



BETHEL XMAS MORNING, 1926.

THIS JOURNAL AND ITS SACRED MISSION

THIS Journal is one of the prime factors or instruments in the system of Bible Instruction, or "Seminary Extension," now being presented in all parts of the civilized world by the WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY, chartered A.D. 1881, "For the Promotion of Christian Knowledge." It not only serves as a class room where Bible Students may meet in the study of the divine Word, but also as a channel of communication through which they may be reached with announcements of the Society's Conventions and of the coming of its traveling representatives styled "Pilgrims," and refreshed with reports of its Conventions.

Our "Berean Lessons" are topical rehearsals or reviews of our Society's published "Studies," most entertainingly arranged, and very helpful to all who would merit the only honorary degree which the Society accords, viz., *Verbi Dei Minister* (V.D.M.), which translated into English is, *Minister of the Divine Word*. Our treatment of the International S. S. Lessons is specially for the older Bible Students and Teachers. By some this feature is considered indispensable.

This Journal stands firmly for the defence of the only true foundation of the Christian's hope now being so generally repudiated.—Redemption through the precious blood of "the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom [a corresponding price, a substitute] for all." (1 Pet. 1: 19; 1 Tim. 2:6.) Building up on this sure foundation the gold, silver and precious stones (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Pet. 1:5-11) of the Word of God, its further mission is to—"Make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery which . . . has been hid in God, . . . to the intent that now might be made known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God"—"which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed."—Eph. 3:5-9, 10.

It stands free from all parties, sects and creeds of men, while it seeks more and more to bring its every utterance into fullest subjection to the will of God in Christ, as expressed in the Holy Scriptures. It is thus free to declare boldly whatsoever the Lord hath spoken;—according to the divine wisdom granted unto us, to understand. Its attitude is not dogmatical, but confident; for we know whereof we affirm, treading with implicit faith upon the sure promises of God. It is held as a trust, to be used only in his service; hence our decisions relative to what may and what may not appear in its columns must be according to our judgment of his good pleasure, the teaching of his Word, for the upbuilding of his people in grace and knowledge. And we not only invite but urge our readers to prove all its utterances by the infallible Word to which reference is constantly made, to facilitate such testing.

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 his Temple, through which, when finished, God's blessing shall come "to all people," and they find access to him.—1 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; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6.
- That the Hope of the Church is that she may be like her Lord, "see him as he is," be "partaker of the divine nature," and share his glory as his joint-heir.—1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; 2 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 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 wilfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35.

CHARLES T. RUSSELL, Editor.

LETTERS FOR THE EDITOR SHOULD BE SENT TO ALLEGHENY, PA., U. S. A.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS AND REMITTANCES

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TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR AS FOLLOWS:—

All Bible Students who, by reason of old age, or other infirmity or adversity, are unable to pay for this Journal, will be supplied FREE if they send a Postal Card each MAY stating their case and requesting its continuance. We are not only willing, but anxious, that all such be on our list continually and in touch with the Studies, etc.

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We are about to discontinue these Tracts. Order at once all you can use, so we need not move the stock to our new quarters.

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This volume has been published as a special issue of our journal—at the extremely low price of 5c a copy, in any quantity, postage included. (To foreign countries, 9c.) This enables people of slender purse to herald far and wide the good tidings in a most helpful form.

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The volumes in English are bound in two styles. MILLENNIAL DAWN in green cloth binding and SCRIPTURE STUDIES in maroon cloth. Specify which you desire.

HIS WORK

Seeing that God has such a wonderful plan for the blessing of mankind, Pastor Russell gave all of his power and energy to making known these great truths to the world. He never took a vacation; he worked until the day of his death.

Like other Christians, he was looking for the second coming of Christ. Between 1872-6 he discovered that the Scriptures clearly teach that the Lord would not return in a body of flesh, but would return as a spirit being, invisible to human eyes, and that his second presence was due in the autumn of 1874. This led to the publishing of a booklet entitled, "The Object and Manner of Our Lord's Return," which had a phenomenal circulation.

Many students of the Bible throughout the United States and Canada responded to the information derived from that book, and his correspondence became voluminous. Realizing the necessity of keeping the truth before the minds of those who had begun to investigate, in 1879 he began the publication of THE WATCH TOWER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE, and was its sole Editor to the time of his death. This journal is issued semi-monthly; it never publishes advertisements, but is devoted exclusively to religious topics. Among the English speaking people in the United States, Canada and Great Britain, its semi-monthly circulation is 45,000 copies. It is also published in German, French, Swedish, Dano-Norwegian and Polish, reaching a large number of subscribers in America and Europe.

He was President of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY from its organization in 1884 until his death. He was also President of the PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION, organized in 1909, and the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION, incorporated in London, in 1913, both of the latter corporations being adjuncts to the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY. Through these religious corporations, as well as by the word of mouth, he promulgated the Gospel of Messiah's kingdom. He was the author of the following publications, issued between the years 1881 and 1914, each having phenomenal circulation, as given below:

FOOD FOR THINKING CHRISTIANS.	1,450,000
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THE ATONEMENT	445,000
THE NEW CREATION.	423,000
WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT HELL	3,000,000

He was also the author of WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT SPIRITISM, OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS, et cetera, et cetera. He was the author of the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION, which had been exhibited prior to his death to more than nine million persons. He wrote and published the SCENARIO of the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION, which had a very wide circulation. His publications were translated into thirty-five different languages. At the same time he was Pastor of more than 1,200 congregations of Bible students, in different parts of the world. These he visited and taught as often as possible.

He organized and conducted a Lecture Bureau which constantly employed seventy Bible lecturers, who traveled and delivered lectures on the Scriptures. He organized and managed an auxiliary lecture bureau of seven hundred men who gave a portion of their time to lecturing on Bible teachings. Each year he wrote practically all of the copy for the BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY, the annual distribution of which amounted to approximately fifty million copies.

His weekly sermons were handled by a newspaper syndicate. More than 2,000 newspapers, with a combined circulation of fifteen million readers, at one time published his discourses. All told, more than 4,000 newspapers published these sermons.

The Continent, a publication whose editor often opposed Pastor Russell, once published the following significant statement concerning him:

"His writings are said to have greater newspaper circulation every week than those of any other living man; a greater, doubtless, than the combined circulation of the writings of all the priests and preachers in North America; greater even than the work of Arthur Brisbane, Norman Hapgood, George Horace Lorimer, Dr. Frank Crane, Frederick Haskins, and a dozen other of the best known editors and syndicate writers put together."

HARVEST WORK

Pastor Russell adhered closely to the teachings of the Scriptures. He believed and taught that we are living in the time of the second presence of our Lord, and that his presence dates from 1874; that since that time we have been living in the time of the end—the "end of the age," during which the Lord has been conducting his great harvest work; that, in harmony with the Lord's own statement, this harvest work is separating true Christians designated as "wheat," from merely professing Christians, designated as "tares," and gathering the true saints into the kingdom of the Lord. It is here interesting to note that Jesus said, "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing! Verily, I say unto you that he shall make him ruler over all his goods." Thousands of the readers of Pastor Russell's writings believe that he filled the office of "that faithful and wise servant," and that his great work was giving to the household of faith meat in due season. His modesty and humility precluded him from openly claiming this title, but he admitted as much in private conversation. For a more detailed account of his work, reference is made to THE WATCH TOWER of June 1st, 1916.

In 1910 Pastor Russell visited Palestine and Russia. He there orally delivered lectures to thousands of orthodox Jews on the regathering of Jews to Palestine. In 1911 he was one of a committee of seven who made a journey around the world and especially examined into the conditions of missionary work in Japan, China, Korea and India. On the same occasion he again visited the Jews in Palestine and Galatia, explaining to them that the prophecies teach that the Jews at an early date will again be established in Palestine. On his return to America he was given a great ovation at the New York City Hippodrome by thousands of Jews, his discourse on this occasion being published by Hebrew papers both in America and in Europe.

During the 42 years of Pastor Russell's Christian work he never directly or indirectly solicited money. No collection was ever taken at any meeting addressed by him or by any of his associates. He had faith that the Lord would supply sufficient money to carry on his work; that the work was the Lord's, and not man's. The fact that voluntary contributions were liberally made by many persons throughout the world proved that his conclusions were correct.

He devoted his private fortune entirely to the cause to which he gave his life. He received the nominal sum of \$11.00 per month for his personal expenses. He died, leaving no estate whatsoever.

Thus closed the career of a most remarkable man. He was loved most by those who knew him best.

BROTHER RUSSELL'S CHRISTMASTIDE GREETINGS

Shortly before his death Brother Russell gave instructions for the publication of a beautiful little card conveying his Christian greetings and best wishes to the new creation, together with references to five recent WATCH TOWER articles which he considered particularly timely and helpful, also announcing the Year Text for 1917, over his signature. On the other side of this card is a rotagravure reproduction of the famous painting, "Christ Stilling the Storm on the Sea," as selected by our Pastor. According to his request, these cards are now being enclosed in all regular mail sent out

from his office in acknowledgment of orders, etc. By this means practically all of our interested readers will receive one. Any who fail to receive a copy, may have one upon request.

Anticipating a continued demand for this picture, he ordered an edition in regular post-card form, with space for message, which may be had at 10c per doz., postpaid. We have also a quantity of the same picture in post-card size, printed on heavy coated paper, with "Our Morning Resolve" on the reverse side. These will cost 6c per doz., postpaid.

"PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING"

Holy brethren, chosen by the sovereign Voice of Might,
See your high and holy calling out of darkness into light!
Called according to his purpose and the riches of his love,
Won to listen by the leadings of the gentle heavenly dove!

Called to suffer with our Master, patiently to run his race;
Called a blessing to inherit, called to holiness and grace,

Called to fellowship with Jesus by the ever faithful One,
Called to his eternal glory, to the kingdom of God's Son.

Whom he calleth he preserveth; and his glory they shall see.
He is faithful who hath called you; he will do it, fear not ye!
Then, holy brethren, onward! Thus make your calling sure;
For the prize of the high calling bravely to the end endure.

JETHRO'S COUNSEL

[The last three paragraphs of this article were reprinted from Chapter III, Volume I of Scripture Studies. The first two paragraphs were reprinted from article entitled, "God's Covenant at Sinai," published in issue of August 1, 1913. The remainder was reprinted from article, "God First—in the Decalogue," published in issue of July 1, 1902. Please see articles named.]

"BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH"

Faithful when with tears thine eyes are dim,
Faithful when Joy's cup o'erflows its brim;
Faithful when God seems to veil his face,
Faithful when he crowns thy work with grace.
Faithful, though thy loved ones turn aside,

Lips that praised thee once, with harshness chide;
Faithful though success enwreathes thy brow,
Faithful should the world before thee bow,
Faithful till hath fled life's fleeting breath,
Eager hands lie folded still in death.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

[Paragraphs 4 to 7 of this article were reprinted from article entitled, "God's Ten Commandments," published in issue of August 1, 1913. Paragraph 8 was reprinted from an article entitled, "Who Is My Neighbor," published in issue of same date. The remainder was reprinted from article entitled, "This Doth God Require," published in issue of June 15, 1907. Please see articles named.]

LETTERS FROM AFIELD

A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE

TO THE DEAR FRIENDS EVERYWHERE:—

Grace, mercy and peace be multiplied unto you!

Am taking advantage of an opportunity to dictate this note to extend to all the dear friends throughout the United States and Canada my heartfelt thanks for the great love bestowed upon us and manifested in the numerous Christmas presents which I and my associates have received, as well as cards, letters and messages of love. May the Lord bless you one and all!

I am unable to write you personally, and so am asking that this general message be given you. I am overwhelmed by your expressions of love, dear brethren. May the Lord reward you richly!

Your brother and servant by his grace,

J. F. RUTHERFORD.

CONVINCED OF HIS MISTAKEN ACTION

DEAR BRETHREN:—

It is with deep regret for my action taken about a week ago that I humbly write this letter, acknowledging that I have made a grievous mistake in supposing for one moment that THE WATCH TOWER was no longer being guided of the Lord. I attended a meeting of opponents, at which were some hitherto prominent brethren. Their arguments were so convincing that upon my return I immediately sent the copy of the letter to you, without any meditation or without looking to the leading of the Lord in the matter.

However, since that time I have meditated very much over the matter, looking up various Scriptures. Now I am fully convinced of my mistake, and beg to apologize for being so hasty in such an important matter and for any inconvenience or trouble I may have caused there. Hoping that my name will again be placed among the readers of THE WATCH TOWER, and also as a member of the International Bible Students' Association, I remain

Your brother in the service of the Lord,

G. W. V. B.—Wash.

OUR PASTOR'S WORDS AS TRUE NOW AS EVER

DEAR BRETHREN IN CHRIST:—

THE TOWER is certainly grand; and we believe the words of our dear Pastor are just as true now as they ever were (See F 658) and that THE WATCH TOWER will be used of the Lord in the future as well as in the past. (Luke 12:37; Revelation 8:3; 14:18) The "Mizpah" of Jeremiah seems to teach the same thing, Mizpah meaning "watchtower."

We ask an interest in your prayers that we may stand ever faithful, and assure you of ours in harmony with the Vow.

Yours in the one hope, Bro. and Sr. K. F. B.—Ohio.

THE FATHER'S BOUNTIFUL TABLE

DEAR BRETHREN:—

We just want to tell you something about our appreciation of the last two issues of THE WATCH TOWER. We feel sure we have never enjoyed a TOWER as we have that of Nov. 1st,

particularly the first article and the reproduction from one of the old TOWERS—"Divine Providences." We have read and re-read these articles, and it seems to us they are just about the finest we have ever had the good fortune to see, and we are grateful to our heavenly Father for his abundant and delicious spread. Every article in the TOWER of Nov. 1st is a gem; and the issue of Nov. 15th is also fine as far as we have read, particularly the first article. The dear Father is certainly setting a most wonderful and bountiful table before us, and it seems that the food gets better as the end of the way draws nearer.

Be assured that it is our daily prayer that our heavenly Father will guide and direct you in the work you are doing; and we ask also that you remember us in your petitions.

Your brother by his grace,

P. A. G.—Tenn.

COULD NOT MAKE DEAF EARS HEAR

DEAR BRETHREN:—

How may I become a member of the Church of Present Truth? I was converted to the belief last winter when a copy of one of your publications was placed in my hands; and I believe that it was by divine providence that I received the volume. I had long struggled with and argued against theories on the Bible as expounded by the Sunday School journals of various churches, until at times I was ashamed of myself, and thought that perhaps the devil was inspiring me to argue against God's Word. But now I see that I was blindly struggling for truth and light.

At the time when I got the volume I was teacher of the men's Bible class in the First Methodist Church here. I realized that it taught me to leave the erring church; but I was so desirous of bringing the light to those whom I had learned to love that I continued to teach the class, discarded theories of the journals and substituted as much present truth as I knew. I was the president of the Gospel Team; and I gave it to them there and tried to lead them to the real truth. But this was all in vain. In a little while I despaired and quit. So at last I have given up all hope of making a deaf ear hear. I am "done." Have you any advice for me?

Sincerely yours,

A. E. J.—Kans.

GRATEFUL APPRECIATION OF THE TOWER

BRETHREN BELOVED IN THE LORD:—

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you! Many times have I had in mind to write to you to tell you of my deep love for you, and of how much I appreciate what you are doing for me in the way of strengthening my faith and increasing my joys in the Lord through THE WATCH TOWER; but I have refrained from so doing because I know that you are all quite busy. But when I read the last TOWER (Dec. 1st issue) I could refrain no longer, as it contained just the subjects that I have been considering for the past three months, using the same references—the back numbers of the TOWER. From the TOWER of 1911, pages 180-182, the article on "The Rewards

seven of us to be sentenced together, for some reason known to him the eighth brother being left behind and not yet sentenced. We spent seven days and nights in the dark cells of Raymond Street jail, Brooklyn. Then we were removed to Long Island City jail, and placed in seven adjoining cells on the corridor. Here for seven days we have had fellowship together, being permitted to assemble in one cell every morning for our Bethel service. We have been treated very kindly here. And now on the seventh night in this prison we are informed that this is to be our last here, and that on the morrow we shall be taken to Atlanta. This journey will begin July 4, when all the allied nations are celebrating the birthday of the American nation.

