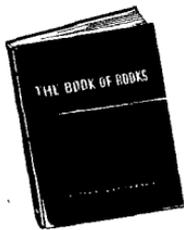




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Highlights of Dawn

The Healing of the Nations

FROM the time he was created and placed on this planet Earth man's abiding concern has been to stay alive as long as he could, and do so with as much comfort as conditions might permit. Indeed, it was the Creator's plan that man should live forever on this wonderful planet, which in course of time would be transformed into a veritable world-wide Garden of Eden, wherein man's every need would be bountifully supplied, and where he might dwell in peace and happiness with all his fellows.

Sickness, sorrow, sin, strife and death—these words would never have found their way into man's vocabulary, for the conditions they represent would have had no place in that lovely global paradise. All mankind would have enjoyed perfect health. There would have been no need for doctors, for hospitals, nor healing medicines; there would have been no heart-rending partings caused by death, no funeral processions, no cemeteries.—Gen2:8-17

How very sad that a single untoward act of disobedience should have changed all this, and brought such tragic consequences upon the entire human race! Deprived of fellowship and communion with his Creator, and shorn of access to the fruit of the trees in the Garden, mental, moral, and

physical deterioration gradually but inevitably changed man from the image of God in which he had been created, to a pitiful, dying creature. (Gen. 3:17; 22-29) And the intervening centuries have brought forth a race that, at best, has enjoyed a measure of health for a season; or, at worst, has been subjected to blindness, palsy, and heart disease; to malaria, tuberculosis, and cancer; but which, whether at best or at worst, has ended for all in the grave.

Medical Knowledge Increases

To his credit, it must be said that man has used as best he can what remains of his God-given intellectual and moral qualities to relieve the physical sufferings of his fellows, to cure diseases, and to extend life. Medical colleges are presently producing outstanding physicians and surgeons. Finely equipped hospitals with the latest diagnostic and therapeutic devices and comforts dot the land. Modern medical practice has surely come a long way from Zipporah's use of a "sharp stone" to perform a circumcision on her son, or Job's employing a broken pot fragment to obtain relief from his boils! and imperfect though it still is, modern medicine has achieved some eminently creditable results.

One of the most beneficial accomplishments of present-day medicine has been the development of anesthesia, which mercifully renders the patient unconscious to pain so that delicate major operations may be performed. Prior to the use of anesthesia as we know it today, the consumption of quantities of alcohol or of addictive opiates provided some small amount of relief from the terrible pain of surgery. Even the drawing of decayed teeth was an agonizing experience, to be put off until absolutely unavoidable.

A system of anesthesia called acupuncture, which has been employed by the Chinese for some three thousand

years, has lately arrived in the United States. In preparing the patient for operation, the anesthetist inserts a varying number of needles in selected parts of the patient's body. To produce the desired anesthetic effect the operator then either twirls the needles rapidly between his fingers, or applies a slight electrical current to the needles. The proponents of this method claim that the patient will thenceforth feel no painful effects from the surgeon's activities; but some who have witnessed operations so conducted view the matter with considerable skepticism.

Vaccines Arrive

It was not until 1798 that the first successful vaccine was developed, specifically for use in the fight against smallpox. Theretofore there had been no effective weapon against this disease, and it periodically ran rampant in many parts of the world, reaping a horrible harvest of victims. Today, thanks to the vaccine, smallpox is rather effectively controlled. Since that time, numerous other vaccines have been produced which have significantly reduced the ravages incident to other serious ailments, such as polio, influenza, tuberculosis, typhoid, whooping cough, and rabies. But constant vigilance is required to keep diseases in check. At one time, polio and tuberculosis had been thought to have been virtually defeated; but overconfidence subsequently led to carelessness, and each of these diseases has lately served notice that in fact they are not entirely dead.

The influenza germ seems continually to be altering its composition, requiring the constant development of new vaccines to re-establish control. Recently, in Italy, a widespread and fatal outbreak of cholera occurred, apparently occasioned by the contamination of seafood by sewage. And in spite of intensive efforts to come to grips with that elusive scourge, cancer, little real progress has been made to date to banish it.

"That I Might Receive My Sight"

In the field of surgery, some remarkable advances have been made to bring relief to man from the sufferings and ailments resulting from his fall. Perhaps one of the most burdensome disabilities for man to endure is blindness. There are still many forms of blindness which even today cannot be helped by medicine or surgery; but for other forms, new techniques have had remarkable success, restoring sight to many who, not too many decades ago, would have gone to their graves in darkness.

Even a victim of damage to the cornea of the eye can today be the fortunate recipient of a healthy donated natural cornea which may have been stored as long as a year in liquid nitrogen at a temperature of minus 190 degrees centigrade, awaiting transplant to a grateful new owner. To such as these, how sweet must be the sight of a loved one, the glory of the cloud-flecked sky, the flowers, the ability to read one's Bible!

Also, for a particular hearing defect, operating procedures have lately been devised by which it is possible to remove certain mechanical "roadblocks" to the transmission of sound waves, providing the former sufferer with the joy of newly hearing the human voice, the song of the birds, the wind in the trees, the beating on the sands of the ocean's waves.

In recent years surgeons all over the world have, with some limited success, engaged in efforts to transplant vital human organs such as the lung, liver, kidney, and pancreas; and even the human heart. Cosmetic surgery has also lately come into its own. Professional people to whom appearance is important may have their faces shaped, noses or chins made more beautiful. Victims of automobile accidents, or mishaps at the workbench, may have features restored or reconstructed out of plastic. Then, for those suffering from

less serious disabilities and imperfections, there are countless helps in the form of eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, and even hair transplants. And what shall we say of the recent "outbreak" of wigs—whether needed, or not!

Truly, the increase of knowledge that has come about in the latter days, and which has catapulted the industrial nations of the world into unprecedented growth and affluence, has also manifested itself in the medical world. But in spite of everything the medical profession can do to alleviate the distresses and pains of a suffering world, it amounts in the end to but a temporary relief; for, ultimately and inevitably, all mankind go down to their graves. The funeral processions never cease, the cemeteries require ever more ground.

"No Balm in Gilead?"

Is this the most that a suffering world may hope for? Can man expect but a few short years of intermittent joy and sorrow, and then death? "Is there no balm in Gilead?" (Jer. 8:22) Joyously, the Bible proclaims that indeed there is! Whereas man brought suffering and death upon himself by disobedience, yet the loving Creator has not abandoned his original purpose that man should live happily and everlastingly upon this earth.

And that is the glorious theme and blessed promise of God's Word from beginning to end. It is referred to in the Bible by the Apostle Peter as "the" restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:21) This wonderful prospect is opened to view by reason of the offering for sin which was made by Jesus on behalf of all mankind. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."—I Cor. 15:21,22

At his first advent, Jesus wrought many miracles on behalf of the afflicted among whom he found himself. On one occasion a blind begger sitting by the side of the road learned that Jesus was about to pass by. He had no doubt heard of this One who had healed so many sufferers—but perhaps had entertained no hope of ever coming into contact with him—and we can easily imagine with what excitement he tried to attract Jesus' attention, calling out to him.

Jesus approached him, and asked, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" The blind man said, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." How Jesus' heart must have been touched by the blind man's plight! And Jesus said unto him, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus.—Mark 10:46-52

On another occasion Jesus was told of the illness of the servant of a centurion, who sought Jesus' aid on behalf of his ailing servant. As Jesus was therefore approaching the home of the centurion, the man sought to restrain him, saying he was unworthy to have Jesus enter his home. Merely say the word, said the centurion, and my servant shall be healed! "For I also am a man set under authority, . . .and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; . . .and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth." Jesus marveled at the man's humility and his faith. Jesus said unto the people, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." And when they returned to the house, they found him whole that had been sick.—Lu. 7:1-10

"Where Are the Nine?"

Then there was the time he found the impotent man lying near the pool called Bethesda, whose waters were supposed to have healing powers. In answer to Jesus' inquiry,

pool, for others stepped in before he could be placed in the water. The man explained that he had no friend to place him in the water. Pitying the man, Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." And we read that, "Immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked; and on the same day was the sabbath."—John 5:1-9

He cured the man with palsy; he restored to life the son of the widow of Nain, he raised his very dear friend Lazarus from the dead. And he cured ten lepers, of whom but one returned to offer him thanks. "Where are the nine?," Jesus asked; and surely there must have been a touch of sadness in his voice.

This loving, compassionate man had left the heavenly realms and the fellowship of the Heavenly Father in order to redeem mankind from sin and death. And how the sorrow and suffering of those about him must have appalled and saddened him! How he must have yearned for the time when his sacrificial work here on earth would be finished, and for the day when the fruits of that work would bring the blessings of life and health to the people!

"The Sun of Righteousness Shall Arise . . ."

