

*The* DAWN

EPHESIANS  
"BY GRACE WE ARE SAVED THROUGH FAITH"

EPHESIANS 2:8

A HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE  
JUNE 1951



# GENERAL CONVENTION--1951

Bowling Green, Ohio, August 18-25

IT IS not too early to begin making plans to attend the General Convention. In the Lord's providence the facilities of the Bowling Green State University have again been secured, and there is every reason to believe that the Lord's rich blessing will rest upon the gathering this year, even as in the past. We can confidently expect that it will be an occasion of great joy in the Lord.

Rooms and meals will be provided by the university at the very low rate of \$15.00 for the entire week. Rooms will be available in private homes outside the grounds for those who prefer them, and meals for the week may be obtained at the university cafeteria for \$12.00.

Requests for room reservations may now be sent to the convention committee secretary, Mr. Ray Krupa, 145 West Passaic Avenue, Rutherford, New Jersey.

**"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and  
into His courts with praise."**



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## Divine Plan Information

The cloth bound Pocket Edition of The Divine Plan of the Ages is temporarily out of stock. A new edition will be printed, but it will be several weeks before they are again available. Meanwhile, for those who may wish them,

## CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN	
Israel's National Resurrection . . .	2
BIBLE STUDY	
The Restoration of Jerusalem . . .	7
Jesus and the Ministry of the Word . . .	11
The Spread of the Gospel . . .	15
The Church Under Persecution . . .	19
CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE	
The "Great Salvation" . . . . .	25
Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts . . .	33
Going On to Perfection	
Book of Hebrews—Chapter VI . . .	34
YOUR QUESTIONS	
Satan Blinds Their Minds . . . . .	42
One Hundred Years of Trial . . . . .	43
Renewed Assurance . . . . .	45
BRITISH SECTION	
More News from Ireland . . . . .	46
"Frank and Ernest" Broadcasts from Radio Luxembourg . . . . .	48
ENCOURAGING LETTERS . . . . .	51
TALKING THINGS OVER	
The Church in a World Gone Mad . . .	53
SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS	
Great Britain . . . . .	50
United States . . . . .	62
CONVENTIONS	
Great Britain . . . . .	49
United States . . . . .	63

the cloth bound Library Edition will be furnished at the price of fifty cents each, the same price as the cloth bound Pocket Edition. We have also bound a small quantity of the Library Edition in paper, which will temporarily be supplied at thirty cents each. These special prices will be effective only while Pocket Editions are out of stock.

## *Israel's National Resurrection*

*"Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off."—EZEKIEL 37:11*

**N**O STUDENT of biblical prophecy today can properly ignore the outstanding developments occurring in Palestine in connection with the rebirth of the nation of Israel. And these events, in turn, are sequentially related to what has been happening to the Jewish people all over the world during the last half century, and more. Indeed, God's dealings with his ancient people are among the most tangible evidences we have confirming the inspiration of the Bible, and particularly its prophecies pertaining to this end of the age—the biblical "end of the world."

Israel lost its independence as a nation in 606 B. C., when its last king, Zedekiah, was overthrown and the people taken captive to Babylon. Though later the people were permitted to return to Palestine, they continued to be subject to Gentile nations. In the days of Jesus the nation was being held in bondage to Rome, and the Master prophesied that they would continue to "be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." —Luke 21:24

There is scriptural evidence to substantiate the fact that the "times of the Gentiles" was to be a period of 2,520 years. Beginning in 606 B. C., this period would, of course, end in A. D. 1914. It was the events set in motion by the World War, which began in 1914, that led to the rebirth of Israel in 1948 as a free and independent nation, no longer trodden down as a subject people to Gentile nations. Indeed, Israel has been admitted as a full fledged member of the United Nations.

This is a marvelous development, and an accurate fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy. His statement that Israel would be trodden down

## HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

by the Gentiles until a certain time implies that Gentile nations would still exist after Israel ceased to be trodden down. True, these foretold developments are closely allied with the establishment of Christ's kingdom and the complete overthrow of all humanly constituted rulership in the earth; nevertheless, it would seem that in the transition from Satan's empire to the kingdom of Christ, there was to be a brief period when Israel, reborn as a nation, would enjoy independent status among the other nations, as implied by Jesus' words.

Less than forty years after Jesus uttered his prophecy the subject nation of Israel was completely overthrown by their captors, the Romans, and the people dispersed into all nations. From that time until within the last half century they have been a hated and persecuted people in all lands where they have been driven. So far as their national hopes were concerned they have, indeed, as the Prophet Ezekiel so graphically foretold, been a people whose hope was lost.

There are many prophecies in the Old Testament, however, which foretold a change in their lot, that they would be rooted out of the nations where they had been domiciled, and returned to their own land. These prophecies clearly indicate that this great change was due to occur at the close of the present Gospel Age, and would synchronize with events having to do with the downfall of Gentile rulership and the establishment of the kingdom of Christ.

Since the return of God's favor to Israel is associated with the setting up of Christ's kingdom, it would seem natural to conclude that it would mark the end of all trouble for this suffering people. However, the prophecies reveal that this would not immediately be the case, that instead, their return to the Promised Land would be marked temporarily by increased trouble. Through the Prophet Jeremiah the Lord foretold the regathering of Israel, but said that he would send fishers and hunters among them. (Jer. 16:14-18) The symbolism of "hunters" strongly suggests severe, driving methods to be used in effecting the return of this people to their own land.

Through the Prophet Ezekiel the Lord uses even stronger language, saying, "Surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: and I will bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand and with a stretched

out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face."—Ezekiel 20:33-35

Prior to 606 B. C., God ruled over Israel through David, Solomon, and others, including Zedekiah. But when Zedekiah was overthrown this typical kingdom of the Lord came to an end. But in the prophecy just quoted the Lord tells us that he would rule over this people with "a stretched out arm." Isaiah 52:10 and 53:1 identify Jesus as the "arm" of Jehovah, so the reference of Ezekiel's prophecy is evidently to the time of Christ's second presence and to the authority of his kingdom. It is interesting, therefore, to notice that the uprooting of the people of Israel from the lands where they had been driven is spoken of as being done under the rulership of the Lord's "arm," and also that it would be accomplished by circumstances described as great "fury."

And how true to the facts is another feature of this prophecy. It states that they would be brought out of the various lands where they were domiciled, "into the wilderness of the people." The remainder of this chapter reveals clearly that they would need to be purified before they could receive the full favor of the Lord; but meanwhile, and even now—yes, even though many of them have actually reached the Holy Land and have set up their own government—they are still in the "wilderness of the people," still in the confusion and fear that is blighting the whole world. They have not yet found rest. This is particularly true of those who, having lost their homes in Europe, have not yet been able to reach Palestine.

Another prophecy of the awakening of Israel and the return of God's favor to them is Ezekiel 37:1-14, from which our text is taken. This is the prophecy in which Ezekiel is given a vision of a valley of dry bones, with the explanation that these bones are the "whole house of Israel." After the prophet saw these bones the Lord asked him if they could live. His answer was, "O Lord God, thou knowest." There is a suggestion here that as the prophet saw it, the situation looked hopeless, and so it seemed to all the Jewish people throughout the long centuries of the Gospel age, and the more so as time went on. The "wailing wall" in Jerusalem continued to be a fitting symbol of their faded hopes.

But the Lord assured the prophet that there was hope for Israel, that he would cause these bones to come together, that he would put flesh upon them, and then put his Spirit in them that they might

## HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

live. Then the Lord told Ezekiel to prophesy to this end. When he did, there was a "noise," and a great "shaking," and the bones came together, and flesh came upon them. The sequence here indicates that out of the "noise" came the assembling of the "bones," and that when the "shaking" occurred, flesh came upon them.

The Hebrew word here translated "noise" is the one used in the Old Testament for "thunderings," and the shaking, according to the Hebrew text, is that of an earthquake. Obviously here are symbolisms of events which were to occur when God's time came for these dried bones of Israel's hope to be revived and for them to be brought out of their national graves. These events were to occur at the end of the age, and another prophecy informs us concerning this time that God's lightnings would enlighten the earth, and that as a result the earth, that is, the social order, would tremble from the thunderings which follow lightning.—Psalm 97:1-5

Jehovah's lightnings are symbolic of the foretold "increase of knowledge" which was to take place at the end of the age, and which the whole world has experienced. (Dan. 12:4) This has caused a shaking of the social structure of civilization; and it has been during this experience, and as one of its results, that Israel's "bones" began to stir. Other prophecies point out that this shaking and final overthrow of the "present evil world" would take place in spasms, and we might think of the first World War as one of these; and as we have already noted, the first visible stir among the Jews, the first shaking of the "bones," as it were, came about as a direct result of that war. Out of that war came the opening of Palestine to the Jews; the Balfour Declaration; the Hebrew University on mount Sopus; and the beginning of the rehabilitation of the land.

This might well correspond with the coming together of the "bones." But as yet they had no flesh on them. Another spasm of the great "time of trouble" must occur to bring about this development, which is described by Ezekiel as shaking, or an earthquake. It is generally conceded that in prophecy an earthquake symbolizes revolution; and now it is almost universally claimed that the second world struggle ushered in a period of world revolution. Out of this shaking of a world has come form to the reassembled "bones" of the house of Israel—they are now a nation, having been covered with flesh.

But Israel, in the real sense, has not yet received life; for the

new nation does not recognize God in its affairs, nor claim allegiance to him. In other words, Israel has not yet been fully resurrected from the "grave" which resulted from the loss of God's favor. The "breath" or Spirit of the Lord has not yet been received. This final step in the "resurrection" process must await, according to the prophecy, another and final spasm in the great time of trouble by which the old world is being destroyed.

This final phase of the trouble is described by the prophecy as the "four winds." (vs. 9) These may well be the same "four winds" mentioned in Revelation 7:1-3, where they are represented as being held back until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. The sealing work here described is that of the Holy Spirit during the present Gospel age, and since the "four winds," when allowed to blow, bring this work to a close, they evidently are a symbol of the final phase of the great time of trouble which terminates the work of the Gospel age.

Another description of this trouble, then, would be that given us in Ezekiel 38 and 39:1-7. Here we are told of mighty forces which attempt to destroy restored Israel, but the Lord intervenes, saves Israel, and destroys their enemies. Resulting from this is the opening of Israel's eyes to behold the glory of the Lord, and also the recognition of God's glory by all the nations. The Lord declares, "So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen [nations] shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel."—vs. 7

Obviously this development will mark the full end of the great "time of trouble," and the full manifestation of Christ's kingdom governing in the affairs of men. By this time the Gospel age work of the Holy Spirit will have been finished; and in fulfilment of the Lord's promise, his Spirit will be poured out upon "all flesh." Then Israel will receive his Spirit and as a result, will live. Thus will be fulfilled the promise:

"Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live."—Ezekiel 37:12-14

## The Restoration of Jerusalem

JUNE 3

Ezra 1:2, 3; 6:14-16

**T**HE Jewish nation was taken into captivity in the year 606 B. C., which was early in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. It was seventy years later when the people were given permission to return to the land of Judah, and to rebuild the temple. Meanwhile, the Babylonian Empire had been conquered by the Medes and Persians, and King Cyrus was the supreme ruler.

The Prophet Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, "Wheresoever the children of men dwell, . . . God . . . hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory." (Dan. 2:37, 38) This was the arrangement under the "times of the Gentiles" grant of power given, first to Babylon, and passed on successively to Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Cyrus understood this arrangement and declared, "The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth," and then added that under this lease of power God had shouldered him with the responsibility "to build

him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah."

Cyrus understood also that in order to discharge this obligation it was essential to release the captive Jews and give them permission and help to return to their own land; for who else would take an interest in building the Lord's temple in Jerusalem? In II Chronicles 36:22, 23, and in Ezra 1:1 we are told that the decree of Cyrus authorizing the rebuilding of the temple was in fulfillment of a prophecy by Jeremiah.—Jer. 25:12

Many difficulties attended the rebuilding of the temple, but it was completed in the "sixth year of the reign of Darius the king." Work on the project prospered, Ezra informs us, because of the encouragement received from the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. Both of these prophets mentioned the rebuilding of the temple, but in the Lord's providence their prophecies extend to a much greater work, even that of building the church, which is "the temple of the living God"—the spiritual temple which is prepared during this Gospel age,

## BIBLE STUDY

Cyrus in connection with the rebuilding of Jerusalem and of the temple, but Ezra makes no mention of it when telling us about Cyrus' decree. A careful examination of Isaiah's prophecy reveals why. Beginning with the 24th verse of Isaiah, chapter 44, the prophet lists one after another of the accomplishments of the Lord—what he is able to do, and what he does do—that he needs only to speak the word and it is done.

In the 27th verse the prophet continues in this vein, and says of the Lord, "That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers." God also says to Cyrus, "He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure": even saying to Jerusalem, "Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." It is clearly the Lord who issues all these commandments, even the commandment which makes Cyrus his "shepherd," the one whom he would use to release his captive people and make possible the building of the temple.

The Israelites were God's chosen people. God had not used nor blessed other nations heretofore, and it would seem almost as great an accomplishment to make Cyrus a shepherd over his people as it would to dry up the sea. God used the decree of Cyrus in connection with the rebuilding of the temple, but this was by the Lord's own word of authority; for it was the Lord who first of all said, "to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid," and it was the Lord, not Cyrus, who said "to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built."

God used Cyrus in connection with the rebuilding of the temple, but not Jerusalem's walls, referred to in Daniel's prophecy. The decree authorizing this project was issued eighty-two years later by Artaxerxes, then king of Persia. The enemies of the returned captives did all they could to hinder the work of rebuilding both the temple and the walls of Jerusalem. One method they used was to confuse the issue between rebuilding the temple and rebuilding the city and its walls.

Work was well advanced on the temple when these enemies sent a letter to Artaxerxes informing him that the Jews were rebuilding the city and its walls, and reminding the king that a fortified Jerusalem in the hands of the Jews would prove a menace to his security on that side of the river. Artaxerxes was stirred by this report. He looked up the records, found that in the past, powerful kings in Jerusalem had proved to be a problem to the preceding empire of Babylon. He discovered that no authority had been given to rebuild the walls and city of Jerusalem, so he sent word that the work should stop until a decree had been issued by him. See Ezra 4:21.

Actually Jerusalem was not being rebuilt, but merely the temple. Then the temple builders finally got word back to Artaxerxes and requested a search of the records to find a decree which had been issued by Cyrus pertaining to the temple. This decree was found, and Artaxerxes honored it and gave his full co-operation, even to the point of making liberal

arrangements for the decoration of the temple after the work of rebuilding was completed.

