

# The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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## THE SIMPLICITY OF APOSTOLIC ORDER

### PART I

*"For one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."-Matt. 23,18*

THUS did Jesus in the above language present to His followers the profound simplicity of the arrangements and relationship that He desired to exist among His followers. as they should go forth to carry forward the great commission given them in the beginning of the Age. The Master's teachings were most explicit that God had called one Church to be associated with His Son in the heavenly realm-one Body, the members of which were all called in one hope of their calling (1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:4) ; that this Church should have but one Head, one Guide, one spiritual Ruler, even Jesus, whom He gave "to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His Body." (Eph. 1:22, 23.) Under our Master in the beginning of the Age there were appointed twelve Apostles, under-spiritual guides to serve the Church throughout the Age, and these are designated the twelve Apostles of the Lamb , the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem, in view of their important positions as spiritual teachers of the Church. (Rev. 21:14.) Thus in the book of Revelation, the New Jerusalem--the symbol of the new Millennial government, the Church, the Bride united to her Lord-is very clearly delineated; and in the picture the statement is most distinctly made that the twelve foundations of the City are precious, and that in the twelve foundations were the names written of the "twelve Apostles of the Lamb,"--no more, no less. What better proof could we have that there were never more than twelve of these apostles of the Lamb, and that any others were, as the Apostle Paul suggests, "false apostles."--2 Cor. 11:13.

Nor can we imagine any need of more apostles; for we still have those twelve with us--their testimony and the fruit of their labors in a much more convenient form than had those who were personally with them during their ministry. The records of their ministries are with us; their records of the Lord's words, miracles, etc. Their discourses on the various topics of Christian doctrine in their epistles are in our hands today in a most satisfactory manner. These things are "sufficient," as the Apostle explains, "that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished." Explaining the matter further the Apostle declared, "I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God." What more is necessary?--2 Tim. 3:17; Acts :20:27.

There is not the slightest suggestion anywhere, to the Apostles or concerning them, that they were to be lords over God's heritage; that they were to consider themselves As different from other believers, exempt from the operations of Divine Law, or. specially favored or secure as respects their everlasting inheritance. They were continually to remember that "all ye are brethren.." and that "one is your Master, even Christ." They were always to remember that it was

necessary for them to make their calling and election sure; and that unless they obeyed the Law of Love and were humble, as little children, they should in no wise "enter into the Kingdom." They were given no official titles nor any instruction respecting special garb or peculiar demeanor, but merely that they should in all these things be ensamples to the flock; that others seeing their good works should glorify the Father; that others walking in their footsteps should thus be following in the footsteps of the Leader also, and ultimately attain to the same glory, honor, immortality-partakers of the same Divine nature, members of the same New Creation.

Their commission was one of service—they were to serve one another, to serve the Lord and to lay-down their lives for the brethren. These services were to be rendered specially in connection with the promulgation of the Gospel. They were partakers of the pre-anointing that had already come upon their Master—the same anointing which pertains to all of the New Creation, all of, the Royal Priesthood, and is described by the Prophet, saying: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, . . . to bind up the broken hearted," etc.--Isa. 61:1, 2; Luke 4:17-21; Matt. 10:5-8; Mark 3:14, 15; Luke 10:1-17.

In accordance with the spirit of Christ in them, and in harmony with their Messages, the Apostles issued neither bulls nor anathemas, nor threats, but 'we do find among, their loving entreaties such expressions as these: "Being defamed, we *entreat*," "I entreat thee also, true yokefellow." "Rebuke not an Elder, but *entreat him*."--1 Cor. 4:13; Phil. 4:3; 1 Tim. 5:1.

### **THE PRIMITIVE ORGANIZATION NOT A SECT**

It is only as Christians have humbly listened to the advice of these faithful "messengers set in the Church in the beginning of the Age that they have been able to remain free from confusion and difficulty on the subject of the, Church's present organization; and even in our own day when so much has been written by our Pastor greatly elucidating this entire matter, there seems to still prevail many conflicting opinions among the people whose vision should be thoroughly clarified by now. Though what our Pastor has written has, been read by many, and perhaps by all of our readers, we think well, at this time, to quote extensively from his expositions on the subject, as found in his illustrious Vol. VI of Studies *in the Scriptures*. From this Volume we quote:

"It is to the New Testament that we must look particularly for our directions respecting the organization and rules of the Church during the days of her humiliation and sacrificing. The fact that these rules are not laid down in a compact form must not deter us from expecting and finding that they are, nevertheless, a complete system. We must fight against the natural expectations of our perverted judgments in respect to laws, and must remember that the Church as sons of God are given a 'perfect law of liberty,' because they are no longer servants, but sons, and because the sons of God must learn to use the liberty of sonship and thereby show the more. particularly, their absolute obedience to the law and principles of love.

"The Apostle sets before our minds a picture of the *New Creation* which illustrates the entire subject. It is a human figure, the bead representing the Lord, the various

parts, and members representing the Church. In 1 Cor. 12 this subject is grandly elaborated, and with great simplicity, the explanation given being that, As the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ [one body or company composed of many members]. For by one Spirit are, we all baptized into one body [whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free.] The Apostle proceeds to call attention to the fact that as the well being of a human body depends largely upon the unity and harmony and co-operation of all its members, so also it is with the Church, the Body of Christ. If, one member suffer either pain or degradation or disgrace, all the members are affected, willingly or unwillingly, and if one member is specially blessed or comforted or refreshed, proportionately all others share the blessings. He points out (verse 23) that we seek to cover and hide the weaknesses, blemishes, etc, of our natural bodies, and seek to relieve and help them; and that thus it should be with the Church, the Body of Christ--the most blemished members should have special care as well as the covering of charity--love; 'that there be no schism [division] in the Body, but that the members should have the same care for one another,' for the most humble as well as for the most highly favored, member.--Verse 25.

"According to this the Lord's organization of the Church is a very complete one indeed; but, as in nature, so in grace--where the organization is complete there is the less necessity for splints and bandages. A tree is thoroughly organized and unified from tips to roots, 'yet the branches are not held on by patent fastenings or cords or screws or printed rules and laws; and so with the Body of Christ. If properly adjusted and harmonized and united on the lines which -the Lord has laid down,. there will be no necessity for cords, splints or screws to hold the various members together--no need for laws and creeds and human "-spectacular appliances to bring them together or hold them together. The one Spirit is the bond of union, and as long as the spirit of life remains, a unity, a oneness of the body must remain also, and this will be a strong or weak union, according as the Spirit of the Lord abounds.

"The Apostle goes further, and points out that God is the superintendent of the affairs of this organization, the New Creation, which He Himself devised and inaugurated. His words are, 'Now ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular. And God hath set some in the Church [*Ecclesia*, body], first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles, then -gifts of healing, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues.' It will be a new thought to many who are used to setting themselves and setting each other in places \*of glory and honor and trust and service in the Church, to realize that God has promised the superintending of this matter amongst those who are looking to Him for guidance and are directed by His Word and Spirit.

"If this were recognized how few would dare to seek the chief seats and to wire-pull after political fashion for honorable stations! To realize the Divine care over the true Church means first of all to distinguish the true Church from the nominal systems; and then to seek reverently and humbly to know the Divine will in respect to all of the true Church's arrangements, services and servants."--Vol. VI, 235-237.

## **"APOSTLES, PROPHETS, EVANGELISTS, TEACHERS"**

"According to the general thought of Christendom, the Lord left the matter of Church organization with provisions which were entirely inadequate to the ends He designed, and has expected His people to use their own wisdom in the matter of organization. Many men of many minds have favored more or less strict organizations, and so we find Christians throughout the world today organized on various lines and with more or less rigidity, and each claiming advantages for his particular denomination or system of government. This is wrong! It is not reasonable to suppose that God, foreknowing this New Creation before the foundation of the world, should be so negligent of His own work as to leave His faithful people without a clear understanding of His will and an adequate arrangement or organization for their well-being. The tendency of the human mind is either toward anarchy on the one hand, or toward tight organization and bondage on the other. The Divine arrangement, avoiding both of these extremes marks out for the New Creation an organization simple in the extreme, and devoid of everything akin to bondage. Indeed the injunction of the Scriptures to each individual Christian is, 'Stand fast, therefore, in the *liberty* wherewith Christ hath made us free, 'and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.'"--Gal. 5:1.

"The Lord provides the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, for the blessing of the general Body, as respects both their present and their everlasting welfare. It is for those who are earnestly relying, upon the Lord as the Head, the Instructor, the Guide of the Church, His Body, to expect, look for and notice His gifts in all these particulars; and to accept and to use them-if they would have the promised blessing. These gifts are not forced upon the Church, and those who neglect them, when offered, experience a corresponding loss. The Lord set these in the Church at the beginning and thus gave us the ideal Church arrangement, leaving it to His people to follow the pattern thus set them and to have proportionate blessings; or to ignore the pattern and to have corresponding difficulties and disappointments. Let us, as those who desire to be led and taught of the Lord, seek to learn how He set the various members originally and what gifts of this kind He has been bestowing upon His people since, that we may thus appreciate whatever gifts of this character are at our disposal, and may the more zealously avail ourselves of them for the future."--Vol. VI, :234, 241.

Concerning the apostolic arrangements and primitive organization of the Church, our Pastor further states:

"We find today that such an organization as obtained in the primitive Church-namely, without a sectarian name and without glory, honor and authority on the part of a few over the many, and without a division into clergy and laity-is regarded as *no organization at all*. We are happy, however, to take our position amongst these disesteemed ones, *to copy closely the example of the primitive Church and to enjoy correspondingly similar liberties and blessings*.

"As elders of the Church are all overseers, care takers, watchers of the interests of Zion, some locally and some in the broad and general sense', so also each, according to his talent and ability, might serve the flock one as an evangelist, whose -qualifications fitted him and whose conditions, permitted him to go about preaching the truth to beginners-finding those possessed of an ear to hear the

Good Tidings, etc.; another serving the flock as a pastor (shepherd), because of special qualifications of a social kind, enabling him to look 'after the interests of the Lord's people person ally, individually-visiting them at their homes, encouraging them, strengthening them, holding together and defending them against the wolves in sheep's clothing who would bite and devour them. 'Prophets' also had their special qualifications for service.

"The word 'prophet' is not generally used today in the broad sense in which it was used in olden times, \*but is' rather understood to signify a seer, or foreteller. The word 'prophet,' however, strictly signifies a *public speaker-an orator*. A seer of visions or a recipient of revelations might also be a prophet, in the sense of a declarer of the same; but the two thoughts are distinctly separate. In the case of Moses and Aaron, Moses was the greater, being the Divine representative, and the Lord said to him, 'See, I have made thee a god [mighty one or superior] unto Pharaoh; and -Aaron thy brother shall be thy, prophet'-spokesman, mouthpiece. (Ex. 71:1.) We have already seen that several of the Apostles were seers in the sense that they were granted a knowledge of things to come; we now remark that they were nearly all prophets too, that is, public orators-especially Peter and Paul. But there were many other public speakers, or prophets. Barnabas, for instance, was one; and it is written 'Judas and Silas) being prophets (public speakers) also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words.'"--Acts 15:32.

### **HUMILITY MOST ESSENTIAL TO QUALIFICATION FOR SERVANTS IN THE CHURCH**

"There is no suggestion in the Scriptures that any person disqualified for the work to be done should be considered the Lord's appointee to that position for which he lacks special adaptation; but rather it is as a duty that in, the Body of Christ each member should serve the others according to his talents-according to his abilities-and that each should be modest enough, humble enough, 'not to think of himself more highly, than he ought to think, but to think soberly,' according to the actual value of the talents the Lord has bestowed upon him. Neither should the Church recognize those of their number desiring to be greatest *on that account*. On the contrary, they should take cognizance of humility as being one of the essential qualifications to eldership or to service in any department. If, therefore, two brethren seem to have equal talent, but one is ambitious and forward and the other humble and backward, the Spirit of the Lord, which is the spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind, would teach the Lord's people, to appreciate the humbler brother as the one whom the Lord would specially favor and wish them to put into the more prominent place in the service.

"It seems less remarkable that 'goats' and goat-like sheep in the Lord's- flock should. aspire to leadership, than that the true sheep who recognize the Master's voice, who know His Spirit and who are seeking to do His will should with docility permit such goats or goat-like sheep to take the leadership amongst them. It is well that we follow peace with all men; but where we disregard the Word and Spirit of the Lord for the sake of peace it will be sure to result injuriously to a' greater or less extent. It is well that all should have the docile, sheep-like nature; but it is necessary also that the sheep have *character*, else they cannot be overcomers; and if they have character they should remember the Chief Shepherd's words, 'My sheep bear my voice [obey it] . . . and they follow me,' 'a

stranger will they not follow . . . for they know not the voice of strangers.' (John 10:5, 27.) It is the duty, therefore, of every sheep to take special notice of the message and the manner of every brother before they aid in putting him forward as an overseer, either local or general. They should first be convinced that he has the real qualifications of an Elder in the Church--that he is sound on the basic doctrines of the Gospel--the Atonement, redemption through the precious blood Of Christ, and full consecration to Him. His Message, His brethren, His service. They should have charity and sympathy for the weakest of the lambs and for all the mentally and morally lame sheep; but they would be doing violence to the Divine arrangement too choose such for their leaders or elders.--They should have no sympathy with goats, or with wolves in sheep's clothing who strive for place and authority in the Church.

"It should be recognized that the *Ecclesia* is far better off without any public servant than to have for a leader a golden-tongued 'goat,' who would surely not 'direct their hearts into the love of God,' but seductively into wrong channels. Of such our Lord forewarned the Church; such the Apostle described, saying, 'Of yourselves shall men arise speaking perverse things [wrong, misleading doctrines], to draw away disciples after them [to artfully attract followers after themselves].' The Apostle says that many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the Truth will be evil spoken of.--Acts 20:30; 2 Pet. 2:2.

"So we see it today. Many are preaching themselves rather than preaching the Gospel, the Good Tidings of - the Kingdom; they are attracting disciples after themselves and their denominations, rather than attracting them to and uniting them only with the Lord, as members of His Body. They are seeking to be the heads of churches, instead of having all the members of the Body look directly to the Lord as the Head. From all such we should turn away; the true .sheep should give them no encouragement in their wrong course. The Apostle Paul speaks of these as having a form of godliness but denying its power. (2 Tim. 3:5.) They are great sticklers for days, forms, ceremonies, ecclesiastical authorities, etc., and are highly esteemed amongst men but, an abomination in the sight of the Lord, saith the Apostle."--Vol. VI, 245-248.

### **THE TRUE BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

It is well remembered that our Pastor realizing that the tendency and practices of Christendom had for centuries been toward a denial of the Christian liberties, rights and privileges that were accorded to the members of the Church in the beginning of the Age, repeatedly and most clearly set forth the Scriptural basis for union and fellowship in Christ. The following is one of his statements which is recognized to be in every way in full accord with the New Testament Scriptures:

"Unity of faith is desirable; it is to be striven for yet not the kind of unity that is generally aimed at. Unity is to be along the lines of- the 'faith once delivered unto the saints' in its purity and simplicity, and with *full liberty to each member* to take different views of minor points, and with no instruction whatever in *respect to human speculations, theories*, etc. The Scriptural idea of 'Unity is *upon the foundation principles of the Gospel*. (1) Our redemption through the precious blood, and our justification by faith therein. (2) Our consecration, sanctification, setting apart to the Lord, the Truth and their service, including the service of the

brethren. (3) Aside from these essentials, upon 'which unity must be demanded, there can be no Scriptural fellowship-upon *every other point full est liberty is to be accorded*, with, however, a desire to see, and to help others to see, the Divine Plan in its every feature and detail . Thus each member of the Body of Christ, maintaining his own personal liberty, is so thoroughly devoted to the Head and to: all the members that it will be his pleasure to lay down all, ,even life itself, on their behalf."--Vol. VI, 240.

It was on this broad basis for Christian fellowship that harmony and unity was maintained in the apostolic age. We are not to understand that there were no occasions for disputes or disagreement on various minor points in the early Church. On the contrary the record clearly shows that there were points of doctrine and practice on which there was more or less of confusion and misunderstanding, and that much patience and the spirit of Christ was required to maintain Christian unity and love. For example, we learn of certain dissensions arising in the Church at Antioch.

It is remembered that the Church at this place was the center of Christianity amongst the Gentiles, and Jews born in Gentile lands. Its Gentile surroundings, no less than its membership, tended to cultivate in it a broad spirit of Christian liberty; some of its membership, under the influence of brethren who had come from Jerusalem feared that it had gone too far in the matter of Christian liberty, and held that Gentiles, upon accepting Christ through faith, should likewise accept Judaism and the Mosaic Law, and come as fully under the conditions of these, including circumcision, as though they had been born Jews. Certain brethren who had recently arrived from Jerusalem accentuated these fears, and as a result there was quite a dissension in the Antioch Church, amounting, as the Greek word shows, almost to a schism, a split. But the right spirit. evidently prevailed, because, instead of splitting over a vexed question, each party respected the conscientious convictions of the other, and it was wisely determined to appeal the matter to the Church at Jerusalem for such words of counsel and advice as its leaders, the Apostles and elders, should see fit to give.

The Antioch brethren evidently had full confidence that God had appointed the Apostles, and that their -conclusion on the matter would ultimately be the correct one. At the same time knowing that the brethren at Jerusalem Were surrounded by the Judaizing influence, tending rather to narrowness of view as respected the Mosaic customs, they sent their two leading representatives, Paul and Barnabas, to present before the Jerusalem Council the views which seemed to the majority of the Church to be the correct ones, that thus the entire subject might be fully, *fairly, thoroughly investigated*, and the mind of the Lord determined as accurately as possible.

