bride to say, "Come, . . . and take the water of life freely." What an incentive this is for every follower of Christ to "give diligence" to make his "calling and election sure!"—II Pet. 1:10,11

Solving World Problems

With such a kingdom arrangement in force, supported by divine, miracle-working power, how wonderfully one after another of earth's problems will be solved. Take the problem of war. When the kingdom first begins to function, it will find mankind devastated by the ravages of various types of warfare, "conventional" and otherwise. Revolution and social upheaval will doubtless have resulted in chaotic conditions throughout much of the world. In due time the nations will recognize divine intervention on behalf of Israel and the world, and having been saved out of the dreadful experience of Armageddon and rescued from the wilderness of despair, they will look to the power that was their salvation, and say:

"Come, and let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."—Mic. 4:2,3

How wonderfully simple is this divine solution of the war problem! It reverses the age-old axiom that in order to keep the peace, the nations must be prepared for war. It also casts aside the wisdom of fallen man which has devised the theory that through a "balance of power" war can be averted. It starts, instead, at the very foundation of the problem, with a program of education in the arts and advantages of peace instead of war; and thus a genuine disarmament program will be put into effect. Then will the promises of God pertaining to

Jesus as the Prince of Peace be fulfilled. Then will the angelic message of "peace on earth, goodwill toward men," become a reality.

There is also the economic problem of today. How serious it is when seventy-five percent of humans go to bed hungry every night! This problem will be solved in the kingdom, for then the arrangements will be such that "every man shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it."—Mic. 4:4

The problem of poverty is, and always has been, a menacing one to millions. The poor, the underprivileged, have ever been a pathetic group. But these shall no longer be an army of the hungry and unsheltered, as heretofore, but will be considered and blessed in that new government to come. Concerning this the psalmist wrote, prophetically: "He [Christ] shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. . . . For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper."—Ps. 72:4,12

Population Explosion

One of the serious problems facing the world today is the population explosion. This is at present one of the contributing causes of war, for governments are seeking living room for their expanding numbers of subjects. But the LORD has provided a solution for this problem also. First, we have the promise that all the waste places of earth will become habitable and productive. "The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose," we are told. (Isa. 35:1,2) Think of all the unused lands in the Americas, in Australia, in South Africa, etc. With these parts of the earth made habitable and productive, and available for the people, surely there will be no need to shed blood in order to acquire additional territory.

But there could be other ways, perhaps more permanent, by which the population problem could be solved—possibly by the bringing to an end man's power of procreation. When our

first parents were created, they were commanded to multiply and fill the earth. It should be observed that once a sufficient number of humans have been born to fill the earth, the purpose of this divine command will have been attained; hence the means by which it was implemented might be caused to cease.

Or, it is possible that God could make provision for mankind to eventually extend their boundaries to other areas of our solar system and universe, made habitable for this purpose. For God, with whom all things are possible, can undoubtedly find many solutions which lie within the realm of feasibility. Thus there is no need for concern, for the matter will surely be solved to the entire satisfaction of all, and to the glory of God.

Environmental Pollution

Closely associated with the population explosion is the increasing menace of environmental pollution. The greater number of people who live in an area, the greater is the threat of pollution in the air, the water, and on the land. Governments are doing what they can about this problem, but human selfishness is hindering the effort so that progress in solving it is painfully slow. But the LORD, through the agencies of the messianic kingdom, will know how to solve this problem also.

Human selfishness has always been a contributing cause for essentially all the problems of fallen mankind. There could never be genuine peace and goodwill in the earth as long as selfishness plays such an important role in the affairs of men. Thank God that under the rulership of earth's new government, the people will learn the value of love as against selfishness! Jeremiah 31:31-34 assures us that during the glad day of the LORD's kingdom, the law of God—which is the law of love—will be written in the hearts of the people, and that eventually all are to become so well acquainted with the LORD and his ways of love that no one will need to say to his neighbor, Know the LORD: for all shall know him from the least of them unto the greatest of them.

Death to Be Destroyed

Finally there is the major problem of sickness and death. Unless this problem is solved the people would still need to travel through "the valley of the shadow of death." In such an event there could be no lasting peace and happiness anywhere. Every peaceful and happy home would intermittently be blighted by the dread enemy, Death, that now counts its victims by the millions every year.

Christ, the great solver of human problems, will solve this one also, for during his reign sickness and death are to be destroyed. Paul affirms that Christ "must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (I Cor. 15:25,26) Isaiah 25:8 declares the LORD will swallow up death in victory, and will wipe away tears from off all faces.

