

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

VOL. VII JUNE I, 1924 NO. 11

IS IT STILL THE NARROW WAY?

"Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."-- Matt. 7:14.

THERE can be no question that the Christian life-as presented to us by Christ and the Apostles is peculiarly a life of suffering, sacrifice, self-denial, and discipline. The above language by the Savior describes the way to life in this Age as a narrow way, for which reason "few there be that find it"; and still fewer successfully pursue it unto the end.

The Master used another figure in presenting the thought of the difficulties and suffering incidental to the life to which He was calling His followers: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matt. 16:24.) Death by crucifixion being the Roman method for executing the death sentence, the cross as an emblem would stand for pain and suffering, ending in death. Therefore, the taking up of the cross would signify the entering into an engagement, a course of life that would mean continual difficulty, trial, and suffering. The Apostles bore testimony to the same truth and line of reasoning, having of course been commissioned of the Lord to speak the same message. Thus said St. Paul: "For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. 2:11-12.) "For if we are planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." (Rom. 6:5.) The words of the Apostle Peter bear out the same thought: "If any man suffer as a Christian; let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." "For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." - 1 Pet. 4:16; 2:21.

It is a most difficult thing, indeed impossible, for the natural man to understand why those accepted into Divine favor should be called to a life of trial and suffering. In order to understand the matter it is necessary to take God's viewpoint; and the Divine standpoint cannot be accepted unless one have faith based upon knowledge of the Divine plans and purposes. The Word of the Lord reveals that God's dealings with His creatures are from the standpoint of their permanent and eternal good and not with the object of having them enjoy temporally the best of the present life. Thus during six thousand years of toil and labor under the curse, humanity is being fitted to properly appreciate

and enjoy eternal life, which will be given to all the good and obedient when placed on trial in the coming Age.

As for Christians, who are being dealt with by the Lord in advance of the world's trial, the Divine Message explains that these are now on trial, called upon to endure certain tests and disciplines, and to prove their love and loyalty toward the Lord by a life of sacrifice and self-denial, a life of full consecration to the will of God; that after having been proved and developed they shall be accorded places of highest honor and responsibility in the Kingdom of the world to come. Thus the voice of Revelation encourages these: "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." -- Rev. 2:10.

Another has well expressed the great truth relating to the glorious High Calling of the Church:

"The conditions on which the Church may be exalted' with her Lord to the Divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) are precisely the same as the conditions on which He received it; even by following in His footsteps (1 Pet. 2:21), presenting herself a living sacrifice, as He did, and then faithfully carrying out that consecration vow until the sacrifice terminates in death. This change of nature from human to Divine is given as a reward to those who, within the Gospel Age, sacrifice the *human nature*, as did our Lord, with all *its* interests, hopes, and aims, present and future -- even unto death. In the resurrection such will awake, not to share with the rest of mankind in the blessed restitution to human perfection and all its accompanying blessings, but to share the likeness and glory and joy of the Lord, as partakers with Him of the Divine nature. -- Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12."

Most appropriately, therefore, did our Master designate this way to joint-heirship with Himself, this way to the Divine nature and immortality, a *Narrow Way*. The word *narrow* expresses exactly the correct thought. It signifies a road or way that has limitations. Those who enter this way agree to place themselves under restraint, to give up many liberties, to permit theta selves to be confined to a certain manner of conduct, of living. We get the thought more vividly if we have before the mind a picture of a narrow lane in which there are many stones, pitfalls, and obstructions, making the way difficult to travel. In this lane there is not much room for liberty or for wandering about. The individual is admonished to look only ahead and press on, denying himself the gratification of the desires and cravings that he would enjoy outside of that narrow way.

We see a contrast as we picture a general broad, easy way. It is so broad that one hardly realizes there is any confinement. Various attractions and objects of interest are there, and the individual runs about with full liberty to engage his interest and attention at any point, and in a general way to do as he pleases. This is the life of self-

indulgence -- the life of the natural man, and it is designated by the Lord as the broad road that leadeth to destruction; that is, it is the road, the tendency of which is toward destruction, death, and as long as the individual remains in that road or way, he is traveling in the opposite direction to that of the way of life.

The Narrow Way, to the contrary, the end of which is life, is the way of self-denial, which signifies the cutting off of liberties and privileges of the natural man. It is a life of cross-bearing. Such is the test that has been placed upon all those who shall share the honors of the Divine nature and of the Heavenly Kingdom. As the world has not understood the lives of the saints, not being able to accept the Divine viewpoint of faith, it has not been "a friend to grace to help them on to God." The world has generally, therefore, had only scorn and contempt for the true followers of Christ. "Marvel not," said Jesus, "if the world hate you. Ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace." Thus this situation continues down to our own day; and by way of stating the question that has been in the minds of the unbelieving world, the poet has written

"What poor, despised company
Of travelers are those,
Who walk in yonder narrow way,
Beset by many foes?"

The answer based upon the sacred words of inspiration is immediately forthcoming:

"Ah, they are of a royal line,
All children of a King,
Heirs of eternal life divine,
And lo! for joy they sing."

The test that has been upon the Lord's people all along the line has indeed been a severe one, and over and over again they have had to settle the question of their determination to follow on and persevere through evil and through good report, midst a crooked and perverse generation among whom they have shone as lights in the world.

PERILS OF THE LATTER DAYS

Though we live in a time greatly in advance of the past, when enlightening influences and civilization have brought in many changes, yet the spirit of the world has not changed, the spiritual darkness in the world has not been lifted; and the conditions of acceptableness to God are the same as they were when announced by Jesus and the Apostles. It is the same narrow way of bearing the cross and of bearing about in the body the "marks of the dying of the Lord Jesus." While in some respects the Christian's course may appear to be

easier than heretofore, yet when all the circumstances are considered, the difficulties are seen to be not less; rather to the contrary, we observe that there are certain dangers and perils to which the faithful are exposed today that did not confront the saints of earlier times. The great increase in knowledge along all lines, the remarkable developments, the achievements of science, the inventions of our day -all furnish far more to entertain the human mind, to give pleasure and power to enjoy, than was ever possible to previous generations. And as the world's knowledge of and faith in God are no greater than before, it means that the spirit of worldliness, of money making, of pleasure seeking, abounds to a degree almost unthinkable. Constantly we are observing the mad rush here and there to gain possession of these new pleasures, in every direction. Humanity is laboring for the "meat that perisheth."

All of these circumstances have come about in connection with the closing days of this Age, when evidently the Church, is completing her course; at a time, too, when the Lord has seen wise to permit general confusion and many strange doctrines and views to be found amongst His professing people.

In view of all of these peculiar and trying conditions of the present hour the great question of most solemn import that is repeatedly coming before us today is, What of the Narrow Way? Is it still the Narrow Way that we purpose to follow? Are we going to permit any of the present conditions to disturb our faith? Will our ardor and love for the Lord and His truth be permitted to grow cold in these days of increased worldliness? Will we be overcome by the spirit of money making and pleasure seeking, or other charms that appeal so strongly to the natural mind? Will we be drawn into any entanglements, alliances, associations, or arrangements of men, and thus expose ourselves to the influence of the worldly spirit?

Nay, verily! As we are confronted with these heart-searching questions, let our answer be that we will be faithful to our Lord, remembering that He has given us many messages of solemn warning respecting the overwhelming influences of the Adversary and of the world in these last days. We are indeed almost within sight of our great inheritance, of the crown of life. We believe the Master bids us hold fast a little longer and if possible summon more courage, more faith, more zeal, that we may be the better fortified to wage a good warfare until we reach the end of our journey.

Let us, therefore, in connection with every problem in these days go to the Word of the Lord for our answer. If we do this humbly and in the spirit of full consecration, we are sure to get wise instruction. As in the beginning of the Age, so now, the Master instructs us that in becoming associates with Him in the Narrow Way, we leave the world and its entanglements and the things of this life all behind. So says the

Apostle: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." -- 2 Cor. 6:14-16.

The words of St. John are of no less solemn import: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world." --- 1 John 2:15, 16.

The experiences, failures, and trials of God's people throughout the Age attest the truthfulness of the claim that only as the Lord's people give strict adherence to the advice foregoing, will they be sure of being kept in this evil day. To yield to the spirit of the world in any degree, or to enter into its schemes, its plans, its expose the Christian to the influence and power of the worldly spirit.

Let us, dearly beloved, resolve anew that the Narrow Way shall remain our choice, that we will continue to follow on to know the Lord, that our choice shall be the cross, and that we shall daily determine to persevere, and by continuance in well-doing seek for 'glory, honor and immortality-eternal life, being fully assured that when our race is run and the laurels of victory won, we shall with all the faithful be able to realize

"How light our trials here have been! how short our pilgrim way!
The life of earth a fitful dream dispelled by dawning day."

UNITED EFFORT IN DISTRIBUTING "THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST"

THOSE who have been edified and blessed in the study of Volume I of the Revelation exposition will be glad to learn that the publishing of the second volume of this work is well under way and that before very long we hope to have copies to send forth. This statement we make in response to the good number of anxious inquiries regarding the matter that have been reaching our office.

We believe that the brethren can hardly realize the extent of the time, labor, and expense in the preparation and publishing of the two volumes treating the Revelation. The task has considerably exceeded what we ourselves originally anticipated, both in time and financial outlay. Considering the fact that our INSTITUTE has not possessed a

treasury adequate to finance such an undertaking in the first place, we have gone forward in this work largely by faith, continually, seeking the guidance and counsel of the Lord. And from what we know of the Lord's love and care, and from the way His providence has heretofore been manifest in connection with this project, we are assured that He is well able and will provide the means necessary to bring the work to completion.

We take occasion here to express to the friends through out the world our heartiest and grateful. appreciation of their interest in this work and the assistance and co-operation given as well as that promised; for this has had largely to do with prompting and encouraging us to press on over many obstacles and to persevere so that this task is now nearing consummation. Above all, we give to the great King of kings our grateful tribute of praise for His help and goodness; for His favor in granting us the gracious privilege of co-operating with Him in this blessed ministry. Again we are impressed to bring to the attention of the brethren the responsibility to the Lord and the Truth that each should feel; that to whatever extent the Lord has enlightened us with the Truth we are correspondingly responsible, and should feel the impulse of His Spirit to pass the Message on to others.

The last book of the Bible, the Revelation, has indeed blessed and comforted the hearts of God's faithful children throughout the Age, and we believe the help from this source has increased in our day. These last days have truly brought new trials and tests to the Lord's people everywhere, and accordingly there is realized a sore need for, some provision of the Lord to confirm the confidence of His trusting children. May we not realize this help from the concluding message of the Bible? Surely it seems that the messages in the book of Revelation that have so richly blessed us should be passed on to others in every possible way.

It is not the unbelieving world we would seek with this word of comfort, well knowing that at the present time they do not have ears to hear; and the Lord has other provision for their enlightenment in the future Age. But it is to the truth-hungry of the present time that comfort and assistance should be rendered. 'We know not just where these are to be found; though most frequently they are to be located among some communion or association of Christian people; hence we would sow beside all such waters.

To facilitate this branch of the ministry we have prepared and published an eight-page leaflet, setting forth briefly and pointedly the two volumes, of the Revelation exposition -- the last page of the leaflet presenting *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, etc. A sample of this leaflet has been sent to each subscriber of the HERALD, and we have provided a good stock on hand for general circulation in much the same way that the friends have been distributing the tracts in the past;

not, however, to be thrown about carelessly or indiscriminately, but to be placed here and there in such hands as would seem at least some prospect of their being read.

