

The Dawn

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Table of Contents

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

God's Assurance of Survival 2

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDY LESSONS

In God's Image 18
Making a Fresh Start 20
God's Sure Promise 22
A Covenant to Live By 24

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

"Be Thou Faithful Unto Death" 26
Times and Signs Series—Part 3
The Appearing and Revelation of Jesus Christ 45
Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 39

VOICES FROM THE PAST

God's Chosen People 17

"FRANK AND ERNEST"

Radio Schedule 42

BIBLE ANSWERS

Television Schedule 44

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

63

CONVENTIONS

64

Highlights of Dawn

The following excerpt from Time Magazine of June 23, 1986, presents an all-too-realistic reminder of the present peril under which we live.

It reads: "An all-out Soviet nuclear attack on the U.S. could entail an intercontinental blitzkrieg: thousands of missiles launched from enemy territory, letting loose tens of thousands of deadly warheads surrounded by a nebula of hurtling decoys and debris. In half an hour, this lethal 'threat cloud' would be over the U.S., raining destruction on cities and military targets alike."

Is our world destined to end like this?

What does the Bible say?

God's Assurance of Survival

"Thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else."

Isaiah 45:18

LESS than one hundred years ago, the wise men of the world were acclaiming their belief that civilization had at last reached such a high pinnacle of development that nations would no longer need to go to war to settle their differences, that a peaceful solution could be found for their problems by sitting down at a conference table and talking things over. Many outstanding churchmen were echoing the same sentiments, implying that the Bible's predictions of calamitous events which would occur at the end of the age were quite out of line with what would actually take place.

Now, however, the stark reality of what the world is facing testifies to the accuracy of the testimony given by God's

holy prophets. The people of every land wait in fear and trembling, not knowing what moment the warning sirens of disaster will announce the approach of rockets laden with potentials of destruction capable of destroying all life from the earth.

Throughout the ages of man's hectic existence upon the earth there have been many periods of distress affecting one or another, and at times, whole groups of nations. Civilizations, so-called, have risen and fallen, and new ones have taken their places, but never before has the entire human race faced the possibility of utter destruction, such as is the case today. There is still much national pride; and nations, as well as groups of nations, are on the alert to seek their own best interests as the battle of international politics rages increasingly intense. Yet the thought uppermost in the minds and hearts of the people of all nations is not so much what might be immediately advantageous to them but whether or not they will even survive when the top flight diplomats are no longer able to prevent the shooting from beginning again on a global scale.

Evolutionist Darwin gave stimulus to the false theory that man was evolving to a higher plan of existence, and thus laid the foundation of false security which was voiced by the wisdom of this world just before the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Then was emphasized the idea of the survival of the fittest. Now, however, it is openly admitted by the best minds in the world, that neither the fit nor the unfit will survive once the latest products of the scientists are unleashed upon a helpless and distraught human race.

Perhaps today the idea of survival is uppermost in the minds of the people. Not that they have any assurance they will survive, or that the human race itself will exist upon the earth much longer, for they have no such assurance. The possibility that they will not survive often haunts their thoughts, as scientists, lawmakers, philosophers, and others, continually warn what to expect when the next

global war breaks out in all its fury.

Various of God's holy prophets foretold this very time in which we are living. The general testimony of the Scriptures points out that the basic cause of this threatening crisis is human sin and selfishness, and selfishness is not eradicated by science and invention. The spirit which induced Cain to murder his brother, Abel, will just as readily order the dropping of atom bombs, even though, as in the case of Cain, there can be no hope for real advantage.

Sin and selfishness have predominated in human affairs ever since the fall of man. There have been noble exceptions to the general trend. Those in commanding positions in world affairs, supposing that none is able to challenge their authority nor rob them of their bounties, are often noble and charitable in their attitude, even toward their enemies. But should the position of these be seriously challenged, they seldom hesitate to adopt any measure whatever for self-preservation.

Thus man's inhumanity to man throughout the ages has been tempered largely by circumstances and by the effectiveness of the inhumane instruments available at the time. The slingshot, the bow and arrow, the battle axe, the original but clumsy musket, the automatic rifle, the machine gun, the cannon, the bombing plane, the jet fighter, have in their times and turns all been utilized for defense and for aggression, with each nation madly attempting to outstrip the others in the development and perfection of these instruments of death.

And man has not changed! The possibility that atom bombs may destroy the entire race will not deter the nations from using the deadliest of all missiles of destruction whenever it is thought expedient to do so. This has been proved by the terrible and ever increasing destructiveness of the First and Second World Wars. It was proved by the actual use of nuclear weapons on the helpless civilian popu-

lations of Japanese cities toward the close of the last global struggle.

The brutal destruction experienced by the human race beginning with 1914 would have been thought impossible a century ago. Indeed, up until the moment the First World War started, the philosophers among the nations said it could not happen. But the Bible said it could, and would. Jesus said there would be upon the earth “distress of nations with perplexity.” (Luke 21:25,26) He also said there would come a time of “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time.”—Matt. 24:21

In forecasting this great tribulation, Jesus quoted from Daniel 12:1, where this Old Testament prophet forecast a “time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.” Daniel explains that this time of trouble would be the result of the “standing up” of “Michael.” Jesus evidently understood this to be a reference to himself, for he quoted the prophecy in answer to the disciples’ question as to the sign which would mark the time of his return and second presence.

The unbelieving world and a large percentage of those belonging to professed Christian churches either scoff at, or at least disbelieve, the idea of Christ’s return. This is the one reason they readily accepted the delusion that the world had so advanced in knowledge and culture that wars could be considered evils of the past. They believed that man would accomplish his own salvation, so did not look to God to do anything for them, or to interfere in their affairs. That a civilized world could become embroiled in a great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, was to them unthinkable and impossible.

Not Doomsday

On the other hand, there are a few, and have been right along, who continued to believe the testimony of the Scriptures that Jesus would return. However, they have

erroneously believed that his return would signal cataclysmic disturbances of nature—that mountains would fall into the sea, and the earth itself would disappear in literal flames of fire. These failed to see that the symbolic prophecies describing the immediate result of our Lord's return were to be fulfilled in the great tribulation Jesus foretold, and that this would mean a destruction of a social order rather than the burning up of the earth itself.

A proper understanding of the prophetic testimony as a whole leads to the assurance that while the trouble associated with the return of Christ is worldwide and distressing—such as never was since there was a nation—the earth itself is not to be destroyed, that this is not what is implied by the prophetic 'end of the world'. Our text declares that the LORD has established the earth. Ecclesiastes 1:4 informs us that "the earth abideth forever." In Psalm 78:69 we are informed that the LORD has "established" the earth "forever."

The disciples asked Jesus concerning the sign, both of his coming (or presence, as it is in the Greek text), and the end of the world. The same sign, or signs, would apply to both. In their reference to the end of the world, the disciples used the Greek word **aión**, meaning 'age', or 'period of time'. They had in mind particularly the waiting time between the first and second advents of Christ.

In other prophecies pertaining to the end of the world, the Greek word **kosmos** is used. This word simply means 'order', or 'arrangement', and as used in the prophecies refers to a social order or civilization. It is this word that the Apostle John used when, in an admonition to the Christians he wrote, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."—I John 2:15

Paul refers to "this present evil world," or **aión**. (Gal. 1:4) It is the same Greek word, **aión** (meaning 'age') that Paul uses in his informative statement that Satan is "the god of

this world.” Certainly Satan is not the god of the earth, for the Scriptures declare that the “earth is the LORD’S, and the fullness thereof.”—Ps. 24:1

It is this evil world, or age, that comes to an end as a result of Christ’s return, or when Michael stands up. From one standpoint, the world in its selfishness destroys itself. This would have occurred centuries ago had the nations been equipped with the potentials of destruction they now possess, including rapid means of travel and communication. But the prophecies show that this increase of knowledge was not due in the divine plan until the time of the end.—Dan. 12:4

From the standpoint of timing in permitting man to discover and unleash some of the pent-up powers of nature, the LORD has had a hand in these events which are bringing a world to an end. For this reason some of the prophecies speak of the LORD gathering the nations, and assembling the kingdoms—gathering them for the “battle of that great day of God Almighty.”—Zeph. 3:8: Rev. 16:14-16

The Scriptures use various symbols to illustrate the effect of these world-destroying events. The Prophet Isaiah wrote, “The LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. . . . The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.”—Isa. 24:1-4

Isaiah also wrote concerning this same time of trouble: “The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman: I will destroy and devour at once.”—Isa. 42:13, 14

Isaiah also foretold concerning the nations assembled before him for judgment at this time, “Come near, ye nations,

to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies.”—Isa. 34:1, 2

Jeremiah wrote, “The LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Again, “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.”—Jer. 10:25, 32

Speaking for the LORD, the Prophet Joel wrote, “Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen [Gentiles], and gather yourselves round about: . . . Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.”—Joel 3:9-14

Concerning this same gathering of the nations, and the divine purpose in connection therewith, the Prophet Zephaniah wrote, “Wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth [social order] shall be devoured with the fire [destructive forces] of my jealousy.”—Zeph 3:8

All of these prophecies are descriptive, each from its own standpoint, of the calamitous events through which the world has been passing since the outbreak of the first global struggle in 1914. Their united testimony forecasts increasing chaos among the nations, as feverishly they gather themselves together for self-protection and for war. It is no longer a matter of citing these prophecies as a warning of

catastrophes to come, for the events which they describe are already upon us.

In view of the sin and selfishness of the world, this trouble was inevitable. The causes have been, and are, at work, and no human power is able to arrest their operation and progress toward the certain end foretold in the Word of God. No hand but the hand of God can stay the progress of the present current of events; and his hand will not do so until the bitter experiences of this conflict shall have sealed their instruction upon the hearts of men. And the great lesson to be learned by all is, that apart from God and from obedience to his laws of righteousness and love, the people cannot properly govern themselves successfully, and that all efforts to do so will ultimately lead to utter destruction.