During our imprisonment the other prisoners have been respectful to us and have treated us with deference. The officers have been kind. We have expected to be governed by the prison rules, and have gladly obeyed them in letter and in spirit. Not a tear of regret or of bitterness has been shed by one of the seven. We have wept for you, Beloved; we have sorrowed because of our separation from you. We have prayed much for you, that the dear Lord will protect you from the wolves and will take you safely into his fold. We know that he loves you more than we can, and that he will care for you where we cannot.

Sorrow not for us, dear Saints; for we are in the Lord's hands. Thus far he has led us, and he will lead us on. Your pathway may be fraught with many trying experiences; but remember his words, "Fear not them that can kill the body, but fear Him who may destroy the soul [new creature]," "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." I know that you are now counted by ecclesiasticism as the off-scourings of the earth; and that you are a gazingstock while you are companions of prisoners. But forget all these things. Remember that our Master made himself of no reputation, that he endured the cruel cross, despising the shame, all that he might do the Father's will. What a blessed privilege, then, to be counted worthy of bearing some of the reproaches that fell upon him! God has favored you and us above the ancient worthies, who endured hardships, sufferings and persecutions far greater than we have endured. He has favored us above the angels of heaven, who desired to look into his plan, but were not permitted. He has favored us by calling us to the heavenly calling far above angels, powers and principalities, setting before us the greatest of all prizes. He tells us that we can have this prize only by passing through much tribulation, and that the feet members must have a goodly part of this persecution. Behold, then, the persecution and the prize; behold the cross and crown! We can have the latter only by gladly taking the former. Shall we then falter or fall back? I am persuaded of you, dear Brethren, that you will not falter; but that when the fiery chariot comes near, you will gladly take to it. It is the greatest privilege ever to get into that chariot. It means a home of glory; it means a crown of life; it means to see and be like Jesus; it means to behold the face of the great Jehovah.

LONGING FOR THE DAY

Poor blind world. It is mad. It is drunk with the wine of Babylon. It is staggering now like a drunken man, and is about at its wit's end. (Psalm 107:27-29) Soon the Prince of Peace will speak to the raging waves of the surging masses, and then quietness and calmness will result. Then will follow the desire of all honest people of all nations. If we have withstood the storms and have been faithful to the Lord, we may

have a part in blessing those who have used us ill because they did not know us, even as the same class did not know our Master.

The dark night is at hand; but remember that it is darkest just before dawn of the bright day. Soon the Son of Righteousness will fully arise with healing in his beams; and if we have proven faithful, we shall experience the sweet promise of our Lord, who said: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the brightness of the sun in the kingdom of the Father." (Matthew 13:43) Then will the world know us, not as seditionists, but as true patriots, that we are not enemies but friends, anxious to do all for mankind. The Lord has promised that the world shall know who has been born in Zion. (Psalm 87:5) Will you be born there? I hope you will. I hope I shall see you there. Then will be fully appreciated the words of our dear Brother St. Paul that "these light afflictions endure but a moment, and they are working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Corinthians 4:17) Now you are despised and hated of all nations; and now is the time to remember the words of our King: "In patience possess ye your souls"; "He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved."

EXHORTATION TO LOYALTY

We have beheld the degraded characters in these prisons. We walked by a prisoner who boasted that he had murdered his fellow man. He was sentenced to ten years. Seven men were there who had given their all to help mankind; and they were sentenced to twenty years of four counts, or eighty years each. We have beheld much sorrow and suffering. What joy awaits mankind when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return [from death and degradation] and come to Christ with songs of joy upon their heads!" What joy to have a part in returning and blessing them!

Beloved in the Lord, the history of the ages is behind you; and a sad history it is. The glories of eternity are before you and its granddeurs are beyond the dreams of man. Long have we hoped and prayed for the coming of God's kingdom of righteousness. We are standing at its very portals now. Let us hold fast a little while, and we shall enter into the presence of our King. Then by his grace we shall see him face to face. Oh, that will be glory for me and for you!

The guard has graciously granted me a candle in my cell, this being my last night here. It is past midnight; my candle is burning low; and I must close. Never have I loved you so much, and never have I desired so much to talk to you.

And now tomorrow, as prisoners for the truth's sake, we go to Atlanta. We go in the strength of the Lord. We seven have learned, to love each other with an ever increasing love. We may not again see you in the flesh. We commend you to the gracious and loving arms of our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, how my heart yearns to do something for you! But our dear Lord will do what I cannot. His grace, peace and love be multiplied unto you. Be faithful, be brave, be loyal, be true; and may the Father of mercies and God of all comfort bless, keep and comfort you.

Your brother and bond-slave of our blessed King.

J. F. RUTHERFORD.

P. S.—We, associate prisoners of our dear Brother Rutherford, desire to express our hearty concurrence in the above message of love and admonition.

W. E. VAN AMBURGH, A. H. MACMILLAN, GEO. H. FISHER, CLAYTON J. WOODWORTH, R. J. MARTIN, F. H. ROBISON.

July 3, 1918.

Long Island City, N. Y.

CHRISTMAS JOY—OUR INCARCERATED BRETHERN

DEAR BRETHERN EVERYWHERE:

Since our brethren in prison cannot write all the dear friends, in their behalf I wish to express the great gratitude they feel to each and every one of the dear brethren who sent them some remembrance for Christmas, and this without regard to intrinsic value of the gift.

Many of their presents were packages of good, substantial and wholesome food. Since receiving it they have much improved physically. The oranges and grapefruit have been specially beneficial and probably have saved them from much sickness and suffering. The other foods have built them up physically, and each one is feeling much better. They are very grateful to the Lord for these temporal blessings and are very desirous of expressing their thankfulness and gratitude to the dear ones sending the gifts. Especially do they desire to express their thankfulness and appreciation of the great love that prompted the gifts. They were very much touched by the sweet messages accompanying the remembrances. One dear sister wrote, "Sugar was scarce, and we did without several days to save sugar to make some goodies for you." Of course the

brethren had to shed some tears for such love; and all they could say was: "God bless them for their loving kindness!" Never this side the veil, dear friends, will you know how much good you did and how much joy you brought to these ambassadors who are prisoners for Christ's sake.

More than 150 prisoners in the Castle had nothing for Christmas, and so our brethren got a list of them from the officers, and out of their own abundance made up a little Christmas package for each of the unfortunates; and thus many were made happy. Even the officers were so pleased that they were heard to say, "Never was anything like that done at this place before." And so we can truly say, the Lord was in the prison that Christmas. I knew each of you would be glad to know these things, because each of you had a part.

Our brethren wish me to say for them that they love you one and all very much—every one of the Lord's dear little ones—and if it be his will they greatly desire to come to you and serve you and make known their love unto you.

Your sister by his grace,

HARRIET B. FISHER.—Gc.

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That the church is "the temple of the living God", peculiarly "his workmanship"; that its construction has been in progress throughout the gospel age—ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the Chief Corner Stone of his temple, through which, when finished, God's blessing shall come "to all people", and they find access to him.—1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Ephesians 2:20-22; Genesis 28:14; Galatians 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.—Revelation 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".—Hebrews 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

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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 kings and priests in the next age.—Ephesians 4:12; Matthew 24:14; Revelation 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 wilfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isaiah 35.

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HYMNS FOR JANUARY, 1924

Sunday	6 150	13 290	20 67	27 198
Monday	7 130	14 200	21 123	28 82
Tuesday	1 34	8 145	15 177	22 25
Wednesday	2 14	9 203	16 35	23 312
Thursday	3 239	10 43	17 188	24 Vow
Friday	4 110	11 164	18 309	25 305
Saturday	5 261	12 295	19 219	26 226

DE LUXE EDITION "STUDIES"

A De Luxe edition, pocket size, of the Seven Volumes STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES will be ready for delivery about December 15th. While the printers hope to have them ready for shipment on this date, we cannot guarantee their receipt by the friends for Christmas. This edition is durably bound, semi-flexible, elaborately embossed in five colors, gold edges, thin Bible paper, and is designed more especially for use of the friends. It contains some of the material used in the Memorial WATCH TOWER; the original text of Tabernacle Shadows; the booklet, "The Bible versus the Evolution Theory"; and an index of all Scripture texts in the Seven Volumes. The set of Seven Volumes \$8.75, single volumes \$1.25. Class rates for fifty or more volumes, \$7.00 per set; single volumes \$1.00. "The Harp of God" in same style of binding, but different cover design, \$1.25 per copy; class rates as above, \$1.00 per copy.

PRAYER-MEETING TEXTS FOR JANUARY, 1924

January 2: "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom."—Daniel 2:44.
 January 9: "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom."—Psalm 145:13.
 January 16: "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens."—Psalm 103:19.
 January 23: "I have set my king upon my holy hill."—Psalm 2:6.
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I.B.S.A. BEREAN BIBLE STUDIES

By Means of "The At-one-ment"

STUDY 2: AUTHOR OF THE ATONEMENT

Week of Jan. 6.....Q. 29-35 Week of Jan. 20.....Q. 43-50
 Week of Jan. 13.....Q. 36-42 Week of Jan. 27.....Q. 51-58

Question books on "The At-one-ment," 10c postpaid

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CHILDREN'S BOOK

"The Way to Paradise" is the title of the new book for children. It was planned to have this book ready for Christmas, but pen drawing of illustrations selected has delayed the publication. It can be announced that the book will be ready about February 1st. It will contain 256 pages including 40 illustrations, is cloth bound, gold stamped, about 5x7¼ inches. Price per copy 65 cents; in quantities of 50 or more, 40 cents.

1924 YEAR CALENDAR

A specially drawn design apropos to the year text. The card is 10¼x18¾ inches in size and is printed in six colors. A weekly calendar pad is attached containing the year text, also the weekly text for prayer-meeting together with the Bethel morning hymn. 35 cents each, three for \$1.00. In quantities of fifty or more, 25 cents each, charges collect.

MOTTOES

An entirely new line of 22 beautiful designs, 44 texts, of various sizes, viz., 5x7, 7x10, 10x14, 14x20 inches. The designs were made especially for us, and have texts in keeping with the year text. This line of mottoes may be obtained as follows:

Packet containing 1 of each design and each text—
 44 mottoes \$14.00
 Packet containing 1 of each design—24 mottoes..... 7.00
 Packet containing assortment of designs and sizes—
 6 mottoes 2.50
 Packet containing assortment of designs—6 mottoes 2.00
 Packet containing assortment of designs—5 mottoes 1.50
 Packet containing assortment of designs—4 mottoes .75
 Single mottoes, per copy, 14x20, 75c; 10x14, 40c; 7x10, 20c; 5x7, 10c.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Although the fiery trials of 1917 and 1918 caused quite a number who had worked in harmony with the SOCIETY to turn aside and follow a different course, yet the Lord quickly filled up the ranks with new recruits and brought in even more. Reports of those that commemorated the Memorial in 1923 were far greater than those of any previous year during the harvest period. From 1904 to 1922 the greatest number of colporteurs in the field at any one time was 650; while the greatest number of bound volumes sold during any one year was 728,478. In 1923 the largest number of colporteurs in the service at any one time was 921; and the total sales of cloth-bound books by the colporteurs for the past year aggregate 1,241,570. This is by far the greatest record ever made in the United States. The Lord's hand has surely been in the work and "a marvelous work he hath done."

More and more the brethren appreciate the fact that it is their privilege to announce the new government of Christ Jesus the Messiah, that which will bring peace and rest and life to mankind. Their love for the Lord and his cause has spurred them on to greater efforts this year. While the contributions to the "Good Hopes" fund have been in excess of what they were a year ago, the classes throughout the United States in particular, and also many other countries, have expended large sums of money in preparing for a public witness and giving the same. It is impossible to estimate the amount of money spent by the friends in this way; but it has all been spent to a good purpose.

During the year the classes have considered each week the prayer-meeting texts relating to the transformation of the new creature into the likeness of the Lord and Master, by keeping the mind fixed upon the Lord and striving to cooperate with him in this transforming work. The influence has been such that visible effects are manifested by the brethren. It is easy to be seen that the classes generally throughout the country are in a good spiritual condition, have entered into the joy of the Lord, and are doing whatsoever their hands find to do with gladness, looking to that blessed time when all the faithful ones shall enter the habitation of the saints in glory, there to dwell in the house of the Lord forever, to behold his beauty and to inquire in his temple.

The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Of that we are quite certain. No greater privilege was ever granted to men or angels than that of now telling to the world that the great Messiah is here, has taken unto himself his power and will establish a government that will bring the desire of all nations.

Let us gird on our armor and with renewed zeal and determination press on during the year that is just before us, rejoicing as we go; and the God of heaven whom we serve will fight our battles for us and will bring us through victorious.

ELECTION

Immediately following the report, which was received with unanimous approval, the order of business proceeded to the election of the Board of Directors and Officers of the SOCIETY. Brother Sexton gaining recognition, said: "It was my privilege four years ago to place in nomination the officers of this SOCIETY. The splendid record made during that time and particularly as shown by the report we have just heard warrants me in concluding that the Lord was pleased with that nomination and has been blessing the servants of the SOCIETY. I, therefore, take pleasure in nominating for Directors the following:

J. F. Rutherford
C. A. Wise
W. E. Van Amburgh
A. H. Macmillan
Hugo H. Riemer
J. A. Baeuerlein
C. H. Anderson"

There being no other nominations these were elected by unanimous vote. The share-holders then proceeded to the nomination of the election of officers and the following were unanimously elected, to wit:

For President, J. F. Rutherford
For Vice-President, C. A. Wise
For Secretary-Treasurer, W. E. Van Amburgh

There being no further business the annual meeting adjourned.

CHRISTMAS

"To give some little token of affection's warmth
To those whose lives are rich in what is best;
To give the hungry food, the tired rest,
Call back the blush of youth to faded cheek;
To bring a glint of joy to eyes grown dim,
Or sing a hymn of praise for those whose cares
And plodding toil have never yet been sung;
To clasp the stranger's hand like that of friend
And feel his heart beat full with brother's love;

"To open wide the doors of vision and of thought
For those whose souls are starving for the truth,
And bid them welcome to a stronger hope;
To give our better selves to those most dear;
To stand alone with God and life among
The quiet hills, beneath a heaven of stars,
Too full of joy for words or song—
All this was taught us in thy birth,
O Son of God and man!"

The WATCH TOWER

AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

Vol. XLVIII

DECEMBER 15, 1926

No. 24

EARTH'S RIGHTFUL GOVERNOR

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."—Isaiah 9: 6.

WITH the coming of the Christmas season all Christians have something to say about Jesus. That is supposed to be the time of his birth. Most of the professed Christians at this season of the year give the three wise men wide advertisement by highly colored cards picturing them, by cantatas, and by divers and numerous other ways. Satan has ever been on the alert to see to it that he and his agents are to the fore and get plenty of advertisement. By this means he turns the minds of the people away from the Lord. He has deceived most of the people about Christmas as well as about many other things. Students of the Bible know that the wise men were not representatives of the Lord but were tools of Satan, used by him to carry out his conspiracy.

* The Scriptural account of the wise men is set forth in Matthew 2:1-16. This record, together with corroborative facts, shows that the vision had by the wise men, and the light which they followed, were approximately two years after the birth of the child Jesus. Satan seized upon the incident and has worked it overtime for the purpose of turning the minds of men away from God and his beloved Son and from the true facts concerning the birth of the Savior and God's great plan of redemption.

* Students of the Scriptures also know that the birth of the babe Jesus did not take place in December; yet because of the general belief upon this point by most people, it seems to be an appropriate time to speak the truth concerning his birth and the purpose thereof. The Scriptural testimony, supported by extraneous facts, shows that the birth of Jesus occurred approximately October 1st. The event is so important that it is always appropriate to call it to the minds of the people, regardless of the date.