It is our thought that this Revelation exposition may be a means of assisting other brethren of the Truth with whom we have been more or less closely associated in past years. These last days have indeed witnessed much confusion and distress of mind among the people who above all others should be well equipped for the battle and the Narrow Way. Our suggestion is that so far as possible the names and addresses of all such brethren be secured.

In addition to this, we suggest the securing of addresses of Christian people, no matter of what denomination; there are various ways of obtaining these addresses; many names of Christian people may be secured in libraries, by consulting magazines and the official papers or journals of various denominations. Our thought is to have both classes of names above mentioned sent to us and we will mail them in return the leaflet with an appropriate letter of encouragement that may assist to awaken interest.

In sending us names as above suggested, please write very plainly and give complete address. Also please indicate such as have some knowledge of the present truth by placing an (x) in front of the name; and others of the mixed class to whom the Truth in general is unknown, please mark with an (o). Many of the friends have already sent us addresses as outlined above, but we desire to encourage this work on a larger scale, believing that if all the interested friends diligently set themselves to engage in this ministry; that thousands of names may reach us to whom we can send an appealing message that may result in the opening of the eyes of understanding of some to behold the length and breadth of the Divine love and goodness. We are assured in the Lord's Word that the Truth is for such as have an ear to hear. The Lord alone knows where the hearing ears are. Let us pray for His guidance, and especially for more zeal and love toward Him and His people, and thus carry out the spirit of the Apostolic admonition -- "we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."

"PROPHECY AGAINST THE SHEPHERDS"

"I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away." -- Ezek. 34; Psa. 137:1-6.

IN ancient times it was a common thing to compare the people of a nation to sheep and their rulers shepherds; thus not infrequently we note this usage amongst the Old Testament Prophets. Micaiah prophesied that he saw all Israel scattered upon the mountains as sheep that have no shepherd. (1 Kings 22 :17. This was three hundred years

before Ezekiel prophesied. Again, Jeremiah in Jerusalem made a comparison like that of Ezekiel (Jer. 23:1-8.) The Prophet Zechariah echoed the words of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel. (Zech. 11:15-17.) At our Lord's First Advent He had compassion upon the people because they were as sheep not having a shepherd. (Mark 6:34 ; Matt. 9:36.) Another spoke of the false teachers of his day as shepherds that without fear feed themselves. -- Jude 12.

Long years after Ezekiel with others had been borne away to Babylon he looked around him and saw the exiled Hebrews imposed upon by leaders that fed themselves and not their sheep, killing the sheep and clothing themselves with the wool; neglecting to feed the flock, neglecting to lead them to the green pastures of God's Word and to the still waters of Divine Truth.

Thus we have in chapter 34 of Ezekiel's prophecy that which may be regarded as a parable fully applicable, we believe, at the present time. It pictures the Lord's flock scattered here and there, some wounded, some torn, some lean and hungry; all neglected so far as the false shepherds are concerned.

We cannot understand this as signifying nominal Christians, but the true saints of God. Nominal Christianity fares well enough, but the Lord does not recognize merely nominal Christians as His flock. They are the tares, not the wheat; they are the goats, not the sheep. The shepherds who neglect to care for the sheep, to provide them with the spiritual food and to assist them to find it, to appropriate it, are often quite busy with the goats -the worldly elements of their congregations, or with some "great work" for the Lord. Their church arrangements are often especially for the goat, or tare class. These do not care for spiritual food; they must be provided with entertainments, suppers, sociables, discourses on politics, or harmless dissertations well filled with jokes. Do not they furnish most of the money? Would they not withdraw from the church if spiritual food were dispensed? For these, some are providing "smokers," parish houses, well supplied with games, etc.

But the shepherds were not appointed by the Lord to look after the goats and the tare class, but to look after the wheat, the Lord's sheep. They are unfaithful pastors, or shepherds; and this prophecy is a reproof to them. The true flock of God is scattered, some here, some there, in many denominations and outside of all. They become the prey of the beastly of the world, and are ensnared into various false doctrines, but "neither did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not My flock. Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord! Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against the shepherds; and I will require My flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the

shepherds feed themselves any more for I will deliver My flock from their mouth."

THE SHEPHERD GATHERING HIS FLOCK

Many Bible students believe that this Scripture has been in process of fulfillment for some time past-that we are living in the *Parousia* of Christ, the time when He is searching out the truly 'consecrated of His people, and gathering them out of all sectarian systems and from the world, to Himself. Surely it is true that the shepherds are ceasing to feed the flock; for very few of the flock of the Lord's consecrated people any longer seek spiritual food at their hands. They are wandering in a famishing condition, and much in danger of falling into the various snares of the Adversary.

However, the Great Shepherd Himself is with His flock, and is causing His voice to be heard; and the sheep will be gathered to Him out of every nation and out of every denomination. Truly, Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me"; and "a stranger will they not follow; for they know not the voice of strangers." (John 10:27, 5.) The voice of the Lord, of the Great Shepherd, amongst His sheep is to be heard now because it is the time of His Second Presence. He is about to complete His flock of this Gospel Age and to glorify them with Himself in the First Resurrection. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow them; they shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever.

"Thus with the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search My Sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out My sheep, and I will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land." -- Ver. 11-13.

The Homeland of the Lord's sheep of this Gospel Age is Heaven itself, and His bringing them to it will mean their resurrection change. Then they shall be in the Kingdom with Jesus Himself-still His sheep, still His flock, still His bride, still His members. But He declares also, "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." -- John 10 :16.

THE SECOND FLOCK AND ITS FOLD

These other sheep of the Lord, we believe, will include all mankind who, during the Millennial Kingdom, will be glad to avail themselves of the great provision the Lord has made for them His Plan. They are other sheep in the sense that they will be of a different nature from the flock which the Lord is selecting during this Gospel Age. The flock now being called and gathered are being begotten to the Divine nature, a spirit nature, and they will attain to this spirit nature by a

resurrection change; as it is written, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." - 1 Cor. 15:50

The other sheep will be the great flock of the Lord, the great family of Adam, purchased by Jesus. For a thousand years the of calling and gathering mankind and separating between sheep and goats will progress, as outlined in Matthew 25:31-46. The whole world will be granted the opportunity of taking their choice as to whether they will be sheep or goats. And nothing "in the Scriptures informs us whether the sheep or the goats will be the more numerous. We are merely informed that all will have the invitation to become the Lord's sheep, to come under His shepherding care; and by so doing and proving their loyalty to Him and developing His spirit, His character-likeness, they will be granted everlasting life on the human plane, the earthly plane.

There the Lord will bring the restitution which St. Peter mentions (Acts 3:19-21), which will be offered to Adam and all his race who will not receive the call of this Gospel Age. Theirs will not be so high a call, but will evidently be a glorious one. The whole earth -- a paradise, an earthly heaven -- will be their everlasting portion, but it will not be the Heavenly Home to which the Church has been invited. The world's blessing of restitution to human perfection, to the image and likeness of God in the flesh, will not be the equivalent of the spiritual nature granted to the Church of this Age, but it will be wonderfully grand.

As for the goats of that time, thank God! they are not to be tormented, as many of us once supposed. Rather, they are to be cut off from life, as is implied in the Greek word *Kolasin*. "These [the goats] shall go away into everlasting cutting off; but the righteous [the sheep] into life everlasting." (Matt. 25:46.) The Great Shepherd, who is now gathering His flock of this Gospel Age, will remain therefore for a thousand years to gather out fully all His flock of the Millennial Age, to separate them fully from all having the contrary spirit, and to destroy completely all except His sheep. All who really love righteousness and hate iniquity, when given a clear opportunity to discern and to take their stand, will choose the right and become the Lord's sheep. All others, who will to be wicked, will die; as it is written, "All the wicked will He destroy." -- Psa. 145 :20.

"I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and I will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment"-with a righteous recompense.- Ver. 15,16.

THE FLOCK CRITICIZED ALSO

Not merely the shepherds, the pastors, the preachers, the ministers, are reproved by the Lord, but also some of His flock not in official positions. In the Day of the Lord's presence, these also will be dealt with, as we read

"And as for you, O My flock, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats. Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? And as for My flock, they have eaten that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they have drunk that which ye have fouled with your feet. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God unto them, Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad, therefore will I save My flock, and they shall be no more a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle." -- Ver. 17-22.

The new order of things incidental to Messiah's Kingdom is here brought to our attention. This already has begun in respect to the Gospel Church. Some who have been considered quite prominent amongst the Lord's people, pushing and managing its affairs, and discounting the Lord's true sheep as peculiar people, will be reproved by the Lord in this day. The poor, the outcasts, the peculiar, are the ones that He styled His flock, and that He was to especially gather and especially feed and especially heal in this time. And is it not so? Is the Lord not feeding His sheep and blessing them irrespective of all sectarianism, and wherever they may be, in every land? Verily, He is searching them out and feeding them.

Truly we have in these last times signal evidence of the fulfillment of the prophetic testimony concerning the Lord's people and of His supervising care over His flock. Going back to the beginning of the Age we observe that St. Paul with an undimmed vision of the coming times sounded clearly the note of warning which has oft times proved the Apostle's voice to be that of the seer. He foretold the coming in of false shepherds designating them grievous wolves who would not spare the flock, but would devour and scatter and thus cause the severest trials and tests upon the faithful.

It was not long after the Apostle's decease that his words were fulfilled. Throughout the Age history has often been repeated; time and again have those of the wolfish disposition crept in, having fastened on them the fleece or sheep's clothing in disguise -- "not sparing the flock." Time and again they have wrought havoc amongst the Lord's people. Nor is the present time an exception in this regard. We have observed unmistakably in these very last days the wolfish character of some who have stood forth amongst the Lord's faithful

people claiming to be true spiritual guides and faithful shepherds of the flock.

A TIMELY WARNING

Brother Russell clearly sensed the general condition that had developed before his eyes among the people who had become informed above all others in Christendom. Shortly before his death he spared no words that he might impress the brethren with the sense of the perilous condition in our midst. Thus he writes:

"We believe that a great crisis is upon the Bible students, and that the sooner it is discerned, the more successfully it may be passed. It may mean divisions; but as the Apostle remarked, divisions are sometimes necessary that the approved course and the approved doctrines and the approved methods may be discerned, and that the true teachers be the more fully appreciated. --1 Cor. 11:18, 19.

"The import of this language unmistakably shows that as a faithful shepherd himself, he was seeking to protect and guard the interests of the faithful; and thus he continued:

"It causes real grief to write that much of the difficulty and danger to the Church seems to lie at the door of the Elders and Deacons -- not all, thank God, but apparently a small minority of them, judging from the queries which come to the Office from time to time from the bewildered sheep, who seek advice as to their proper course. The true, loyal servants in the Church should be all the more appreciated by the Lord's people in proportion as they realize the difference between true Elders and Deacons and those who are untrue. Nor are we writing with a view to the discouragement of the unfaithful, but rather to open their eyes to the true situation, that perchance they may be recovered out of the snare of the Adversary and become helpers of the Lord's Flock, instead of hinderers.

"So far as we are able to judge, the same conditions prevail today amongst Bible Students which the Apostle pointed out to the Elders of the Church of Ephesus when he charged them: 'Take, therefore, heed unto yourselves and all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with the blood of His own [Son].' (Acts 20:28.) St. Paul's prophecy came true: 'After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the Flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word .of His grace.' -- Acts 20:29-32.

