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November 2010



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Being Thankful

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”
—*Psalms 100:4,5*

EACH YEAR IN THE UNITED

States, many Christian people observe a national day of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving Day had its roots with the early settlers of New England, and it occurred after the annual harvest time of fruits and vegetables for which they gave thanks to God. Many changes have taken place since that time and the true significance of that occasion has been generally lost, but the custom has continued until our present time. This year families and friends will gather together to celebrate this special day on Thursday, November 25th.

THE SPIRIT OF THANKSGIVING

A day of thanksgiving is a time to remember our loving Heavenly Father to whom we owe our very existence, and who continues to provide for our daily needs. For this, we turn our attention to the wonderful words and spirit of the psalmist in our featured scripture—‘Enter into his gates with

thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.'

The spirit of thanksgiving is that which encourages us to appreciate all that God has done for us. As his children, we thank him for giving us the Truth by which we are enlightened to his plans and purposes. We realize our own unworthiness of the countless blessings that he has bestowed upon us. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. 5:8-10) "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."—I Cor. 1:30,31

GOD'S GOODNESS MANIFEST

The Apostle Peter explained that our Lord Jesus was God's wonderful gift to his sin-sick and dying human creation. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (I Pet. 3:18) God continually provides for mankind, yet as a whole they are in rebellion against him and his authority.

The natural world with all of its varied beauties is seen by the majority of people as the handiwork of a loving and wise Creator. He has given his human family many rich gifts that we may enjoy in

our everyday lives. However, this realization appeals not only to the physical and mental faculties, but we also learn to appreciate the abundant spiritual blessings that he has given to us in his Holy Scriptures. In proportion as we study his wonderful word of Truth and seek to attain understanding, so also does the Holy Spirit more richly abound in us in the development of the New Creature in Christ Jesus, and our walk with him in newness of life. Thus does the child of God grow in the spirit of love, appreciation, and thanksgiving.

EVERY GOOD GIFT

Our Heavenly Father was responsible for our birth through the arrangements of his wonderful providence in nature. As we develop a more meaningful spiritual relationship with him, we grow in knowledge and grace. However, we also realize our insufficiency and dependence upon him—his love and mercy. Only after we have been for a considerable length of time in the narrow way can we comprehend the full force of the apostle's words, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."—James 1:17,18

It is important that we go often to our Father in prayer and supplication as his child. We may do so with the knowledge that he delights to give us his blessings. By his leading hand he has promised to guide us along the various steps of our Christian walk. His marvelous love and grace toward us is

thus manifest—“For in him we live, and move, and have our being.”—Acts 17:28

Those whose minds have been enlightened to the wonderful works of God see his riches of grace more each day and have many causes for thankfulness that many others may not have. They have come into a very close and precious relationship with the Lord, and know that all things are overruled for their spiritual welfare by a loving God. This is in accordance with the words of the psalmist, who wrote, “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”—Ps. 91:1

IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS

The Apostle Paul admonished, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (I Thess. 5:18) Those who have given their lives in consecration to God and the doing of his will, and have accepted our Lord Jesus as their Head, consider every day as a time for giving thanks. Thus the child of God rejoices with gratitude and thankfulness in serving our loving Heavenly Father daily and in every situation of life.

Every experience of life, whether it is one of joy or sorrow, is an occasion for thankfulness. It means being willing to have the Lord’s will cost us something, knowing that in giving ourselves to the divine service, the greater our joy will be. It has been said that the deepest shades of sorrow may yield the richest fruitage of peace and joy in the Lord. Sorrow and trial may elicit a greater degree of thankfulness than may be true with more pleasant experiences. For example, some of the Lord’s people may

have been bedridden for years with a debilitating disease, yet they appreciate God's grace in their spiritual life more fully than others who have not undergone such an experience. Their trial has caused them to depend upon the Lord, and this has caused them to live closer to him, being ever conscious of their dependence upon him.

A THANKFUL HEART

We are inspired by the zeal and determination shown by the Apostle Paul, when he wrote, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 8:38,39

Many of God's servants of the past were men who endured great hardship, but their hearts were filled with thankfulness. This was especially true in the spiritual life of the great Apostle Paul. He proclaimed, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."—II Cor. 4:7-11

Few of the Lord's people have suffered more for the Truth than Paul, but there is no indication of

complaint in his writings that form a major part of the New Testament scriptures. Further, in his letter to the brethren at Corinth, he explained, “Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”—vss. 14-18

The apostle readily accepted his commission in the service of the Lord. However, this service brought him almost continuous suffering and trial, oftentimes nearly costing him his life. Yet he did not waver in his commitment, and continued serving the Truth and the brethren with his heart filled with devotion to God. He had the assurance that these ‘light afflictions’ which he said were only for a moment in time were preparing him for an abundant entrance into Christ’s glorious kingdom to which he had been invited to have a special part.

UNTIRING ZEAL

Because of his untiring zeal in preaching the Truth and assisting the Lord’s people to greater faithfulness, the Apostle Paul was taken prisoner to Rome. While in bondage, he wrote an epistle that has been a source of blessing and encouragement

to the Lord's consecrated people throughout this present Gospel Age. He said these comforting words, "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth."—Col. 1:2-6

We note that the apostle's letter was addressed specifically 'to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse.' This reflects the apostle's sincere desire for their spiritual growth and development as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, and that they may be built up in the most holy faith. Paul was concerned for the spiritual well-being of these brethren although he had never met them personally. He had learned of them through the ministry of Epaphras. "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."—Col. 1:9,10

Paul hardly mentioned in his letter the fact that he was living in a Roman prison and, no doubt,

enduring trying circumstances at the time. Even in a casual reference, he mentioned it in perspective with the spiritual life of his brethren. He wrote, “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds.” (Col. 4:1-3) Again, in closing his letter he said, “Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.”—vs. 18

ABOUNDING WITH THANKSGIVING

After their having been thoroughly established in the faith, he brought the Colossian brethren’s attention to the importance of giving thanks to the Lord for all of the blessings they had received. Further in his letter, he reminded them, “Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”—Col. 2:5-7

Paul used the tree as an example to frame his inspiring thoughts. The rooting process goes on without any outward manifestation. Yet, a tree that is well rooted cannot be easily uprooted because of its powerful grip upon the soil that has nourished it. “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness,

whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”—Eph. 4:14,15

In the life of the consecrated Christian, the roots of faith reach ever deeper into the wonderful knowledge of God and his ultimate purpose concerning the development of the Christ during this present Gospel Age, and the future recovery of the whole human family from their sin-sick and dying state under the administration of Christ’s kingdom. As the tree develops, so does the mature Christian’s character grow stronger and more visible. In time, it will be manifest by the wonderful fruitage of the Holy Spirit of God.