In solving the problem of death none are to be overlooked, for even those who have fallen asleep in death throughout the ages are to "hear his [the Son of man's] voice, and shall come forth" from the tomb. (John 5:28, 29) The living room problem having been solved, there will be an abundance of habitable land to take care of all—the living and those who will be raised from the dead. This means that no one will need to lament the fact that Christ's kingdom did not come sooner—before father or mother, or other dear ones died—because these will be restored to life. The power of that blessed one who broke up funerals at the time of his first visit to earth simply by restoring the dead to life, will again be exercised, not on behalf of a limited few, but for the restoration of all the families of the earth. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

This does not imply universal salvation, for in order to continue living and to be restored to human perfection it will be necessary to obey the laws of the messianic kingdom and to accept the provision of life through the redeeming blood of Christ. Christ in his kingdom role is referred to in the prophecies as "that Prophet," and Peter said, "It shall come to pass,

(Continued on Page 37)

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 Sacramento KJAY 1430 10:00 a.m.
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Jacksonville WXTL 1010 7:45 p.m.
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of adjustments which are being made regularly in the schedule for the "Frank and Ernest" programs. New stations will be added, and some old ones will no longer carry our program. You may wish to check this schedule regularly, to see what is happening in your area.

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Allentown WHOL 1600 10:45 a.m.
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 Pottstown WPAZ 1370 12:45 p.m.

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Charleston WOKE 1340 7:06 p.m.
 Beaufort (Sat.) WVGB 1490 1:00 p.m.

VIRGINIA

Richmond WGGM 1410 7:45 a.m.

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Spokane KUDY 1280 9:45 a.m.
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WISCONSIN

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 Jackson WYLO 540 2:15 p.m.

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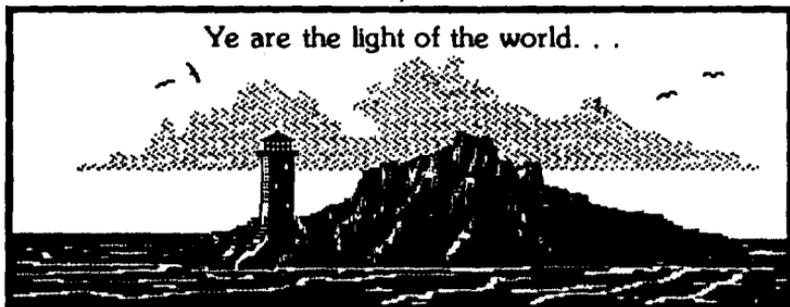
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that every soul which will not hear [obey] that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."—Acts 3:23

Sunshine Over All

Thus it will be that the various problems now plaguing fallen man will be solved, and this as the increasing light of the Master's second presence permeates one after another of the dark places of earth. One of the prophecies pertaining to the time of Christ's rulership over the earth refers to him as "the Sun of righteousness." (Mal. 4:2) And Jesus said that his faithful followers would also "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13:43) The healing rays of that Sun of righteousness will continually pour into the sin-sick and wounded hearts and lives of all mankind. From pole to pole that "Sun" will shine, and upon every continent, and the isles of the sea, the soothing, life-giving powers of that divine light of the Lifegiver will be felt for good.

The enlightening rays of Christ's presence will fill the earth with a knowledge of the glory of God. All "doctrines of devils," all nocturnal hallucinations and superstitions, all human creeds and dogmas, all the precepts of men by which people are taught to dread God rather than love him (Isa. 29:13), all political intrigues, as well as the thousand-and-one other evils that have plagued a dying world, are to be swept away and replaced by a true knowledge of God and of his love.

There will not be a nook or corner any place in the earth where the light from that glorious Sun will not penetrate. The warmth of its healing rays will assure a blessed reign of righteousness, and through that rulership of love and healing light all sin, unrighteousness, sickness, death, and all sorrow will finally be destroyed. Such is the ultimate and divine purpose to be accomplished by Christ's second visit to the earth. May we rejoice in this purpose, and continue to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6:10—(*Our Lord's Return* available, 10 cents each)

The Gospel of Matthew

"All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy king."

—Matthew 21:4,5

EACH OF THE four Gospel writers described Jesus from quite different perspectives. Mark saw Jesus as the perfect servant of God, one who acted quickly and had little to say. Luke presented Jesus as a perfect man with love toward all, especially the despised classes of humanity. John described Jesus as the Son of God—God's personal representative on earth.

Matthew's Gospel is still different from the others. The placement of Matthew as the first Book of the New Testament is appropriate. He is the logical "bridge" between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Even though he wrote for a Jewish audience, he did not tell the Jews what they wanted to hear. He presented Jesus as the *king* of Israel, the long-awaited Messiah. And it is Matthew's Gospel that provides the narrative illustrating the *kingly nature* of the "Branch."

The Branch

The word 'branch' or 'sprout' is used in the Scriptures to show vitality, prosperity, or descendents. Consider these words from the Prophet Isaiah: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him."—Isa. 11:1,2

David was a descendant of Jesse, and was revered by the Jews. But as time passed, David's royal house dried up. It became like the stump of a nearly dead tree. Isaiah prophesied

that out of the "root" would come a Branch, and this "Branch" would be glorious. Among other things, the "Branch" would "slay the wicked" (vs. 4), which to the Jews meant Israel's enemies.