"COURSE OF TWO OF GOD'S SERVANTS CONTRASTED"

"As it was ambition which first misled Lucifer, and converted a glorious servant of God into an adversary, so it is his spirit that has been dangerous all the way down. The spirit of our Master was the very reverse of this. 'He humbled Himself, even unto death,' in the doing of the will of the Father. We see nothing of the spirit of pride or ambition or self-seeking of any Sort in our Master. We are warned by the Apostle to humble ourselves after His example, if we desire to be exalted with Him in His Kingdom.

"But how many seem to forget entirely these Scriptures, which we so frequently bring to the attention of the Lord's people as essential to our attaining to any position in the Kingdom!

"We believe that the testimony of the Lord's Word and the signs about us clearly show that this time of special testing and trial upon the Lord's people, this harvesting time, is soon to close, and all the true sheep will have been gathered to the Heavenly Fold. Meantime, the good work begun with the Gospel sheep will be extended amongst all mankind.

Never again will the Lord leave His sheep without shepherding. We are not from this to understand that He made a mistake when He said; "If I go away, I will come again"; but rather that the leaving of His flock for a time was incidental to their testing, their proving, and development, that those loyal to the Lord, the principles of righteousness, and the instructions of His Word might be manifested, even though they were scattered, and that others also might be manifested as unfaithful. It is, however, refreshing to know that throughout the entire Millennial Age, until all the work of perfecting the sheep shall have been' accomplished, the Shepherd will be with them. Thus we read:

"And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even My servant David; He shall feed them, and He shall be their Shepherd. And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it. And I will make with them a Covenant of Peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods." -- Ver. 23-25.

We are not from this to understand that the Prophet David, of old is to be made Jehovah's representative and be given the care of the sheep in the future. The word David signifies *beloved*; and the thought, we believe, is that the antitype of David is meant. Jesus is preeminently beloved of the Father; and the Bride class, the Church, are to be the members of Christ, their Head-members of the Beloved. Thus the Lord Jesus said of His people, "The Father Himself loveth you." We see then that The Christ, Head and Body -- Jesus and the Church--are to be the antitypical David, or Beloved of God, into whose care all

who are His sheep or who desire to become His sheep during the Millennial Age will be committed. The wild beasts, representing the evil-doers, those who will devour, destroy, and do harm, will be caused to cease; and the whole world will become "the fold." No longer will there be need of making a special fold, building the fences against the enemies; for the sheep will be in a quiet and restful condition" -- in the woods.

"In other words, the close of the Millennium will witness what the Lord has declared, that nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all His holy Kingdom. (Isa. 11 :9.) It will witness also what Jesus has declared, namely that from that time onward, there shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying, no more curse, because all the former things shall have passed away. "And He that sat upon the Throne said, Behold, I make all things new." (Rev. 21:3-5.) Even Satan shall be bound, to deceive the world no more until Messiah shall have fully accomplished .the work of perfecting the flock.

"There shall be showers of blessing,'
This is the promise of love.
There shall be seasons refreshing,
Sent from the Savior above. "

'There shall be showers of blessing,'
Precious reviving again;
Over the hills 'and the valleys
Sound of abundance of rain."

'There, shall be showers of blessing,'
Oh! that today they might fall,
Now as to God we're confessing,
Now as on Jesus we call!"

DANIEL THE BELOVED OF JEHOVAH

SERIES XXII

THE PROPHET A STUDENT OF TIMES AND SEASONS

"And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; . . . even the man [angel] Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation." -- Dan. 9:20, 21.

THE events of this most remarkable chapter took place toward the close of the Prophet Daniel's life history. Almost seventy years of his eventful life had been spent at Babylon. The record of his early years

clearly implies that he could not have been far from sixteen years of age when, with others of the most intelligent of the youthful Hebrews, he was carried a captive to this great idolatrous city. At the time the wonderful revelation contained in this chapter was given, he must have been long past fourscore years of age. Nebuchadnezzar,' the great monarch of Babylon, whose faithful servant the Prophet had been for over forty years, had been dead a quarter of a century. Evil-merodach, Belshazzar, and the other weak, unworthy successors of Nebuchadnezzar had-all met untimely deaths. The mighty empire of Babylon had been overthrown, and Darius the Mede had assumed the reins of authority in the great city. It is supposed by some historians that Cyrus the Great, at this time had not ascended the throne, but was commanding the immense forces of the Medo-Persian army; others suppose that he was ruling conjointly with Darius. However this may be, this latter king could scarcely have reigned a full year; and this seems all-sufficient to account for the fact that he is not mentioned by secular historians, and that his name does not appear in Ptolemy's canon. "Ptolemy's specific object being chronology, he omitted those [names] who continued not on the throne a full year, and referred the months of their reigns, partly to the preceding and partly to the succeeding monarch."*

* Concerning this king further, see H '23-285.

THE PROPHET'S UNSELFISH LOVE

It was during the brief reign of Darius, through the plotting of his jealous associates in office, that Daniel was cast into the den of lions and was miraculously delivered. It was at this time that Daniel was promoted to the highest position of trust in the kingdom. One of the commendable, yet rare things in such cases -- a thing which reveals a remarkable trait of character possessed by the aged Prophet, was that notwithstanding the long years he had resided in Babylon, and the distinguished honors that had been conferred upon him, Daniel had not in any measure lost his interest in and love for his beloved fatherland, though he had been exiled from it from his boyhood. A remarkable thing about this -is that his love was purely unselfish, for he could not possibly have hoped that he himself could ever return to his beloved country; the journey being too difficult to undertake for one of his advanced years. He must have surely realized at this time that his life work was drawing to a close, and that he would soon sleep with his fathers. His last resting place would have to be by the banks of the Euphrates, where he had spent nearly his whole life. In the language of the revealing angel -- a little later on -- he would there "rest and [by resurrection] stand in his lot at the end of the days." -

DANIEL INQUIRES WHEN THE SEVENTY YEARS COMMENCE

The events recorded in chapter 9 are naturally divided into three parts. In verses 1-3 it is recorded that Daniel had been engaged in the study of what God had foretold through other prophets, particularly Jeremiah, concerning the Divine purpose to restore his people to the land of their fathers. He had been studying a time prophecy. The prophecy was that of the seventy years of his people's captivity, servitude, and the desolations of Jerusalem. Through his studies he had reached the conclusion that these seventy years had nearly run their full course. Some today seem to have the idea that it would not require much study to reach such a conclusion; that all he would need to do was 'to reason, "I have now been almost seventy years in Babylon, therefore the seventy years must be nearly over." The most, however, that he could gather from his studies was that an approaching crisis, a great turning point in the history of his beloved people and land was near at hand. He had learned this, not by any special revelation, but by a study of books.

The predictions which more specially engaged his attention were the two references to the seventy years recorded in Jer. 25 and 29. Doubtless he had come to see as he compared these predictions with the records of the events that occurred in his younger days, that the servitude, captivity, and desolations did not all begin to take place at one and the same -date, but that they began at different times and had been accomplished by stages, during a period of about nineteen years. The question for him to decide was *which of* the dates in the several stages of the captivity, servitude, and desolations was the critical one; the one from which to begin to calculate?

Was it in the third year of Jehoiakim, 606 B. C., when he himself had been carried to Babylon? or, to quote another, "was it the following year, B. C. 605, when Judah had for the first time become thoroughly tributary to Nebuchadnezzar? or was it seven years later, B. C. 598, when in his eighth year that monarch a second time successfully attacked Judah and Jerusalem, carrying captive Jehoiachin with his treasures, and all the principal men of the kingdom? or was it yet again eleven years later still; B. C. 587, when Zedekiah, the uncle of Jehoiachin, who had been placed on the throne of Judah as a sort of Babylonian viceroy, having rebelled against his master, Nebuchadnezzar, in the nineteenth year of his reign, once more besieged and took Jerusalem? On this occasion the city was finally broken up, and Zedekiah, after seeing his sons slain before his face, and having his own eyes put out at Riblah, was carried away to languish and die in exile. Later in that same year Nebuzaradan burned the temple, raised Jerusalem to the ground, and carried off to Babylon the rest of the people. This was the last stage of the long process of the decay and

fall of Jewish monarchy, and the record of it terminates with the fateful words, 'so Judah was carried away- out of their land.'

**"SEARCHED DILIGENTLY TO KNOW
WHAT MANNER OF TIME"**

"Now here was a period of [nearly] twenty years, more than a fourth part of the predicted seventy, during which the captivity had been slowly accomplished by stages. Daniel had consequently need to pray, and to study carefully, before he could discern whether the restoration of his people and of that temple worship for which his soul yearned, were still [nearly] twenty years distant, or even then close at hand.

"Moreover; as he pondered the expression, 'seventy years,' the question could hardly have failed to occur to him, What sort of years - - sacred years or secular? The sacred year of the Jews was lunar, for the intervals between the feasts and the fasts of the Levitical calendar were all strictly lunar; but they also used a longer tropical year, as did the Babylonians, while the Egyptians employed a retrograde solar one. The true length of the years intended must therefore have been a point on which Daniel reflected, and that perhaps without being able to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, though he must have perceived that the actual duration of the captivity would vary to the extent of two years, according to the calendar employed.

"As he studied, the thought, proved by the result to be a true one, could scarcely fail to be suggested to his mind, that the restoration might probably be as gradual and as much by stages as the captivity had been, and so occupy an *era*, rather than a *year*. *His* people had not all come to Babylon at one time. Was it likely that they would all leave at one time? Jerusalem and its temple had not fallen in a day, nor in a year, but by stages. The temple had been first despoiled of its treasures, and then consumed with fire eleven years later. Was its reconstruction and its rededication to be similarly interrupted? The national overthrow had been gradual; was it not likely that the national restoration would also be gradual? As he pondered, the question would arise in his mind, 'If so, which will be the principle stage?' Already the first was past. Babylon the overthrewer had been overthrown; the city still stood, but its power was gone. The Median monarch occupied the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, and the Persian Empire had succeeded the Babylonian. "This fact would greatly confirm the faith of Daniel as to the nearness of the restoration of his people, because Jeremiah had said, 'This whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.' (Jer. 25 :I I, I2.)

'Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured;. and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee, will I give for a prey.' -- Jer. 30:19.

"Daniel's studies of chronological prophecy were at a time when one of the salient points of the Divine prediction had already been accomplished. Not only had the time run out, but one part of the thing predicted had happened. How confirmed must his faith have been, and how confident his hopes, though the restoration itself had not come Yet there were difficulties through which he could not quite see. The promised deliverer was not yet on the throne; Cyrus was there; but he was not sole monarch, nor yet in a position to make the predicted decree. Darius was the ruling monarch, and prophecy had, two hundred years before his birth, named Cyrus as the deliverer. Would Darius soon die then, and Cyrus succeed him? There was probably no immediate prospect of this, but Daniel doubted not that in some way God would make His promise good, fulfilling His own predictions, and that speedily. Cyrus would become supreme ruler, and would restore Israel and rebuild Jerusalem. Knowing this, he bowed himself in confession and prayer, and in humble supplication that the promise of restoration might come to pass, even as the threats of judgment had done." -- H. G. Guinness.

"I SET MY FACE UNTO THE LORD GOD"

Many expressions in the prayer seem to indicate deep sorrow of heart on the part of the devout Prophet. May it not have been because he failed to see that fervent, holy enthusiasm to return to their native land and resume again the worship of Jehovah, that ought to have characterized the chosen people? It seems that many of the Hebrews had settled down and become contented with their condition and had little desire to return to Palestine. This most naturally would cause the devout servant of Jehovah sadness of heart; and this to some extent may account for his words: "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." Next there is recorded his most remarkable prayer; and finally he tells of the angel Gabriel's appearance, and the prophetic revelation of the "seventy weeks."