A SURE FOUNDATION

Those who are privileged to be living during the closing decades of this present Gospel Age have received abundant mercies from our loving Heavenly Father. He has revealed more fully to us the mysteries of Truth that were kept hidden for centuries, and the Lord’s people have been lifted up and established on a blessed and firm foundation in Christ. David expressed his appreciation and thanks to God, when he wrote, “I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.”—Ps. 40:1,2

OUR GOINGS ESTABLISHED

The psalmist said that his prayer had been answered and that he had experienced new hope and understanding in his life. We also learn that God had established his goings. What a wonderful thought,

because we, too, can say that our goings have been established and that we have experienced a newness of life and purpose. Our Lord is the firm foundation upon which each of us has our standing. We have been raised out of the horrible and miry pit of clay, which represents sin, destruction and death, and our feet are now placed upon the solid rock of Christ.

In this beautiful psalm, David further said, “He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.” (vss. 3,4) The Lord has also established our goings, and we too have been given a new song to sing. It is centered in the wonderful promises of God as revealed in the Divine Plan of the Ages.

A NEW SONG

Our firm foundation features the hope of our heavenly calling in Christ Jesus, and the establishment of Christ’s future kingdom of righteousness under which all the families of the earth are to be blessed. “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts [living creatures], and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and

forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”—Rev. 14:1-3

The Apostle Paul experienced this wonderful change in his spiritual life and ministry. He proclaimed, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 3:13,14

OUR BLESSED HOPE

When we learn the true meaning of the song which our loving Heavenly Father has given us to sing, we have much for which we may praise and thank him. If we are abounding therein with thanksgiving, it means that God has taken us into his tender confidence and has revealed some of the hidden treasures of Truth concerning his ultimate plan and purpose for his human creation. Through his Word, we catch a glimpse of his marvelous glory, and see more clearly his abounding love, infinite wisdom, unlimited power, and unswerving justice.

The new song in our mouths grows distinctly more melodious and harmonious as we have opportunity to sing it aloud to others. It becomes more precious as our love for God and his beloved Son becomes more established in our hearts and lives. From the words of the Prophet Isaiah, we read, “Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places

of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”—Isa. 52:8-10

LIFTING UP OUR VOICES

We believe that we are now living in the closing years of this present Gospel Age. As conditions in the world continue to grow more desperate and violent let us take advantage of our great privilege to lift up our voices in proclaiming the long-promised kingdom of Christ soon to be established over the whole earth. Individually and collectively let us hold forth the Word of life to a sin-sick and dying human family that yet awaits the glorious kingdom which we believe is soon at hand.

Let us give our heartfelt praise and abounding thanksgiving to our loving Heavenly Father for all of his benefits and blessings to us. “Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”—Ps. 100:1-5 ■

“Dawn Devotional Radio”

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God is Awesome

Key Verse: “Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.”
—Psalm 66:5

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 66

THE PSALMIST AFFIRMS the grandeur and majesty of the Creator by exhorting all people to honor and praise his mighty name.—Ps. 66:1,2

In our Key Verse, there is an introduction to some of the great works that have occurred under God’s sovereign authority, especially as they pertained to his covenanted people, the nation of Israel.

Gentile nations also were aware of the Heavenly Father’s providence concerning the Jews, as attested by the words of Rahab the harlot prior to Joshua’s conquest of Jericho.

“She said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven.”—Josh. 2:9-11; Ps. 66:6,7

The psalmist again calls upon the nations to reverence God for all that he had done to preserve Israel

while also reminding the Jews that he had brought various disciplines and chastisements upon the people though he had not abandoned Israel, but brought them into a greater blessing as an evidence of his special favor toward them. "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved. For thou, O God, has proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. . . . We went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."—vss. 8-12

Although this psalm relates primarily to God's dealings with his ancient people Israel, the lessons it contains have a much wider prophetic application. Gospel Age followers of Christ may well take comfort from the faithfulness of God in delivering them from the condemnation that fell upon the human race because of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."—Rom. 8:1

Thus, despite the fact that the faithful footstep followers of Jesus have endured opposition and persecution throughout their Christian sojourn, there have been given exceeding great and precious promises to God's spiritual children. The end result of their fidelity and development of the fruit and graces of the Spirit will merit for them an everlasting inheritance into the "kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." This grand reward is also described as a "crown of righteousness" that will be reserved for all the saints whose lives demonstrate their supreme love for God and obedience to the principles of holy and sacrificial living during this present age.—II Pet. 1:4-11; II Tim. 4:7,8

It will be then, under the administration of a righteous government by Christ and his church, that all will truly praise God and worship him in spirit and in truth. ■

God is Forever

Key Verse: *“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”*
—Psalm 90:2

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 90

THIS INSPIRED PSALM, although possibly drawn from Israel’s wilderness experiences, commences with a sense of trust and security that believers throughout human history realize under God’s protective care.—Ps. 90:1

Our Key Verse declares the Heavenly Father is without beginning or end and, as the intelligent first cause of all creation, he is unchangeable and worthy of supreme honor and

reverence.

“Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.”—vss. 3-5

The foregoing verses affirm important Biblical teachings, some of which have been misunderstood through the ages, including death as a condition of peaceful unconsciousness resulting from the disobedience of father Adam.

“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off,

and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”—vss. 10-12

Human life is very brief when compared to God’s eternal existence. Such being the case, it is wise for mankind to strive to practice godly principles during his earthly sojourn so that he will be less defiled when awakened from the tomb.

We are assured that the human family will rise from the dead during God’s kingdom. “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth.” (John 5:28,29, *New American Standard Bible*) Since it is God’s intent that all people should be saved from death and come to a knowledge of the truth (I Tim. 2:3,4), this period will provide a favorable opportunity for all to repent of their sins and come into harmony with the divine law. “The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”—Isa. 35:10

Since Jesus’ death and resurrection, believers have received an invitation to participate in a heavenly calling to be joint-heirs with Christ in heaven and to bestow blessings to the human family during God’s kingdom. (Heb. 3:1) By applying the principles of righteousness and sacrificial living, the Lord’s people throughout this Gospel Age have been strengthened by a realization that not only has the Heavenly Father been our strength and fortress but, “If God be for us, who can be against us?”—Rom. 8:31

May we ever realize the import of the Apostle Paul’s counsel—“Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”—Heb. 11:6

■

God Delivers and Protects

Key Verse: *“Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.”*

—*Psalm 91:14*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 91

BELIEVERS WHO RELY

upon God find that he is a shelter from the storms of life and a fortress that provides safety from all enemies that may beset them. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.”—Ps. 91:1,2

“Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.”—vss. 3-6

Satan is represented as the ‘fowler,’ or hunter, in the foregoing verses, desirous of destroying the faith of Christians with his deceptive ways, including the promulgation of false doctrine. Devoted followers of Christ who obey the truths found in God’s Word are promised protection from the many evil influences that abound in the world today.