This was a beautiful spirit-the right spirit; far more commendable in God's sight and in the judgment of sound-minded men than any immoderate course they could have taken. People who take the immoderate course are generally those who do not have sufficient faith in the Lord as the real Head of the Church, and in His overruling providence in the affairs of those who are seeking to know and to do His will they are generally those who feel too much self-assurance, as did even the meek Moses, when he erred in smiting the rock in the wilderness the second time saying: "Ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?"--Num. 20:10.



The truth has nothing to lose by fairness, openness, and a reasonable moderation and the *turning on of all light obtainable*. And while the Church at Antioch evidently had great confidence in Paul and Barnabas, they properly also had great confidence and respect for the Apostles at Jerusalem, and reasoned that since these men all gave evidence that they were truly the Lord's special servants. and mouthpieces, it would be strange indeed if meeting together and hearing all that could be said on both sides of the question, they could not arrive at a unanimous decision respecting the Lord's will, that would assure the Church in general. We commend this noble principle which is as applicable now as it was then. Today, however, as we cannot refer questions to the living Apostles, we must refer them to the recorded teaching of our Lord and the Apostles, seeking assistance in this amongst the brethren who appear to have the best knowledge of God's Word and the greatest insight into the Divine Plan.

We rejoice that there was such a spirit. of broadmindedness in the early Church as is represented in the course pursued-we rejoice that when an important subject was to be considered, with a view to knowing the mind of the Lord, that there was fullest liberty granted for as much dispute or debate, in a proper manner, as was necessary to bring the whole subject before those who had it tender consideration. Such full opportunity for freedom of discussion, within reasonable limits, is absolutely necessary to spiritual health and progress. To shut it off means to crush proper activities of thought, and in many instances means to accumulate a force which would ultimately result in an explosion, which would be damaging in some respects at least. Let us remember, in this matter, the Golden Rule; and let its accord to others differing from us | the same reasonable liberty, inside the boundaries of foundation principles, that we would like to have them accord to us, if our positions were reversed.

*(To be continued)*

## **THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST**

SERIES XXI

### **THE SUN-CLAD WOMAN, THE DRAGON AND THE MAN CHILD RULER**

*"And a great Sign was seen in Heaven; a Woman invested with the Sun, and the Moon under her Feet, and on her Head a Crown of Twelve Stars;. and being pregnant, she cried out travailing and being pained to bring forth. And Another Sign was seen in Heaven; and behold! a great fiery-red Dragon, having- seven Heads and ten Horns, and on his Heads Seven Diadems. And his Tail draws the Third of the Stars of Heaven, and cast them to the Earth, and the Dragon stood before That Woman who was About to bring forth, so that when she should bring forth he might devour her Child. And she brought forth a Son, who is to rule All the Nations with an iron Scepter; and her Child was snatched away to God, even to His Throne. And the Woman led into the Desert, where she has a Place prepared by God, that there may nourish her a thousand two hundred and sixty Days."--Rev. 12:1-6.*



It will be apparent to the careful student that the events referred to in these symbols do not follow those described in the close of the previous chapter. The events pictured in the closing symbols of the previous chapter, as we have seen in our last exposition, occur in connection with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and relate not only to the introductory scenes connected with the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom but include the glorious work of the entire Millennium. This will be in itself, an indisputable proof that the vision we here consider is a retrospective one, for it is a fact that must be conceded by all that the very nature of the matters and events symbolized in Rev. 12:1-6 is such as to make it absurd to look for their fulfillment in connection with the sounding of the seventh-trumpet events. The latter cover the reign of Christ, while the symbols of chapter 12 are of such a character that we must look for their fulfillment somewhere in connection with Satan's empire and the reign of evil. Thus we look backward in history for the events symbolized by this remarkable vision.

In this vision under consideration we have portrayed both secular and religious history. The secular or civil history begins to have its fulfillment in the symbolism of the "great red dragon." The history is continued in that of the symbolic "beast" of chapter 13. The connecting link in the history contained in the two chapters is found in the statement in chapter 13:2--and the dragon gave him [the beast] his power, and his throne, and great authority," indicating plainly that the political power, exercised by the symbolic "beast" of chapter 13 is derived from, and succeeds that, of the political power of the symbolical "dragon" of chapter 12. The events of history covered by the two chapters reach to the vision of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1), which evidently refers to Christ's assumption of kingly authority at the period beginning with the deliverance of the true Church, and in the close of the chapter a vision describing the destruction of the "vine of the earth," the false Church. The religious or church history contained in the vision is found in the symbolism of the woman who is seen first as clothed with the robe of sunlight, etc., and then her becoming pregnant, and later on, her flight to the wilderness, etc.

### **THE VISION LOCATED IN HISTORY**

Having given a brief analysis of some of the requirements of the symbolic vision, we now inquire, Where in history are we to look for the beginning of the fulfillment of this vision? The reply is, There are certain matters stated in the vision itself that enable us to clearly find its location. One of these is that of the symbolical "time" feature referred to in chapter 12:8. This "time" feature is associated with the symbolical woman's flight and sojourn in the wilderness. It is stated that the sojourn of the woman (true Church) in the wilderness, was for a period of a thousand two hundred and sixty days. We immediately associate this period with that of the prophesying of the Two Witnesses in sackcloth for twelve hundred and sixty days (Rev. 11:3) ; and the treading under foot of the holy city forty-two months-1260 days (Rev. 11:2.) We have already explained these in a previous exposition as covering the period from the rise of Papacy in 539 A. D. to 1799 A. D. It seems very evident that there cannot be two or three distinct periods of the same length referred to in the Revelation visions. This is generally admitted by both the Futurist interpreters who understand the "days" to be literal twenty-four-hour periods, and the Historical interpreters who understand the

"days" to be symbolical, a year for a day, Pastor Russell, it is very evident, was associated with the school of Historical expositors which school had its origin among the Lord's consecrated shortly after St. John's day. This is the Protestant school, which we have been, in a general way, following in all our expositions thus far.

This enables us, with Historical expositors, to locate the vision as beginning about 539 A. D.; and as the other events of the symbol, namely, the woman's travail, the dragon's readiness to destroy her child *precedes* the flight of the woman into the wilderness, therefore, these events occur previous to 539 A. D.

We have still another very striking evidence confirming the fact that we are to look for the fulfillment of the vision back of 539 A. D. This evidence is associated with the fact that the same symbolical "time" feature is connected with the dominion of the "beast" (chapter 13) that succeeds the dragon (chapter 12) over the saints. It is contained in the statement: "And it was given him [the beast] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. And authority was given him to act forty-two months." (Rev. 13:5, 3) It must be evident that the "time" period referred to in this vision is the same as those described in Rev. 11:2, 3, already noted as beginning about 539 A. D.

### **THE RELATIONSHIP OF DANIEL'S VISION AS EXPLAINED BY OUR PASTOR**

We now call attention to a further establishment of the fact that this is the time in history to look for the fulfillment of the vision under consideration, and in this fact we note that we have one of the incontrovertible evidences of the truthfulness of the Historical interpretation of the Revelation. This is seen in its close connection with the vision of the Prophet Daniel, contained in Dan. 7. In the vision of Dan. 7 we have portrayed an outline of the whole history of world empires from Daniel's day down to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Four wild beasts are employed in the vision to picture the great world-empires that would hold sway during this long period. The first three, ' Babylon, Medo-Persia and Grecia had Passed away 31 years before the Savior was born. The fourth, the Roman, was ruling during Christ's earthly life and at the time St. John had the visions. The Prophet Daniel was given a symbolic representation of the division of this fourth, or Roman Kingdom. He saw coming up on the head of this beast "ten horns," and was informed by the revealing angel that these horns represented the time when the empire would be divided into ten kingdoms. It is evident that in this vision of Rev. 12, St. John sees the same Roman Empire symbolized by a "great. red dragon." He sees the same "ten horns," and in addition sees "seven heads." The "seven heads" are understood by all expositors to represent the seven successive forms of government which ruled the Roman Empire, from its beginning. This was our Pastor's understanding of this matter, as referred to in several places in his writings. (See Biblical Comments.) He also identifies the fourth beast of Dan. 7 with the "great red dragon" of Rev. 12. We quote:

"To this fourth beast (Dan. 7) representing Rome, Daniel gives no descriptive name. . . . John the Revelator, seeing in vision the same symbolic beast

(government) was also at a loss for a name by which to describe it, and finally gives it several. Among others, he called it 'the Devil.'--Rev. 12:9." -Vol. 1, 258.

Concerning the "ten horns" it is the interpretation of all Historical expositors that the division of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms in the fourth century is represented. This was also the interpretation of Pastor Russell. We quote his comment on Dan. 7:7, 8:

"Here the Roman Empire is shown; and the divisions of its power are shown in the ten horns, a horn being a symbol of power"--Vol. 1, 258.

To show that by "power" he means kingdoms, we quote further :

"As it [the Papal power] rose in influence, three of the divisions, horns or powers of the Roman Empire (the Heruli, the Eastern Exarchate and the Ostrogoths) were plucked out of the way to make room for its establishment as a civil power or horn." -- Vol. 1, 258.

Indeed it is quite generally understood that the "great red dragon" symbolized the government or rulers of Pagan Rome, This also was our Pastor's understanding of this matter, as will be seen in many places in his writings. In unfolding the events connected with the change in history from Pagan Rome to Papal Rome, he plainly states this, as will be seen in the following quotation from his writings:

"The Roman Empire had not only conquered the world, and given it politics and laws but, recognizing religious superstitions to be the strongest chains by which to hold and control a people, it had adopted a scheme which had its origin in Babylon, in the time of her greatness as ruler of the world. That plan was, that the emperor should be esteemed the director and ruler in religious as well as in civil affairs. In support of this, it was claimed that the emperor was a demigod, in some sense descended from their heathen deities. As such he was worshiped and his statutes adored; and as such he was styled Pontifex Maximus--i. e., Chief Priest or Greatest Religious Ruler. And this is the, very title claimed by and given to the pontiffs or popes of the Roman Hierarchy since this anti-Christ obtained 'the power and seat and great authority' of the former ruler of [Pagan) Rome.--Rev. 13:2."--Vol. II, 288.

Pagan Rome became professedly Christian (?) Rome when Constantine the Great, became its emperor about 314 A. D.; and Christian Rome became Papal Rome, when the. decree of Justinian was enforced making the Roman bishop the Head of Christendom, 539 A. D.

### **THE DRAGON, THE EMBLEM OF PAGAN ROME**

Having thus established the fact that the vision under consideration began to meet its fulfillment in the ,days of the Pagan Roman Empire, we now proceed to consider the particular time in the history of Pagan Rome when it occurred. This we will endeavor to prove also from certain symbols contained in the portrayal of the "great red dragon," The first we will notice is that found in the name "dragon" that is given to it. It is a rule in symbolic language that a symbol is never employed until it becomes familiar in the minds of the people. Now it is recorded in history that a dragon was employed by Pagan Rome itself as a symbol of its sovereignty; and not only so, but we learn from history the exact time when it first began to be so employed. Note the following from an eminent expositor:

"The general interpretation which refers this vision to [Pagan] Rome may receive confirmation from the fact that the dragon was at one time the Roman standard. ... Ammianus Marcellinus (XVI. 10) thus describes this standard: "The dragon was covered with purple cloth, and fastened to the end of a pike gilt and adorned with precious stones. It opened its wide throat, and the wind blew through it; and it hissed as if in rage with its tail floating in several folds through the air..

"The dragon was first used as an ensign near the close of the second century of the Christian era, and it was not until the third century that its use had become common and the reference here, according to this fact, would be to that period of the Roman power when this had become a common standard, and when the applicability of this image would be readily understood. It is simply Rome that is referred to-Rome the great agent of accomplishing the purposes of Satan towards the Church. The eagle was the common Roman ensign in the time of the Republic and in the earlier periods of the empire, but in later periods the dragon became also a standard as common and as well known as the eagle."--Barnes.

We quote another eminent author and expositor as further establishing this point:

"In the third century it [the dragon] had become almost as notorious among Roman ensigns as the eagle itself; and is in the fourth century noted by Prudentius, Vegetius, Chrysostom, Ammianus, etc.; in the fifth, by Claudian and others."--Elliott, Vol. 11, 14.

Another way of locating the particular period in Pagan Roman history when the vision began to have its fulfillment is found in the fact that the "diadems" were seen by St. John on the "heads" of the "dragon," as well as a historical feature associated with the "diadems" themselves. Concerning this matter we have the following significant fact, as noted by the Historian Gibbon in his historical Index of Contents, regarding the very year that the "diadems" were assumed by the

Pagan Roman ruler:

"Diocletian assumes the diadem and introduces the Persian ceremonial. New form of administration."

This notice in the Contents of *Vol. II*, "Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," is explained fully and enlarged upon in the chapter of the history referred to in this Table of Contents. This badge of authority was one that embodied absolute Asiatic Sovereignty. Elliot, in his great work, *Horae Apocalyptae*, has said concerning this:

"According to the long established custom of expressing official rank and power by signs, a new and appropriate badge was chosen; the diadem, that ensign of Oriental despotism and which, as such, had been by the republican Romans so abominated, and shunned even by the earlier emperors,--how I say, in place of the old imperial badges of the laurel crown, and the military robe of purple, the Persian diadem and robe of silk and gold were assumed by Diocletian, and his associated colleague; and at the same time instead of the former familiar mixing with fellow-citizens, the seclusion, mystery, prostration, and adoration of the Persian court was introduced into the Roman."--Pages 123, 124, 125.

Thus do the symbols themselves, establish the time for the beginning of the fulfillment of this vision of chapter 12, as that of the reign of Diocletian. He,

according to all historians, is the one who ruled the Roman Empire during the last great persecution of the Church by Pagan Rome. This persecution began in 303 A.D. and ended in 313 A. D.

### **THE FALLEN CHURCH SYMBOLIZED**

We now take up the consideration of the vision of the woman invested with the robe of sunlight, etc., seen by St. John in the heavens. The "woman" of the vision is very generally understood to represent the Christian Church, although there is some difference among expositors as to the meaning of some of the particular symbols. This was the view held by our late Pastor.

"A combination of these symbols [the sun, moon and stars] is found in Revelation (12:1) where the woman symbolizing the early Church is represented as clothed with the Sun; that is resplendent in the full, clear light of the unclouded Gospel. The MOON under her feet represents that the Law which supports her is nevertheless not the source of her light. The twelve stars about her head as a crown, represent her divinely appointed and inspired teachers-the twelve Apostles."--Vol. IV, 591.

"And being pregnant, she cried out, travailing and being pained to bring forth."--v. 2.

We note the significant statement by Thomas Wemyss, author of *"The Symbol Dictionary,"* as to the general significance in other Scriptures of this symbol:

"Travailing (with child) is a symbol of great endeavors to bring something to pass, not without much difficulty, pain and danger. And the compassing of the end, which the persons represented in the symbol aimed at, is a deliverance from the pain and danger they labor under.'

"Hence the symbol of travailing with child is often used In the prophets to denote a state of Anguish and misery.--Isa. 26:17, 18; 66:7; Jer. 4:31; 12:21; 30:6, 7.

"And also in the New Testament, the pains of childbearing, are used to signify the sorrow of tribulation and persecution; as in Matt. 24:8; Mark 13:8; John 16:21, 22; 1 Thes. 5:3. In Romans 8:22, Paul compares the earnest desire of the creation for the Kingdom of Christ to the pains of a woman in travail."

A view held mostly by Futurist interpreters of the Revelation is to make the woman clothed with the sun, travailing to bring forth, represent the true Christian Church from the beginning of the Age to the end of the same. Those who hold this view interpret the travailing of the woman to represent the efforts of the Church in proclaiming the Truth throughout the Age, to gather out from the world and develop the Kingdom class. The birth of the man-child is understood by these interpreters to represent the resurrection of these called-out, prepared ones, to kingly authority with Christ, at the end of the Age. However, a careful study of all the requirements of the symbols associated with the vision, will we believe, discover insurmountable obstacles connected with such an application of the vision. We note several objections to this interpretation of the vision. It would require that the "twelve hundred and sixty days," or years (however these days may be interpreted) meet their fulfillment *after* the resurrection of the Church. Such an interpretation finds the Church in heaven during the twelve hundred and sixty days or years, instead of, as in the vision, on earth in the symbolic

wilderness, miraculously fed during that period. (v. 6.) To interpret the vision in this way requires that we adopt the Futurist interpretation, for it is very manifest to the Bible student that all the events symbolized by the visions that follow in this chapter, as well as the succeeding chapters, occur *after* the birth of the man child. This certainly was not our late Pastor's understanding of the vision. He understood the vision to refer to the gradual rise of the anti-Christ. Indeed he understood that Constantine and his successors were prematurely the "Man of Sin," the Papacy. (See Biblical Comments.) In regard to the flight and sojourn of, the woman in the wilderness, his thought is plainly stated in one of the Scripture Studies. We call the reader's attention to this, found in his exhaustive study on the "*Man of Sin.*"

"In the first flush of papal exaltation, the people as a whole were nominally members of the church or else pagans; and all who professed Christ were expected to conform to the usages and regulations of the gradually self-exalting hierarchy . . . . This was the time when, as pictured in Revelation, the true Church (woman) fled into the wilderness into solitude (Rev. 12:6)--an outcast because of her fidelity to, the Truth, and to the true Lord and Head of the Church. In this time, when apostates were being exalted as princes, the true, humble saints were experiencing what the Lord had warned them, and all who live godly (in this present time), to expect, viz., persecution."--Vol. 11, 329.