All those whom Jesus healed, and those whom he restored to life, eventually found their way to the grave. Jesus knew this would happen. In performing those miraculous cures and restorations to life, Jesus was merely presenting to his followers and to the world some simple but forceful foreviews of those greater and everlasting miracles of restitution that should be performed in the kingdom. And to his disciples, who had witnessed many of these works, he said, "Greater works than these shall . . . ye do; because I go unto my Father." (John 14:12) Jesus' faith in that glorious outcome was firmly rooted in the promise of God.

And how glorious are those promises, which God has

spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets! "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," God had said to Abraham. (Gen.22:18) Jesus knew he was that Seed of promise; and the Apostle Paul confirms it, adding that wonderful statement that all who are Christ's are counted in as parts of that seed of blessing! (Gal. 3:16, 29) Greater works than those which were done by Jesus shall be the privileged lot of all who are faithful unto death. Greater works, in that they shall include **all** who have ever gone down into death, who shall be brought forth from the grave, and given an opportunity to gain everlasting, perfect life.

The Prophet Daniel foretold that the dead would be raised, after Michael should stand up. He wrote, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." Jesus knew that he was the Michael here spoken of, and in quoting from this prophecy of Daniel he made it clear that "all that are in the graves" would hear his voice, and come forth.— Dan. 12:1, 2; John 5:28, 29

The Prophet Isaiah described the edenic beauties and abundance that shall exist during the kingdom reign of Christ and the church, when the work of restitution is undertaken. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as they rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. . . . Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. . . .And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men,

though fools, shall not err therein. . . .And the ransomed of the Lord shall return from the graves, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”—Isa. 35

“With Healing in His Wings”

The raising of the dead foretold by the Prophet Daniel will not be for but a few short years as it was with Lazarus; nor will the healing of the blind, the deaf, and the lame which Isaiah so beautifully describes be but a temporary blessing. All who hear and heed the voice of “that Prophet” in the kingdom will be restored to healthy, happy, everlasting life. For in that day “shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” In that glorious thousand-year day the work of restitution shall go forward, healing all who will, even as when Jesus healed the man with the withered hand on the sabbath back there in Palestine.

And not only will the people be given whole bodies in the kingdom, but more importantly, and necessarily, will their hearts be healed; for everlasting life will be gained only by those whose hearts are brought into full harmony with the righteous laws of the kingdom; only by those who love the Lord and their fellows. The Lord said he would “make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah” which covenant shall be shared in by the whole world, when he would put his law “in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (Jer. 31:31-33) In that happy kingdom “the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.”—Isa. 33:24

These are the precious blessings that, so long ago, were promised should come through the Seed of blessing, of which Seed the faithful overcoming followers of Jesus, the

bride of Christ, are a part.

"For the Healing of the Nations"

The Revelator tells us that the Heavenly Father himself will be an interested and loving observer of the kingdom work. "And he showed me a pure river of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." The blessings of life which were lost by Adam when he disobeyed, and the tree of life which was withdrawn from his reach will be graciously restored for the benefit of the entire resurrected race.

Yes, the people of all the nations of earth will be truly and everlastingly healed! And when "the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that is athirst come," how joyously will the nine lepers, along with the whole world of mankind, then raise their voices in rapturous praise and thanksgiving to the Heavenly Father, and to their Lord Jesus! With what gladness will the blind man pass among the people, telling all that Jesus had restored his sight! And can we not see the centurion going about proclaiming Jesus' wonderful power to heal! Then will the whole world unite in singing that song of grateful praise that was composed so long ago by the Psalmist David:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."—Ps. 103:1-5

Who Will Be Resurrected?

Will Adam and those responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus be resurrected?

Hebrews 2:9 reads, "But 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." Since, according to this text, Jesus tasted death for "every man" it means that Adam was redeemed from death, and will be brought forth in the resurrection and given an opportunity to live forever.

Paul wrote, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23) The death penalty, the "wages of sin," was experienced by Adam, and God's gift of life through Christ will also be experienced by him. Again Paul wrote, "Since by man came death, by man came

also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."—(I Cor. 15:21, 22) Here again we are assured that Adam is included in the redemptive work of Christ.

It has been argued that Adam's sin was wilful, and not in ignorance, therefore he was not redeemed by the blood of Christ. Hebrews 10:26 reads, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." The only reason wilful sinners today are separated from God's favor and life is because "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." It is true that Adam's sin was wilful, but God in his love provided redemption for his wilful sin. But such a provision for redemption from wilful sin is made only once in the plan of God. Adam came under that provision when Jesus tasted death for every man, and will therefore be awakened from the sleep of death in the resurrection.

As for those responsible for

the crucifixion of Jesus, the scripture testimony is clear that they will be awakened from the sleep of death in the resurrection. Jesus said to these, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23:39) For these scribes and Pharisees to "see" Jesus and to acclaim him "blessed" means that they will have to be awakened from death.

In the 11th chapter of Romans the Apostle Paul likens unbelieving Jews who did not accept Jesus as branches broken off from an olive tree. But he assures us that these will be received again, and adds, "What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? (Rom. 11:15) Later in the chapter Paul adds, "So all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."—vss. 26, 27

At The Burning Bush

Jesus referred to his heavenly Father as being "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac,

and the God of Jacob," then added that "he is not a God of the dead, but of the living." (Luke 20:37, 38) Does this prove that those who have died are not really dead, but living in some other state or place?

No! this is an erroneous interpretation of Jesus' statement. The statement in the question was made by Jesus in reply to the Sadducees, who themselves did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. In his reply Jesus said that the resurrection of the dead was indicated by Moses when he referred to the Lord as the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Jesus added that the Lord is not a "God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him." Actually, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead, but because God in his great plan of redemption and salvation will restore them to life, he looks upon them as being merely asleep. All the dead live unto God, because his plan calls for their awakening. They have not perished in the sense of going out of existence.

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PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown WHOL 1600 10:45 a.m.
Pittsburgh WARC 540 12:00 noon
Pottstown WPAZ 1370 12:45 p.m.

PUERTO RICO

Aguadilla (Fri.) WGRF 8:00 p.m.

TEXAS

Dallas KNUS 98.7 F.M. 6:15 a.m.
Lubbock KDAV 580 9:45 a.m.
Pleasanton KBOP 1380 7:30 a.m.
Shamrock KBYP 1580 10:15 a.m.

UTAH

Salt Lake City KSOP 1370 9:00 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Bellingham KPUG 1170 9:30 a.m.
Seattle KAYO 1150 10:30 a.m.
Spokane KUDY 1280 9:30 a.m.
Tacoma KMO 1360 9:45 a.m.
Yakima KUTI 980 7:15 a.m.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee WEMP 1250 8:45 a.m.
Milwaukee WYLO 540 7:00 a.m.
Neillsville WCCN 1370 9:15 a.m.

WYOMING

Sheridan KWYO 1410 12:00 noon

CANADA

Camrose, Alberta CFEW 10:45 a.m.
Corner Brook, Nfld.

CFCB 570 10:30 a.m.
Oshawa, Ont. CKLB 1350 9:45 a.m.
Port Au Choix CFNW 10:30 a.m.
Port Aux Basques, Nfld.

CFLW 1230 10:30 a.m.
Prince Albert CKBI 900 10:30 a.m.
Regina, Sask. CKRM 7:45 a.m.
Stephenville, Nfld.

CFGN 910 10:30 a.m.
St. Thomas, Ont.

CHLO 1570 10:45 a.m.
Vancouver, B.C. CJVB 1470 9:45 a.m.
Winnepeg CKY 7:45 a.m.

Yorkton, Sask. CJGX 940 10:00 a.m.

URUGUAY

Montevideo 1:30 a.m.

VIRGIN ISLANDS

St. Croix (Sat.) WSTX 970 9:00 a.m.

MALDIVE ISLANDS

Radio Maldives (Tue.) 4740 9:00 p.m.

AUSTRALIA

Geelong 3GL 222m 10:00 a.m.

PANAMA

Panama City HOQ 1250 10:30 a.m.

MEXICO

XEX

RADIO TOPICS FOR FEBRUARY

<p>3—"Times of Restitution" 10—"Palestine in Prophecy" 17—"Creation Versus Evolution"</p>	<p>24—"Today and Tomorrow in Prophecy" 31—"The Beginning of God's Creation"</p>
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Bible Study

LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 3

Promise of the Comforter

MEMORY VERSE: "The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

—John 14:26, R.S.V

JOHN 16:4-15

AS JESUS explains in the opening verse of this lesson, he was about to impart some information to his disciples which he had previously withheld—"because I was with you." This increased enlightenment concerned the sending of the Holy Spirit as a comforter to his disciples. The thought behind this word is not only the imparting of comfort in times of sorrow—although it includes this—but it also means helper, "intercessor."