Lest it is assumed that the thousand or ten thousand who fall were those of the world it should be noted that only those who have a relationship with Christ could fall from divine favor. Thus to fall implies some deficiency in knowledge, character development, or a failure to put on the whole armor of God.—vs. 7

The Heavenly Father also provides divine protection for his children through the use of angels. “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” (Ps. 34:7) Thus, spiritual forces are employed on behalf of the church when necessary to keep them from danger. The angels that protect believers also may be of a symbolic nature in that they may refer to human instrumentalities, or faithful leaders in the church, whose teachings and example serve to guard the Lord’s flock from danger and keep them from falling.—Ps. 91:11

At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness to apply the promise of God’s protection in a literal way by placing himself into danger to see whether God would deliver him in a miraculous manner. Our Lord, however, rebuked the Adversary by stating it would be improper to endeavor to tempt God. (Matt. 4:6,7) Thus, as followers of the Master, we must not recklessly expose ourselves to perilous situations but employ the spirit of a sound mind in all our endeavors and be wise as serpents, yet harmless as doves, trusting God for his overruling providence in our lives.

Our Key Verse expresses God’s great love for the church and reaffirms that our obedience and loyalty to him will result in a grand exaltation to joint-heirship with Christ Jesus in his Messianic Kingdom that will bless mankind.

The special promise to the church of Smyrna is one that should encourage and inspire believers throughout the Gospel Age. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10 ■

God is All-Knowing

Key Verse: *“There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.”*
—*Psalms 139:4*

Selected Scripture:
Psalms 139

off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.”—vss. 2,3

In our Key Verse, David asserts that God knew his thoughts even before he spoke, as well as his disposition of mind. This attribute of the Creator’s omniscience should lead all who reverence the Almighty to contemplate the purest thoughts possible, that they might be most pleasing to the Heavenly Father.

As with other Old Testament admonitions, an awareness by Christians of the manner in which God searches our minds and hearts should make us appreciate the need for entertaining the highest standards of righteousness to remain in the Heavenly Father’s favor.

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul provides us a standard for our thoughts. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any

DAVID, IDENTIFIED AS THE author of this psalm, expresses its overall theme concerning God’s intimate knowledge of every facet of his being. “O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.”—Ps. 139:1

“Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar

praise, think on these things.”—Phil. 4:8

The psalmist declares the futility in trying to escape from God’s presence though even some of his servants have attempted to do so. One such failed attempt relates to Jonah’s disobedience in not heeding the Heavenly Father’s commandment to go and speak against the wickedness of the inhabitants of Nineveh. Instead, Jonah traveled in an opposite direction to Tarshish and was chastised through a series of difficult experiences, including being swallowed by a great fish when the sailors aboard the ship on which he traveled cast the Lord’s prophet overboard into the sea. When subsequently given a second chance to follow God’s command, Jonah then went to Nineveh to fulfill his assigned mission.

“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.”—I Cor. 3:18,19

This passage underscores the limitless knowledge possessed by God and the ineptitude of the human family by comparison. Additionally, we read, “The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.” (II Chron. 16:9) Those followers of Christ who have been spiritually enlightened have been blessed abundantly by realizing his presence and wisdom in guiding their lives.

How wonderful it will be in God’s future kingdom when everyone will acknowledge this simple truth. “They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”—Heb. 8:11,12



The Significance of Baptism

*“I have a baptism
to be baptized
with; and how am I
straitened till it be
accomplished!”*

—*Luke 12:50*

THESE WORDS WERE SPO-ken by our Lord Jesus during his earthly ministry as recorded by Luke, the historian. They emphasize the total commitment, dedication, sacrifice, and zeal that would mark his baptism on behalf of the sin-sick and dying human family. His was the most important life that was ever lived, and through him we learn the true meaning and significance of baptism. It is a fundamental doctrine and one of the most important aspects of our walk of faith with him in newness of life.

BAPTISM

The word ‘baptism’ is only found in the New Testament. It is derived from a Greek word which means ‘to whelm,’ or ‘to completely cover,’ with water. The Master taught us that being immersed in water symbolizes the giving of one’s life to the Heavenly Father in complete consecration. He promised that his true followers were also soon to be blessed with the spirit of enlightenment and

understanding because of their commitment. He explained, “John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”—Acts 1:5, *New American Standard Bible*

‘STRAITENED’

In our featured scripture, Jesus used the word ‘straitened’ which in other translations of the Bible has been rendered ‘pressed, pained or distressed.’ It points to the very narrow and difficult way of his sacrificial life and ministry. Our Lord had come to earth to die for the sins of mankind, and he could not deviate from the Heavenly Father’s ultimate plan and purpose for his sin-sick and dying human creation. The Master was pressed on every side in his dedication to fulfill the will of his Father. He was thus restricted, limited, and confined to the fulfillment of that purpose.

The same word has been translated ‘pressed’ when describing the Apostle Paul’s ministry. We read, “When Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.” (Acts 18:5) The word ‘strait’ was also used by Paul when writing to the church at Philippi. He told them, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.”—Phil. 1:21-24

On another occasion, Jesus used a similar word ‘strait’ which means ‘narrow’ and emphasizes the

narrow way of the Christ. He said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."—Matt. 7:13,14

THE IMMERSER

The scriptural account of Jesus' baptism was recorded in three of the gospels. These accounts were recorded in Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, and Luke 3:21,22. Matthew has included more detail of the event, and we thus turn to his gospel. We read, "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. 3:13-17

The sacred record indicates that John objected to carrying out Jesus' command to be baptized by him. John recognized our Lord's true distinction and prominence as the foretold Messiah and he felt unworthy to baptize the Lord from heaven. Years later, when speaking of Jesus, the Apostle Paul pointed out this distinction. He said, "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless,

undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”—Heb. 7:26

SYMBOLIC

Water baptism was a symbol of Jesus’ consecration unto death. Paul explained, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—Rom. 6:3-11

A HIGHER PRIESTHOOD

Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the priesthood when he became thirty years of age, which was the legal age that a priest could offer sacrifice. “From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation.” (Num. 4:47) The Psalmist David later wrote concerning our Lord

Jesus who would be a high priest of a greater priesthood. Therefore, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."—Ps. 40:6-8

A VOICE FROM HEAVEN

When Jesus was raised up from the water it symbolized his future resurrection from death. The heavens then being opened to him points to the higher spiritual truths that were opened to his understanding. As an emblem of holy peace and salvation, the dove was an outward representation of God's marvelous power as it descended upon him. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:14) The Heavenly Father responded to the Master by imparting his Holy Spirit upon his beloved Son.