But the city and its walls could not be rebuilt until another decree had been issued by Artaxerxes, and this was obtained later by Nehemiah, when the king gave him permission to go to Jerusalem for this purpose. Nehemiah records, "So it pleased the king to send me." (Neh. 2:6) Letters were given to Nehemiah by the king to facilitate the journey and to expedite the work of rebuilding the city.

It is important to keep these historical events in their proper sequence because they have to do with a vital time prophecy relating to the first advent of Christ. Daniel foretold that it would be sixty-nine weeks—symbolic weeks, each one being seven literal years in length—from the issuing of the decree to rebuild the walls and city of Jerusalem, to Messiah the Prince. (Dan. 9:25-27) This was a period of 483 years. To locate the starting date for this period at the time Cyrus issued his decree, would shorten the period from creation to the first advent of Jesus by eighty-two years, and this would lead to an erroneous understanding of certain important time prophecies of the Bible.

### Nehemiah 8:1-3

Ezra, the scribe, also acting under authority from Artaxerxes, restored to Israel the worship of Jehovah. Practically an entirely new generation had grown up during the Babylonian captivity, although there were some of the

original captives who returned. In Babylon they had no temple, and probably this new generation had been given little instruction in religious matters; so this called for another major job of "reconstruction."

Little good would it be to the children of Israel to have their capital city rebuilt and their temple restored, unless the worship of their God was also restored to them, and this was the task that Ezra supervised. "The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the Law," the account tells us. That must have been a wonderful day for Israel!

Just as the building of the temple pointed forward to the building of a far more important "temple"—the spiritual temple of God—so the restoration of the Law to Israel reminds us of a still more far-reaching religious reform, even of that time when the Lord will turn to all people a "pure language," and when they will "all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent."—Zeph. 3:9

Historically, the period from the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the first advent of Christ is rather obscure. The outstanding events in the nation all pre-date this final era in their history. God had watched over them as a nation. He brought them out of Egypt; gave them his Law; brought them into the Promised Land; blessed them and punished them according to their needs, while they were being ruled, first by judges, and then by kings; and finally permitted them to become a subject nation to Gentile rulers.

## BIBLE STUDY

Now there was a marking of time, as it were, until the 483 years of Daniel's prophecy had run out. During this period the Jews were none too faithful to the Lord. Malachi tells us that they robbed God, and because of this failed to enjoy the rich blessings of the Lord which otherwise might have been theirs. Then their Messiah came, and the plan of God moved forward into a new age, the Gospel age. It was because they were not wholly faithful that they were unprepared to accept their Messiah when he came to them. "He came

unto his own, and his own received him not."—John 1:11

### QUESTIONS:

What year was it when Cyrus issued the decree authorizing the Jews to return to their land and to rebuild their temple?

Explain the larger fulfilment of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah.

Did Cyrus give permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem?

Explain the circumstances which made it necessary for Artaxerxes to grant permission for the walls to be rebuilt.

What was the particular work of Ezra in connection with the return from captivity of the children of Israel; and of what was this a fitting illustration?

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# Jesus and the Ministry of the Word

JUNE 10

Luke 4:14-22

**J**ESUS came at the close of the Jewish age. He conducted his personal ministry exclusively among the Jewish people. The seventieth symbolic week of Daniel's time prophecy—seven literal years—had not yet run out. (Dan. 9:25-27) Jesus' ministry, in fact, commenced at the beginning of this seven-year period. The prophet foretold that the covenant—that is, God's exclusive covenant of favor to the natural descendants of Abraham—was to be continued with them for this final seven years. Because of this, Jesus lim-

ited his service to them, and said to his disciples, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not."—Matt. 10:5

This was not because Jesus lacked love for the Gentiles. Nor was it because the divine plan made no provision for the blessing of the Gentiles. It was simply because God's due time for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles had not yet come. All of Jesus' work was conducted in harmony with his Heavenly Father's plan, including its time features.

It was at the river Jordan, when Jesus was thirty years of age, that

## THE DAWN

he was anointed for service by the Holy Spirit; that is, he was there duly authorized by God for the ministry he had come to earth to perform. The high priests and kings of Israel had been anointed to office by the use of anointing oil. Jesus came to be both a priest and a king, and he was anointed to office, not by the pouring of oil on his head, but by his Father's outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon him.

The first forty days after receiving this anointing, Jesus spent in solitude in the wilderness. The Holy Spirit was a great enlightening power in his mind, and he needed time to ponder over the marvelous revelation of the divine plan which had thus been given to him. He was then especially tempted by Satan, these temptations being calculated to swerve the Master from his course of faithfulness in performing his Father's will as the world's Redeemer.

Then he entered actively into his ministry, in the power of the Spirit. He returned early to Nazareth, the home of Mary and Joseph, and on the sabbath entered into the synagogue. There he was given the opportunity to read the Scripture lesson for the day. He chose the opening portion of the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, a prophecy which foretold his anointing of the Spirit and outlined the nature of the ministry he was to conduct.

According to this prophecy his message was to be one of good news, called in Luke's account, the "Gospel." The Gospel nature of

his message is indicated by the fact that it would heal the broken-hearted, give assurance of deliverance to the captives, and the recovery of sight to the blind. It was also to be a message which, by engendering hope, would "set at liberty them that are bruised."

The prophecy also foretold that Jesus would be anointed to preach the "acceptable year of the Lord." The Apostle Paul quotes from the prophecy of Isaiah concerning a "time accepted," and adds, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (Isa. 49:8; II Cor. 6:2) All of these expressions refer to a special period of time in the divine plan during which the Lord would accept the sacrifices of his people, and upon the basis of their faithfulness in laying down their lives in his service they receive the reward of glory, honor, and immortality, plus the privilege of reigning with Christ during the thousand years of his kingdom.

During the Jewish age, Israel's priesthood offered animals in sacrifice, but now, in the new age being opened up by Jesus, the people of God were to have the privilege of offering themselves in sacrifice; and Jesus was the first to do this. His sacrifice was acceptable because of its inherent perfection. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26) The sacrifices of his followers are acceptable through the merit of the Redeemer's blood.—Rom. 12:1

The sacrifice of both Jesus and his church is also acceptable to God because this is the "accept-

able year," that is, the age in the divine plan when this feature of God's purpose is being accomplished. This Gospel age is the only time in the divine plan when the Lord's people are invited to present their bodies "a living sacrifice." This, then, is the "acceptable year" the opening of which Jesus was anointed to announce.

Prior to Pentecost, when the disciples also received the Holy Spirit, they did not understand this feature of the divine plan very well, although Jesus referred to it on several occasions. When two of them indicated their willingness to drink of his cup and to be baptized with his baptism, he said to them, "Ye shall indeed." (Mark 10:39) This was the same as telling them that they would have the opportunity of giving up their lives in sacrifice.

On another occasion Jesus spoke to his disciples about denying oneself and taking up his cross and following him. (Matt. 16:24) This also was but another way of describing the privilege of sacrifice, of giving up their all in God's service, dying a sacrificial death. Yes, Jesus preached the acceptable year of the Lord. His ministry took place during the transition period between the Jewish and Gospel ages, so a very important part of it was to introduce this special characteristic of the Gospel-age work.

The people "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." (Luke 4:22) Yes, Jesus' message was filled with the great fact of God's grace manifested through him toward a sin-cursed and dying world. The

people of Israel had not been accustomed to hearing such words from their religious teachers. The scribes and Pharisees heaped burdens upon them, grievous to be borne. Little had they heard which could be called gracious. No wonder Jesus was popular among the common people of his day.

**Luke 19:10**

THIS is one of the texts in the Bible which, in a few words, sets forth the entire divine plan of salvation—"For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Original sin had cost man the loss of life, and the loss of his earthly home—"in Adam all die." It was this that Jesus came to seek and to save. Paul explains that "in Christ shall all be made alive." —I Cor. 15:22

Matthew quotes this same statement, and then records the Master's Parable of the Lost Sheep. (Matt. 18:11-14) In God's great universe there are many orders of creation. Some of them are mentioned in the Bible, such as "angels, principalities, powers," etc. In the human creation, the first man became responsible for the sin of the entire race, so the whole human creation was "lost," having strayed outside the fold of the Shepherd.

Jesus left his habitation in the spirit realm and came down to earth to save the "lost sheep." He gave his life in order to accomplish this work of salvation. But when this great mission of love is finally completed, and the lost sheep—the human race—is restored to life and to its lost home, there will be great rejoicing in

heaven; for divine love will have triumphed over sin and selfishness.

**Mark 10:45**

JESUS came to earth to minister to the people, to serve them, and the greatest service he rendered was to give his life "a ransom." This text says "a ransom for many" but we must understand that here the word "many" in reality means all, especially since the Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus gave himself a ransom for "all," and that he tasted "death for every man."—I Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9

In the word "ransom" we have the explanation of how Jesus saves those who are lost. It has the thought of substitute, or corresponding price. It is the thought of a "life for life," as outlined in the Law given to Israel. (Exodus 21:23) In this case, it was Jesus' life given for Adam's life. Because the whole race dies in Adam, his redemption by the sacrifice of Jesus provides salvation for all his children. Thus we see that Jesus not only proclaimed good tidings to the people, but by his death he ratified the promises of God which formed the basis of the gracious words which he uttered.

**John 3:16**

HERE is another of those texts which outlines the whole plan of human redemption and salvation, and shows it to be a provision of divine love. "God so loved the world that he gave." Unselfish giving is the only true expression of divine love; and the Heavenly Father gave the most wonderful of all gifts, even his own beloved Son.

But in this text we have another

viewpoint of salvation brought to our attention—the gift must be accepted. The Good Shepherd Jesus gave his life for the sheep. This gift or sacrifice of his life was "a ransom," a corresponding price. It provided complete satisfaction, or propitiation, for "our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (I John 2:2) But this gift alone does not actually assure salvation, for there must also be the acceptance of the gift.

So it is that only those who "believe" will have everlasting life as a result of the Father's love. However—and for this we thank God—every individual of Adam's race is to be given a full opportunity to believe, based upon a complete understanding of the issues involved. If that opportunity is not provided in this life, and during the present Gospel age, it will be given during the age to come, when the knowledge of the Lord will be so universal that all shall know him from the least unto the greatest.—Jer. 31:34

"How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" the apostle asks. (Rom. 10:14) And they cannot hear without a preacher, a messenger. While the followers of Christ are commissioned to be his ambassadors to all nations, only a few, comparatively, have as yet heard, in the sense of understanding the Gospel of Christ. Not many have had "ears to hear."—Matt. 13:9, 16

But this has not been their fault. Those who have heard and understood have been invited through the Gospel to lay down their lives

## BIBLE STUDY

with Jesus, to suffer and to die with him. These have walked in the narrow way of sacrifice.

But when the work of the new age, the kingdom age, begins, all the blind eyes will be opened, and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped. Then those who believe will walk over the "highway," "the way of holiness"—the return road to the earthly fold of the Good Shepherd from which they strayed. They will "return . . . with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."—Isa. 35

### QUESTIONS:

Why did Jesus conduct his ministry exclusively among the Jewish people?

When was Jesus anointed by the Holy Spirit, and what did this anointing mean to him?

Explain some of the ways in which Jesus' message was one of good news.

What is the "acceptable year of the Lord" which Jesus was anointed to preach? Cite examples of how he preached this message.

In what sense were Jesus' words "gracious"?

How did Jesus seek and save that which was lost? How is this illustrated by the Parable of the Lost Sheep?

What is the meaning of the word "ransom," and how did Jesus give himself "a ransom for all"?

What is necessary in order for one to receive the blessing of life provided by the redemptive work of Christ?

Is the opportunity to believe in Christ limited to this life, and to this age?

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# The Spread of the Gospel

JUNE 17

## Acts 1:8

**W**HILE in the flesh, Jesus had promised his disciples that he would send them the Holy Spirit; and now, after his resurrection, and when he was with them for the last time before returning to the heavenly courts, he renewed this promise. In his previous references to the Holy Spirit Jesus emphasized that it would be a revealing power in their minds, enabling them to understand the things which he had taught them, even bringing to remembrance

important teachings which otherwise they would entirely forget. Jesus had promised, in fact, that the Holy Spirit which he would send would guide them into "all" truth, and show them "things to come."—John 16:13

But on the occasion of this last visit with his disciples, before his ascension, Jesus spoke of another important function of the Holy Spirit—it was to be a power in their lives which would enable them to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in all

Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Some time before this—before he was crucified—Jesus sent his disciples into the ministry, but restricted the field of their activity. They were not to go to the Gentiles, nor to any city of the Samaritans. (Matt. 10:5, 6) But now these restrictions were removed. They were to continue their work among the Israelites in Jerusalem and in all Judea, but in addition were to spread the Gospel of the kingdom to other nations, even to the "uttermost part of the earth."

Actually there were still three and one-half years of exclusive opportunity for the Jews to hear the Gospel before it could go to the Gentiles. This was the last half of the seventieth symbolic week of the prophecy recorded in Daniel 9: 25-27. A prophetic week is a period of seven literal years. The prophecy stated that Jesus would be "cut off" in death in the midst, or middle, of this week, but that the covenant would be confirmed to the Israelites to the full end of the week. So there still remained the last half of this prophetic week before favor could be shown to the Gentiles by preaching the Gospel to them.

But Jesus did not mention this detail when he gave his disciples the commission to go into the uttermost part of the earth with the message. They were to begin in Jerusalem and in Judea, and he knew that in the natural course of events the short remaining period of special favor to the Jews would have expired before they were able to do any witnessing among

the Gentiles, and this proved to be the case.

Cornelius was the first Gentile convert, but he did not hear the Gospel because of any effort the disciples were making to witness to the Gentiles. Indeed, it required a miraculous intervention of divine providence to induce Peter to go to the home of Cornelius and preach the Gospel to him. (Acts 10:9-48) When Peter was assured that it was the Lord's will he gladly visited Cornelius. This devout Gentile accepted Christ, and from that time forward Gentiles came freely into the church and became fellow-heirs of the promises with the Jews.

Many have made the mistake of supposing that this world-wide proclamation of the Gospel was for the purpose of converting the world and preparing all mankind to go to heaven. But this is not true. James informs us that Peter had declared "how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." (Acts 15:14) This "people for his name" are the sons of God who will be united with Christ as the divine ruling family during the millennial age. The work of God in the earth during this present Gospel age is to reach these through a general proclamation of the truth, that through their acceptance of and obedience to it they might be prepared to live and reign with Christ.