HIS LOVING KINDNESS

* It is written: "God is love." Few of earth's creatures have ever understood the full import of that statement. Love is the perfect expression of unselfish-

ness. God's love for man has been made manifest in many marked ways. The Scriptures were written for the benefit of men who love God, that all such may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:17) God desires his people to learn and to have their hearts comforted by a knowledge of his plan, and for this reason he caused the Scriptures to be written. (Romans 15:4) Unselfishness prompted the Lord God to do this. The making of the record is no profit to him. He did it for man's benefit. After having written his Word he then makes man acquainted with it, and permits the light from his countenance to shine upon that Word with increased brilliancy for man's benefit as man makes progress in the narrow way.—Prov. 4:18.

* In the early days of man's experience God provided that his beloved Son should eventually come to earth and be born of a woman in order to become man's Redeemer. It has been his loving kindness for man that has caused God to unfold his purposes gradually and to show man the outworking of his plan to redeem and bless him. As man comes to understand the Word of the Lord his faith in God increases and his desire also grows to be unselfish and to be devoted wholly to the Lord.

A PROPHECY

* When Isaiah wrote the above text, "Unto us a child is born," the Child had not been born. The words he wrote applied to a future time; hence these words constituted a prophecy. Isaiah could not understand the full meaning or import of his own words, nor could any man prior to the giving of the holy spirit. Isaiah did not know about that. Why then did the prophet say, "Unto us a child is born"? Whom did he mean by "us"? Primarily he meant the natural house of Israel, which house constituted God's chosen people, whom God had selected and set aside for his own purposes. Israel after the flesh foreshadowed spiritual Israel, and the prophecy had more particular reference to the latter.

* Certain faithful Jews before the birth of the Child

were used as types foreshadowing future events. God caused Isaiah to say: "Behold, I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." (Isaiah 8:18) These words, "signs and wonders," mean that Isaiah and his sons were types used by the Lord to foreshadow things to happen in the future. The words of the prophet, especially concerning the "child", refer to some future time, although spoken in the present tense as though pertaining to the time when Isaiah was serving in the office of prophet. The time must come when this prophecy will be fulfilled.

FULFILMENT

* All of the prophecies of God are fulfilled exactly in his due time, not before nor after. This one of Isaiah 9:6 began to have its fulfilment approximately 1926 years ago, and is still in course of fulfilment. We should expect the light of it to increase until the fulfilment is complete. God had promised the Jews that he would send them a mighty One of whom Moses was a type. Of course the devout Jews were expecting a fulfilment of that promise. Then the Lord, through his angel, addressed the virgin who was to give birth to the Child, and informed her that his name should be called Jesus. He further said, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:32, 33) This latter statement from the angel to Mary was also a prophecy, and is directly linked to the prophecy which Isaiah had written long before.

* The holy angels of heaven must have been informed of what was soon to take place, and that information surely brought great joy to the angels. The due time came; and a company of these angels was organized in heaven and directed to proceed to the earth and there give testimony in the name of Jehovah God concerning the birth of the mighty Child. When these angels left the host of heaven, and as that happy train moved toward the earth, they must have indulged in continuous praises unto Jehovah, rejoicing because of the commission which they were soon to execute. When they reached the proximity of the earth one of these angels was given the distinguished honor of making the announcement of the purpose of the visit.

¹⁰ God knew, of course, that the enemy would attempt to deny the birth of the Child. Therefore the Lord arranged for competent witnesses who would, for man's benefit, thereafter give testimony concerning his birth. God did not select the three "wise men from the east" to be his witnesses, nor did he select the clergy of the Jewish people for that purpose. Later the Devil saw that these wise men and the clergy together would make a good combination for him to use in his attempt to destroy the Child and thereafter to deceive the people;

and that is why the wise men have been given such prominence in connection with this account. God evidently had their visit recorded in order to show that he did not select any of the Devil's instruments for his purposes, and that the Devil could not thwart his purposes.

¹¹ The Lord God selected honest men, who would not think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, to be his witnesses. Those selected as his witnesses were herders of sheep. They had brought their sheep into the corral, just over the brow of the hill upon which was situated the little town of Bethlehem. There they were watching their flocks to safeguard them from the wild animals, even as the Lord causes his flock to be watched to safeguard them from the wild dogs generally called D. D.'s. (Isaiah 56:10, 11) "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."—Philippians 3:2.

¹² That honored heavenly messenger who made the announcement of the Savior's birth was clothed with glory from Jehovah, and the Lord caused that glory to shine round about the shepherds. The Bible record shows that the appearance of the angels always brings dread and fear to men, and gives the reason therefor. Of course these humble shepherds were afraid, because they knew that the representative of the great Jehovah God was there. Undoubtedly they had heard of angels appearing on previous occasions to their forefathers, and now as they witnessed these heavenly messengers they stood in great awe and fear. The mighty messenger from heaven, in order that he might still their troubled hearts and allay their emotions, said to them: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2:10, 11.

¹³ At this point began the fulfilment of the prophecy which Isaiah had previously written; and here the angel gave utterance to another prophecy from God which in due time shall be completely fulfilled, and all people shall know about it; and then those who obey the Lord will greatly rejoice in its fulfilment. While this special heavenly messenger delivered the glad tidings to the witnesses the other members of the heavenly train seemed to wait at a respectful distance; then at the opportune moment they appeared, and all together joined in singing an anthem of praise, which also was a prophecy, to wit: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

¹⁴ This last-mentioned prophecy also is directly connected with that previously pronounced in Isaiah 9:6 concerning the birth of the Child who is to be the Prince of Peace. It must have its fulfilment in due time. The time must come when there will be lasting peace on earth and good will expressed toward all men. The importance of this wonderful Child is emphasized by the prophet's utterance concerning the same. The im-

portance of the prophecy is greatly enhanced in the minds of Christians as the divine plan is revealed to them. In God's due time its importance will appear to all the families of the earth, and the day will come when every creature in heaven and in earth will join together in joyful acknowledgment of Jesus as the Christ, all to the glory of Jehovah God.

WHY CHILD BORN

¹⁵ Of course the enemy Satan would employ every possible means of fraud and deception to blind the minds of men concerning the reason for the birth of this Child of God. Among other means employed is that deceptive theory, since taught to the people by the clergymen in various denominations, namely, that Jesus when he was on earth was God himself, merely incarnated, using a body of flesh for the time being. If their statement is true, then God himself was practising a fraud upon mankind. It is just like the Devil to make God appear as a fraud, which he, the Devil himself, is. The preachers of this error have been used by the Devil for many centuries to practise this fraud upon mankind and to blind honest thinkers from a true understanding of the philosophy of the ransom sacrifice.

¹⁶ The human race came under condemnation by reason of Adam's sin. Adam was tried before Jehovah, found guilty of a violation of the divine law, and sentenced to death. (Genesis 3:15-24) At that time no children had been born, the parents were under the sentence of death, and the children were afterward born without a right to life, hence condemned before Jehovah God. The children were not sentenced to death, but by reason of inheritance were born in sin and shapen in iniquity; and for that reason they had no right to life.—Psalm 51:5.

¹⁷ Being without the right to life mankind must die, and they must remain dead for ever unless God should make some provision for their deliverance out of death. And God made such provision. "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: . . . therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."—Romans 5:12, 18.

THE RANSOM

¹⁸ In the exercise of his loving kindness God made provision for the redemption of mankind. This he did in agreement with his promise. (Hosea 13:14) Ransom means "exact corresponding price"; that is to say, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life. Such is the statement of the divine law. (Exodus 21:23, 24; Deuteronomy 19:21) An angel could not become man's redeemer, because angels are greater than men and of a different nature.—Psalm 8:5,

¹⁹ The term *incarnate* means to be invested with a body of flesh, to be clothed with flesh. An incarnated being would therefore mean a spirit being who is merely for the time being clothed with a human form, but in truth and in fact at the same time is a spirit and not a man. The incarnation theory is that Jesus, when he was on this earth, was a divine being who walked around in human body; and that it was only this human body that died. It is easy to be seen that an incarnated creature could not provide the ransom price. The one who furnishes "a life for a life" in behalf of Adam must be one who not only appears as a human being perfect in organism, but who must really be a human being, and have the right to life as a human being. He must exactly correspond with the one sentenced to death.

²⁰ The one who would provide the ransom price for Adam must therefore be just exactly equal to Adam. For this reason it is recorded in the Scriptures that upon earth there was none who could meet these requirements nor give to God a ransom for man. (Psalm 49:7) But in due time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, which means that he was made flesh and dwelt amongst men. (Galatians 4:4; John 1:14) Of course Jehovah God and the Logos were at all times higher than the angels; God is without beginning, and the Logos was the beginning of God's creation and the active agent of Jehovah God in the creation of all things that were created.—John 1:1, 2; Revelation 4:11; Proverb 8:22.

²¹ It is written: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour: that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Hebrews 2:9) The one providing the redemption for man of necessity must be a man, not more nor less; otherwise he could not be an exact corresponding price. That Jesus was a man is further testified to by the apostle: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

²² To provide the ransom price such man must be without sin. But how could he be without sin if brought forth from an imperfect woman? The answer is that Jesus was not begotten of imperfect man but begotten in the womb of Mary by the power of Jehovah. (Matthew 1:18) Hence he was born holy, complete, harmless, without sin or iniquity, or otherwise imperfect. The birth of this wonderful Child was necessary in order for God to fulfil his promise concerning man's redemption. (Hosea 13:14) It was necessary for that Child to be born perfect and grow to manhood's estate in order that he might be the Redeemer. The hope of man for life is entirely dependent upon this great and wonderful event. Without the birth of the perfect One the ransom sacrifice could not have been given.

WHY A JEW

²³ Was it necessary for the Redeemer to be born a Jew, and if so why? A perfect man had sinned and was sentenced to death. A perfect man must become the voluntary substitute for the condemned man in order that the one sentenced and his offspring might be released from that judgment and the effect thereof. Under the rule laid down by Jehovah, namely, "a life for a life," a perfect man could have provided the ransom price regardless of whether he were a Jew or a Gentile. But since Jesus was born a Jew there must have been a good reason therefor. There was more than one good reason for this.

²⁴ Abraham is the father of Israel. To Abraham God made promise, saying, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The Redeemer therefore must be of the "seed of Abraham" in order to meet this promise of God. Jacob was the grandson of Abraham; and God also caused a prophecy to be made at the time of Jacob's death, to wit: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."—Genesis 49: 10.

²⁵ Moses was a Jew and a natural descendant of Abraham; and God caused this prophecy to be written concerning Moses and his antitype: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; . . . I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."—Deut. 18: 15, 18.

²⁶ David was a direct descendant of Abraham; and God made promise to David that the Redeemer must be from the house of David and that this descendant of David should for ever sit upon the throne. All of these prophecies must have a fulfilment. God never fails to carry out what he says. "I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." (Isaiah 46: 11) "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isaiah 55: 11.

SENTENCE AND REDEMPTION

²⁷ The statement is often made that the Jews were under a double sentence, (1) by reason of the sin of Adam, and (2) by reason of their failure to keep the law covenant. It has been difficult to understand how one could be under sentence to death and then again be sentenced to death. The difficulty has arisen from confusing the terms sentence and condemnation. When a man is tried in a proper court with competent jurisdiction, and found guilty, the judgment of the court is then entered against him, sentencing him to the punishment. It is the sentence or judicial determination, made

and entered on record against the one personally involved, that is carried out. Condemnation means disapproval or that which is wrong and not approved because imperfect.

²⁸ When Adam sinned he was required to appear before Jehovah. He had a hearing before that great court, was judged and found guilty; and the judgment or sentence of death, and expulsion from Eden to enforce that judgment, was then and there entered against Adam. (Genesis 3: 17-19) None of his children were yet born, and therefore they could not be on trial and could not be sentenced. Later they were born; and being born of parents who were under sentence of death and therefore imperfect, these children came forth imperfect, unrighteous, wrong, therefore disapproved or condemned in the sight of Jehovah. It is proper therefore to say that all of Adam's posterity were born under *condemnation*, even though they were not under sentence. In agreement with this it is written: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin my mother did conceive me."—Psalm 51: 5.

²⁹ All the Jews were descendants of Adam and therefore came into the world under condemnation; they were wrong, disapproved, and were without right to life, just as were all other peoples. God then made a covenant or contract with the nation of Israel, acting through Moses as the mediator. And when Moses laid before the Israelites the terms of this contract, "all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." (Exodus 19: 8) The Lord God stated to the Jews: "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them."—Leviticus 18: 5; Romans 10: 5.

³⁰ As descendants of Adam, neither the Jews nor other peoples were under sentence of death by reason of Adam's sin; but they were disapproved, condemned, because born imperfect, and therefore were without the right to life. This disapproval or condemnation was the result of Adam's sin by inheritance. Had the Jews been under a sentence of death, as was Adam, they could not have entered into a covenant with God. Until the value of a perfect human life is substituted for Adam it will be impossible for him to enter into a covenant with God; for he is under a sentence of death. But a condemned person or people might enter into a covenant with Jehovah through a mediator, which mediator must have the approval of God. The law covenant was made with Moses as mediator for the nation of Israel.

³¹ If the people of Israel could not make the covenant direct with Jehovah how could they enter into a covenant with Jehovah through Moses as mediator, seeing that Moses was also an offspring of Adam and therefore born disapproved or under condemnation? The answer to that question is given by the Apostle Paul. Moses had faith in God and in the coming of Messiah, and because of his faith God counted this unto him for righteousness or justification, and by reason of his faith God could deal with him as a righteous man and thereby

make him the mediator. It was true that Moses was not actually perfect; but God counted him so by reason of his faith, that he might make of and with him a type of the great Mediator to come.—Heb. 10:1; 11:23-29.

³² The law covenant provided a penalty for failure to keep its terms. That penalty the nation of Israel agreed to. (Exodus 19:8) The law provided that any one guilty of a wrong that was punishable by death should be hanged on a tree, and counted accursed by Jehovah for that reason. Other violations of the law brought upon them severe penalties. (Deuteronomy 21:22, 23; 27:1-26) The Jews broke every statute of the law covenant, therefore under the contract or covenant they were subject to the penalty agreed upon. They slew the prophets of God and were guilty of death. Agreeing to the penalty of the law, which they did, was equivalent to a judicial determination or sentence against them.

³³ A perfect man, Jew or Gentile, could provide redemption from the condemnation resting upon the Jews by reason of Adam's sin. No man, however, could relieve them from the disability resulting from a violation of the law covenant, which entailed upon them a penalty to which they had agreed, unless that man was born under the law. Jesus was born a Jew, born under the law. He kept that law perfectly, because he was a perfect man and was always in harmony with Jehovah. He did not gain anything for himself by keeping the law; but he did prove that the law is honorable and right, and that a perfect man can keep it, and that God was dealing sincerely with the Jews when he told them that he would give them life if they could keep the law.

³⁴ Note now the argument of the Apostle Paul: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4, 5) Being made of a woman, that is to say, being a man born of woman, the death of Jesus would have provided a ransom price for all, removing from all the disability resulting from Adam's sin. But being born of a woman, and also being born a Jew under the law, and dying upon the tree or cross, as or in the place of a sinner, Jesus thus met all the requirements of the law and the penalty imposed by the law covenant, being acceptable instead of or in the place of the Jews as a nation or people. (Galatians 3:13) Jesus therefore by his death on the cross provided the price to remove the disability upon the Jews and upon all men, thereby making it possible for the Jews as well as the Gentiles to become the sons of God by faith in Christ.

³⁵ The law covenant served as a schoolmaster or tutor to lead the Jews to Christ and to prove to them that it was utterly impossible for them to get life by their own efforts. It also for ever stops the mouth of every human being, be he Jew or Gentile, from claiming that it is possible for man, by his own efforts, to obtain life everlasting. Every member of the human family who will

receive life upon any plane must receive it by reason of his faith in the blood of Jesus shed for him, and render full obedience to the law of God.