From the account, we thus read, "Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. 3:16,17

SACRIFICIAL DEATH

When Jesus was immersed by John the Baptist, it was merely a symbol of his sacrificial life and death. The reality of his new life was shown by a favor that was later asked of him. We read, "Then

came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." (Matt. 20:20,21) Turning to Mark's account, Jesus' question concerning his baptism is more clearly stated. "Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared."—Mark 10:38-40

Thus did Jesus reveal the true nature of his baptism, which at that time had not yet been completed in death. His baptism was a symbol of his burial into sacrificial death, a burial so complete that it ended in the grave. His faithful followers are invited to participate with him in his sacrificial death, which, when faithful, will lead to life on the very highest of all spiritual planes.

Jesus expressed this matter further in a statement he made to Peter. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of

man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”—Matt. 16:24-27

The Master explained this to Peter in response to his suggestion that Jesus was making a mistake in going to Jerusalem where he would expose himself to the danger of being arrested and put to death. His answer shows that, because he had entered into a covenant with God which called for the sacrifice of his life, any drawing back would mean the loss of eternal life because of unfaithfulness. He knew that being faithful to his covenant of sacrifice unto death would mean a raising up to newness of life, even to the divine nature in the first resurrection.

FORESHADOWS

There are many situations and experiences in the Bible that serve as types and illustrations of future events. One of these is the story of Noah and his family. They were brought through the waters of the flood that symbolizes baptism.

The Apostle Peter wrote, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by

the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”—I Pet. 3:18-22

Peter also spoke of the first world that was destroyed, “Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” (II Pet. 3:6) The whole human family was threatened with death by the coming flood waters. However, God warned Noah of the danger, and revealed to him that the way of escape was by means of an ark. Noah obeyed the voice of God, built the ark and entered into it before the waters descended. They were thus saved and brought through to life in the new world.

NOAH’S OBEDIENCE

The true spirit of consecration to do the will of God is thus shown in the readiness of Noah to build the ark and bring all of the animals into it. He also preached righteousness to the unrepentant people of his day. He and his family put their trust in God, and by obeying his instructions they placed their lives wholly in his hands.

The flood waters came as foretold and brought death and destruction to all human flesh, except to Noah and his family. They had passed through the deluge safely. It was a severe experience but, because of their obedience to God’s will, they were brought through the deluge alive and were then used by God to begin a new world.

The Apostle Peter said that the eight people who were safely in the ark had been ‘saved by water.’ He then said that this was a ‘like figure’ of the manner in which baptism now saves us ‘by the

resurrection of Jesus Christ.' The baptism by which we are saved through the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not accomplished by our being merely immersed in water, but by our baptism into his sacrificial death.

The apostle put the matter in proper perspective, when he proclaimed, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—I Pet. 1:3-7

Jesus voluntarily gave his life in sacrifice, but God's promises were made sure and he raised him from the dead. His resurrection inspires in us a hope of life because it gives evidence that if we lay down our lives in conformity to God's will, he also will fulfill his promises to us. We can trust him that we, too, will be raised up to joint-heirship with the Master. This is the real baptism into death, and the subsequent raising up to life in Christ is illustrated by the experience of Noah and his family in being brought safely through the waters of the flood.

THE CLOUD AND SEA

Another illustration of Christian baptism is symbolized by the typical baptism of Moses and the Israelites in the cloud and in the sea. When writing to the brethren at Corinth, the Apostle Paul spoke of this, and said, “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”—I Cor. 10:1-4

The scriptural account shows that the whole nation of Israel became dedicated to God through their leader Moses. They agreed to follow his leadership and join him on an unknown journey. This indicated their acceptance of the will of God as it was to be shown to them through his representative Moses and his leadership on their behalf. Their spirit of consecration was thus confirmed. The firstborn of Israel were in danger of death, but were delivered through the instructions given to them by God.

The entire nation risked their lives by putting themselves in the hands of Moses. The possibility of death became very real when they later stood facing the Red Sea, and with the Egyptian army bringing up the rear determined to capture them and return them to Egypt. However, God gave instructions to his representative. “Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye (Continued on page 35)

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(Continued from page 31) have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”—Exod. 14:13-15

The marvelous power of the Heavenly Father was truly manifest to the people. “The angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.” (vss. 19,20) The sea was divided by the hand of God, the cloud descended upon them, and they passed safely through the waters.

The scriptural record reads, “The children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.”—vss. 29-31

CHRIST OVER HIS OWN HOUSE

The Apostle Paul makes clear the fact that Moses served as an illustration of our Lord Jesus who will deliver mankind from death under the administration of his future kingdom. Israel represents the

whole world of mankind that will be delivered at that time. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."—Heb. 3:1-6

Although all individual Israelites did not enter into a complete dedication of themselves to the Lord, it does not take away from the true significance of the illustration. God was dealing with his people as a nation, and they came under the terms of the original consecration and baptism established at that early time. When John introduced our Lord Jesus, he was also preaching the remission of sin to the Jews and to bring individuals back into harmony with their original dedication.

A NEW COVENANT

Through the Prophet Jeremiah, God directed his people to a New Covenant arrangement that he was preparing for them. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made

with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”—Jer. 31:31-34

DELIVERED FROM DEATH

Symbolically, the children of Israel had followed Moses into the waters of death, and in accordance with the instructions he had received from the Heavenly Father. However, because of their obedience to him they were delivered from death and restored to life and favor with God. Thus was the whole nation together with their leader baptized. First, there was the total surrender of Moses to God, and later of the Israelites as a nation, to do the will of God. After having demonstrated their readiness to follow the Lord, they were then symbolically immersed in the sea and in the cloud.