Unless

Jesus prophesied that this would be the case. Forecasting the time of great tribulation which would identify the time of his second presence, and the end of the present age, he said that unless this period of tribulation be shortened "there should no flesh be saved." (Matt. 24:22) These prophetic words of the Master are very much in keeping with the dire predictions of our scientists and other wise men of today, the difference being that Jesus foretold this situation more than nineteen centuries before it became a reality.

But Jesus, who, by prophetic vision, foresaw what the wisdom of this world denied until the evil day was upon them, also assured us that this tribulation would be cut short by the LORD before it went the full and horrible lengths dictated by human ambition and selfishness. Since Jesus was right in the first instance, and contrary to the wisdom of the worldly wise, we can have confidence in his assurance that the tribulation will be brought to an end before all flesh is destroyed. Yes, we can be confident that despite the seriousness of the trouble, and despite the omi-

nous clouds of doom now hanging low over the nations and filling the hearts of the people with fear, the human race will not be destroyed; for, through his Word, the LORD has given the human race this blessed assurance of survival!

For the Elect's Sake

Jesus prophesied that "for the elect's sake" the days of "great tribulation" now upon the human race would be brought to an end before all flesh is destroyed. (vs. 22) There are two classes mentioned in the Scriptures as being God's chosen or elect people. The first to merit this distinction was the Jewish nation. Since the first advent of Jesus, the self-sacrificing footsteps followers of Jesus have been recognized by God as his elect people.

However, although the people of the Jewish nation lost their national privilege of being joint-heirs in his long-promised kingdom as a result of their failure as a nation to accept Jesus, nevertheless, they are still loved by God, and in this end of the age are being specially dealt with by him. Their restoration to the Promised Land is a marvelous fulfillment of God's promises to them, and it is being accomplished exactly on time according to the prophecies.

The Prophet Joel, speaking as the mouthpiece of God, wrote: "In those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations." (Joel 3:1,2) This prophecy reveals that the regathering of Israel to the Promised Land was due at the time when all nations would be gathered, and when, as verse two states, the LORD would "plead with them there for my people . . . whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land."

It should increase our faith in the prophecies when we note the manner in which the Jewish people have been regathered into their Promised Land during the very time when the Gentile nations have been relentlessly destroying one another. The LORD said that these two events would

occur at the same time, and we stand in awe as we note the marvelous manner in which they are being accomplished.

While the Scriptures do not reveal the details of developments in a way that can now be understood, they do indicate the final act in his care for his elect, or chosen people, Israel. This is shown particularly in the prophecy of Ezekiel, chapter thirty-eight. The time is still future—how far we do not know. Israel is shown as dwelling confidently and prosperously in the land which God gave to their fathers. This is somewhat true at the present, but we should have no doubt that it will be true in God's due time.

The prophecy reveals that the people of Israel, in their prosperous and, at the same time, defenseless, position, will become a coveted prize of war. It will be then that aggressor hordes will come down from the "north" against the nation, assisted by various allied armies. The details of this attack which will be mounted against God's elect people do not need to be understood in order for us to have faith in the promise recorded in verses twenty-two and twenty-three of this prophecy of Ezekiel, assuring us of divine intervention on behalf of Israel.

This intervention, the prophecy assures us, will result in the opening of the eyes of "many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD." Since this divine intervention will occur while the time of great tribulation is threatening the whole world, it will result in shortening the trouble before it has resulted in the destruction of all flesh. Certainly when the nations see this demonstration of divine power, and their eyes are opened to behold his glory, they will begin to look forward toward him for a solution to their problems.

"Swords into Plowshares"

Seemingly it will be then that the prophecy of Isaiah 2:1-4 will be fulfilled. It reads in part, "It shall come to pass in the last days that . . . many people shall go and say, Come

ye, and let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem. . . . And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

It is noteworthy that this is a prophecy depicting the culminating events of the last days. It is not the last days of human experience upon the earth, but the last days of the reign of sin and death. The effects of sin and selfishness have been cumulative throughout the entire course of human history, and reach a climax in the last days when the nations angrily destroy one another, and ultimately would destroy the human race itself, but for divine intervention.

Meanwhile, God has all the agencies of his kingdom prepared and ready to assume control of the nations. The spiritual and human phases of this kingdom are symbolized by the terms Zion, and Jerusalem—Zion being the spiritual phase of the kingdom, composed of Jesus and his church; and Jerusalem being the human phase in which the resurrected Ancient Worthies will be the “princes in all the earth” to represent the divine Christ.—Ps. 45:16

Thus the last days, the period during which the present evil world comes to an end, will not be climaxed with the destruction of the human race, but by the establishment of divine authority among the nations, which will lead to the full answer to the Christian’s prayer, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”—Matt. 6:10

The human race will not perish, although all evils which now afflict the people will ultimately be destroyed, including death itself, for the promise is that Christ must reign until all enemies are put under his feet, the last enemy to be destroyed being death. (I Cor. 15:25,26) It will be the last days of sin, selfishness, greed, graft, corruption, crime,

war, pain, and death. It will be the beginning of that abundant life of peace and joy which was provided for our first parents in the Garden of Eden, but which they forfeited for themselves and for their progeny when they disobeyed the law of God.

Redemption and Recovery

When Adam and Eve sinned against God and were driven out of their garden home to die, they lost the privilege of living in an earthly paradise. This loss would have been eternal had it not been for the redemptive work of Christ. By some unscriptural twist of reasoning, the theory developed that the coming of Jesus to be the Redeemer of the world was a provision by God to enable sinners to repent and go to heaven. On the contrary, it was to make possible the return of the dead and dying race to life on the earth.

It is true that there are promises in the Bible of a heavenly reward, but these are only for the footstep followers of Jesus. Paul, for example, spoke of those who are partakers of a "heavenly calling." (Heb. 3:1) It is a mistake to suppose that these promises represent God's provision for the entire sin-cursed and dying race. They apply only to those who are willing to suffer and die with Jesus in order that they might live and reign with him, and the purpose of his thousand-year reign is to restore mankind in general to life on the earth—to "that which was lost."—Matt. 18:11

It is this glorious outcome of God's loving design toward the human race which is emphasized by him in our text, in which he assures us that he created the earth not in vain, but formed it to be inhabited. Unscriptural human philosophy has claimed that in the last days the earth would be destroyed, and the unbelieving of the human race consigned to an eternity of torture. This would mean that God did create the earth in vain, and that it never would be inhabited except partially, and by a sinful, dying race.

The predictions of the scientists that the human race might well destroy itself by their own inventions, if true, would also mean that God created the earth in vain. Let us take courage, then, in the promise that it is God's intention that the earth be inhabited by his human creation, and that man's original sin did not defeat this purpose.

The Creator has given us assurance of his intention toward mankind by sending his beloved Son to redeem the fallen race from death. When created, man was given dominion over the earth, and this dominion, according to the Scriptures, is to be restored. This was God's original intention concerning man. But Paul wrote that "we see not yet all things put under him [man]," but, he adds, "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."—Heb. 2:8, 9

Yes, we now see that the purpose of Jesus' death was that an escape from death might be provided for the sin-cursed race and an opportunity be given to all to have that original earthly dominion and home restored to them. This opportunity will be extended to humanity during the thousand years of Christ's reign. That is why our text declares that the LORD did not create the earth in vain, but formed it to be inhabited.

The human race will not perish from the earth. Evil and evil institutions will be destroyed, and death will be swallowed up in victory, but man will continue to live, and will have his tears wiped away. (Isa. 25:8) The LORD will make "wars to cease unto the ends of the earth," and the nations will be commanded to "be still" and know that he is God. (Ps. 46:9, 10) Knowing and obeying him, the people will gain life everlasting.

The days in which we are living are indeed made dark and frightening by the increasing threat of total destruction in

an all-out nuclear war. But, as the prophet wrote, we will not “fear, though the earth [social order] be removed, and though the mountains [governments] be carried into the midst of the sea [restless, discontented masses].”—Ps. 46:1-3

We need not fear because we know that while this present evil world will be destroyed, the great tribulation which brings this about will be shortened in time to prevent the destruction of all flesh. Besides, even though many may perish in this time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, they will later be awakened from death and be given an opportunity to participate in the blessings of the new day, that glorious kingdom day when the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.—Hab. 2:14; Isa. 11:9

It will be true, of course, that in that day when the kingdom of Christ is exercising control in the affairs of men, the only ones to receive its permanent blessings of peace and life will be those who seek the LORD and obey his laws. In the prophecy from which our text is taken, the LORD says, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”—Isa. 45:22

Those who go through the great Armageddon struggle alive, as well as the ones who perish in the great tribulation and are later awakened from the sleep of death, will have to look unto the LORD in order to survive eternally. That will be the time prophesied by Moses and repeated by Peter when it shall come to pass “that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet [the Christ], shall be destroyed from among the people.”—Acts 3:22, 23

But those who do obey, who “bow the knee” and “confess” their allegiance to the new king, will live. “I have sworn by myself,” saith the LORD, “the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall

swear." (Isa. 45:23) When, in the kingdom age now near, the people look unto the LORD in this manner, they will be saved.

Yes, they will be saved from selfishness and war, and saved from sickness and death. The dominion over earth which was lost through sin will be restored. The human race will survive and enjoy their home on earth forever, for God created the earth not in vain, but formed it to be inhabited. □



FOR YOUR NEWSPAPER

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SEPTEMBER SPECIAL

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Voices from the Past

BROTHER M. STAMULAS, 1955 GENERAL CONVENTION

God's Chosen People

BROTHER Michael Stamulas, of the New York Class, spoke on the topic, "God's Chosen People." He used as his text, Psalm 65:4, which reads, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple."



The reference in this text is to those whom the LORD calls during the present age, and it is a great honor to be one of this class. God showers his mercy and love upon his chosen, and cares for them in their every time of need.

There are certain steps taken by those chosen by God. First, through the truth, they are drawn to Jesus by the Heavenly Father. Jesus explained that no one could come to him except when drawn by the Father. When drawn to Jesus by the Father, our part is to accept. When we accept by making a full consecration to do God's will, we are begotten by God and become his sons, his children.