While Jesus was with his disciples during the course of his earthly ministry he served them personally in these ways, but now he was about to leave them and return to his Heavenly Father. Before morning he would

be arrested, and before the close of the next day, crucified. It was a tense situation for Jesus and for the disciples. Jesus said, "Now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Then Jesus explained, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." In the King James Version the Holy Spirit is often referred to as the holy "ghost." This is an endeavor on the part of the translators to make the Holy Spirit a person,

the third person in what is called the trinity of God.

The Revised Standard Version and most newer versions never use the word "ghost" in connection with the Holy Spirit. However, they do attempt to keep alive the erroneous view that the Holy Spirit is a person by using personal pronouns when the text refers to this invisible power of God. There is no warrant for this inasmuch as the pronouns used with reference to the Holy Spirit could just as properly be translated "it" as "he."

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; and then explains, "Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." This is rather a vague statement, but of one thing we are sure, and that is that the work of the Holy Spirit during the present age is largely in and through the lives of the Lord's consecrated people. The Lord's people, with the light of truth illuminating their hearts and lives, have always been a rebuke to the sinful world of mankind, as they have continued to testify concerning the great plan of God, including the future Day of Judgment, when

Satan is bound.

Jesus said to his disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." The disciples were natural-minded men. They did not have the spiritual perception which was later theirs by reason of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so it was impossible for them to grasp the teachings of Jesus as they later did as a result of the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit.

But Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit, when it came, would guide his apostles into "all truth." This, of course, was a reference to the truth of the divine plan; and the apostles served as the mouthpieces of truth for the remainder of the church down through the age.

Prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost Peter could not understand why Jesus should die at such an early age, when, as it doubtless seemed to him, his ministry had not been completed. But when the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, Peter was instantly illuminated, and in his pentecostal sermon quoted Psalm 16: 10, and pointed out that it was a prophecy of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Yes, he now understood that Jesus' death was a part of the plan of God for the redemption and restoration of mankind.

Victorious in Defeat

MEMORY VERSE: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

—John 18:37

JOHN 18:33-38

JESUS' trial was already in progress. Because he was the Son of God, and acknowledged it, he had been found worthy of death by the high priest. But, as a subject people to Rome, they were not allowed to put individuals to death, so they had appealed to Pilate, the representative of Rome, to take the matter in hand and order their enemy crucified.

The Jews knew that Pilate would not be impressed by the religious issue involved, although he did bring it up incidentally. They knew that Pilate's chief concern pertained to Rome's sovereign right to rule, so Jesus' enemies charged that he claimed to be a king. If this were true he could be held guilty of treason, and Pilate would not be able to ignore the charge.

So Pilate asked, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" If Jesus really was setting himself up as the king of the Jews, as the foretold Messiah, or otherwise, and

the people in any number followed him, it could lead to insurrection of the little nation against Rome.

Jesus' reply to this question was, "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews." (vs. 36, RSV) Thus while Jesus did not deny that he was a king, he made it plain that his authority as a king did not stem from this world. If it did it would have to be from Rome, and in that case Rome's soldiers would fight for him, so that he would not be delivered to the Jews.

When later Pilate threatened Jesus for not replying to him, and asked if he did not realize the power that was vested in him, the Master replied, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." So Jesus made it doubly plain as to where the authority of his kingdom was vested.

"Art thou a king then?" and

Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."—vs. 37

Thus Jesus condemned himself in the eyes of Pilate, although this Roman ruler still did not believe that this meek and lowly Nazarene was in any way a threat to the power of Rome. So casually he asked Jesus, "What is truth?" Jesus made no reply to this question. Had he replied, it would doubtless have been that God's "word is truth." But this certainly would be beyond the understanding of this Roman governor.

After asking the question, "What is truth?" "he [Pilate] went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all." Naturally this did not please the Jews who were clamoring for Jesus' death. When hatred and prejudice rule the heart, the mind ceases to reason, and in this case nothing could satisfy the thirst for blood by these incensed Jews, who were jealous of Jesus, and bent on taking his life.

JOHN 19:7-11

The Jews replied to Pilate that regardless of what he had found concerning Jesus, accord-

ing to their law Jesus should be put to death. Jesus' transgression of the Jewish law, according to these accusers, was that he had made himself out to be the Son of God. This was blasphemy, and called for the death penalty.

While Pilate was vested with the great weight of Roman authority it would appear that he was rather uneasy in his dealing with this mob of shouting Jews who were demanding that Jesus be crucified. So when he learned that Jesus made himself to be the Son of God, while he did not understand what this meant, "He was the more afraid." Here was a fear of the unknown, and in this case based largely on superstition.

Then Pilate went back to Jesus and asked, "Whence art thou?" As we noted earlier in the lesson, Jesus made no reply to this question, deciding doubtless that the matter was quite beyond the ability of the Roman governor to grasp. But Pilate was incensed by Jesus' refusal to answer, and asked him if he did not realize that he had power to free him. Jesus' complete rest in the will of his Father is in his reply that he could have no power over him except that permitted by the Father.

Victorious in Death

MEMORY VERSE: "Jesus . . . said . . . It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit."—John 19:30

JOHN 19:17-22, 28-30

JESUS' trial was now over. Pilate had reluctantly consented to his crucifixion. He had been flogged, and a crown of thorns had been placed upon his head—a derisive symbol of the "crime" for which he was being put to death. They took him to a place called Golgotha, meaning "the place of the skull." It is claimed by many that the location of this place can even now be identified, but that has no importance so far as the redemption of mankind is concerned. It is the fact of Jesus' voluntary death as a human, and on behalf of the world, that provides salvation, not the place where he was crucified.

"Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." This title angered the Jews. "Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews." Pilate refused to yield to this demand, and he answered, "What I have

written I have written." He knew that Jesus had not even claimed to be king of the Jews, and he also knew that Jesus really had not committed a crime of any kind that made him deserving of punishment by death.

As Jesus hung upon the cross he became very thirsty, which was not uncommon. His ordeal was especially severe. He had an encounter with the two thieves who were crucified beside him, assuring one of them that his prayer to be remembered in his kingdom would be answered; that he would be with him in paradise. He had recognized the temporary withdrawal of his Heavenly Father's favor, and had cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—Matt. 27:46

And now his ministry was nearly over, as well as his suffering on the cross, so he said, "I thirst." "Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth." It is believed that

this "vinegar" was a sour wine. Together with hyssop it apparently had a deadening effect, and was often used in cases of crucifixion.

Our memory verse is meaningful. Jesus said, "It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit." We like the Revised Standard Version translation because it uses the word "spirit" instead of "ghost." Another of the Gospel accounts quotes Jesus as saying, "Into thy hand I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46) Even the word spirit as a translation is not the best. "Life" would be better. Jesus said to his father, I commend my life into your hands to do with me as you wish. What a wonderful display of resignation to the divine will this was! Jesus knew what the Heavenly Father had promised him, and he knew that those promises would be fulfilled.

"It is finished." Two things are involved here. His excruciating ordeal upon the cross was about at an end. He had not looked forward to this with joy, but when the final test of obedience was upon him he said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11) And now he had finished drinking this cup, and he was ready to say to his Heavenly Father, "Into thy hand I commend my spirit."

But Jesus' entire early ministry was also now ended—a ministry which had been characterized by his statement in the temple when he was a mere lad: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Throughout every hour of every day which made up his three and one-half years of service Jesus had zealously been "about" his Father's business.

An important feature of Jesus' ministry was the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom, which was an oral presentation of the kingdom hope, frequently illustrated by the miracles which he performed. Certainly in the kingdom the blind eyes of the people will be given sight, and Jesus illustrated over and over again that divine power was able to accomplish this glorious work on behalf of the world of mankind.

Another aspect of Jesus' ministry was the training of his disciples to be his ambassadors in the world after he returned to his Heavenly Father. The disciples had not yet received the Holy Spirit, so Jesus was limited in what he could say to them; but patiently he imparted important truths to them, knowing that later the Holy Spirit would call these things to their attention. And how kind he was to them, referring even to Judas who betrayed him as a "friend."

The Resurrection Victory

MEMORY VERSE: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."—John 20:29

JOHN 20:19-29

THE resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the greatest miracle yet performed in the outworking of the divine plan of human redemption and salvation. On the Day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter spoke of this miracle, saying, "This Jesus hath God raised up." (Acts 2:32) Jesus did not raise himself from the dead. He knew that he would not be able to do this, but in a prophetic prayer he was comforted—a prayer in which Jesus is portrayed as addressing his Heavenly Father, and saying, "Thou wilt not leave my soul [life] in hell [death], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."—Acts 2:27; Ps. 16:10

During the course of his earthly ministry Jesus performed many outstanding miracles, but he did so by calling upon divine power. But in death he could not do this, so he depended upon the Heavenly Father to fulfil his promises to restore him to life, and he did. Truly this was a great victory over the forces of evil! Satan

was the one who plotted the Master's death, thinking thus to destroy the divine plan centered in him; but he was foiled, for an important feature of God's plan had been carried out by the death of Jesus; namely, the redemption of the world because Jesus died "the Just for the unjust."