A SONG OF DELIVERANCE

A wonderful song of deliverance was sung by all the people following their harrowing experiences. “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously:

the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him."—Exod. 15:1,2

Throughout the present Gospel Age, our Heavenly Father has invited faithful followers of Jesus who have symbolized their consecration to him by water immersion. The inspiring words of the Master in our featured scripture will become ever more meaningful when the baptism of the Christ will also have been accomplished. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"—Luke 12:50 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

NOVEMBER 4—"He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant."—Philippians 2:7 (Z. '00-318 Hymn 261)

NOVEMBER 11—"Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue [fortitude]." II Peter 1:5 (Z. '04-10 Hymn 78)

NOVEMBER 18—"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Psalm 34:7 (Z. '97-120 Hymn 333)

NOVEMBER 25—"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."—James 1:13 (Z. '04-7 Hymn 150)

Ye Are In Christ Jesus

“Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”
—*I Corinthians 1:30*

IN THIS LETTER TO THE church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul was speaking about God’s method in calling the weak and humble-minded ones of this earth for a place in his heavenly kingdom. He explained, “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” (I Cor. 1:25) The Heavenly Father wanted to show the power of his Truth and its transforming influences upon those who were of a contrite heart. The apostle further wrote, “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.”—vss. 27-29

GLORY IN THE LORD

He concluded this portion of his letter by stating, "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (vs. 31) The apostle may have had in mind the occasion when God selected and anointed his servant David. From the scriptural record, we read, "The LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."—I Sam. 16:7

As members of the fallen and sin-sick human family, there is nothing of our fallen and condemned nature of the flesh by which we could have any standing before our Heavenly Father. All of our special privileges, and the hope of sharing with our Lord Jesus in joint-heirship with him in his future heavenly kingdom, have been made possible only through the abundance of his marvelous grace. The apostle proclaimed, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."—Rom. 3:24-26

THE GIFT OF GOD

All of the blessings associated with our salvation are available to us, not because of our own merit, but because of the Heavenly Father's love in giving

his Son to be our Redeemer. We read, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8) This special blessing is provided for those who come to God in humble faith, love, and devotion. These may have peace with him, and also have access to the inner chambers of his marvelous and wondrous grace. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:1,2) We should be inspired by the great hope that has been set before us. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."—Heb. 2:3

Jesus came to earth to shed his precious blood on behalf of the whole world. It will be manifest to all under the administration of his future kingdom. However, his earthly ministry also marked the beginning of this present Gospel Age during which time the invitation to the heavenly call has gone forth to those who desire to be part of the Christ, who will share in blessing all the families of the earth.

The Apostle Paul expressed his love and appreciation to God for this wonderful High Calling in his letter to the brethren at Philippi. He told them, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ

Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.”—Phil. 3:13-15

In our featured scripture, Paul states that God, through our Lord Jesus, has provided us with four special blessings, and we will briefly review each of these as expressed by the apostle. They are wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Jesus was the first one to walk in the narrow way that leads to immortality, and it is only through his merit, virtue, and counsel that it is possible for any of us to walk in the same narrow way and share the same hope. Therefore, all things necessary for our development as New Creatures in Christ Jesus have been provided that we may be faithful in our new spiritual life and share as joint-heirs with him in his future heavenly kingdom.

CHRIST OUR WISDOM

The apostle has written that the first blessing we receive from Christ is ‘wisdom,’ and Solomon said, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy [One] is understanding.” (Prov. 9:10) The word ‘fear’ in this scripture means reverence and has been better translated in some versions of the Bible. It suggests the necessary and proper attitude of reverence that all of God’s children should have toward him. If we are to be truly wise, it is essential that we follow the teachings of God’s Word of Truth. It suggests having respect for his wonderful words of enlightenment and instruction that will lead us to faithfulness and zeal in our consecration to him.

In the marvelous Word of God, we read, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”—Rom. 11:33-36

Reverence for God is important from the very beginning of our walk in newness of life with Christ Jesus. It points to having a humble recognition of his greatness and perfection of holiness, and our own depravity and unrighteousness. To recognize this is the true foundation of wisdom, for it implies a willingness and desire to put aside our own imperfect ways, and to accept instead the divine will and counsel. Approaching God in this wise attitude of humility and desiring to be taught of him is a basic step in our consecrated lives, and one of the provisions of his wondrous grace. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”—Ps. 42:1

In his epistle, the Apostle James outlines an overall picture of divine and heavenly wisdom. He writes, “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”—James 3:17,18

In Christ we have the best and noblest example ever shown of the manner in which these various elements of heavenly wisdom operate in one who is fully consecrated to the doing of God’s will.

Heavenly wisdom is in harmony with the divine character in each of these aspects, and our Lord Jesus manifested these wonderful qualities as he daily went about in the service of his Father.

CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Apostle Paul stated that in addition to the gift of wisdom, the second blessing the Lord's people receive through Christ is 'righteousness.' He used the word righteousness which has been translated from a Greek word which also points to our being 'justified.' We are thus accepted by God as being righteous, or justified, and through his marvelous grace our heart intentions toward him are considered as being perfect.

That which makes possible the carrying out of our heart desires, and enables us to render acceptable sacrifices to our loving Heavenly Father is the provision of Christ's righteousness that has been imputed to us by divine grace. Our new life in Christ makes possible the fact that our fallen flesh is an acceptable sacrifice, as spoken by Paul. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—Rom. 12:1,2

The fact that Christ's righteousness makes up for our deficiencies does not mean that we have liberty to be careless. The apostle explained, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that

are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:1,2) None of us can ever hope to reach the high standard of perfection as was displayed by our undefiled Lord Jesus, but we should strive diligently toward this goal. He is our perfect example of righteousness, and our pattern and guide to show us the righteous way which we must follow throughout our consecrated lives. The Prophet Isaiah admonished, “Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.”—Isa. 51:1

As the Lord’s consecrated people, we should daily wage an aggressive struggle to control our thoughts, words, and deeds and to bring them into captivity to the will and purpose of God as expressed by the teachings and example of Christ. The merit of his righteousness is imputed to us upon the basis of our faith, and gives us a true standing of righteousness, or justification, before God.

It is important to us as Christians that we always keep this fact in mind. The recognition of our own sinful condition and of the wondrous provision made for us through Christ should be indelibly impressed upon our hearts and minds. It may serve as a touchstone of our true relationship to God throughout our entire earthly pilgrimage. How encouraging are the words of the apostle, who said, “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—I Cor. 15:57

CHRIST OUR SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is the third blessing pointed to by Paul in our featured scripture, that is received by

the consecrated people of God through our Lord Jesus. Sanctification signifies the setting apart of one's life for a holy purpose and service of God. The Greek word for 'sanctification' means purity, or holiness. It applies to the fully consecrated child of God who has accepted the heavenly calling and the doing of the divine will during this present Gospel Age. The standard of purity, to which the apostle points, also suggests the special and pure relationship that is enjoyed by the consecrated follower of Christ with the Heavenly Father.