³⁶ Answering therefore the question, Why must the Redeemer be born a Jew? (1) Because God had said that a descendant of Abraham and a descendant of Jacob, through the house of David, would be the Redeemer; and God must keep his word. (2) The One thus born to redeem the human race was born a Jew not only that he might redeem mankind from the disability resulting from Adam's sin but that he might remove the disability resting upon the Jews by virtue of their violation of their law covenant. This is not a double sentence. Their condemnation through Adam is not a sentence. But the condemnation resulting to the Jews under the law covenant bears a close resemblance to a sentence for the reason that the Jews, acting through their mediator, had agreed to the penalty imposed for a violation of the law; and this penalty must be met before the account can be squared. Behold the economy of Jehovah in thus arranging that by the death of his beloved Son all these disabilities could be removed.

GOVERNMENT

³⁷ The Jews had tried to establish a desirable government, but had failed. For a long time they were in bondage to other rulers. God had promised by the prophets that a Messiah should come. The Jews were anxious for the coming of the promised Messiah that they might be relieved of their burdens. They knew nothing about the necessity for a ransom sacrifice. Isaiah the prophet therefore prophesied, saying, "Unto us [Jews, and afterwards to the Gentiles] a child is born, unto us a son is given."

³⁸ When the time came for the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy the Child born could and would prove that the law covenant would give life to any who could keep it, and further prove that only a perfect man can keep the law covenant, and therefore that the Jews could not get life under the law covenant because they could not keep it. This Child now born, being the Son of God, was therefore perfect and able to do the will of God perfectly. God clothed him with power to save to the uttermost.

³⁹ The Prophet Isaiah says further: "And the government shall be upon his shoulder." Thus he states that this mighty One would bear up the government; and then in other parts of his prophecy he proceeds to tell the Jews and all who would hear and believe that this mighty One not only would be the Governor but would rule in righteousness and bring blessings to the people.

⁴⁰ The Jews looked upon Moses as a great leader, upon David as a great king, and upon Solomon as the wisest man of all time; but now says Isaiah the prophet unto them concerning this Child about whom he prophesied: "His name shall be called Wonderful," meaning thereby that his name would become marvelous, that he

would be the worker of miracles, that his fame would spread throughout the whole universe and that his greatness would far exceed that of any one else. The prophet then adds that he shall be called "Counsellor", which means that he would guide the people aright, advise them and teach them to go in the right way, and would lead them into life and happiness. He then adds that he would be called "The mighty God". The Jews would thereby understand that their magistrates before had been called gods or mighty ones, but now this Child when born would be One who would receive all power and authority to act for and in their behalf.

⁴¹ Then the prophet also says that he shall be known as "The everlasting Father". Father means giver of life; and those understanding the prophecy would know that this mighty One would be clothed with power and authority to grant life everlasting to those who would obey. In harmony with this Jesus afterwards said: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Then adds the prophet that he shall be known as "the Prince of Peace". The word prince means governor or lord. This mighty One, then, is to be the rightful Governor of the earth. Unto him shall the gathering of the people be, and under his righteous reign peace shall be established and never end.

⁴² It was a great privilege enjoyed by Isaiah the prophet to be permitted to foretell the birth of the Redeemer and earth's rightful Governor. Had he been able then to comprehend the full import of his own words he would doubtless have been overwhelmed with joy. Even greater than his was the privilege of the angels to announce the birth of this mighty One. The Apostle Peter clearly intimates that the angels themselves did not understand the full meaning of the birth of the Master. (1 Peter 1: 12) But they knew that it was the outworking of God's plan in behalf of mankind, and probably understood that it was the beginning of the fulfilment of the prophecy uttered by Isaiah. What they did know thrilled their hearts with joy and they sang praises to Jehovah God. It was a still greater favor which the disciples of Jesus enjoyed by being permitted to walk with him and for three and one-half years talk with him and hear the gracious words that fell from his lips. They greatly rejoiced when they learned that he was the Messiah and the Redeemer.

⁴³ But now a much greater favor is conferred upon the truly consecrated saints of God on earth in being permitted to know that this great and mighty One has taken his power and begun his reign, and in being permitted at this time not only to speak of his birth but to tell forth the goodness of God and that it now is the time for the beginning of the fulfilment of prophecy which in God's due time will result in the complete establishment of peace on earth and good will to men.

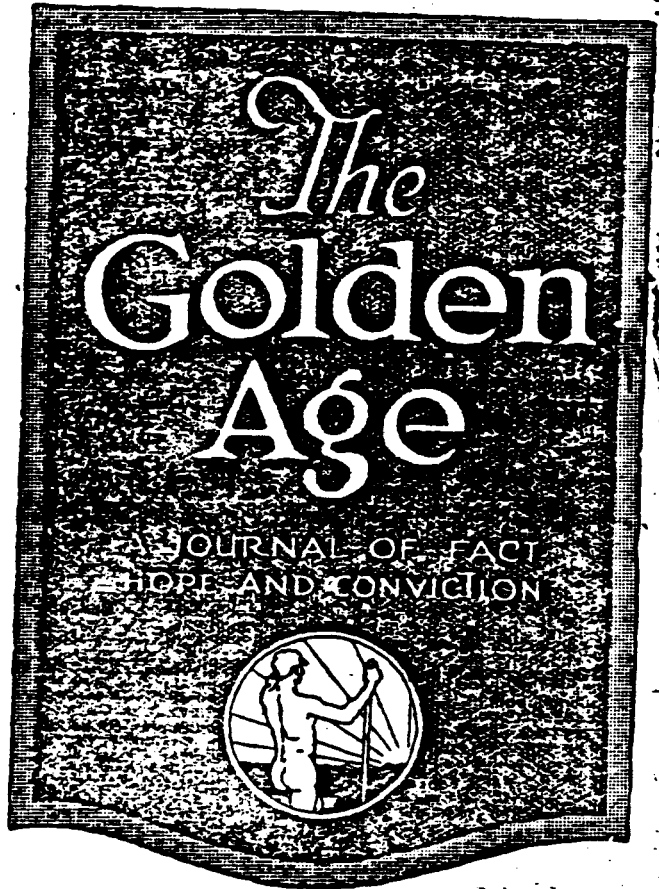
⁴⁴ These saints, now enjoying the privilege of being of the temple class, can to some degree appreciate the

joy that thrilled the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ when he began operations to establish his kingdom in 1914 and, further, when he came to his temple in 1918. It was then to the faithful ones that he said: 'You have been faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many. Enter into the joy of your Lord.' Those who have now entered into the joy of the Lord appreciate the fact that the joy of the Lord is their strength.

⁴⁵ Blessed is the privilege of the saints now! As these now look upon the works of Jehovah and his beloved Son Christ Jesus, and know that Christ Jesus is earth's rightful Governor and that he has taken his power and begun his reign, they lift up their voices in song, saying, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."—Revelation 15: 3.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

- What particular incident has been given undue prominence in connection with the birth of Jesus, and why? When was Jesus born? ¶ 1-3.
- Why did Jehovah cause the Bible to be written? ¶ 4, 5.
- What is meant by the statement, "Unto us a child is born"? Explain Isaiah 8: 18. ¶ 6, 7.
- What prophecy did the angel give to Mary the virgin? To whom did the angels make announcement of our Savior's birth? Why did they not make their announcement to the "wise men"? Why is the visit of these wise men mentioned in the Bible? ¶ 8-11.
- Why did the angel say to the shepherds, "Fear not"? What prophecy was then made unto them? ¶ 12-14.
- How has Satan confused the minds of many concerning the reason for Jesus' birth as a human being? What was the reason for it? ¶ 15-17.
- What does the word ransom mean? What is the incarnation theory, and why do we know that Jesus was not an incarnated Logos? ¶ 18-20.
- Explain Hebrews 2: 9. How could Jesus be perfect, seeing that he was born of an imperfect mother? ¶ 21, 22.
- What prophecies had foretold that Jesus would be born a Jew? ¶ 23-26.
- Were the Jews under a double sentence? What is the difference between sentence and condemnation? Was Adam sentenced? Were his children sentenced or merely condemned? ¶ 27, 28.
- How could God consistently enter into a covenant of life with Israel? Could he have made such a covenant with Adam after he had sentenced him to death? ¶ 29, 30.
- How could Moses, being imperfect, be approved by Jehovah as a mediator? When Israel violated their covenant with God what position did this place them in before him? ¶ 31, 32.
- Could the Jews have been redeemed by the death of a perfect Gentile? What is St. Paul's argument in Galatians 4: 4, 5? ¶ 33, 34.
- What purpose did the law covenant serve? Summarize the reasons why the Redeemer must be born a Jew. ¶ 35, 36.
- Were the Jews anxious for the coming of the Messiah? Why? What did Jesus' keeping of the law prove to them? ¶ 37, 38.
- Explain the entire text of Isaiah 9: 6, especially the titles therein given. ¶ 39-41.
- How does the privilege of the Prophet Isaiah, and that of the angel who announced the Child's birth, compare with the privileges of the King's witnesses on earth today? ¶ 42-45.



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The Song of the Angels *By Mrs. E. Hunter*

DEAR old Christmas, with its good cheer!
What happy memories of childhood cluster
around this season!

We all treasure the joys of Christmas and recall with pleasure its sweet songs of heavenly music, the merry faces of little children bright with expectation of coming favors, the beautiful Christmas trees bespangled with gold and silver, and the twinkling little candles like tiny sentinels on the mount of green.

Sometimes at the top of the tree there would be a bright star, or an angel with outspread wings, bearing the message of joy.

Many are the delights of Christmas; and we are glad that the poor old world has had so much pleasure in the celebration. While we cannot agree that December twenty-fifth is the correct date of our Savior's birth, nevertheless we are glad to join in the happy song of praise and thanksgiving for Jehovah's gift of gifts to a lost and dying race—His Son. But ah! how few of earth's millions have any serious thought of the real import of the birth of Jesus, the Holy Child of Bethlehem. Yet it is the great outstanding event of history, without which there would be no hope of a future life.

Let us pause and consider for a moment as we glance backward on the stream of time. Let us listen to the Song of the Angels, as it rang out on the hills of Judea more than nineteen centuries ago.

It was in the quiet stillness of the night, and the faithful shepherds were watching their flocks in the open field. Above glistened the lovely stars, silently proclaiming the glory of God. Suddenly appeared the angel of Jehovah with the song that has come down through the ages: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

Immediately the heavenly choir caught the glad refrain and filled the air with the sweetest song of earth—the Song of the Angels: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

What a benediction, what hope for the children of men in the Song of the Angels!

"Happy shepherd on whose eye
Shone the glory from on high,
Of the heavenly majesty."

No Peace as Yet

AND now after so many years we turn our longing eyes in every direction for some manifestation of the promised peace on earth.

Oh, sad indeed are the conditions in the world—man killing his fellow man and perfecting every device for further slaughter; the idle rich living in luxury while the poor are struggling to keep alive the little spark of life. In the slums of our great cities we see sights that make the heart sick and the brain faint—little children reared in crime, who never had a chance, who were doomed from birth to fall by the wayside, many of them old before reaching maturity. Add to all this the selfish exploitation of the common people by corrupt men in high places, the gambling curse, the drinking curse, the insane asylums, the hospitals, the reform schools, etc. What a picture of the sighing, crying, and dying of the poor human race!

We turn from it all; and we listen again to the Song of the Angels: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Could there have been a mistake? Did the angels misunderstand this message which they brought from the courts of Jehovah? No; they were perfect angelic beings, and the message was one of joy and not of sorrow. How can we harmonize the message of "joy" and "peace" with the night time of weeping? Again we pause and look into the distant past.

In the Garden of the Lord, the one perfect beauty spot of earth, our first parents came into being with all the grandeur of perfection, mental, moral, and physical. But Satan, that old serpent the devil, aspiring to make himself like the Most High, reached out to acquire dominion over them. One act of disobedience to the just requirement of their Creator, at Satan's instigation; and the jewels of perfection began to fade. Out into the unprepared earth they were driven to wrest their sustenance from the soil as best they could, struggling with the adverse conditions amid the thorns and thistles. Separated from the fellowship of their Creator, the Eden home gone, the dominion of earth lost, and the death penalty upon them, our first parents were indeed reaping the bitter fruits of disobedience; and by inheritance the penalty has fallen upon every member of the human family. The sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto

dust shalt thou return," has never been revoked.

The first faint gleam of hope for the condemned race was that the "seed of the woman" should utterly destroy the power of sin. About midway between the fall of Adam and the Song of the Angels in the hills of Judea stands that wonderful promise made to Abraham: "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; . . . and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed."—Genesis 22:17, 18.

Some Christians believe that this promise was fulfilled when Jesus died on Calvary and thus became the Redeemer of the world. But a moment's reflection will prove the fallacy of such a thought. True, some were blessed and, through faith, passed from under the curse in Adam to the promise of life in Christ, "saved by hope." But more than half of the human race have lived and died without hearing of the name of Jesus. Consequently they have not been blessed. And we still have the sorrows of earth.

Blessings Sure to Come

YET the angels had sung: "Good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." We must conclude that the blessing tarries; for as we view the changing scenes of church and state we find no record of wonderful blessings having come to the world such as predicted by the prophets of old and as sung by the angels. Why the long delay in granting the blessing to all as promised?

Reflecting on God's Word, we find that He is a great economist and frequently accomplishes more than one purpose at a time. Evidently it was His will to permit six thousand years of evil to teach men the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its awful results; and at the same time He has been sending crucial tests to certain elect classes whom He purposed to use in blessing the non-elect world in general. The long time it has taken to prepare these elect classes for their future work gives us some idea of the importance of that work in Jehovah's sight.

In the Old Testament we have the record of some faithful ones who were loyal to God and the principles of righteousness under adverse conditions. Of this class the apostle Paul wrote: "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder,

were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy." (Hebrews 11:37, 38) Tenderly and with reverence we think of those dear prophets of old, and rejoice to know that a great reward and honor awaits them. They will represent the earthly, visible phase of the kingdom, "princes in all the earth" (Psalm 45:16), during the Messianic reign.

Another elect class representing the heavenly phase of the kingdom has been called during this Gospel age to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and to sacrifice with Him their little all of human life, aims, and hopes, exchanging these for "glory, honor, and immortality," proving under severe trials faithful unto death. Of this class it is said: "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" as "kings and priests" unto God, ruling, judging and blessing mankind. (Revelation 20:4, 6; 1:6) They are Jehovah's appointed missionaries for the conversion of the world. Then that gracious invitation found in Revelation 22:17 will be extended: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come, . . . and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely."

Earth's Restored Paradise

MANY are the promises of a restored earth, the Golden Age long dreamed of by poet and sage, and spoken of "by the mouth of all the holy prophets."

As we catch a glimpse of these times of refreshing, we are assured that the Song of the Angels has rung true: "Good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

Let us consider a few of the blessings which shall obtain in that new earth. Justice shall be the foundation of the government-to-be. (Isaiah 28:17) Human life will be more precious than fine gold. (Isaiah 13:12) "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat." (Isaiah 65:21, 22) "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."—Isaiah 2:4.

And again, "when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth the inhabitants will learn righteousness." "Their flesh shall be fresher than a

child's, and they shall return to the days of their youth'; and, blessed thought! "there shall be no more death." This will be Paradise on earth, with the gift of everlasting life to whosoever will give heed and receive instructions in the way of righteousness and life.

The Song of the Angels is on the eve of fulfillment. Good tidings of great joy are going forth to the meek ones of earth, a message fragrant with hope. On every side we see preparations for that perfect government which shall be "the desire of all nations."

In an interview some time ago Marconi said: "Science will transform the world. Within fifty years life on this planet will be so changed that we who are here now would have difficulty in recognizing it. It will be a better and happier world." And again: "The age of what are known as scientific miracles is not in danger of coming to a pause; it has only just begun." He tells much of the wonder-world to come and fears that life will be too easy for the human race with electricity doing the labor; that "if people are not careful they will deteriorate."

Groundless fear! Very few of the human family have had an opportunity to develop themselves physically, mentally, and morally. The struggle for existence has kept most of us busy. With long, delightful hours of leisure, what wonders could be accomplished toward the goal of perfection! The latent qualities of reason, memory, and determination will be developed; the Godlike quality of benevolence shall radiate from every face, which will be returning to His image, with the added blessing of health that bespeaks the harmony with nature's beneficent laws.