Following his resurrection Jesus made several appearances to his disciples, and on each occasion he had appeared in a body which in some respects at least was different from the one in which he conducted his earthly ministry. To Mary at the tomb he appeared as a gardener, and she recognized him only when he called her by name. To the two disciples on the way to Emmaus he appeared as a stranger, and conversed with them for a considerable period of time, and they recognized him only by the familiar manner in which he asked the blessing upon the evening meal.

He appeared to all his apostles except Thomas in an upper room, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews.

These reported to Thomas that Jesus had visited them while he was away, and he promptly replied that he would not believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead unless he could see the nail prints in his hands and the spear wound in his side.

Eight days later Jesus again appeared in the upper room, and this time Thomas was present. The Master showed Thomas the nail prints and the wound, and Thomas expressed his belief by addressing Jesus as "my Lord and my God." Then "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."—vs. 29

This is a revealing observation. The apostles who saw Jesus eight days previously made no reference to nail prints. None to whom Jesus appeared prior to this had seen nail prints, yet they had seen him, even as Jesus observes. This special appearance to Thomas is referred to in the verse following the lesson as a "sign." John's statement is, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples."—vs. 30

Yes, the showing of the nail prints to Thomas was a sign. It did not mean that Jesus' resurrected body was a scarred hu-

man body which would be his for eternity. The appearance to Mary at the tomb was a sign. Being now a divine being he could appear in any sort of body that might best suit his purpose at the time, and this he did; even as he appeared on the shore of Galilee and cooked a breakfast of fish for his apostles.

Jesus gave his flesh—his humanity—for the life of the world. (John 6:51) He was "put to death in the flesh," and made alive in the Spirit, the express image of his Heavenly Father's person. The hope of his faithful followers is to be made like him in the resurrection and like the Heavenly Father, and to sit with him in his throne. This will be the church's glorious resurrection victory.—Rev. 20:6

While Jesus was with his disciples in the upper room he said to them, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." This doubtless was in anticipation of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost as a result of Jesus' appearing in heaven for us, and it is through the merit of his shed blood, his poured-out life, that sins can be remitted.

Paul Encourages the Hebrews

"For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."—Hebrews 12:3

THE Epistle to the Hebrews contains much vital information concerning the typical significance of the tabernacle which God instructed Moses to build in the "wilderness"—particularly as to its services and its priesthood. It also places the promised "New Covenant" in its proper position in the divine plan. It is a valuable epistle so far as certain doctrines of the plan of God are concerned.

In addition to these typical and doctrinal features of the book, also woven in is a message of encouragement to the "Hebrews" to whom it is especially addressed. These Hebrews, according to the apostle, had not been making the progress in the truth that they should. Paul speaks of them as "dull of hearing," to which he adds, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."—Heb. 5:11, 12

Paul's method of encouraging these brethren to a more steadfast and progressive appreciation of the truth was first to assure them of its source, showing that it had come

to them from the God of Israel, through his beloved Son, whom they had accepted as the Messiah, and to whom they had dedicated their lives. He calls their attention to this divine origin of the Gospel in the first chapter. We will quote the first eight verses to refresh our memory: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

How better could the apostle emphasize the great weight of authority that supports the Gospel than thus to remind us of the highly exalted position of God's beloved Son, through whom the Heavenly Father has spoken to us? We know that the holy angels occupy an important place in the service of God, but they have not been exalted to the high position that Jesus was. Later in this chapter Paul speaks of the angels as ministering spirits, "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." And how much this service of the "ministering spirits" means to every follower of the Master! But the Heavenly Father has never

said to any of these, "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (vss. 13, 14; Ps. 110:1) But he did say this to his Son, who at his resurrection from the dead was given all power, or authority in heaven and in earth.—Matt. 28:18; Dan. 7:13, 14

The Channel of Truth

This highly exalted one is the channel of truth for the Lord's people during the present age. He has spoken to us through his own personal ministry, and he speaks to us through his inspired apostles and prophets. This is the reason it is so vital to adhere to what we have learned from him. The apostle was leading up to this very point, for in the first verse of the next chapter he says, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."—Heb. 2:1-3

Paul realized that the Hebrews to whom he wrote this letter had to some extent already let these things "slip"; that to a degree they had already neglected this wonderful truth which they had received from God's highly exalted Son. As we have already quoted, they had need to be taught again the first principles of the oracles of God, so now he was encouraging them to a renewed effort, lest the great truths of the Gospel be allowed to slip away from them entirely.

Suffering Not Easy

It would seem from various statements in the epistle that one reason the faith and zeal of the Hebrew brethren were

showing signs of abating is that as a result of espousing the cause of Christ they had received a great deal of persecution—persecution, perhaps, which they did not expect. So Paul explained to them that this was in reality quite in harmony with the divine plan; that as followers of Jesus they were his brethren, called to the same glory to which he had been exalted, and that the pathway to this glory was one of suffering. On this point he wrote:

“For it became him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.”—Heb. 2:10-13

While the Hebrew brethren were showing signs of laxness, this was not true of them when they first accepted the truth. At that time they even accepted their trials and persecutions with steadfastness and joy. In chapter 10 it is written to them, “Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions, partly whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the [fulfilment of] promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith:

but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”
—vss. 32-39

The “Former Days”

From this passage it is clear that when these Hebrews were first enlightened they endured much affliction, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. There is a hint here that some of them had been locked in gazingstocks and exposed to public view to endure the insults of the passers-by. Others became companions of those thus used; in other words, they voluntarily let it be known that they were friends and brethren of those who were held in the gazingstocks, thus sharing their suffering with them. This revealed a remarkable degree of zeal for the Lord, the truth, and the brethren.

But this was in the beginning. At that time they took joyfully the spoiling of their earthly possessions, knowing that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. So Paul urged, “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” The use of the word “therefore” in this context would suggest that the Hebrews were indeed showing an inclination, through laxity, to cast away their confidence, hence Paul’s words of encouragement to them to hold on to their faith for, as he had said in the previous chapter, “He is faithful that promised.”

“A Little While”

Like all the brethren in the Early Church this Hebrew group looked for the return of their Messiah to set up his kingdom. The general impression then was that this great event in the divine plan would take place soon. But per-

haps more time had already gone by than they had expected, and they were becoming discouraged on this account, so Paul wrote, "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Here the apostle was referring to essentially an entire age in the plan of God as "a little while," and was encouraging the Hebrews to maintain their faith and hope and zeal, and to continue their submissive endurance of suffering. After all, the waiting time was only as long as their individual lives.

Do we not have a somewhat similar test of faith at the present time? Now we know that He who was to come has come, yet we are still suffering this side of the veil. In the Lord's providence it is our privilege to be associated with the harvest work which takes place during the early years of the Master's presence, but this work is stretching out much longer than many of us had supposed that it would, so we too need to watch lest we cast away our confidence. We also have need of patience, that after having done the will of God in devoting ourselves to him and to the messianic cause "we might receive the promise."

God Not Unrighteous

Paul admonished the Hebrew brethren to call to remembrance the former days, and there is evidence, in chapter six, of their early zeal. We quote, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end."—vss. 10, 11

A mere "first love" enthusiasm for the Lord, the truth, and the brethren is not enough. Paul set the right pattern for the Hebrews and for us when he wrote that they should show that same initial diligence "to the full assurance of

(Continued on page 34)

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faith unto the end." This is the real test of Christian faithfulness. It is not so much what we have done to serve the Lord in the past, but it is important that today, and in all the days to come, we continue zealously and faithfully in his service. Only those who do this can hope to receive the glorious reward which the Lord has promised, which is to be associated with Jesus in his glorious kingdom which will bless all the families of the earth.

"Strong Consolation"

In a further effort to build up the faith and zeal of the Hebrew brethren Paul cites God's dealings with faithful Abraham. He refers to God's promise to bless all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham, and reminds us that when Abraham proved faithful by showing his willingness to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering, God confirmed his promise to him by his oath: "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that which is within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."—Heb. 6:18-20

This was strong consolation indeed for those Hebrew brethren! It reminded them of Abraham's faithfulness under severe trial, and of the trustworthiness of God who had made the promise to him. This was one of the messianic promises of the Old Testament, and the Hebrews had accepted Jesus as their Messiah; and now they were reminded that suffering was involved in the inheritance of this wonderful promise, and that if they were to be among the

many sons brought to glory with Jesus, they also would need to suffer, patiently, and with their spirits strengthened by the "strong consolation" provided by God through his faithfulness to Abraham.