His love and interest in his beloved country was deep and fervent; but it was not so much this that moved him to offer up the petition which is recorded in verses 4-19. This prayer of the aged statesman, and venerable prophet of Jehovah, which in many respects is the most remarkable one recorded in the Sacred Writings, more than anything else discloses to our view the inner life of this devout servant of Jehovah. The fact that he was chosen by Nebuchadnezzar and his successors to fill the most important places in the affairs of

government -- for the long period of nearly seventy years, shows how remarkable was his wisdom and foresight as a statesman; and not only so but it discloses; his thorough honesty and trustworthiness in the performance of his arduous, official duties during this long period.

Beyond all else, the most significant thing disclosed in his prayer is that in all the cares of state, in all the pressing duties of his office, he was more noted for his deep spirituality, which is seen in his private devotions. His life was a living exemplification of the exhortation of the great Apostle, "Pray without ceasing." This characteristic proves conclusively that his remarkable wisdom and ability to fill so ably these responsible positions was the result of his living piety. The habit of maintaining a 'close personal communion with God, and a constant leaning upon Him for wisdom and strength, are the sources from which spring man's greatest dignity and truly grand successes. Daniel could not possibly "have been the man that he was so honored a premier, so wise a prophet, so beloved a favorite of heaven, but for his having been so earnest a believer and so devout and fervent a suppliant" at the throne of Jehovah. If the responsible places in our government were filled with men whose inner lives were characterized by the humble, dependent, and reverent state of mind that is disclosed in this wonderful prayer of the Prophet, there would cease to be the shame and scandal which we see exhibited in the administration of public affairs today. The great secret of Daniel's success in the positions of public trust, which he held for so long a time, was that no plots to undermine his character, no misrepresentations of his motives and acts, no subtle attacks to draw him away from his morning and evening devotions and his private communion with the great Jehovah, from whom he obtained the wisdom to perform his individual and public tasks, was successful.

VALUE OF STUDY OF TIME PROPHECY

It is by a consideration of the various elements that are contained in his prayer that we are enabled to get a deep insight into the innermost feelings of the man greatly beloved of God. Concerning this prayer, one has said "I know not that there is in the Bible a sublimer litany than that which is contained in this chapter; or clauses more appropriate as channels of a Christian's prayers, than these earnest, beautiful, yet simple petitions." In the first place we may learn what constituted the innermost desires of the Prophet's heart; what it was that moved him to express himself so earnestly; what it was that inflamed, and fed his desires; for holy desire is the first element of all true prayer. As already intimated, Daniel, while himself a prophet, was also a student of prophecy, and particularly chronological prophecy.

Is there not much reason to believe that one great cause of the departures from the Bible as a Divine revelation on the part of so many in the professed Church of Christ today, as also the leanness of modern piety, is that there is such a lamentable lack of searching to discover what the Prophets have written concerning "things to come." Referring to those who neglect or despise the sure word of prophecy one has said, "Let such study as Daniel studied, and discover the Divine providential administrations of God in the affairs of men; and they would then partake more of Daniel's spirit of wisdom and unction and true devotion." The Apostle Peter informs us that the prophets of old inquired and searched diligently concerning the time and [note carefully] the *manner* of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that was to follow. Daniel is surely one of those referred to by the Apostle.

Many tell us that the study of prophecy is unprofitable; indeed, that such studies are barren of good results; and some even go so far as to say that such studies are detrimental to spirituality. How common it is to hear Christian people say that we are not authorized to pry into what they call the secrets of unfulfilled or fulfilled predictions. But Daniel was not of this mind. He took delight in what God had said concerning things to come, and particularly in those things that concerned his own people in future times. Instead of working harm to his piety, it had the effect only of kindling the flame of love and devotion to God and His cause. Notwithstanding all the duties and cares of state, and notwithstanding the much time required to attend faithfully to these matters, he found time to study the "sure word of prophecy" and instead of unfitting him for his daily tasks, he was able to attend more diligently to the "king's business." Where in history do we read of a better public servant than Daniel? His qualities as such were tested for a period of seventy years, and through at least three administrations of state; and his eminent fitness to fill these responsible positions was fully acknowledged, even by those' who hated him most.

DANIEL MOURNED THE SINS OF HIS PEOPLE

Daniel's service to the king, let it be remembered, while faithfully performed, was only a secondary affair in his life. His chief interest was all the time in the plans and purposes of God for His people and the relationship these would eventually sustain to the world. He was desirous of learning all that God had revealed concerning these things. He was deeply interested in the people of God and the city that was called by His name, and the sanctuary, the temple in which He had chosen to make Himself known. This at the time was laying desolate in ruins. As long as it lay in this desolate condition, the aged Prophet felt keenly that it was a dishonor, a reproach to the Great Jehovah.

But that which grieved Daniel more than anything else, that which constituted the chief feature of his prayer, was that which caused this punishment and these desolations. He realized keenly that the cause was the sins of his countrymen. A study of this prayer discloses an abundance of material most worthy of our consideration, and material which may be made use of to our profit. This fervent petition, this pouring out of the Prophet's soul to God was not the result of a sudden, spasmodic feeling that would subside almost as quickly as it came; rather it was the result of much thought and study.

It is most significant that before offering up his prayer, Daniel humbled himself under the mighty hand of God by fasting in sackcloth and ashes. This was no formal fasting. It had an end to be accomplished. It was by this that he was made to feel his own littleness, his own unworthiness from the natural standpoint to approach the Infinite God. It caused him to realize how undeserving either he or his fellow-countrymen were, of receiving the Divine favor. It brought him into a state of mind in which he would be able to appreciate more the long-suffering and tender mercy of Jehovah toward himself and his people. His mind thus became filled with a deeper consciousness of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the wickedness that had brought upon his nation and his countrymen this long and severe punishment; and, as measurably blameless and holy and pleasing to God, as his own life had been, he still felt most deeply his own natural unworthiness; and on this account he identified himself with his fellow-countrymen and their sins, not only with those who had been the cause of this punishment, but also those who had lived through the period of the captivity. He felt that even then, when the time was near for God's favor to be shown them in their deliverance, that deliverance would not be because of their worthiness, but because of God's great mercy. He confesses with deep and heartfelt contrition the righteousness of God in inflicting this severe judgment on His people.

THE EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER

While deeply concerned in the matter of his people's restoration for their own sake, he was particular to express his chief concern as being that the worship of Jehovah might be established again and thus the reproach upon His cause, which had long prevailed, be removed. His greatest desire, as expressed in his prayer, was for forgiveness of sin, and the restoration of, his nation to obedience and fellowship with God. He longed that his people might receive the blessings that could come only from heaven -- the blessings of pardon, peace, and purity.

His prayer was not "a mere outcry under the miseries which sin had brought, but an unreserved confession of inherent evilness and ill-desert, and a thorough acquiescence in the righteousness of God's

punishments which He visits upon them." It avails but little, if anything, that afflictions be removed, that a release from punishment be effected, if the inner cause of the punishment be not healed. Therefore the plea upon which the prayer of Daniel was based is the only one that avails with God. It was not that his people merited any right or claim to Jehovah's clemency, but entirely that He would. show mercy for the sake of the honor of His great and holy Name.

The prayer expressed both pathos and importunity. It was a tax upon all the feelings and energies of the aged Prophet's being. It was a prayer that the Prophet felt deeply must be answered, and these characteristics in a marked degree are disclosed in its concluding words: "O Lord hear; O Lord forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not for Thine own sake, O my God; for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy Name."

Who can doubt that such praying, such confession, such earnest pleading and supplication, could but reach the ear of the infinite, gracious, and merciful God! It contained all the elements that constituted true prayer. It came from the humble and contrite heart, and it was inspired by a desire that Jehovah should be honored. Such a prayer God cannot fail to hear and answer. It was founded, like all true prayer must be, upon the promises of God, and upon the fact that the time appointed was near for Jehovah to fulfil His promise to His people. He had foretold through Jeremiah that such a prayer would be offered up, and had promised to answer such a prayer.

DANIEL'S PRAYER BRINGS VISIT OF GABRIEL

Daniel had discovered by studying the sacred records that the due time had come to plead the promise. This shows us the close connection that prayer has with the unfolding of God's purposes for His people and for the world. When the time comes for Him to fulfil His promises -- to introduce a new feature in His dealings with humanity, there is always found one individual at least, to plead the fulfillment of His promises. Some seem to have the impression that because God has promised to perform a certain thing and has set the time for such a performance, that there is no need to pray. This is not true. The soul that is closely watching the unfolding of the Divine purposes -- who has a knowledge of the times and seasons of God's Plan, instead of being deterred from pleading with God, is rather encouraged and inspired to do so.

Daniel's next words reveal to us how heaven and its holy inhabitants were affected by his prayer. It caused a great sensation there. It reached the throne of Him who rules the universe, and one of heaven's mightiest angels was sent on a special mission to earth to answer the aged Prophet's pleadings. Closely examining the prayer we discover that its great burden was not so much for his people's restoration; he

knew that that had already been foretold, and he believed the time was near at hand for its fulfillment. That which most deeply exercised his mind, and caused him to be so earnest, so importunate in his supplication was, as we have noted, the forgiveness of sin; and the gracious answer addressed itself to this great desire of his heart. The wail of futurity was lifted, and he was permitted to behold that which no previous revelation had disclosed -that of the exact time of the first advent of the Messiah "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Israel had long been looking and waiting for the great Messiah king. Up to this time no definite information in regard to the exact time had been given. The time had come to make this known and Daniel who had for seventy long years stood loyal to his God, Daniel the beloved one of Jehovah, was to be the honored recipient of this knowledge, and to be the recorder of it for the benefit of coming generations. Daniel informs us that he had scarcely ceased praying, when the mighty angel of God, Gabriel, whom he saw once before in a vision, touched him at about the time of the evening oblation. "And he informed me," said Daniel, "and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to skew thee; for thou art a man greatly beloved [in heaven]; therefore understand the matter and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

LOYALTY TO GOD, HINDRANCES AND SUCCESS

"Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God."

-- Isa. 40:1; Ezra 3:8-13; 6:14, 15.

LOYALTY to the Lord, and faith in His promises, are costly. The Lord has so arranged the matter, to the intent that only those who are willing to pay the price may enjoy these blessings. Only the faithful and the obedient are willing to pay the price. Thus the Lord proves His people, separating the merely nominal believers from the true, selecting to Himself His "jewels," His "peculiar people."

This principle applied to the Jews who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon captivity, in response to the Lord's provision through the proclamation of King Cyrus. Out of the great hosts of that nation carried captive-first the ten tribes, and later the two tribes -- there were only forty-two thousand three hundred sixty (42,360) of the proper faith in God and the Abrahamic promise, and of the proper weal and

courage, etc., ready to respond. The remainder of the nation had become so comfortably settled in Babylon, socially and financially, that their interests in these things outweighed their faith in the Abrahamic promise: Thus God sifted the nation, and in this motley group from all the tribes He had the jewel class -the very best and most loyal part of all the seed of Abraham. As the Apostle explains in respect to the elect Church in this Gospel Age, so we might say of these Jews returning from Babylonian exile, that there were not many of them great, or wise, or learned, or noble, according to the course and wisdom of this world.