#### Acts 4:5-12

IT WAS difficult for the religious rulers of Israel to accept the idea that God could use anyone but them to represent him among the

## BIBLE STUDY

people and to do his work. It was this difficulty, and their jealousy which accompanied it, that caused them to call for the death of Jesus. They thought that this would put an end to the challenge which was threatening their leadership, but not so; for his disciples, witnessing by the power of the Holy Spirit, were rapidly gaining the attention of the people. And these rulers noting the boldness, particularly of Peter and John, perceived that they had "been with Jesus" and were therefore just as dangerous as he.

Peter had performed an outstanding miracle in healing a man who had been lame from the time of his birth. (Acts 3:1-9) Using this miracle as a background of illustration, Peter preached a wonderful sermon on the second coming of Christ, explaining that then there would be times of "restitution" or restoration "of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21) The religious leaders of Israel did not like this, "being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."—Acts 4:1, 2

Now it was the next day, and the religious rulers assembled themselves and summoned the disciples to appear before them for a hearing. They demanded to know "by what power, or by what name" the miracle of healing had been performed. Peter was prompt to reply. He explained that the miracles had been performed in the name of and by the authority

of "Jesus Christ of Nazareth" whom they had crucified. Then he referred to a prophecy which had foretold their rejection of the Messiah, the prophecy concerning the stone which the builders rejected.—Ps. 118:22; Matt. 21:42-44

This rejected "stone" had become the "head of the corner," Peter explained, and now no one could receive God's favor except through Jesus. "Neither is there salvation in any other," said Peter, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." The Jews had hoped to obtain salvation by keeping the Law. They had failed. To those who could see and appreciate the lesson, the Law had been a schoolmaster to guide and teach the necessity for a Redeemer; and Jesus had died as that Redeemer. Through him a new age in the plan of God was opening; and in this new age Jesus was to be "the way, the truth, and the life."—John 14:6

### Acts 28:15, 16, 30, 31

THESE verses from the closing chapter of the Book of Acts bring us to Rome with the great Apostle Paul. Paul went to Rome as a prisoner, and to a large extent by his own choice. When Peter and John and the other disciples began their ministry at Pentecost they could not foresee all the trying and the wonderful experiences that would result from their faithfulness. Each new contact of interest was an additional evidence of God's blessing upon their work. It must have been thus when Cornelius was converted, and even more so when Saul of Tarsus was

shown the light of the Gospel as he traveled on the Damascus road.

Saul had been a bitter enemy of the church, but when he became the Apostle Paul he was an intrepid defender of the faith. He was untiring in his devotion to the Lord, the truth, and the brethren, and displayed great faith and boldness in the face of opposition and persecution. While he was faithful in witnessing to the Jews in their synagogues and elsewhere whenever he had an opportunity, he was primarily an apostle to the Gentiles, and a very faithful and self-sacrificing one.

He was attacked by the Jews in Jerusalem and taken into protective custody by the Roman authorities and spirited out of the city until he could have a hearing. He could have been given his freedom, but he appealed to Rome, and the Roman law left no alternative under the circumstances but to abide by the prisoner's request. However, it was many months after he was first arrested in Jerusalem before he finally reached Rome, and all that time he continued to be a prisoner.

Even so, he had not been idle. He had managed to witness to rulers, to soldiers, to shipmates, and others. Nevertheless it was a long period of hardship and privation. When we keep this in mind it helps us to appreciate more fully what it meant to the apostle that some of the brethren in Rome who had learned of his coming, and anticipating the route by which he would arrive, should come to meet him. The account states that when

he saw these "he thanked God, and took courage."

But Paul did not go to Rome to lie idle in prison. He knew what his rights would be as a Roman citizen, and he took full advantage of them, arranging to live in his own "hired house" while awaiting trial. True, he was not left entirely free, for he was continually watched by Roman guards, a guard being chained to him. But even to these he was able to proclaim the glad tidings.

This was his lot for two whole years, and during that time he "received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God." Paul was enthusiastic about this providence of God which enabled him to give such a wide witness for the truth. Writing about it he said, "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places."—Phil. 1:12, 13

"In all other places"—we do not know the full implication of these words. Rome was then the capital of the so-called civilized world, and no doubt entertained many visitors—for business or other reasons—from many countries. Probably some of these made it a point to visit the unusual prisoner, Paul. It does not seem unreasonable, then, that his imprisonment in Rome may have resulted in the Gospel being carried throughout Europe. The disciples had been commissioned to preach the Gospel in all the world, and perhaps Paul's

imprisonment in Rome was one of the divine providences which helped to carry out this commission.

**QUESTIONS:**

What particular function of the Holy Spirit is emphasized in Acts 1:8?

Was Pentecost the due time for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles? Explain.

Who was the first Gentile convert, and for what purpose did God visit the Gentiles?

What miracle did the apostles perform which helped to stir up the animosity of Israel's religious leaders?

What great feature of the divine plan did Peter illustrate by this miracle?

How had the Jews hoped to obtain salvation? Is there any other way to life except through Christ?

Why did Paul appeal his case to Rome? How did the Lord overrule his imprisonment in Rome in a way that caused the Gospel to reach many places?

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## The Church Under Persecution

JUNE 24

| Peter 5:6-11

**M**UCH of Peter's first epistle is devoted to the subject of Christian suffering. In the divine providence he was especially trained by precept, example, and experience to deal with this subject in an understandable and convincing manner. He wrote, "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." (I Pet. 2:20) It was by way of a difficult path that Peter had become reconciled to this viewpoint. He had tried to dissuade Jesus from exposing himself to the danger of arrest by his enemies, for he knew that his Master had done nothing but good and he could not see why he should be made to suffer. "Be it far from thee," he said to Jesus.—Matt. 16: 22

Later, he assured his Master that he would gladly die for him, with the thought, evidently, of protecting the One whom he loved so dearly from being injured by his enemies. That same night he demonstrated that he meant what he said, for he drew his sword and went into action against those who had come to Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. Meanwhile Jesus told Peter that Satan had "desired" him to sift him as wheat. "But," the Master continued, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."—Luke 22:31, 32

Peter still had much to learn, particularly with respect to the manner in which the way of love leads to sacrifice. Jesus had explained that those who lose their lives sacrificially shall save them; but Peter had not yet grasped the

true meaning of these words. He was yet to be converted to this viewpoint before he would be in a position to "strengthen the brethren" in this way of life for the Christian—the narrow way. It was only when he received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and its revealing power made plain to him the meaning of these lessons, that he realized how wrong he had been in his endeavor to prevent his Master's crucifixion.

But having had these experiences he was now able, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, to present clearly to the brethren just why they were suffering because of their faith, and how their experiences harmonized with the divine plan. He explained that the prophets had foretold the sufferings of Christ. As he unfolds the subject he reveals that the church was to participate in this foretold suffering, and that it was not suffering which resulted from evil-doing, but from well-doing— from following faithfully in the footsteps of Jesus, letting their light shine in the world as he did.

"For it is better," wrote Peter, "if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (I Pet. 3:17, 18) How this information must have strengthened the brethren in the Early Church who were being so bitterly persecuted; as indeed it has strengthened all the Lord's people from then until now.

God permits Christian suffering for wise purposes, one of which is to test the obedience of his people. Jesus learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and God is dealing with us in the same manner. This is why Peter wrote that we should humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God that he might exalt us in due time. If we rebel against his providences because at times they are hard to bear, it would indicate that we were not wholly obedient to him, that we surmised our own ways to be better than his. Jesus prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," nevertheless he wanted the Father's will done, no matter how much suffering might be involved. (Matt. 26:39) This is the attitude of true humility and obedience.

When we do humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, we can then cast all our care upon him, knowing that he does indeed care for us. If we take matters in our own hands, following a course which we think is best regardless of what the Lord's instructions and providences indicate to be his will, then we have no right to expect that he will take special care of us; although in his abundant mercy he often overrules the mistakes of his people for their good.

One of the great enemies of every Christian is Satan the devil, whom Peter compares to a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour. The devil is a wily foe, and in order to be prepared to meet his attacks successfully we need to be "sober" and "vigilant." We are to be calm and thoughtful,

and always on the alert, for we know not when our great Adversary will attack, or how.

Peter indicates that our best method of resisting the devil is by being steadfast in the faith. This simply means that if we understand the truth, the divine plan of the ages, and know the part in that plan to which our Heavenly Father has called us, then we will recognize Satan's efforts the more quickly to swerve us from the proper course. It was so with Jesus. When Satan tempted him to do things which were contrary to the Heavenly Father's will, Jesus resisted by saying, "It is written"—that is not what my Father wants me to do.

Peter explains that we have the same afflictions as those in the world. This is true so far as general sufferings of the fallen human race are concerned; but we can learn lessons from these afflictions which the world today is unable to learn. With us the Lord is using these afflictions to test our faith and obedience, and to teach us to lean more heavily on him for grace to help in time of need.

Persecutions and other sufferings which result from our faithfulness to the Lord in bearing witness to the truth, and otherwise serving him and his people, are in a different category than the "afflictions" which are common to the world. We could avoid persecution by refraining from letting our light shine in a dark world, but this would indicate a lack of obedience to the commission given to us by the Lord, which in turn would demonstrate a

lack of appreciation of what the Lord has done for us in opening the eyes of our understanding to know the truth.

We are made "perfect," and are established and strengthened and settled by the manner in which the Lord is dealing with us. The perfection here referred to is not sinlessness, but has the thought, rather, of being well developed as Christians—mature. We need a certain amount of suffering in order to reach this mature state of development, and when we do reach it, we are established and cannot be blown about by every wind of doctrine, for we are "strong in the Lord," and have definitely settled in our minds and hearts, what the Lord wants us to do and to be, and there can be no deviation from our course of obedience to his will.

#### Revelation 1:9-11

THE Apostle John—"that disciple whom Jesus loved"—was a humble follower of the Master. (John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20) Perhaps the wonderful things he saw in vision on the Isle of Patmos helped him to realize how weak and helpless he was in the light of the many complex situations which were presented to him; and especially how little he could hope to accomplish against the ominous forces of evil which he saw portrayed, particularly those "beasts" which were so obviously bitter enemies of God, of God's people, and of righteousness. So in addressing the readers of his message he claimed no high position in the church, no rank or distinction, but identified himself simply as "your

brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."

Regardless of the extent to which he could understand the visions presented to him, one thing he could see was that the followers of Jesus were destined for a long period of suffering, meaning that those who would be found worthy to reign with Christ in his kingdom would need a great deal of patience, much of the spirit of endurance. He saw, also, that all the brethren who were faithful witnesses for Jesus and for the Word of God would share in the suffering, so he referred to himself as a "companion in tribulation."

"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day," writes John. The most reasonable interpretation of this statement is that John, in prophetic vision, was given a position in prophecy at this end of the age, which in turn is in the early morning hours of the "day of the Lord," that prophetic day which is to last for a thousand years. From this vantage point John sees the events of the Gospel age as though they were "behind" him; things of the past, that is.

He heard a voice behind him, and looking around he discovered that the One speaking was the resurrected Lord, and he gave John a message to deliver to the "seven churches." These churches are named in the 11th verse, and while congregations of the brethren actually existed in all the places named, it seems reasonable to suppose that in reality these congregations were representative of the entire church as it would

exist and develop down through the Gospel age; each congregation named being symbolic of the church during a certain period in the age.

These seven churches are represented, as shown later in the chapter, by seven golden candlesticks, and Jesus—"one like unto the Son of Man"—is seen amidst the candlesticks. This indicates clearly that the seven churches are not merely the particular congregations of Asia Minor which are mentioned, but the entire church; for according to promise, the Lord has been with his people in spirit throughout the entire age. They have been a persecuted and suffering people, so have needed his presence and help.

#### Revelation 7:9, 10, 13, 14

THE word "church" as used in the New Testament is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*, meaning "called out," or selected. The "great multitude" of suffering ones portrayed in this passage are called out from the world, and from one standpoint can properly be referred to as the church, but they are not the church which is the body of Christ, and they are not those who come up in the first resurrection to live and reign with Christ.

They are, however, included in what the Apostle Paul describes as "the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." (Heb. 12:23) The term "firstborn" takes our minds back to God's dealings with ancient Israel. It was the firstborn of Israel who were passed over, delivered from death, on the

night before the Exodus. Later the tribe of Levi was substituted for the firstborn of Israel, and set apart to be the religious servants of the nation.

The priests of Israel were all taken from the tribe of Levi, and they were the ones who served in a special capacity by the offering of sacrifices, etc. But all the Levites were set apart, or selected, in place of the firstborn to serve the people in matters pertaining to God. It is to this typical picture that the apostle refers when he speaks of the "church of the firstborn."

As we have seen, there were actually two classes among the Levites—a very small number (only one family) who served as priests, and the larger group who served in lesser capacities. So it will be when the "church of the firstborn" is complete. There will be a very small number, the priestly class, described by Jesus as a "little flock," and there will be the "great multitude" who will serve before the throne and in the temple, but will not be on the throne as reigning kings with Jesus.

It is this larger number which is pictured in Revelation, chapter 7. Those who do not understand the plan of God might think that these are the same ones described in Revelation 3:21 as overcomers who sit down with Jesus in his throne, but they are not. It is only by suffering with Christ that the "little flock" will prove worthy to reign with him, so all the priestly class throughout the age have had the privilege of suffering with him.

But the suffering mentioned in

connection with the "great multitude" is different. These are said to come up through "great tribulation," and wash their robes "white in the blood of the Lamb." This language indicates that the sufferings of this class are not the result of their faithfulness to the Lord; but the reverse, and that the Lord sees that they need the "great tribulation" as a refining medium to make them ready for the position they will occupy in the kingdom. These will have a wonderful place in the kingdom, but will not be kings and priests with Christ.

### In Review

This lesson completes a three month's series which began with the creation, noted the entrance of sin into the world, and has traced briefly the promises of God pertaining to his plan for the deliverance of the fallen race from sin and death—which were made to Abraham, revealed to Moses and the other prophets, and elaborated upon by Jesus and the apostles. Without realizing it, however, the committee of the Protestant churches which arranges these international lessons brought the series to a close without taking into consideration God's wonderful provision for the world of mankind in general.

It is as though the committee had the idea that the plan of God reaches its fruition in the church, and a church, moreover, which from the committee's standpoint will never actually become complete. The thought seems to be that since Jesus came to die for the race, and instituted his church,

now the plan of God consists merely of trying to get as many as possible to join the church in order that they might go to heaven when they die; and that this, which in their view is the final phase of God's plan, will continue more or less indefinitely into the unknown future.