This same great truth, centered in the oathbound promise to Abraham, should be a great consolation to us while we wait for our deliverance into the kingdom. And we think it is significant that Paul should use this great fundamental truth of the Gospel in his efforts to encourage the Hebrews and us. Fanciful interpretation of types will not do this. Only the fundamentals of the Creator's grand design can furnish the courage we need to face the trials involved in suffering with Christ while waiting for the kingdom.

The Christian should learn early in his walk in the narrow way that serving the Lord with the expectation of sharing in Christ's glory requires faithfulness to the end of life. Paul reminded the Hebrews of this, writing, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." (3:14) The Christian's "first love" must also be his "last love." What we have done in the past loses its importance if our faithfulness now does not measure up to what it formerly was. This is Paul's great lesson to the Hebrew brethren and to us; namely, that only cheerful endurance to the end will lead to a crown of life and glory.—Rev. 2:10

The Faithful of the Past

To further encourage the Hebrew brethren Paul reminds them of the faithfulness of those who in past ages had endured many sorts of trials, yet did not permit these to swerve them from their steadfastness in the service of their God—the God of Israel. These examples of faith are brought to our attention in the eleventh chapter, and in

chapter 12, verse 1 they are referred to as "a cloud of witnesses."

We suggest a rereading of this wonderful chapter. We will quote what Paul says concerning one of those Ancient Worthies: "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."—Heb. 11:23-27

In verse 1 of this chapter Paul writes that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Moses had this sort of faith, and it gave substance, or reality, to the things which God had promised. Thus he could see the things of God—those blessings which God had promised, even though to the natural eye they were invisible. Seemingly this was one of the problems of the Hebrew brethren. Their faith had weakened and they could no longer see the great features of God's plan in clear perspective. Their afflictions and persecutions had cast a sort of veil over God's promises, and not being able to see through this veil their progress in the narrow way had been retarded, even set back, and they needed that some one teach them again the first principles of the oracles of God.

In this chapter Paul speaks of those who "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered

about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not [the fulfilment of] the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”—Heb. 11:36-40

Notice that these faithful ones of the past did not in their day receive the fulfilment of that which God had promised, yet they endured—faithfully endured—unto the end of their life. True, God blessed them with strength to endure, and thus encouraged them in their pathway of faithfulness; but as to the future rewards in the resurrection of the just, these remained invisible, and they could rejoice in God’s promises concerning them only by the eye of faith.

Have not all the Lord’s people been subjected to this situation? Even now, in the end of the Gospel Age, and in the time of Christ’s presence, our faith is what lifts us up. Christ’s presence is an invisible one; and while we see the old world tottering to its fall to make way for the new heaven and the new earth, we see it all upon the basis of faith. If our faith is weak, our zeal will lag, and instead of being rejoicing Christians we may well experience a measure of disappointment that our waiting has to be stretched out over so long a period of time. Surely it is true of all the Lord’s people that we have need of patience!

Looking unto Jesus

Beginning the next chapter Paul writes, “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.”—vss. 1, 2

Paul had surrounded the Hebrew brethren with “a cloud of witnesses” in order to encourage them to a more steadfast faith and zeal, and in view of these encouraging examples from the past he urges them to lay aside every weight of worldly care, and the sin of unbelief which did so easily beset them—and all of the Lord’s people, for that matter—and to run with patience the race that was set before them.

Then he presents to them the greatest of all “witnesses,” even our Lord Jesus himself, “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.” This joy was set before Jesus by the promises of the Heavenly Father—one of them being recorded in Psalm 16: “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forever more.” (vss. 10, 11) According to Paul’s testimony Jesus had already entered into the presence of his Heavenly Father, and was “set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

And then the apostle admonishes the Hebrew brethren to consider Jesus, “that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself,” lest they be wearied and faint in their minds. (vs. 3) The “contradiction” of sinners against Jesus cost him much suffering, and finally death; and how could the Hebrews expect anything different, especially since Paul had explained to them that many sons, including themselves, were being brought to glory by the same pathway of suffering in which Jesus walked? How appropriate

it was, then, that they consider him!

Then Paul adds, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." (vs. 4) Here blood is used as a symbol of life poured out. The Hebrew brethren, in the former days, had taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods; they had been made a gazingstock, and had suffered in other ways. They had also been faithful in the service, but they had not yet completed their sacrifice as Jesus had—they had not yet "resisted unto blood."

A Kingdom Picture

Beginning with verse 22, Paul presents a symbolic picture of the kingdom in which the Hebrew brethren hoped to have a share. Here he was setting joys before them even as Jesus had had joys set before him to help him bear the cross. We will quote this symbolic description of the kingdom without comment: "Ye are come [by faith] unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."—vss. 22-24

After the many admonitions to faithfulness, and the warnings, some of which we have quoted, Paul returns to his premise which he established in chapter 1; namely, that we should be faithful to the truth because of the great weight of authority with which it has reached us. He says, "See that thou refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."—vs. 25

"Bless the Lord, O My Soul"

"BLESS the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. . . . The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. . . . He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust: . . . bless the Lord, O my soul."—Psalm 103

In a few other texts the word here translated "bless"—"Bless the Lord, O my soul"—is translated "praise," and when God is the object, the word "praise" in today's language is possibly a better choice. So, "Praise the Lord, O my soul," and from my very heart, praise his holy name. Psalm 103 is a psalm of praise to God—praise in thankful acknowledgment of blessings received from his bountiful hand. We have received so much from him. We have so much cause to "praise his holy name." We praise him for all his benefits, all his favors—for his forgiveness of all

our iniquities. This is mentioned first, because without the merit of Christ being applied we would still be in trespass and sin, but through his blood the disease of death is healed.

“Praise the Lord, O my soul.” We praise him for his plan of redemption. We praise him for his loving-kindness and tender mercy. He is “the God of all mercy.” He is the “Father of mercies.” He is “plenteous in mercy.” He is slow to anger even though we may give him a cause. We praise him for our daily strength; for his grace to help in time of need. We are told that “as an eagle” our strength is renewed.

As far as the east is from the west, so has he removed our transgressions from us, so that Adam’s transgression under which we were born can no longer affect our relationship with him through Jesus Christ our Lord. Like as a father has compassion, so the Heavenly Father has compassion for us. He knows our frame. He knows that in its fallen condition it will not take much stress and strain. He knows we are made of dust. But if we serve him in sincerity and truth he will have compassion toward us, because he loves us. Many times we express our love for God, and that is good. We should love him. But let us also ever be conscious of God’s love for us.

If there is one thing above others aiding us in our battle to gain everlasting life, it is the love, comfort, and encouragement that we receive from our Heavenly Father. The Apostle Peter described the followers of Jesus as those “who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.”

A Christian’s experiences are varied. They have to be, in order to promote our spiritual development. There are times when we are “on the mountain-top,” when all things flow smoothly and lightly. Everything sails along as a song!

Our brethen appreciate that we are endeavoring to direct our consecrated life along Christian lines. And then again, there are times when our path leads down to the valley; sometimes deep into the vale of tears; sometimes into the slough of despondency at the very bottom of the valley—"the valley of the shadow of death." We always need the love of God, no matter where we are—on the mountaintop, or in the vale of bitter experience, prosperity, or adversity. At all points our faith is being tested to see if we are able to say, "Praise the Lord, O my soul." It may be that just as many have been drawn away from the love of God through material success as have through material failure. Our frame is dust. It does not stand strain, and so we need the love of God and his keeping power to supply us strength and help for every time of need. "The Lord loves those that fear him." We have a better word. "The Lord loves those that 'reverence' him." But in the original Hebrew we find that it also means "worship," and that is good too. "The Lord loves those who 'worship' him." Whenever you have a text with the word 'fear' in it, try using the word 'worship.' You will enjoy it. That is, if the word is from the proper root.

Psalm 33:8 says, "Let all the earth [worship] fear the Lord." Psalm 67:7: "God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall [worship] fear him." Psalm 102:15 reads, "So the heathen shall [worship] fear the name of the Lord," etc.

The true worshiper of God in this day of salvation is the one who has consecrated his life to God. We need the love of God because we are now—right now—on trial for eternal life. We are all aware of our first trial—we were all condemned in Adam, for "in Adam all die." But our Lord Jesus filed a motion for a new trial! By his own death on Calvary he gained the right to offer to every one of Adam's

children a new trial for life—"So in Christ shall all be made alive." We are of those who fear God, who reverence him, who worship him, who have consecrated ourselves to him; and so we are now on trial for eternal life. It is a full and fair trial. But we must "keep ourselves in the love of God." That is, we must keep within those boundaries where the love of God can reach us and help us to continue in the protection of his love. This is what Jude is saying in verses 20, 21: "But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Ephesians 3:14-19 reads, from "Living Letters," "When I think of the wisdom and scope of his plan I fall down on my knees and pray to the Father of all the great family of God. Some of them up in heaven and some down here on earth, that out of his glorious unlimited resources he will give you the mighty inner strengthening of his Holy Spirit, and I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts, living within you as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love, and may you be able to feel and understand, with all God's children how long—how wide—how deep and how high his love really is, and to experience this love for yourselves though it is so great that you will never see the end of it or fully know or understand it. And so completely filled with God himself."