HOPES DEFERRED, TRIALS MANY

Nor had their trials ceased with the surrender of brighter prospects in Babylonia. They left their friends in Babylon, full of zeal, and to some extent admired by their more worldly wise compatriots, who preferred to remain in the foreign land. The escort granted them by the king, the presents of money, and the costly vessels of the temple service, were with them, and their hopes ran high as they began their journey of nearly 800 miles, about the distance from Philadelphia to Chicago. According to tradition they must have been about four months traveling, whereas an express train in our day would make the distance in seventeen hours.

The toilsome journey ended, they finally rested at Jerusalem, only to find still greater discouragements. But a very few of them had ever seen the place before, and those few had seen through the eyes of childhood, for it had now been seventy years since the captivity commenced when Daniel and his companions were taken, and the city had lain waste a large portion of this time, according to the Word of the Lord. (2 Chron. 36:21.) The wall and the temple had been demolished by Nebuchadnezzar's orders, and many of the private residences were also left in ruins, and now for seventy years of such desolations, the place was a wilderness. Trees were growing in what formerly were streets. Everything was disorder. Any other class than those full of faith and zeal, as these were, would have been utterly discouraged. We are to remember that the Lord thus tries our courage, and faith, and zeal, not to destroy these qualities, but to deepen and fix them-to establish us, to develop us in character. As with the typical Israelites there, so it is now with the spiritual Israelites -- all such trying experiences, under Divine providence, will work out to our advantage if we will but persevere in our faith, and love, and zeal.

It required more than a year to put themselves in reasonable condition for living, and then their attention turned to the rebuilding of the temple. That they should have begun so soon to think of the house of the Lord speaks well of their spiritual condition. It is at this point that our lesson properly begins, describing the laying of the foundation of

the temple, and the priests and the Levites, appropriately robed, making a joyful noise before the Lord, as representing the faith and confidence of the people in the precious promises associated with that temple and with that city. Alas, poor Jews! we sympathize with them greatly as we remember that as a nation they clung to those Abrahamic promises for over 1,600 years, and yet finally rejected the Prince of life, and in consequence were left desolate, as a house, or nation. The Apostle remarks, concerning their faith in the Abrahamic promise, "unto which promise our twelve tribes instantly serving God hope to come."

How glad we are for the poor Jews that although Israel hath not obtained the chiefest favor, but only the "elect" have obtained it, while the rest were blinded, nevertheless God's mercy and favor still have them in mind, and assure us that they shall obtain mercy through our mercy, shortly -that the blindness that has been on Israel, during the selection of spiritual Israel, will surely pass away, furnishing them the chief opportunity for reconciliation to God, under the New Covenant provisions of the Millennial Age. -Heb. 8 :10-12.

A NEW SONG IN MY MOUTH

As with the mind's eye we see those poor but faithful Israelites, out of all the tribes, praising God as they laid the foundation of the Temple, it suggests to us how much more the spiritual Israelites who have returned from mystic Babylon should shout and sing the praises of our King from our higher standpoint of knowledge and appreciation of His grace and truth. Speaking of us, the spiritual Israelites, the Prophet declares, "Thou hast put a new song into my mouth, even the loving-kindness' of our God." All spiritual Israelites, who are in the right attitude of heart toward the Lord, are full of songs of gratitude and praise -not always audibly, however, for many can best sing and make melody in their hearts unto the Lord; and indeed the Psalm of Life, which each of the Lord's followers declares in actions and words to those about him, is the best testimony, the best praise we can raise, more to the glory of our King than any others.

If the Israelites who remained in Babylon, whose faith and courage were insufficient, could have witnessed the scene at a distance, they doubtless would have shouted for joy, that they had not undertaken such a pilgrimage and such a work of restoration; but as Paul and Silas could sing in the prison, with their backs bleeding from the cruel lash, while others enjoying every luxury of life in the same city were miserable, so it was with those returned Israelites. Full of faith 'and hope they were also filled with joy as they looked forward in prospect for still further favors from the Lord, in harmony with His glorious promises. And so it is with the Lord's people today: our rejoicing is not because of temporal favors and advantages and privileges, but on

account of those joys which are ours through faith and hope, inspired by the Divine promises -- the culmination of the same promises for which the natural Israelites were aspiring, and which are secured to us through the great Jew of the seed of Abraham, our Redeemer, our Bridegroom.

The shouts were discordant -- some of joy, some of weeping. Those who looked forward in hope shouted for joy. Those who looked backward, and pictured before their minds Solomon's grand temple, wept as they thought of the insignificance of the present one in comparison. And so today among spiritual Israelites, there are some who weep for the past, when they should be rejoicing for the future. The Apostle exhorts us to "forget the things which are behind, and to press forward to the things which are before." The lessons we learn from past experiences, even from adverse experiences, while they should be kept in memory, need not be mourned over by spiritual Israelites, for they can call to mind that the merit of Christ's sacrifice covers all of their unwilling blemishes and mistakes. Carrying with them their experiences they should press forward to fresh victories and fresh joys in the Lord.

"FIRST PURE, THEN PEACEABLE"

We are to remember that these 42,000 people, about 35,000 of whom are supposed to have belonged to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and Levi, and about 11,000 from the other nine tribes, occupied only a small district in Palestine, about twenty-five miles square, Jerusalem being the center. The remainder of the territory of Palestine was more or less settled by immigrants. The king of Babylon followed the practice of moving the captives from one nation into the territory of another, so that their old associations being broken up they would be more dependent upon the Babylonian government and lose their own natural traits. These people of various nationalities that had settled in Palestine had acquired some of the traditions of the land and its religious customs, and in our Lord's day, 566 years later, they were known as the Samaritans. Of them our Lord said, "Ye believe ye know not what; we know what we believe, for salvation is of the Jews." Respecting the same people, we remember our Lord's commandments as He sent forth the twelve Apostles and later also the seventy disciples to proclaim Him, He said, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."-- Matt. 10:5, 6.

These mixed peoples, whom we will for convenience call Samaritans, paid little attention to the Jews returned from Babylon until they heard of their project of rebuilding the temple on its own site, the consecrated site, for it is supposed that Abraham's typical offering of Isaac was made upon this very "dome of the rock" upon which the

temple was built, a rock that to this day is held sacred by Musselmans, Jews and Christians. The Samaritans had been unneighborly up to this time, but now seemed to catch an inspiration from this temple building as they remembered the ancient glories of the nation of this land, whose great king Solomon had built the first temple. Ceasing to act as enemies, the Samaritans proffered their assistance in the building of the temple. We cannot doubt that they were sincere in this proposition, and that really their religious fervor impelled them to make it.

Many commentators think the Israelites made a great mistake in rejecting their aid and declining to affiliate with them. But such commentators are evidently in error, since our Lord Jesus by His conduct and words fully substantiated the thought that the Samaritans had nothing whatever to do with the true Temple and its building. God had been sifting the true seed of Abraham to select from it the faithful few, and now to have invited the Samaritans to come in and join them in the temple building and temple services would have been to bring in a semi-heathen mixture, which the Lord did not desire. Why the Lord did not desire it can be seen only from the one standpoint -- not that it was His wish to send those Samaritans to eternal torment, nor that He wished to destroy them in the Second death, but that He has for future development a great Plan of Salvation which will affect every nation, people, kindred, and tongue, including these Samaritans. In the interim He wished to develop the typical seed of Abraham, and subsequently the spiritual seed of Abraham, to be His agents and representatives in conferring His blessings upon all nations.

"WHICH TEMPLE YE ARE"

We find the same thought abroad today, troubling those who have come out of Babylon, and who are wishing to build the true Temple of God -- the holy Temple, the antitypical Temple, "which Temple ye are." The foundation of our Temple were laid at Pentecost, under apparently very unfavorable conditions from the world's standpoint -- a dead leader, and a handful, of a few hundred disciples scattered and considerably discouraged. Nevertheless, those who recognize the Lord's hand in the matter see things differently: with the eye of faith they discern in Jesus the great Rock of our Salvation typified by the "rock of the dome," the top of Mt. Zion, on which the altar of sacrifice stood. The same eye of faith now discerns that the twelve Apostles are the foundation stones of Divine appointment, built upon the rock Christ Jesus; and that upon the ministries of those appointed representatives of Christ, a glorious Church, a glorious Temple of the Lord is being erected. Those who then had the eye of faith shouted for joy, and all who since possess the same spiritual vision rejoice in the greater work which the Lord is accomplishing, as they see the preparation now of the "living stones," which, by and by, in the First

Resurrection, shall be brought together, complete as the glorious Temple of God, in and through which all the families of the earth may have intercourse with God to their blessing.

There are numerous "Samaritans" today who have neither part nor lot in this great Temple and its construction. These Samaritans are found in churches of nearly all denominations, men and women of good character and of religious inclinations. Some of them are "good Samaritans," ready to relieve the sick, the indigent. Worldly wisdom says that these should all be recognized as "Israelites indeed," even though they be not fully consecrated to the Lord to do His will. Many are inclined to upbraid us now, as they upbraided the natural Israelites, for refusing the fellowship and co-operation of the Samaritans of their day.

ONLY ONE NARROW WAY

There is but one course for the Lord's people to follow they should appreciate whatever is good in these their neighbors and friends, they should deal justly and kindly with them, but they should remember that as oil and water will not mix, so likewise there cannot be any real union between the consecrated and the unconsecrated in respect to their religious views and their endeavors to co-operate in the Divine service. Their standpoints are opposite, affiliations are injurious to both parties. If the spiritually begotten ones, the Israelites indeed, attempt to meet the ideas of the Samaritan class, they will be compromising their own covenant with the Lord. Likewise, if the Samaritan class or the broadminded (?) class of our day be encouraged to affiliate with the consecrated, it will injure them in that it will deceive them into thinking that they have become joint-heirs in the Divine promises; whereas none can inherit under those promises except through faith in the Redeemer, circumcision in the heart, and a full consecration unto the death. Such only become regularly and legitimately Israelites indeed, probationary members of the "very elect" Church.

When their co-operation in temple building, etc., was declined, the Samaritans became the bitter opponents of the Jews, whom they, no doubt, described as bigoted. Consistently with their views of the subject they did all in their power, politically and otherwise, to hinder the temple building, and thus the trials and difficulties of the servants of God were greatly increased and multiplied.

So it is today. Those who are faithful to the Lord, "the people who do know their God," are esteemed to be religious bigots and fanatics by some of the respectable, who profess to have larger and broader views, and who, in harmony with their erroneous conceptions of the situation, are more or less acting in a way to hinder the real work of the consecrated, the preparation of the living stones of this Temple.

We need to understand the situation properly, otherwise we would soon be discouraged, and think of God as being against us because He permits such opposition. But with the right view of things before our minds we may realize that all the oppositions of the partly consecrated are really beneficial to us, helpful in that they serve to do the chiseling and polishing of our characters, necessary to fit and prepare us for honorable stations in the Temple of Glory soon to be completed. One thought not to be lost sight of is, that in the Lord's arrangement we are the stones, He the master workman -- and all the trials and difficulties and oppositions and perplexities and disappointments of our experience are the chisels and the wheels and the emery-sand for our preparation. From this standpoint only are we able to follow the Apostle's advice to rejoice in tribulations also.

THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

*"Return into Me, and I will return unto you, with Jehovah of hosts." --
Mal. 3:7; Neh. 8:1-3, 8-12; Ezra, chapters 7-10.*

THERE are no more interesting and inspiring lessons to the Christian than those to be noted in connection with the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and the temple after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. Rebuilding the city wall tended to unify the hearts of Israel and to revive faith in the Lord and, in His gracious promises to that nation. Nehemiah was wise in beginning the reformation movement as he did, and his wisdom undoubtedly was of the Lord and in harmony with his prayers for wisdom and usefulness. So all who would engage in Divine service require not only zeal but also the wisdom which cometh from above, and only those who seek it prayerfully will be in condition to be used of the Lord and to be helpful as reformers amongst their brethren.

As illustrating different methods of serving the Lord, and how some methods are wiser and more successful than others, and as a means of adding to our own wisdom respecting methods of serving the Truth, let us here contrast the efforts of Nehemiah with those of Ezra. For instance -Ezra seemed to find only faults in the chiefs of the people, and berated them as though they had nothing commendable in them. Nehemiah, on the contrary, began his work by ignoring some of the evils which he doubtless quickly discerned, and sought the co-operation of the nobles in the general cause. Subsequently at a favorable opportunity, when the people cried out because of usury and oppression, he very wisely yet very moderately remonstrated against their course, pointing out in kindly words yet boldly their wrong, and he was successful in correcting the wrong without antagonizing the wrongdoers. (Neh. 5:7-13.) Ezra, full of zeal and anxious for quick reform. convened the people, in the rain, without shelter. (Ezra 10:9-

13.) Nehemiah, on the contrary, not only chose the pleasant season, but also the accustomed occasion, for his gathering of the people. Ezra attacked the one particular sin of intermarrying with the surrounding peoples, and thus held up one particular class of the people to special shame and confusion.: Nehemiah seems to have taken a broader view and to have assailed sin in general, showing that all were sinners in some respects, and that all needed reformation. Ezra's method was the more 'aggressive, accompanied by legal prosecutions, penalties, etc. (Ezra 10:8, 14.) Nehemiah's method was to make general a knowledge of the Divine Law, and through it to appeal to the awakened consciences of the people, that each might act for himself, heartily as unto the Lord. Without finding fault with Ezra's intentions, all reformers may profitably apply the lessons of this contrast to themselves, and seek to use Nehemiah's wise and gentle method in dealing with those who are in error, either doctrinally or otherwise.

CELEBRATING COMPLETION OF THE WALL

With the completion of the wall and the security thus realized and the faith and hopes thus inspired, it was but reasonable that the event would be celebrated with feasting and rejoicing. But Nehemiah wisely waited this until he had reorganized the people socially according to the heads of their families, especially the priests and Levites, who were the divinely appointed ministers and teachers of the people. (See Chap. 7:63-73.) Meantime also, donations were received for the temple and its service, and Nehemiah, himself very wealthy, setting an example of liberality in his large gifts, was imitated by many. By this time the "Feast of Trumpets" on the first day of the seventh month drew near. It was a time for the general gathering of the people, the beginning of their civil year, announced by trumpet blowing. Here the narrative of our lesson begins, with the spontaneous gathering of the people in an open place, a plaza, near the water gate, called here a "street."

In all probability this congregation of the people was instigated, first, by Nehemiah, the Tirshatha (Persian for provincial governor), and secondly, through the heads of the people and the priests and Levites. Evidently preparations had been made for such a gathering, for a large platform, called a "pulpit," had been erected. When the people assembled and called for the reading of The Book of the Law of Jehovah, appropriate at this season, all things were in readiness, and Ezra the priest, accompanied by thirteen men, evidently chiefs of the people, representing the various tribes, took their appointed places on the platform or "pulpit" to give dignity and importance to the service.

Apparently the convention was opened with prayer. "Ezra blessed Jehovah the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads and worshiped

Jehovah with their faces to the ground." They were about to begin a study of the Divine Word, as expressed in the Law, and no one is in the proper attitude of mind to be taught and blessed by the Lord's Word unless he be in the attitude of heart which appreciates the greatness of God and the unworthiness of himself. Such a condition of heart is essential to true hearing and understanding. And here we have the secret of much of the failure to understand God's Word -- today as well as in times past. "He that seeketh findeth; to him that knocketh it shall be opened," and the "seeking" consists not merely in church attendance or Bible reading, but in a heart -hunger to know the truth and to obey it.

THE WISE DISCRIMINATION

The service began early in the morning, "From the morning [daybreak] until midday," and during that time we are told that "the ears of all the people were unto the book of the Law," that is, they gave close attention to hear and to understand every word. It was not only necessary that they should desire to know and that they should be in the attitude of heart to implore Divine blessing and assistance, but it was also necessary that they should be *attentive*, giving ear. And more than this, it was necessary that there should be amongst them teachers capable of expounding the Law, explaining the meaning of words, and how the Divine Law was to be applied to the daily life; and what it signifies. Thirteen teachers (Joshua and twelve others) are indicated by name. These probably were priests, and the statement is that associated with him were "the Levites." These "caused the people to understand the law, and the people stood in their place." We are not to understand that the people *stood* for five hours: they stood while the Law was being read, and sat down, after the eastern custom, on their haunches, during the time explanations were being given. The expression "all the people stood in their place" signifies that the teachers mentioned moved about amongst the people, instructing them, answering their questions, making plain the meaning of the features of the Law just read, while the people remained in their places.

There is a lesson here for God's people of today -all who are interested in the welfare of Zion and in the repair of her walls of righteousness. As Nehemiah looked up the genealogies of the priests, it is appropriate for us to recognize the difference between the consecrated, whose names are *written in the Lamb's book of life*, and the unconsecrated, whose names assuredly are not so written, and who therefore cannot be recognized as religious teachers in any sense. So also today our Governor, the Lord Jesus, is searching amongst the people and separating to Himself those whose names are written -- the *consecrated* -- for His kings and priests -a "royal priesthood." Arrangements are already made for the great antitypical "Feast of

Trumpets," and the beginning of a new civil year or Millennial era for mankind -- for all who desire to be the Lord's people, to hear His word and to obey it. Raised above the people, on a *higher plane of being*, will be Christ, the great Priest, and His associates, spiritual Israel, to declare the Word of Jehovah, the Law of righteousness, the Truth; and amongst the people, to teach them and to expound the Law to them, will be the Ancient Worthies, representatives of Israel in the flesh, and the Levites, all who believe, the entire household of faith aside from the elect and then glorified Church.

ANOTHER SOUNDING OF JUBILEE TRUMPETS

The blowing of the trumpets announcing the beginning of the antitypical jubilee year will soon be heard throughout all the world, and the true-hearted will speedily respond. Meantime our great and wise Governor is instructing the Royal Priesthood, and thus preparing for the great work of the future. The arrangements are all so perfect and so complete that when the declaration comes, the people will all hear the Word of the Lord "distinctly," and they will get the "sense" and "understanding" of it. It will no longer be as in the past and at the present time, a din, a Babylon of confused noises, misrepresenting the Divine Message, and confusing those who desire to know the will of the Lord. The first result of that presentation will be weeping and mourning for sin, but the message of the great Priest and Governor will go forth to the people, to the effect that they need not weep and mourn, because the great sacrifice for sins has already been offered, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and that in consequence the 'Millennial Day in which they will be living is not to be a day of mourning but a day of rejoicing, a day of acceptance of Divine favor, a day of newness of life and of consecration to the Lord.

The message will then be similar to the one which Governor Nehemiah promulgated, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet [enjoy the wonderful provisions of God's bounty with thankfulness and pleasure] and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared [cause the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth], for this day is holy unto the Lord: neither be ye sorry, for the pleasure of Jehovah is your strength" -- rejoice that you are restored to Divine favor. And all the people will rejoice, because they will understand the words of the Divine Law -- because they will see and appreciate the Divine arrangement, and find it to be indeed "good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people."

These blessings which will be to the world in the future may already be appropriated in a measure by the Lord's consecrated people--the Gospel Church, the Royal Priesthood. By faith we are permitted to hear the words of the Divine Law in advance of their public proclamation, to the whole world, and therefore blessed are our ears

which hear and our eyes which see, for many have not seen and have not heard, the god of this world at the present time blinding their minds so that they cannot. To us, too, the first hearing of the Divine Law should perhaps bring remorse and tears as we realize our shortcomings, and that with our very best efforts we, cannot measure up to the perfect standard. But to us also comes the Lord's message, through His servants our brethren, saying, Weep not, but rejoice. Behold the goodness as well as the severity of God, behold His Love as well as His justice, and that He has made through Christ a full propitiation, not only for the sins that are past, but also for the inherited weaknesses and blemishes of the present and future -that all of our blemishes have been covered with the great sin -offering finished at Calvary.

It is our privilege, therefore, to dry our tears and to rejoice in the God of our salvation, and to eat of the fat things of His Word, the exceeding great and precious promises given to us, and to drink of the sweets of His favor, and to send portions of this our blessing to others who have not yet seen and have not yet heard and who have not yet tasted of the riches of Divine grace. And whoever receives the grace *of God* not *in vain* will be prompt and zealous, not only in his own rejoicing, but also in his endeavors to communicate his blessings to others.

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

VOL. VII JUNE 15, 1924 NO. 12

THE ANNUAL MEETING AND THE BROOKLYN CONVENTION

GENERAL conferences of Christian believers in the days of the primitive Church were encouraged and were made seasons of refreshing. We know the Lord still blesses such occasions to the building up of the consecrated and to the reviving of their weary spirits. "Gird up the loins of your mind," says the Apostle, and "hope to the end .for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." All along the way there is need for the binding up, this rendering of assistance to one another that we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

We have just had such a successful spiritual conference in Brooklyn, held in connection with the Annual Meeting of the INSTITUTE, June 7 and 8. They were two days of quiet, peaceful rest, and holy joy in the Lord, in the INSTITUTE'S parlors.

Commencing Saturday morning there were appropriate words of greeting and warm welcome spoken by the Chairman, followed by an instructive discourse. Not a large gathering, indeed, but a few comparatively; probably about thirty being present at this opening session.

At 2 P.M. the Annual Business Meeting opened with singing of hymns and devotional services, with probably fifty present. The usual order of this meeting was followed out the general reports of the INSTITUTE, that of the Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer were read, and after opportunity was given for discussion and suggestions, they were approved by the members. Then followed the balloting for directors to serve the ensuing year, resulting in the re election of the brethren who constituted the directorate of the past year, the names of which appeared in the May 15 issue of the HERALD.

The brethren whose administration of the affairs of the INSTITUTE has thus had the endorsement of the members once more, render thanks to the Lord for the great privilege of co-operation in the greatest of all ministries. In taking up this service again, the directors desire the earnest prayers of the brethren everywhere, realizing that there is a solemn responsibility attaching to every appointment of Divine service. Each of these brethren feels very weak in his own strength. Their fervent desire is to serve the Lord and His cause in any and every way that may be pleasing to the Lord, and to this end they shall greatly appreciate the co -operation and assistance of all the other co-laborers in the Master's vineyard. The beautiful harmony and simplicity of this business meeting which was concluded with hymns and worship, were indeed impressive, and the general interest expressed in all the proceedings was most pleasing.

About 6:30 P.M. the regular convention exercises were resumed -- two discourses that were well received concluded the first day. A feature much appreciated by all was that of the excellent luncheons provided by the Brooklyn Ecclesia in the basement of the INSTITUTE during both Saturday and Sunday. This gave splendid opportunity for continual fellowship, in an informal manner, much to the gratification of all.

Sunday morning's exercises commenced with a prayer and testimony session. Here again the remarks and exchanges of thought were much blessed of the Lord. The similarity of experiences that the children of God have in the Narrow Way is such as to draw them very close together and

"Often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear."