In regard to the significance of the 1260 days during which the true Church (the woman), should sojourn in the symbolic wilderness, we quote from the study on the "*Times of the Gentiles*":

"The period of Papacy's triumph is given as three and a half times and this we know (and will show in this volume) was fulfilled in twelve hundred. and sixty years ( $360 \times 3 \frac{1}{2} = 1260$ ). The same period is mentioned in the book of Revelation- In chapter 12:14 it is called three and a half times ( $360 \times 3 \frac{1}{2} = 1260$ ) ; in chapter 13:5 it is termed forty-two months ( $30 \times 42 = 1260$ ); and in chapter 12:6 it is called twelve hundred and sixty days."--Vol. 11, 91.

This period of the true Church's sojourn in the wilderness was typified in the experience of Elijah. We quote again the very interesting interpretation of this particular incident:

"Elijah fled from Jezebel and Ahab, into the wilderness, to a place prepared of God, where he was miraculously nourished--1 Kings 17:5-9.

"The true Church fled into the symbolic wilderness, or condition of isolation-to her place, prepared of God, where she was sustained.--Rev. 12:6, 16 .

"Elijah was 'three years and six months' in the wilderness, and during that time there was no rain, and a great famine was in the land.-Jas. 5:17; 1 Kings 17:7; 18:2.

"The Church was three and a half symbolic years (a day for a year--1260 literal years) in the wilderness condition, during which there was a spiritual famine because of the lack of truth--the living water.--Compare Rev. 12:6; 11:3; Amos 8:11."--Vol. 11,256.

## **BIRTH OF THE MAN OF SIN**



In view of the foregoing it seems clear that the woman being pregnant very fittingly represents' the Church in the period of the reign of Diocletian in the beginning of the fourth century, when, because of the severity of the persecution, the desire to control the affairs of the world, in what seemed to her at that time would benefit her in the spread of the truth. had become quite general. The symbolic picture of her fleeing to the wilderness described as occurring after the birth of the man child implies that there were some of her number, the truly consecrated, who had not been deceived and allured by Satan's wiles.

The woman "pregnant," travailing, and being pained to bring forth, then, is a symbol of the church as a whole fallen from grace, greatly desiring and praying that God would exalt to the throne of the Roman Empire, one friendly to her and in this way, she be delivered from persecution, and her interests furthered in the world. As an eminent and godly writer has portrayed this:

"She grasped for her glory in the time appointed for her humiliation, and vainly thought to reign in the earth while her King is absent in the heaven. . . Her travailing and bringing forth the man child exhibits her compassing earthly sovereignty and dominion, which dominion and sovereignty are, however, caught away from the true Church, whose, portion for the present is the wilderness and rejection."--A. J. Gordon--*Ecce Venit*.

In connection with this same matter our late Pastor has said:

"The true Church is symbolized by a 'chaste virgin', while the apostate church, which has fallen away from primitive purity and fidelity to the Lord, is symbolically called 'a harlot.' . . . The true 'virgin' Church continues to be such to the end of the Age."--Vol II, 277.

"Here, then, under Constantine's reign, the opposition of the empire to Christianity gave way to favor, and the Imperial Pontifex Maximus became the patron of the professed but really apostate Church of Christ; and, taking her by the hand, he assisted, her to a place of popularity and splendor from which she was able afterwards, as the imperial power grew weak, to put her own representatives upon the religious throne of the world as Chief Religious Ruler, Pontifex Maximus.

"It is a mistake to suppose, as many do, that the Church at this time was a pure (Virgin) church, - suddenly lifted into dignity and power which became her snare. Quite the contrary is true -- a great falling away had occurred,. etc."--Vol. 11, 290, 291.

It was in connection with the terrible persecution tinder Diocletian that these desires for worldly favor were manifested. We quote the historian concerning this persecution which occurred from 303 A. D. to 313 A. D.

"In the year 303, when this emperor (Diocletian) was at Nicomedia, an order was obtained from him to pull down the churches of the Christians, to burn all their books and writings, and to take from them all their civil rights and privileges, and to render them incapable of any honors or civil promotions. This first edict; though rigorous and severe, extended not to the lives of the Christians; . . . it was however destructive to many of them, particularly to those who refused to deliver the sacred books into the hands of the magistrates.

"Not long after the publication of this first edict against the Christians - . . . Diocletian, by a new edict ordered all the bishops and ministers of the Christian Church to be cast. into prison. Nor did his inhuman violence end here; for a third edict was soon issued out,' by which it was ordered, that all sorts of torments should be employed, and the most insupportable punishments invented to force these venerable captives to renounce their profession by sacrificing to the heathen gods; for it was hoped that, if the bishops. and doctors of the church could be brought to yield, their respective flocks would be -easily induced to follow their example.

"An immense number of persons, illustriously distinguished by their piety and learning, became the victims of this cruel stratagem, throughout the whole Roman Empire, Gaul excepted, which was under the mild and equitable dominion of Constantius Chromium [father of Constantine the, Great].

"In the second year of this horrible persecution the 304th of the Christian era, a fourth edict was published by Diocletian. . . . By it the magistrates were ordered and commissioned to force all Christians, without distinction of rank or sex, to sacrifice to the gods, and were authorized to employ all sorts of torments in order to drive them to this act of apostasy. The diligence and zeal of the Roman magistrates, in the execution of this inhuman edict, had liked to have proved fatal to the Christian cause."--Mosheim's *Eccles. History*.

We thus have depicted in this brief extract from the pages of the historian, the most terrible persecution, the most severe trial, testing, that the Church had ever experienced up to that time. How did she meet the trial? How did she stand this testing of her loyalty to her great Head? By keeping in mind, that, at this time, many "tares," mere professors, as well as many nominal believers had come into her fold, we will not be surprised to -learn that only a few, the "little flock" class stood fully the great test. History shows that these stood the trial and proved their loyalty to Christ and laid down their lives in their Master's cause. Others, the vast majority, yielded, compromised, as was to be expected, and espoused the cause of Constantine the rival of the pagan Emperor Diocletian and welcomed him as their deliverer, who after attaining the rulership, little by little usurped the place of Christ in the Church. Here Pagan Rome was changed to Christian (?) Rome, and for two centuries, except in one instance, the Roman Empire had a professed Christian for its ruler. These were precursors of the great anti-Christ. As previously stated, our late Pastor speaks of these, particularly of Constantine, as the premature "Man of Sin," the Papacy-the "man child" of this vision. (See Biblical Comments.)

### **CONFIRMATION BY THE HISTORIAN**

Briefly summing up, from the records of the historian, the events that portray the elevation of Constantine, this premature "Man of Sin" ("man child"), to the throne of the empire, we find the following:

At the time of this last persecution of the Church by Pagan Rome, there were four emperors ruling over the Roman Empire, Diocletian and his three subordinate associates, Maximian, Galetrius, and Constantius Chlorius, the last, who was the father of Constantine the Great, ruling at Britain. It is a matter to be specially noted that during this last persecution, those Christians who lived in Britain, under

Constantius Chlorius enjoyed a freedom from it. In fact this emperor seemed very favorably disposed towards his Christian subjects. Constantine, his son, was even more so. The Christians throughout the Roman Empire, seeing\_ this favorable inclination of the young Constantine, were led to hope that he, an heir to the throne, might be their deliverer. On account of -the fierceness of this last persecution, this hope grew into fervent prayer that he might be elevated to the throne. This is what we understand to be the fulfillment of the woman in travail.

*D. N. Lord* quotes the following, as bearing on this point, from *Eusebius*, a learned prelate in the professed church of Constantine's day, and at the time he wrote, a zealous supporter of Constantine the Great:

"The Emperor Constantius Chlorius was distinguished, through his whole life for mildness and clemency towards those under his rule, and friendliness to Christianity. . . . And he alone after a peaceful and glorious reign, left his empire at death to a legitimate, a modest, and a religious son. On his demise, Constantine, who had long ago been assigned to that office by the Almighty (?) was immediately saluted, Augustus, by the army, and became a zealous emulator of his father's veneration for the Christian religion."

That prayers were offered up in his behalf, that he might be elevated to the throne, is thus recorded by another professed Christian prelate, *Lactantius*:

"The Lord has heard the prayers which were offered continually by you and the other brethren. . . . and tranquillity is restored through the empire, the church lately prostrated [under Diocletian] has again risen, and the temples of God which the Emperor [Diocletian] had overturned, are by his mercy, re-erected in greater beauty than before. For he has raised up princes, who have put an end to the cruel sway of the tyrants, and given protection to the people, so that already, as though the late clouds were dispersed all are gladdened with peace and security. These tempests have passed away. . . . God in His pity has relieved His afflicted servants and wiped away the tears of the mourners."

The Pagan party (rulers and priests) seeing the attitude of the young Constantine towards the Christians, sought all ways to prevent his accession to the throne. To prevent this, just before the death of his father, the young Constantine was taken and held a prisoner at the court of Galerius at Nicomedia. He managed, however, to escape, making a swift journey to Boulogne, France; thence to Britain, where at the death of his father, he was proclaimed Emperor. The other associate emperors were obliged, on account of his extreme popularity in Britain, to acquiesce in his accession to the throne. However, it was only a very short time before efforts were made, particularly by Galerius, to cause his overthrow. This increased a desire that already existed on the part of Constantine, to aspire and strive to be the sole ruler; and some twenty years before his death, which occurred in 337 A. D., he succeeded in overthrowing all his rivals. It was during the civil wars (which ended in the overthrow of his rivals), that he professed to become not only a friend, but a convert to Christianity; and history informs us that he attributed his success in attaining sole rulership to this fact. We thus see the fulfillment of that part of the vision described in the words: "And the dragon [the Pagan, civil and religious rulers] stood before the woman [the professed church, pregnant with worldly aspirations and desires for dominion], who was about to bring forth, so that when she should bring forth, he- (the Pagan civil and religious rulers) might

destroy her child. And she brought forth [prematurely, in, A.D. 314. See Biblical Comments] a son who is to rule all nations [during the Dark Ages] with an iron scepter; and her child was snatched away to God [a mighty one] even to his throne [the highest place of authority and power on earth.

### **CONSTANTINE THE PREMATURE MAN CHILD**

Constantine represented prematurely the "man child." In the full sense the man child represents the Papacy. Shortly after the accession of Constantine, desiring, doubtless, to promote what he understood was the cause of Christianity (many have since made the same fatal error) he issued a decree declaring the Christian religion, the religion of the Empire. The Pagan temples were by his orders either destroyed or converted into houses of worship for the Christians Christianity thus became popular, and large numbers joined the nationalized churches (Babylon). Constantine, himself, assumed authority in temporal matters of the church. Concerning this we quote the author already cited above:

"He [Constantine] became in that station a usurper of the rights of God, by assuming an absolute authority over the religion of his Christian subjects. In prescribing their faith and worship he treated their religious obligations as under his jurisdiction, and thence the rights and legislation of the. Most High, as subordinate to his, and dependent on his for their efficiency.

"He summoned the council of Arles in 314 to re-judge the ,cause of the Donatists. The following is a part of a letter addressed by him to the bishop of Syracuse. 'We have ordered a great body of bishops from different and almost numberless places to assemble in the city of Arles, by the first of August, and write to direct you to take public vehicle, with two of the second order whom you may choose, and three youths, who may serve you on the way, and present yourself at the aforementioned place on that day, that by your gravity, and the judgment of others who are to assemble, this disgraceful contest which has so long continued, may be terminated in harmony."

Eusebius further wrote:

"The decrees which the bishops had enacted in the councils, he [Constantine] ratified, so that it was not lawful for the prefects of the provinces to rescind their canons."

Constantine sought by force to impose the creed of this council on all his subjects, to prohibit all assemblies of dissentients from the Catholic church, confiscate their property and suppress their books. *Eusebius* cites a letter addressed to these dissenters which we quote in part:

"Know by this law, ye Novatians, Valentinians, Marcionites, Paulists, Cataphrygians, and all who form sects by private assemblies, your folly is involved in so many falsehoods and your doctrine imbued with such poisonous drugs, that the healthy are led by you to disease, and the living to eternal- death. . . Wherefore as the plague of your errors can no longer be borne, We make known by this law that no -one of you may hereafter dare to convene a congregation; And accordingly, command that all edifices in which you hold such assemblies be taken away; it being' our design not only not to allow your superstitions and senseless assemblies in public, but not even to permit them in private houses, or

in, any separate places; but what is far better, that as many of you as are desirous of the true and pure religion, should come to the Catholic church, and partake of its sanctity, through which you may be able to attain the truth. . . . And that the magistrate may have the requisite power for this remedy, we have commanded as has already been mentioned, that all the houses of your superstitions, that is, the oratories of all sects . . . be without contradiction taken away and immediately delivered to the Catholic church; but other places adjudged to the public, that no opportunity be hereafter left you of assembling. Accordingly, let not your forbidden congregations from this day venture to meet in any place, whatever, whether public or private. Let this be published."

Lack of space forbids us to further enlarge on the usurpations of the rights of Christians, by Constantine. Suffice to say that he claimed and exercised the right to punish those who disobeyed these decrees. "He deposed and appointed bishops at his Pleasure. He banished Arius, ordered that all books .written by him and his partisans should be burned, and threatened death to any who should attempt to conceal them."

Regarding the utterance, "and her child was caught up to God and to His throne," the following exposition seems most fitting and appropriate:

"That her. son was suddenly caught up to God and to his throne, denotes both that he was rescued in an extraordinary manner, from the attempts of the Pagan emperors to destroy him, and exalted to supreme power in the empire; and that he became in that station a usurper of the rights of God, and an object of idolatrous homage to his subjects."--D. N. *Lord*.

Thus was the way gradually cleared for a Roman bishop to occupy the Roman throne.

## **A CHRISTMAS LESSON: THE PRINCE OF PEACE**

-- DECEMBER 21--Isa. 11:1-10; MATT. 2:1-12; LUKE 2:8-14 --

*Golden Text:--"Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins."--Matt. 1:21.*

FOR four thousand years and more the premises of God, clothed in more or less of obscurity, had been given to mankind, intimating that ultimately the great curse of sin and death which had come upon the world through father Adam's disobedience in Eden would be rolled away, and-instead of a curse, a blight, would come a blessing of the Lord with life-giving refreshment. In various types, figures and shadowy promises this lesson had come down through the ages to the time of our Lord's birth, especially amongst the Jews, who were the divinely favored and covenanted people. And since the Jews were of a commercial spirit, many of them were to be found in all parts of the civilized world; and thus amongst every people the faith in the one. God and the hope of Israel through a Messiah were more or less made known, so that at the time of our Lord's birth we read, "All men were in expectation" of a soon-coming Messiah. Doubtless this expectation was built up-on the interpretation of Daniel's prophecy, which we now see clearly marked the year of our Lord's majority, when He was thirty years

of age and made His consecration to His work and received, the begetting of the (Holy Spirit, His anointing as the great antitypical High Priest and as the great antitypical King over Israel and the world.

In the Divine predictions of a coming Savior attention is largely called to the fact that He is to be a King, a Deliverer, a Savior. This point is made prominent because God appealed to mankind along the line, of their necessities and hopes. The sacrificial feature of the Lord's ministry was made less prominent than His power and majesty and glory, because the sacrifice related especially to God and was to meet the demands of the Divine Law against the sinner-race. The question of how God would settle the matter consistently with his own sentence of death, resting upon the rate would to the average human mind be much less important than the statement of the resultant glories restitution and blessings. Hence, we find the references to the sacrificial features of our Lord's ministry largely presented under types and symbols intended to be comprehended only by those who, as sons of God, would be guided into the Truth by the Spirit of, God.

### **TESTIMONY OF JESUS, SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.**

In the prophecy of Isaiah (11:1-10), under consideration in this lesson, the Lord pictures natural Israel as entirely cut off, leaving nothing behind but the root of Divine promise, and yet He shows that out of this root shall ultimately come all the blessings originally promised to Abraham, and confirmed unto Isaac, unto Jacob, and unto David, the last confirmation reading, "I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he shall be my son." (2 Sam. 7:12, 13.) This prophecy seems, indeed, to have a fulfilment in Solomon, but only because Solomon was a type of the greater Son of David, who was also the Son of God. Solomon indeed built the typical house of the Lord, but Christ, the antitypical Son of David and Son of God is now building the true, the antitypical Temple, the Church which is His Body, a temple of the Holy Spirit, a house of sons. David himself prophetically grasps the truth of this promise saying, "Jehovah hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from him; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." (Psa. 132:11.) The Apostle Peter, moved by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, refers to this same promise, and definitely applies it to our Lord Jesus.-Acts 2:30.

In the prophecy our Lord is not spoken of as the root out of David, but as the root out of Jesse, David's father; because David himself is a type of Christ, his name signifying *beloved*. Hence also the fact that in many prophecies our Lord's Millennial reign is spoken of as the reign of David, the reign of the Beloved.

It is worthy of note that the Scriptures, in speaking of the Gentile governments, symbolize them as trees, and their destruction as the cutting down of those trees. Many trees do not sprout again from their roots when once cut down, as for instance, the cedars of Lebanon to which great Babylon was likened. On the contrary, the Lord speaks of Israel as a vine of His own planting, and one peculiarity of the vine is that it seems to thrive the better in proportion as it is pruned. Thus our Lord also speaks of spiritual Israel, as branches of Himself, the true Vine, and declares that the Father prunes the Vine to the intent that it may bring forth more fruit. It is said that amongst the vine-growers of Palestine it is



customary to cut back the vine clear to the roots yearly, in order to get fresh sprouts therefrom. And so we find that the Lord, with fleshly Israel, frequently pruned them by disciplines, captivities, etc., cutting off many of the branches, and preserving only a remnant. This process was followed at the First Advent in the cutting off of Israel from all further share in the spiritual features of the Abrahamic promise, except the remnant which received the Lord, and on this account were granted privileges to become members of the house of sons. (John 1:12.) During this Gospel Age the Lord deals with His people not collectively, not as a nation, but individually: each branch is pruned, and every branch is expected to bring forth fruit, or else it will be entirely lopped off.