But this is not the correct view! The selection of the church is not the final phase of God's plan of salvation. The church is selected to be associated with Jesus in his kingdom, and the purpose of that kingdom is to bless all the families of the earth. Briefly this is brought to light in connection with the promises made to Abraham assuring him that his "seed" would bless all nations. Paul explains that Christ is that promised seed, and that as many as are baptized into Christ and have thus become members of his mystical body are also a part of the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the original promise.

This promise will not be fulfilled until all the families of the earth are blessed, and a whole thousand years are set aside in the plan of God for this work to be accomplished. So it will be during this thousand years that the church, which is the body of Christ, will reign with him for this purpose. The body members of Christ receive a spiritual, a heavenly reward, but mankind in general will, during the thousand years of the kingdom, be restored to life as human beings on the earth.

The thousand-year period dur-

ing which this is accomplished is described by the Apostle Peter as "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3: 19-21) It is strange that the Bible Study committee should fail to schedule a feature of the plan of God which all his prophets foretold; but we rejoice that there is such a time of future blessing for the people. This glorious hope for the world gives a richer meaning to every other phase of the plan of God.

#### QUESTIONS:

In what way was Peter especially equipped to discuss the subject of Christian suffering?

Why is it essential to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God?

Upon what condition may we confidently trust in God's care?

How may we best resist the attacks of Satan?

What is the difference between the afflictions which are common to man, and suffering which is for righteousness' sake?

How are Christians made perfect by their afflictions?

What did the Apostle John mean by being "in the spirit" on the Lord's day?

What is represented by the seven churches which John saw in his vision?

What does the word "church" mean, and is the "great multitude" of Revelation 7:9, 10 a part of the church which is His body?

Is the "tribulation" suffered by the "great multitude" the same as the "sufferings of Christ"?

Is the plan of God completed with the development of the church?

## The "Great Salvation"

*"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."—EPHESIANS 2:8*

**O**CCASIONALLY one hears the question asked, "Are you saved?" The chances are that the one asking this question has no clear idea of what is involved scripturally in being "saved." He would probably have in mind the very unscriptural idea of being rescued from hell-fire. But regardless of the misunderstanding which exists on this subject, it is one about which a great deal is said in the Word of God; and, as well expressed by the poet, the word "salvation," when its implications are understood and appreciated, is indeed a "joyful sound."

Salvation means to be saved from death; but in view of the gross misunderstanding of the plans and purposes of God, this is rather an oversimplification of the subject. For example, what is death, and how is anyone saved from it? Is salvation a present heritage of believers, or is it a future state of bliss? The answers to these questions help to give us a better understanding of what it really means to be saved, and of just how the grace of God operates to bring to us this great gift of his love.

It is because man is dying that he needs to be saved, and death entered into the world when our first parents transgressed the divine law—"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:17) The New Testament agrees with this. Paul writes: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."—Rom. 5:12

It is important to keep this simple fact clearly in mind. If we distort the meaning of the Scriptures at their fountain source by the erroneous claim that death is not death, but separation from

God, and that those who are separated from God by sin will be eternally tortured, then the whole subject of salvation becomes one of confusion and error.

God created man to live—to live on the earth as a human being. Every necessary provision was made by the Creator in order that his human creatures might enjoy a continuance of life on the earth. It was only necessary that they obey his law. The warning was given that disobedience would result in death—the loss of life. There is no mystery to this—nothing that calls for interpretation. The result of disobedience has been manifested throughout all the ages since, for man has continued to die, and the reign of sin and death still exists.

### Love Found a Way

Adam was justly condemned to death. There was no requirement on God's part that anything be done to set aside the penalty or to hinder the operation of the divine principle which had decreed that the wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23) However, God's grace, his love, made a provision whereby the sinful race would not have to remain dead eternally. This provision was Christ, who came to redeem the fallen race, to die the "Just for the unjust." (I Pet. 3:18) So Jesus explained the purpose of his mission to earth, saying that he came "to seek and to save that which was lost."—Luke 19:10

Salvation, then, is provided by the grace of God—"By grace are ye saved." "We have redemption through his blood," Paul writes, "the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1:7) In his letter to the Thessalonians, the apostle writes that God "hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." (II Thess. 2:16) Paul writes to Titus that we are "justified by his grace."—Titus 3:7

One reason God gave his Law to Israel was to demonstrate that man could not extricate himself from the result of his own sin. The apostle tells us that "death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." (Rom. 5:14) Adam sinned wilfully, and the penalty of death was inflicted directly upon him. But his children were born in sin, and while they came under condemnation with Adam, they were not so directly involved in the guilt as he.

But why did Paul say that this was true "from Adam to Moses"? Simply because, through Moses, God gave Israel his Law

and told them that by keeping that Law they could live. In other words, it gave them an opportunity to be released from the original condemnation. In this respect they were placed in the same position as Adam. But like Adam they failed. The Law which was ordained to give life brought death instead, thus demonstrating that no member of the fallen and sinful race could by his own righteousness prove worthy of salvation.

There was no other way, then, for salvation to come to mankind except as a provision of divine grace. And it was in order that mankind might not perish forever that God's abounding grace provided a Redeemer, even his beloved Son. The coming of Jesus to die the Just for the unjust was an evidence that the Creator had not turned his back upon his human creation, that he still loved human beings, and had found a way whereby he could be just in demanding the death penalty for sin, yet justify those who would accept the provisions of his grace through Christ.

#### "Through Faith"

God bestows some of his blessings upon mankind irrespective of their attitude, and whether or not they are worthy or unworthy. He causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon the just and the unjust alike. But this is not true with respect to salvation. His grace has provided a universal opportunity for salvation, but only those who accept it on God's terms will be benefited by this manifestation of his grace. So the apostle wrote, "By grace are ye saved through faith."

How beautifully this harmonizes with the great truth expressed in John 3:16—"Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." No one can enjoy the blessings of God unless he has faith in him and in his promises. To a large extent lack of faith is responsible for all that is wrong in the world. Those who have full confidence in God are glad to accept his will as their rule of life. Those who do not have such confidence imagine that their own ways are better than his, and thus they drift away from him and into the paths of sin.

Because of the blinding influences of Satan, the vast majority of mankind have no faith in God, and even when told of his grace through Christ, cannot believe it to be anything other than a pleasant tale. They have no confidence, no faith, no belief in God, hence there is no basis upon which God can deal with them; so his grace which provided salvation is of no avail to them.

"The just shall live by his faith," wrote the Prophet Habakkuk, and he prefaced this statement by a reference to a person whose "soul is lifted up," and therefore "is not upright in him." (Hab. 2:4) Faith in God and in God's ways implies humility and an understanding of one's own undone condition. One who exalts himself is not truly "upright," except in his own eyes. His righteousness is as "filthy rags" in the sight of God.—Isa. 64:6

In Romans 1:17 Paul quotes Habakkuk's statement, and applies it to our belief in the "Gospel of Christ," which "is the power of God unto salvation." (Rom. 1:16) It is also quoted in Hebrews 10:38, and the apostle adds that the Lord has no pleasure in those who draw back; that is, in those who, by losing their faith in him and in the glorious provision of his grace, fail to continue their obedience to him and his will.

In Romans 3:23-25 Paul again emphasizes the vital necessity of faith in the acceptance of God's grace. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," he explains. Then he adds that we are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation *through faith* in his blood." All boasting of our own good works "is excluded" by this arrangement, the apostle declares. The "law of works" failed to bring salvation, and we can be saved only by the "law of faith."—Rom. 3:27

And the faith which saves us through the grace of God must be a living, working faith. "Faith without works is dead," James tells us. (James 2:17, 20, 26) This means that a belief in Christ which makes the merit of his blood acceptable for our salvation is one which is demonstrated by a full surrender of ourselves to the Lord and a devoted effort to do his will. It would be meaningless to profess faith in Christ while failing to conform our lives to the pattern he has set for us.

### Justified by Faith

We have seen that salvation means to be rescued from death. Since all believers in Christ die in seemingly the same manner as the remainder of mankind, just how can they be said to be saved? A failure to discern the proper answer to this question has led to much confusion. One erroneous conclusion has been that since believers die as do others it must be that the salvation offered in the Scriptures pertains to a special state of bliss after death, and

that a failure to be saved before death results in an eternity of torture.

But this is all wrong! There will come a time—during the thousand years of Christ's reign—when believers will not die, when faith in Christ will result in the renewing of youth; yes, in eternal youth and happiness as human beings right here on earth. This is the provision of God's grace for the vast majority of the human race, and it was to guarantee this opportunity to all that Christ died.

But prior to the "due time" for this blessing to be offered to the world another feature of the divine plan is being accomplished. It is the selection of a "people for his name." (Acts 15:14) This "people" is variously described in the Scriptures as the "church" of Christ; the "body" of Christ; the "bride" of Christ, etc. There is offered to these the glorious prospect of sharing a heavenly home with Christ, and reigning with him in his kingdom.

However, this offer has a condition attached to it—those who reign with Christ must first suffer with him, and those who live with him must first die with him. (Rom. 8:17; II Tim. 2:11, 12) So they are invited to follow in his footsteps, and to be "planted together in the likeness of his death." (Rom. 6:5, 8) These are urged to present their bodies "a living sacrifice," and are assured that if they do so, their offering will be "holy" and therefore "acceptable" to God.—Rom. 12:1

The question naturally arises as to how members of the fallen and dying race can offer themselves in acceptable sacrifice to God. We know that Jesus died sacrificially, not as a condemned sinner, but how could we be "planted together in the likeness of his death"? The answer to these questions is in the fact that believers in Christ receive what the Scriptures describe as justification by faith. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."—Rom. 5:1

The world is alienated from God through wicked works, but the believer has been brought nigh to him by the blood of Christ. He is at peace with God, and no longer under condemnation. By faith he has received the salvation provided by the blood of Christ, and God looks upon him as though he had already been restored to perfection, just as all mankind will be restored by the close of the "times of restitution of all things."—Acts 3:21

But there is only one reason this standing of faith is granted to believers during the present age. It is that they might offer

themselves in acceptable sacrifice to God. By faith they have been made alive by the blood of Christ, but their life is returned to God in sacrifice. Paul speaks of this as a "reckoned" matter. (Rom. 6:11) Actually, as the world views the Christian, he is dying just like everyone else. But as God views him, and as the Christian "reckons" it, he is dying with Christ, laying down his life in sacrifice; being "crucified with Christ."—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14

#### The "Great Salvation"

The prize which is offered to those who walk in the narrow way of sacrifice with Jesus, and who are faithful even unto death, is described as the "great salvation," which, as the apostle says, "began to be spoken by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." (Heb. 2:3) This "great salvation" is much more than being restored to perfect human life on the earth. It is "glory and honor and immortality." (Rom. 2:7) It is the "divine nature." (II Pet. 1:4) It is being made like Jesus and seeing him as he is. (I John 3:1-3) It is sitting with Jesus in his throne. (Rev. 3:21) It is having "power over the nations." (Rev. 2:26) It is participating in the "first resurrection" to live and reign with Christ. (Rev. 20:4, 6) It is being with Jesus and sharing the "place" which he promised to prepare.—John 14:2

Again we are reminded of God's grace. It was his grace that made provision for the "great salvation" to become the possession of those who suffer and die with Christ. And by his arrangement his grace operates through the same channel to provide this "great salvation" as it does to provide human salvation from death for all mankind, and that is through the redemptive work of Christ, which we accept upon the basis of a faith which manifests itself in a full consecration to do his will.

Is our faith equal to the test which this marvelous offer puts upon it? There may be a certain satisfaction, even a measure of blessing, derived from saying to ourselves and to others that we believe the plan of God, and are glad that Jesus died for us; but has our faith led us to go all the way in laying hold of this provision of divine grace? Have we taken Jesus into our hearts, and made his example the rule of our lives? Have we taken up our cross to follow him? If we have, then by faith the hope of the "great salvation" is our hope; and if we are faithful unto death in laying down our lives in sacrifice, this glorious hope will be trans-

lated into reality. Then "this mortal shall have put on immortality."—I Cor. 15:54

When this hope of the "great salvation" has matured into reality for all who are striving for it, "then," the apostle explains, "shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (I Cor. 15:54, 55) The "saying," "Death is swallowed up in victory," is recorded in Isaiah 25:8. It is part of a wonderful prophecy concerning the blessings of life which will come to the world of mankind during the thousand years of Christ's kingdom. In this prophecy the people are represented as saying, "Lo, this is our God; . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."—Isa. 25:9

Yes, "salvation," through Christ, is yet to become the heritage of all mankind—salvation to life as human beings. But this must wait, Paul indicates, until those of the Gospel age, who are by faith striving for glory, honor, and immortality, have actually attained their "great salvation." Then, and not before, will the general salvation of the world become a reality. Not until then will the many promises of "restitution" be fulfilled.

#### **"It Is the Gift of God"**

After telling us that we are saved by God's grace, through faith, the apostle adds that it is not of ourselves, but is the "gift of God." When we consider the heights of glory to which the promises of God encourage us to aspire, it would be futile to think that we could attain such heights by our own righteousness, or strength, or worthiness. Surely we are not "sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (II Cor. 3:5) It is only "by him," that is by and through Christ, that we are able to offer sacrifice to God which is acceptable, and in return become partakers of the divine nature.

It is all by God's grace, and God's grace is manifested to us through the gift of his beloved Son, while we, in turn, lay hold upon this wonderful gift, accepting it from God through our faith. God gave his Son, and those who believe receive life—in this age, a life which they can offer in acceptable sacrifice to God, and in the resurrection, immortality; and those who believe in the age to come, perfect, unending, human life.

To the woman of Samaria Jesus said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou

wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." And again, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."—John 4:10, 14

"If thou knewest the gift of God." Yes, Jesus is God's great gift, the gift which manifests his unmerited grace, or favor, which through faith results in our salvation. It is true, of course, that everything we possess is ours by the grace of God, and this includes our faith. "All men have not faith," the apostle writes. (II Thess. 3:2) Some have a little faith, and some have sufficient to lay hold upon the promises of God, accept the terms of the "great salvation," and run diligently for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

If we have such a faith, let us rejoice, and let us endeavor to have it increased through prayer and active use. The disciples prayed that their faith might be increased, and we should do the same. Besides, as we become better acquainted with the plan of God its glorious beauty cannot help but increase our faith! As we note the providences of God in our lives, our faith will also be increased.