Jehovah's King Now Present

THE waste places of the earth will be made to bloom like the Garden of Eden, and man will have the privilege of coöperating for his own development. Already we see the desert blooming like the rose and streams breaking forth in dry lands—all because we are living in the dawn of the Golden Age, the due time for the blessing of all nations. Not all are familiar with the fact that the blessing time is in the world's judgment day. The Prophet says: "When thy [God's] judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." There needs must come the humbling of the nations by bringing to naught the

wisdom of men; for it is based upon selfishness. The Lord shakes the nations to shake out unrighteousness, untruth and irreverence; then the desire of all—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in a real, tangible form—shall come. God's mind is made up; He has declared it; He will do it. "Sing unto the Lord with the harp . . . make a joyful noise before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth."—Psa. 98: 5-9.

When Jesus in His humiliation came to earth to be man's Redeemer few recognized Him as the Messiah, the One sent from God. So now in the end of the age we find similar conditions existing; and again it is true that "there standeth one among you whom ye know not" (John 1: 26)—earth's rightful King, Jehovah's Anointed, veiled from the sight of flesh, but recognized by the eye of faith through the prophecies as now present, by the signs of the times, the predicted running to and fro, and the increase of knowledge—all indicating preparations for the blessing of all nations by the Prince of Peace.

True, there is a destructive work as well as a constructive work going on in the world today, which may seem to nullify the promised peace on earth. Many are the dire forebodings heard on every side. In a magazine article ex-President Wilson expressed the opinion that "civilization is tottering." It is indeed the world's dark hour just before the dawn. But again we see the wisdom of God; for this destructive work will act as a purifying fire to humble and make the world ready for the blessings which God has for it.

The silver lining to the dark cloud is the kingdom of Christ set up in "power and glory," which is the only remedy for the ills of the human race. Happy and wise are they who have sufficient faith to touch the hem of His garment (to recognize His presence) and be among those "millions now living [who] will never die."

When Christ and His footstep followers begin their reign of a thousand years, and the glories of perfection stretch out before the wondering gaze of humanity, for the blessing of all the willing and obedient of the human family, the Song of the Angels will ring out not only in the hills of Judea, but gradually and rapidly to earth's remotest bounds: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

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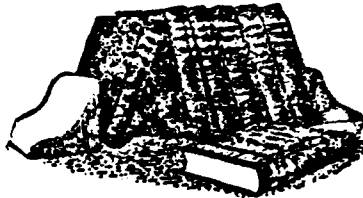
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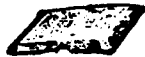
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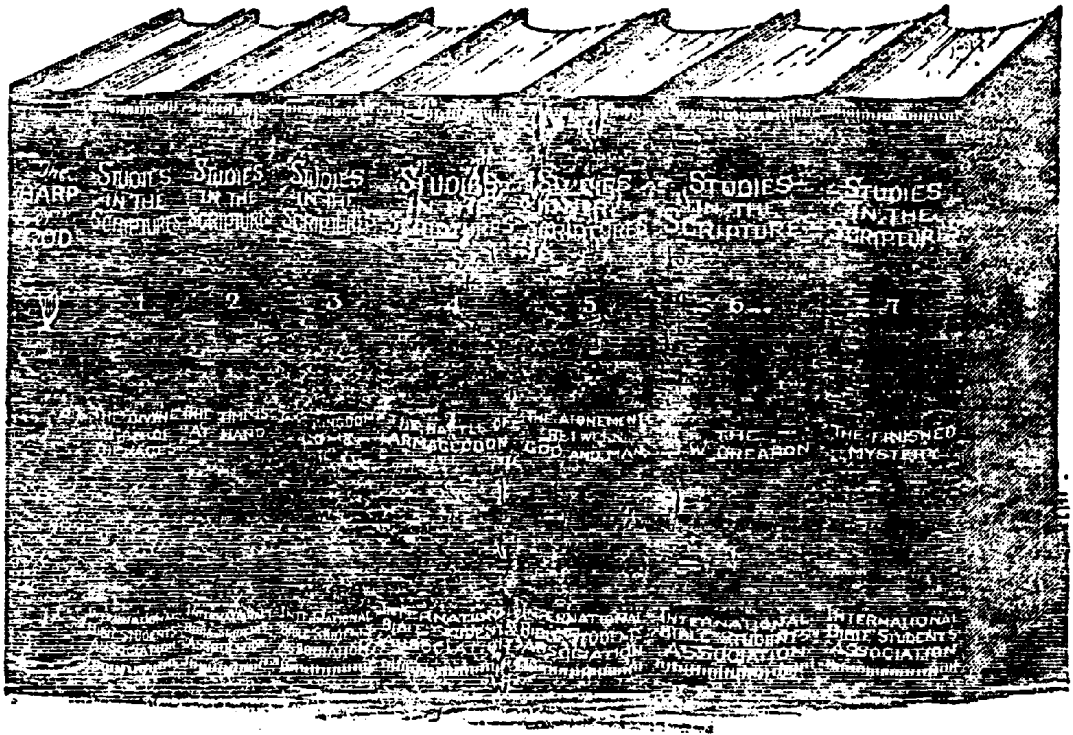
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About Santa Claus *By Gerald Barry*

THE name "Santa Claus" is an American corruption of the Dutch form "San Nicolaas" (St. Nicholas), whose festival used to be observed on December 6th. From early times feasts were held in this saint's honor in England and Germany, though subsequently they became confounded with the Christmas festivities. As many are not aware of the origin of the custom the following extract from the "Encyclopædia Britannica" may be of interest:

"Nicholas, St., bishop of Myra, in Lycia, a saint honored by the Greeks and the Latins on the sixth of December. His cult is as celebrated as his history is obscure. All the accounts that have come down to us are of a purely legendary character, and it is impossible to find any single incident confirmed historically. The main facts of his life are usually given as follows: He was bishop of Myra in the time of the emperor Diocletian, was persecuted, tortured for the faith, was kept in prison until the more tolerant reign of Constantine, and was present at the council of Nicea. It should be observed that this last circumstance is ignored by all the historians, and that St. Athanasius, who knew all the notable bishops of the period, never mentions Nicholas, bishop of Myra. . . .

"There are nearly 400 churches in England dedicated to St. Nicholas. He is the patron saint of Russia; the special protector of children, scholars, merchants, and sailors, and is invoked by travellers against robbers. . . . A legend of his surreptitious bestowal of dowries upon the three daughters of an impoverished citizen who, unable to procure fit marriages for them, was on the point of giving them up to a life of shame, is said to have originated the old custom of giving presents in secret on the Eve of St. Nicholas, subsequently transferred to Christmas Day. Hence the association of Christmas with 'Santa Claus,' an American corruption of the Dutch form 'San Nicolaas,' the custom being brought to America by the early Dutch colonists."—"Encyclopædia Britannica," Vol. 19, page 648.

The question may be asked: Is it wise to en-

courage the "Santa Claus" custom, or should children be told the plain facts of the matter?

To those who love honesty and truth, there is but one answer to this question: Such are bound to discourage everything akin to falsehood and deception. It would be better every way to point children and all to the real spirit of Christmas—that it celebrates in a general way the great gift which God provided for the salvation of our race; namely, the gift of God's dear Son, who was born into the world as the Babe of Bethlehem. (Luke 2:10-12). On this point Pastor Russell has well said:

"Although we cannot agree that this (December 25th) is the proper day for celebrating the birth of our dear Redeemer, but must insist that it was about October 1st, nevertheless since he did not intimate his desire that we should celebrate his birthday it is quite immaterial upon what day that event, of so great importance to all, is celebrated. Upon this day, so generally celebrated, we may properly enough join with all whose hearts are in the attitude of love and appreciation toward God and toward the Savior. The habit of giving little remembrances one to another at this time of year seems to us especially appropriate. God is the great giver of every good and perfect gift. He is continually giving and we are continually receiving from Him; but amongst all His gifts the one of greatest importance to us is the gift of His Son to be our Redeemer. While, therefore, thanking the Lord for this great gift and for the great plan which centered in it, it is appropriate that we cultivate in our hearts the spirit of liberality, generosity, . . . according to our conditions and circumstances. . . . We recommend that every little gift on this occasion should, as far as possible, represent or be accompanied by some little remembrancer of the great gift—something to draw the mind of the recipient to the fact that the great gift of God in Christ is and should be in the minds of all who give or who receive the trifling exchanges of the season."—*Watch Tower*, 1903, page 457.

Rewriting Earth's Literature *By E. J. Willits*

I CERTAINLY do enjoy reading your fearless exposures of the errors that prevail in all the walks of life, particularly among what the world calls "the higher ups"—big business, big politicians (miscalled statesmen) and big ecclesiastics. What a herculean task it will be in the Golden Age to rid this old earth of all the taints of sin that have become so deeply imbedded in every fibre of the present social fabric!

Take the matter of the world's literature: I have often wondered whether it will all be destroyed and a completely new literature written, leaving the dead past to bury its dead; or whether it will be "revised" in accordance with the truth. I can imagine the chagrin of the poet Longfellow, for instance, when upon his awakening from the sleep of death, he learns that the world has been 'turned to a pure language,' the message of truth; and perceives that he

violation of the just and loving laws of his Creator—was not proper. David's love for the Hittite's wife, which prompted him to place Uriah in the forefront of battle that he might be slain and that the king might have his wife was not proper. Aphroditean love, which we see manifested about us today, is not proper.

The eyes of the present generation are soon to be opened to the impropriety of it all and to the propriety of God's love—to its height, depth, length and breadth. Thus when every individual becomes a perfect creature, he will realize the truthfulness of the phrase "love divine, all love excelling."

All sincere Christians realize the truthfulness of this statement even now. I would urge all

such that they allow not Aphroditean love to enter into their hearts; that they allow not anything to take the place of God's superior love. [Cats may be urged not to run after mice; but will they heed?—Ed.]

In the Golden Age now at hand every individual who will bend himself into harmony with God's righteous laws will become more attractive and beautiful than the statue of Aphrodite. Then it is that admiration for this statue will be torn from the hearts of all. Worshipful admiration for other individuals will cease. Each person will be complete in himself. Masculinity and femininity will exist combined as a unit in each person, instead of in the present unsatisfactory divided state.

The Real Character of St. Nicholas *By Mrs. I. S. Marshall*

THE article about Santa Claus by Gerald Barry in No. 73 of THE GOLDEN AGE contains the query as to whether we should tell children the plain facts about Santa Claus. I say: Yes; and then tell them the story, which I will relate briefly as best I can.

St. Nicholas was born on December 6th in the year 300 A. D., and when grown became a monk in a monastery in a little village. His parents were very rich. They both died; and St. Nicholas, being their only child, inherited all their wealth, which was mostly in gold. There lived in the village a poor man with his daughter.

One night St. Nicholas went to this man's hut like a thief, but not to steal. He filled the poor man's boots with gold and went out. The next morning when the man got up and was about to put his boots on, he was surprised to find them full of gold. That is where the idea of a Santa Claus came from, and the practice of children hanging up their stockings at Christmas time. St. Nicholas was a helper of the poor; he did not care for others to know what he had given; he did not leave a card with his gift; for it was a gift from the heart. How noble is the motive of such giving!

Joy Department

I WISH to thank you for the pleasure and the benefits, and the inspiration I receive from your magazine. Each issue seems to be better than the one preceding. May THE GOLDEN AGE live throughout the Golden Age.

—J. BEST FOSTER, *Ark.*

I CONSIDER THE GOLDEN AGE the most valuable paper published today and hope to be your constant subscriber. This is the age for the truth, and you should feel blessed that you are the agency used for its propagation.

LEN H. CLARK, *La.*

Prices Paid to Farmers *By W. C. Miller*

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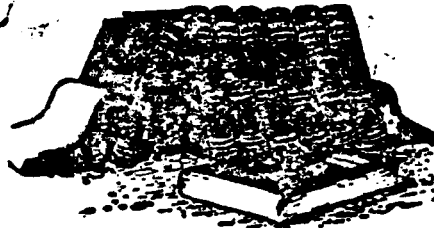
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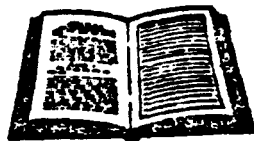
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International Bible Students Association
Brooklyn, N. Y.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

Universal Peace

"On earth peace, good will toward men."—Luke 2:14.

CHRISTMAS is regarded by many people as the date of the birth of the babe Jesus in a manger at Bethlehem. Whether or not the date is correct is of small importance, but the event was and is of the greatest importance.

Bethlehem is situated on an elevation overlooking a deep ravine, beyond which are fields where shepherds graze their flocks. Beautiful for location is this historic spot, particularly attractive to one of poetic mind and deep reverential heart, and doubly so since the great events, recorded in Holy Writ, which there transpired nearly nineteen centuries ago. From the surrounding hills of Judæa the shepherds had brought their sheep to the field opposite Bethlehem and corralled them there for the night. While the others slept, one or more of the shepherds kept vigil over the flocks, waiting for the dawn of day. The atmosphere of Judæa is exceedingly rarified, and the stars shine forth with unusual beauty and brilliancy, and thus the glory of the night is enhanced.

Without doubt these lowly herders of sheep were men of great reverence for God, men who trusted in his promises made to their father Abraham and hence were expecting the coming of Messiah. And for their faithfulness Jehovah rewarded them with a wonderful vision. While these humble watchers were gazing into the starlit heavens and meditating upon the majesty and expressed wisdom of Jehovah, there suddenly appeared unto them a star of remarkable brilliancy, standing over against Bethlehem, a city called the city of David. Simultaneously the angel of the Lord, the heavenly messenger, appeared unto them, and the light of the glory of the Lord shone round about them. Then the shepherds were sore afraid. What man of reverential mind would not have been awe-struck at such a marvelous manifestation!

To calm their fears, the heavenly messenger sweetly said to these humble men of the fields; "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall

be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." (Luke 2:10-12) Awed by this vision and thrilled with their environment, the shepherds in wonder and amazement stood speechless before the heavenly messenger. Then suddenly there appeared with this angel a whole multitude of the heavenly host, angels bright and fair; and in celebration of this marvelous event of the ages they joyfully sang together an anthem of praise to Jehovah, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men".

Long centuries and the burdens of earthly cares have effaced or hidden this glorious vision from the minds of most men who call themselves Christians; and today these words announcing universal peace to those of worldly mind sound as but a hollow mockery. Nearly nineteen centuries have come and gone since that heavenly messenger announced the birth of Jesus and brought a message of good tidings; and after these long years of laborious effort on the part of some men to establish ideal conditions, with dismay they witness the whole world rocked from center to circumference and all kindreds and peoples engaged in the strife of tongues, tumult, distress and war. Now the great mass of so-called Christendom is trusting in the god of force and violence rather than in the God of peace and love. Millions of earth's habitants, including those who pose as teachers and preachers of the Gospel, have turned to infidelity, disregarding the Word of God, and advise, counsel and engage in strife and violence. Alas! their faith in God and in his precious promises is gone.

How different with those who truly love the Lord and who study to show themselves approved unto God! Their diligent and prayerful search to know the meaning of these events past and present the Lord has been pleased to reward with a clear vision; and now they are privileged to mark the majestic onward tread of Jehovah in the unfolding of his marvelous plan. And thus understanding, their hearts are filled with joy; and the sweet message of that heavenly host resounds through the corridors of the age, calling attention to the momentous

events that are transpiring and the even greater ones immediately to follow. Not only do they rejoice in their own hearts, but it is the privilege of such true followers of the Master with confidence to say to the bewildered and frightened of nominal Christendom: "Behold, thy God reigneth".

And now we invite all sober-minded peoples of earth—Christian and infidel, Jew and Gentile, bond and free—to come with us while we together briefly review this beautiful Christmas story, and ascertain its meaning and significance to the groaning people of all the nations of earth. Its message of comfort is intended for all; for the angel of the Lord said: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people". The time is now due for the world to begin to understand the real meaning of what occurred on that memorable morning in Bethlehem; and those who do understand and avail themselves of such knowledge will be greatly blessed and comforted in heart, mind and body.