It is interesting to trace the use of the title 'Branch' in the Scriptures. There are four prophecies that characterize this Branch from four different viewpoints. Each seems to be descriptive of one particular Gospel. Jeremiah's characterization of the Branch is descriptive of Matthew: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a **king** shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."—Jer. 23:5

The context of this prophecy shows that the word Branch is a title of someone to come, and this 'someone' is a king. When Matthew wrote his Gospel, his objective was to show that the lawful heir to David's throne had arrived, the one who should be accepted as king.

The Branch as spoken of in Zechariah describes Mark's Gospel: "Behold, I will bring forth my **servant**, the BRANCH." (Zech. 3:8) In Mark's presentation Jesus is shown to be the perfect **servant** of God.

"Behold the **man** whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD." (Zech. 6:12) Luke's Gospel showed Jesus as the **perfect man**. Luke described the perfect humanity of our Master and emphasized his love for all mankind, especially the despised elements of Jewish society.

"In that day shall the Branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious." (Isa. 4:2) "O Zion, . . . O Jerusalem, . . . lift up thy voice with strength; . . . say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" (Isa. 40:9) This describes John's Gospel, where Jesus is shown as God's **personal representative** on earth. It is not, "Behold the man!" in John's Gospel. It is, "Behold your **God!**"

The Gospels

The first four Books of the New Testament are all called Gospels. The Greek word *evangelion*, translated 'gospel', means 'good news' or 'glad tidings'. But the English word gospel started out as *God's spel*. (*Spel* is Old English for 'word' or 'discourse'.) Thus the first four Books of the New Testament represent 'God's Word' for us, as communicated by his only begotten Son. That is why they are so important to Christians everywhere.

Jesus as King

Matthew wanted to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, the long-promised king of Israel. How could he make a convincing case? He did it in the same way anyone would who is trying to convince others that a Biblical point of view is correct—he would quote from the Scriptures.

Matthew quoted 54 scriptures from the Old Testament—more than twice the number of any other Gospel writer. There are 22 quotations which are found in his Gospel, and *only* in his Gospel. Here are a few:

"All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the LORD by the Prophet [Isaiah], saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel."—Matt. 1:22,23

"Thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem . . . out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel."—Matt. 2:5,6

"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son."—Matt. 2:15

"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."—Matt. 8:17

"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret."—Matt. 13:35

"All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass."—Matt. 21:4,5

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver."—Matt. 27:9

"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots."—Matt. 27:35

Notice the constant repetition of the phrase, "that it might be fulfilled." Matthew was establishing the evidence that Jesus Christ was the one predicted in the Scriptures.

Matthew quoted one Old Testament text that presents a problem: "He [Jesus] came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." (Matt. 2:23) But there is no Old Testament prophecy that says this directly. However, because Nazareth means 'branch town', perhaps Matthew is drawing attention to the Branch, as mentioned in Isaiah 11:1.

On six occasions Matthew quoted Jesus as he reminded his audience that they surely must have read a particular text in their sacred Scriptures. He did this more than the other three Gospel writers combined, probably because his audience was predisposed to believe what was written in their Bible. Here is one example: "He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read that he [God] which made them at the beginning made them male and female?" (Matt. 19:4) Clearly Jesus believed our first parents were created. Those who believe that human beings came into existence through a process of evolution do not agree with our Lord.

Jesus Christ

Matthew opened his Gospel with these words: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." (Matt. 1:1) The word *Messiah* in the New Testament is simply a transliteration into Greek of the Hebrew word

Messiah. A transliteration conveys the sounds of the foreign word, not its meaning. The word *perestroika* is an example of a Russian word originally written in the Cyrillic alphabet, that has been transliterated into English letters to convey the original sound of the word.

In Hebrew, the word **Messiah** means 'anointed'. In a transliterated form, the word **Messiah** is found only twice, and only in the Gospel of John. The word **Christ** is a Greek translation of the Hebrew word **Messiah**. There would be less confusion for English readers if the word always appeared as **Messiah**. **Jesus** is the equivalent Greek word to the Hebrew **Joshua**, and means 'the salvation of Jehovah'. Thus Matthew introduced his subject as: Jesus, the **Messiah**.

The word *anointed* is particularly appropriate. In Old Testament times kings and priests were anointed with oil when they were set apart for their office. The oil used for the High Priest was so special that no one could make it, or use it inappropriately for any other than the priesthood, under penalty of death. (Exod. 30:32,33) To anoint means to 'consecrate'.

Matthew mentioned the "son of David," even before he spoke of Abraham, because he wanted his readers to see Jesus as the heir of David—the prophetic Branch. Jesus was the one who prophetically fulfilled what God had said to David through the Prophet Nathan: "Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, [and] I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. . . . And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever."—II Sam. 7:12,16

Matthew traces Jesus' genealogy from Abraham to Joseph—his mother's husband. Why was Joseph important genealogically? It was a question of legality. Because Joseph was Mary's husband, Jesus was legally considered his son. Jesus was thus a son of David in the eyes of Jewish law.