Following the testimony meeting the friends were very acceptably served again in a discourse in which the brethren were reminded of

the heavenly promises and providences of the Lord and were admonished to hold fast and to remain trusting.

The three o'clock meeting on Sunday had been advertised for the public at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The Brooklyn friends had labored very earnestly for several days to prepare for the meeting. While the numbers in attendance were not all that could have been desired (between three and four hundred being present), yet everything considered, the results in a general way seemed very gratifying. Excellent attention was given throughout the discourse on the topic, "Modernism and the Bible, or Life Beyond the Tomb." The brethren have been led to believe that much real interest has been, aroused by this service that would seem may result in some being brought to a clear knowledge of the Divine Plan and the God of love. Sixty of those in attendance handed in their names as interested and desiring to know further of this way. Let us trust that if it is the Lord's good pleasure there may be those of this number whose hunger and thirst after righteousness may be satisfied. Several special meetings on the succeeding Sundays are arranged by the Brooklyn friends to stimulate and encourage the interest aroused.

In the evening the brethren gathered again at the INSTITUTE parlors for the concluding discourse, in which the speaker earnestly reviewed the hope of our calling, the experiences and tests of the Narrow Way, and the glorious prospects that illuminate and brighten the pathway of all those who thus sojourn. There was no mistake whatever that all present felt greatly edified by the convention; and with hearts overflowing with praise and gratitude once more parted, bidding each other Godspeed, and rejoicing in hope of the promised coming glory Surely we can still encourage all God's children to seek fresh supplies of His truth and grace by coming together in holy conference to stir up one another's pure mind by way of remembrance.

THE INSTITUTE'S ANNUAL REPORT

As we are concluding another year in the Lord's service and in the ministry of the Truth, we are reminded of the fact that it means to us one year's march nearer home; and this thought brings comfort and strength. Thus the great Apostle wrote to the early Church: "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light." (Rom. 13:11, 12.) The Apostle endeavored to encourage the brethren nineteen centuries ago by having them look ahead by faith to the approaching day of deliverance and victory. Arid are not his words of equal force, indeed of greater import to the consecrated today, in view of all the array of testimony before us, to the effect that we are very near to the close of the night

time and are at the threshold of the morning? Truly, therefore, year after year, we have fresh and substantial reasons for keeping awake and lifting up the head with hope and courage in the realization of the fact that the long promised salvation of both the Church and the world is closely approaching.

The yearly reviews of our united efforts in this ministry should be occasions for renewing our strength and determination to be faithful to the Lord, and therefore mutually profitable. Indeed, we have found them to be of this character in the past. We look for encouragement, however, not in the direction of some great outward results of our combined endeavors; not in the direction of large numbers being added to our association; nor in the acquirement of immense funds with which to do a work; for the Word of the Lord does not lead us to specially seek encouragement after this manner or from such sources. Rather it is in a careful and prayerful observation of the Lord's leading throughout the past year, of His providential care, of His sustaining grace that has enabled His children to press on and to hold fast to the faith, that we recognize the ground for our renewed confidence and courage at this time.

Blessed indeed are the eyes that see, and the ears that hear in these days. And by this seeing and hearing we realize that the word of reconciliation has been committed to the Lord's people from the beginning of the Age with the object in view of selecting out of the world those who shall become fitted and prepared to be the Bride of God's dear Son. The fact, therefore, that we have not been commissioned to convert large numbers of humanity and effect a general transformation in the world, should not be allowed to cool our ardor or hinder our zeal in witnessing to the Truth. In the face of apparent failure and defeat, Jesus said, "To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the Truth." We believe it is this faith in God and loyalty to Him which continues steadfast against many odds and in the face of unfavorable conditions, that the Lord is specially seeking and favoring.

Throughout the New Testament we are time after time assured that our sanctification is God's will concerning us, and that the chief business of faithful disciples of Christ is to spend and be spent in the service of truth and righteousness; which evidently signifies that we are to both live the Truth in our daily experiences as well as to preach it by word and by pen to the extent of our time and ability.

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

The spirit of the true Church was to be indeed evangelical. "Go ye and teach all nations," said Jesus. The records of the early Church show that they were imbued with this spirit. It was clearly set forth that the Church was to be the repository of the Truth, "the pillar and ground of

the Truth." (1 Tim. 3 :15:) Again we note the Apostle's instruction: "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men; forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." -- 2 Cor. 3:2, 3.

Considering, then, how high and exalted are the privileges of the faithful in Christ in thus being ambassadors for God, we realize truly that there is a holy solemnity and carefulness that should be associated in the conduct and lives of all who make that profession. And experience has clearly made manifest that only those who are in vital union with Christ by faith, and by full consecration to Him, realize and feel the power daily impelling them to faithfulness in bearing testimony to the Truth. We realize increasingly, then, the importance of this thought, that with all of our preaching to others, and with all of our united effort to spread the Truth, the Lord would have us give first consideration to our own spiritual condition and earnestly hearken to His Word of admonition respecting our own sanctification and preparedness to be vessels fit for His use. If our daily communion with the Lord is such as to prompt us to careful and devout living and conduct, then will our testimony to others concerning our God and His message of Truth be all the more effective and acceptable to Him.

Our reports each year of the ministry of the INSTITUTE are of necessity similar, in that our instrumentalities and methods of operation are practically the same. As in previous years, so with the last, we have not been without certain reverses, trials, and testings ; but we believe we can truly testify to a sense of the Lord's assisting grace and keeping power. As we have been forewarned, the Adversary is ever on the alert to interrupt and to hinder those who would be burning and shining lights for the Lord. And the Apostle assures us that "we are not ignorant of His devices."

Looking backward down the aisles of history, we note the remarkable fact that every person that has represented the Lord and His cause has been the target of the evil one and has been bitterly assailed by him; thus fulfilling the Savior's words, "The darkness hateth the light." A review of history reveals that Satan has been vigorously opposing the Divine Plan for six thousand years, and especially the work of developing the Christ, the seed of Abraham; but it is observed also that the purpose of God has not suffered any defeat whatever; nor have any of His faithful, trusting children been forsaken by Him. To the contrary they have realized the overruling of Divine providence and the Lord's personal care over their lives and work-sometimes indeed turning aside and making void some of their well-intentioned efforts to serve Him, while guiding and giving success in another direction. Such experiences are not disappointments or defeats in the

proper sense of that word -- rather they are causes for fresh rejoicing, because those who are truly the Lord's desire His will done and not their own, and because such experiences furnish fresh evidences that His people are not fighting their own battle merely, but the Lord's; and thus added assurance is given that He will continue to guide the faithful and His ministry to the glorious victory foretold by all the holy Prophets.

In view of the lessons of the past, and in consideration of God's promises, let the fact be borne in mind that in proportion as they have on the divinely provided armor, the Lord's people will be able to discern and resist the influences and attacks of the evil one, and will be increasingly fortified.

FELLOWSHIP OF KINDRED MINDS

As we come in contact with our fellow-brethren in the Narrow Way and as we hear from them through the correspondence, the fact seems to be more definitely impressed upon our minds that what the brethren most need is the word of encouragement and that fellowship of heart that comes through contact with kindred spirits. Evidently this has been the case all along through the Age. The Apostle therefore earnestly admonished in his day: "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together," well knowing that in so far as the brethren could mingle together in Christian fellowship, prayer, and praise, they would thus be availing themselves of this divinely provided means of keeping the fires of their love and zeal burning brightly. But it has fallen to the lot of some throughout the Age to be isolated, and this is the situation with many in these days. In fact, taken as a whole throughout the world, a considerable number of the friends do not have the advantage of meeting regularly with a Class of the brethren. It is in view of these peculiar circumstances that the visits of THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM seems most appropriate and seasonable. Through the messages of this journal there is kept up this continual contact with other minds; the Scriptural views that are presented, we are assured, have the effect of stirring up the pure minds of the friends by way of remembrance, and thus assist to stimulate their faith, hope, and courage.

The brethren throughout the world may well know that those who have been entrusted with the work of preparing the matter in the HERALD are constantly seeking the Lord's guidance and help that the things that are profitable, edifying, and uplifting spiritually may be presented in that way and manner that will do the most good. Though we are well aware that there is room for improvement in one way or another, and though we doubt not that there are others who might render this service more efficiently, yet the Lord has been pleased to grant much encouragement from time to time, ,as from all parts of the

world the letters tell how much brethren have been helped and renewed in spirit as they have perused the pages of our journal.

From the beginning of this work the brethren have sought to follow the progressive policy which means that we have sought the Lord for His counsel to assist in making whatever advance in the path of knowledge that might be pleasing to the Lord. Progress has been the order of all the ages. The Divine Program has been working out step by step. God's servants and children have been permitted to know of His purposes more and more down the stream of time, and this indeed is the spirit of the entire Bible. It has been the privilege of God's children all along, to advance in knowledge and light beyond that of the preceding generation, which is in keeping with the Apostolic admonition, "But grow in grace and in knowledge," etc.; again, "Growing up into Christ in all things," etc. Truly the path of the faithful truth-seeker has been a shining one more and more. Consequently it is in consideration of what the Bible thus clearly presents that we in these days have admonished God's children to preserve the disposition to advance and make progress in the school of Christ, endeavoring to see more clearly the truth as it relates to one or another of the features of the Divine Plan, and thereby further the work of grace in the heart and the sanctification of the spirit.

Our regular list of approximately nineteen hundred subscribers throughout the world contains those who, we feel sure, are to the best of their ability seeking to know the Lord better and to assist fellow-members of His Body as best they are able.

We remind the HERALD readers once more of our arrangements whereby all those who desire the visits of this journal may have them whether they have the means to pay or not. We offer to do this not because we have a surplus on paid subscriptions, for as we have previously explained the journal is being published at a continual loss so far as the financial viewpoint is concerned; and the cost of the journal is more than twice the subscription price charged, making it constantly necessary to draw on the general fund made up of contributions to the general cause. We would add here again, that those who do not like to ask for the HERALD as the Lord's poor, may if they prefer ask for it on credit, and if never able to pay for it, may so inform us and the debt will be cancelled; the one thought we have is that all lovers of truth should have the advantage of the regular visits of this journal.

THE PILGRIM MINISTRY

By the Lord's grace a considerable has been accomplished during the past year through the ministry of the Pilgrim service. During the greater portion of the year one brother has given all of his time to traveling through much of the Canadian territory as well as through

the eastern, and middle, and some of the western portion of the United States. Other brethren whose circumstances will not permit devoting all their time to this service, have been serving more or less locally to good advantage on Sundays. We include in this connection the visit of the representative from Great Britain during last September, report of which appeared in the November 15 issue of the HERALD. This visit by our British Brother, we believe from all reports, was productive -of much good to quite a good number of the friends. In fact this may be said with regard to this branch of the ministry in general. The INSTITUTE is receiving encouraging messages constantly from the Pilgrim visits, and suggestions from especially brethren isolated and located in remote districts, that they would appreciate more frequent visits by a brother who might minister to them in holy things. We would be glad indeed to co-operate in a larger service of this kind, but in this we must be subject to the circumstances and rest the matter with the Lord, trusting Him for whatever provision He may see best to make in the way of increasing this service. The following is a summary of this branch of the ministry:

Number of Pilgrims 19
Miles traveled 42,405
Meetings held 388
Total attendance 6,412

THE MINISTRY BY CORRESPONDENCE

Another means of mutual encouragement is the contact with many of the friends by letter. Some avail themselves of this means freely and others we hear from less frequently. Messages thus by letter come to us from all parts of the world, some making inquiry along one line or another of the Truth, others expressing desire for assistance in applying the teachings of the Word to the affairs of daily life; others are in the nature of business correspondence. There is indeed a pleasure and satisfaction in receiving these communications as well as in replying to them and offering words of assistance and comfort to the best of our ability. Great indeed are the opportunities God has given His people in these days, in that all of His dear children are afforded this means of fellowship and communion in a manner that has not been possible until modern times.