Here again we are told that our appreciation of our Father's love for us is dependent upon our faith and consecration: "That he might dwell in our hearts;" that we may be rooted and grounded in God's love for us; that we may be able to grasp and understand how great that love really is—how long it is—the length of his love—that it reaches throughout the ages. How wide it is, the breadth of his

love—it is world-wide. It includes all his creatures. How deep it is. The depth of his love. It reaches down to you and me and it will reach below ground, and sea, in the resurrection of the dead. How high it is—the height of his love; it reaches not only to the heavenly hosts but it reaches above and beyond and through the shell of human selfishness and self-seeking. May we truly have an appreciation of the length and breadth and depth and height of God's love for us!

He is our Heavenly Father, and as a father he is more interested in our welfare than we ourselves know how to be. Every human father knows this—even though it is hard for his young son to understand that truth. Our Heavenly Father knows the prize of the high calling and what it means—of glory, honor, and immortality—better than we. He knows, he appreciates the loss it will be to those who fail and he knows that far better than we do. And so, "Like as a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who truly worship him."

Sometimes we may feel that even the Lord has forgotten us. Our Lord's reply to that is given in Isaiah 49:15, 16. He says to us, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." This promise should help us to appreciate our Heavenly Father's great, yet tender love—the protecting love of a father, the tender love of a mother.

A nursing child holds a special place in the average household. In the Father's household we also hold a special place. A mother does not often forget her baby. The child is the center of her life. Other things may be neglected because of the baby, but the baby is not neglected for daily chores. The mother delights to feed, to comfort the child.

But even though she might forget, God says, "yet will I not forget thee." A mother's ear is always attuned to her offspring. You have seen a mother leave a room for her child, while you have heard nothing—but she did! And so, even though others do not recognize our needs our Father does—"His ear is open to our cry." He knows, he loves, he cares.

As we think of God's love for us we are reminded of a simple truth stated by our Lord Jesus Christ, "The Father knoweth what things ye have need of." He knows what we need before we call, and as Apostle Paul expresses it, gives "exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."—Eph. 3:20

But that does not mean we should not pray. "Ask and ye shall receive. Seek and ye shall find." He knows that we need clothing and he supplies it. And at great cost we wear the beautiful robe of righteousness. He knows we need food and he supplies it. He prepares a table before us; our cup runneth over, not of physical sustenance alone, though for this we are thankful. But of every word that proceeds from him. It is not his fault if we go hungry spiritually. He knows we need shelter and protection, and he supplies it. "He shall cover thee with his feathers; under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Because thou hast made the Lord thy refuge even the most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Do you believe that?

How much does the Father love us? He says, "Behold, I have engraven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me." This alludes to a custom of marking on the hands the city walls and temple of Jerusalem before one made a journey. It is thought by many that

this was really the start of the "wedding ring" custom. But to us it represents that our Father will never forget us. He has set us as a seal upon his heart. He is ever mindful of us and our needs.

How much does he love us? The prophet records these words: "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, . . . He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." (Zech. 2:8) This is an assurance of God's protecting care. And this text always reminds us of Matthew 18:10: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven." The Lord is not pleased if one member despise another, or think scornfully of his brother, or would put a stumblingblock in his path.

The ministry of angels is a great truth. It is serious business to discredit one who is guarded by "his angels," for they do always behold the face of our Father. What is the report they are making on us for our actions? It is good to have God as our Father, for then we have his angels as our angels, ever ready to minister to his children. Hebrews 1:14 reads, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

David said in the 8th Psalm, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" We have been visited with divine favor; called with a heavenly calling. He is mindful of us, concerned for us.

Brethren, it is not presumption to say we are favorites of divine providence, for we have that great assurance of Scripture found in John 16:27, "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." Observe what emphasis is laid upon this: the Father himself loves us. We owe Christ's merit to

God's love in giving his Son. Our Father has four great attributes: Justice, wisdom, love, and power. Think of his almighty power, and then remember that all that power, his keeping power, the power that raised Christ from the dead (Eph. 1:19, 20), is exercised on your behalf! Think of his wisdom. The whole plan of the universe expresses it; and we have that wisdom to direct our lives, our providences, and Romans 8:28 properly reads, "We know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Think of the justice of God; the great plan that makes it possible for "God to be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." We as God's children enjoy justification before him through Jesus.

Not only is it true that "God is love," but I John 1:5 describes him as light. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Here is another expression of the absolute nature of God. Not, "God is a light," but simply and absolutely, "God is light." And light is truth; and light enkindles love. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin."

As all material life and growth depends on light, so all our spiritual life and growth depends on him, for he is light. He is our light. Thus, God is love. God is light, and we walk in the light of his Word. The Word of the Lord endureth forever. It is a lamp to our feet, a light to our path. It has taught us of our Father's love. And so, may we say with the psalmist, "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved."—Ps. 66:8, 9

The Divine Library

IN CONSIDERING this subject we are at once reminded of the rather large number of books that are brought to our attention in the Word of God. For instance, the Old Testament (the Law and the Prophets) is spoken of as a book: "In the volume of the book it is written of Me." (Ps. 40:7) This is the only record God gave to man during the first four thousand years of human history. (Josh. 8:31; II Kings 14:6; 22:8; Neh. 8:1) Further, "the book of the Prophet Isaiah" (Luke 4:17, R. V.), and similar expressions, occur from time to time in the New Testament.

In Jeremiah 36:1-4 we read how Jeremiah was told to write "upon a roll of a book" a record of all the judgments that were to come upon Israel, that God had spoken through

Jeremiah, the fulfilment of which began with the overthrow of Zedekiah, Israel's last king. At that same time came the destruction of the temple, built some four hundred years previously by Solomon.

In due time there were added to the Law and the Prophets the books of the New Testament—the messages of Jesus and his inspired apostles, closing with the Book of Revelation, expressly spoken of as a book. (Rev. 22:10) To this a special warning was attached concerning the adding to or taking away of anything written therein. (Rev. 22:18, 19) This book brings to a close the canon of Scripture, and naturally we should not expect, nor should we be authorized to expect, any further revelation than that al-

ready given, a revelation containing, as it does, an outline of the complete plan of God, from man's creation to the close of "the times of restitution," the time when everything in heaven and in earth will be once more in full atonement with God.

Seen but Not Perceived

There is an interesting reference to this book of divine revelation in Isaiah 29:11, 12, which tells of a time coming, when in God's providence the understanding of this book containing the record of the divine purposes would become obscured not only to the learned and the unlearned in Israel, but also on a world-wide scale. We read, "The vision of all [that is, the whole vision of revelation] is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned."

The time for the first

marked fulfilment of this prophecy was at our Lord's first advent at the close of the Jewish Age. Both Jesus and Paul quote from this chapter and apply it to their day. (Matt. 15:8, 9; Mark 7:6, 7; Rom. 11:8; Isa. 29:10, 13) Many scriptures teach that what applied to Israel at the end of the Jewish Age applies still more forcefully to nominal spiritual Israel (Christendom) at the close of the Gospel Age.

In harmony with these scripture foreshadowings, how true it is that large numbers of professed Christians have lost the vision of truth and the salvation centred in Jesus which they once enjoyed! The prophet indicates to us that this lack of understanding the Word of God and the divine plan revealed therein would be specially the experience of religious leaders; and this is true in this our day.—Isa. 29:10

Many prominent religionists seem unable to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, and the "records" thereof they no longer believe to be a revela-

tion from God. And how truly the Word of God long ago foreshadowed this, saying: "The sun [symbolizing the Gospel light] shall be darkened, and the moon [the Old Testament—the Law] shall not give her light."—Mark 13:24; Joel 2:31; Micah 3:5-7

This book of divine revelation, not yet perceived by all, tells us that by nature we are all sinners, and that true repentance, conversion, and an acceptance of the atoning work of Jesus, manifested by a full consecration to do the will of God, are essential requirements on the part of every member of the true church. We are also assured that continued faithfulness will mean a glorious heavenly inheritance beyond the veil.

We are further informed that although the truth contained in these books of the Bible is dark, obscure, and unperceived now by the vast majority of mankind, it will in due time be open to all; for God "desires all men to be saved, and to come to an accurate knowledge of the truth." (I Tim. 2:4), Diaglott) Only in this way can the whole

world hear and know God and his will concerning them, and have a full and fair opportunity to gain life everlasting on the human plane by obedience to the divine will in that earthly phase of the kingdom.