Just to believe, in the sense of acknowledging Jesus is our Savior is not enough. Jesus invited us to deny self, and to take up our cross and follow him. Paul explains that it is given unto us, not only to believe on him, but to suffer for his sake.—Phil. 1:29

Now is the time to make our calling and election, our choosing, sure. It is blessed to be called and chosen, but this is in vain unless through diligence we prove faithful! □

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International Bible Study Lessons

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 7

In God's Image

KEY VERSE: "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold it was very good."—Genesis 1:31

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:1, 26-31

THE pronouncement stated in the words of our text was made when, after long epochs of time, God's purposes had found fruition in the creation of man upon the earth. Preceding this, the many steps of preparation leading to this grand event were briefly described in the six days of creation. During the long eons of these days God's ultimate goal for a human creation was never lost sight of, and as each progressive step was completed upon the earth, God said it was good. One by one, the various formative objectives were met, until the earth finally emerged as a home for man with air to breathe, food to eat, water to drink, animals to keep, and provisions for shelter, etc. And so, near the end of the sixth day, God brought forth Adam.

Genesis 1:26 uses the word likeness, as well as image, in describing Adam's similarity to his Creator. We read, "God said, Let us make man . . . after

our likeness; and let them have dominion." This would seem to imply that man's likeness to God included the fact that he was given a dominion. God is the supreme Ruler of all his great universe, and on earth he delegated authority to man, whom he had created in his image. No such grant was given to any of the lower animals, nor would they be capable of exercising dominion. Man's authority was limited. He was not given dominion over the weather, or seasons, or tides, but only over the lower orders of sentient creatures—the fish of the sea; the fowl of the air; the cattle; and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Just as God commanded the lower orders of the animal creation to multiply and fill the earth, the same command was given to man. Thus the animal kingdom, with man as king, was to be extended to encompass the whole earth.

There was every necessary provision to enable this divine arrangement for the earth to function as God had planned. Man needed only to use properly what God had provided. "God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."—vss. 29-31

We know, of course, that tragedy temporarily disturbed the smooth working of man's dominion. Indeed, he lost his dominion, and with it his life. But God's design was not changed by man's failure. Throughout the Scriptures the fact continues to be emphasized that it is still God's plan for man to live on the earth, the home which was originally prepared for him. In Isaiah 45:18 we read, "Thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it

not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited."

Man's dominion will then be restored to him. This fact is attested by Jesus, who prophetically speaks to those who will prove worthy of everlasting life, saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25:34) By his death as a ransom price for man, Jesus made valid this promise of restoration.

When the angel announced the birth of Jesus, acclaiming it to be glad tidings of great joy, which would be to all people, the heavenly host sang, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill toward men." (Luke 2:10, 13, 14) Jesus did not come to earth to arrange for a transfer of the human race to heaven. He came that there might be peace and joy and health and life for God's human creatures here on earth.

When the Creator's design concerning man shall have been fully accomplished, man's eternal home will be on the earth, and it will be here that, throughout eternity, the Creator will continue to pour out his rich blessings upon his human creation. Then will have come to pass that which God foresaw from the very beginning—that it would be 'very good'. □

Making a Fresh Start

KEY VERSE: "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth."—*Genesis 9:13*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Genesis 9:1-15*

THE first dispensation of man's existence on the earth had come to an end. It had been a tragic experience of over sixteen centuries, during which conditions of evil had worsened with the expanding population until it was said that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6:6) As tragic as it was for man and even for the angels who became involved in man's affairs, it no doubt serves as a valuable object lesson showing the rapidity with which sin will deprave and degrade the mind and heart, if allowed to continue unchecked. Mankind's fallen condition left him hopeless, except for the promise of God's help.

But God's assistance at that time came in a way we would perhaps least expect. Except for Noah and his family, the entire population of that dispensation, or world, was destroyed from off the face of the earth in a Flood. Did this represent God's final solution to that problem? No!

Not at all! The Apostle Peter wrote that while God "spared not the old world, but saved Noah . . . bringing in the Flood upon the world of the ungodly" (II Pet. 2:5), this was the Creator's way of "reserving" them in death "unto the day of judgment to be punished [curtailed]." (vs. 9) The word punished in this text is not translated correctly in our **King James Version** of the Bible. The original Greek word means 'to curtail'. Certainly this rendering conforms to the facts of the matter. During the time those generations previously lived, nothing was done to curtail their downward course in sin, God having reserved this for a future day.

That God's final answer to the problem of Adamic sin in mankind is not their destruction was so beautifully expressed when a fresh start was initiated through Noah and his family. As a new dispensation began, God expressed again his covenant with man, the first to be spoken since his expulsion from Eden.

The token of the covenant he gave through Noah we have with us today, and it will continue as long as the sun and the earth and the rain remain. God said, "It shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. . . . And I will remember my covenant."—Gen. 9:14-16

Many millions of rainbows have since bespoken those words uttered so many thousands of years ago, and yet the outworkings of sin continue and again threaten the extinction of our race. Peter warned that the seeming long delay in God's plan would cause many to doubt these ancient promises of God, and to scoff at them. (I Pet. 3:4) But he assures us that "the LORD is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (vs. 9) This is a wonderful statement of God's intention, and not only reflects on his great patience in allowing the much-needed lesson of sin during the long past and present, but also speaks of a great hope for a future world of righteousness, wherein all will have an ample opportunity to turn from sin and gain life.

God's purposes have never wavered in this respect, and this

is beautifully illustrated in a scene described in the Book of Revelation where God is sitting as the great and ultimate ruler of our world. And in this scene "there was a rainbow round about the throne." (Rev. 4:3,4) In the rainbow covenant to Noah, God expressed his basic intention for man's salvation. In later covenants spoken to Abraham, to Israel, to David, and prophetically to the resurrected world of mankind in the future, God revealed much detail about his plan for accomplishing this. His Word reveals that the actions of his rulership throughout all ages have been with an eye single to the ultimate best accomplishment of his spoken word to those ancient fathers.

In a similar appearance to the Prophet Ezekiel, God's throne again was associated with a rainbow. "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard the voice of one that spoke."—Ezek. 1:28

How the glory of God has indeed shone unto us through his covenants, and what great words they speak about his benevolent plan for the world's salvation! □

God's Sure Promise

KEY VERSE: "*Behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.*"—Genesis 17:4

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Genesis 17:1-8, 15-19

NATIONS in Abraham's day were frequently just families, with one of the family serving as tribal head, or king. Naturally, they grew larger through the centuries; but in the early days, nations were very small. The promise that Abraham was to have a seed that would become a great nation, Israel, and dominate other nations, would therefore imply that his offspring would become more powerful than the others, or, as Paul states it, a city—a city which would have foundations, sure foundations, because its builder and maker was God.

But God had a much grander, and more far-reaching plan in mind than that visualized by Abraham. This is revealed to us by the many references to the seed of Abraham which we find in the New Testament. In Galatians 3:8, 16, Paul mentions the promise concerning the seed, and explains it in such a way as to indicate that even Isaac, the miracle child, was not the real seed of promise. In verse 16,

Paul explains that when God promised Abraham a seed, the one he had in mind was, in reality, Christ.

In Galatians 3:27-29, Paul further explains that the true followers of Christ during the present age, those who have "put on Christ," are also "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Those who compose this larger faith seed of Abraham include Gentiles as well as the natural descendants of Abraham, the Jewish nation.

In Galatians 4:21-31, Paul explaining this matter further in the form of an allegory, says: "Jerusalem which is above [represented by Sarah] is free, which is the mother of us all," Paul writes, adding, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise." In this lesson, Paul quotes from the prophecy of Isaiah (54:1), "Rejoice; thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for

the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband." (vs. 27) This ties in with the fact that Sarah was barren for so long, illustrating that many centuries would pass after the promise of the seed was first made, before Christ, the real seed, would appear, and before the development of the remainder of the faith seed would begin, Isaac being a type of both Jesus and those who would make up his body.

Abraham looked for a city, a government, but he did not understand the grand scale on which the promises of God pertaining to it would be fulfilled. Paul says that Abraham looked for a heavenly city, but this simply means that he believed the God of heaven would work through his seed to bless mankind here on the earth. Abraham did not expect a heavenly reward. God promised him the land—promised it to him and to his seed—not the faith seed of this Gospel Age—Christ and his church—but to his natural seed.

In making promises to Abraham, God said his seed would be as the sand. Indeed Abraham will have a vast earthly seed. God's promise was that through the spiritual seed of Abraham, all the families of the earth were to be blessed. Later, when his

son, Isaac, was married to Rebekah, a further prophecy was made of the extent to which the fatherhood of Abraham would extend.

In this story of how Rebekah became Isaac's bride there are a number of interesting similarities to the manner in which Christ secures his bride, his wife. The Bible presents many illustrations of the oneness of Christ and his church, and the bridegroom and bride picture is one of them. "The marriage of the Lamb is come," the Revelator says, "and his wife hath made herself ready." (Rev. 19:7) It will be after this 'marriage' that the "Spirit and the bride" will say to the sin-cursed and dying world, "Come, . . . and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."—Rev. 22:17

How fittingly this eventual bringing of all the nations as children into the covenant favor of Abraham's family was expressed in the blessing upon Rebekah: "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions!" (Gen. 24:60) We see in this an implication that the church of Christ, the antitypical bride class, in the regeneration will mother the millions of Adam's race—the glorified Redeemer being the "Everlasting Father," the Son of God.—Isa. 9:6 □

A Covenant to Live By

KEY VERSE: "Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine."—Exodus 19:5

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Exodus 19:1-6

ABRAHAM and his descendants were God's chosen people. They had been chosen to be the channel of God's blessings to all the families of the earth—but they were not to occupy this position in the divine plan unconditionally. God expected them to prove their worthiness of it by obedience to the terms of the covenant into which they entered with him.

In this text, God reminded Israel of his ability to care for them, and to fulfill his promises toward them. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself," he said to them. (vs. 4) "Now therefore," the LORD continued, "if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." (vs. 5) Verse six continues, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

Later God established a priesthood within Israel. The function

of the priests was to offer sacrifice, and upon the basis of the sacrifices offered, to extend the blessings of the LORD to the people of the nation. God's proposal, conditioned on obedience, to make them a kingdom of priests suggests that the entire nation would serve as a priesthood for the other nations of the earth. It was to be a kingdom of priests, indicating kingly authority and power.