Here, then, we have the thought of the Lord, expressed through the Prophet, respecting Christ Jesus, our Lord, that He from the time of His baptism and anointing with the Holy Spirit, became the new spiritual shoot out of the Abrahamic promise, and out of the root of, Jesse. But they greatly-err who see in this study our Lord Jesus only, and who fail to recognize the fact that He is the Head of the Church, which is His Body. The true Vine is therefore the entire Body of Christ, as our Lord explains. (John 15.) This stem or new Vine had its start in our Lord Jesus, and has grown and prospered and had branches which have borne their fruit under the great Husbandman's care in all these centuries of the Gospel Age. But neither the Vine nor its fruitage have been specially delightful either to the fleshly Israelites or to nominal spiritual Israelites; on the contrary, our Lord's prophetic declaration has been accurately fulfilled: "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." Our Lord and the Apostles were hated by the chief religionists of their day, not because they were evil, but because of their faithfulness to God; because that faithfulness, as a light, rebuked, as darkness, the unfaithfulness of those who hated them.

### **KINGDOM NOW SUFFERETH VIOLENCE.**

The Scriptural position throughout is harmonious and consistent. It describes the present time of evil as "the present evil world," in which "the prince of this world" rules, and in which the Lord's people, "the Body of Christ," the heirs of the Kingdom, "suffer violence," and that this Violence, through suffering persecution, is working out for those who are rightly exercised thereby a preparation for the time when the entire Body of Christ, having been thus purified and prepared, will be given 'the Kingdom under the whole heavens, the said dominion of earth, being wrested with force from the prince of this world, and the kingdoms of this world, and bestowed upon the Son by the Father's power, and through the great time of trouble with which this Age shall end, and in which the prince of this world will be bound.

The power by which the Lord shall accomplish the blessing of mankind, after He has crushed the power of evil and established the reign of righteousness is stated to us in this prophecy-it is to be by the spread of a knowledge of the Lord. The Apostle assures us (I Tim. 2:4) that it is the will of God that all men shall come to a knowledge of the Truth that they may be saved. He assures us that there can be no salvation without knowledge (Rom. 10:14, 15), consequently the knowledge of the Lord being very limited throughout this Gospel Age, only comparatively few of earth's millions have come to such a knowledge of Him as to permit them to exercise faith in God, and in the great sacrifice and pardon' for sin which God has

provided in Christ. But the fact that few in the present life have come to this knowledge shall not in any degree thwart the Divine Plan, nor make the death of Christ on their behalf of no avail, for the Lord assures us that in due time the true light of the world, Jesus, shall lighten every man that cometh into the world-this includes all the heathen, all those of imbecile mind, who could not grasp the truth, and all the infants who die without knowledge of the only name under heaven whereby we must be saved. God has thus made ample provision, first,, in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, and secondly, in the Millennial Age which He has provided through Him, in which the knowledge of, the Lord shall be caused to fill the whole earth.

### **ANGELS ANNOUNCED GLORY TO FOLLOW.**

It is not surprising that the angels who announced our Lord's birth mentioned only the glories to follow and not His sufferings which would intervene. It is not surprising that they did not weep for the sufferings and humiliation, but sang, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men;" grasping merely the culmination of the great Divine Plan which had its beginning in the birth of Jesus.

Whether or not the "wise men" of the East were Hebrews we are not informed; but since Divine favor was for the time confined to Israel, and since that favor did not depart until they had rejected the Messiah, we consider it highly probable that 'these wise men from the East were part of "the twelve tribes scattered abroad," who, "instantly serving God," were hoping for and "waiting for the consolation of Israel" through the long-promised Messiah. (Acts 26:7; Luke 2:25.) We do know that hundreds of thousands if not several millions of Israelites were carried captive to this very East country -Babylon, Medo-Persia, and we know also that less than 55,000 availed themselves of the decree of Cyrus permitting their return to Palestine. The great bulk of the people of Israel, therefore, at that time (as now) resided in foreign lands. And it would appear that their foreign captivity was helpful to their religious interests, and that the Israelites in general had more faith in the Lord and more strong interest in prophecies respecting Messiah after the captivity in Babylon than for several hundred years previous, when they were continually beset with idolatry.

The promise of God to Abraham of a great "Seed," • great king and ruler who should bless the world with a righteous reign, it would appear, was carried by the Israelites into all the then civilized world. Leading some to expect a Jewish Messiah, it led others through a feeling of pride to declare that they were as able as the Jews to produce the desirable government and ruler for the world. Hence, we find that the idea of universal dominion began to- prevail. It is claimed by some that Zoroaster, the great Persian religious teacher, was a disciple of the Prophet Jeremiah, and the memoir of Mrs. Grant, missionary to Persia, says:

"Zoroaster taught the Persians concerning Christ. He declared that in the latter days a pure virgin should conceive, and that as soon as the child was born a 'star would appear, even at noonday, with undiminished luster. 'You, my son,' exclaimed the venerable seer, 'will perceive its rising before any other nation. As soon as you see the star, follow it wherever it leads you, and adore the mysterious

child, offering your gifts to him with the profoundest humility. He is the almighty Word which created the heavens.' "

Although this is only a legend, it is interesting to know that there was such a legend amongst the people of the East. And respecting Zoroaster it may be said that his teachings were of a higher character than those of other heathen teachers.

Expecting a king, the wise men naturally came to the palace of Herod, who, although called the King of the Jews, was the representative of their conquerors, the Romans. Herod was the founder of the house of Herod and naturally had great expectations, not only with reference to the duration of his own dominion, but also with a view to the establishment of his posterity in the power and office which he enjoyed. No wonder, then, that he was "troubled." The prospect of a rival either in the power or in the esteem of the people was not to his liking. "And all Jerusalem [was troubled] with him." Political influence takes in a wide circle. There were connected with Herod's government or benefited by it, directly or indirectly, many whose plans, hopes, etc., might be very much disarranged by any change of the government. Herod evidently knew of the Jewish tradition respecting Messiah, for he at once sent for those who were learned in the-Scriptures to demand of them where the Prophets indicated that Messiah should be born. The Scribes and Pharisees were evidently quite familiar with the subject, had looked it up, and apparently without hesitation gave the name of Messiah's birthplace as Bethlehem, and quoted from the Prophet in support of it.

The cunning art of Herod, by which he hoped to learn who was this divinely designated Prince and heir to his throne, is appreciated only when we remember the sequel to this narrative: how, when he found that the wise men did not return to give him the information and permit the destruction of the child Jesus, he determined to kill All the children of the City of Bethlehem of two years old and under,, thus he might be sure, he thought, that he had outwitted the Divine Plan and protected his own power.

The star which seemingly had led these wise men toward Jerusalem and which then apparently had vanished, and left the searchers to arouse the curiosity and interest of the people of Jerusalem again became their guide as they left the city, leading them to Bethlehem, which is only a short distance, and the star appears to have indicated even the very house in which they found the new-born King. According to the custom of the time they presented costly treasures as well as their homage.

### **KING NOW AT THE DOOR.**

Although the King came, his own received him not; and like the "young nobleman" of his own parable he went "into a far country," even heaven itself, there to be invested with power by the King of, kings, and to postpone the establishment of his Kingdom until His Church, His Bride, His joint-heirs, should be selected and prepared to share the Kingdom with Him.

Meantime, the world still needs a King as much as ever. All nations are learning more and more their need of a wise, a just, a powerful, a loving, a merciful ruler. They need this very one, and are gradually learning that none of the fallen race can be trusted with much power, honor and glory; that all are weak through the fall, and that a superior king and superior government are essential to their highest

blessing. The masses are beginning to feel this need more keenly; and it is remarkable to what extent various advocates of Socialism recognize and quote with commendation the teachings of this very King—even though it may be said that they wish others to be governed by the Golden Rule, while they themselves fail to walk by it.

The world is beginning to realize that the King is at the door: the Herods of today and with them all those of influence and power, political and financial, are "troubled" at a prospect of a *change of government*, which their own "wise men" announce as imminent. We need not expect that the princes of this world will welcome Him; rather they will fear a disruption of present institutions; fear that under His government they would not have so favorable opportunities for prosperity; and that in the general leveling, which the Prophets declare will accompany His reign, some that are high shall be abased, and some that are low shall be exalted. As a consequence, Messiah's Kingdom, although a Kingdom of peace and righteousness, must be introduced by a "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation." Yet we rejoice in the promise that "when the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness," and that eventually His Kingdom shall come to be the "desire of all nations."

Thus far the Gospel of the Kingdom has been received by only a few: and the special blessings have been with the few who have acknowledged the King, and who are being prepared to be joint-heirs in His Kingdom. But let us not forget the gracious results that are to follow the establishment of that Kingdom, when, as declared by the angels, the Good Tidings and the great joy "shall be unto all people."

## **REVIEW: THE TRAINING OF THE APOSTLES.**

--DECEMBER 28-1 JOHN 1:1-9--

*Golden Text -- "Ye shall be my witnesses."--Acts 1:8.*

It is noted that the lessons of the past quarter deal more particularly with our Lord's special instructions to the Apostles who were designed to be His mouthpieces after His departure, not only for the Church in its initial stage but for the entire Age. No wonder then that Jesus took particular care to impart to these, those grand and important lessons of faith, hope, obedience and love—lessons so vitally essential for all those whom God is choosing for the grand and glorious mission of the coming dispensation—the uplifting of humanity. We have seen, therefore, how these Twelve were our Lord's disciples in an especial sense.

Immediately succeeding His forty days of meditation and testing by the Adversary in the wilderness, and having determined upon the proper course, our Lord began to preach the Gospel of the coming Kingdom and to invite followers, who were called disciples. It was from amongst these disciples that He eventually chose the Twelve. (Luke 6:13-16.) They were all from what might be termed the humbler walks of life, —several of them fishermen, and of them it is declared without disapproval that the rulers, "perceived that they were unlearned men." (Acts 4:13.) Apparently the Twelve were called from amongst the "disciples", or

general followers who espoused the Lord's cause and, confessed Him without leaving their daily avocations. The Twelve were invited to become associates, in the ministry of the Gospel and the record is that they forsook all to follow Him. (Matt. 4:17-22; Mark 1:16-20; 3:13-19; Luke 5:9,11.) The "seventy" commissioned later on never were recognized as Apostles. Luke gives a particular account of the selection of the Twelve, informing us that just prior to this event our Lord withdrew to a mountain for prayer--evidently to take counsel with the Father in respect to His work and His co-laborers in it. He continued all night in prayer--and when it was day He called unto Him His disciples (Greek, *mathetes*--*learners* or pupils) ; and of them He chose twelve, whom He also named Apostles (Greek, *apostolos*--sent forth ones). Thus the Twelve were marked as separate and distinct amongst the disciples.-Luke 6:12, 13, 17.

The other disciples not thus chosen to apostleship were also beloved by the Lord, and no doubt they were in full sympathy with His appointment -of the, Twelve, recognizing it as in the interest of the work in general. Upon what bases the Lord made His choice is not stated; but we have the record of His own prayer to the effect that, "Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me;" and again, "Of those whom Thou hast given Me, I have lost none save the son of perdition,"--Judas. In what sense or to what degree the Father made choice of the Twelve matters nothing to us. No doubt one qualification which they possessed was humility and, undoubtedly, their lowly vocations and previous experiences in life had been such as tended to make them not only humble men, but to lead additionally to strength of character, determination, perseverance, etc., to a degree which other pursuits might not have done to the same extent. We are informed that the selection of the Twelve at the time it took place, instead of waiting until Pentecost (the date of the begetting of the Church), was, in large measure, for the purpose of permitting these Twelve to be especially with the Lord, to behold His works, to hear His Message, that thus they might in due time be witnesses to declare to us and to all of God's people at first hand the wonderful works of God, and the wonderful words of life manifested through Jesus.-Luke 24:44-48; Acts 10:39-42.

### **THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE LAMB.**

The Apostle declares that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid-Jesus Christ. (I Cor. 3:11.) Upon this foundation our Lord, as the Father's representative, began to rear His Church, and in so doing He called Twelve Apostles--not by accident, but by design, just as the twelve tribes of Israel were not twelve by accident, but in conformity to the Divine Plan. Not only did the Lord not choose more than those twelve Apostles for that position, but He has never given authority since for any more--barring the fact that Judas, having proved himself unworthy of a position amongst the Twelve, fell from his place and was succeeded by the Apostle Paul.

We notice with what care the Lord watched over the Apostles--His carefulness of Peter, His praying for him in the hour of his trial, and His special appeals to him afterward to feed His sheep and His lambs. We note also His care for doubting Thomas and His willingness to demonstrate to him thoroughly the fact of His, resurrection. Of the Twelve, He lost none save the son of perdition--and his deflection was already foreknown to the Lord and foretold in the Scriptures. We cannot recognize the choice of Matthias recorded in Acts as in

any sense of the word the Lord's selection. He was, doubtless, a good man, but was chosen by the eleven without authority. They had been instructed to tarry at Jerusalem and wait for endowment from on High by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and it was during this waiting period, and before they were endued with power, that they mistakenly cast lots and chose Matthias to take the place of Judas. The Lord did not reprove them for this undesigned meddling with His arrangement, but simply ignored their choice, and in His own time brought forward the Apostle Paul, declaring, "He is a chosen vessel unto me;" and, again, we have the Apostle's statement that he was chosen from his mother's womb to be a special servant; and, further, that he was not a whit behind the chiefest of the Apostles.-Gal 1:15; 2 Cor. 11:5.

What a good foundation therefore for the faith of all the followers of the Lamb, in the life work and in the messages of these whom God specially appointed to be the special lights and supports of the Church. Through these the Master has fulfilled His good promise: "Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the Age."

"What more can He say than to you He hath said?  
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled."

## **LEAD ME.**

I do not ask, dear Lord, that life may be A pleasant road;  
I do not ask that Thou wouldst take from me Aught of its load;  
I do not ask that flowers should always spring Beneath my feet;  
I know too well the poison and. the sting Of things too sweet.  
For one thing only, Lord, dear Lord, I plead: I Lead me aright,  
Tho' strength should falter, and tho' heart should bleed, Through peace to  
light.  
I do not ask, dear Lord, that Thou shouldst shed Full radiance here;  
Give but a ray of peace, that I may tread Without a fear;  
I do not ask my cross to understand, My way to see;  
Better, in darkness, just to feel Thy Hand, And follow Thee.  
Joy is like restless day, but peace Divine Like quiet night;  
Lead me, O Lord, till perfect day shall shine, Through peace to light.

## **LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT**

### **PLEASED WITH FEAST OF SOUND WORDS.**

Dear Brethren:

Greetings of love in the Lord!

Thanks for the back numbers of *The Herald of, Christ's Kingdom*, which have reached me safely. I write to state how pleased I am with the feast of sound words



contained therein. . . . I believe. the explanation of Revelation contained in the *Herald* is good, and harmonious with, God's character of Love; and in line also with His other attributes, therefore true,.

I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude and thankfulness for all, my Heavenly Father has done for me through my dear Redeemer, and for the privilege of joint-sacrifice with Him; for the joy of serving Him, the Truth, and the brethren in any way. Please find money order for \$-----, and renew my subscription for 1920 for *The Herald of Christ's Kingdom*. Trusting the Lord may continue to bless all the dear brethren, and may you abound more and more in His love and service, and preserve you unto His heavenly Kingdom, I remain

Your brother by His grace

C. D.--Eng.

### **STILL SEEKING THE OLD -PATHS.**

Dear friends:

We are feeling the need of a Pilgrim so much out here that the Class wished me to write and inquire why we do not get any. Is it because funds are low that no

Pilgrims seem to be making western trips? If that is the case, we would be glad to make up an amount that would help pay expenses of a trip. I believe other Classes near us would do the same. If you will inform us as to conditions we will be glad to help what we can. We have only had, one Pilgrim since the *Institute* was organized and we are certainly getting hungry for another. Our members are about the same and our meetings continue to be very helpful, and we feel that we are growing spiritually, but we do need a Pilgrim to encourage and admonish -us and cheer us on our way.

We realize. that you are meeting many trials and difficulties of which we know nothing. The various doctrinal storms do not touch us here, specially, though we get literature setting forth many varieties of "new light." I trust we are all seeking the "old paths" and so will not be entangled with new theories.

May you continue- faithful and, in line with our Father's will, and thus realize continually His abiding presence and blessing. With much Christian love to all the dear friends,

Your sister by His grace,

E. M. A.-Kansas.

### **DISCERNING THE MIND OF THE LORD.**

Dear Brethren:

I enclose \$1.00, being renewal of subscription to the *Herald*, and I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to the Lord for having provided such a timely help as this publication has been to me and also to many others of His consecrated ones.

Not having been long in-the Truth, my acquaintance with the Watch Tower publications while under Brother Russell's supervision has been limited to an occasional perusal of some of the back numbers of the same. Nevertheless this has

been sufficient to convince me that the same sweet spirit that pervaded his writings has found a continuance in the pages of the *Herald*. The reprints from his writings are much enjoyed and the articles on Revelation provide great interest. In this latter connection the interpretations seem most reasonable. . . .