In his genealogy of Jesus, Matthew added the words "the king" (vs. 6), when he mentioned David. These words are of

particular note, because with them he intended to show Jesus as the king, the rightful descendant of David's royal house. He used the expression, 'son of David' as a title for Jesus in his very first verse, and eight other times in his Gospel. We quote one concerning the time when Jesus was presented to the people as king: "The multitudes that went before and that followed cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD; Hosanna in the highest."—Matt. 21:9

The words shouted by the people had been taken from Psalm 118:25,26. The word *hosanna* is a Hebrew one, and has been transliterated into Greek. Even though many commentators consider it a cry of praise, the word, in fact, is a cry for help. The original psalm reads: "Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD."—Ps. 118:25,26

Hosanna is a pleading cry for help. It may be considered a one-word prayer. And the petition is that the "son of David," and the "Most High" will come and save. We may thus properly read the Matthew text this way: "Save, please, O son of David. Blessed in the name of the LORD is he who comes. Save, please, O Most High."

The Sermon on the Mount

There are five great discourses by Jesus in the Book of Matthew. The longest, continuing from Chapter 5 through Chapter 7, is familiarly called, the Sermon on the Mount. Although a portion of it is contained in Luke, nearly seventy percent of the record is unique to Matthew. This beautiful sermon begins with the Beatitudes, which are thought by some to be the entire Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said, "Blessed are . . . ," nine times. The Greek word means, 'supremely blessed, by extension, fortunate,' (*Strong's Concordance*).

People consider the beatitudes to be overly passive or mild, because they commend those who are 'poor in spirit', who 'mourn', who are 'meek', 'merciful', 'peacemakers'. But would

we prefer to keep company with those of an opposite temper?—those who are proud; or the light-hearted bent only on pleasure; greedy aggressors; or those who persecute others? The beatitudes are not at all 'weak'. They are far superior to, and stronger than, most principles taught of men. We could never point to a stronger man than Christ, who fulfilled all of them in his life. We are expected to do the same since we are attempting to walk in his footsteps.

The next 30 verses in Matthew, Chapter 5, are not found in any other Gospel. In them Jesus spoke about the moral life of the Christian community, and specifically emphasized to his readers that the righteousness of Christians must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. Because he wrote for a Jewish audience, Matthew included these words of Jesus: "Think not that I came to destroy the Law or the prophets: I came not to destroy but to fulfill."—Matt. 5:17

The Jews were taught to believe that the Law was their basis for a unique relationship with God. Even though they must have been impressed with the miracles of Jesus, they were concerned about what Jesus' power would ultimately mean relative to their Law. Jesus told them that he was there to give the Law a new meaning, one that God had always intended it to have. But the majority simply could not accept this statement.

Their strong commitment to their Law caused them to stumble. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the Law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone." (Rom. 9:31,32) Thus we see how something good can be at odds with something better. The Law was good, but it was not good enough to provide justification, to make men right with God. Jesus brought the 'something better', but most could not accept it.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus spoke about various subjects. Included were: What will happen to those who are angry at their brethren? What to do about offenses caused by

a 'right eye' or a 'right hand'. He expanded various Old Testament laws to apply to Christians; he taught the 'Lord's Prayer'; he talked about laying up treasure in heaven; He gave us the 'Golden Rule'. He spoke about the 'narrow way', and how we must *do* God's commandments, not just *hear* them. At the close of the Sermon on the Mount we read: "It came to pass, when Jesus ended these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes."—Matt. 7:28,29

Adam Clarke, a noted 19th century Bible scholar, wrote: "So ends a sermon, the most strict, pure, holy, profound, and sublime as ever delivered to man; yet so amazingly simple is the whole that almost a child may understand it."

The Gentiles

We would not expect Matthew to speak about the Gentiles, since he was writing to Jewish readers. But still he did not tell the Jews what they wanted to hear. Like the other Gospel writers, Matthew did indeed show that "the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind," as the poet wrote. His Gospel contains strong warnings against blind trust that having descended from Abraham means automatic acceptance with God. "I say unto you that **many** [not only Jews] shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. 8:11

Some might interpret this to mean only those of the Jewish community will "sit down." But there is no misunderstanding his words at the very end of his Gospel: "Go ye therefore and teach **all** nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."—Matt. 28:19

Concluding Thoughts

The Gospel of Matthew has been one of the best loved Books of the New Testament from the very beginning of the Christian experience. Some have called it the "first among equals," when comparing it to the other three Gospels. It contains a large number of memorable verses. In this Gospel rec

ord Jesus is portrayed as a *king*, the long-awaited Messiah. Matthew proved his thesis by constantly quoting from the Old Testament, many more times than the other Gospel writers.