But happy are we if to begin with, our faith has been able to recognize and accept the "gift of God," even Jesus—accept him, that is, as our personal Savior, and to drink of the water of life which he has provided for all who come to God through him. If we have partaken of this life-giving water, it should, as Jesus told the Samaritan woman, be in us as a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The implication here is that one of the evidences of having received life from Christ will be our overflowing with the life-giving message to others. Do we have this evidence? Is the water of life overflowing from our hearts to others? Christians are not to be like sponges which merely soak up water, but as wells which overflow for the refreshment and blessing of others. And this will be our experience if Jesus has truly given us the water of life to drink.

#### **"Wells of Salvation"**

It is a blessed thought to realize that the water of life which springs up in the Christian even now like "a well" is to continue flowing yet more abundantly in the age to come. Our work is not

limited to this present time of sacrifice and suffering. We are being prepared to be the channels of blessing to the world in the next age. To reign with Christ will mean that we will share with him in the work of offering salvation to all mankind.

In one of the prophecies which refers to this future privilege of those who live and reign with Christ, they are represented as "wells of salvation." Every Christian, to the extent that he is faithful in the use of his opportunities of making known the glad tidings, is a well of salvation, because the truth, when proclaimed, offers the "great salvation" to those who have hearing ears. But how much more true this will be in the age to come!

"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," says the prophet. (Isa. 12:3) The restored people of natural Israel will be among the first to have this opportunity, but eventually all mankind will be given the privilege of partaking of the water of life made available through Christ and his church. This opportunity for salvation will be given to all the people of the earth, and what a day of gladness it will be! The prophet continues:

"And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth."—Isa. 12:4, 5

Truly "he hath done excellent things." (Isa. 12:5) His abounding grace through Christ has provided salvation for both the church and the world. How can we keep from singing!

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## WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

**JUNE 7**—"The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."—I Peter 5:10 (Z. '95-202. Hymn 105)

**JUNE 14**—"God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."—I Peter 5:5 (Z. '96-19. Hymn 224)

**JUNE 21**—"Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart."—Matthew 11:29 (Z. '96-79. Hymn 104)

**JUNE 28**—"Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil."—Proverbs 3:7 (Z. '96-263. Hymn 136)

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# Going On to Perfection

## HEBREWS—CHAPTER VI

Verses 1, 2—*“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”*

**T**Hese opening verses of chapter six are in reality a continuation of the lesson presented in the closing verses of chapter five. It is a lesson designed to encourage the Lord's consecrated people, by study of the Word and the heart application of its principles, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

*“Leaving the principles.”*— This expression must be taken in connection with the explanation, “not laying again the foundation.” Putting the two together the thought of “leaving” the principles is simply that of building up from the foundation, not leaving them in the sense of deserting them and never again thinking or talking about them. The illustration is clearly that of constructing a building. A building is not complete, or “perfect,” while only the foundation is laid; neither would it be “perfect” if the superstructure were built elsewhere than on the foundation.

The word “principles” in this verse is the translation of a Greek word meaning “beginning or chief.” It is the Greek word *arche*, which is essentially the same as the first part of the word *archangel*, meaning chief angel. It is not the same word which is used in the preceding chapter in the expression “first principles.” There, as we learned, the Greek word used signifies orderly arrangement, the thought being the orderly arrangement of the doctrine of the Bible to form the divine plan of the ages.

The “principles” of the doctrine of Christ are not, therefore, the unimportant teachings of the Bible, but instead, the great foundation truths upon which all Christian belief and work must be built. How important it is, then, that we keep in constant and

vital touch with these foundation principles. It should not be necessary to build the foundation repeatedly, but since the Hebrew brethren had let these things "slip" they needed to be taught over again, in order that they might, in renewing their devotion, have a foundation upon which to build.—Heb. 2:1

"*Repentance from dead works.*"— Because Paul was addressing Hebrew Christians the dead works here mentioned could be particularly their efforts to gain life by keeping the Law. These were dead works not only because they did not thereby gain life, but also because by them they were brought under the additional condemnation of the Law. But "repentance" is the principal thought in connection with this doctrine, and repentance is essential to receiving God's blessings regardless of one's former position in life.

Repentance is a definite step in the life of all who become Christians. It is not something with which we are concerned but momentarily when first drawn to the Lord. As Christians we are daily transgressing against God, and daily we need to be in a repentant attitude which seeks divine forgiveness through the merit of the shed blood. This fundamental doctrine in the plan of salvation should serve continually to keep us humble before the Lord, and in constant recognition of our need of divine grace and mercy through Christ.

"*Faith toward God.*"— The relationship of faith to our standing before God is a vital fundamental of the divine plan. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," the Scriptures declare. (Heb. 11:6) We see the importance of this doctrine by noting the manner in which Paul couples it with "repentance from dead works." No one can be justified by the works of the Law, but we can be justified by faith and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:1) How important it is to keep this fundamental truth clearly in mind and order our lives in keeping therewith!

The "*doctrine of baptisms.*"— Because all those of the Jewish nation had been "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," it was merely necessary for Jewish converts in the Early Church to be baptized with John's baptism for the remission of sins, and thus to be reinstated in their standing with God under the Law Covenant, in order to be transferred into Christ. (I Cor. 10:2) But even in the case of these, the real doctrine of baptism called for their burial into Christ, their covenant to be dead with him. Gen-

tile converts had the responsibility of symbolizing this baptism in death by immersion in water. Thus "baptisms," in the plural, are involved in this basic teaching of the truth, and all are important—foundation truths upon which to build.

The "*laying on of hands.*"— This practice was familiar to the Jews under the Law Covenant. In Jesus' day there were occasions when the sick were healed by the laying on of hands. The servants of the Early Church were elected by the laying on of hands, or, more literally, stretching forth the hand. Timothy was cautioned by Paul not to lay hands on anyone suddenly—without due consideration. (I Tim. 5:22) As a Christian doctrine the laying on of hands seems to indicate clearly the giving of recognition and authority.

The literal act of laying on of hands ceased with the death of the apostles, but its symbolic significance has continued with the church throughout the age, and is a vital factor in the Christian life today. Those upon whom the apostles laid their hands received the Holy Spirit. This outward sign of approval was of great value in the Early Church; but the Lord's people still need that which the laying on of hands represented; namely, the approval and acceptance of God, which is manifested by the "witness" of the Spirit. (Rom. 8:16) The doctrine, or teaching, which has to do with our being anointed by the Holy Spirit and being thereby recognized by the Lord as members of the body of Christ and authorized to be his ambassadors, is therefore fundamentally important. Surely we do not want to lose sight of this glorious significance of the truth!

The "*resurrection of the dead.*"— "If in this life only we have hope in Christ," writes Paul, "we are of all men most miserable." (I Cor. 15:19) Surely the doctrine of the resurrection is a very vital one. This is true whether we think of it as pertaining to the "first resurrection" in which we hope to share; the "better resurrection" of the ancient worthies, or the general resurrection of the world. (Rev. 20:6; Heb. 11:35; Acts 17:31) It is the very foundation of our hope. It requires keen spiritual vision, which can be enjoyed only by "those who by reason of use have their senses exercised" to plumb the real depth of this glorious doctrine of the truth. (Heb. 5:14) In the first chapter of Ephesians Paul says that he prayed for the opening of the eyes of understanding of "the saints which are at Ephesus," that they might realize the mighty power being exercised on their behalf, explaining that it is the power

which raised Jesus Christ from the dead and highly exalted him "far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named."—Eph. 1:18-21

*"Eternal judgment."*—The reference here seems to be to the final judgment, or determination as to the individual's worthiness or unworthiness of everlasting life. The church is on trial now, and in the case of each probationary member the time will come when the decision must be made, therefore let us strive earnestly that we may be found among those who will hear those welcome words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." (Matt. 25:21) It is certainly important that we keep constantly before us the fact that our lives are an open book before God, and that while he is merciful and just, our trial will end favorably only if we keep our hearts pure and render unto him the very best that we are able.

Verse 3—*"And this we will do, if God permit."*

In two ways Paul reveals his humility by this statement. He had criticized the Hebrew brethren for their lack of zeal, and had pointed out to them their great need to make better progress in the Christian way, yet he puts himself on a level with them and says this will "we" do, if God permit.

He realized that every blessing enjoyed by the Christian is a manifestation of divine grace. We could not have come into this blessed relationship at all except the Heavenly Father had drawn us. (John 6:44) We could not know the truth unless he had given us "ears to hear." (Matt. 13:16) So now, we cannot make progress in the truth unless the Lord permits, yea, even helps us, for we are able to work out our own salvation only because he is working in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure."—Phil. 2:12, 13

Verses 4-6—*"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world [Greek, age] to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."*

The Greek word here rendered "once" denotes more than the single fact that at one time we were enlightened. It is a word which means finality. Provision was made to rescue the fallen race

Verses 7, 8—*“For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.”*

Here the apostle is using an illustration to help us grasp more clearly what he means by “going on to perfection.” God’s purpose in watering the earth, and the purpose of those who till the ground, is that it might “bring forth herbs”; that is, that there might be a fruitage, or harvest. In this illustration the earth pictures those to whom are given the water of truth, while the tillers of the soil might be those who are used by the Lord to assist the brethren in connection with their understanding of the truth. This co-operative arrangement is intended to bring forth fruit, but if nothing but thorns and briers appear, the effort is wasted. So, the object in our receiving the truth is not merely that we may enjoy it, but that it produce a fruitage in our lives, “the peaceable fruit of righteousness.”—Heb. 12: 11

Verses 9, 10—*“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For 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.”*

Although these Hebrew Christians had not been making use of their opportunities as they should, Paul was pleased to call them “beloved.” This is the spirit of divine love, the love that will not let go its hold on an individual while there is any evidence at all that reformation is possible. The expression, “better things,” is in contrast with the possibility just mentioned of falling away after being fully enlightened, and thereby crucifying the Son of God afresh. Here the apostle was encouraging them to take a firmer hold upon the truth, and to follow that course of zeal and devotion which would result in their salvation—that “great salvation” which began to be spoken by our Lord.—Heb. 2: 3

These Hebrew brethren evidently “ran well” for a time, for the apostle speaks of their “work and labor of love.” In chapter ten, verses thirty-two to thirty-four, he asks them to call to remembrance these “former days” when they were first illuminated, when

they "took joyfully" the spoiling of their goods, etc. He wanted them to renew their original zeal and love.

What could have been more encouraging to those who, perchance, had become weary in well-doing than to assure them that the Heavenly Father had not forgotten their past faithfulness! While Paul doesn't say so, one of the evidences that God had not forgotten them was the fact that he stirred up the apostle's mind to write this epistle as a means of helping them to take a more positive stand for the truth and for righteousness.

God's justice not only reproves and punishes where necessary, but treasures up every good deed and rewards it. Even the giving of a cup of cold water to one of his little ones will not go unrewarded. God also encourages every good trait that it might grow stronger and become more dominant in one's life. He takes delight in every evidence of progress in the path of righteousness.

Verses 11, 12—"*And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*"

"*The same diligence.*"—In the beginning their work and labor of love was very manifest. God's interest is in all his people—"every one of you"—he does not want one to fail. But victory is dependent upon "full assurance of hope," not for a little while, merely, but until we have been faithful even unto death. Note the connection here with his former admonitions and warning with respect to failure to enter into rest because of unbelief.—Heb. 2:3; 4:1-11

(Every truly faithful and zealous disciple of Christ is an encouraging example to his brethren.) Those who inherit the promises do so because of their implicit faith and patient endurance—even unto death. If we follow the example of these we will not be slothful, but diligent. God's promises pertaining to the "great salvation" are not unconditional. Those who actually inherit them must fulfil the conditions.

Verses 13-15—"*For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he patiently endured, he obtained the promise.*"

The apostle here does not quote the entire oathbound covenant with Abraham, for he is not discussing the covenant, but is merely citing the illustration of Abraham's faith in God's promises and of patiently waiting for their fulfilment as being essential to actually having them become a personal possession. God made "promise" to Abraham. Here the Greek word translated promise means simply an announcement. But the "promise" which Abraham obtained after he endured is from a Greek word meaning more than an announcement—it is, according to Prof. Strong also a "pledge," or an "assurance." God gave Abraham this pledge, this assurance, when he ratified the original promise by his oath.

Verses 16-18—*"For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an 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."*

God's willingness to give his people a more abundant assurance of his loving purpose toward them is fully in keeping with his grace and mercy. He did not need to confirm the covenant with his oath, for no one would ever have reason to doubt his word. Later, one of the requirements of the Law was that important matters should be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses, and God was willing to conform to this principle. His Word was immutable and his oath was immutable, so by these two immutable things, he has given us strong consolation who have laid hold of the hope set before us in the covenant with Abraham.

Verses 19, 20—*"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."*

Our anchor is fastened "within the veil." Here the apostle puts the Christian in the position of the typical high priest who alone had the privilege of entering into the most holy of the tabernacle. We can hope to enter into the antitypical most holy, even heaven, because Jesus, our Forerunner has, first of all, entered for us to prepare the way. What a glorious hope! —CONTRIBUTED

## Satan Blinds Their Minds

**My parents hold the opinion that the Bible is a Book filled with contradictions. Since listening to your radio programs I have read my Bible for the first time in my life and I am thrilled with its teachings. Why cannot everyone see the beauty of its message concerning the kingdom of God?**

NEVER were there so many Bibles in the world as there are today, nevertheless there is a lamentable lack of understanding as to its message. The Bible contains God's plan for man, and those who study it in a proper attitude of heart find gem after gem of precious truth, as the divine plan gradually unfolds to enlighten their minds; for "light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."—Ps. 97:11

Many persons who discredit the inspiration of the Bible and believe it to be a book of confusion and contradiction, do so because of ignorance. (II Cor. 4:4) Probably they have never studied the Bible, having been duped by the philosophical jugglery of the higher critics who are unable to find the truths of the Bible because their hearts are not proper soil for the growth of the seeds of spiritual understanding.

The best proofs respecting the divine inspiration of the Bible are

to be found within the Book itself, because of the grand harmony which is found there when the divine plan of the ages is rightly understood. (No human mind could have conceived the plan which it presents for the blessing of all the families of the earth.) We rejoice with you that your eyes of understanding have been opened to the message of the kingdom.