We rejoice then, dear brethren, at every evidence of His loving kindness and pray that His blessing may continue to rest upon you and that He may grant you continued strength to send forth the glorious news of the coming Kingdom. With much love in Him,

Your brother by His favor,

A. A. L. P.-Eng.

**LOVES THE MESSAGE OF OUR PASTOR.**

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Greetings in the name of our Beloved!

Have delayed for some time to write few words of encouragement to the dear ones laboring in the Lord's Vineyard, especially those of the Editorial Committee of the *Herald*. How deeply we appreciate your efforts, dear ones, as shown forth in the *Herald* columns. All the articles breathe forth the true spirit of the. Master and the Heavenly Father; also reflect the meekness and humility of Him who so loved us that He gave His all at Calvary that we might become the sons of God. We love the *Herald* and. its Editorial staff because its columns are so free from the strife, bitterness and fault-finding we have endured in recent years. It seems that our dear Pastor is nearer to us since the birth of the *Herald* for all the articles contained therein, seem to come direct from him.

My wife and I are isolated; being the only ones in the Truth here in our City. We have been 'Unable to find any of the brethren here. We ask the prayers of all .the brethren, as we likewise remember them in our daily petitions.

Enclosed find P. O. order for \$2.00 for which please renew my subscription to the *Herald* for one more year, and forward me two dozen "Food for thinking Christians." Would like also a few copies of back numbers of the *Herald* and "Where are the Dead?" You have our heartiest support so far as we are Able to assist you. We are only grieved that we are not permitted to help in a more substantial way. With Christian love in which Sr. R. joins,

Yours in His service,

W. W. R.-*Kans.*

### **FINDS REFUGE IN SOUND DOCTRINE,**

Dear Brothers in Christ:

It has been on my mind for some time to write to you that I may express my thankfulness to the Lord and to you as His faithful servants for the help and comfort I have received from the *Herald* in the past year.

I certainly appreciate under-shepherds who do not pose as *great* light bearers by giving\_ the hungry unlearned sheep *guesses* and *speculative* matter. I haven't realized until lately just how much help I had been getting from the *Herald*. But as I see the confusion among the Lord's people again I look over the paper and see how the truths in it help to judge false doctrines. We much enjoy the reprints from our Pastor. I, find by, looking up the old Towers I have, and re-reading them that they are often timely and really more up-to-date than many things the friends are wasting some of their time over. I have, read the Revelation Series I in the *Herald* with interest, and if they continue as good as they are now, and we feel sure they will, I would like them in book form. I certainly appreciate the explanation on Rev. 8.3.

I try to get the fundamental doctrines in my mind, and I have always tried to profit by that wise and faithful servant's warnings. As time goes on I realize more fully the wisdom of staying by the *sound doc trines* that have carried the Lord's people through previous harvest siftings. . . .

I am practically alone here in my belief, but I will not take time to tell of the past with its mistakes and trials. There have been many, trials and we have been misunderstood. . . , 'We have also found much imperfection in ourselves; learned wonderful lessons; had great joy; gained the necessary knowledge from the

Lord's proper channels; in fact we trust the Lord much more than we could if we had not been so sorely tried, and we "stand" and see the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life.

Yours with the hope that you will -make your calling and election sure.

*M. S.--Wash*

## **The Herald of Christ's Kingdom**

## LOOKING BACK WE PRAISE THE WAY

*"Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; knowing, brethren beloved, -your election of God." 1 Thes. 1 :1-4.*

THE day set apart for National Thanksgiving is past, but we trust that the spirit of thankfulness continues in many hearts; and no time is more appropriate for the review of our Causes for thankfulness as children of the Heavenly King, than at Christmastide, on the threshold of a new year, while, ruminating upon the things that were, the things that are, and the things which we desire and hope shall be. Whether partial failure or moderate success has, during the, year closing, marked our efforts along lines of moral, physical, financial' or spiritual attainment, let thankfulness fill our hearts, as well as good resolves and holy ambitions for the coming year. Indeed, we esteem that thankfulness must be an abiding grace in all true Christians who have reached a reasonable degree of development in the higher life.

Though in the past few years the weight of the world's sorrow, suffering, trouble and distress has greatly increased, yet humanity, especially the portion living in this favored land, still has much for which to be thankful. The lessons that men the world over should be learning from their present suffering and sorrow are occasions for gratitude and thankfulness. These lessons should cause them to know that their own indiscretion and waywardness is largely responsible for their present sufferings., The Poet has truly said:

"Man's inhumanity to man,  
Makes countless thousands mourn."

Indeed, the inhumanity, selfishness and cruelty exhibited among the civilized (?) nations of the earth during the past five years has had nearly altogether to do with the increase of human suffering during these years. Yes, the "curse," the penalty of sin, rests heavily upon the earth. The Convict, man, is being made to feel its weight. Conditions are not what they would have been, had he remained obedient to his Creator in Eden.

But "thanks be unto God for His unspeakable. gift," -His Son, our Lord; and for the "ransom for all"; and for the reconciliation by it made possible; and for the promise of His Kingdom soon to come; and. for our call to a share in it with our Lord; and for the glorious prospect of coming "times of restitution of all things spoken. by the mouth of all the holy Prophets."--Acts 3:19-21.

Thank God, this will mean the lifting of the "curse" from the ground, And from-so many of the death-sentenced convict-race as will accept. the grace of God in Christ. Ali! blessed thought; this will mean an end of famines, an end of pestilences, an end of storms and floods and droughts, and ultimately "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, I neither shall there be any more pain: because the former things [shall have] passed away." (Rev. 21:4.) Already a blessing has followed in the wake of the Gospel of Christ-since the "Great Light"

was "lifted up" on Calvary. Wherever any have been made free indeed by the Son, a light has shone out and has brought with it blessings; although, this intelligence and its accompanying blessings have been sadly perverted by selfishness -- especially in the large class of Christian counterfeits, called in the Scriptures "tares."

But if others have cause for thanksgiving, how much more cause have those into whose hearts the light of the knowledge of God, shining in the face, of Jesus Christ our Lord, has shined. (2 Cor. 4:4.) Those thus favored, can rejoice and give thanks under all circumstances and conditions -- in sickness, in death, in poverty's vale or in comfort and health.

Surely, thankfulness is a necessary ingredient to Christian living. It must be mixed with our songs of praise, and with our prayers; it must fill our hearts to enable us to render faithful and efficient service to our Lord, in any direction. It was this gratitude, thankfulness, which enabled Brothers Paul and Silas to serve our Master so faithfully that they could sing praise and offer thanks for the privilege of suffering for Christ -in the jail at Phillipi, while their backs were smarting from the cruel lashes received as the cost of their discipleship.--Acts 16:25, 33.

Moreover, the thankfulness of the true Christian must continue -- daily, hourly; its loss even for a moment should be deplored as an evidence of spiritual sickness and the afflicted should go to the leaves of healing in the Divine Word, that lie may be, refreshed in strength of love and zeal and realize afresh that "the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one **died for all**, then were all dead: and that He died for all that they Which live [now reckoned alive in Christ] should not henceforth live unto themselves, but [in thankfulness] *unto him which died for them* and rose again."-2 Cor. 5:14,15.

"Let the peace of **God rule in your hearts, and be ye thankful.**"--Col. 3:15.

## **THE SIMPLICITY OF APOSTOLIC ORDER**

### *PART II*

*"These were more noble in that they searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were Acts 17:11.*

ALL careful readers of the Bible must be deeply impressed with the spirit of liberty that is inculcated throughout the entire book. Especially is emphasis given to the quality of liberty throughout the New Testament, where, Christians living in the spirit dispensation, and ushered into the liberty of the sons of God, are earnestly enjoined to stand fast in the liberty wherewith they have been made free and to be not entangled again in any yoke of bondage.

The value of true liberty amongst the Lord's people cannot be overestimated. It becomes a part of their very life. It was because, under a wrong conception of union, this spirit of true liberty was crushed out of the Church shortly after the Apostles fell asleep in death that the "dark ages" resulted, with all their ignorance, superstition, blindness, persecution, etc. The Reformation, movement of the sixteenth century was but a reawakening of the spirit of liberty--liberty to think inside the foundation lines of the doctrines of Christ; liberty to believe as much

or as little more, in harmony with this, as the mental conditions and circumstances will permit, without being branded as a heretic or persecuted by brethren, either in word or deed.

All the liberty there is in the world today has been paid for: none of-it has been attained without sacrifices. Why? Because selfishness is so entrenched in the race that those who possess power, authority, privilege, opportunity, would hold these for themselves to the disadvantage of others, to the enslavement of others, were not the rights and liberties fought for. Looking back over the history of, nations, without approving of wars, every reasoning mind can see, nevertheless, that only through wars have' liberties come to the race. The mistake that is being made by many today is the supposition that humanity would ever be able to attain the condition of absolute equality and unselfishness through laws or wars or any other means within the power of Adam's race.

If the world's liberty has required fighting for, much more may we expect to battle for those who take the still higher ground of the Bible, and who strive for the "liberty wherewith Christ makes free." (Gal. 5:1.) For although this very Scripture declares that Christ gives this **freedom, the Word** shows us that He gives it only to those who desire it and who will fight for it. Their battle is not to be with carnal weapons which the law of love forbids, yet their warfare is to be mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds of error.

### **WHY THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD MAINTAIN HIS LIBERTY**

Nor should it be difficult for us to understand why followers of Christ should be exercised by liberty, and should carefully guard the same with jealous care. It is as Individuals that Christians are during this dispensation invited to membership in the Royal Priesthood, to patiently continue in well -doing and thus seek for glory, honor and I immortality. It was as individuals that. Jesus addressed His followers when He said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches"; again, "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." Such also -are exhorted to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

It becomes most evident, therefore, that no follower of Christ can make the calling and election sure for another. It is a thing to be worked out by each individual member of the Body, of -Christ; and this is the spirit and teaching of the entire New Testament on the subject. In order that Christians may I make their calling and election sure each must for himself learn and imbibe the great. lessons of Divine Truth contained in the Scriptures. We cannot learn these lessons for each other, nor can we build character for each other. For ,anyone therefore to trust in a fellow-member to do his thinking for him-to decide for him what he shall or shall not believe, what he shall or shall not practice, is to give up his liberty' in Christ, the very means by which he is to make his calling and election sure. Therefore, no matter how much we might esteem a brother, no matter how much confidence we might have in his judgment and learning, we should never accept any doctrine or teaching merely because it comes from him; and this reasoning would apply -equally to a committee of brethren in whom we might naturally have confidence. The spiritual individuality.- of every person should be preserved, and this can only be done by his personally receiving and digesting the truths of the Divine Word. This is why our Lord and the Apostles so earnestly



exhorted the early Church to search the Scriptures--to make the Truth their own personally, to know and understand its meaning. Thus the Apostle points out that one of the important purposes of an individual understanding of the Truth is that the Lord's people might be given such a comprehension of the Divine will and the principles of righteousness that, having their senses exercised, they might discern both good and evil, and thus experience sanctification by the Truth. The noble Bereans were especially commended because of such personal search of the Scriptures daily to prove whether or not those things were true. Nor does our study of the Truth and our standing fast in the faith signify that we are to contend and stand for the innumerable and fanciful interpretations of the parables, symbols and types of the Bible, -which were never designed of the Lord as a basis for the Christian's faith and practice, but were arranged merely as a pictorial method of confirming truths and facts already known and understood. Types should never be used to teach doctrines, but to illustrate those already taught in plain terms.- It is on the clear, plain fundamentals of the Christian's faith that all should unite, but upon the theories and speculative views of the figurative expressions of the Scriptures, there can be no satisfactory union. Our motto rather should be, On essentials, unity, on non-essentials, liberty and charity.

In the light of the foregoing, we find that accordingly our Lord and the Apostles sought to put the Church on guard against the yielding up of their right and liberty to see the Truth for themselves, and to settle every matter of doctrine and practice each for himself. Hence, too, the forceful warnings of the New Testament against submitting to any self-appointed leaders, or any person or combination of persons, who might attempt to lord it over God's heritage and to take away the liberty of the sheep.

Among the most clear and forceful warnings of modern times we believe that none could be more profitable and to the point than that given by our Pastor. We are persuaded that it will be of general profit at this time to quote below extensively from his faithful admonitions.

### **WISE MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR**

"It has been well said that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty:. and truly it is the price of every principle of truth and righteousness which we desire to hold; because unceasing vigilance, art, cunning craft, unscrupulous hypocrisy and unblushing impudence are the characteristics of Satan, 'the prince of this world' (John 14:30; Eph. 2:2), who, unrecognized by men, is constantly. manipulating human affairs, civil and religious, for the accomplishment of his own 'diabolical 'purposes in the enslavement of humanity to the dictum of ignoble' tyranny.

"We certainly do not deny, but on the contrary affirm, that the Church should have living teachers; and that the Lord has raised up Such teachers, all through the Gospel Age, and will to its close, to instruct the Church in general by expounding the Word of God, pointing out and making clear its teachings and bringing forth from the storehouse things both new and old. But all are not ,teachers. Teaching, St. Paul 'declares, is a special gift. (1 Cor. 12:28-30.) A teacher is one who being fully consecrated and brought into submission to the Divine will and enlightened concerning the Divine plan, God can and is pleased to use in instructing His,

Church. And the basis of such selection may be a keen, penetrating mind or other natural or supernaturally imparted endowment and qualification.

"But as for a clerical class, God does not recognize it as His elect teachers; nor has He chosen many of His teachers from its ranks. The mere claim of any man to be a teacher is no proof that he is one by Divine appointment. That false teachers would arise in the Church, who would pervert the truth was foretold. The Church, therefore, is not to blindly accept whatever any teacher may set forth, but should prove the teaching of those whom they have reason to - believe to be God's messengers, by the one infallible standard-the Word of God. 'If they speak not according to this -word, 'it is because there is no light in, them.' (Isa. 8:20.) Thus while the Church needs teachers, and cannot understand God's Word with out them,, yet the Church individually-each by himself and for himself, and *himself* only-must fill the important office of *judge*, to decide, according to the infallible standard, God's Word, whether the teacher be true or false, and whether the claimed teacher is a true teacher by Divine appointment.

"Thus seen, not many *special* teachers are necessary ('Helps,' 'Pastors,' etc., are more numerous--1 Cor. 12:28)--and they only when old truths may need to be lifted out of the dust of error and human tradition; or when some new unfoldings of God's Plan require presentation to the Church as 'meat in due season.' And then, such teacher must, offer proofs that he is a teacher, and that his teaching is true, by *expounding and* harmonizing the Scriptures.

"God has in the past raised up teachers who, though befogged by prejudices and errors, nevertheless brought forth parts of truth; for instance, Wycliffe, Huss, Zwingli, Luther, Bunyan, Calvin, Wesley, and others; and God will continue to so raise up the needed teachers. As St. Paul declares, God himself provides these teachers, they are His gifts to the Church.--1 Cor. 12:28. . . .

"But, notice, that these *teachers* are not the only *priests* of the Royal Priesthood; rather, they are merely God's agents or. mouthpieces by which He speaks to the general Priesthood, His consecrated Church -1 and the entire Church or priesthood is blessed of God through such teachers. . . .

"We exhort all God's true Church -- the one Church -- which includes *all consecrated believers-to awake to the principles of the Reformation, to a recognition of the right of individual judgment* upon religious questions. *Demand Scriptural proofs for all you are asked to believe; take neither the decisions of Rome, nor those of Westminster, nor those of any smaller councils or synods, as final settlements of the question. "What is Truth?" AND BE SURE THAT YOU BELIEVE AND CONFESS NOTHING THAT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND FULLY AND CLEARLY.* To subscribe to, or confess, what you do not understand, and therefore cannot truly believe, is *solemn lying* in the presence of God and witnesses, no matter if it be true that others, by the hundred, have done the same before you. If you did this once, thoughtlessly, even though it were years ago, in joining a church, now that your attention is called to it, you are bound to procure a copy of the 'covenant,' or 'articles of faith,' the belief of which you confessed publicly, and after careful, prayerful study of it, if you find that you do not. so believe, you will *be bound to deny it as publicly as you confessed it, or else-forfeit in God's sight all claim to honesty.*

"Require of all who shall attempt to teach in the name of the Lord, the *exact words* of the Lord or the Apostle which they claim Support their teaching. Get the chapter and verse and look *the matter up. for yourselves, critically*, examining the text and the context. *Weigh and test every item of teaching which you receive as your faith, regardless of how much you esteem the person who presents it.* We know that no fellow-mortal is infallible, and that His *Word is the only standard* by which God wishes us to square and measure and build up our faith.

"When you come to apply this rule you will be greatly surprised. You will find that many errors of doctrine, as well As of custom, have been carried over from Romanism into Protestantism. Many doctrines expressed in the catechisms and confessions of faith and in the hymn books and from the various pulpits, you will find no foundation for in the Bible; and many prominent in the Bible, you will find are ignored by one or another, and some of them by all the sects of Christendom. But hold fast to God's Word. Let God be true, if it should make every man a liar.--Rom. 3:4." Z. Aug.'89.

### **HUMAN CHURCH ORGANIZATION NOT DESIRABLE**

In view of the many lessons from the Scriptures, as well as from the history of the past, bearing upon the subject of Christian liberty, and in view also of our Pastor's clear elucidation as to the maintenance of our rights and liberties in Christ, none of the brethren today need be in ignorance on this important subject. It is encouraging in these days to find a goodly number of brethren in all parts of the world who have clearly defined perception with regard to this matter, and in accordance therewith are striving to the best of their ability to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. It is pleasing to, note that the increasing tendency on the part of the brethren is to exercise great care that they remain free from all 'human entanglements and bondage. We commend this disposition most highly.