Jesus was the fulfillment of the Law. In the Sermon on the Mount he gave his followers a new law, one that transcended the letter of the Old Law, and one which embodied the spirit of the Gospel Age. He taught that anyone could enter into a relationship with the Heavenly Father through faith in Jesus. This was more than most Jews could do.

There is, perhaps, no greater contrast between human philosophies and the teachings of Christ than these words: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."—Matt. 11:28-30

Those who have accepted this gracious invitation will say in their hearts, "Amen!" □

The Passing of the Year

Look not with sadness on the passing of the year,
Behold it as you would a sunset glow
That streaks the sky with red and gold 'ere night descends
To say, "Fair day, 'tis time for you to go."

Regrets will come, for resolutions oft we break.
The unsaid word, the duty never done.
Lessons, oh, so hard to take and understand—
Ah! But have you counted victories won?

So greet the New Year coming in with upturned face.
Upon the ladder-rung we can't stand still
But must climb upward, step by step to reach our goal,
And thus our fondest hopes we shall fulfill.

THE GOLDEN THREAD SERIES —PART 12

Moses' Story

THE PHARAOH WHO had exalted Joseph to such a high position in the government—exceeded only in power by the king—had died. “There arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.” (Exodus 1:8) This new pharaoh became greatly concerned about the Israelites and said to his council, “Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.”—Exodus 1:9,10

The Israelites, by this time in history, had been made slaves to the people of Egypt. They were useful to Pharaoh as well as other powerful and rich men in Egypt, adding to their wealth by their excellent, industrious work as slave laborers. They were used to build Egypt's celebrated treasure cities, including Pithom and Rameses, which are famous even today. They were used as slave labor to grow and harvest crops, or to make bricks for the building of the magnificent Egyptian cities.



When the Israelites became a real and severe threat to Egypt because of their sheer numbers, Pharaoh decided that even sterner measures must be taken. If they became too numerous, they could revolt against the government, and successfully overthrow it. Or if another country should threaten invasion of Egypt, the Israelites could join with that country and easily conquer it. And so the cruel taskmasters made certain that Pharaoh's orders were carried out to increase the amount and the difficulty of the work placed upon the Jews. By doing so, their lives became bitter, and without joy—they were weary, beaten down, and forlorn—without hope.

As if this were not enough injury to the Israelites, Pharaoh commanded that all male babies should be killed at the very moment of birth. This action, if continued for a generation, would effectively eliminate the entire race of Israelites. But the midwives refused to obey this terrible order, and when Pharaoh called for them and demanded to know why his instructions were disobeyed, they told him that the Hebrew women were very strong and healthy—they delivered their babies before the midwives could arrive to help them.

Still Pharaoh did not relent or take pity on the babes. This time he directly ordered the Israelites, saying, "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive." If they failed to do this, it meant that it was legal for an Egyptian to seize a Hebrew male child at any time and any place, and to drown him in the river.—Exodus 1:15-22

It was under such dreadful circumstances that Moses was born. His mother and father were Hebrews of the tribe of Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, and a priestly line. Moses was a beautiful, healthy little baby boy; his mother carefully hid him until he was three months old. Then, realizing she could not continue to do this, she wove a little basket-like boat out of bulrushes, made it watertight and comfortable, placed the baby gently in it, and floated it in the reeds close to the river's edge. She gave Moses' older sister, Miriam, the responsibility of watching to see what would happen to her baby brother.—Exodus 2:1-4

It was not long before Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe in the river, as was her custom. Surely Moses' mother chose that particular place for this very reason! The princess' curiosity was aroused when she saw the little ark floating in the busrushes, and "she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept."

She was well aware of her father's brutal order for the little sons of the Hebrews to be put to death, but immediately her heart went out to this tiny, helpless infant. When Miriam realized this, she went closer and asked, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" And Pharaoh's daughter answered, "Go." And so Miriam told her mother what had happened, and then she took her to talk with Pharaoh's daughter. The princess said to her, "Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."

It was in this marvelous way that Moses' own mother took him safely back home, nursed him, and raised him herself, having many years of opportunity to teach him about his heritage as a Hebrew, and what she knew of the great God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Exodus 2:5-9) How amazing are the providences of God!

Because of this unique arrangement, Moses grew up under the protection of the Egyptian government. At first his mother cared for him in her own home, but when he was older he was taken back to the princess in the palace of the Pharaoh, and she adopted him as her own son. She called him Moses, which means 'drawn out', because she had drawn him out of the water. He became learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. (Acts 7:22) But while his mother had cared for him, Moses learned that he was not an Egyptian. She taught him about the promises of God to the Israelites, including those promises of freedom from Egyptian enslavement.

We will see next how the golden thread of God's promise to deliver all mankind from death was pictured by the deliverance

of his people from slavery in Egypt, and how God used Moses as his chosen instrument for their miraculous deliverance!