True sanctification was illustrated in the Tabernacle arrangements by the mitre worn by the High Priest of Israel. The inscription reads, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." (Exod. 28:36) It pointed to the High Priest's consecration and dedication to serve God in the holy things within the Tabernacle, including the offering of sacrifices.

THE HIGH CALLING IN CHRIST

During this present Gospel Age, the heavenly call has gone forth to those who are being invited to become part of the church. They have responded by making a full consecration of their lives to God, and have dedicated themselves to him as a sacrificial offering. The wise counsel of the Apostle Paul has encouraged them to seek the spiritual calling.

Paul emphasizes the spirit of sanctification and holiness that is necessary to present our lives to God. "Ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know

how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.”—I Thess. 4:2-4

The life of the fully consecrated is one in which the moments and days are directed into ways that may be used in showing forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. The Apostle Peter proclaimed, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”—I Pet. 2:9

Our every thought and power should be used in keeping with the divine will and purpose. We desire that the will of God be enthroned within our heart so completely that our life may be poured out to him, and that our whole being be consecrated fully and forever to the doing of his will. “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”—II Cor. 10:5

A sanctified life goes beyond the endeavor to be morally upright and pure. It includes this, but upon the basis of one’s best efforts to be righteous there is the further privilege of devoting that life to the service of God. It is more than giving up of bad habits and the mere setting aside of a few worldly pleasures. We are now walking in newness of life, and fully devoted to the doing of God’s will. If we are so engaged, we are laying down our life in the divine service and will have little time to indulge in worldly pleasures.

The Prophet Micah expresses the sentiment of those who have dedicated their lives in service to

our loving Heavenly Father. “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”—Mic. 6:8

Christ is our sanctification because of his fullness of devotion to the Heavenly Father. His devotion was so faithfully carried out that he was consumed with zeal. He is our perfect example, which we should follow. The work of sanctification is a lifetime endeavor to fulfill our consecration, and live a life that has been wholly set apart to the will of God.

We are sanctified by the study of God’s Word, and we look to Jesus in order that we may more and more set aside the ways of the flesh. The Spirit of Christ should fill our hearts. Jesus prayed on behalf of the faithful members of the prospective church class, and asked the Father, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”—John 17:17

CHRIST OUR REDEMPTION

The fourth and last blessing spoken by Paul in our featured scripture, was that Christ is also made our redemption. The word ‘redemption’ means salvation, or deliverance. The apostle was pointing to the result of Jesus’ redemptive work that had already been accomplished at his death. It was the deliverance, or ultimate attainment of a position of glory with Christ in his future kingdom that he was emphasizing. The apostle used the same word translated ‘deliverance’ when speaking of some of the heroes of faith. He said they would not even entertain the possibility of an immediate deliverance from death, that they might receive a “better resurrection” at a later time.—Heb. 11:35

In his letter to the church at Philippi, he wrote, “Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”—Phil. 3:20,21

MANKIND’S FUTURE DELIVERANCE

In the divine program, the redemption and complete deliverance of the Christ—head and body—was to take place before the deliverance of the whole sin-sick world of mankind from sin and death. This will occur under the administration of Christ’s future kingdom of righteousness and peace that will be established over the earth. Jesus put this future salvation in proper perspective when he explained, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”—John 10:14-18

ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE

We are assured that all of our experiences are for our spiritual growth and development as New Creatures in Christ. “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding

and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”—II Cor. 4:17,18

“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Rom. 8:28,29) The true people of God have been ‘marked out beforehand’ according to the wonderful purpose of God.

“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (vss. 30,31) In this verse the word ‘predestinate’ means to mark out beforehand, and suggests the infinite wisdom and power of the Heavenly Father.

Thus is shown God’s foreknowledge in the ultimate plan concerning the Christ. They are first marked out (predestinated), then called, justified, and glorified. In the words of our featured scripture, Christ is their wisdom, justification (righteousness), sanctification, and deliverance (redemption).

“Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”—I Cor. 1:30 ■



Seeking the Father's Will

*“Let this mind be
in you, which was
also in Christ
Jesus.”
—Philippians 2:5*

IN HIS LETTER TO THE church at Philippi, the Apostle Paul encouraged the brethren to have the mind of our Lord. To develop this

level of reasoning, it is necessary to study the Truth with all diligence, and to rightly divide the wonderful scriptures concerning the divine plan and God's ultimate purpose. The doctrines and teachings of the Bible are the basis and fundamental guide to our spiritual growth and guidance as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.

The high standards that are set forth in God's Word never change, and our conduct should be governed by the standard of truth and righteousness at all times. Our character development is the background for serving our loving Heavenly Father, and it enables us through Christ Jesus to enter upon a new walk of faith. In respect to this lifetime commitment, an understanding of God's wonderful character and purpose is essential. Those who are alert in their efforts to rightly divide the word of

Truth are walking in the light, and their service is acceptable to him.

JESUS' MINISTRY

Jesus' ministry is the most noble and outstanding example ever known. Even as he sought to know his Heavenly Father's will and purpose in his life, so also is it necessary for us in our Christian walk and service. For example, Matthew has recorded Jesus' actions when it came time for him to carry out the terms of his earthly ministry. We read, "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee." (Matt. 4:12) He knew that it was his Heavenly Father's will that he select his disciples. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him."—vss. 17-20

From Matthew's record, we further learn, "Going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."—vss. 21-23

From the scriptural account, it is thus made clear that John's imprisonment confirmed the fact

that the time had come for the Master to preach the particular message that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. He had been anointed to preach at the time of his baptism, and he delayed this particular phase of the message until he had heard that John had been cast into prison.

JOHN'S MINISTRY

By studying and meditating upon the word of Truth, Jesus was able to understand the Father's will, and that his public ministry pertaining to the kingdom of heaven was not to begin until John had been imprisoned. This had been disclosed by Old Testament prophets who had foretold long before that the ministry of John the Baptist would be designed as a preparatory work that would precede the ministry of the Master. Concerning John's ministry, Isaiah wrote, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (Isa. 40:3) Therefore, until John's ministry had been finished, Jesus knew that it was not yet time for his own public ministry to begin.