Why should the babe Jesus be born at all? Why mark his birth with such ceremony and joyful expression by the heavenly host? The answer is the old, old story, which grows sweeter the oftener told; and never so sweet as now, because the time is here for its appreciation by man.

Four thousand years before the staging of this drama in the hills of Judæa, Jehovah had created a perfect pair—Adam and Eve—and provided them with a perfect home in Eden. He had endowed them with power and authority to bring forth children, to fill the earth and to control it and to make the entire earth as a garden, a glorious spot, a fit habitation for a happy and perfect race of people. To this first pair the Lord granted the privilege of life everlasting in a state of human blessedness, conditioned, however, upon a faithful obedience to his law. The wife, deceived by Satan into a violation of the divine law, in turn induced her husband to take the step of disobedience wilfully rather than be separated from her. The result of this transgression was an infliction of the penalty of the law, which penalty is described in the Genesis account (chapter 3) as a dying condition until death was fully accomplished, a return to the dust whence the Lord had taken the elements to make man.

Having judicially determined that the perfect

man should die because of his disobedience to the law, Jehovah chose, as a means of enforcing this judgment, to compel man to live outside of the perfect Eden and to feed upon the poisonous elements of the earth until complete death would ensue. Hence he drove the two out of Eden and set a flaming sword at the garden's entrance, lest Adam might return and partake of the tree of life. For 930 years Adam battled with the elements of the earth, daily succumbing, until at the end of that time he was dead.

The secret of all the suffering, sorrow, sickness and death of humankind from then until now lies in what occurred in Eden and following. While in Eden the perfect man did not exercise his power to beget children; and hence the perfect pair never brought forth children. It was only after undergoing the legal sentence of death, and after they had imbibed the poisonous elements of earth's vegetation, that this pair cohabited and children resulted. It is reasonable, therefore, to see that this condemnation fell upon the offspring; and that the father, now imperfect, could not beget a perfect child; hence the offspring of Adam would be an imperfect one. For this reason the Psalmist wrote: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me". (Psalm 51: 5) And for the same reason the inspired witness said, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed [by inheritance] upon all men, for that all have sinned". (Romans 5:12) The ultimate result of the operation of the divine law of necessity would have meant the complete extinction of the human race. Today, instead of men living 930 years, the average life is much less than one-tenth as long.

God foreknew the course that man would take; and before the foundation of the world he outlined a plan for human redemption and blessing. Nearly two thousand years after the humankind had wandered in the earth in sorrow and distress, Jehovah spoke to his servant Abraham, likewise an imperfect man, but one who exercised great faith in God, and to him made promise that through his seed all the families, nations, kindreds and peoples of earth should have a blessing. (Genesis 12:2, 3; 22: 18; Galatians 3:16) Later, God organized the descendants of Abraham into a nation under the name of Israel, and with that nation and people made a law covenant and from time to

time reiterated his promise to bring a blessing to the nations of earth through the seed of Abraham. The Israelites verily believed that this promised seed was an earthly seed. The promise at one time was confined to the house of David; and when David ascended the throne the Jews thought that the time had come for the blessing of mankind. The prophets, however, foretold the coming of another and greater one; and at the time of Jesus' birth all thoughtful people of Israel were looking for the coming of the Messiah. God through his prophet had foretold that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judæa.—Matthew 2:5,6.

Here we emphasize one thing prominent in the message brought by the angel; namely, the word *all*. It will be marked in the examination of this and other Scriptures relating to the redemption of man that God had promised to bless *all* the families of the earth, and that at the birth of Jesus the angel announced that this is glad tidings which shall be brought to *all* people. It is not the thought of the Scriptures that such a message would be brought to all at the same time; but that in God's due time every one of the human race would hear this message of glad tidings and would each have the opportunity of availing himself of the benefit of it.

The race was justly condemned to death because of disobedience to the law of God; and this judgment could not be set aside or reversed for the reason that God is unchangeable. His laws are fixed. However, such a judgment could be satisfied by the demands of the law being met. In due course of time God made promise to the house of Israel, his specially chosen people, that a provision for releasing mankind from death and the effects of this judgment would be made. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."—Hosea 13:14.

The word ransom means a price exactly corresponding. A perfect man had violated God's law, and death resulted. Therefore the only thing that could constitute a ransom or corresponding price for mankind would be the life of another perfect man, exactly equivalent to Adam while in Eden. In other words, the redemption and deliverance of the human race from death, and its restoration to human perfection and happiness, must entirely depend upon the voluntary submission to death of a

perfect human being—nothing more and nothing less.

At once, then, we see that none of Adam's stock could meet this requirement of the law and redeem the human race because all were imperfect, having descended from Adam. And this thought is expressed by the Psalmist, who says, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him". (Psalm 49:7) Any child begotten by a member of the Adamic stock would necessarily be imperfect; hence the account concerning the conception of Mary and the birth of the babe Jesus shows that she conceived by the power of the holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18-25) Therefore Jesus was begotten not by man, but born of a woman, and when born he was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners". (Hebrews 7:26) When he grew to manhood's estate he was the exact counterpart of Adam prior to his disobedience. Not until we understand these things can we understand why there was so much joy in heaven among the angelic host at the birth of Jesus. The heavenly beings had been observing for four thousand years the downward course of mankind. They had seen the great degradation and sorrow that sin had inflicted upon the human family, and now they perceived that Jehovah was making provision for the redemption and blessing and uplifting of all men.

That which man prizes above everything else is life; for without life nothing else can be enjoyed. The whole human race, being under the condemnation of death, ultimately must die. Why, then, did Jesus come to earth? Why was he born? He answers; "That the people might have life and have it more abundantly". (John 10:10) He "was made flesh and dwelt among us". (John 1:14) "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise partook of the same." (Hebrews 2:14) "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels [namely, a human being] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Hebrews 2:9) Jesus himself declared that he laid down his life for the sheep. (John 10:11, 15, 16) Here he uses the word sheep to illustrate those who are willing and obedient to the will of God, that they shall receive the benefit of his sacrifice.

And this opportunity must come to all, as

St. Paul states: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have *all* men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for *all*, to be testified [to *all*] in due time." (1 Timothy 2:3-6) Here again it is observed that it is God's will that all men shall be saved from the condemnation of death and thereafter brought to a knowledge of God's provision for them, which knowledge opens to them the opportunity of accepting the benefits of the ransom sacrifice. Hence, says the Apostle, these facts must be testified to all men in God's due time. As this testimony comes to men at different times and they understand it, they rejoice in it because to them it is good tidings, good news of a better thing for them—an opportunity for life.

Why, then, if Jesus died on the cross nearly nineteen centuries ago, should the human race continue to suffer? The Scriptural answer is clear. The promise to Abraham was that in *his seed* should the blessing come to mankind; and this seed must first be fully developed before the benefit of the ransom sacrifice can be extended to all. It is important, therefore, to perceive what constitutes the seed and how it is developed. The Scriptural proof is that this seed is the Christ, the Messiah, composed of Jesus, the Head, and the church, meaning the called-out class which constitute the members of the body of the Messiah class. Hence St. Paul argues: "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise".—Galatians 3:27, 29.

It has pleased the heavenly Father to devote the period of time elapsing from the resurrection of Jesus until the setting up of his kingdom to the work of selecting those who would be willing followers of the Master, and who would prove their faithfulness and loyalty to him even unto death, and to whom he would grant the privilege of joint-heirship with Christ Jesus in his kingdom. (Romans 8:16, 17; 2 Timothy 2:11, 12) The selection of this class has been from among those who have voluntarily consecrated their lives to the Lord. Not every one who says, "Lord, Lord", will be of that class, but only those who enter into a covenant with God by

sacrifice and continue thus faithful unto death. These are promised a part in the first resurrection and an association with Christ Jesus as members of the royal priesthood. Therefore we can understand the words of the Master when he said that only a little flock (comparatively speaking) of mankind would have this blessing.—Luke 12:32.

The purposes of the Lord in this regard are ascertained from the words of the Apostle: "God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called."—Acts 15:14-17.

Jesus taught his disciples, and through them the church has been taught, that after he had ascended on high he would return in course of time and gather unto himself the saints, and then would establish his kingdom for the purpose of blessing mankind. All Christian people have looked forward to the second coming of the Lord, and to the end of the wicked order of things and the establishment of a new and righteous order. This same thought was in the mind of the disciples when they approached Jesus just before his crucifixion and propounded to him the direct question: "Tell us when these things shall be, and what shall be the proof of thy coming and the end of the world?"—Matthew 24:3.

The Lord Jesus answered their question, and the answer is recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew and the twenty-first chapter of Luke. He describes the great stress and trouble that is now upon the human race. Among other things he said that there would be a great world war in which nation would rise against nation, to be accompanied by famine, pestilence and revolutions and a time of trouble such as never was before; and all mankind are witnessing the fulfillment of this prophecy at this very time. Again he said in answer to the same question that there would be "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves [restless humanity] roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the

earth: for the powers of heaven [ecclesiastical systems] shall be shaken". (Luke 21:25, 26) All the trouble that has afflicted the nations since the fall of 1914 has been clearly in fulfillment of the prophetic utterance of the Lord. To the Christian this means (and soon all the world will learn to know that this is the meaning) that the kingdom of the Lord is at hand, that Christ is present, that he is tearing away the old order of things preparatory to establishing a kingdom of righteousness and peace which shall constitute "the desire of all nations". "I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come".—Haggai 2:7.

The wars, famine, pestilence, revolutions and like disturbances that so much distress mankind do not constitute any part of the glad tidings. No one rejoices in this suffering and trouble; but the Christian rejoices that these troublesome times are the proof foretold by the Lord that would precede the establishment of his kingdom of righteousness which would bring blessings to all the groaning creation. The message that has been preached to the people for long centuries, and is yet being preached by many, to the effect that it is the Lord's purpose to save a few in heaven and to consign all the residue of mankind to a condition of endless torture, contains no glad tidings to any one of an honest heart. Surely it could be no real joy to any person to be convinced that he would spend eternity in heavenly bliss while at the same time some one near and dear to him would be spending eternity in torture. Such a doctrine is not taught by the Word of God, but is the result of a distorted interpretation of the Scriptures.

The divine program, which has been developing progressively for many centuries, has now about reached the point of time for the world of mankind to begin to understand and appreciate some of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God. His inspired witness wrote: "Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of Jehovah; for he will send Jesus, who before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must retain until the 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.

The word refreshing here suggests the thought of something that makes one happy after a long experience with that which is con-

trary to happiness. The autumn season marks the dying and falling of the leaves, the trees appear bare, and the wind moans and sighs through their branches. Then follows the long, dark, cold winter, picturing in a measure the long night of suffering and death that has afflicted the human race. In the spring season the warm, gentle rays of the sun, falling upon the earth, cause the grass to spring forth, the trees to bud and leaf, followed by the blossoms and the fruit, the singing of the birds and the rejoicing of all nature because of the reviving, or coming again to life, of that which was dead. Seemingly the Apostle had such a picture in his mind when he said that times of refreshing would come at the establishment of Messiah's kingdom because it would mean the restoration of that which father Adam lost for himself and all of his offspring, namely, life and all the sweetness incident thereto. The perfect man Jesus, having laid down his life and thereby providing the purchase price for the human race, now returns for the purpose of ministering to mankind by giving to him the very thing that he has long desired.

Long ago the Apostle saw this and wrote: "He [God] hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man [Christ Jesus] whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead". (Acts 17:31) The assurance here then is to every man that has lived on the earth that he must have a fair and impartial trial in a time of righteousness, which trial is for the purpose of giving him an opportunity to render himself in obedience to the law of God and live. It means that millions who have gone into death will return again; for "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." (Acts 24:15) The great Master himself assures us that all in their graves shall hear his voice and awaken to the resurrection by judgments, i. e., a time of trial and opportunity for life and its blessings.—John 5:28, 29.

The work of reconstructing the human race will devolve upon the great Messiah, and that great work will begin as soon as the present trouble upon the earth has ended; for Jesus assures us that there never will be another time like it. (Matthew (24:21) Then, under his righteous reign, every one will have a chance of hearing the sayings of Jesus and then will

apply his words, "Verily I say unto you, If a man keep my saying he shall never see death." That Scripture, like all other sayings of the Master, must have its time for fulfillment; and no one could keep his sayings until first they heard them. The millions in death could not hear until awakened out of death, and the millions now on earth could not hear until God's due time and until they are told. That due time is about at hand.

Will that be a time, then, of rejoicing and gladness? The Lord through the prophet gives us a vision of that great time of blessing, saying, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose," thus picturing how the earth itself shall begin to yield that which is necessary for the sustenance of mankind and permit him to enjoy the fruits of his labors without the intervention and oppression of the profiteers. "It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."

Before the coming of that glorious day, however, the prophet infers that the people would become very much discouraged and without strength. He pictures them as trembling in their knees and hanging down their hands, and for their encouragement says: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you." St. Paul tells us that the whole world aside from Christians are blind, and blinded by the adversary. Many people are actually blind, while practically all are blind concerning a vision of God's plan.

The prophet then pictures the blessings during the reconstruction, saying, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

Then the prophet describes a way opened for the human race to journey back to the perfection of life, of body and mind, continuing: "And an highway shall be there, and a

way, and it shall be called The way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein". This highway is the Messiah, who is given as a mediator between God and man, to lead man back to the state of perfection; and the way to pass over it will be by rendering themselves in obedience to the law of the Messiah. It shall be a holy, a righteous way. No person shall be permitted to progress in wickedness, in profiteering, in oppression, in keeping the people in ignorance or filching their pockets under the pretense of preaching the Gospel or anything else; but its object shall be the cleansing and blessing of the people, and it shall be so clear and plain that every man can understand it. "No lion shall be there"; that is to say, no monstrous beast, such as czars, beastly governments, oppressing corporations, or ecclesiastical, political or financial systems. "Nor any ravenous beast [government of oppressive violence] shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there." The earth and everything in it shall be made conducive to the uplifting and blessing of mankind.

Having in mind, then, that the Apostle assures us time and again that Jesus ransomed the entire human race, *all* of them, the prophet continues: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return [meaning they shall return from the land of the enemy, from death and from their bondage in blindness and ignorance and superstition], and come to Zion [the Messiah] with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away". (Isaiah 35) Indeed then all shall know the truth of the message that the angel brought to the shepherds as they watched their flocks—good tidings of great joy unto all.

Messiah's kingdom will establish a universal peace. As the prophet declares, when his kingdom is established, then the nations shall come and say, "Let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. . . . And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid".—Micah 4:1-4.

To assure such a lasting blessing will require, of course, nothing short of a perfect ruler. Then the earth will have such, for "the government shall be upon his [Messiah's] shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, [Life-giver], The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end".—Isaiah 9: 6, 7.

To the Christian, therefore, who has a clear vision of the divine plan and who appreciates the time through which the world is now passing this should be the happiest Christmas he has ever spent, because by the eye of faith he can see the Sun of Righteousness rising with healing in its beams, driving back the great dark night of suffering, tumult and trouble, preparatory to the healing, blessing and uplifting of the human race, back to the perfection of life, liberty and happiness. The incoming of this glorious time means the beginning of the Golden Age—a time of rejoicing for all who love righteousness.

Juvenile Bible Study

MAN'S highest duty and privilege is to glorify God. One who loves and obeys the great Creator loves and obeys righteousness, makes a better citizen and a greater benefactor to mankind. To love and obey Jehovah one must know him. How can we know him except through his Word, and how can we know and understand his Word unless we are taught? If it is proper and necessary to send our children to the public schools that they there may be taught concerning the selfish things of this life, with stronger reasoning is it proper and necessary that they be taught concerning the things that have to do with their eternal welfare and happiness.