We do not wonder, however, that some who have had sad experiences, in connection with one bondage or another in the past, are inclined to go to the other extreme, almost to the extent of refusing to be considered as members of an Ecclesia. Some of these, out of loving concern for the highest interests of the Lord's people, we believe, have had more or less of a question mark in their mind as to this, arrangement here, known as the PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE, thinking that it might become the occasion for a further bondage to a human system to those who have membership in the INSTITUTE; thus seeming to have the impression that the PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE is a religious organization. Several times during the past year we have endeavored in the columns of this journal, as well as in our correspondence with the brethren, to set forth the facts regarding this INSTITUTE and its service.\* We have repeatedly stated that this INSTITUTE is not a religious 'organization in any sense of the word. None of those who become members are questioned as to what they believe; nor are they questioned as to their religious faith and practice. The PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE sets forth no Articles of Faith, and has no creed whatsoever, and is therefore not a **church**. -- it is purely and simply a business corporation, authorized by brethren of many Ecclesias who, earnestly desiring to be faithful to the Truth and the life work of our Pastor, have undertaken, in a united way, to carry on a general ministry of the Truth, believing that more could

be accomplished by uniting their efforts than for each Ecclesia to attempt to work separately -- in an individual way. Accordingly, the brethren desired to have some arrangement whereby they could appoint or elect certain of their number to represent, them in having charge of the work and in carrying it forward according to the wishes of those who appointed them.

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\*See HERALD, Dec. 1, 1918, page 3, "Inquire for the Old Paths;" same issue, page 10 "A Holy Convocation. at Providence;" *April 1*, 1919, page 100, "Wisdom in the Work of the Ministry;" July 1 1919, page 19 6, "Annual Report of the Pastoral Bible Institute." We can still supply these issues if you do not have them on hand.

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In order that this purpose might be executed, it was deemed to be, profitable and expedient to form a, simple business membership company for transacting the necessary business, and, whereby the brethren at large could have a voice as to who would represent them. in carrying on the service, and as to what activities and policies, etc., would be pursued. It was-thought that in this way, everything in the nature of headship would be avoided, and no opportunity. left for a *self-appointed individual* to usurp a position of authority and lord it over God's heritage. By having, this simple business arrangement, the ministry is- not carried on either before the Church or the world in the name of an individual, nor in the name of several individuals, but in the name of the corporation -- in this case, the PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE, which stands for and represents the brethren at large, who in turn represent the Lord.

It should be evident to all that there -is - not the slightest attempt in this arrangement toward a Church organization. So far as we know, all the brethren connected with the. PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE and its activities recognize that the Church was duly and fully organized by our Lord and the Apostles. in the beginning of the Age when the Church was set with various regulations, elders, pastors, teachers, etc., and full instructions given as to how these would be continued in the Church unto the end of the Age, "Till we all come," etc. As to the Church's organization, we are most fully in accord with our Pastor's presentation in *Studies, Vol. VI*, as we have already indicated in Part I of this article, contained in our December 1st issue.

Asked as to the Scripturalness of a business arrangement for conducting a general service, our reply is that we know of not the slightest inference in the Scriptures unfavorable to having a business concern such as described above. The Lord's people are exhorted to use the spirit of a sound mind in all things, and to do whatsoever they do unto the glory of Cod. The Apostle assures us that "the end of the commandment is love," and that "love worketh no ill to his neighbor." (1 Tim. 1:5; Rom. 13:10.) The preaching of the Gospel is a ministry-of love and any device that will encourage or facilitate such holy service in harmony with the principles of justice and love is to be lauded and not condemned. True enough, we do not read of any business corporation being authorized in the early Church, nor for the Church subsequently; but neither do we read of the brethren of that time riding on railway trains, and making use of such devices as we have in modern

times. The increase of the human family, and the advance of civilization and commercialism -has become the occasion for the introduction of various, legal instruments and arrangements by which the world's business might be transacted orderly. The matter of a corporation is one of those which the Lord's people may make use of just the same as they may make use of a railway train, although St. Paul journeyed, hundreds of miles by foot.

We remind all once, more that our Pastor's sentiments as to the use of business corporations for the conducting to the use of business of the work of. the ministry were. exactly as presented above. All who are properly informed well know -that he organized and made use of several business concerns by, which in a very *substantial* and *practical* sense he carried on the work, both in America and in foreign lands. (See his full statement' regarding this matter in The Watch Tower of Dec.. 1, 1915, page 359.) Not only so, but he stated that, it was his desire and purpose that 'brethren might continue to carry on, the ministry through a business concern *after his death*, thus fully attesting the fact that he believed such a procedure a wise and holy one, *if -done in the spirit of the Lord*, and in every way a Scriptural one for footstep followers of Christ to pursue.

Finally, we believe that none have anything whatever to fear with regard to bondage in connection With the PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE. We urge none to become members, nor is membership in this INSTITUTE in any sense or to any degree made the test of fellowship or of service; and brethren who are not members of the INSTITUTE, but who have ability and talent as teachers, and *who show the spirit of the Lord*, are given equal share in the ministry to that of other brethren who are members of the INSTITUTE. Those who have been reading the columns of this journal well know that we have repeatedly discouraged everything in the nature of bond age to men and to systems, and everything in the nature of lording -it over God's heritage.

In this connection we desire to state again with regard to the matter that appears in the HERALD. We wish the friends everywhere to use. their own personal judgment with regard to accepting what they read, and receive nothing as Truth unless they recognize that it is well established by suitable and satisfactory Scriptural evidence. The fact that you may not see and accept every view advanced shall not be allowed to make any difference or, hindrance so far. as full fellowship in Christ Is concerned. Each should accept only so much as he fully recognizes to be the Truth.

The brethren now having charge of the affairs of the INSTITUTE do not for an instant. consider that they have a monopoly over the Lord's goods, or that they have any special anointing to an office above other brethren not in this position. We do believe that the Lord has greatly blessed our humble efforts during the past year to the encouragement and edifying. of many of the. scattered sheep, but we equally believe, that other brethren could have just as well, and possibly better, performed this ministry and have received fully as great - a blessing from the Lord. We believe that for the good that has been accomplished the Lord alone deserves the credit. We wish to assure all, too, that there is no desire in the mind of any of the brethren to build up a system, nor are we determined that this is a\* Divine arrangement that must abide. To the contrary, if it shall please the Lord to dispense with the entire arrangement of the INSTITUTE and its ministries, at

once, we trust to accept the same with proper humility. We have no intimation, however, that the Lord intends to do this, for His blessing seems to be increasingly upon the humble endeavors of the brethren; but when the time shall come that it is His will, that this arrangement shall cease, we desire to accept the same in full resignation to the will of God, being fully persuaded that His ways are wise and just- and that He doeth all things well. It is sufficient for us that we remember His promise that "he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psa. 126:6.) Our desire is merely to please our Heavenly Master while continuing in the house of our earthly pilgrimage, and to wait with patience for the promised deliverance. Brethren, pray for us.

## YOUR "GOOD HOPES"--1920

[The plan here proposed we designate "GOOD HOPES," because nothing is actually promised--only your generous hopes, expressed, based upon your future prospects as they now appear to you. The plan proved not only so beneficial to the cause of truth, but also so blessed to the hopes, for, some years past, that we again commend A to all as Scriptural and good. Those who desire to make use of -this plan can fill out both of these memoranda. One should be kept for the refreshment of your memory; the other mail to us.]

*To. the*

"PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE."

Dear Friends:--I have read with interest of the privilege and opportunities that are opening up for the spread of the truth. I need not tell you that I am deeply interested in the spread of the Glad Tidings of the Lengths-and breadths, the heights and depths of redeeming love expressed for us in God's great Plan of the Ages.-

I am anxious to use myself--every power, every talent, voice, time, money, influence, all-to give to others this knowledge, which has so greatly blessed, cheered and comforted my own heart and placed my feet firmly upon the Rock of Ages.

I have been considering carefully, and praying to be instructed, how to use my various talents more to my Redeemer's glory and for the service of his people--those blinded by human tradition who are, nevertheless, hungering for "the good Word of God," and those also who are naked, not having on the wedding garment of Christ's imputed righteousness, the unjustified, who stand at best in the filthy rags of their own righteousness. I have decided that so far as my "*money talent.*" goes, I will follow the rule so clearly laid down for us by the great Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 16:2), and will lay aside on the first day of each week, according to my thankful appreciation of the Lord's blessings during the preceding week. Out of this fund I wish to contribute to the several parts of the Lord's work specified on the back of this letter. Of course, I cannot in advance judge or state particularly what the Lord's bounty may *enable me* to set apart weekly, and hence you will understand the sum indicated to be merely my conjecture or hope, based upon present prospects. I will endeavor to contribute more than I here specify; and



should I not succeed in doing as well, the Lord will know my heart, and you, also, will know of my endeavors.

My only object in specifying in advance what I *hope* to be able to do in this cause is to enable those in charge of the work of publishing and circulating the truth, etc., to form estimates, lay plans, make contracts, etc., with some idea of what I will at least try to do in the exercise of this my highly appreciated privilege.

My present judgment is that during the coming year, by self-denial and cross-bearing, I shall be able to lay aside on the first day of each week for Home and Foreign Mission Work (to assist in the general circulation of the truth, and in publishing free literature in various languages, and in supplying these gratuitously to Brethren who have the heart and opportunity to circulate them widely, and in meeting the expenses of Brethren sent out as "Pilgrims" to preach the Divine Plan of Salvation, and, in general to be expended as the officers of the Institute may deem best), the amount of per week.

To comply with United States Postal Laws, all or any portion of my donation may be applied as subscription price for The Herald or free literature sent to the Lord's Poor or others, as the Institute's officers may deem advisable.

That the work be not hindered I will endeavor to send you what I shall have laid aside for this cause at the close of each quarter. I will secure a Bank Draft, Express Order or Postal Money Order as I may find most convenient, and will address the letter to the

PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE  
262 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, N.Y.

## **CHRIST THE CENTER**

"As the sun is the center of our solar system, so Christ is the Christian's sun and center of desire. As gravitation holds the planets in their proper orbits, so, love holds the trusting heart in the pathway of willing obedience. As in completing the solar circuit, the earth receives the pleasing variety of seasons adapted to beauty and health, and to promote all organic life, so in our loving service of Christ, there is a pleasing and useful variety of gracious and profitable experiences. Sometimes fierce storms sweep across our pathway to drive us into the shelter of His promised grace. Sometimes the cold repulsiveness of the world's unbelief and sin chills us like a winter's blast, driving us to the central, steady sunlight of a Savior's constant love, causing springtime to burst forth in the Christian's heart, and bursting buds of developing faith and love to expand into the fruits of Christian grace. But there is no winter in the sun. And he who has the Sun of Righteousness in his heart will have constantly the springtime of His abiding love."--*Selected.*

## **ADVICE TO THE SAINTS**

*"Keep in touch with Christ.-Avoid the spirit of faultfinding, criticism, uncharitableness and anything inconsistent with His perfect love. Go where He is most likely to be found, either where two or three of His children are gathered, or where the lost sheep is straying. Ask Him to wake you morning by morning for communion and Bible-study. Make other times in the day, especially in the still hour of evening twilight, between the work of the day and the avocations of the evening, when you shall get alone with Him, telling Him all things, and reviewing the past under the gentle light that streams from His eyes."*

*"Tell God that you are Willing to be made Willing about All.--A lady was once in great difficulties about certain, things which she felt eager to keep under her own control. Her friend, wishful to pass her into the better life of consecration, placed before her a blank sheet of paper, and pressed her to write her name at the foot, and then to lay it before God in prayer. She did so and at once entered this blessed life. Are you willing to do this? Are you prepared to sign your name to a blank sheet of paper and then hand it over to God, for Him to fill in as He pleases? If not, ask Him to make you willing and able to do this and all things else. You will never be happy until you let the Lord Jesus keep the house of your nature, closely, scrutinizing every visitor and admitting only His friends. He must reign. He must have all or none. He must have the key of every closet, of every cupboard, and of every room. Do not try to make them fit for Him. Simply give Him the key. And He will cleanse and renovate and make beautiful." -Selected.*

## **THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST**

### **SERIES XXII**

#### **THE WAR BETWEEN MICHAEL AND THE 'DRAGON**

*"And there was a War in Heaven; Michael and his Angels fighting with the Dragon. And the Dragon fought and his Angels, and were not, strong, neither was their Place found any longer in Heaven. And That Great Dragon was cast out, That Old Serpent which is called the Enemy, even That Adversary who is deceiving the whole Habitable; he was cast to the Earth, and his Angels were cast with him. - And I heard a loud Voice in Heaven saying, 'Now is come the Salvation, and the Power, and the Kingdom of our God, and the Authority of his. Anointed one, Because That Accuser of our Brethren, who Accused them before our God Day and Night, has been cast out. And they conquered him through the Blood of the Lamb, and, through the Word of their, Testimony; and they loved not their Life to Death. Therefore, rejoice, Heavens! and Those who Tabernacle in them. Woe to the Earth and to the Sea! Because the Enemy is gone down to you, having great Wrath, knowing That he has a Short Season.'"--Rev. 12:7-12.*

IN the outset of the present, exposition we wilt state that it is our conviction that this striking and marvelous vision of St. John met its fulfillment in the great conflict between Christianity and Paganism in the fourth century. This conflict had its two phases--first, that which related to Christ's *true* followers coming in conflict with Paganism in their efforts to carry out the commission of their Master; and second, that of Christ's nominal followers in their conflict with the same. The, period in history covered by the vision is the same as that' of the

previous vision, the days of Pagan Rome persecution, culminating in the elevation of Constantine to the throne of the Roman Empire, which our late Pastor interpreted to be the premature birth of anti-Christ.--See Biblical Comments.

The symbols employed to describe this conflict are evidently drawn from a literal, transaction, the early stages of which were possibly in evidence before man's creation, and have continued since. That occurrence is the fall of Satan and his rebellion against Divine authority and empire; additionally the fall of holy angels and their association with Satan. To understand the vision and its application in history it will be necessary to have a general knowledge of this literal occurrence. In the vision we considered last the dragon (Pagan Roman rulers) is not mentioned as associated with Satan, the great Adversary of the Church. In this, however, we learn that he was, in that vision as well as this, the unseen instigator of the Church's persecution by the Pagan rulers and priests, and also the cause of the fall and departure of the Church from her heavenly purity and mission to that of the unholy and depraved earthly things.

While the history of Satan's rebellion against Divine authority is not all clearly given in the Scriptures, we do find, however, many -references to it, and these enable us to gather with certainty the following facts:

(1) That Satan was a created being, having at one time his abode in the heaven of heavens; the inference being that he was honored with his existence in creation's early morning, as he is called Lucifer, bright one, son of the morning.-Ezek. 28:12-15; Isa. 14:12.--Z. '02-135.

(2) That at some remote period he rebelled against God's authority.--Isa. 14:12-15.--Vol. VI, 297.

(3) That because of such rebellion he was expelled from heaven; this our Lord witnessed.-Luke 10:18.--Z. '00-235.

(4) That he was the, one Who used the serpent to cause the fall of our first parents.-Gen. 3:1-5; 1 Cor. -11:3.

(5) That his -abode at the time the vision we are considering had its fulfillment was in the region around the earth; and he was using the dragon (the Pagan rulers) in an endeavor to thwart God's purposes in the selection of the Church or Kingdom class. -- 2 Cor. 4:4; Deut. 32:16, 17; 1 Cor. 10:20.

(6) That he is the chief or prince of numerous fallen angels, and that these are organized into a kingdom that is opposing God and His purposes in every conceivable manner.-Matt. 9:34; Luke 11:15-18.

Bearing well these facts in mind we will not be surprised that he is designated by Christ as the "prince of this world," and by St. Paul as its "god," or ruler, and is the great author and propagator of all the false religions of earth and has controlled to a considerable extent the nations of earth through fallen angels. (Dan. 10:13.) Paganism being the highest type of idolatry, is the religion through which he has succeeded to the greatest extent in blinding and deceiving humanity in their state of condemnation and alienation from God. Papal Rome, which succeeded Pagan Rome, is in a sense -a continuation of Pagan Rome, being nothing less than, a paganized form of, pure Christianity. Keeping in mind these facts will enable us not only to see the appropriateness of the use of this past

conflict of heavenly beings to symbolize the conflict of Christianity with Paganism, but also to see in the language of the symbols the fact: stated that Satan and his angels are the unseen instigators of all the evil and corruption of the Pagan rulers and priests, and that Michael (Christ) and the holy angels are the unseen supporters of His true and holy Church on earth.

In a later vision (Rev. 20) we have. a scene in which is described, a time when Satan's power will be completely restrained for a thousand years, when all the idolatrous paganized forms of Christianity will be destroyed. However, the overthrow of the literal Pagan government and religion described in this vision we are now considering does not bring in this much-to-be-desired condition as the symbols that follow very plainly teach, one of which-is the flight of the woman (true Church) into the symbolic wilderness (a place of separation from the nationalized nominal church

In the vision it is very manifest that Satan and his angels, are used as symbols of the Pagan rulers and, priests. It is also literally true that Satan and the fallen 'angels were the invisible instigators of the attempt of the Pagan civil. and religious authorities to overthrow the Christian religion.

### **SATAN OPERATING BEHIND THE SCENES**

Satan, in the vision called the old serpent, is first mentioned in connection with this symbolic war. The object, doubtless, of mentioning this great Adversary of man is to show that it was his power operating invisibly behind the scenes. He was the author of the purely Pagan religion, and his power had become thoroughly entrenched in the government of Pagan-Rome. With the overthrow of the Pagan government, Satan, himself, is represented as being cast to the earth. After this over throw the seven-headed dragon ceases to be mentioned, but Satan, the serpent, is mentioned as continuing his efforts to destroy the true Church. In fact, we have a general brief summary of these efforts in the closing part of the vision. This general summary reaches to the end of the 1 twelve hundred and sixty years. Satan's further operations are described in the symbolic vision of the two "beasts" of Rev. 13. He is there represented as giving his power which was formerly exercised through the Pagan government to the Papal government, which government is represented in one of the "beast's" heads.