How true the apostle's words that the study of this wonderful Book is "profitable"! It inspires us with hope and joy, not only for our own blessing of eternal life, but also with the realization that God's love is not restricted to a few, that it embraces the entire human race. (II Tim. 3:16, 17; I Tim. 2:4) The value of any other book relating to religious doctrine is only in proportion to its fidelity to the teachings of the Bible. In Isaiah 8:20 we read: "If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them."

Let us not condemn those who do not believe the Bible to be the Word of God, but rather give thought to the words of the Master, when he said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and

have not heard them."—Matt. 13: 16-17

## One Hundred Years of Trial

Isaiah 65:20 reads, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." Many of your interpretations of Scripture seem most reasonable to me, but this text has always been a puzzle, so I turn to you for an explanation.

THE verses immediately before and after the text quoted show that the time of the application of this scripture is during the kingdom reign of Christ. Verse 17 reads: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Verses 21-25 describe the new order thus prophesied as a time when "they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and . . . plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them" and "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain [kingdom], saith the Lord."

The implication of our text seems to be that during the new social order that will come as a result of Christ's kingdom being established on the earth, the time will come when both infancy and degenerate age will no longer exist. It also seems to teach that if any one dies in that age, it will not be until he

has had a full probationary period of one hundred years in which to choose whether he will serve God and live, or disobey the laws of God and die. At the present time death occurs, whether in infancy or in old age, not because of one's own sins, but because of father Adam's sin and consequent condemnation to death, which has been passed on to all of Adam's children, the human race.—Rom. 3:23; 5:12

During the new order here prophesied, one need not die at all if he will but comply with the reasonable conditions of salvation to everlasting human life. If he dies after one hundred years of opportunity to enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of God, it will be because he is a sinner, an incorrigible sinner, who has, over a long probation, refused to obey the divine laws of righteousness, persisting in opposing the kingdom for which all right-minded men now pray as taught by Jesus, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6:10

The death of anyone in that day will be his own fault; he will have died because of his own sin of disobedience to God's law, under full knowledge of his wilfulness. Now men die because of Adam's sin, but then adamic sin will have been canceled through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ; for it is written that "in those days" everyone who dies shall "die for his own iniquity"; he will die the "second death" from which there will not be a resurrection.—Jer. 31:29, 30; Acts 3:23; Rev. 20:6, 14

From the text of our question we

conclude that the shortest period of testing during the next age will be one hundred years. Those who make no progress toward perfection, who refuse to submit themselves to God and his righteous ways, will be found unworthy of the gift of salvation, and even though they will be but as children when compared with the life expectancy of the righteous, they will be cut off in death. In the new order there will be no old age as we know it today, for that would be an evidence of death working in their members. Referring to this time of Christ's reign it is written in I Corinthians 15:25, 26: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

### Destroyed in "Hell"

**Matthew 10:28 reads: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Will you please help me to understand this text?**

THESE are the words of the Master, spoken to the twelve apostles as he sent them to visit the surrounding towns and villages in Israel. In verse 7 his message to them reads, "And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The Master knew that the message of his kingdom would not be acceptable to the leaders of the people of Israel, for continuing, he said in verse 16, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves"; but he also knew that even though wicked men were able

to kill their bodies, nothing that wicked men could do would ever affect their future lives, for these were in the hands of God. The opposition of men to the Gospel message is not to be feared.

Our Lord's bidding to his apostles is an admonition which we can take to ourselves at this time, as we proclaim the message that his kingdom is at hand. As in the past, many now oppose the message, but it should be preached without fear; for even though we paid so high a price as our human life for the privilege of preaching the message of his Word, we know that no man can dispossess another of eternal life—that rests with God. No man is able to destroy the "soul," the being, the new creature, which, because of Christ's work of redemption, the Father has promised to restore to life in the resurrection.

Let us take these words of our Master as a special challenge to ourselves, as did the apostles. Many today are afraid to give a real demonstration of their Christian faith. They conceal the knowledge that they have of the kingdom. Let us not fear the frowns, the threats, nor the acts of men whose power can extend no farther than our present existence; but let us have respect and reverence for our Father in heaven, with whom are the issues of life. Continuing his instructions to the twelve our Master said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. . . . He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his

life for my sake shall find it."—Matt. 10:32, 39

God is able to destroy all hope of a future life for those who are wilfully unfaithful to their calling. The text of our question uses the word "hell." This word is translated from the Greek word "Gehenna," and refers to complete destruction in the second death, the result of unfaithfulness.

### Renewed Assurance

In John 1:29 we read: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Later, while in prison, John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus, and as recorded in Matthew 11:2, 3, said unto him, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Why did John ask that question, for on the previous occasion he seemed so sure?

THERE is no doubt that John the Baptist was convinced that Jesus was the Anointed of God at the time he baptized him in the waters of the river Jordan. Later, John was imprisoned, and as the days and weeks of confinement passed with nothing accomplished in efforts for his release, he possibly became discouraged, and doubt entered his mind. Like many others of that day, including the apostles, John the Baptist believed that Jesus' kingdom would be quickly established in Jerusalem; that he would re-establish David's throne and reign over the nation of Israel, delivering them from the hated Roman yoke. When Jesus did not do this, John's

mind was filled with misgivings.

The evidences that Jesus gave to John's disciples were relayed to him in prison and undoubtedly reassured his faith. (Luke 7:19-23) May we suggest that there is a lesson in this experience for us. John was "more than a prophet." In his experiences he was an illustration of the church of God during the closing days of the Gospel era, the time in which we now live; for now the number of those who are members of the church still living on the earth is decreasing, while the church is increasing on the other side of the veil as one by one the "feet" members of the body of Christ finish their course in death.—Luke 7:26; Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15

Like John, some today, who formerly believed they were living in the days of the second presence of the Son of Man, and who, like John, have had a part in announcing his presence, have had their faith tested, and have faltered in their conviction. The signs which our Lord gave to John the Baptist were sufficient to reassure his faith; the signs now manifesting his second presence are easily discerned by those who are "watching" and should be adequate to reassure the faith of his disciples today. The Master said: "Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." (Luke 12:40; Mark 13:37) It requires spiritual perception through an indwelling of the Holy Spirit for the "watcher" to recognize the presence of the Lord as "a thief in the night."—I Thess. 5:2

## *More News From Ireland*

**I**N THE February issue of this magazine, the columns under the heading, "Fellowship in Ireland," gave instances of the fervent Christian faith and love of the Irish brethren being very readily demonstrated. The brother from England who then visited Ireland had the refreshing and stimulating experience of noting abundant evidence midst the brethren there, of their "first love" for the Lord, his Word and will, being maintained and very warmly manifested. Since that visit another brother from England has had the privilege of helpful spiritual fellowship with the brethren across the Irish Sea.

With sincere gratitude it is acknowledged that by the Lord's grace a very close tie has been established between the Irish and English brethren through the radio work. Our Father in heaven, to whom heartfelt thanks are rendered, has very richly blessed the "Frank and Ernest" broadcasts received in Ireland from Radio Luxembourg, not only in introducing the true Gospel to some who had not previously been comforted and enlightened by it, but also in contacting brethren who have long

embraced the truth, some of whom live many miles apart.

Widely scattered brethren are, as opportunities arise, gratefully enjoying more fellowship. They are rejoicing in all their privileges which are in Christ Jesus, including the interests of their own individual spiritual life, and also that of each other, all with a view, as beautifully illustrated in Ephesians 4:15, 16, to the building up of the true church, the body members of Christ. They are also letting their light shine in the world, holding forth the Word of life.

This further visit by an English brother was made on the invitation of the brethren in Dublin, and he crossed over by the Saturday night boat to have fellowship with them for several days. From the beginning to the end of the visit, there were evidences that the various conversations, meditations, and ministrations, were blessed by the Lord, and that rich spiritual uplift resulted. The first assembly at the regular meeting place in Dublin was on Sunday afternoon. Here fellowship was enjoyed with additional brethren, some from distant northern Ireland, and others from Dublin city and vicinity.

Here were very encouraging manifestations of loving zeal and enthusiasm, for these qualities had prompted brethren residing in dis-

## THE BRITISH SECTION

tant and widely scattered areas, to assemble with one another around the inspired Word. Neither lengthy journeys, nor any inclemency of the weather, hindered them. Having thus met together in the Lord's name, there was the joyful realization that he was truly in their midst, and that to bless.

Owing to awkward traveling facilities, one of the brethren who journeyed down from the Belfast area (about 130 miles distant) was able to have this fellowship in Dublin for one session only, after which it was necessary for him to make the return journey. This is just one specific instance of the general determination and zeal to comply with Hebrews 10:25, to forsake not the "assembling of ourselves together." The Sunday afternoon discourse was an exhortation to "hold that fast, which thou hast"; and for the evening address the text was, "Ye are not your own, for ye were bought with a price."

It is customary in various districts, at home and abroad, for brethren to tarry, and not disperse immediately at the close of such meetings; and it was noted that Dublin is not an exception to this practice. Because of the extended period of fellowship, the late buses were used by most of those present, when at last they did separate.

The next meeting to be held was on the Monday evening. Earlier that day, the visiting brother was due to journey south to Wicklow, in order to visit an interested enquirer who had corresponded with the Dawn office in response to the "Frank and Ernest" broadcasts.

To the English brother's great surprise and joy, three of the Irish brethren had arranged also to make the journey, and to take him there and back by motor car. This kind arrangement was very acceptable, not only because of the fact that the address of the enquirer was not easy to find; but also that additional unexpected conversations with the brethren were enjoyed.

When the enquirer was eventually located, a very interesting and encouraging interview followed, during which a pocket chart of the plan of the ages was opened, and explanations, also questions and answers, flowed freely. A very pleasing and outstanding feature during this discussion was the eagerness of the Irish brethren to demonstrate the warmth of their Christian love by inviting this newly interested listener of the "Frank and Ernest" radio programmes to visit them, and to stay in their home for a weekend.

This loving invitation for a weekend of fellowship in the truth came not only from Dublin, but also from northern Ireland brethren. Such an ever ready attitude of heart and mind, which is actually seeking opportunities to assist, beautifully illustrates how the exhortation recorded in I Peter 1:22 is being practised in Ireland; that is, "Love one another with a pure heart, in an outstretched manner."—Young

Despite various conditions in Ireland which oppose truth, these brethren, although frequently rebuffed openly, are not only eager to make their own heavenly call-

ing and election sure and assist others who are known to them to do the same, but they give much evidence of lovingly and sympathetically going to any lengths to assist others, including complete strangers, to come to a proper understanding of God's Holy Word and will, also to increase in this heavenly knowledge, and in the graces of the Holy Spirit. Such evidence as this surely rejoices the heart of all those who sincerely love the Lord.

The form of the Monday evening meeting was a chart of the ages discourse; and at its close there were, as indeed was the case on Sunday, questions and discussions upon the Scriptures, all with a view of assisting one another in the "most holy faith." Again, on the Monday night, the brethren were not ready to go home after the meeting; and this night the last bus actually left without them.

Although these weekend meetings had not been specially advertised, the brethren experienced added joy to have with them two

young men who were first contacted through the "Frank and Ernest" messages from Radio Luxembourg.

Since preparing the foregoing paragraphs for these columns, correspondence has come to hand from Dublin expressing very grateful thanks for these helpful weekend ministrations which, by the Lord's grace, stirred up their minds "by way of remembrance"; and it was further indicated that this was the very experience needed. It is their hope that more visits will be made, as and when brethren can be spared to serve, because they rejoice thus to gather and feed upon the Word of truth. And they continue to pray for our Father's rich blessing upon every effort in his service.

While it would doubtless be quite true to say that the vast majority who read these lines will never visit Ireland and meet the dear ones there, we can all earnestly pray for them; and also that in their midst "the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified."—II Thess. 3:1



## *"Frank and Ernest" Broadcasts From Radio Luxembourg*

**T**HE full extent to which hearts are blessed and made to rejoice as the result of these truth programmes cannot now even be approximated; but hundreds of appreciative letters are being received from listeners. This is very

encouraging indeed, and we gratefully praise and thank the Lord because of this continued rich blessing upon this work. Here are extracts from just a few of these letters:

## THE BRITISH SECTION

### Helpful and Interesting

Dear Sirs: Will you kindly forward me your booklet entitled, "God and Reason," as promised over the radio. Your discussions are very helpful and interesting, and point, as it were, the finger to events that are coming upon the earth as foretold in the Word of God. Thank you. Yours faithfully, E. R., North Johnston, Pembroke-shire.

### Most Inspiring

Dear Sirs: I am an ardent listener to your Luxembourg broadcasts and find them most inspiring, and I should be very pleased if you would send me the "Hope Book." Yours sincerely, D. H. Rhondda, Glamorganshire.

### Work of God

Dear Fellow Christians: Thank you for your booklets. Yes, I would be pleased to receive and peruse your suggested subjects, "Hope Beyond the Grave"; "When a Man Dies"; "Our Lord's Return"; "Spiritualism," etc. It is kind of you to offer the above booklets gratis, but I believe your work is of God, and I would therefore (as a believer in the same truths, and with that deep down peace in one's mind and heart) like to at least cover the cost of these publications, so that there may be another (without peace and confident hope) who might get these books gratis and be eternally benefited by reading them. I do hope you going out into all the world, like good disciples, constantly encourages you, and even though it may be as bread cast "upon the waters," that you nevertheless see that your efforts in the great cause bring forth fruit for the glory of God the Father. One day we may meet, either here or there. You are, I feel, filling a long desired need; so please reply briefly so that more time may be given to those in vital need who seek—who wander aimlessly—and even to those who persecute, but know not what they do. Your brother, F. B. Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

### Finding Great Interest

Dear Sirs: I am finding great interest in your other books, so I would be very glad, and pleased, if you would send me the book mentioned on Radio Luxembourg, called the "Hope Book." Thank you. Yours truly, C. H. Stoke, Staffordshire.

### We Look Forward to Broadcasts

Dear "Frank and Ernest": I have listened to your broadcasts on Monday evenings, and have enjoyed them very much. I find them very illuminating and helpful. Will you please send me the booklet, "God and Reason," and if possible the "Plan Book." Thank you very much for your broadcasts, and I pray God's blessing upon your work for him. Yours in his service, C. P. Rotherham, Yorkshire.

### Once More on the Road to Christ

Dear Sirs: Being ardent followers of your broadcasts, I felt it was time I wrote telling you of the many blessings which my dear wife and I have received since we first came to hear of you. We trust and pray your wonderful ministry may teach the hearts of many that they may come to the Lord. My wife and I are both converted, though I must confess we were beginning to backslide. However, since listening to "Frank and Ernest" we find ourselves once more on the road that leads to Christ. I would be very grateful to receive the "Creation" book, and any other literature which would help us even further. May God's richest blessing be upon you, in your great and wonderful work. I remain, yours in him, R. T. Reading, Berkshire.