This promise of God continued with Israel throughout the centuries, although the nation never did qualify to inherit it. The promise was still theirs, however, when Jesus came. But because they rejected him, the one Jehovah had sent to be their Messiah and king, he said to them that the kingdom would be taken away from them and given to a nation bringing forth the proper fruits of righteousness. This new nation is identified by the Apostle Peter. (Matt. 21:43; 1Pet. 2:9, 10) It is made up of the faith 'seed' of Abraham.—Gal. 3:16, 27-29

Those called to this new arrangement for a priesthood to fulfill God's promised blessing, are referred to in Malachi's prophecy, with a similar use of language: "They shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." (Mal. 3:17) The Hebrew word here translated jewels means 'a peculiar treasure'.

Our Heavenly Father's heart of love has long been planning and working to have a special treasure for himself. The making, or bringing into being, of this new creation is a mighty and wonderful work. This is God's masterpiece. It is a work of surpassing strength and beauty, bringing into fullest action exhaustless resources of divine power, sounding the depths of unfathomable wisdom, and compassing eternity in the stupendous purpose of God. This is indeed a divine family—immortal!

During the Jewish Age, and even before that time, there was no heavenly calling. Consequently there is no mention in any of the promises made to Israel, that they would obtain a spiritual inheritance, to the divine nature. Theirs were earthly promises. The high calling of God in Christ Jesus was not opened until subse-

quently, and it opened as a result of our Lord's first advent.

This glorious high calling, the invitation to the spiritual, heavenly phase of the kingdom, was first extended to the Jews—but only a remnant of that people responded. Because faith and obedience were lacking in Israel—God's elect, chosen nation—that house of Israel was left unto them desolate, deserted.

And so it will be the privilege of spiritual Israel to bless all families of the earth. This is the greatest and grandest theme and position in the whole universe! Soon this divine family, Christ and his glorified church, will be complete beyond the veil, and will shed forth the light of knowledge of the glory of God for all people. This glorious, holy, and long-awaited divine family—kings and priests of God—will be instrumental, with Jesus, in raising all those who are in their graves, and in establishing fully and completely the glorious kingdom of God in the earth.

"Fear not, little flock," Jesus said, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 13:32) With what great pleasure, then, does our Father exclaim regarding his true people: "They shall be mine . . . in that day when I make up my jewels"—my special treasure! □

Christian Life and Doctrine

“Be Thou Faithful Unto Death”

*“Be thou faithful unto death,
and I will give thee a crown of life.”
Revelation 2:10*

THE words of this text are part of the message given to the church at Smyrna. It was the second of seven messages recorded in the Book of Revelation, and generally applied to the second period of the Gospel church, designated as 100 A.D. to 325 A.D. By this time all the apostles except John had fallen asleep in death, and, therefore, it is believed John was used as the messenger. It was a time of bitter persecution of the Christian church; Smyrna means ‘bitter’, and conveys the same thought as the Hebrew word ‘**marah**’.

Seven messages to seven churches are recorded in the second and third chapters of Revelation. Each one is a message to the church in a certain period of the Gospel Age. There is a pattern in these messages, whereby our Lord first acknowledged their service and zeal, and after doing so said, “But I have somewhat against thee.” He then told them of their lack, or how they had gone astray.

To the church in Pergamos he said, “Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.”—vs. 6

To the church in Thyatira he said, “Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.”—vs. 20

To the church in Sardis he said, "I have not found thy works perfect before God. . . . Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments" (Rev. 3:4), implying that most in Sardis had.

To the church in Laodicea he said, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."—vss. 15, 16

But our Lord does not find fault with the church in the Philadelphia period, nor the church in the Smyrna period, except to mention to Smyrna the blasphemy of the unfaithful. (Rev. 2:9) Instead, he tells them he knows of their tribulation and poverty. When he mentions their poverty, the Lord is quick to tell them, "But thou art rich!" And they were indeed, because our Lord had called and chosen them.

The church in Smyrna did not have the failings which were to become so prevalent in the later periods of the church. Rather, bitter persecutions were their lot, which they endured faithfully. It is also noteworthy that the reward to be given for faithfulness included the promise that they would "not be hurt of the second death" (vs. 11), another way of saying their reward would be immortality. The family of mankind after their restoration from Adamic death face the prospect of second death if they should willfully disobey God. But those who become members of the Christ class will never be in danger of the second death, because they will be immortal. Death will be impossible.

This promise to the church at Smyrna is in sharp contrast to the reality of their ongoing experiences. The persecutions they were enduring involved physical violence so severe that premature death often occurred. The Romans imprisoned and tortured the Early Christians. They also used them to amuse their nobility and subjects by forced participation in

sadistic games. In these games the usual format was gladiators pitted against beasts. Often Christians were thrown into the arena instead of gladiators. Foreknowing these circumstances, our Lord encouraged the brethren in Smyrna to be faithful unto death. This exhortation has continued to be appropriate for all God's people, even to our day, regardless of the nature of the trial.

The church of that period also saw the beginnings of the Antichrist system, as ambitious leaders came upon the scene. The Apostle John, the messenger to the church of that era, about 100 A.D., wrote of this event in the latter years of his life:

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

“Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.”—I John 2:18-26

Soon after John's death, and since all the other apostles were already asleep in death, the parable of the wheat and the tares, given by Jesus, began to be fulfilled. “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good

seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.”—Matt. 13:24, 25

The phrase, ‘while men slept’, refers to the apostles’ falling asleep in death; and the ‘enemy’ is the Devil. The Adversary, indeed, was successful in causing imitation Christians, ‘tares’, to come upon the scene. The statement in the message to the church at Smyrna could refer to such ambitious leaders who may have come, initially, from Israel: “I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not.” (Rev. 2:9) In the apostle’s time, those of the sect of the Pharisees sought to impose the Law of Moses upon new Gentile converts. Their spirit was contrary to that of Christ. This same spirit, and the same type of false teachings were set forth by deceptive teachers during the Smyrna period of the church.

Thus Smyrna had to contend not only with persecutions at the hands of pagan Rome, but, additionally, with grasping leaders and false Christians. They faithfully endured all of these sets of circumstances, responding to the exhortation of our Lord, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10

Since so many of their trials in real life took place in the coliseum, the arena became an illustration of Christian experiences. Prior to the Smyrna period, in the days of the apostles, such incidents were already occurring to many of their brethren. The Apostle Paul uses the picture of the coliseum when he writes of “being appointed to death,” making reference to the “looking on” of others, and especially applying this simile to events in his Christian life. (I Cor. 4:8, 9) The stadium, of course, is the world in which we live, and when Paul uses this illustration he has in mind the fact that angels and men are the on-lookers of our battle.

He was combating the concept of some brethren in Corinth that the reign of Christ had started, and consequently they were reigning. With irony, he said, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us; and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you."—I Cor. 4:8

The position taken by some of the Corinthian Christians was that God had bestowed upon them prosperous livings. In sharp contrast, the apostle pictures himself, and the other apostles, in an arena as spectacles to angels and the world, appointed to die. The meaning of the phrase, 'God hath set forth us the apostles last', seems to allude to the practice in the games at Rome where the last event was saved for those who were thrown into the amphitheater to die at the hands of gladiators, or by beasts.

In this letter to the brethren at Corinth, the apostle also mentions the need for being faithful as stewards, and, furthermore, that he should not be judged of anyone in the performance of his stewardship. Then he contrasts the erroneous view that some had, namely, that sacrifice, trials, and sufferings were over. He speaks again in an ironical manner, of his own experiences, saying, "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you."—I Cor. 4:10-14

By these strong words he hoped to shock many of them into reality. The fact was that the time in which they were living was, and continues to be, a time for testing. We are not spared any of the difficult experiences of the world of mankind. All these are used as part of our training and

development by God to become associated with our sympathetic High Priest.

The Roman arena, in ancient times, was used also for games other than the violent ones where death to some person or animal was inevitable. Many of these were competitive in nature, and were the origin of our modern-day Olympics. In such events, spectators cheered their favorites on to victory, when often a crown-like wreath was received as prize. The emphasis of these games was not on a lust for blood, but rather on skills for success.

The Olympic games were established by the ancient Greeks in 776 B.C., and were held every four years until 396 A.D. However, there were no games during the Dark Ages. Upon being revived in 1896, they have continued to the present day. It is noteworthy that no wars were fought when the games were held; they were a symbol of peace. Among the main events were the foot-race, the pentathlon, boxing, and chariot and horse racing. The Apostle Paul used two of these events, the foot-race and boxing, as illustrations concerning the Christian life.

These pictures are given to us in I Corinthians 9:24-27: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

In the ancient Olympic games, no one could participate unless he had previously trained intensively for ten months to develop particular skills, living a rigorous life, having practiced self-denial by avoiding gratification of the flesh. The contestant had to offer proof of having met these qualifications before he would be allowed to put forth his best efforts in the competition to win the prize. The prize, as

described by the Apostle Paul, was merely a perishable crown. But those who compete in the race for the prize of the high calling do so to gain an imperishable crown.—I Cor. 9:25

We can compare the required training for the ancient Olympic games to the Christian's necessary study of God's Word and his application of Christian principles in daily life. The development of their skills can be likened to the development of the fruits of the Holy Spirit by the Christian. The need for self denial practiced by the contestants of that era, and their putting aside of the gratification of the flesh, reminds us how we are required to sacrifice and to lay down our lives in the service of God. All this training is then put to the test in the final contest. So, too, we need to persevere in our battle with the world, our flesh, and the Devil, for as the Apostle Paul has said, "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."—Heb. 10:36

Specific applications were made by the Apostle Paul of the foot-race, and boxing, the two events he selected as illustrations of the Christian's development. He uses the foot-race to show the need for proper grounding in the faith, and boxing to demonstrate character development. This figure of a foot-race is again employed by Paul in the Book of Galatians.