The books of divine revelation are a wonderful means to a marvelous end. The end is the complete establishment of God's glorious kingdom consisting of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—II Pet. 3:13

The Scriptures teach us that embodied in this divine, eternal purpose is the completion and glorification of the true church with her Lord, and that through the reign of this glorified Christ—Jesus the Head and the church his body—earth's millions will be raised to life, and God's long awaited kingdom will be fully established in the earth. Then "God shall wipe all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."—Rev. 21:4

Other Important Books

There are books in addition to those contained in the holy Scriptures, but they are not available for our scrutiny and use, as is the case with the Bible. However, reference is made in the Bible to these other books; for example, "The Book of Life." The Apostle Paul has indicated in Philipians 4:3 that there were those who labored with him in the Gospel whose names were in "the book of life." What comforting words! Then in the next verse he exhorts: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."

This is a special book of life. It is open at the present time, and in it the names of all the overcomers of the Gospel Age are to appear. When we take the step of full consecration and are begotten of the Holy Spirit, it is appropriate that we should be reckoned as members of the family of God and that our names be recorded as such.

"The Book of Life" is referred to again in Revelation 3:5. "He that overcometh [conquers in himself the spirit of the world] the same shall be [in the resurrection] clothed in

white raiment [actual righteousness of the saints]; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life [the record of the faithful elect], but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

"I will confess [speak out—Young] his name." This gives us, first of all, the thought that, although we have been begotten of God, we have never been introduced to him in his actual presence. Our Lord is represented not only as our Bridegroom, but also as our Elder Brother, and is pictured as waiting on the other side until we, his brethren, shall pass over. Our Lord being the One to whom the Father delegated the work of instructing us in the school of Christ, it will be most fitting, as we pass beyond the veil, that he should introduce us to the Father. What a gloriously blessed thought! Those specially confessed — introduced — are the bride class. And we are to hope and strive that we may attain that wondrous heavenly calling.

The infinite range and scope of our Heavenly Father's

intellect and memory makes anything in the nature of an ordinary written record in a book unnecessary. Our Father knows the various members of his spiritual family, even as Jesus has said concerning himself and his sheep, "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."—John 10:14

The Lamb's Book of Life

The "book of life" referred to in Revelation 3:5 is later called "the Lamb's book of life." We quote: "And there shall in no wise enter into it [the heavenly city] anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."—Rev. 21:27

This book includes the names of those who attain to the position of joint-heirship with Christ, whose names are written in heaven during the Gospel Age, and who are faithful to their covenant. What a glorious incentive we have here to faithfulness! What a warning against the slightest sympathy with anything unclean, untrue, or in anywise

contrary to the divine standard of holiness. This 27th verse is truly a very important admonition to the church.

If we appreciate the glorious things of the divine provision for the church, and also for the world, these promises and offers will have their influence upon us, and under their power we are expected to keep our garments unspotted from the world. We are to be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. We are to hate every contamination of the flesh upon our robe of righteousness, and to seek immediately in prayer for the removal of any spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, from our wedding garment. Thus we may abide in the Lord's love, and in due time be "meet [fitted] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."—Col. 1:12

"Another Book"

The Scriptures also tell us of "another book"—one that refers to the earthly phase of the kingdom. "And I saw the dead [all mankind, except the church and the great company], small and great, stand

before God; and the books were opened [bringing a full knowledge of the truth]: and another book was opened, which is the book of life [the record of those who shall pass the restitution trial of judgment satisfactorily]: and the dead [now raised from death] were judged [tried and tested during the Millennium, that thousand-year judgment day] out of those things which were written in the books [of divine revelation, not in the old creedal teachings], according to their works."—Rev. 20:12

The righteous shall flourish (Ps. 92:12), but any who prove to be incorrigibly wicked after having had a full and merciful opportunity to obey and live, will be destroyed. (Acts 3:23; Rev. 20:15) Not one blot of iniquity will be allowed to exist in God's perfect, everlasting kingdom.

Today, the most urgent call for us, as recorded in God's precious "Book," the Holy Bible, is for the church, the bride, to make herself ready for the glorious heavenly inheritance. (Rev. 19:7; I Pet. 1:4) Having been counted worthy to have our names written in "the Lamb's book of life," continued faithfulness is needful if, with the Lord's help, we would be overcomers. Jesus, through the Revelator, has said: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Rev. 3:21; 20:6) Thus the precious assurance may be ours: "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life."—Rev. 3:5 □



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BRITISH SECTION

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Talking Things Over

Privileges and Responsibilities

WE HAVE now entered a new year, both with respect to Christian experience,—as those experiences are related to the divine plan,—and in appraising the meaning of what is happening in the chaotic world around us. So far as the outlook of the world is concerned, it has perhaps never been more uncertain than now. One of these uncertainties is sure to have a direct bearing upon our lives as Christians, in serving the Lord and in our fellowship one with another.

We refer to the energy crisis. How much the curtailment of gasoline for our automobiles, and the increasing price of that which is available, will affect our way of living insofar as attending our local gatherings is concerned, and our attendance at local and general conventions, is one of the uncertainties for us with respect to 1974.

Apparently there will be a considerable increase in unemployment and here again, how much this will affect the brethren is an uncertainty. For some it may provide more time for the service of the Lord, as well as certain hardships in supplying the temporal needs of life.

However, the privileges and responsibilities of Christians toward one another and toward the Lord will remain the same. And what better time could we have to examine some

of these privileges and opportunities than now, as we are facing difficulties in the world and, without doubt, villainous onslaughts of the Adversary, as well as bringing our own flesh under control at a time which tends to destroy tranquility of heart and mind and remove us from our moorings of rest in the Lord. One of the good passages to remind us of some of our responsibilities is I Corinthians, chapter 13. This is Paul's well-known treatise on the subject of Christian love.

To grasp the full meaning of what Paul says in this chapter it is well to take its setting into consideration. It is in chapter 12 that Paul presents a comprehensive outline of the organization of the new creation. In this chapter he uses as an illustration the make-up of the human body, with its members representing us as members in the mystical body of Christ.

He explains that it is God who sets every member in this body as it pleaseth him. He shows that all in the body occupy this position because of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and that through the Spirit certain gifts are made available; that some are made apostles, some prophets, some teachers; that there are miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Then he asks, "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"—vss. 28-30

Following this series of questions Paul adds, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." Two purposes of the Lord are served by this organizational arrangement of the new creation. One is that we may effectively serve one another in the most holy faith, and that this should be done sympathetically and with a desire to be a real spiritual blessing to one another, "that there should be no schism in the body; but that the

members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

What a blessed privilege this presents to all of us as followers of the Master! And as followers of the Master we are also his witnesses working individually and together in proclaiming his Gospel of the kingdom. Paul probably sensed what many of the Lord's people have experienced, which is the possibility of being caught up in a fever of activities, and to some extent overlooking our responsibilities to one another.

And it could be this that prompted his marvelous presentation of the subject of love which we find in chapter 13. We are to bear witness to the truth in any and every way possible, and may 1974 be a good year for activity in the Lord's service, despite the handicaps we might encounter. But let us remember that no matter how zealous we might be as witnesses for Jesus and the Word of God, and no matter how well-qualified we may be to sound forth the glorious message of present truth, this accomplishes nothing for ourselves if it is not done in harmony with the spirit of love. So Paul, in showing us this more excellent way, opens chapter 13 with the warning, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

This is merely Paul's effective way of saying that unless we serve the Lord in the true spirit of love, all of our activities will amount to nothing as far as we are concerned and just a noise so far as God is concerned. Paul is not **saying here that we are not to be concerned about bearing witness for the truth.** So far as the brethren today are concerned, we have none that are able to speak with the tongues of men and of angels. About the best we can do

is to speak with lisping, stammering tongues. But one of our responsibilities is to use our stammering tongues as effectively as possible.

Knowledge

Verse 2 reads, "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." The gift of prophecy here referred to is probably the ability for public speaking. Probably Paul understood all the mysteries of the divine plan, and possessed all necessary knowledge of the plan. These are valuable assets to the Christian life. We need to have a knowledge of God's plan in order to present it properly when we are bearing witness to the truth. But knowledge can be made a hobby, as though the acquiring of knowledge is the all-important consideration, when it really is not.

Then Paul speaks of having faith,— so much faith that we could remove mountains,— and yet this would mean nothing to us if we did not possess love, and use the power of faith in keeping with divine love. If we do not do this, Paul said, we are nothing." Jesus spoke of a faith that could remove mountains, and perhaps Paul had this in mind and was merely saying to us that even though we have this faith which Jesus describes and have not love, we still are nothing.