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### CONVENTION

YEOVIL, JUNE 23, 24—Masonic Hall, Hendford. Secretary, Mr. W. F. Fox, 34, St. Michael's Road, Yeovil.



**SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS**

<b>C. A. CORNELL</b>			
Eastleigh .....	June	17	
Anerley .....	July	29	

<b>C. E. DICKINSON</b>			
Liverpool .....	June	24	
Doncaster .....		30	
Dewsbury .....	July	1	
Yeovil .....		29	

<b>J. E. HUMPHREY</b>			
Anerley .....	June	24	
Ipswich .....	July	22	

<b>J. H. MURRAY</b>			
Oxford .....	June	10	
Lincoln .....	July	15	
Bournemouth .....		22	

**W. E. PAMPLING**

Ossett .....	June	3
Coventry .....		17
Leigh (Afternoon) .....	July	8
Warrington (Evening) .....		8

**A. SPAIN**

Luton .....	July	22
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**W. N. WOODWORTH**

Aldersbrook (Labour Hall) .	June	21
Eastleigh .....		22
Yeovil .....		23/24
Ealing .....		25

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Daily Heavenly Manna—(Cloth)—2/6; (de luxe)—6/3

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Moffatt's Translation (Complete Bible)—17/6

The Everlasting Gospel—8d each; 7/6 per dozen

Hope (Consolation booklet)—1/2 a dozen

Leeser's Translation—10/- each

# Encouraging Letters

## Rejoicing in the Truth

Dear Sirs: I would like to take this occasion to tell you how much I have enjoyed the "Frank and Ernest" programs, and also the literature I have received from you. It was about two years ago that I was painting in the house one Saturday and listening to the radio at the same time, when a "Frank and Ernest" program came on in which they discussed the topic, "Hope Beyond the Grave." I was so interested in it that I sent for your booklet, and after reading it sent for the complete set of "Studies in the Scriptures." Well, it opened up a whole new world for me, and has made clear many things that had puzzled me for years, and has made the Bible seem more real and alive than ever before. Having been raised in many of the old church traditions, some of the views expressed were so different that my mind could not accept them at once, but after much thought and careful comparison with the Bible, I had to admit that they represented the most logical and harmonious study of the Scriptures I had ever read. A year ago I subscribed to The Dawn Magazine, and have enjoyed it a great deal. I wish everybody could get to know God and his promises as I have since that first day I heard "Frank and Ernest." I tell it to everyone who is willing to listen, although I find old beliefs and ideas are

very hard to break down. Nevertheless, I think you are doing a wonderful work in bringing the light to this dark and confused world, and I thank God with all my heart that he permitted me to be one to find the truth. Sincerely yours, Mr. C. W. W., Mich.

## A Revelation

Dear Sirs: Please send me a copy of "When a Man Dies," as announced on your program last Sunday. Ever since I was a little girl, and attended Mission Band in the Presbyterian Church, it has been of deep concern to me what will become of the millions of so-called heathen. No one seemed to have an answer, so I drew my own conclusions. Knowing that God is love I convinced myself that each person would be judged according to the measure of light he possessed. Another thing that worried me was the fact that, in my humble opinion, the average person was not good enough at death to immediately enter into heaven, or bad enough to descend into everlasting punishment. I could not imagine a Heavenly Father being so cruel. Your message, therefore, came as a revelation, and I am looking forward to receiving your little booklet, and will be very enlightened by it, I am sure. Wishing you continued success in your radio messages, which were never more needed than today, I am, Yours very truly, Mrs. G. P., Canada.

**Encouragement from England**

Beloved Brethren: Greetings of love in our dear Lord's name! We, the brethren of the Liverpool Ecclesia, England, desire to place on record our appreciation of the loving faithful service you dear ones of The Dawn staff, and all the brethren associated with you in this work, are rendering to the Lord's people throughout the world. We esteem it a great privilege and joy to be identified with you in this service in this country, although in a very small way.

By the Lord's grace you have been the means of sounding the trumpet of present truth in no uncertain manner, and thus have given a clear lead to the people of God everywhere. We here are finding that the truth today has the same power to bring peace, joy, and gladness of heart which made our fellowship so blessed and sweet in the past.

We rejoice with you in the fact that the message of the kingdom is now being broadcast so efficiently to millions of listeners, and that as a result many are being gladdened and comforted by the precious promises of God's Word. We are looking forward to Brother Woodworth's visit, and are hoping to have a convention in Liverpool on that occasion. We pray constantly for you all, that the Lord will grant you the wisdom, grace and strength you may need to accomplish the work he has commissioned you to do in his name. Your brethren by his grace, The Liverpool Ecclesia, England.

**Was Never Satisfied**

Dear Friends: You have really got me thinking! I am one of the thousands of people who was brought up in a strict, old fashioned Christian home, and taught to believe in an everlasting hell-fire. I was told that if I died and didn't go to heaven, then I would go to hell and would be burned forever. That never did sound right to me, for if our Heavenly Father loves us as the Bible says he does, how could he inflict such punishment upon us? I look forward to your broadcast every Sunday, and hope we will have the pleasure of tuning you in for a long, long time. Thank you. A. C., Calif.

**Wants to Be a Christian**

Gentlemen: Today I heard your program of questions and answers for the first time, and enjoyed it very much. I am not a Christian, but I want very much to be one. I will greatly appreciate your sending me the booklet, "When a Man Dies." I believe it will answer a lot of questions I have had on my mind for a long time. I will continue to listen to your programs, and earnestly seek to find a place in my life for Christ. Yours truly, H. T. S., N. C.

**The Wonderful Plan**

Dear "Frank and Ernest": I would like to write a "thank you" for your inspiring Sunday talks. They are full of hope, and make a person understand the wonderful plan of God for mankind. You are like two keys, helping to unlock many hidden ideas concerning the Bible. Sincerely yours, H. D., N. Y.

## The Church in a World Gone Mad

*"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."—PHILIPPIANS 2:14, 15*

**A** HISTORIAN wrote concerning the days of the French Revolution that it was "the worst of times and the best of times." The same might truthfully be said about the era through which the world is presently passing. It is indeed the worst of times, for it is the period foretold by Jesus and the prophets wherein there would be "distress of nations with perplexity," when evil men and seducers shall "wax worse and worse," and when there would be a "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation."—Luke 21:25; II Tim. 3:13; Dan. 12:1

Who can doubt that we have reached such a time? In addition to international tensions and strife, there are internal upheavals within nations, with graft and crime rampant everywhere. No one dares hope that the measure of tranquillity which may be enjoyed in some part of the world today will not be disrupted tomorrow, so there is a constant state of apprehension and fear from which millions are attempting to escape through avenues of questionable and sometimes sordid pleasures. Such are the death throes of this "present evil world" as it succumbs to the weight of its own sin and selfishness.—Gal. 1:4

On the other hand, it can be said that we are living in the best of times, for these are the days immediately preceding the full manifestation of the kingdom of Christ. However, only those who are blessed with the vision of present truth can understand and appreciate this viewpoint. Apart from the truth the world situation today seems tragic indeed, for it denotes a failure of churchianity

to accomplish its designed purpose of influencing the nations of earth to live at peace with one another and thus to perpetuate a civilization which they misnamed "Christendom."

To the millions in the world who make no profession of belief in Christianity the outlook is equally dark and threatening. There is a measure of "wishful thinking" on the part of many, but no genuine hope anywhere in the world, and, apart from the truth of God's Word, nothing upon which to base such a hope. All the "foundations of the earth are out of course," even as the prophet foretold, and human wisdom is unable to find an answer—"They walk on in darkness."—Ps. 82:5

### Lights in the World

The thought uppermost in the hearts of those who know the truth is one of thanksgiving to God for opening the eyes of their understanding to know and appreciate his glorious plan of salvation. And this spirit of thankfulness is bound to overflow, not only in direct praise to God for his abounding grace, but in showing forth his praise to as many others as we possibly can. Those into whose hearts the Lord has shined with the Gospel, and who in turn are reflecting the light of truth in order that those around them might see it, are the only lights in the dark world of today. How unchristlike it would be to hide the light of truth under a "bushel."—Matt. 5:14-16

Nor should there be any question in the minds of truth-enlightened Christians as to the nature of the message which should be proclaimed at the present time—or in fact at any time—for now, as ever, it should be nothing short of the full Gospel of the kingdom. Nor should our incentive for preaching this Gospel be other than love for God and a desire to bless those who may have ears to hear and hearts to respond to the message. It is highly important, we think, to keep these viewpoints in mind, else there may be danger that in our zeal we may place ourselves in the unfortunate position of being energetic yet unapproved ambassadors.

One of the most appealing allurements which many of the Lord's people find difficult to resist is the idea of courting persecution. There are plausible reasons for this. Jesus was persecuted, and we want to be like Jesus. The apostles and others in the Early Church were persecuted, and we want to follow them as they followed Christ. Besides, we know that it is only through much tribulation that we may hope to enter into the kingdom, that it is only

if we suffer with him that we may hope to reign with him.

These thoughts are all scriptural, and should weigh heavily in our Christian thinking, but they should not be allowed to outweigh other important truths pertaining to the proper attitude of the Christian in this world of darkness. Persecution is not alone an evidence of being on the Lord's side. It would be comparatively easy to stir up the wrath of the world against ourselves, if that were the only consideration. But then the question would be whether or not we were suffering for righteousness' sake or for our own misguided efforts.

This is a matter which in every part of the age has confronted the Lord's people. Shortly after the apostles fell asleep, the lure of martyrdom so influenced the church that for a period the chief aim of many who accepted Christ was to be put to death as martyrs. With many of these, other important aspects of the Christian life were almost entirely ignored, the one aim being to attain the glory of martyrdom.

This, of course, was a wrong viewpoint, yet it illustrates the lengths to which fallen human reasoning will lead the Lord's people away from the true path of righteousness. And it is something which we will do well to remember today. At present the Gospel of the kingdom is being heralded far and wide by radio and otherwise, yet seemingly there is not a great deal of outward opposition to it. There is much cold indifference, but little active persecution. Because of this we might conclude that our message is too "mild," that it does not have the "smiting" qualities which it should, or that the evil practices of the church and the world are not being exposed as they might be.

But would it be right so to conclude? What did Jesus mean when he said that his church was the light of the world? What did Paul mean when he said that we "shine as lights in the world"? Do any of the scriptures which bear on the Christian's commission as an ambassador for Christ suggest he is to be a crusader against the evil practices of the world? That there is much in the world that is wrong, and against which we could find much that truthfully could be said, there is no question. But is it in this manner that we are to "shine as lights in the world"?

If so, how shall we decide which particular wrongs in the nominal church or in the world, we are to attack? Shall we crusade against the liquor traffic? Here is an evil that is destroying more

lives each year than war, and debauching millions of others. We surely have no sympathy for such an evil, but have we been commissioned to crusade against it? The tobacco trade, with its advertising being dinned into the ears of the young and old, and displayed alluringly before their eyes in the newspapers, magazines, and billboards, is certainly obnoxious, but have we been commissioned to embark on a campaign against tobacco?

Every truth-enlightened Christian knows much about the evils practiced by the nominal church—Babylon. Here is a field in which we could easily become martyrs, if that is what the Lord wants us to do. But does he?

The overtones of war are now being thundered around the world. The masses do not want war, but the international situation is such that the youth of every nation are being sucked into a terrible abyss of slaughter. Here is something which every sincere Christian could easily be in open rebellion against, but is this what the Lord wants?

### **Our Exemplar**

What would Jesus do? This is a question which each one of us could seriously ask ourselves as we consider the nature of the message which we are commissioned to proclaim in the mad world of today. One of the first messages Jesus gave when he began his ministry was delivered in a synagogue in Nazareth. It was based on Isaiah 61:1-3. This is a prophecy concerning Jesus' anointing by the Holy Spirit—his commission for service. It is also our commission for service; for as members of his mystical body we receive of the same anointing which came upon him.

Just what is included in this divine authorization? "Good tidings unto the meek"; "to bind up the brokenhearted"; "to proclaim liberty to the captives"; "the opening of the prison to them that are bound"; "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord"; "the day of vengeance of our God"; "to comfort all that mourn"; to give those who mourn in Zion, "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

When Jesus said to his audience in Nazareth that this scripture was fulfilled in their ears, he did not quote all of it, stopping just before it mentions the "day of vengeance." There was a good reason for this, for that part of the commission, indeed all the remainder of it, has its particular application in this end of the age rather than at the beginning of the age when Jesus conducted his

personal ministry. The "day of vengeance" is one of the scriptural expressions which indicates the significance of the great time of trouble with which the age comes to an end.

In a study of this entire commission several points come clearly to light. One is that it calls for the proclamation of the whole Gospel. To specialize on some particular segment of the truth would not be in keeping with this divine commission. It calls for the proclamation of the great hope of restitution, as well as the "high calling" of this age—the "acceptable year of the Lord." These two great fundamentals of the Gospel cannot be presented properly and effectively apart from an explanation of man's fall, his redemption through Christ, and his need for repentance and surrender to the Lord. This has been the work of the church throughout the age, and every consecrated follower of the Master is still bound by the same divine commission. Nothing should be taken away from this divine commission.

#### **"The Day of Vengeance"**

Now that we are at the end of the age there is added the responsibility of proclaiming the "day of vengeance." This is not in reality an additional message, but more particularly an up-to-date application of the same glorious Gospel of the kingdom, in that it involves an explanation of present world conditions in the light of prophecy, and emphasizes the fact that the kingdom of Christ is man's only hope of survival. It is the Lord's vengeance which is upon the nations, and this means that we are in the time of Christ's second presence when he has been set as King upon the holy hill of Zion, and when he is dashing the nations to pieces like a potter's vessel.—Ps. 2:6, 9

But to declare these truths relating to the "day of vengeance" does not imply pronouncing vengeance, nor does it call for a campaign of smiting condemnation against the evils of the crumbling world. Generally speaking, the people already know how wrong the world is, but they do not know the basic causes of the world's insanity, nor do they have any conception at all of the divine remedy—the kingdom of Christ. Only in the great plan of God is this information available, and it is our privilege to proclaim the glorious truths of the divine plan.