QUESTIONS

1. Why did the Egyptians make slaves of the Hebrews?
2. Were the Egyptians kind to their slaves?
3. What order did Pharaoh give concerning the Hebrew's boy babies?
4. What did Moses' mother do to avoid having him put to death? How did her plan work out?
5. Who gave Moses his name, and what does the name 'Moses' mean?
6. What two different kinds and sources of education did Moses receive?

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“If It Be So”

IN 606 B.C. King Nebuchadnezzar took the children of Israel captive to Babylon. Among these captives were three young Hebrews who were given the Chaldean names Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. In addition to these three young Hebrews there was also Daniel, who became one of God's outstanding prophets. All four of these young Hebrews were given special training by the king's servants, and when Daniel was able to tell Nebuchadnezzar about his dream in which he saw the great human-like image, and interpret it for him, the king gave him a high position in the government.

Daniel seized the opportunity to request from the king that his three friends be given suitable positions in the government, to which Nebuchadnezzar agreed. Later Nebuchadnezzar erected a great golden image, and directed that all the officials in his government attend the dedication of this image. This, of course, included the three young Hebrews. It was further commanded that upon a certain signal played on musical instruments, all should bow down and worship this image.

The three young Hebrews properly concluded that this would be equivalent to worshipping a false god; that it would be idolatry, which was forbidden by the Law of their God. So when the signal was given they did not bow down before the image. This information was communicated to Nebuchadnezzar, and the three young men were brought before the king. The king decided to give them another chance, and told them, “Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same

hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"—Dan. 3:15

With resolution, the three young Hebrew men replied, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." (vss. 17,18) Here we have a remarkable display of faith, a faith that was based upon the promises of God.

The Resurrection Hope

The Apostle Paul indicated in Acts 24:14,15, that in the Law and by the prophets it was taught that there would be "a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." The three young Hebrews who refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's image were undoubtedly of the 'just' class, and would know about God's promises of a "better resurrection" for the faithful of Israel. Their faith meant, then, that if the God of Israel did not see best to deliver them at that time from the fiery furnace, he would surely deliver them from captivity in death in his own due time; hence their willingness to defy the king and rely upon the wisdom and love of God to deal with them as seemed good in his sight.

This was proper reasoning. Centuries later the Apostle Paul wrote, "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life *only* we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."—I Cor. 15:16-19



The Ancient Worthy class, of which Daniel and the three Hebrews were a part, did not understand fully the loving arrangement through the redemptive work of Christ whereby the dead would be restored to life. But the evidence is that they did have a hope of the resurrection, and it was this that made much of the difference in the manner in which they served God. Those who did not exercise faith in God's promises, readily drifted away into idolatry and into other sins. Such would have had no scruples against bowing down to the great image which Nebuchadnezzar set up.

We Are Also Tested

The example of the three Hebrews is a meaningful one to us who have covenanted to do the Heavenly Father's will. We have many assurances in the Word that our God is able to care for us in every time of need. With these assurances we should be able to meet the tests of faith and obedience which his wisdom may permit to come upon us. A crisis in our lives as Christians may be a temptation from the Adversary, but God permits it as a test of our fidelity to him.

And these tests come to us in many ways. Often small things are involved, and we find ourselves confronted with a decision as to whether we will follow the course of righteousness set forth in the Word of God, or whether we will take the easier way—the way, perhaps, of less sacrifice which would be more pleasing to the flesh. We know that if we choose the LORD's way he is able to overrule to his own glory, and to our deliverance from the trial, if it be his will to do so.

But our decisions as followers of the Master must be based, not on the expectation that if we choose the hard way the LORD will lift the burden, but on what we believe the LORD wants us to do, regardless of what the outcome may be so far as our own immediate circumstances are concerned. True, we should always keep in mind, as the three Hebrews did, that our God is able to deliver us, and that he will deliver us in his own due time, even if that due time is not until our resurrection.

"But If Not"

Another meaningful statement in the reply of the three Hebrews to Nebuchadnezzar is contained in the three words, "but if not." They were not sure whether it was God's will to deliver them from the fiery furnace. But even so, they did not intend to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's image, for, they continued, "be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."—vs. 18

We are also given two viewpoints when confronted by tests of faith. The one is, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us." The other, "But if not" we will not serve other gods—neither the world, the flesh, nor the Devil. The three Hebrews knew that God would deliver them out of the hand of the king, but just how or when, they did not know. So with us, we are assured of ultimate deliverance into the kingdom, but just what the LORD's providence may be in the meantime, we do not know; it is a matter of faith.

Three Hebrews Delivered

As it resulted for the three Hebrews, God permitted them to be cast into the burning fiery furnace, although they were so fully protected that the flames did not hurt them. When the king investigated he discovered that instead of there being three in the fiery furnace there were four! The fourth was "like the Son of God." In other words, while the LORD permitted these faithful servants to pass through this "fiery trial," his presence was with them and they were not injured. The fire had no power upon their bodies, "nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed." They did not even have the smell of fire on them!