THE LOST SHEEP OF ISRAEL

Another example of how Jesus could properly serve his Father and be guided by the Holy Spirit of truth concerned his ministry to the Jewish nation. The scriptural record states, "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."—Matt. 10:5,6

The Master's commission of service was thus limited to the Israelites and to a very specific time

and place. Thus were the disciples of Jesus directed to go only to the Jewish people at this early period of Jesus' ministry. It was not until three and a half years later that this same Gospel message was sent to the Gentiles. In subsequent years, the Gospel was then preached primarily to the Gentiles, and to those whom Jesus and his disciples had not been permitted to serve before that time.

JEWISH FAVOR ENDED

This changing situation as to the status of the Gentiles with relationship to the Gospel is understandable only when the word of Truth is properly divided, and the mind and will of the Heavenly Father is understood. Jesus was well acquainted with the Scriptures and knew that Daniel in his prophecy had revealed a period of special favor that was determined upon the nation of Israel. This period was designated as one of seventy symbolic weeks, which was actually 490 literal years. Jesus' ministry began just seven years before the full end of this special favor to Israel. Thus did he know that it was not the will of his Father that the message should go to the Gentile people before that period of time had been fully accomplished.

It is evident from this that Jesus limited his message of Truth in harmony with the Holy Spirit of God and his commands. This period of special favor to Israel ended three and one-half years after the Master's death. At that time, and in the divine providence, the apostles were informed through the Apostle Peter of the dispensational change. As a consequence, the Gospel was then extended to the Gentiles. Eventually, the proclamation of the

message was carried on almost exclusively among the Gentiles.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Just as it was important for Jesus to be acquainted with the will and purpose of his Heavenly Father, so should it also be with those who are now living during the closing years of this present Gospel Age. To understand what God's ultimate plan and purpose is for his human creation, we should do so intelligently and in accordance with his will.

Consecration to do the Father's will suggests making a diligent study of the Scriptures in order to be assured of what his will might be. To be acceptable servants of God and the Truth, it must be in harmony with his will as he has revealed it to us through his Word.

The special guidance manifested by Jesus in seeing that his disciples were directed in their service, suggests the care with which God desires all of his people to observe, and to have their consecrated lives governed by the principles of Truth. We are advised to use the sword of the Spirit to strike down human reasoning which could otherwise exalt itself above the knowledge of Christ.

In his letter to the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul directed their attention to this by telling them, "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And

having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.”—II Cor. 10:3-6

When the proper time arrived for the Gospel message to be given to the Gentiles, the Apostle Peter was informed of it by a vision. In the material realm there is a proper time for sowing and another time for reaping, so in the outworking of the divine plan it is being carried forward in an orderly way to completion. Those who are consecrated to the Lord’s will and are cooperating with him should give all diligence to the task at hand. Paul said, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”—II Tim. 2:15

TRIALS AND TESTING

Satan’s efforts to stumble Jesus were along the line of suggesting to him a way of doing things which was contrary to the course that God had outlined for him. The Truth that was present during Jesus’ time was designed to chart a course for him, and the same is true of our time. Throughout the present Gospel Age, the Adversary has sought to becloud the Christian’s mind relative to the divine Word and will, and for the purpose of turning aside those who are desirous of pleasing God.

Thus does the apostle encourage the brethren in Christ to greater faithfulness and zeal in serving God. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, hav-

ing itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”—II Tim. 4:2-8

CHRIST'S KINGDOM NEAR

The kingdom truths promulgated by Jesus and the apostles have lived in the hearts of a little flock of faithful believers throughout this present Gospel Age. In connection with the prophecies pertaining to the harvest work at the end of this age, there is brought to our special attention the fact that the Chief Reaper of the harvest is invisibly present, and is conducting the work of harvest in accordance with the wonderful will and purpose of the Heavenly Father.

Now that the prophecies pertaining to the end of this Gospel Age are being fulfilled to all whose eyes and ears of faith have been opened, let us lay fresh hold upon these truths and fully appreciate the fact that through them God has given us specific instructions pertaining to our present activity, and that by adherence to these instructions we can show ourselves approved unto him. This message of Truth will bring restitution blessings for the world under the establishment of Christ's future

kingdom. The church is nearly completed and will soon be united with the Lamb in glory.

Meanwhile, we have not yet reached the dark night of trouble which will close the privileges of proclaiming the Truth, and there is no evidence that the Lord wishes us to make any change in the message. It is still his will that we make known the wonderful plan and purpose concerning the sin-sick and dying human family.

Let us continue to seek an understanding of the divine will, and realize the responsibility which it imposes to lay down our lives in service and sacrifice as did our Captain and Redeemer, making known the glad tidings of his coming glorious kingdom to be soon established in all the earth. ■

OBITUARIES

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to their family and friends in the loss of these dear ones.

Brother J. Samuel, Mettupalayam, India—August 14. Age, 78

Sister Dawn DeMarco, Lithia, FL—August 22.

Sister Annabel Sue Davis, West Covina, CA—September 1.

Sister Florence Hopkins, Rutherford, NJ—September 16. Age, 101

Brother S. Williams, India—September 26. Age, 80

Sister Rosealee (Kuzma) Palicki, Detroit, MI—September 28. Age, 93

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

WEBSITE A TOOL

DawnBible: This site is an excellent tool for the little flock to follow the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to complete our vow made unto the Almighty Jehovah.—INDIA

LOVE TO FEAST

DawnBible: This site is a blessing to me. You will be hard pressed to find any teaching like this where I come from. There is no meat to be found in the churches I have attended. Just milk and sour milk at that. They are full of Pharisees and Saducees.

I love to feast on the meat of God's Word and *The Dawn* is fattening to my soul.—NC

EXCELLENT BOOKLETS

DawnBible: I am impressed with your excellent booklets that you send out for free. Your understanding of the Bible is definitely the most advanced I have ever read! Do you have any material that cover end time prophecy?—CA

CHANGING PEOPLE

DawnBible: It's always a pleasure to come across such informative websites. This kind of information will help change the lives of people. Thank you.—NJ

GOD IS LOVING

Dear Dawn: I would like to give a word of encouragement to any former JW's who may be out there, or anyone else who has been in any controlling church.

I feel the fear you must be dealing with. I, too, am a former JW. Since finding the Dawn Bible Students, I see how much Jehovah loves me, and he truly loves you, too. God is loving! Take heart! My prayers are with you all!—CANADA

WEALTH OF INFORMATION

DawnBible: You have a wealth of information that I enjoy teaching. Thank you for your dedication to the Word of God. I pray that Almighty God will continue to bless you and your work.—OK

ENCOURAGING LETTERS—*contd.*

THANK YOU

DawnBible: Thank you so much for the book, *Divine Plan of the Ages!* I have a hard time putting it down! Bless you all in the name Jehovah and Jesus Christ!—CANADA

DAILY MANNA

DawnBible: I visit your site every day for the *Daily Manna*, once a week to check for any new conventions near enough to my house for me to travel to, and whenever I need some reading material from your 'publications' section. This is a great site. Thank you and God bless you all!—FL

JESUS, THE WORLD'S SAVIOUR

DawnBible: I am glad to read about *Jesus the World's Saviour* on the internet place by your organization. May his grace and power continue to flow in your lives and ours as well. I'm blessed. Thanks.