Many brethren from the province of Galatia were Jews who started in the Christian way still adhering to the Law Covenant. The Apostle Paul desired to help them understand that the Law had led them to Christ, and that having come into the body of Christ, they no longer were under the Law. But they drifted away, and once more became enmeshed in the same problem, causing Paul to write to them again on the matter. In his second letter he established first his special selection as an apostle, told of the unique revelations he had received from God, and then he told them of certain Judean brethren who attempted to convince Gentile converts in

Antioch to be circumcised according to the Law. Finally, Paul attended a conference which was convened at Jerusalem to resolve this important matter. He reported the results, using the illustration of a racecourse: "I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain."—Gal. 2:2

Here Paul used the racecourse as an illustration of his proper understanding of the doctrines of Christ which others were trying to subvert. He said, "Neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you."—Gal. 2:3-5

As he continued to explain to them in detail their position in the body of Christ, and the grace covenant pictured by Sarah, he admonished them further, climaxing his comments by using the racecourse again as an illustration:

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole Law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"—Gal. 5:1-7

And again, with this same illustration in mind, Paul said, "So run, that ye may obtain the prize." (I Cor. 9:24) And, once more, "I therefore so run, as not uncertainly."—I Cor. 9:26, **Diaglott**

Boxing is also employed by Paul as an illustration of character development, or of controlling the flesh. He said, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. . . . So fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."—I Cor. 9:25-27

Character development depends on subduing the fleshly imperfections and conforming to the image of Christ. Our shortcomings and failings constantly assert themselves, giving us trouble, and we need to beat them down as did the combatants in the Olympic games.

As we strive to become champions, we are being watched. The picture of an arena is used by Paul, and the on-lookers, in this case, are the faithful people of the Old Testament. The thought is not that they are alive and looking upon us, but rather that their achievements were so worthy of imitation that we should follow in their steps. As we are victorious, Paul says that their deeds "look upon us," since we have followed their examples. The apostle listed many heroes of faith, telling us of their successes in being faithful.—Heb. 11

With such examples before us, we are now to run the race as if they were the audience in a large amphitheatre. In particular, we are to look to our trainer and coach, Jesus, who has run this course before us, and has been highly, completely successful. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood,

striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the LORD, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.”—Heb. 12:1-5

The trials and tests are indeed difficult, but we cannot avoid them if we are to gain the crown of life. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the LORD hath promised to them that love him.” (James 1:12) The cross and crown emblem, used so widely by Bible Students, has the oft-stated significance, “If you bear the cross, you will win the crown.” This is usually combined with our text in Revelation 2:10, as a motto.

The experiences of the church at Smyrna are summarized very well in the words of Jesus when he told his disciples of events which would befall them prior to his presence. “Jesus . . . said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”—Matt. 24:4-13

In the middle of all these trials and tests to the church in Smyrna would come the Antichrist. “Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. . . . For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”—vss. 11, 24

Indeed, we have seen how false religious systems have sprung up in the interval of time from the Smyrna period of the church to the present Laodicean period. These systems have been largely responsible for the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the putting to death of many faithful saints, even as in the Smyrna period. "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."—Matt. 24:9

The conditions of apostasy are mentioned in every period of church history since the Smyrna era. But, in the last period, with the return of our Lord, he said he would no longer tolerate the conditions fostered by the apostate church system, but would take positive action against them. This action has precipitated tests upon all the LORD'S people living in the Laodicean period. We read of these in the message to the church of Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent."—Rev. 3:15-19

The last verse of this message is similar to the words of the Apostle Paul: "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the LORD, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without

chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”—Heb. 12:5-11

In this message the necessity and importance of chastening experiences is made clear. The manner in which we endure these ordeals, and the spirit that we manifest, is part of the arena picture. We are being watched. Will we become bitter because of the trials, or will we accept them as necessary for our development? The wrong spirit, if not purged, can affect the standing of the LORD’S people. The apostle cautions us saying, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”—Heb. 12:14, 15

The positive course to be taken is to seek holiness without which no man can see the LORD—this is the sure way to become an overcomer in the arena. The severe, difficult experiences are necessary if we are to gain the prize, and the LORD is very interested in our attaining victory. Hence he says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore and repent.”—Rev. 3:19

It only remains for us to cooperate with him in this program, since Jesus has done his part. Through his ransom sacrifice he made possible our hope of entering into the presence of God, which is depicted by the Most Holy of the Tabernacle. Paul’s words indicate this: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated

for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”—Heb. 10:19-22

We can be assured that God will do his part in helping us to achieve our goal, even as Paul reminds us, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)”—Heb. 10:23

But our task is to be faithful in meeting his requirements, and how can we accomplish this? The answer to this question is that we do it by mutually helping one another to achieve the love and good works which the LORD wants. “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”—Heb. 10:24, 25

But we cannot be victorious alone. First, daily we need God’s help, strength, and guidance, and that of his Son, Jesus. At this time we have the special invitation extended by Jesus of permitting him to come into our hearts and to learn of him. “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” (Rev. 3:20) Are we availing ourselves of this privilege? Have we invited him to sup with us?

We also need the help of our brethren. We cannot become isolationists, but must make every effort to meet with others of like precious faith, so we can encourage one another to love and good works. If we do this we shall receive our LORD’S approval, promised to the church of the Laodicean period. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” And the fulfillment of our text, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10), will be our victory in the arena of this present

evil world.

There is nothing that can stand in the way of our victory! Unless we allow them, no foe can prevent us from gaining the prize! The Apostle Paul gives us this added assurance, "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." (Rom. 8:36,37) May we be inspired by these promises! Let us put forth every effort to gain the victory and the prize—the crown of life—through Christ who strengthens us, and through the Father who assists us to do his will. Let us be more than overcomers! □

• • • • •

"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 forever. Amen."

—Romans 11:33-36



Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

SEPTEMBER 4—There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment.—I John 4:18 (Z. '03-329 Hymn 172)

SEPTEMBER 11—Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.—Luke 14:27 (Z. '03-345 Hymn 202)

SEPTEMBER 18—My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.—Exodus 33:14 (Z. '03-376 Hymn 161)

SEPTEMBER 25—Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness (justification), and sanctification, and redemption (deliverance).—I Corinthians 1:30 (Z. '03-440 Hymn 126)

"FRANK and ERNEST"

SUNDAYS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

ALABAMA Sheffield	WSHF 1290	1:30 p.m.	Grand Rapids	WMAX 1480	8:45 a.m.
ARIZONA Nogales	KFBR 1340	9:15 a.m.	MINNESOTA Minneapolis	KUXL 1570	2:15 p.m.
ARKANSAS Little Rock(Sat.)	KAAY 1090	10:30 p.m.	MISSOURI St. Louis	KSTL 690	4:00 p.m.
CALIFORNIA Glendale	KIEV 870	1:45 p.m.	MONTANA Kalispell	KGEZ 600	9:45 p.m.
Redding	KSXO 600	7:45 a.m.	NEW JERSEY Salem	WNNN-FM 101.7	9:45 a.m.
Sacramento	KJAY 1430	10:00 a.m.	NEW MEXICO Los Alamos	KRSN 1490	8:15 a.m.
San Francisco	KEST 1450	3:30 p.m.	NEW YORK Buffalo	WHLD 1270	12:00 noon
Tehachapi	KTPI-FM 103.1	10:15 a.m.	New York	WOR 710	12:00 mid.
CONNECTICUT Groton	WSUB 980	8:15 a.m.	OHIO Cincinnati	WNOP 740	9:00 a.m.
COLORADO Englewood	KQXI 1550	3:15 p.m.	OREGON Portland	KKEY 1150	7:00 a.m.
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Washington	WYCB 1340	2:30 p.m.	PENNSYLVANIA Allentown	LVBA 1600	10:45 a.m.
FLORIDA Cypress Gdns.	WGTO 540	7:30 a.m.	Berwick	WBRX 1280	12:00 noon
Jacksonville	WBIX 1010	1:15 p.m.	Jenkintown	WIBF-FM (Wed.) 103.9	2:00 p.m.
GEORGIA Augusta	WHGI 1050	10:45 a.m.	Pottstown	WPAZ 1370	12:45 p.m.
Vidalia	WVOP 970	1:00 p.m.	SOUTH CAROLINA Beaufort (Fri.)	WVGB 1490	5:00 p.m.
HAWAII Honolulu	KNDI 1270	11:45 a.m.	Charleston	WOKL 1340	7:06 p.m.
ILLINOIS LaSalle	WLPO 1220	9:45 a.m.	Lancaster	WAGL 1560	9:30 a.m.
Rockford	WXTA 1330	6:15 a.m.	TENNESSEE Memphis	WMSO 640	10:00 a.m.
West Frankfort	WFRX 1300	9:15 a.m.	TEXAS Fort Worth	KFJZ 870	6:15 a.m.
INDIANA Hammond	WJOB 1230	8:30 a.m.	Pearsall	KVWG 1280	9:15 a.m.
LaPorte	WCOE-FM 96.7	10:00 a.m.	VIRGINIA Richmond	WGGM 1410	7:45 a.m.
KANSAS Goodland	KLOE 730	8:15 a.m.	WASHINGTON Clarkston	KCLK 1430	10:00 a.m.
KENTUCKY Bowling Green	WLBJ 1410	8:00 a.m.	Everett	KWYZ 1230	9:30 a.m.
Winchester	WHRB	10:30 a.m.	Spokane	KUDY 1280	9:45 a.m.
MARYLAND Baltimore	WCBM 68	6:45 a.m.	Tacoma	KAMT 1360	7:30 a.m.
MAINE Portland	WDCS-FM 106.3	9:45 a.m.	Yakima	KUTI 980	6:45 a.m.
MICHIGAN Pontiac	WPON 1460	6:45 a.m.	WISCONSIN Milwaukee	WNOV 85.6	7:00 a.m.
Pontiac	WPON 1460	10:00 p.m.	WYOMING Cheyenne	KSHY 1370	10:15 a.m.
			Sheridan	KWYO 1410	12:00 noon

PUERTO RICO
 Aguadilla WABA (Fri.) 8:00 p.m.