Of this we shall say more later. In order to understand the symbolic significance of Michael and his angels, and the part they take in the great conflict which resulted in the overthrow of Paganism, it will be necessary to know something of the conditions existing in the Church of .Christ during the -period of the Pagan Roman persecutions, and on to the rise of the premature anti-Christ, Constantine and his successors on the throne.

Even in the Apostle's day the "mystery of iniquity," one aspect of which was that of ambition and lordship in ,the Church, had already begun to develop. Shortly after the Apostle's day the "tares" became quite numerous in the Church and many nominal believers associated themselves with the true. However, no general separation of the truly consecrated ones took place until the complete development of the "mystery of iniquity," the apostasy. The truths of the Gospel slowly but surely exposed the abominations of Paganism, the religion of the Roman Empire. This caused the Pagan rulers and priests to attempt to destroy the

Christian religion which, in both a pure and to a considerable extent an impure form, was spreading all over the Roman world. Thus began the conflict of Paganism and Christianity, symbolized in this vision by the conflict between Michael (Christ) as represented in His true followers, and Satan, as represented in his followers, the Pagan rulers and priests.

Keeping in mind that the tares (mere professors) and nominal believers in Christ became much more numerous will enable us to see that which we would naturally expect to occur -- a gradual disposition to compromise on the part of nominal Christians with Paganism, on account of the cruel persecutions. Just before Constantine ascended to the throne of the Roman Empire, the truths of the Gospel had so far exposed the abominations of the Pagan religion that some of the rulers as well as the people became favorably disposed towards nominal Christianity. This was what gradually brought about a cessation of persecution. The result was that while Paganism was finally overthrown, the nominal believers, who were now by far the most numerous, began more and more to court and secure the patronage of the Imperial power which had become professedly Christian. Satan was thus foiled in his attempt to destroy the true Church by persecution. He now, as the symbols which follow point out, resorted to another method, and, as the symbols later on in the Revelation show, he identified himself in a particular sense with the professed Church and through its supporters introduced the Pagan rites and ceremonies into the Church by clothing them in Christian symbols. It was at this time that the Papal apostasy developed and the true followers of Christ began to separate themselves from the great nominal, nationalized Christian system.

### **THE CONFLICT BETWEEN PAGANISM AND CHRISTIANITY**

In applying the symbols of this vision it is, necessary to keep in mind the two classes that made up the professed Christian Church during the period of the vision's fulfillment. These two classes were:

(1) The true and faithful followers of Christ. In this great conflict the avowed purpose of these was not of the Pagan empire and religion. The purpose of these as it has always been, was to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom. These, while doubtless few in numbers, had comparatively clear views of the mission of the Church—that the preaching of the Gospel was for the purpose of gathering and preparing the Kingdom class. In this great conflict these did not use carnal weapons, nor interest themselves specially in the selection of rulers, or unite with, nominal professors in the accomplishment of this purpose. The weapon of their warfare was the Word of God, used both offensively and defensively. This weapon was indeed mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan. However, if they had been the only ones engaged in this conflict against Satan and his hosts, we may be sure that while they would have been successful from the Divine standpoint, they would never have accomplished the overthrow of the Pagan religious government and caused the establishment of a professedly Christian government in its stead. This leads us to note the other, the much larger class, that made up the Christian Church at this time:

(2) The great nominal profession. These also engaged in this conflict; and the avowed purpose of these was as expressed in the utterances of their leaders, as

recorded by the historian, the overthrow of the Pagan government and the establishment of a professedly Christian government. These united themselves with worldly men who had been enlightened sufficiently to see the abominations of the Pagan religion. Their idea of the purpose of the preaching of the Gospel was to make the Christian religion the religion of the empire, in fact, to establish a visible kingdom of God on the earth, with a Christian ruler at its head.. These in many ways com-. promised with the world to attain these ends. The weapons used by these were carnal-not in harmony with God's Word.

Many expositors, not understanding clearly God's purpose for this Gospel Age, have interpreted Michael and His- angels to represent both these classes. It is our thought, however, that only the "little flock" class, the true and faithful followers of Michael (Christ) are thus represented. In a comment by Pastor Russell on Dan. 12:1 we have his thought concerning who Michael is. His words in part are:

"Michael (which signifies 'who as God,' or one representing God) is the name here applied to our great Redeemer."--Vol. 111, 62. It could only be said of these that "they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of -their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."--v. 11.

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A recent expositor of this vision makes Michael to represent the Pope. If the law of symbolic language would permit such an application, the period-when this vision had its fulfillment as applied by this writer was full a century before the name or title, Pope, began to be applied exclusively to the bishop of Rome: The first known writer who applies it to the Roman bishop as his specific title, is Ennodius of Pavia in the latter part of the fifth century. "--*Intenational Encyclopedia*.

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We have also recorded in the vision the sentiments held by the nominal, the great mass of professed Christians of those times. To such the great victory was accomplished through the successful wars of Constantine against the Pagan rulers and priests, which caused the establishment of a professed Christian empire in the world. In the vision these sentiments are expressed in the words of the loud voice heard in, the symbolical heaven- "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."--v. 10.

We have also recorded in the vision the exhortations that were made by this class at that time, calling upon all to rejoice over the great victory. The words describing this are recorded in the vision and are: "Therefore, rejoice, Heavens, and those who tabernacle in them."

If any of the true followers of Christ were for a time deceived to the extent that they engaged in this great rejoicing, they soon became aware of the true situation, and their joy was very soon turned into sorrow because of the corruptions of the true Gospel which followed. It is very evident, however, that the great nominal church at this time regarded its sudden increase to a majority, and the change in public sentiment towards them by which persecution from Paganism ceased, as an indication that. the Kingdom of God had come'. 'That this change was to; produce



a woe instead of a blessing, not only to the true, Church but to earth's inhabitants is seen in the words that follow.

### **PAGANISM OVERTHROWN. SATAN JOINS THE CHURCH**

"Woe to the earth and to the sea! Because the enemy is gone down to You, having great wrath, knowing that, he has a short season."--v.12.

Elliott in his great work, *Horae Apocalyptae*, thus comments on these words:

"It surprises me that so many Commentators should have regarded this denunciation as the concluding part of the song of triumph. . . . It would surely be a strange appendage to any song of triumph. . . . Its similarity of expression and form to the several denunciations of coming Woes under the Trumpets, suggest the presumption . . . that this, like them, is to be regarded as a detached and solemn notification, by the dictating, prophetic, spirit, of some woe on the Roman Empire, soon about to follow. . . . At the same time it [the words] revealed too [also], the original author of all, the evil; viz., the Devil, the Prince of this world, now at length fallen from the Roman mundane heaven and cast out from -his long-held throne [Pagan government] . . . Incapable of repentance, that evil spirit is represented in Scriptures as only 'gathering fresh -malice against Christ, Himself and Christ's cause and Church, from each partial victory they might have gained over him; and the terrible consciousness of the ceaseless shortening of his respite from the sentence of God's final judgment. 'Knowing that his time is short,' may here mean simply, persuaded. . . . Now it is reasonable to suppose that the Devil knows not any more than the angels in heaven the exact time of the last judgment; and might thus, anticipate, as the early Christians did [erroneously], that it would follow speedily the breaking up of the Pagan Roman Empire."--Elliott--Vol. 3, 40, 41, 42.

A brief summarized interpretation of this vision of the war in heaven is as follows given by another eminent expositor:

"Here, then, an obedient archangel and his subordinates on the one hand, and the great apostate angel, Satan, and his subordinate spirits on the other, are exhibited [in symbol] as waging a war with one another, in which Satan, unable to maintain his 'ground, is at length driven from heaven and dejected with- his angels to earth. And they are representatives [symbols] of men, manifestly from the song of those in heaven, which follows, in which the conquerors are exhibited as not loving their lives unto death, which is predicable only of men and of martyrs, not of angels; and as overcoming their adversaries by the blood of the Lamb, and by their -testimony, which is predicable only of witnesses for God and believers in Christ. Michael and His angels, then, are symbols of believers in Christ, who gain a victory by faith in His blood by proclaiming His Word and by submitting to martyrdom, rather than swerve from fidelity to Him. . . .

"From the persecution of the woman, and attempt of the seven-headed dragon to destroy her during her flight to the desert, which are exhibited in the vision that follows, it is seen that the period of this contest was anterior to her retreat into seclusion and the commencement of the twelve -hundred and sixty years.

"This angel war, then, it is apparent from these circumstances, was symbolic of, the struggle of the faithful teachers, confessors and martyrs of -the Gospel on the

one hand, to spread and give supremacy to Christianity, and of the Pagan priests and their active abettors, the persecuting rulers especially, on the other, to maintain the dominion of idolatry. *It was not a strife [of the true Church class for, Political power, manifestly, from the means by which the victory was gained]. They overcame the dragon not by the sword, but by, the blood, of the Lamb, and by their testimony.*\* It were against the law of symbolization also, to interpret it as a literal war [as some have done]. As the symbol, war (of the vision), was one of force, analogy requires that that which it symbolizes should be one of authority and persuasion.

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\*A recent commentator makes these words (overcoming by the blood of the Lamb, etc.) apply to Papacy's followers, Catholics. In the light of the above this is manifestly an erroneous interpretation.

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"The victory of Michael was such a success of the Christian army as to turn the current of public belief and feeling in their favor and produce a revolution in the civil government, by which, instead as before, of accusation as apostates they [true Christians] were [for a brief time] formally recognized as true worshipers of God" tolerated in their faith and worship and [mistakenly] inspired with the thought that Christ's Millennial Kingdom was at hand. The period of this war was the period therefore of the persecutions by Diocletian, Galerius, Maxentius, Maximin and Lucinius; and the victory that change 'of public feeling, wrought by' the testimony and faith of the teachers of the Gospel and sufferings and constancy of the confessors and martyrs that rendered persecution and Paganism itself unpopular, prompted Constantine to espouse the cause of the Christians and finally led to the rejection of Paganism as the religion of the state." -- *D. N. Lord*.

Thomas Newton in his "Dissertations on the Prophecies" has thus quoted from a letter addressed to Eusebius by Constantine concerning this event of Church history that fulfilled this prophecy:

"Liberty being now restored, and that dragon being removed from the administration of public affairs by the providence of the great God, and by my ministry, I esteem the great power of God to have been made manifest to all."

This expositor (Newton) informs us (deriving his knowledge from Eusebius) that "a picture of Constantine was set over the palace gate, with the cross over his head and under his feet, and the great enemy of mankind who persecuted the Church by the means of impious tyrants in the form of a dragon, transfixed with a dart through the midst of his body and falling headlong into the depths of the sea; in allusion, as it is said expressly, to the Divine oracles in the books of the prophets, where that evil-spirit, is called the dragon and the crooked serpent." This expositor further says:

"For now it was no longer in the power of the heathen, persecutors, as Satan accused holy Job before God, to accuse, the innocent Christians before the Roman governors, as the perpetrators of all crimes and the causes of all calamities. It was not by temporal means or arms that the [true] Christians obtained this victory (v. 11), but by spiritual, by the merits and death of the Redeemer, by their constant profession of the truth, and by their patient suffering

of all kinds of torture even unto death; and the blood of the martyrs hath been the 'seed of the Church';"

### **THE TRIUMPH OF THE TRUE SAINTS**

The victory of the true followers of the Lamb at this time was not that of establishing Christianity as the national religion but rather that triumph in their being faithful unto death. This triumph or victory was manifested in their maintenance of a Christ-like conduct in *all* of their sufferings, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for His name. There can be no doubt but that they rejoiced when their persecutions ceased, but they did not count it a triumph for the cause of their Master to have a mere professor (Constantine) elevated to the throne of the empire. They doubtless knew, as all intelligent Bible Christians know today, that the time of their rejoicing in this particular would be when they would be united to their Lord at His coming enthronement in glory and power.

On the other hand-there can be no doubt (because the historian has so recorded it) that the nominal Christians, whose understanding of the Word of God was very deficient, believed that, Christianity had received a wonderful impetus- when Constantine was elevated to be the sole ruler of the Roman empire; and the supporters of the Papacy, as well as many nominal believers, entertain the same thought today.

"And when the Dragon saw that he was cast to the Earth, he pursued the Woman who 'brought forth the Male child. And there were given to the Woman the Two Wings of the Great Eagle that she might fly into the Desert, into her Place, that she should be nourished there a Season [time] and Seasons [times] and a half a Season [time] from the Face of the Serpent."--vs. 13, 14.

We have described in the symbolic words, "the Dragon pursued the Woman", which we now consider the snare of Satan which marked his second effort to destroy the true Church. However, before considering this we note a difficulty; that to some minds there seems to be a conflict with the interpretation of the previous vision, that the man child was Constantine, the premature anti-Christ, and the Papacy being the real one. This difficulty is in the fact that the woman who flees to the symbolic wilderness seems to be the same as the one who gave birth to the man child. It may be asked, How could the pure Church bring forth an enemy? We answer, the only way that the fall of the Church from heavenly to earthly things could be described would be by first exhibiting her in her purity as is done in the symbol of the first verse of this chapter (12:1). This is in perfect harmony with the way **that** other Scriptures describe the same transaction, the fall of the Church. The Apostle Paul thus portrayed the fall of the Church from primitive purity. He informs us that the day of Christ cannot come until there come a falling away first. The thought evidently is not that a new (false) church system would spring up in a moment, but rather that it would be the primitive Church, as one generation followed another, declining in purity of faith and piety. He further tells us that this falling away on the part of the true Church would develop into an apostasy, called by him the "man of sin" (Papacy), who as a god (ruler) would sit in the temple (church) of God. He then informs us that the "mystery of iniquity" had already in his day begun to develop in the true Church.

He then indirectly tells us that its, full development could not occur until the fall of the Roman emperors.--2 Thess. 2:7, 8.

In harmony with this method of the Apostle Paul's in describing the fall of the Church is that of St. John's. St. John in this symbolism --(Rev. 12:1-6) pictures the Church in four conditions: first, in her primitive purity, -before the falling away, clothed with a robe of sunlight and the moon under her feet and on her head a crown ,of twelve stars. Second, he represents her as pregnant, Which would represent unfaithfulness to her vow of chastity to Christ, her prospective bridegroom; and third as giving birth to a world ruler who was to rule the -nations (during the Dark Ages, See Biblical Comments) with an iron scepter; and fourth, he beholds her in the vision we are now considering, pure again (not however made up of the same individuals), in her proper place, the wilderness, a place of separation from the world.

There could be no other way, it seems to us, to represent the gradual departure of the Church from her primitive virgin purity, resulting in the substitution and acknowledgment of an earthly head in the place of her true Head, and her final recovery from this, than in the method described by the Apostle Paul and St. John. Indeed this would be the way we would describe- the present. deflection amongst Truth people.

It will be noticed that the word translated "persecuted" in the Common Version is rendered "pursued" in the Diaglott. This Greek word *dioko* is rendered "follow" in. Rom. 9:30, 31; 14:19; 1 Cor. 14:19; Phil. 3:12; 1 Tim. 6:11, and is so translated in this instance by eminent expositors of the Revelation who believe that it better expresses the truth contained in the symbol.

Rendering it thus, the truth brought out is that the Pagan priests and their followers pursued or followed the "woman" and sought to join her society, or in other words unite with the Church.

"The dragon who followed the woman symbolizes the Pagan priests and their abettors who had been defeated in their attempt to maintain their idol worship, and had fallen into a minority. Their following after her denotes their attempt to join her society by a profession of Christianity.

It was natural that crowds of the worldly should be drawn to the Church when Christianity became the religion of the court, and a profession of it a passport to office and honor."-D. N. Lord.

### **DIVINE PROTECTION OVER THE VIRGIN CHURCH**

According to historians it was true that the Pagan priests and rulers and the larger number of their followers did unite with the false, nominal, nationalized church rapidly merging into Papacy. What became of the pure Church that fled to the symbolic wilderness? How was she protected from the serpent's attempt to corrupt her? We have the answer in the beautiful symbol which follows:

"And there was given to the Woman the Two Wings 'Of the Great Eagle, that she might fly into the Desert, into her place; that she should be nourished there for a time, times and a half, from the face of the serpent." v. 14.

We have this symbol explained in Exodus 19:4, as the protection of God over His people: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."

It is a symbol, then, of God's care over the true followers of Christ, in their being privileged to obtain a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. In this way was she protected from the false doctrines and idolatrous rites with which the visible, -nominal church, at the time developing into Papacy, became flooded.

"The gift to the woman of the wings of an eagle denotes that aids were granted her in her flight, that were supernatural, and peculiarly suited to bear her above the dangers with which she was threatened by the intrusion of Pagans into the Church. As the wings were an addition to her body, and became a part of her nature, they denote not an exterior instrument but a gift that formed a part of herself, and an intellectual and spiritual gift; therefore, knowledge, faith, constancy, wisdom, love, by which she was borne above the torrent of false doctrines, superstitions, rites and idolatries in which the dragon [Satan] endeavored to engulf her."-D. N. Lord.

The period covered by this sojourn in the symbolic wilderness, in which the true Church was nourished, was that of the twelve hundred and sixty years of Papal supremacy.