Verse 3 reads, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." When the rich young ruler asked Jesus what good thing he could do to inherit eternal life, Jesus said that it would be necessary for him to sell all he had and give to the poor, and that if he did this he would have treasure in heaven. Paul may

well have had this in mind when he said, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor. . .and have not love, it profiteth me nothing [I will lay up no treasure in heaven]."

The reference to giving his body to be burned is simply a reminder of what we have all covenanted to do; that is, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, with the assurance that this sacrifice will be holy and acceptable to God, our reasonable service. But even such a great sacrifice would profit us nothing if it was not motivated by love.

Love Is Kind

In verse 4 Paul adds, "Love suffereth long, and is kind." The faithful Christian is called upon to suffer,—to suffer throughout his entire walk in the narrow way. Ofttimes this suffering tends to irritate, and perhaps causes one to be unkind in his dealings with others. Paul is reminding us here that love, even though it suffer, is kind, and there is no excuse whatever for a Christian to be anything else than kind. If because of our weaknesses of the flesh we do become irritated and manifest temporarily a spirit of unkindness, let us not hide behind the unscriptural thought that this is righteous indignation. Let us acknowledge it to be a fault, and ask God's forgiveness.

Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." The marginal translation here reads, "Love is not rash, it is not boastful, it is not puffed up." Making a hobby out of knowledge could easily puff one up, but love does not puff up, love builds up, the apostle says. (vs. 5) Love "doth not behave itself unseemly." Love "seeketh not her own." This is a heart-searching truth. And it is so easy to insist on having our own way! We excuse it by saying that a principle is at stake, while no principle is at stake at all. This is simply a plain statement that love seeketh not her own. It means that we are in the way of sacrifice, and the sacrifice to

which we have agreed is the giving up of everything that is our own—even our own ways.

Love “is not easily provoked.” Christian love is something that has to be worked on, and worked on in harmony with the plain admonitions of the Word of God. We are not supposed to make excuses for not being guided by love, for to make such excuses would merely be a way of condoning our imperfections.

Thinketh No Evil

Paul's explanation that love thinketh no evil is indeed heart-searching. It is so easy to think evil! It is one of the ways of the world. The world in general would rather think evil than good. Newspaper reporters know this, and cater to it in their reports of news. If a man, whether through intoxication or otherwise, falls down on the street and needs help, and some kindly-disposed person happens along and helps him to his feet, brushes him off, perhaps helps him to a bus station, or whatever he can do, no mention in the newspapers is ever made of it. But if a man is walking down the street and another man comes along, knocks him down and leaves him dying on the pavement, that man will get a big write-up in the papers. That is news, our worldly reporters think. But this should not be the viewpoint of Christians.

Let us think of the street on which we are traveling through the world as having two sides. One side is in the bright sunlight, the other in the shadows. As Christians, which side of the street do we use? That is reflected in the viewpoint we get of the experiences which we encounter and the observations which we make. When reporting an experience or observation, what do we report—the seamy side of what we experienced or saw, or the good side?

Man is not totally depraved, and certainly not the

brethren, and no matter what we may experience in our contact with them, there is always something good to report. And it is the good side of life that we will report if we are in harmony with Paul's admonition, "Love thinketh no evil." So as we go along this street of life during 1974 and afterward, let us make sure that we are walking on the sunny side, where things look bright and good, rather than on the side hidden in shadows where everything encountered is of a somber, evil nature.

This thought is further borne out in verse 6 where Paul says that love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." Are we so in harmony with the right and the good and the wholesome that we are rejoicing in that, and will talk about that at all times rather than the unwholesome things in other people's lives? Are we truly rejoicing in the truth of God's plan and seeing to it that this is at all times the uppermost thing in our hearts and minds, even when we interpret our associations with others and what they might say or do?

Love "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." It is so easy to read passages of scripture like this and say, "Aren't those wonderful thoughts!" and then close the Bible and perhaps give little attention as to how successfully they are applied in our own lives. It is because love endureth all things that it remains kind.

Love "never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

(Verse 11) "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I

became a man, I put away childish things." Here the apostle is not referring to the time when he was a babe in Christ, and his growing up in Christ. He is comparing his whole Christian life to the childhood stage in his experience, and referring to the manhood stage as the time when he would be beyond the veil and be with his Master. The best any of us can do during the present life,—during the childhood stage of our Christian experience,—comes far short of the ideal. We do many foolish things, and will continue to do many foolish things until we finish our course in death. Verse 12 amplifies this thought. We quote, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Verse 13: "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." May the year 1974 be a triumphant one for all of us as we endeavor to be filled and controlled more and more by the spirit of love. If we find ourselves walking on the shady side of the street, may we cross over and enjoy a more happy, wholesome, and more blessed experience of being so under the control of the spirit of love that we will truly think no evil, thus enjoying what the Lord wants us to enjoy as we carry out the terms of our consecration.

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GENERAL CONVENTION BULLETIN

THE General Convention Committee has given prayerful consideration to your spiritual welfare in preparing the program for the 1974 convention. A few of the highlights have emerged, and the prospects are that a great blessing is in store for all.

There is to be a panel discussion and, as usual, the moderator and panel members will be chosen because of their knowledge of the subject and their ability to express themselves. The subject chosen for the panel discussion was suggested by the theme text, "Be thou faithful unto death . . ." What death does a Christian die? How can we be faithful in the dying process? Is this death meaningful in God's plans and purposes? It is obvious that the panel's over-all subject is the sin-offering.

Another profitable and popular session that has been arranged for is a question meeting. It is in this meeting that you will have the opportunity to present to a panel of qualified Bible students questions that have been a problem to you. And you will hear answers to other questions that will be interesting and beneficial.

Two symposiums have been planned, and the topic was again suggested by the theme text, "Be thou faithful . . ."—faithful in doctrine, faithful in trials, faithful in service, faithful in prayer. Capable brethren, rich in Christian experience, will explore these ramifications of being faithful, to our edification and spiritual benefit.

The General Convention, to be held at Albion College, in Albion, Michigan, will provide you a rich spiritual feast. Plan to attend. The dates are August 3 through August 8, 1974.

Speakers' Appointments

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

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Sayville, NY	Feb. 3		Detroit, MI	18
	P. HATGIS		Chatham, ONT.	20
Detroit, MI	Feb. 24		Saginaw, MI	21
	G. JEUCK		Grand Rapids, MI	22
Hartford, CT	Feb. 17		Grand Rapids, MI	24
	A. KRUMPOLT		La Salle, IL	25
Allentown, PA	Feb. 10		Paris, IL	26
	M. MITCHELL		Zeigler, IL	28
New Haven, CT	Feb. 3	L. POST		
	E. K. PENROSE		Philadelphia, PA	Feb. 24
Lynchburg, VA	Feb. 1	S. SURACI		
			New York, NY	Feb. 10

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Conventions

PALO ALTO, CALIF., an. 26, 27—Carpenter's Hall, 3065 Middlefield Rd., Mrs. M. S. Blicharz, 104 Vista Del Monte, Los Gatos 95030

DETROIT, MICH., Jan. 27—Northwest Branch YWCA, 25940 Grand River. Mr. Frank Niemczak, 18937 Murray Hill, Detroit, MI 48235

SACRAMENTO, CALIF., Feb. 16, 17—University of California, Faculty Club, Davis, Calif. Mrs E. F. Lankford 6000-19 Ave., Sacramento

DETROIT, MICH., Feb. 24—Northwest Branch YWCA, 25940 Grand River.

Mr. Frand Niemczak, 18937 Murray Hill, Detroit 48235

ORLANDO, FL, March 2-4—Saturday morning session: Loch Haven Art Center, corner Rollins St. and Mills Ave. All other sessions: Orlando Garden Club, 710 E. Rollins St. Mr. Stanley Jeuck, 1910 Hillcrest St., Orlando, 32823

BUFFALO, N. Y., March 24

FRESNO, CALIF., April 6, 7

AGAWAM, MASS., April 7

BOISE, IDAHO, April 19-21

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

FEBRUARY 7—"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."—Romans 13:16 (Z. '95-11 Hymn 312 A)

FEBRUARY 14—"By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."—Matthew 12:37 (Z. '96-32 Hymn 208)

FEBRUARY 21—"Thou art my

rock and my fortress; therefore for Thy name's sake, lead me, and guide me."—Psalm 31:3 (Z. '02-249 Hymn 126)

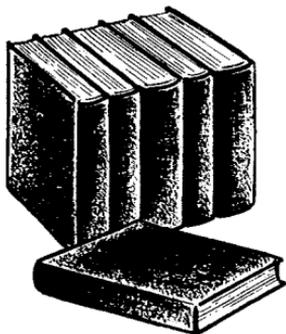
FEBRUARY 28—"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."—Philippians 4:6 (Z. '03-8 Z. '02-266)

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1974 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper date for the observance of the annual Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 p.m. on Friday, April 5.

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

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

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

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

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

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