U.S. BROADCASTS—Spanish Language

ARIZONA
 Nogales KFBR 1340 9:00 a.m.

FLORIDA
 Miami WRHC 8:30 a.m.

CANADIAN BROADCASTS

ALBERTA
 Edmonton CJOI 3:00 p.m.
 Lethbridge CJOC 7:15 a.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
 Castlegar CKQR 8:45 a.m.
 Duncan CKAY 9:00 a.m.
 Duncan CKAY 7:30 p.m.
 Grand Forks CKGF 9:00 a.m.
 Penticton CIGV 10:15 p.m.

LABRADOR
 Churchill Falls CFCL-FM 97.9 7:15 a.m.

MANITOBA
 Winnipeg CKJS 9:00 a.m.

NEWFOUNDLAND
 Corner Brook CFCB 570 7:15 a.m.
 Deer Lake CFDL-FM 97.9 7:15 a.m.
 Goose Bay CFLN 1230 7:15 a.m.
 Pt. au Choix CFNW 790 7:15 a.m.
 Pt. aux Basques CFGN 1230 7:15 a.m.
 St. Andrews CFCV-FM 97.7 7:15 a.m.
 St. Anthony CFNN-FM 97.9 7:15 a.m.
 Stephenville CFSX 910 7:15 a.m.
 Wabush CFLW 1340 7:15 a.m.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
 Yellowknife CJCD 9:00 a.m.

ONTARIO
 Hamilton CKOC 7:00 a.m.
 Leamington CHYR 5:00 p.m.
 St. Thomas CHLO 10:45 a.m.

QUEBEC
 Montreal CFMB 5:15 p.m.

SASKATCHEWAN
 Prince Albert CKBI 900 7:30 a.m.
 Weyburn CFSL 1190 7:15 a.m.

YUKON
 Whitehorse CKRW 9:30 a.m.

OVERSEAS BROADCASTS

BRITISH ISLES
 Radio Caroline (Tues.) KHZ 962 8:45 p.m.

BRITISH WEST INDIES
 Grand Cayman Radio Cayman 9:30 a.m.

CEYLON
 Colombo Radio Sri Lanka (Sat.) 7:15 p.m.

HONG KONG
 Radio Villa Verde (Fri.) 6:00 p.m.

ITALY (Italian)
 Europa Radio Milano

83.3-FM 11:30 a.m.
 Euro Tele Radio Calabria

MHZ 102 (Fri.) 5:30 p.m.
 Radio Corleone Centrale

FM-88-500 FM92 11:00 a.m.

MEXICO (Spanish)
 Mazatlan XECQ 8:30 a.m.

NEW ZEALAND
 Dunedin 4XD 11:15 a.m.
 Whakatane IXX 6:45 a.m.

NIGERIA
 Radio Africa (Wed.) 8:00 p.m.

PANAMA
 Panama City HOQ 1250 10:30 a.m.

PHILIPPINES
 Manila (Sat.) DWXX 1026KH2 7:15 p.m.

SOUTH AFRICA
 Joubert Park (Thurs.)

SWAZI Music Radio 1400 &
 shortwave 49 & 60 9:00 p.m.

SPAIN (Spanish)
 Radio Girona (Mon.) 9:45 p.m.

TONGA
 Nuku' Alofa (Mon.) 10:15 a.m.

URUGUAY (Spanish)
 Montevideo (Sun.) 9:15 a.m.
 Radio El Espectador 810

VIRGIN ISLANDS
 St. Croix WSTX 970 9:00 a.m.



Ye are the light
 of the world.
 Matthew 5:14

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Christian Life and Doctrine

TIMES AND SIGNS SERIES

PART 3

The Appearing and Revealment of Jesus Christ

*“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious
appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”*

Titus 2:13

A TRAGIC sense of loss must have filled the hearts of the disciples when Jesus, having appeared to them for the last time before his ascension, suddenly departed, and in a manner which left no doubt that the short seasons of fellowship they had been enjoying with him subsequent to his resurrection had come to an end. Two angels appeared and said to them, “This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner,” thus giving them assurance that he would one day return, yet they knew that for the time being they must carry on without the help of his personal presence.

Under these circumstances, and because they realized that all they hoped for in and through him would not be realized until he did return, his coming again took on an aspect of tremendous importance to them. Christ’s

return and coming kingdom, together with their hoped-for share in his kingdom, was indeed a "blessed hope." In fact, it was the center of all their hopes. Just as Paul reasoned that if there were no resurrection of the dead, the Christian's faith and preaching are vain, so it would be if Christ did not return; for it was after his return that the promised resurrection of the dead, of both the church and the world was to take place.

It was not until the foretold falling away from the true faith of the Gospel occurred and the nominal church joined hands with the state, thinking thus to establish Christ's kingdom apart from his personal presence, that the hope of his return began to lose its lustre, and ultimately ceased to be a vital factor in the lives of nominal Christians. But the spurious and misguided efforts of man have not changed the divine plan concerning the return of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom. To those who take God at his word, this aspect of his plan is still of fundamental importance, and they are anxious to become as well acquainted with its details as possible.

God's providences, at times, permit important features of his plan to be brought into disrepute through misunderstandings. Jesus, for example, was born in the honorable town of Bethlehem, yet he was reputed to come from the less honorable town of Nazareth, causing Nathanael, who considered following him, to inquire, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46) So during the nineteenth century some of God's earnest people formulated false conceptions of the second coming of Christ, and proclaimed them widely. Their views on the subject were wrong, and their expectations failed. This brought odium on the subject of the second advent. In view of this, only the honest-hearted who are determined to know the truth, and are willing to have it cost them ignominy, are likely to make a serious study of this aspect of the blessed

hope, referred to by Paul in our text.

Improved Translations

For many centuries during the Middle Ages the Bible was virtually buried in dead languages. During this period many strange notions developed concerning God's design toward his human creation. When the Bible began to be translated into the languages of the common people these distorted views influenced the work of the translators to a considerable extent. An example of this is found in the English translations of the Hebrew word **sheol** and the Greek word **hades**. Both words simply mean the state of death, but in many instances they were translated in a manner seemingly to support the traditional theory of eternal torture for the wicked.

The effect of error on the work of the early translators is also apparent in many of the prophecies pertaining to the return of Christ. The theory which developed during the Dark Ages held that Christ would return to earth as a sort of glorified man. In this form he was suddenly to appear in the sky, be visible to the entire human race for a short time, and then as he approached closer to the earth it was to be enveloped in flames, the unconverted of the human race whisked off to a place of torture, while the saints would be taken to heaven. All of this was to begin and to be completed within one twenty-four hour day.

This distorted conception of the return of Christ, and its purpose, caused the scholars to translate one of the Greek words used in the New Testament prophecies by our English word 'coming', when its real meaning is 'presence'. In their twisted theology there was simply no way in which Christ could be present in the earth for more than a few hours. He was to return, and go almost immediately away again, so they could not use the word presence.

The Greek word to which we have reference is

parousia. This word is used twice in the New Testament when it does not apply to Jesus, but to the Apostle Paul. These uses of the word establish its real meaning. Paul expresses others' appraisal of him, saying, "His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence [**parousia**] is weak." (II Cor. 10:10) And again, writing to the saints at Philippi, Paul says, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence [**parousia**] only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."—Phil. 2:12

It can be seen at once that the use of the word coming to translate the Greek word **parousia** in either of the foregoing texts would have given an entirely wrong meaning to Paul's words. In these texts it is the presence of a human being that is involved, so we understand what Paul means. He is not discussing his coming or arrival, but his actual presence. So we need only to reason from the understandable into the realm in which we do not fully understand in order to realize what the prophecies mean which discuss the second **parousia** of our Lord; that meaning being his actual presence, not his coming.

The first time the Greek word **parousia** is used in the New Testament prophecies is in Matthew 24:3. In this text the disciples asked Jesus, "What shall be the sign of thy presence [**parousia**]?" This means that all the signs which Jesus outlined in response to this question are not signs that he would soon return, but evidences that he had already returned, and was present.

Another interesting text in which **parousia** appears is I Corinthians 15:22, 23. It reads, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming [**parousia**, presence]." Here the reference is to the thousand years of Christ's presence, the

thousand years of his reign. During that time the whole world will have an opportunity to repent, obey the laws of the kingdom, and, through Christ who redeemed them from Adamic death, receive everlasting life.

Still another very interesting use of the Greek word **parousia** is by the Apostle Peter. We quote, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and presence [**parousia**] of the Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." (II Pet. 1:16) Here Peter is referring to his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration, when, together with James and John, he saw Christ transfigured before him. He did not see Jesus coming, but **present**. He was there with them, and Peter uses the word **parousia** to describe this blessed experience. Peter uses this incident on the Mount of Transfiguration as an illustration of the power and majesty of Jesus during the thousand years of his kingdom.

Peter again uses the word **parousia** when, discussing the subject of Christ's presence, he writes, "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise [evidence] of his coming [**parousia**, presence]? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (II Pet. 3:3,4) No scoffer has ever questioned the fact that the Bible promises the return of Christ, which is the implication of the **King James Translation** in which the word coming incorrectly translates **parousia**. The question raised by the scoffers is whether or not we can believe Christ has returned, and is present, since everything in the world, as they see it, seems to go along as usual.

Epiphania

Another Greek word used in the New Testament with reference to Christ's return is **epiphania**, which means

'manifestation', or 'bright-shining'. It is used in prophecies which directly or indirectly refer to the manifestation of the fact that the Lord is present. One of the most significant uses of this word is in II Thessalonians 2:8. We quote: "Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness [**epiphania**] of his presence [**parousia**]."

The wicked one referred to in this text is the great Antichrist system, the Man of Sin, the Mystery of Iniquity. It is a system which came into being through the union of church and state. It is not merely a false church, but the illicit union of the false church with civil power. This union, it was claimed, was the kingdom of Christ on earth. Its principal headquarters was in Rome.