### **SATAN FURTHER ATTEMPTS DESTRUCTION OF TRUE CHURCH**

We have in the next verse described another attempt on the part of the serpent (Satan himself) to destroy the true Church.

"And the Serpent cast out of his Mouth after the Woman, Water as a River, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. And the Earth helped the Woman; and the Earth opened her Mouth, and drank up the River which the Dragon cast out of his Mouth." vs. 15, 16. This seems to have had its fulfilment toward the close of the twelve hundred and sixty years.

Commenting on Dan. 12:14 our late Pastor has thus given what he believed was the interpretation of these verses:

"This is the same 'flood' mentioned in Rev. 12:15, 16, where it, is shown more fully, as coming out of the mouth of the serpent or dragon, and where its real object, from Satan's standpoint, is explained to be to overwhelm the 4 woman' (the protesting Church of God) AS HER THREE AND A HALF TIMES (1260 YEARS) OF WILDERNESS -- HIDING WERE ABOUT CLOSING, and she was coming forward into prominence 'leaning on [the arm of] her beloved,' the WORD OF GOD.-Songs of Solomon 8-5.

"In symbol, water generally represents TRUTHS; and the symbol preserves its meaning even though it be said to issue from the mouth of the dragon or serpent. The thought conveyed by this symbol is that TRUTH would issue forth through evil agencies, and with an evil intent. And just this we find: the strength of the French revolution lay in the fact that it was instigated by many stern TRUTHS, regarding priest-craft, and king-craft, and regarding the individual rights and liberties of all. 'THE RIGHTS OF MAN' was indeed the watchword of that revolt against civil and ecclesiastical oppression. Truths regarding human rights were seen and expressed there which cause us surprise when we consider the

ignorance, superstition and servility of that day, under which the masses had so long rested. Many of the TRUTHS which then swept as a 'flood' over France, deluging it with blood, are now very generally accepted among all civilized peoples; but they were too strong, and too suddenly put, for that time.

"Indeed, the prophecy clearly shows that the serpent, Satan, did not intend what under God's providence has resulted, but the reverse. In this he overreached himself, as he has done on other occasions. . . . In this case God's plan, for the protection of the 'woman' (Church) from Satan's wiles and for causing the intended ill to work out good, may be clearly traced, in exact fulfillment of the prediction made seventeen hundred years before, viz.: 'And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.' The 'earth,' in symbol, represents society--order-loving people; and it is a fact of history that the flood of truth which spread over France --arraigning Papacy and its priest-craft, and monarchy and its parasitic aristocracy, as the responsible causes of much of the ignorance, poverty and superstition of the people--was swallowed up, or absorbed by the people of Europe generally (the Roman 'earth')." Vol. 3, 65-67.

Commentators generally make this verse apply to the whole period of Satan's operating through the Papacy.

"And the Dragon [Satan] was enraged against the Woman, and went away to make War against That Remainder of her Seed, who Keep the Commandments of God and have the Testimony of Jesus."--v. 17.

"This wrath had been vented by his persecuting her (ver. 13); by his pursuing her; and by his pouring out the flood of water to sweep her away (ver. 15), and the same wrath was now vented upon her children. . . . Stripped of its imagery, the meaning is, that as he could not destroy the Church as such, he vented his malice against all who were the friends of the Church and endeavored to destroy them.. 'The Church, as such, he could not destroy, therefore he turned his wrath against individual Christians to bring as many as possible to death.'

"The reference here is to persecutions against individuals, rather than a general persecution against the Church itself, and all that is here said would find an ample fulfillment in the vexations and troubles of individuals in the Roman communion in the Dark Ages, when they evinced the spirit of 'pure evangelical piety, in the cruelties practiced in the Inquisition on individual Christians under the plea that they were heretics, and in the persecution of such men as Wycliffe, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague. This warfare against individual Christians continued long in the Papal church, and tens of thousands of true friends of the Savior suffered every form of cruelty and wrong as the *result*."--*Barnes*.

The phrase, "which keep his commandments and have the testimony of Jesus Christ," fittingly describes true Christians who faithfully served God, and bore testimony to the true Gospel, even to becoming martyrs to Christ's cause.

## **PETER PREACHES AT PENTECOST**

--JANUARY 4--Acts 2:14, 22-24, 32-42--



*Golden Text.--"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."--Acts 2:21.*

THE coming of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus had promised in His last conversation with His disciples (John 16:7), is the central theme for this lesson. There were, then, two powers which made the existence of the Christian Church a possibility.

First, The living Savior, risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven; the world's prospective King to be loved and served, the Savior to be proclaimed the Guide and Director of the Church; the Source of authority and power.

Second, The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; the transformer of souls; the strength in weakness, the guide into all truth. Without these two powers nothing could have been accomplished.

The Jewish festival of Pentecost, made forever a Christian festival by the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Disciples of Jesus, was fifty days after the Passover, and therefore ten days after the Ascension. These ten days were spent by the little group of Christians in a continued prayer meeting, waiting for the promise which Jesus, had made, to them as He left them.--Acts 1:5.

These disciples gathered in an upper room, praying, and waiting for the fulfillment of the promise, that they might be prepared for the overflowing blessing. There are two ways in which God answers prayers for spiritual gifts: (1) by the gift itself, (2) by making the soul capable of receiving the gift in full measure. Both kinds, of answers were given to this praying company.

The meager outlines of the preaching on the day of Pentecost, afforded us by the extracts from St. Peter's discourse, indicate simplicity, wisdom and courage, such as we should expect in those who were guided by the Holy Spirit., The Apostle first took advantage of the charge of some that the speakers were intoxicated. He showed the unreasonableness of the proposition on the surface and then explained the true meaning, of the phenomena, referring his readers directly to Joel's prophecy, "And upon the servants and the handmaids in 'those days I will, pour out my spirit."--Joel 2:29.

It may be well to note in passing that Joel's prophecy is a double one, and that, probably for the very purpose of hiding the - truth until, due, it states matters in their reverse order; telling first about the general -blessing of the Millennial, Age "*afterward,*" and telling subsequently about the blessing of the Gospel Age, which is confined exclusively to God's servants and handmaids--"*in those days*"--during the Gospel Age,' prior to the, general outpouring of. the spirit which will follow the, establishment of the Kingdom.

### **INFLUENCE OF THE, HOLY SPIRIT**

Having gotten the attention of his hearers, many, of whom were believers in the Prophets--and "Waiting for., the consolation. of Israel," which they, promised--the Apostle proceeded to preach Christ unto them. He did not becloud his subject and confuse his hearers by saying: You have heard of great philosophers and great teachers amongst the Gentiles, 'and as Jews we have had some great prophets ourselves, one of whom was, Jesus; but he, came directly to the point he wished to impress, and declared to them that Jesus, the despised. Nazarene, of whom doubtless, the majority had heard something probably

derogatory, was. indeed the Messiah; that though He had died. He had 'arisen; and-having arisen and ascended on high He had shed forth His power upon these speakers, who were now His representatives and mouthpieces in the world, to declare His mercy. Neither fear of rulers nor shame in confessing the crucified one to be his Master is the least apparent in the Apostle's language. He fully identified himself with the crucified One, and as plainly declared that the rulers had been wickedly and sinfully responsible for His death, in that they had incited the Roman governor to its accomplishment. He pointed out that this was no mischance, but God's foreknown and prearranged plan-that it was necessary that, Messiah should die as the Redeemer of the people, before He could deliver them fully. He pointed out that although it was necessary for Christ to die, nevertheless a heavy responsibility, a curse, hung over that nation which had thus, in its wickedness of heart, rejected and crucified God's Son.

The word of truth, as always, was a savor of life unto life or death unto, death.- (2 Cor. 2:16.) To many the words were foolishness and had the death odor, and they passed on; but to those deeply interested ones who remained, the Apostle's explanation of matters was forceful, especially as he backed this tip by quotations from the Prophets, showing that God had foreknown the death of Messiah, and had foretold His resurrection also, and this miraculous outpouring of His Spirit, of which they all were witnesses. The record is that many of the hearers were pricked to the heart--conscience-smitten. They noted the aptness of the Apostle's quotations and their application, and the logic of his reasoning.; and doubtless in all these things they remarked of the Apostles what they had previously remarked of our - Lord-that the teaching was not like that of the Scribes and Pharisees, uncertain, indefinite, but with force, with authority, with distinctness, with conviction of its truth.

And after this same sort is all the preaching of God's 'true servants, done under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is illuminating and not confusing. Error is never clear; it is always confused and confusing. Clearness and simplicity, on the contrary, are marks of the truth. For various reasons the- old, old story, which the Apostles here preached, is considerably neglected in our day by professed ministers of the Gospel of Christ. One reason is that those who attempt to teach realize their own confusion of thought, and need first to be taught of God through His Word, by His Holy Spirit, and through such channels as the Holy Spirit may use in granting illumination of mind and appreciation of the Word. Another reason is that. the nominal -churches have in-great measure ceased to believe the old, old story; and have accepted instead an evolution- theory. Only to a small minority of Christian people, therefore, is the true Gospel precious. The majority more and more have itching ears for something new--a new gospel of education, refinement and wealth.--2 Tim. 4:3, 4.

As the Apostle clinched one feature after another of his argument, and showed how completely Jesus had fulfilled the declaration of the Prophets in respect to His life, His teachings, His miracles, His death, His resurrection and the- Holy Spirit now poured out upon His followers, conviction of the truth was forced upon the minds of many of the hearers, and they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Is there, any mercy for us, seeing we are members of -this -nation, whose rulers have thus despised God's grace, and crucified His Son?

This was exactly the condition of heart which Peter desired to awaken. He- wisely realized that people must see the, provision for their. forgiveness and rescue before they will lay hold upon salvation He would not begin by tendering mercy, but by showing the right, the truth, and the wrong. But now that his hearers were in the right condition of heart, the, Apostle did not seek to terrify them, but promptly told them of God's mercy and love, assuring them that they were still His favored people, and that if they would come to the repentant condition of heart they would be accepted of the Lord, even as the other believers were already accepted; and that they, too, would have the blessing, of the Holy Spirit and its gifts.. There is a pattern in this preaching which all of the Lord's Royal Priesthood should take note of and practice as they have opportunity to dispense the Good Tidings.. Instead of ranting they should use logic, reason and Scriptural quotations; and those convicted, and seeking to know the way, should not be terrorized, but should be promptly assisted and guided in the Lord's way, and assured of His mercy.

The Apostle was fully justified in telling, his hearers that the promises were still theirs as -a people; for it was clearly declared by the Lord, through the Prophet, that ,Christ should be cut off in the midst of the seventieth symbolical week of Israel's favor, leaving one-half of that seventieth week, viz., 3 1/2 years, of special favor to Israelites individually, after their national favor had ceased.-Dan, 9:25-27; Matt. 23:37, 38.\*

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Scripture Studies, Vol. !!, 201.

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### **GODLY SORROW LEADETH TO REPENTANCE**

Specifically, St. Peter's answer was that his conscience- stricken hearers should individually repent and be bap tized. He did not Make the mistake that some are in clined to make when they suppose, that sorrow for a wrong is repentance. St. Peter perceived that they al ready were sorry, "perplexed in their hearts." Sorrow is not repentance, but as the -Apostle" explains, "Godly sor row leadeth to repentance." (2 Cor. 7:9, 1 10.) Repent ance would be the proper fruitage or result of a proper sorrow. Repentance would mean a full retraction of all share in the great national sin of Israel, the rejection and crucifixion of Messiah. It would mean, therefore, an acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, and the confession or Him as such. And this, in turn, would mean that ,confessing Him to be the Son of God they would become fully submissive to His teachings, become Hi!; disciples. Repentance, therefore, rightly understood, meant a great deal, and 'it means no less today than then. Whoever today refuses to acknowledge Christ as the Messiah, the sent of God--whoever refuses to obey His teachings, to follow Him-is unrepentant; no matter -how fully he may believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, the sent of God, the Redeemer; and, even though he sor row at the record of the sufferings of Christ, he has not come to the point of repentance until he has renounced the sins for which Christ suffered, and become. a follower of His teachings. Only such **as** are thus repentant have part or lot in the household of faith. God's proposition is not to save people in their sins, but to save them from their sins; and during this Gospel Age the first condition of acceptance,, and

even a reckoned salvation, is. that the sinner shall renounce his sin. and accept the Lord and the righteousness and harmony with God\* for which he stands as representative. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."--1 -John 5:12.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT SELECTING THE BRIDE**

The Apostle would have his hearers understand that the rejection of Christ and His crucifixion did not end the mercy of God toward them. These matters were merely steps in the Divine plan for the execution of Divine mercy; the promises were still theirs, yea, they would be for their children, and ultimately all mankind, however far they might be from God at that time. But he intimates distinctly that a Divine election is connected with the matter, and that only those called of God could at present be expected to hear and to respond. And this we see about us today, and as we look back through the past. As Abraham sent his servant, and invited Rebekah to be the bride of his son, Isaac, so the Heavenly Father has sent His servant, the Holy Spirit, during this Gospel Age, to call the antitype of Rebekah, the Church, to be the Bride of Christ--joint-heir with His Son. As not all the women of the world were called to be the bride of Isaac, so at present not all man kind are called to be the Bride of Christ. Those invited to this joint-heirship must first be related to God, even as the one invited to be Isaac's bride was a relative of Abraham. Hence the step preparatory to this call to joint-heirship with Christ is justification through faith. The Apostle's hearers, being members of the typically justified nation, needed only to accept Christ, as the antitype of Moses, and to recognize spiritual Israel as the antitype of natural Israel, in order to be fully in relationship to the Lord's call.

Evidently the Lord was guiding in respect to every feature of the establishment of the Church, and, it was on this account that so large a number as three thousand persons were prepared to accept the Message, to accept Jesus as their Redeemer and King, and to avow them selves His followers, disciples. It is not necessary that we should suppose that they were all baptized in the one day, not are we, indeed, certain that they- all avowed their allegiance to Messiah in the same day; but that as result of that one day's preaching about three thousand were added to the Church. These were not added to a. denomination, a, party, a sect, but were additions to the one Church, the Body of Christ--members added to the one Head, of the Church. We do not read that their names were en rolled -as members of the Church, nor that they took certain vows, nor that they assented to certain. confessions of faith. He who accepts Christ as his. Redeemer and as his Instructor, who pledges himself to obedience to Him, -and to walk in His footsteps, has taken the only obligation which the Scriptures define as marking those who are probationary members of the true Church. And it is still proper to make an outward acknowledgment or sign of this acceptance of Christ by a symbolical baptism. The real baptism, the real consecration, of the heart, or will, its burial into Christ, takes place first; the outward or symbolical representation of this. in. water is the good, confession by which the individual shows, in God's appointed way, to his fellows or to whoever-may witness,. that. He has died to the world and become alive toward God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

That the new converts were "Israelites indeed" was demonstrated by the, fact that they did not speedily fall away and become cold. On the contrary, we are

in-formed that they continued steadfast, recognizing the teachings of the Apostles--that God specially used them as His representatives: and mouthpieces for the instruction of His Church. They thus continued in fellowship with the household of faith, and this would imply meeting with them every first day of the week to celebrate the Lord's resurrection, to unite their prayers at the Throne of Grace, -and to build one another up in the most holy faith. Breaking the. spiritual bread on these occasions, they also united in a common meal, in remembrance of the Lord's first meeting with them and making Himself known after His resurrection in the blessing and breaking of bread. (Luke 24:35.) This has no reference to the Memorial Supper, Which was celebrated yearly, and not with bread. alone,, but also with the cup, of equal importance.

### **SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY IN THE EARLY CHURCH**

Fear came upon-every soul"--reverence--an appreciation, to some extent at least, of the wonderful relationship to God into which they had been introduced, and of the wonderful power of God working in their midst, and, especially manifested through the miracles and signs which the Apostles were thus permitted to perform for the establishment of the faith of the justified.

The early Church, full of love for the Lord and for each other, is a beautiful and in many respects an ideal picture, in which we can rejoice: no wonder it is recorded that they had, joy, gladness, in their hearts, and in their thanksgiving to God, and that the people in general, their neighbors, were pleased with them and rejoiced in their loving spirit. How delightful it would be if all the", Lord's people in the world today could be thus in harmony with each other and appreciated by their friends and neighbors. Indeed, we must suppose that the Lord specially -shielded the infant Church for a short season, until it should become somewhat established in knowledge and in faith, else the great Adversary would have raised up opposition and persecution more quickly than he did. Even as it was, it was but a, little time until the persecution arose, and with it the testing of those who had espoused the cause of Jesus. Then came the great scattering under persecution, so that those who had learned the way of the Lord -learned additionally patience and obedience; some 'of them even unto death, and others being scattered abroad became preachers of the Gospel of Jesus and their newly found hopes in Him.

The Lord "added to the Church daily such as should be saved," or, as the Revised Version renders it, "such as were being saved." As the same Apostle Peter declares, the salvation promised us is still future, we are waiting for it; it is "to be *brought unto us* at the revelation of our Lord and Savior Jesus," at His Second Advent. (I Pet. 1:13.) But meantime there is a beginning of this salvation in the present life. Even now we are, as the Apostle declares, "saved by hope." (Rom. 8:24.) .,The salvation is not merely of hope, either, but it begins to take hold upon us, mentally, morally and physically the regenerating. Work begins, the new mind, the new will, is the start, and from that proceeds true obedience, "to the Lord's Word, progress in knowledge and progress in grace, and all the progress of the new creature. It often, indeed, means the sacrifice of the earthly interests of the natural man, but it means the development of the new- creature. It means the progress of the work of salvation in the heart, which alone God recognizes; and the- new creature, thus making progress is ultimately to be perfected in salvation by a share in the "first resurrection."