The Biblical education of children, we believe, has been sadly neglected. Every parent owes a duty to his own child and a corresponding duty to every other child to whom he can render aid. In view of the time of great stress now upon the human race, is it not high time that we take some positive action toward the instruction of the children concerning the greatest thing about which they should know, the Word of God? We believe that all parents, whether Christian or not, desire to see their children grow up in righteousness and truth. Because of the long-felt need in behalf of the children, THE GOLDEN

AGE inaugurates a children's Bible study department. There is no desire or purpose to teach the doctrines of any sect or system; but the sole purpose is to instruct the children in the Bible. To do so we have arranged this study in question and answer form, propounding the questions and briefly answering, citing the Scriptures where the proper Biblical answer may be had. We suggest that the parents propound these questions to their children and aid them to locate in the Bible the answer, thus familiarizing the child (and incidentally the parent) with the texts of the Bible and enabling them to get some insight into the glorious character of Jehovah and the Lord Jesus.

We suggest that the child be given one question each day and that in addition to the answer here given, it be encouraged to look up the Scriptures cited and any other Scriptures that, with the aid of the parent, it might find bearing on the question. As this is a primary study, we therefore begin with the subject

THE BIBLE

1. What is meant by the word Bible?

Answer: A book that contains the Word of God as expressed to man, and has reference to all the sixty-six books collectively, contained in what is commonly accepted as the Holy Scriptures.

2. What is the Bible?

Answer: It is an expression of God's will toward man and an outline of his plan concerning the human race, given for man's instruction.—John 17: 17; 2 Corinthians 4: 2.

3. Are we invited to study the Bible?

Answer: Yes; Jehovah says to us: "Come, now, let us reason together" (Isaiah 1: 18); and "Study to show thyself approved unto God".—2 Timothy 2: 15; John 5: 39; Deuteronomy 29: 29; Revelation 1: 3; 1 Peter 3: 15.

4. Should we expect to understand the deep things in the Bible?

Answer: If we study it with a reverential and prayerful desire we may understand them. "The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Proverbs 1: 7) The plan of God is a secret which he has promised to reveal to those who reverentially seek to understand it. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his plan."—Psalm 25: 14; 1 Corinthians 2: 10.

5. Can everybody understand the Bible?

Answer: They could, if everyone would com-

Our Great Creator's Unspeakable Gift

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."—2 Corinthians 9:15.

THERE is an appropriateness in the general good cheer of the Christmas season. The custom of giving tokens of love and friendship prevails wherever the story of Jesus has gone. Surely this is just as it should be. While some may have been injured by receiving bounties, but few, if any, have been other than blest in the giving of them. Herein we see corroborated our Savior's words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive". In proportion as we attain Godlikeness, in proportion as the spirit of Christ dwells richly in us, in proportion as we possess the holy spirit, in that same proportion shall we appreciate more and more our Lord's statement.

In our dealings with God it is necessary that we realize our dependence, our own insufficiency, and His greatness and beneficence; and that we learn to go to Him as His "dear children", to whom He delights to give His favors, and who receive them and appreciate them with gratitude of heart. In every sense of the word we are debtors to God and always shall be. We can never dispute the obligations under which His mercy and loving kindness have placed us. The sooner we realize this fact, the better will it be for us. Some possessed with a false pride declare that they ask no favors from God or man—that they pay their way and wish always to do so. As respects our dealings with our fellowmen, something of this spirit is praiseworthy; but the entire proposition is inconsistent with our relationship with the Almighty.

As we did not create ourselves, neither can we maintain our being, as the Scriptures assert: "In Him we live and move and have our being". (John 1:12) This would have been true of us whether born on an angelic plane or as perfect human beings; for we could not have created ourselves, directly or indirectly. Through the arrangements of His providence in nature, God was responsible for our birth; and He is the Provider for His creatures on every plane. The fact that He causes His sun to shine upon the just and the unjust, and sends His rain upon the evil as well as upon the good, and thus provides for the world of mankind that in general is in rebellion against Him and His authority, does not prove that the laws of nature are autocratic.

Rather, as the Scriptures show, these mercies of God scattered broadcast tell of a provision on our Creator's part for the necessities of His creatures. That He allows these laws to be interfered with at the present time and permits adverse conditions upon our race He fully explains to be because of its sinful, rebellious attitude, because the sentence, the curse of death, has been justly pronounced against mankind, and because He sees a way by which present lessons of adversity and tribulation may be made instructive as respects "the exceeding sinfulness of sin".

"All Taught of God"

Two of the great lessons for us to learn are (1) our complete dependence upon God and (2) His loving kindness and tender mercies over all His works. But these lessons can be learned only from one standpoint and by one class. Those who view matters from the outside only will surely misunderstand, misinterpret, many of the operations of divine providence.

"The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him and he will show them his covenant"—His future plans, His agreement. (Psalm 25:14) In order to see, to understand, to appreciate them we must accept certain matters by faith: (1) "that he is"—that there is an Almighty Creator; (2) "that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him". (Hebrews 11:6) Seeking the Lord diligently, we find in the Bible that which commends it to our hearts as well as to our heads.

But right here we are beset by a danger and a difficulty; for while it is possible to receive great assistance from fellow-believers in the understanding of the divine Word, yet there is much danger of our becoming even more confused by such assistance—by the creeds and theories of men, particularly those handed down from the dark ages. Whatever, therefore, we receive from men we must accept tentatively—for examination, for proving and testing by the Word of God. Thus we "try the spirits," or doctrines, as the Apostle admonishes. (1 John 4:1) Thus we permit God to be His own interpreter and to make the matter plain to us. Those teachers who refer to the Word of God,

who point out to us its harmony with itself and with reason, giving the citations and showing the relationship between text and context—these are the teachers who are really helpful. All others are apt to be injurious, whether they address us orally or in print.

"Every Good and Perfect Gift"

Only after we have been for some time in the School of Christ can we comprehend the force of the Apostle's words, "Every good and perfect gift is from above". (James 1:17) Then we begin to look about to find some of these good and perfect gifts. We soon find many gifts and blessings, but very few of them perfect, purely good. Everything connected with our present condition is imperfect. Even the sunshine and the rain, which are common to all God's creatures, are evidently not furnished under perfect conditions. Imperfection seems to be written upon everything we have, as well as upon ourselves.

The Bible explanation of this state of affairs is that, while God's work is perfect (Deuteronomy 32:4), our race today are not really samples of His workmanship, but are depraved, fallen, imperfect through the original sin of Father Adam and its entailed weaknesses and blemishes upon his posterity. The good and perfect gifts of God are to be seen only by the eye of faith—only by those whose eyes of understanding have been opened to see by faith Jesus, the great Redeemer. By faith this class see accomplished in God's due time His great work of Redemption, the wiping away of all tears from off all faces and the re-establishment of perfect life conditions, such as God has promised.

Those whose eyes of understanding have to some extent been opened see more and more of the riches of God's grace, and appreciate more and more all of His gifts and favors, especially the great gift, the unspeakable gift, mentioned in our text. What this gift is the entire Scriptures set forth in various presentations. Of these statements one of the most forceful is St. Paul's declaration, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord".—Romans 6:23.

A Gift Not Appreciated

False theologies have diverted or taken away from the Bible statements that eternal life is the gift of God, and that He will supply it only

to those in fullest harmony with Himself. False theologies have taught us that eternal life is a natural quality—yea, that it is a persistent one, that not even God Himself can destroy our lives or being. This erroneous thought has distorted all our reasonings, and has left the issue as between an eternal life in torture or an eternal life in bliss. But the Scriptures clearly define a different issue; namely, as between extinction, destruction, and a life in harmony with God, a life which Divine Love and Mercy had provided for those who are in accord with the Almighty.

Let us hearken to the testimony of our Lord, the Apostles and the Prophets on this subject, and see that God is now proffering the church a gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us note the Scriptural proposition that if we are willfully, deliberately, intelligently, rejecting this gift it will be withdrawn, and that the effect upon us will be the second death, everlasting oblivion, from which God offers no hope of recovery.

Let us note that this is the general dealing of God; and hence that when His time shall come for dealing with the world of mankind in general, during the Millennial age, the offer then to be made to them will be a similar proposition of life or death everlasting. Those who will accept God's gift upon God's terms are welcome to it. He is pleased to give it to them. Those who will then reject it shall die the second death.—Acts 3:22, 23.

"Through Jesus Christ our Lord," is the Apostle's statement. The gift is not offered to us by the Father directly, but indirectly through the Son. To those whose eyes of understanding have been opened, the Apostles says, "This is the record, that God has given unto us eternal life; and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 4:12) Other Scriptures inform us that this life is merely reckoned to the church now, and that they will not get it until they shall experience the change of the first resurrection, at the second coming of our Lord. Of these it is written, "Your life is hid with Christ in God". (Colossians 3:3) Thus every suggestion of God's gift is bound up similarly in Christ. Only as we become united to Him, related to Him, can we have this unspeakable gift of God. Hence it is not improper that we should sometimes both think and speak of Jesus Himself as being

The Unspeakable Gift

Both Jesus and the eternal life which the Father has provided through Him are unspeakable in the sense that it is impossible for us to present fully to others the richness and the glory which inhere in both. Who can describe life eternal on either a spirit plane or as restored and perfected humanity? It is beyond all the powers of our mental comprehension. Even the thought of it can only be imperfectly communicated and imperfectly grasped. It must gradually dawn upon us, grow upon us in appreciation and comprehension. Similarly the wealth of grace divine represented in our Lord Jesus is unspeakable. We cannot tell it; and the natural man cannot receive of the things of the Spirit of God, neither know them.—1 Corinthians 2:14.

Only those who are especially favored of God can get even the first glimpse of the riches of God's grace in Christ. If this glimpse be appreciated, it leads to clearer and still clearer views; all who will appreciate either our Lord Jesus or the gift of life must be "taught of God". (John 6:54) As our Redeemer said to St. Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father in Heaven" (Matthew 16:17), so all who would grasp spiritual things must be taught. All our teaching and preaching cannot overcome the blindness of the natural fallen mind in respect to God's gift and the channel through which it comes.

Only as the Heavenly Father shall grant His blessing may fruits to our labors be expected. As is written, "As many as the Lord your God shall call," and; "No man can come unto me except the Father who sent me draw him." (Acts 2:39; John 6:44) Hence we see that our present appreciation of divine goodness implies three things: (1) the divine provision of eternal life, (2) Christ the channel, and (3) the knowledge by which we are enabled to appreciate both the gift and the channel.

Receiving and Rejecting God's Gift

As we look out over the world and perceive 2,000,000,000 in heathen darkness and the remaining 400,000,000 of nominal Christendom in a dull foggy light of superstition and ignorance, our first thought might be that the world in general has rejected God's gift and hence has sealed its doom for the second death. Then we

find relief in the Scriptural assurance that the present world-wide darkness is the result of Adam's sin and condemnation to death; that, although Christ has come and offered His sacrifice for sin, and thus made possible the removal of the curse and the bringing back of Adam and all of his race to harmony with God and to the possibility of accepting His gift of eternal life upon His terms, nevertheless the offer of this opportunity to the race in general is still future.

How glad we are that in God's due time all the blind eyes shall be opened, all the deaf ears unstopped, and the fogs of superstition and error all flee away before the rising of the Sun of Righteousness—the glories of the Millennial kingdom!

The few who now see and appreciate God's gift are indeed, as the Scriptures declare, a "little flock" (Luke 12:32); and although generally disowned by men, and "counted fools for Christ's sake," they are rich in that they have become, in advance of the world, the recipients of God's favor by faith. Even now they may think of themselves as being possessors of life eternal—because of their joy and confidence in Him who has promised.

There is a superlative blessing of eternal life on the spirit plane, "far above angels, principalities and powers". Those who attain that blessing will indeed be "partakers of the divine nature". (2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2) Surely "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him". (1 Corinthians 2:9) Those who have now accepted Christ as their Redeemer and their Bridegroom possess also all the riches of God's grace that center in Him; and when He shall appear, they shall be made like Him, sharers in His glory. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"

Gifts to the Church

God's time has not yet come for giving the gifts of the Redeemer's sacrifice to the world. The distribution to the world of mankind of those blessings is held in abeyance, waiting for the glorious thousand-year day—earth's jubilee. Meantime God has been preparing for a special class of humanity other gifts, the richness and value of which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man".

God has a right to give different gifts to His different creatures. He has given to the angels the gifts, blessings, which cause their everlasting happiness; and now He is selecting from amongst men by various trials, tests, a very special class—a saintly class, of all nations and denominations. While He calls all perfect intelligent beings (angelic and human) “sons of God”, He purposes that the saintly ones now being selected shall be His sons on a still higher plane, to which Jesus has been exalted as a reward for His obedience—“far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named”.

To such of these as respond to the drawings and leadings and tests, God is giving special gifts at the present time—not earthly gifts, tangible and seen of men, but spiritual gifts—new hearts of appreciation, new eyes of understanding, new ears of comprehension, new powers of spiritual enjoyment. To them “old things are passed away, and all things have become new”.—2 Corinthians 5:17.

The Most Helpful Gifts

Give without hoping for gifts in return—every gift at this season should be a love token. We value the gift not so much for its monetary worth as because of the love and fellowship of which it is a reminder. It is eminently proper that friends and parents should prepare gifts for others in secret, and keep them until the opportune time for presentation. In all this they are merely copying the Heavenly Father, who is thus preparing for the world the wonderful gifts of the Messianic Kingdom, described as “a feast of fat things for all people”.

But there are other gifts which should not be kept back merely for Christmas time. Each one and especially each Christian, should every day send forth on life's pathway gifts and blessings that would bring joy, cheer, to many hearts—the kindly word, the nod of recognition, especially to one in less favored circumstances, the kindly look, the word or act of sympathy. Oh, how much these gifts mean to the poor world, whom the Apostle Paul describes as the groaning creation! Many of them have little that they know how to enjoy in the present life, and no prospect beyond. How blank such lives! What a godly pleasure comes from casting upon them an occasional ray of sunshine!

“More Blessed To Give”

God Himself is the great pattern set before us in His Word. In proportion as we have received of God's gift and have appreciated it, in that same proportion are we privileged to be so “taught of God” as to become more and more like Him in spirit, disposition—desirous of giving—generous. Since man was created in the image and likeness of God, all men would have possessed this generous disposition had it not been for the fall of Adam; and we find that the fall has especially blighted some in one particular and others in another. Hence amongst “natural men” there are some who are generous, and who to that degree have perhaps more Godlikeness than have some of the children of grace—especially until the latter have been trained in the School of Christ.

For we are to remember that God's message and His drawing power affect the less honorable of mankind. (1 Corinthians 1:26-29) Thus opportunity is afforded for the Lord to demonstrate the power of His grace in the transformation of character. But so surely as we have become God's children, recipients of His blessing and of the instruction of the School of Christ, this quality of benevolence will grow in us; and the more ripe we become as Christians, the more it will abound in our thoughts, words and deeds. But any other condition, any failure to progress, any turning toward greater selfishness, would be sure signs that we are faced in the wrong direction, that we are walking after the flesh, not after the spirit.

Thousands on thousands in the world are needy; and those possessed of the Lord's spirit will feel an intense desire to give to these. But here the difficulty arises. What lines shall we draw? We answer that as comparing spiritual and temporal gifts we should prefer to give the higher, the spiritual, wherever we have opportunity—not forgetting the other, however, as occasion may demand or opportunity offer.

Since the judgment of each will be according to his light, it follows that many more can appreciate the privilege of giving earthly blessings, comforts, succor, solace, etc., than can understand the still higher privilege of giving heavenly gifts, blessings, counsel, succor, consolation, comfort. Whoever, therefore, has spiritual ability to give further spiritual favors should rejoice to thus engage in blessing others.

Great Joy for All People Coming Soon

(A CHRISTMAS SERMON BY THE LATE PASTOR RUSSELL)

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the City of Bethlehem a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."— Luke 2:10, 11.

Great joy to all people? Did God send that message by the angels? Can we believe it implicitly? If so, it tells us of the most momentous change conceivable in human conditions. Of the present the poet has truthfully said:

"Now the world is full of suffering,
Sounds of woe fall on my ears,
Sights of wretchedness and sorrow
Fill my eyes with pitying tears.
'Tis the earth's dark night of weeping:
Wrong and evil triumph now;
I can wait, for just before me
Beams the morning's roseate glow."