Paul explains that this system would be destroyed by the **epiphania**, the bright-shining, that is, of Christ's **parousia**, or presence. This bright-shining is not a glare of literal light from the sky, but rather is that great "increase of knowledge" foretold by the Prophet Daniel. (Dan. 12:4) Nor does it imply that all ungodly civil and religious authority in the earth would at once be destroyed. It was to be of gradual accomplishment.

Through the printing press, radio, television, world travel, and in other ways, the prophetic increase of knowledge is helping to break down superstition, and thus to weaken the power of false systems of religion over millions of people. It has led to the separation of church and state in practically every country of Europe, even in Italy, where the pope's civil authority is limited to the Vatican City. Thus the union that formed the Antichrist is already essentially broken. Other forms of government have taken its place throughout most of the old Roman world.

The ecclesiastical aspect of this union is symbolized in Revelation by a harlot woman. This 'woman' is still

making boastful claims, and deluding countless millions with her superstitions. But even so, in Italy today, unlike the past, there are millions who are not afraid to vote contrary to the wishes of the church. And the Gospel of the true kingdom of Christ can now be preached in Italy, which was a thing impossible in the heyday of Antichrist's power.

But this is only the beginning. As the prophetic increase of knowledge continues, the people will become more and more enlightened so that eventually every vestige of superstition's power over the people will be completely destroyed. The threat of purgatory, for example, will then no longer strike fear into the heart of a single individual, for all will have learned there is no purgatory, and that the great Creator of the universe is a God of love and mercy. Then the knowledge of the LORD will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.—Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14

Thus we see that the **epiphania** of the Lord's **parousia** refers to the circumstances which make manifest the fact that Christ has returned. There might be an object in a dark room, but its presence is not realized by those in the room until the light is turned on. Then the object would be manifested by the light. The light that manifests the presence of Christ is the foretold increase of knowledge.

However, this increase of knowledge takes place, not alone in the fields of science and invention, but in the hearts and minds of the LORD'S own people as well, enlightening them with a clear understanding of the divine plan of the ages as revealed in the Bible. In this respect, the increase of knowledge is described by Jesus as "meat in due season." (Matt. 24:45; Luke 12:37) Concerning it Daniel wrote, "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." (Dan. 12:10) The reference here is, of course, to those who are made wise by the wisdom that cometh from above.

One of Jesus' references to 'meat in due season' is recorded in Luke 12:37. The text reads, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." In verse forty-two Jesus gives us an additional thought: "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?"

Here is confirmation of the fact that during the early part of Jesus' second presence only his own true followers would know about it. In this prophecy there is no reference to the world at all. It is as though Jesus returned only to his own people. What he does for them is to provide meat in due season. There is a further reference to this made in Matthew 24:45-47. In verse forty-eight of this chapter reference is made to the possibility that an "evil servant" would charge that the Lord had delayed his coming. If the return of Christ were accompanied literally by a burning earth and flaming heavens, no one would charge that he had not come. It is because his presence would, to begin with, be known only to the faithful watchers, and the fact grasped by them upon the basis of faith, that some could say it is not true.

And what is this first evidence which manifests his presence, that for the watchers constitutes the beginning of the **epiphania**, or bright-shining of his presence? It is the fact that meat in due season is provided for the watchers. Meat is used in the Bible as a symbol of truth, the truth of God's plan, the divine plan of the ages. In this reference the additional thought is given that the truth would be in due season, seasonable, that is, to the time in which it was revealed.

The Apostle Peter presents a similar thought by the expression "present truth." (II Pet. 1:12) In Noah's day

it was present truth—meat in due season—that the Flood was about to come. Nearly two thousand years ago it was meat in due season that Jesus was born, that he had been made flesh, and that he gave his flesh, his humanity, in sacrifice for the sins of the world. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and later upon Cornelius and his family, the first Gentile converts, was present truth to the Early Church.

At that time there was also another very important feature of truth revealed which particularly was meat in due season for the first disciples, and it continued to serve as nourishing spiritual food for the LORD'S people throughout the entire age from then until now. It was the truth Paul referred to as a “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

This great salvation is also described by Paul as the “prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14) And again as the “heavenly calling.” (Heb. 3:1) Peter speaks of it as “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you [margin, us].” (I Pet. 1:4) Paul said this heavenly reward began to be spoken by Jesus, and it was. He said to his disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, ye may be also.”—John 14:2, 3

This glorious, or heavenly, hope was not offered to the people of God prior to the first advent of Christ. But with the first advent of Jesus it was the due season for it to be made known; for, in the plan of God, this glorious prize was to be offered to those willing to suffer and die with the Master, being inspired to do so by the hope of living and reigning with him.

Because it was then the due time for this meat, this truth, to be served to the LORD'S people, great stress

was laid upon it by the apostles, and it captivated the minds and hearts of all the true believers in the Early Church. However, they did not overlook the fact that the divine plan also provided a hope of life on the earth for all mankind, and that this feature of the divine purpose would become operative during what Peter described as “times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”—Acts 3:19-21

But, as the apostles correctly understood the matter, restitution blessings were not due to reach the world until the work of the Gospel Age was completed; the work, that is, of calling and preparing those who would be partakers of the heavenly calling. This meant that the times of restitution were not due to begin until after the second advent of Jesus, and that it would be the major work to be accomplished during the thousand years of his kingdom reign.

Since the hope of restitution applied to a future age, and not to the LORD’S people of this age, it was but natural that it should be more and more overlooked by the LORD’S people to whom it did not specially apply. Consequently, shortly after the apostles fell asleep, the hope that the world of mankind would be restored to human perfection on the earth following the return of Christ was soon almost completely ignored. And even worse, it became buried, and thus hidden in the rubbish of human tradition.

How could there be times of restitution of all things, and also eternal torture for all who did not qualify to be in heaven with Jesus? How could mankind be restored to perfect human life on the earth, if the earth were to be destroyed at the second coming of Christ? How could Jesus be made flesh, and give his humanity for the life of the world, thus opening up the way for human restitution, if he were God himself, or a third part of a trinity of gods?

However, for the LORD'S true saints throughout the age, few in number though they were, the heavenly hope continued to shine. It lost some of its lustre from being seen apart from other jewels of truth which constitute that glorious galaxy which is the divine plan of the ages. But it was still a glorious hope to the "wheat," who, as "children of the kingdom," stood alone among the overwhelming number of "tares" which, as a result of Satan's planting, grew up around them. — Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43

Knowledge Increases

It was about the beginning of the nineteenth century that the Bible, through its translations into various languages, and by means of the printing press, began to come into general use. Various facets of truth and half-truths were discovered and emphasized by different reformers. Indeed, this began much earlier. But it was not until the nineteenth century that there was any large degree of freedom for Bible study; and this freedom was particularly operative in America.

Outstanding among the students and exponents of the Bible during the nineteenth century was Mr. William Miller. He did much to revive interest in the prophecies pertaining to Christ's second advent. There were millions who professed to follow his teachings along this line. Mr. Miller found time prophecies in the Bible which he believed pointed out the exact hour in which Jesus would return to earth. He set the date and proclaimed it. This was due to occur in 1844. But Jesus did not come as expected, and there was great disappointment.

Although Mr. Miller learned much truth from the Bible, and proclaimed it, he did not understand the real purpose of Christ's return. He continued to believe the truth-beclouding tradition of the Dark Ages that Jesus would suddenly appear in the sky, snatch up his followers to

himself, and then set the earth on fire, and thus make an end of human experience.

But out of the bitter disappointment resulting from the failure of Brother Miller's predictions came a great searching of the Scriptures for more and better information. Among those who thus earnestly studied the more sure word of prophecy was a small group in Allegheny, now Pittsburgh, Northside, Pennsylvania. Out of this searching of the Word came startling discoveries of truths, not new truths, but truths which had lain almost completely hidden and ignored throughout the centuries.

Pastor C.T. Russell, who was one of those who participated in this group study, reported that one of the most significant truths they learned was that the purpose of Christ's return was not the destruction of the earth and of the unbelieving human race, but the ushering in of what Peter had foretold as the times of restitution of all things. Naturally, the proper understanding of this basic truth of God's Word helped to clarify all the other features of the divine plan.

To realize that it was God's purpose to restore the human race to perfection as it was enjoyed by Adam, helped to clarify the doctrine of the ransom. It was discerned that the word ransom really implies a substitution, and that Jesus gave his perfect humanity as a substitute for the perfect life of Adam. This, in turn, meant that Jesus could not be resurrected as a man. Therefore, his second coming would not be as a man, but as a glorious divine being, invisible to human eyes.

It was then, also, that the great salvation offered to the followers of Jesus during the present age began to take on a more brilliant lustre. Now it was seen that the heavenly hope implied much more than merely being saved. It was now discerned that those who make their calling and

election sure, and receive an abundant entrance into the heavenly phase of Christ's kingdom, will reign with him for a thousand years, and share in the work of restoring the remainder of mankind to life on the earth.

The Due Time

So, while restitution was the one great truth which came to light in that study of the watchers in the early seventies of the last century, its discovery helped to bring into proper focus every precious doctrine of the divine plan as revealed in the Bible. Besides, the hope of restitution was indeed meat in due season, because it was revealed to the watchers as the Gospel Age was drawing to a close; following which, the Millennial Age, during which restitution was to be offered to believers, would begin. It was present truth indeed, for the turning point between the ages.

While church historians reveal that from time to time the idea of human restoration, or restitution, was suggested by an occasional individual, certainly it was not clearly understood. It is possible that a dim outline of this great truth was held in the hearts of more than those who feebly and confusedly gave voice to it. But when, in the end of the age, the watchers discovered it, and at the same time realized how it brought harmony to the entire Bible, it was no longer possible to keep it a secret.

There was one of those faithful watchers—Pastor Russell—whom the LORD, providentially, had placed in a position to do something about it. Fired with enthusiasm and love, Brother Russell had the message printed and delivered to churches throughout the entire United States as “**Food for Thinking Christians.**” Thus the great trumpet began to sound. The meat in due season began to be proclaimed throughout Christendom. As time went on, the hearts of thousands were caused to rejoice. Whether

accepted or rejected, the import of this message was generally recognized. Its opponents dubbed it 'Millennial Dawnism'. They knew it pertained to the thousand years of Christ's reign. The fact that all mankind were to have an opportunity to be restored to human perfection was critically referred to as the doctrine of the 'second chance'. But whether they believed or disbelieved, Christendom heard the trumpet!