The Apostle Paul wrote that it was through their faith that these Hebrews "quenched the violence of fire." (Heb. 11:34) Upon the basis of faith we, too, can pass through our trials unscathed. God is dealing with us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. We know that our ultimate deliverance will be into the everlasting kingdom of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ. We

know that this deliverance will mean the death of the flesh and all its interests. So regardless of what happens to our flesh, we know that the LORD is looking out for our New Creatures.

We have Jesus as our example. God permitted his enemies to put him to death. But Jesus, as a New Creature, came through his 'fiery furnace' uninjured, with not so much as the smell of smoke upon him! And so it will be with us. Our faith can quench the violence of fire also, even a fire which may destroy our flesh. But the violence of our trials will not harm us as New Creatures, and we will know that through them all our Heavenly Father's presence is with us by his Holy Spirit, and by all the other means of grace which he is pleased to use in his love and mercy. □

1991 Memorial Supper Date

THE PROPER TIME for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 p.m., on Thursday, March 28, 1991.

We have a complete Memorial Service available for isolated brethren, or for any who care to have it, on both audio and video cassette. The audio cassette service can be purchased for \$3.00, or is available free of charge on loan from:

**Dawn Recorded Lecture Service
199 Railroad Avenue,
East Rutherford, NJ 07073.**

The video cassette service can be purchased for \$6.00, and is also available free on loan. Send your request to:

**Dawn Video Cassette Service
P.O. Box 435
North Hollywood, CA 91617**

The 1991 General Convention

THE 1991 GENERAL CONVENTION is to be held July 27th through August 1st.

At the most recent meeting of the General Convention Committee it was decided that Hope College in Holland, Michigan—which is near Grand Rapids—was our best prospect as a site for the General Convention in 1991. All but one of the committee members had previously visited this college and were impressed with its facilities and appointments. Hope is a warm and friendly place, not too large, but very adequate for our convention needs. The chapel, which seats about one thousand, is cathedral-like in structure, with large stained glass windows. It is not air-conditioned, but has ceiling fans. A pipe organ occupies the rear balcony overlooking the rows of bench type seats similar to those at Albion College. There are many auxiliary rooms on the lower level which are more than adequate for young people's classes, recording areas, nursery rooms, a book-table, and other uses.

Should the weather be hot, an alternate room, which is air-conditioned and has a capacity of three hundred and fifty, could be used for our assembly during the latter days of the week. This is located in the same building as the cafeteria, and some of the dormitories. The dining room is a delightful, air-conditioned room, which overlooks a beautiful campus area through expansive ground-level windows. About six hundred people can be served at one time, with a choice of food which offers good variety and no limits on servings.

Most of the dormitories are corridor style; all are exceptionally clean and comfortable, with bedding and linens supplied by the college.

Fine athletic facilities are available to us, including inside basketball courts, a running track, and an olympic-size swimming pool, housed in a beautiful gymnasium.

For those wishing to stay off-campus there are many fine motels within a radius of two or three miles from the college. Also there are RV camping areas nearby. Shopping at the downtown mall is within a short walking distance of the campus, and there are some scenic attractions in the Holland area.

The subsidized prices, which have not yet been finalized, will be in the range of \$130.00 to \$135.00 for the weekly 6-day, 7-night package for room and board, with proportionate pro-rata amounts on a per-day basis. More detailed information will be forthcoming in later issues of *The Dawn* magazine.

If you have special needs or should desire to know more about the college facilities at this time, we suggest that you talk with someone on the committee. The committee chairman is Walter Blicharz, whose telephone number is (313) 642-1553.

The reservation form and convention program will appear in future issues of *The Dawn*. □

A New Year



A New Year dawns to mark for us
The measured beat of time,
An opportunity is thus
Extended thee and thine.

What will we do, what will we be
In the new year ahead?
What growth and progress shall we see
As upward we do tread?

God grant that as the sands of time
Run low within our glass,
Our faith and hope and love sublime
Shall bring His will to pass.

Full of Zeal

Dear Brethren: Greetings in the Savior's name! Thank you so much for entrusting me with the work of presenting the TV programs on the cable access in St. Paul, Minnesota. These programs seem to be pretty good quality—better than the other programs shown on this channel. I had gone to the convention in Chicago during the New Year's weekend, and I found it very spiritually uplifting and full of interesting material that gave me more Biblical knowledge.

I guess by now you are probably wondering how a person such as myself has a high amount of zeal and eagerness to serve our Heavenly Father. Since I was a child I was a very spiritually-minded person and was brought up in religious schools and eventually a religious seminary for two years. I left the seminary because they didn't teach the Bible, but only biology and evolution. I became broken-

hearted because they felt the study of man-made sciences more important [such as psychology] than teaching the Gospel of Christ.

I became a sinful person after this because I felt there was no God. I joined the Marine Corps and spent a total of eight years in the Service and I got out a Staff Sergeant.