PASTOR RUSSELL

DawnBible: It's wonderful

and amazing that the truths recovered from the Bible by Pastor Russell are still being published and disseminated around the world! I pray that many of those who leave the Jehovah's Witnesses sect will find their home amongst the Bible Students.—UT

WEEKLY STUDY

DawnBible: The books I received from your ministry and the ones I am ordering are going to be really good for our weekly study group.

I thank you for the information that you offer. We all enjoy it very much and we are learning a lot. Thank you.—NM

FRANK AND ERNEST

Dear Dawn: We thank God for the services you have provided and are still providing to his people.

We have an 85 year old sister in our class who got the Truth a few years ago. She is interested in receiving copies (CD or MP3s) of the *Frank and Ernest* Radio program. In the one hope.—OH

ELDERS TEACH THE YOUNGER

DawnBible: Our Bible studies in *The Dawn* are great. Our study is supposed to be 45 minutes long; however, we run over a lot and all the scriptures from all the brothers and sisters are inspiring to me because they are so full of knowledge and their thoughts are right on.

Through your books, elders can teach the younger ones so much. Keep up the work you are bringing for all to read. May the Lord bless and keep you. Great job.—OH

PEOPLE OF THE BIBLE

Dear Dawn: I am so excited to get the literature. I have been finishing up the book *People of the Bible*. It has been a blessing to me beyond compare.

I have had this book in my possession for about 11 or 12 years and just now got around to reading and finishing it. I did not have any idea what I was missing all of this time. Thank you all for everything.—NC

WWW.LIVE365.COM

Dear Dawn: I like *Dawn Devotional Radio* [www.live365.com/stations/dawn_radio]. I listen to it and like the site. Thanks for this station and site for people that want to be close to the Lord.

GOOD BOOKS

DawnBible: I thank God to find you here. It's a high time I wrote to you. I have been reading a lot of books from your publication. They are good books.—AFRICA

INSPIRATION TO YOUTH

DawnBible: Dawn booklet was a great source of inspiration to our youths of Wellington congregation. Thanks be to God for exploring the truths through this booklet.—INDIA

CURRENT EVENTS

DawnBible: I enjoy reading *The Dawn* magazine as it is always so informative and current with world events.

Thanks for the light you have provided your readers!—NY

General Convention Bulletin

—DATE CHANGE—

June 25-30, 2011—Johnstown, PA

THE 2011 GENERAL CONVENTION will once again be held on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. The original dates for the convention were Saturday, July 16, through Thursday, July 21. **The new dates are Saturday, June 25, through Thursday, June 30.** The cause of this change was a last minute decision by the University to host a group of over 1,600 people prior to our originally scheduled dates, but running through the Saturday and Sunday of our scheduled week.

Further details of next year's General Convention will be announced beginning with the January issue of *The Dawn*. We regret any inconvenience this change may cause, and it is our hope you will be able to arrange your schedule so as to attend all or a portion of this annual gathering of the Lord's people.

—General Convention Committee

“By love serve one another.”
—*Galatians 5:13*

Boundless Grace

*Come, thou fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart a song to raise,
Streams of favor, never ceasing,
Call for notes of heartfelt praise.*

*Teach me some melodious sonnet
Grace to gratitude doth move.
Praise thy grace, I glory in it!
Grace so full of matchless love.*

*Not alone hath grace redeemed me,
Bought me with Christ's precious blood,
Sought me out when I, a stranger,
Wandered from the fold of God;*

*But beyond this great salvation
God hath shown me wondrous grace
Called me with a heav'nly calling,
Ever to behold his face.*

*O! to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Lord, thy goodness, like a fetter,
Binds my grateful heart to thee.*

*I will tread the way appointed,
Rough and thorny though it be;
In the steps of thine Anointed;
'Tis my privilege, I see.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

Studies in the Scriptures

You will find the Studies in the Scriptures series outstanding textbooks on the Bible.

~ All prices are in U.S. dollars ~

THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES (\$2.00 + \$1.00 postage) Gives an outline of the Divine Plan revealed in the Bible, relating to man's redemption and restitution.—358 pages

THE TIME IS AT HAND (\$2.00 + \$1.00 postage) Deals with Bible chronology and time prophecies, identifies the Antichrist, and points out the time and manner of our Lord's return.—371 pages

THY KINGDOM COME (\$2.00 + \$1.00 postage) Discusses time prophecies relating to the work of the church at this end of the age, the restoration of Israel, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom. One chapter pertains to the Great Pyramid of Egypt.—384 pages

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON (\$3.00 + \$1.50 postage) Shows the dissolution of the present order. It discusses many prophecies relating to the end of the age, noting especially our Lord's great prophecy of Matthew 24.—660 pages

THE ATONEMENT BETWEEN GOD AND MAN (\$3.00 + \$1.00 postage) Devoted to the fact and philosophy of Christ's atoning work, the nature of man, the divine punishment for sin, the truth about hell, and the operation of the Holy Spirit.—498 pages

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

THAT THE CHURCH IS “THE TEMPLE” OF THE LIVING GOD—peculiarly “his workmanship;” that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age—ever since Christ became the world’s Redeemer and the chief “corner stone” of this temple, through which, when finished, God’s blessings shall come “to all people,” and they find access to him.—I Cor. 3:16,17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29

THAT MEANTIME THE CHISELING, SHAPING, AND POLISHING of the consecrated believers in Christ’s atonement for sin progresses, and when the last of these “living stones,” “elect and precious,” shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Rev. 15:5-8

THAT THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD lies in the fact that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God “tasted death for every man,” “a ransom for all,” and will be “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” “in due time.”—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; I Tim. 2:5,6

THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH is that she may be like her Lord, “see him as he is,” be a “partaker of the divine nature,” and share his glory as his joint-heir.—I John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; II Pet. 1:4

THAT THE PRESENT MISSION OF THE CHURCH is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God’s witness to the world; and to prepare to be the kings and priests in the next age.—Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6, 20:6

THAT THE HOPE FOR THE WORLD lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ’s millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35