Christ's Presence Recognized

As we give close consideration to these facts, and realize that a group of faithful watchers were given meat in due season, the implication is that the Lord's second presence, his **parousia**, must have then begun, for this was to be the first manifestation of his return. This, we believe, is the only logical conclusion that can be reached. What it means is that Christ did return, and the bright-shining of his **parousia**, his **epiphania**, manifested his presence to the watchers.

So we see that the fact of Christ's presence is one thing, while the manifestation of this fact to the people of God is necessary if they are to rejoice in this glorious forward step of the divine plan. So, from that time in the seventies of the last century, watchers in Zion have recognized the bright-shining of the Lord's presence, his **parousia**; for, through the truth of the divine plan, and by the fulfillment of prophecies pertaining to world events, Christ has manifested himself to them.

But the presence of Christ has not yet been manifested to the world in general. The bright-shining of his **parousia** must and will continue to increase, until the presence of the great king of the new world is manifested to all. Paul wrote to Timothy, saying, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing [**epiphania**] and his

kingdom.” (II Tim. 4:1) This text has particularly to do with the time when the presence, the **parousia**, of our Lord will be manifested to the world, through the work of judgment and the functioning of the messianic kingdom.

In our text, Paul said, “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing [**epiphania**] of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13) In a limited way this text is now being fulfilled in the experiences of the watchers, to whom the presence of Christ has been manifested. However, the blessed hope of all Christ’s true followers is to see the LORD face to face. But this will not be while they are in the flesh. John wrote, “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he [it] shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3:1-3) It will be then that God and our Savior Jesus Christ will be fully manifested to those who are to live and reign with him.

Apokalupsis

There is still another Greek word used in the promises and prophecies of the New Testament. It is **apokalupsis**. The literal meaning of this word is ‘to reveal, by uncovering, or unveiling’. Like the word **epiphania**, it means to make manifest that which already is present. With **epiphania**, this manifestation is by a bright-shining, whereas with **apokalupsis** it is by uncovering, or unveiling. So far as the results accomplished are concerned, there is actually not too much difference in the meaning of the two words.

As with Christ’s **epiphania**, so with his **apokalupsis**, this manifestation, this revelation to the watchers through fulfilled prophecies, is only the beginning. It will be continued until he is revealed to the whole world of mankind. One of the prophecies referring to this, reads, “The LORD hath made bare [uncovered] his holy arm

[Christ] in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” —Isa. 52:10

To begin with, the presence of Christ will be revealed to the world under severe circumstances. Paul wrote, “To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed [**apokalupsis**] from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. —II Thess. 1:7

“Rest with us,” Paul exhorted. The well-nigh unhampered reign of evil throughout the world has always been a severe test upon the people of God, who wonder why God allows his name to be blasphemed, and his people to suffer. Paul’s assurance was that this would not continue forever, that Christ would return, and would be revealed in power and great glory to the world; and in the exercise of his power, would destroy all evil and evildoers.

Peter describes one aspect of the time of Christ’s second presence as “the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” But Peter adds that the day he refers to is a thousand years in length, then explains that God is “long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” —II Pet. 3:7-9

That will be the world’s day of judgment, and it will be a day of perdition, or destruction, for all who, when given a full opportunity under the enlightenment and regulations of that time, prove to be incorrigible sinners.

Jesus’ parable of the sheep and the goats, illustrates this. (Matt. 25:31-46) In the introduction to this parable Jesus said, “When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” (Matt. 25:31) In the text already quoted (II Thess. 1:7,8), Paul expresses a similar

thought, saying that “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed [**apokalupsis**] from heaven with his mighty angels.” And here we have a further precious truth with respect to the **apokalupsis** aspect of our Lord’s second presence; namely, that when his presence is revealed to the world, and his power and great glory are unveiled before all nations, his footstep followers, raised from the dead in the first resurrection, and exalted to glory, honor, and immortality, will be with him, and share in the glory of his revealment.

Peter wrote, “Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation [**apokalupsis**, revealment] of the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:18,19) The sons of God here referred to are those who constitute God’s ruling house of sons composed of Jesus and his true followers. It will be through these, and during the thousand years of the kingdom, that all creation, all the families of the earth, will be blessed.

It is truly a wonderful privilege now to be living in a transition period between two ages, yes, even between two worlds! The Gospel Age is rapidly drawing to a close, and the thousand-year age of Christ’s kingdom is near. More than that, a world is also coming to an end, and a new world is soon to be established—a world in which will dwell righteousness. (II Pet. 3:13) How honored are the Lord’s watchers at this time, who, by the eye of faith, are able to discern in the momentous events of our time, the presence, the **parousia**, of our Lord!

Let us rejoice also that while as yet his presence is known only by the few, in God’s due time, which is near, it will be manifested to all mankind. If to the Early Church the promise of Christ’s appearing constituted a blessed hope, as our text states, how much more blessed it is now to realize that that hope is being translated into reality, and that soon the glory of his presence will be revealed to all mankind,

when the world will say, "This is our God; we have waited for him, . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." —
Isa. 25:9 □

Divine Help for the Humble

SOLOMON says that "a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again." (Prov. 24:16) If we are truly brokenhearted over our shortcomings, then the LORD will be nigh to help us; but he resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. The LORD has not promised to prevent us from making mistakes, because he knows that we need such afflictions to break our hearts and to make us contrite. For the same reason God permits afflictions of other kinds—he knows they are good for us as new creatures in Christ—for they are among the all things which are bound, under this overruling, to work together for our best interests as Christians.—Rom. 8:28-30



The Apostle Paul had a great affliction, a thorn in the flesh, from which he earnestly sought deliverance; but God did not deliver him. Instead, Paul received the assurance of divine grace to help him bear the constant goading of that thorn—"My grace is sufficient for thee." (II Cor. 12:7-10) Perhaps our thorn in the flesh is some weakness of character that causes us to err repeatedly along some particular line. The LORD may permit us to fall seven times, or even seventy times seven, yet he picks us up each time, graciously delivering and forgiving us.

The secret of obtaining God's blessings through all our afflictions is to have a humble heart, a contrite spirit. He may permit us to fall in order that we may be kept humble. He may permit other afflictions for the same purpose; but when we humbly cry to him in our distress, he will deliver us. Upon this we can depend! In this assurance we can go on in the narrow way toward the kingdom. □

Speakers' Appointments

These speakers are associated with the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their services are furnished free upon request. Write to: Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged when possible.

D. HOLLIDAY	Portland, ME	9	
Victoria, B.C.	September 2, 3	Boston, MA	10
Wenatchee, WA	4, 5	North Brookfield, MA	11
Seattle, WA	6, 7	Groton/New London Convention	14
		St. Louis, MO Convention	20, 21
G. PASSIOS		L.B. POST	
Allentown, PA	September 21	Pittsburgh, PA	September 20, 21
Pottstown, PA	21	Detroit, MI	28
E.K. PENROSE		J.H. SNYDER	
New Haven, CT	September 2	Middletown, NY	September 14
Hartford, CT	3	J.W. TATE	
Agawam, MA	4	New Haven, CT	September 21
Vergennes, VT	7		

Obituaries

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

Sister Josephine Kusmierski, Grand Rapids, MI—April 11. Age, 93.

Brother Stephen Hula, Grand Rapids, MI—May 16. Age, 70.

Brother Herman Freiberg, Monessen, PA—June 22. Age, 92.

Sister Lucille Wesol, Hebron, IN—July 15. Age, 64.

We appreciate information concerning any brethren to be included in this list.

Conventions

JACKSON, MI, August 30-September 1—Inn on Jackson Square, 1 Jackson Sq. Mrs. Ray Lumley, 253' Ashton Rd., Jackson 49203

SEATTLE, WA, August 30-September 1—St. Thomas Center, Kenmore, WA. Contact: Mrs. C. Christiansen, 2404 E. 16th St., Bremer-

ton, WA 98310

GREATER NEW LONDON AREA

September 14—Mohegan Community College, Mahan Drive, Norwich, CT. Contact: Miss Jewel Franco, 29 Cutler St., Groton, CT 06340

ST. LOUIS, MO, September 20, 21—Rodeway Inn South, 3660 South Lindberg Blvd., 63127. Contact: Mrs. Jane Prutzman, 10709 Wheeling Court, 63136
Phone: (314) 868-1986

PITTSBURGH AREA, September 20, 21—Sewickly Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA. For information contact: Mr Mike Balko, 501 Pittsburgh St, West Newton 15089.

MILWAUKEE, WI, October 4, 5—

Aurora Hall, 734 North 26th St.
Contact: Mrs. John Pazucha, 4454 South 14th Street #3, 53221

GRAND RAPIDS, MI October 11, 12—Kenowa Hills High School, 3950 Hendershot, NW. Contact: Ruth Kowalski, Secy., 862 First St. NW, 49504
Phone: (616) 456-5069

ORLANDO, FL, October 25, 26—Orlando Garden Club, 710 E. Rollins St., Orlando. Contact: Mrs. Stanley Jeuck, 587 Queens Mirror Circle, Casselberry, FL 32707

SAN DIEGO, CA, November 28-30—LaJolla Village Inn, 3299 Holiday Court, LaJolla. Contact: Ruth Rice, 8060 Wing Span Drive, San Diego 92119
Phone: (619) 589-1534

Under His Wings

Under His wings I am safely abiding;
Tho' the night deepens and tempests are wild,
Still I can trust Him; I know He will keep me;
He has redeemed me, and I am His child.

Under His wings, what a refuge in sorrow!
How the heart yearningly turns to His rest!
Often when earth has no balm for my healing,
There I find comfort, and there I am blest.

Under His wings,
O what precious enjoyment!
There will I hide till life's trials are o'er;
Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me;
Resting in Jesus I'm safe evermore.