This is in full agreement with the prophetic declaration, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning". (Psalm 30:5) The question is not as respects the weeping and the night, the reign of darkness, of sin, or death. This is fact—not imagination, not speculation. Even those most favorably situated share with the world in general the condition which the Apostle describes, saying, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together . . . waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Romans 8:22, 19), waiting for the morning of the new and better day referred to by the angels and by all the prophets and apostles, as well as by our Redeemer. What interests us in this connection is the promised escape from present conditions to those of joy, happiness and blessing. Whoever can heartily believe the angelic message will surely agree that it is good tidings—a message of peace on earth and good will to men. But show us how it can be brought about, and when. Prove the matter to us, not only Scripturally, but demonstrate it logically, for it is contrary to all that we have ever been taught or ever believed, and it seems too good to be true.

Dear friends, I address you as Christian believers, pupils in the School of Christ, students of the Lord's Word, and remind you that not only all creation is groaning, but that the Apostle includes us and all believers in the matter, saying, "Ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," the Body of

Christ. (Romans 8:23) We have indeed a faith which the world has not—a message of peace and fellowship of spirit with the Lord, and, many of us, also a communion with saints; but blessed as these divine favors are, they leave much to be desired, and we groan, waiting for the glorious consummation—the conditions which are to be ours in the Resurrection morning.

THE CAUSE OF OUR GROANING

In order to appreciate the Bible explanation of how the relief and joy are coming to the world, we must note these declarations respecting the cause and source of our tribulations. Nowhere is the matter so beautifully and thoroughly summed up as in the Apostle's statement, "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death as the result of sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned". (Romans 5:12) That explanation shows the entire situation. We perceive that sin has gotten hold of our race; has blemished its organism; has more or less defiled its every member. And we perceive that death is its natural outworking or penalty, and that all of our sorrows and troubles and weaknesses, mental, moral, and physical, are the results of this dying process, which is operating in us. The Scriptural explanation that the entire matter in its start in weakness, original sin, was in Eden, with our first parents, is logical. We perceive exactly how these blemishes have been conveyed from parent to child with increasing force and virulence. Thus we confirm the statement that we were "born in sin and shapen in iniquity; in sin did our mothers conceive us," and that there is none righteous from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet.

As a race we are unable to justify ourselves before God, for, as the Apostle declares, "We cannot do the things that we would", for "there is none righteous, no, not one," in the absolute sense. (Romans 3:10) We see, then, that our Creator determined not to sympathize with, nor encourage, nor permit sin, but to destroy it.

His work has operated along the lines of justice, in sentencing us to death and in holding to that sentence for now six thousand years.

CAN DIVINE SENTENCE ALTER?

Is it supposable that the unchangeable God will change? Surely not! What then is there as a basis for hope, since He has already decreed us unworthy of life—worthy of destruction—death? Does not justice rule in all of the divine dealings? Could God violate this element of His character, of which we read, "Justice is the foundation of his throne"? We must assent that God cannot change. But the Scriptures reveal to us another of God's attributes coming to our relief—His love. We inquire with deepest interest, Is it possible for God's love to triumph over His justice? We answer, No, the divine attributes are so perfectly coördinated that one cannot trample upon another. Human wisdom might here drop the matter as hopeless, but the divine plan shows us to the contrary — that divine love provided for the satisfaction of justice, by a sacrifice and corresponding price. To our astonishment, the Scriptures hold up our Lord, "The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all; to be testified in due time". (1 Timothy 2:5,6) Now we begin to see that our all-wise and all-just Creator, in the fulness of His love, provided for the satisfaction of His own justice, and thus provided for the relief of our race, and for the fulfillment of our text, that ultimately great joy should come to all people, through Messiah's sacrifice.

But would it be just to lay the penalty of Adam's sin upon a substitute? Would it be just to cause the innocent to suffer for the guilty? Ah, yes! That course would be unjust. But that is not the divine program. On the contrary, divine wisdom set before the Redeemer a great prize and rich reward if He would undertake the sacrifice incidental to our deliverance from the power of sin and death. Jesus did this. As we read, "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God?". (Hebrews 12:2) The Apostle, telling us of the sacrifice, assures us that He voluntarily left the glory which He had with the Father, was made flesh, and gave Himself as the "propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world".—1 John 2:2.

The Apostle assures us further that He who

was rich became poor for our sakes, voluntarily, and has now been gloriously rewarded in part, for His faithfulness to the Father's will. He notes how Jesus humbled Himself, even unto the death of the cross, and then adds, "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father".—Philippians 2:9-11.

JUSTICE, WISDOM, LOVE, POWER

These are the fundamental divine attributes. The first three have been exhibited to us in operation. We wonder and adore divine justice, unchangeable; divine wisdom, inscrutable; divine love, immeasurable. What remains, therefore, is to see the final demonstration of divine power in action. A sample of it was given us by our Lord, when He awakened Lazarus from the sleep of death, as showing further the glories of His coming kingdom—the divine kingdom. Divine power is still more manifest in our Lord's own resurrection, His "change" from earthly to heavenly condition. "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye". (1 Corinthians 15:52) The work of this gospel age, the selection of the church from amongst mankind, demonstrates further the justice, wisdom, love and power of God; but the power still waits for a full development. If that element of the divine character shall prevail, it will indeed mean what our text declares, that "great joy shall be to all people".

Love divine has sought the world and bought it with the precious sacrifice of our Redeemer. Adam was the transgressor, and all his race suffer in consequence. Jesus Christ redeemed father Adam, and in so doing, redeemed all of his family and all of his inheritance. Our glorious Lord purposes to take the place of Adam and to adopt all of his children, if they will, and to give them back again all that was lost in their father Adam. We must remember that, no matter what our plane of birth, no matter how deep our degradation, our rights, as the children of Adam, were the perfect human rights, had those not been forfeited by his disobedience. Consequently the restoration which our Redeemer purposes is not merely a restoring to each individual of the things which he

once possessed, but a restitution of all that was his by right under the original divine arrangement, if Adam had not sinned. Hallelujah! What a Savior! "Able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him." (Hebrews 7:25) So surely as the divine program has thus been carried out, exhibiting God's justice and wisdom and love, so surely the remainder of the divine program will follow, and demonstrate divine power.

WHY SO LONG A DELAY?

With a haste which properly belongs to our short-lived and dying condition, we wonder why divine power has not made greater haste in the deliverance of Adam and his race from the bondage of sin and death—why Messiah, after purchasing the world and the fulness thereof, has not made haste to take possession of it, but has permitted the reign of sin and death to continue, and has permitted Satan still to be the god of this world and the deceiver of men.

The Scriptures give the only answer. They tell us that, from the divine standpoint, the six thousand years of the reign of sin and death are a short time in God's sight—that a thousand years in God's sight are but as yesterday, and that we are to have patience and faith. They show us that the divine command was to multiply and fill the earth, and that this work has been much more rapidly accomplished under the reign of sin and death than it would have been otherwise, and that thus God has provided by now a sufficient number of Adam's race to fill the whole earth. They show us further that these have all had some lessons and experiences along the line of sin and death, and will, thereby, be prepared for the lessons on the side of righteousness, the lessons which God purposes they shall have in the future, when the Redeemer shall fulfill His promise and call them forth from the tomb, the prison-house of death.

An example of the operation was granted to us when our Lord called to his friend Lazarus, who was dead, "Lazarus, come forth"—and the dead came forth. He was not alive. He was dead, or, from the divine standpoint of speaking of things which are not yet accomplished, as though they were, he was asleep, just as Stephen was asleep when he was stoned to death, and as the good and bad of all the past are said to be asleep with their fathers.

Another particular reason for the delay of the establishment of Messiah's kingdom and the blessing of the world which He redeemed is that there is another feature of the divine purpose, namely, the selecting, or electing, of a "little flock" to be the church of Christ, His bride and joint-heir in His kingdom glory and Millennial work. The type or pattern of this church was Israel in the flesh and the overcomers of that time, briefly mentioned by the Apostle in Hebrews 11. They are to have a special reward and share in the services of the future. They, however, were not invited to be members of the bride class, the selection of which began at Pentecost and will, we believe, very soon be completed, when the last one of them shall have been accepted, found faithful, chiseled and polished, and made ready for the kingdom glory, into which they will be ushered by the power of the first resurrection. "So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Corinthians 15:42, 44) "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had they received his mark upon their foreheads, nor in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."—Rev. 20:4.

JOY IN THE MORNING

That time is Scripturally designated the "morning" of the New Dispensation. The picture is carried out by telling us that now darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the heathen, but that in due time the light of divine glory shall arise. Meantime the Lord's faithful must walk by faith and not by sight, and the Father's Word of promise must be the lamp to their pathway, the light of their footsteps, even as a "lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn".—2 Peter 1:19.

Our Lord Himself is styled the "Sun of Righteousness", which shall arise with healing restitution in His beams. (Malachi 4:2) And in one of His parables our Lord represents His church, which is also to be with Him the "Sun of Righteousness", which is to return and refresh the world. He describes the future glory of the garnered wheat of this gospel age, saying, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father". (Matthew 13:43) The results will be the scattering of

the ignorance and superstition and darkness of sin, which now prevails, and the enlightenment of all mankind.

A further guarantee of the blessing of that time is given us in the assurance that one of the first works of our Lord, in respect to the establishment of His kingdom, will be the binding of Satan. The Apostle says, "And he laid hold on Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be finished". How careful our Lord is to prove to us how every detail of that glorious plan has been worked out, and that nothing shall fail! He assures us as follows: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it". (Isaiah 55:11) And if our faith be lame, He assures our hearts, saying, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts".—Isaiah 55:9.

"GREAT JOY TO ALL PEOPLE"

Our Lord said, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted". (Matthew 5:4) So if we find that the great majority of mankind have had considerable experience in mourning and sorrow, under the reign of sin and death, there is comfort in the thought that the same large majority of the race shall be comforted, shall receive joy. All will have the opportunity of coming to this estate of joy, promised for all who were redeemed by the precious blood. And the promised "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," will be world-wide in their influence. All except the church will share in that glorious restitution blessing. And the faithful of the church will have, before then, received their full share of blessing, through the "change" of

nature from human to divine. "Behold, I show you a mystery," says the Apostle, "we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye".—1 Corinthians 15:51,52.

The restitution work will begin immediately with the generation living at that time — following the great time of trouble, which the Scriptures declare will usher in the Millennium. As soon as order and blessing shall be established in the world, under that glorious kingdom or dominion, invisible to men except through its agents or channels, then will begin the awakening of the sleeping millions—gradually. The last will be first, so that the first Adam will probably be the last to be awakened. But their awakening will be for the purpose of bringing them to an accurate knowledge of God, His justice, wisdom, love and power, to the intent that, if they will be rightly exercised in obedience to Christ, the great Mediator between God and men, they will gradually regain the perfection lost by original sin and, if they become careless, they will receive stripes, chastisements, that by these judgments of the Lord, they may finally regain all that was lost. Their joys will be increasing with every step taken on the return journey back from sin and death to perfection of life. The joy will be unto all people, yet there is the intimation that some will reject the divine favor. As it is written, "And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people".—Acts 3:23.

Thus enlightened by the divine message, our hearts will undoubtedly be drawn nearer and nearer to the Fountain of all Grace and our lives will be all sunshine. Let us not only put off the works of darkness, but put off all that pertains to the darkness and error, and be clothed in garments of lights, and give

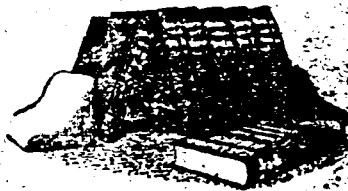
"Praise to him by whose kind favor
Heavenly Truth has reached our ears;
May its sweet, reviving savor
Fill our hearts and calm our fears."

CHRISTMAS 1921

Spirit of Christmas, the whole world is waiting,
Waiting and longing for Christ and for you.
Song of the angels, oh! banish all hating;
Peace and good will ring, O joy-bells, ring true!
Spread the glad tidings, the new day is dawning.
Lift up your heads, all ye saints, and rejoice.
Glory to God in the highest! 'Tis morning.
Praise Him, oh! praise Him with heart and with voice.

—Agnes Nourse.

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promised by Jehovah to "all the families of the earth". See Genesis 12:1-3; 22:15-18; 26:2-5; 28:11-14.

13. *Why should the standing up of Michael (Christ — Daniel 12:1) or the taking of His power to begin His reign (Revelation 11:17, 18), cause such a great time of trouble?*

Ans.: Satan is "the god of [god means mighty one] this world" [the present order or arrangement of things]. He was also called by Jesus "the prince of this world". (John 14:30) "The god of this world" [Satan] does not desire to have his kingdom taken from him; so he is resisting at every step the forward march of the new King of earth. In the Revised Version, Revelation 11:15 reads: "The kingdom [not kingdoms] of the world is become [becoming] the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ", etc. The kingdoms are really one kingdom, the kingdom of Satan, just as the new kingdom will be one kingdom, the kingdom of Christ.

14. *How will those days of trouble be shortened?*

Ans.: The answer is found in Revelation 20:1-3, where it is shown that Satan will be bound for a thousand years (during the reign of Christ over the earth) by "an angel come down from heaven"—by Christ come to earth. When Satan is bound, the trouble stops; for he is the great trouble-maker. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."—Revelation 21:4.

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ns.: "Christ in you [the church class] the hope of the church"—Colossians 1:27.

2. *What is meant by the word "Christ"?*

ns.: It means anointed.

3. *Was Jesus anointed of the holy spirit, and do the church class receive the same anointing?*

ns.: Yes; Jesus was anointed of God (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38), and also the church.—2 Corinthians 1:21; 1 John 2:27.

4. *Then, in plain language, what is this great mystery that St. Paul is speaking of?*

Ans.: It is that the promised seed (the great deliv-

erer) is not a single individual or person, but "many" (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27); that God's dear Son "is the Head of the body [the body of the Christ], the church" (Colossians 1:18), and that all who are Christ's are "Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise" to bless all families and nations of the earth. See Galatians 3:8, 16, 29; Genesis 12:3; 22:18.

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CHRISTMAS CAROL

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on earth, good will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King".
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

But with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;

And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring:
Oh, hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!

And ye beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing:
Oh, rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

HOLLANDISH HYMN, Number 160

[This hymn, translated for THE GOLDEN AGE, is sung by the Hollandish people on the night of each December 31st]

Hours, days, months, and years,
Swiftly as the shadows go;
Ah, we find upon our pathway
Naught that's lasting here below.
In the way that we must traverse,
Scarce a footprint e'er remains,
Only on the soul the present
Leaves its blessings or its stains.

Generations languish earthward,
And we bloom upon their graves;
And in time our children mourn us—
Fallen, like the autumn leaves.
Dust, that ages slow have gathered,
Nests with the deathlike grave;
Without Thee, Eternal Father,
Ah, who could our being save?

Though Thou turnedst to destruction,
Still Thy grace forsakes us not,
Heavenly light shines round about us,
Glory is Thy children's lot.
'Neath Thy loving care and guidance
All the weary, dying way
Leads us, as Thy Word hath spoken,
To the full and perfect Day.

Neither weal nor woe can harm me,
Neither grief nor chastening rod,
Thou art ever left to cheer me,
Thou'rt eternally my God.
Whate'er sorrow here may threaten,
Unto Thee for rest I go;
Thou art, through Thy Son, my Father,
Spite of changes, spite of woe.

Father, still, in all my sorrows,
Father, though in shade or sun,
Father, in the Vale of Shadow,
Father, too, when death has won.
Though on earth is naught but changing,
Thou, O God, dost faithful stand;
E'en my soul rests in Thy mercy,
Slumbers in Thy Father-hand.

Haste then, years, haste freely onward,
With your sunlight and your pain,
What of grief ye bring upon me,
Mine is peace that shall remain.
Though all else on earth should fall me,
Onward led by Thy dear hand,
Bright, beyond our mean existence
Shines my heavenly Fatherland.

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