In brief, our preaching of the "day of vengeance" consists in explaining as clearly as possible the meaning of present world chaos, that the judgments of the Lord are upon the nations, and that soon

the Lord's kingdom will manifest itself to bless and restore the people to health and life. Properly presented, the truth concerning the day of vengeance should be one of great comfort. Yes, it will "comfort all that mourn," and surely the world is filled with mourning ones today.

In Isaiah 35:4 the responsibility of the saints during this time of trouble is again mentioned. The text reads: "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you." Jesus said that at this time the hearts of the people would fail them for fear as they looked ahead to the things coming upon the earth, but it is our privilege to say to as many of these as we can, "Fear not." We can say this by explaining that while the trouble now upon the earth is a manifestation of God's vengeance, it is but preparatory to the blessings of the kingdom, the salvation of all the willing and obedient from sin and death.

#### **Mourners in Zion**

Isaiah 61:3 makes special mention of those who "mourn in Zion." These seem to be in addition to the "all that mourn" mentioned in verse two. Those who mourn in Zion are those who, in one way or another, are associated with the professed people of God, and who are distressed over conditions with which they are surrounded, both in the world and in the church.

The same glorious message of present truth which comforts sorrowing ones in the world in proportion to their faith to believe it is also a satisfying portion to these who "mourn in Zion." Indeed, it is especially so, for the reason that it provides an explanation for the confusing and disappointing situations in which they find themselves as a result of nominal Zion's failure to convert the world. It is not that a special message needs to be directed to these, for the truth of the divine plan, the Gospel of the kingdom, suffices to accomplish this desired end, even as the same message accomplishes all the other objectives of the divine commission.

The term Zion is also sometimes used in the prophecies concerning God's typical chosen people, those who are Israelites after the flesh. The kingdom message also reaches and comforts any among these who have ears to hear. This objective of the kingdom proclamation is referred to in Isaiah 40:1, 2, which reads, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished,

## TALKING THINGS OVER

that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

The wonderful manner in which the prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel to the Promised Land are now being fulfilled should properly be a part of the kingdom message today. These developments are of such a nature as to strengthen faith in the out-working of the entire divine plan, and should therefore help to make our ministry a greater comfort to both Jews and Gentiles.

We are not to suppose, though, that the Lord's commission to comfort "all that mourn" implies that all who hear the message will be comforted, nor that every individual mourning one in the world will even be reached by the efforts of the saints—although we should do all we can toward this end. The thought is, rather, that there are no restrictions on the scope of the commission. The whole world is the field of service, and in this world of darkness we are to let our light shine as brightly and as effectively as possible.

### **For a Witness**

Jesus said that "this Gospel of the kingdom" would be preached in all the world for a "witness." It is not to be expected that more than this will be accomplished so far as Jews and Gentiles generally are concerned. That feature of the Gospel pertaining to the high calling of this age is still reaching one here and there, and every effort should be made to nurture these in the truth, and encourage them to run zealously for the "prize." Indeed, no part of the truth should be held back from those who show a desire to learn the way of the Lord more perfectly. Those who progress in knowledge should be instructed in all the truths of God's Word, including its prophecies concerning mystic Babylon and the call to "come out of her, my people." But as for the people in general we will find that our efforts have resulted largely in a witness, rather than in bringing large numbers into the truth.

This will be true with respect to both Jews and Gentiles. The prophecies clearly indicate that the Jews would return to the Promised Land in unbelief, and that they would remain in unbelief until in the final phase of the great time of trouble they should be attacked by aggressor nations from the north, and the Lord would intervene to save them. In confirmation of this Paul declares that "blindness in part" came upon Israel "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." (Rom. 11:25) The reference here is to the grafting of Gentile branches into God's olive tree of promise to take the

places of the natural branches which were broken off because of unbelief.

This work is still going on. The "fulness" of the Gentiles has not yet come in, and this explains why Israel is still in unbelief, and will remain so until their eyes are miraculously opened by the wonderful manner in which the Lord will protect and deliver them in that future hour of their greatest peril. An occasional one may accept the truth, even as is true among the Gentiles, and has been true of both Jews and Gentiles throughout the age. But aside from this, let us not expect that our message will result in more than a "witness" to those who hear.

**"Without Murmurings"**

In our text the apostle admonishes us to "do all things without murmurings and disputings." How fitting is this counsel! The world in which we shine as lights is filled with strife and animosity, and in such a world our witness will be effective in proportion to the wholesome influence of love and good will among ourselves as we proclaim the message. The Lord's people should have but one objective in their labor of love, and there should be no reason for strife as together they lay down their lives showing forth the praises of their God.

It is thus, the apostle asserts, that we will be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke." If we continue faithfully to let our light shine in this dark and suffering world, sooner or later we are sure to be "rebuked" by those who sit in darkness. But when it comes it should be unmerited so far as any wrongdoing on our part is concerned. Our own conduct should be both "harmless" and "blameless," hence without just cause for rebuke. Nor will we be rebuked by the Lord if we are faithful to the truth and maintain the proper attitude of sympathy, understanding, and love as we minister the kingdom message to others.

(Faithful followers of the Master have never found themselves at home in the world.) Its spirit is contrary to their spirit, and it is a struggle to overcome the spirit of the world. This is especially true today. We are surrounded by turmoil and chaos, by ill will and hatred, but let us rise above these in our association with one another and in our attitude toward those to whom we proclaim the message. Paul speaks of the "perverse nation" of his day, and now we have the privilege of shining as lights in a perverse world. It is a world that is falling apart under the weight of its perverseness.

## TALKING THINGS OVER

We cannot do anything to hinder this, nor do we want to, but we can tell the people that a new world is near—"new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—II Pet. 3: 13

The time is short. We do not know how much longer we will have the privilege of shining as lights in the world; so let us make faithful use of every opportunity we have to "comfort all that mourn," rejoicing in the realization that if faithful in doing the Lord's will now, we will be united with Christ beyond the veil, and together with him, shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. Then it will not be a case of lights shining in the darkness, for the darkness will be dispelled by the glory of the Sun of Righteousness, and the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea.

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# Speakers' Appointments

## Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

<b>HENRY E. ANDERSON</b>		Whittier, Calif. ....	17
Allentown, Pa. ....	2, 3	Santa Ana, Calif. ....	24
<b>WILLIAM A. BAKER</b>		<b>JOHN Y. MAC AULAY</b>	
Salem, Ore. ....	June 17	Tonawanda, N. Y. ....	June 1
<b>JULIUS BEDNARZ</b>		Buffalo, N. Y. ....	3
Allentown, Pa. ....	June 2, 3	Erie, Pa. ....	4
New Haven, Conn. (Morning) ..	10	Cleveland, Ohio ....	5
Waterbury, Conn. (Afternoon) ..	10	Toledo, Ohio ....	6
Detroit, Mich. ....	June 29-July 1	South Bend, Ind. ....	7
<b>JENS COPELAND</b>		Gary, Ind. ....	8
LaSalle, Ill. ....	June 24	Chicago, Ill. ....	10
<b>ORLANDO D. DEIFER</b>		Shenandoah, Iowa ....	11, 12
Reading, Pa. ....	June 10	St. Joseph, Mo. ....	13, 14
<b>DAVID DINWOODIE</b>		Kansas City, Mo. ....	15
Paterson, N. J. ....	June 24	Topeka, Kans. ....	17
<b>EDWARD FAY</b>		Wichita, Kans. ....	18
Riverside, Calif. (Morning) June	17	Oklahoma City, Okla. ....	19
Pomona, Calif. (Afternoon) .....	17	Portales, New Mex. ....	21, 22
<b>EARL FOWLER</b>		Albuquerque, New Mex. ....	24
San Luis Obispo, Calif. (Sat.) June	16	Los Angeles, Calif. ....	July 1-4
<b>PANTEL HATGIS</b>		<b>E. R. MAC JILTON</b>	
Paterson, N. J. ....	June 10	Duquesne, Pa. ....	June 3
<b>PETER KOLLIMAN</b>		East Liverpool, Ohio ....	10
Allentown, Pa. ....	June 2, 3	<b>ADAM MISKAWITZ</b>	
Lancaster, Pa. ....	17	Aurora, Ill. ....	June 10
<b>ROBERT A. KREBS</b>		<b>MARTIN C. MITCHELL</b>	
Los Angeles, Calif. ....	July 1-4	Allentown, Pa. ....	June 2, 3
<b>ARTHUR H. KRUMPOLT</b>		Baltimore, Md. (Morning) .....	10
Allentown, Pa. ....	June 2, 3	Wilmington, Del. (Afternoon) ....	10
Wallingford, Conn. (Morning) ...	17	<b>ROY E. MITCHELL</b>	
Hartford, Conn. (Afternoon) .....	17	Paterson, N. J. ....	June 3
<b>RAYMOND J. KRUPA</b>		<b>DANIEL J. MOREHOUSE</b>	
Allentown, Pa. ....	June 2, 3	Milwaukee, Wis. ....	June 10
Easton, Pa. ....	24	Detroit, Mich. ....	June 29-July 1
Detroit, Mich. ....	June 29-July 1	<b>LEON H. NORBY</b>	
<b>LUDLOW P. LOOMIS</b>		Allentown, Pa. ....	June 2, 3
Lehighton, Pa. ....	June 17	Philadelphia, Pa. ....	10
<b>EDWARD LORENZ</b>		<b>HARRY PASSIOS</b>	
San Francisco, Calif. ....	June 3	Washington, Pa. ....	June 17
		<b>S. E. RANGER</b>	
		Boise, Idaho ....	June 2, 3
		Ogden, Utah ....	5, 6

## SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

Denver, Colo. ....	9, 10	Oakland, Calif. ....	29
Lincoln, Neb. ....	12, 13	Los Angeles, Calif. ....	July 1-4
Barnes City, Iowa ....	15	<b>FELIX S. WASSMANN</b>	
Clinton, Iowa ....	16, 17	Allentown, Pa. ....	June 2, 3
La Salle, Ill. ....	18	Groton-New London, Conn. ....	16, 17
Chicago, Ill. ....	20, 21	<b>GEORGE M. WILSON</b>	
Gary, Ind. ....	22	Allentown, Pa. ....	June 2, 3
Jackson, Mich. ....	23, 24	Detroit, Mich. ....	June 29-July 1
Ann Arbor, Mich. ....	25, 26	<b>ERNEST G. WYLAM</b>	
Saginaw, Mich. ....	27, 28	Gary, Ind. ....	June 17
Detroit, Mich. ....	June 29-July 1	<b>W. NORMAN WOODWORTH</b>	
<b>VICTOR E. SAMUELS</b>		Detroit, Mich. ....	June 29-July 1
Allentown, Pa. ....	June 2, 3	<b>H. L. YOUNG</b>	
<b>CHESTER A. SUNDBOM</b>		Mahanoy City, Pa. ....	June 10
Minneapolis, Minn. ....	June 15	Wilkes Barre, Pa. ....	24
Spokane, Wash. ....	17	<b>CHRISTIAN W. ZAHNOW</b>	
Vancouver, B. C., Can. ....	18, 19	Jackson, Mich. ....	June 17
Victoria, B. C., Can. ....	20	Ann Arbor, Mich. ....	18
Seattle, Wash. ....	21, 22	Flint, Mich. ....	19
Portland, Ore. ....	23, 24	Detroit, Mich. ....	June 29-July 1
Salem, Ore. ....	26		
San Francisco, Calif. ....	28		

## CONVENTIONS

**ALLENTOWN, PA., June 2, 3**—Odd Fellows Hall, 118 N. 9th Street. For reservations write the secretary, Mrs. Orlando D. Deifer, 747 East Wyoming Street, Allentown, Pa.

**SAGINAW, MICH., June 10**—Woman's Club, 311 N. Jefferson Street.

**BOWIE, TEX., June 17**—For details write Mr. J. Frank Whitaker, R. F. D. 1, Sunset.

**JACKSON, MICH., June 17**—Convention opens at 9:30 a. m., in the Odd Fellows Temple, 414 South Mechanic Street.

**SALEM, ORE., June 17**—Home gathering 2339 State Street.

**CHICAGO, ILL., June 24**—910 N. La-Salle Street.

**DETROIT, MICH., June 29-July 1**—Y. W. C. A. Building, 2230 Witherell, at Montcalm. There will be a baptismal service. A rich spiritual feast is expected. Those expecting to attend are requested to advise the secretary early. The Detroit brethren will accommodate as many as possible. Rooms in nearby hotels will be secured if desired. Write to the secretary, Mr. Charles Chupa, 7751 Patton Street, Detroit 28, Michigan.

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**LINCOLN UNIVERSITY, PA., July 15**. On Ritchie Farm.

**WEATHERFORD, TEX., July 29**—Zion Hill Schoolhouse.

**BOWLING GREEN, OHIO, August 18-25**—See inside front cover.

**LABOR DAY CONVENTIONS:** Brooklyn, N. Y.; Minneapolis, Minn.; Seattle, Wash.

## "For Thy Name's Sake"

**T**HE motive of every acceptable prayer must be the glory of God's name—"For thy name's sake." It is well to remember this whenever we approach the throne of heavenly grace. If we ask God for wisdom and guidance it should not be for the purpose of having the way made easy and plain for us, but in order that our purpose in life may be such as to glorify his name. And having asked God to direct our paths "for his name's sake" we should neither murmur nor complain at what his providence deems best for us. We are not even to express a choice, but like Jesus, be willing at all times to say, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

When we ask God for forgiveness we should be reminded of his grace and glory manifested in the wonderful provision through our Redeemer whereby our sins can be forgiven. Our desire to be in harmony with him should not be merely that of enjoying the sunshine of his favor, but especially in order that our service will be acceptable and a glory to his name.

If we ask for strength to endure trials, it should be with the desire that our endurance of trials will glorify God. God has promised to help us in every time of need, but we should not seek his help merely because we sense our need for it—although that need should be felt—but because the strength he has promised will enable us the better to glorify him. It is proper for us to pray for our "daily bread"—both temporal and spiritual—not merely because we want to enjoy it, but that through its use we might receive strength to show forth his praises.

This unselfish viewpoint of the Christian life will, in turn, help to sweeten every experience which divine wisdom ordains to be best for us as new creatures in Christ. If we ask God to lead us "for his name's sake," and the way he leads is in a wilderness of hardships and trials, we can with faith and confidence take satisfaction in the assurance that such a way must be best suited to glorify his name. In this true Christian viewpoint self is nothing and God is everything.

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THE DAWN

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# To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach

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

That meantime the chiseling, shaping, and polishing of 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 wilful wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isaiah 35