One day after I had gotten out, a gentleman knocked on my door and asked me if I wanted a Bible study and I said, "Okay." The next day a couple came over to my house and we began studying for about a year. I began reading a lot of their old books and found that their doctrine kept changing throughout the years, and there appeared to be a false sense of security that held them together. I dropped out because I found that they relied heavily on mind control techniques which I am very familiar with [army], and they demanded blind obedience and total submission to the organization.

After this I began an investigation of different religions and most of them concentrated heavily on certain parts of the Bible, while ignoring others. During this time they were twisting my wife's mind and creating barriers between me and her.

This went on for years until we moved to Minnesota. There was a church down the street from us, and I called the pastor and he provided me with a lot of different books exposing the constant changing doctrines [of my former religion], and exposed a lot of problems this sect were having. There was even a movie which exposed a lot of their false doctrine. It very briefly showed Pastor Russell and his pyramid prophecies without saying anything bad about him. Another book he gave me mentioned the Dawn Bible Students, saying that they were very nice people and agreed that everyone would be given a second chance.

I went back to the seminary and checked out two books: "***The Divine Plan of the Ages***," which I felt had been

written for me—it answered every question I had on the Bible and it convinced me that God is truly a God of love. The second book was entitled: "***Thy Kingdom Come***." It amazed me at the knowledge and important scientific data and testimony of the stone witness. I called the Dawn Bible Students after reading these two books. They sent me a catalog, and the booklet, "***When Pastor Russell Died***," which explained the reason the earlier Bible Students [I had met with] were so devoted to spreading the message of a loving God—out of the love in their hearts for their fellow man. After reading these materials I became truly convinced that Pastor Russell was indeed that "wise and faithful servant providing meat in due season." [Matt. 24: 45] It's such a wonderful message I can see how it could warm the hearts of atheists!

I realize I have a lot to learn compared to members who have been [studying] for 20, 30, even 60 years! But I will devote all my free time to studying all six volumes plus

some of the other books I have ordered and received. This is the message of a loving God that I have waited for all my life. It has truly warmed my heart and set aside all doubts I've ever had about our loving Creator. I don't know how to thank you for all your help.

These Bible truths that I have learned so far have been like what Jesus said in Matthew 7:25,26 where the wise man built his house on rock and when the rains came and also a flood, and the winds blew and the house did not fall, for it was built on solid rock. In the same way what I have been learning is built on a solid rock and no matter how many other different teachings there are of other religions they can not destroy my house for it is built on solid rock! Yours in service to the LORD.—MN□

Captivated

Dear "Frank and Ernest": I used to listen to you for many years. Somehow I found you again on WOR. My wife was captivated with your definition of the Lord's Prayer, so please send me 2

copies of "*How God Answers Prayer.*" Sincerely in faith.—NY

Question Answered

Dear Frank and Ernest: I would like to ask you a question: Will there be any that live thru Armageddon? Don't all have to die to be acquitted of the Adamic sin?—WA

ANSWER—"This subject is fully covered in the booklet "*Armageddon Then World Peace.*"—Editor

Life Is Better

Dear Dawn: Please send me 2 copies of the "*Daily Heavenly Manna*" book. I want to give one to a dear friend of mine. We have taken *The Dawn* for years and really receive many blessings reading it each month. We also read the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*. We truly believe what you have written on back of *The Dawn*. [To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach]. My life has been so much better since making my consecration and doing my best to do the LORD's will instead of mine. So we pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done"

here on the earth, as it is in heaven! Keep up the wonderful work.—MO

Missing the Fellowship

Dear Brethren: Greetings in His dear name! I would like you to start sending me your tapes again [Recorded Lecture Service Tape Library] as I am so lonely for the fellowship of the brethren. God bless you for your loving work. Your sister in Christ—CA.

Studying the Bible More

Dear Dawn: Please send me volume four of "Studies in the Scriptures," ***The Battle of Armageddon***, plus the Question Book for volume 1, ***The Divine Plan of the Ages***. Your books are helping me to appreciate more and more Jehovah's grand plan. I am studying the Bible more and I am learning a lot. Thank you for introducing me to your magazine.—MI

A Wonderful Time

Dawn Bible Students: Thank you for sending the tape, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." It is very good. It will be a wonderful time when all

sin, sickness and death are gone from this earth. May God bless you and your work. Thank you so very much. A friend in Christ.—OH

Witnessing to Family

Dear Friend in Christ: I returned VC-27, "How God Answers Prayer—God's Judgment Day." Now I want to order the last tape received, "King of Kings"—D3. Enclosed is \$30.00 for the five tapes. I can use this one to witness to my family and others. How precious is God's love and message to us. Ever grateful for your service. Love in Christ.—CO

Witnessing at Sea

Dear Brother "Frank": Being a Christian and a Seaman by profession, I was blessed this evening in following your radio program, "What is Wrong with the World?" particularly on the topic, ***God and Reason***. I monitored it from London, while loading ship's cargo alongside a Rotterdam jetty. I would be very thankful if you can further supply me on the above subject by mail if possible. I