We take this opportunity to assure all the friends that their communications are always welcome, even though we may not answer in detail as fully as we would like, owing to the demands of other features of the work upon our time. We ask the friends to consider in a general way the messages in the HERALD as in the nature of replies to their letters, which are frequently laden with rich perfume of Christian love, sympathy, and deep appreciation of the Truth.

Number of letters received 3,453

Number of letters sent out 5,838

SEASONS OF REFRESHING

We are encouraged in reporting that the zeal and interest of the friends in desiring to meet in general convention continues firm and strong, even though the general circumstances have not permitted many of such gatherings during the past year. They are three in number—Boston, Springfield, and Ulster Park. These were all seasons of much refreshing to the inner man. The characteristic feature of all of these gatherings was that of singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and making melody in the heart unto the Lord. It is to be observed that the brethren more and more realize the sore need of one another's assistance. They need one another's encouragement. All have their severe reverses and trials of faith, and the conventions are one of the best means of assisting the brethren to rise above their troubles and gain a position of advantage over their besetments. Then, too, the ministry of the Divine Word at these conferences is generally along lines peculiarly fitting to the times and the experiences of God's people, and is such as to strengthen them for the warfare of the Narrow Way. We cannot but encourage the brethren to make greater effort if possible to have a share in the convention blessings. As report of the year's conventions has already appeared in the journal we will not enlarge further here.

THE GOSPEL STORY IN THE PRINTED PAGE

Preaching the Gospel story through the printed page we all know has been a method greatly blessed of the Lord in modern times; and so continues to be amongst the most effective ways of presenting the Truth to the people. We are able to report that the brethren have been richly blessed during the past year with privileges of service along this line. The occasion of the great earthquake in Japan suggested the sending forth of a message bearing upon the subject of calamities, earthquakes, etc. We accordingly got out an edition of fifty thousand copies of an eight-page leaflet covering this subject quite exhaustively. Nearly all of this edition has gone from our office, and we believe a large portion of them have been distributed by the friends in all parts of the world, but particularly here in America. We are not able to state of course just how far-reaching the results of this message have been. The tract covering this subject seemed well received by the brethren everywhere, and from quite a good many strangers messages came expressing interest in the theme and making further inquiries. Additionally, twenty-five thousand copies of the tract, "Where Are the Dead?" have been published since our last report, and many of these distributed in addition to the leaflet, "The Dark Cloud and Its Silver Lining," which many are using. Still others have been making use of

the special. issue of the HERALD treating the subjects of "Hell," and "The Second Coming of Christ." We continue to recommend to the brethren everywhere the distribution of free literature. It may sometimes seem that the results do not justify the time and expense, but we do not believe this is the proper way to look at the matter. The Word of the Lord counsels us to "use that which is in throe hand," and leave results with Him. The experience of the brethren has too often proved that the Lord has not only blessed the message to the enlightening and comforting of the truth -hungry, but has also richly bestowed His favor upon those who have labored in the vineyard at the cost of present advantages and the pleasures of this life. The great commission given to the Church in the beginning of the Age was to remain unchanged until the end of the Age -until all the faithful were gathered to the Lord in glory.

CAN WE DO MORE?

We believe, therefore, that the Lord in His due time will give clear indications as to the conclusion of all evangelical effort and ministry of the Truth for this Age. Like all of the Lord's methods of dealing with His children in this dispensation, He is not threatening any with special punishment who do not engage in the ministry; rather He places it before us as a privilege to which He knows that all truly grateful and consecrated hearts will respond. And such only He is seeking for the heavenly Kingdom. Jesus said, "whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." Concerning faithful servants, He declares that in the end of the Age He will address all such saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

With regard to the distribution of "*The Divine Plan of the Ages*" we regret to report that not very much has been accomplished during the year. Some here and there have been making use of these by loaning and selling, etc., but it seems that many more of the brethren could be placing this Volume to good advantage amongst the people with whom they come in contact from time to. time-friends, neighbors, relatives. We all recall how beautiful, simple, and clear the Truth is presented in this Volume. It seems difficult to imagine how it could be improved upon; and especially in this day when infidelity is making such inroads amongst Christian people of all denominations. The second and third chapters of "*The Divine Plan of the Ages*" deals with the very heart of the entire subject of faith in a supreme being and in the infallibility of the Scriptures as a Revelation of the Divine plans and purposes. Let us, dear brethren, be more aroused, if possible, to a sense of our responsibility toward the Truth as contained in this book

that has been the means of enlightening the minds and satisfying the longings of so many people.

THE BLESSING OF THE REVELATION

A word is in season here with regard to the Revelation exposition, although we have previously reviewed this feature, and advised the brethren of our accomplishments in this direction. Of the edition of three thousand copies of the first volume of the Revelation exposition that we had published, approximately two thousand have been sent out amongst the brethren, some of these reaching very remote portions of the earth. Excellent testimonies are repeatedly received from the brethren everywhere telling of how much this exposition has illuminated the visions of the Apocalypse and has made more real the great truths of the Plan of God. Earnest longings are expressed that the second volume of the exposition may be ready for mailing soon. We have pleasure in saying that it is our expectation that we will have this volume ready within another month. With this volume will surely go our prayers that the Divine blessing may attend the ministry of the Truth that we believe it presents, and cause a further blessing to come to those who "read and those who hear the prophecy of this book."

We have already informed the brethren of the little eight-page leaflet which has been prepared as an explanatory word of introduction regarding the Revelation volumes, which we trust the friends will use freely. The suggestion recently made in the pages of the HERALD we repeat, that those who desire to encourage the circulation of the Revelation exposition may co-operate by sending us the names of Christian people of all denominations, and we in turn will mail one of the leaflets, together with an appropriate letter, and thus endeavor to encourage interest and lead to the securing of the volumes.

UNTO THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH

What has been stated foregoing with regard to the accomplishments of the past year includes in a general way the brethren of other lands as well as those of America. The HERALD continues to go regularly to many of the foreign countries -- Great Britain, Australia, Ireland, France, Scandinavia, Holland, Denmark, Germany, Finland, India, South Africa, etc.

Through the BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE Of Great Britain and the BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE Of Australia, as well as through many individual communications from both of these countries we are kept informed of general conditions and the progress of the work. In many respects the circumstances with them are much the same as they are with us here in America.

They like our brethren here have their discouragements and besetments. Indeed the Christian life and warfare are practically the

same in all parts of the earth. It is one continual struggle and battle against selfishness and sin in many forms as well as against powerful forces of evil presided over by the great adversary of God and man. How we all look forward to the day of deliverance when the great change shall come and the darkness be scattered!

Additionally, by correspondence we are in touch with the brethren in all of the other countries named above, and they give evidence of a work of grace going on in the hearts of all those who are related to the Lord by faith and full consecration. Surely the Divine prediction has been and still is in process of fulfillment: "Out of every nation, people, kindred, and tongue," shall be assembled those who shall be heirs of the Kingdom. The German friends in Munich have arranged and are publishing monthly a journal which contains for the most part a translation of the articles of the HERALD in the German language. Copies of this journal are being mailed regularly to a number of the German speaking friends in America. The brethren in Munich are also translating the Revelation Exposition into the German language. Likewise friends in Finland are publishing a journal in their language containing much of the matter presented in the HERALD. For all the dear brethren who are thus laboring to co-operate for the advancement of the cause of the Lord in other lands we wish the Divine blessing in every way, for the Lord's glory and for their good.

WE SHALL REAP IF WE FAINT NOT

In the review foregoing of our labors during the past twelve months we realize that the results seem small. Yet our confidence is that the Lord knows best and we may be certain that no feature of this work or service is falling short to any extent beyond that which is His will. In our endeavors to advance His cause we must of course be governed by the natural resources at our command. These are all under the Lord's control; to whatever extent it may please Him in His providence to give our ministry greater impetus and strength, we of course cannot foresee. We rest assured that everything the Lord desires will be accomplished, and though what we have thus far been enabled to do seems of little moment from one standpoint yet inasmuch as what has been done seems fully in line with the Lord's purpose and such as He has led us to reasonably expect for these times, we content ourselves and render thanks to Him for the little share we have had in ministering to His cause and His people.

Again we acknowledge with the poet that

"We know not what awaits us
God kindly veils our eyes
And o'er each step of our onward way
Doth make new scenes to rise."

Nor do we need to know what is before us since we are fully assured that "The eternal God is our refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." The Divine Word forewarns all the Lord's children to expect that there will be trials and tests to the end of their pilgrim journey. Hence we marvel not as we look back upon the way and note that seasons of temptation and severe testing have been experienced. We recall that there were similar trying times when the Master Himself walked with His disciples in Judea.

The lesson to all the faithful today, dearly beloved, is one of solemn import. The great and sublime end that we all seek is a place with our dear Redeemer in His Kingdom; for hereunto have we been called. The question is, Shall we permit anything in these days to discourage us in the race for life or hinder us from reaching that much desired goal? "We shall reap if we faint not." Let us pray for one another and in every way assist one another to stand, and to fight a good fight of faith. Love of the brethren is classified in the Scriptures as one of the evidences of the new life. Let us give evidence that all men may know by this power of love in us that we are His disciples. Praising God for past mercies, let us continue our services and hold fast to our consecration to Him with the thought that we are nearer to the glorious change, the "Well done," for which we hope. May the Lord's blessing abide richly with His people, giving more and more wisdom, enabling them to do those things pleasing in His sight.

STATEMENT OF AUDITING COMMITTEE
Brooklyn, N. Y., May 26, 1924.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The undersigned by appointment of the Brooklyn, Springfield, and Ulster Park Ecclesias met and audited the financial accounts of the PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE on the above date, and desire to certify that the same were correct and in good condition.

Your brethren in Christ,

George W. Jeffrey
Percival Gregory
Frederick C. Schaufelberger

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT

Balance on hand May 15, 1923 \$1,619.78

RECEIPTS DURING YEAR:

Tract Fund \$7,135.70

Herald Subscriptions 1,918 .79

Revelation Volumes 2,580.28

Volume 1 78.85

Bibles, Mottos, etc. 339.93
Rentals 700.00 12,752.83
\$14,372.63

DISBURSEMENTS DURING YEAR:

Herald Expense \$4,702.79
Free Literature 716.25
Pilgrim Expense 1,863.66
Convention Expense 38.50
Office Expense 493.67
Revelation Volume Expense 3,367.24
Bibles, Mottos, etc. 324.16
Administration Expense 181.75
Maintenance of Property 1,268.10 12,950.12
Balance on hand May 15, 1924 \$1,422.51

LIABILITIES:

Balance due on Revelation Exposition, approximately \$2,250.00

Cash on hand 1,422.51

Indebtedness: \$827.49

THE LOVE THAT IS PERFECT

WHEN we can say that we are not jealous or pained, or made uneasy at the success or superior excellence or reputation of another; that we rejoice to hear another praised even though it be along a line that rivals us -- our love is perfected, in this particular; for "Love envies not."

When we can say that we have no desire for display or vainglory -no desire that others shall think we have superior talents, abilities; when we always feel an unwillingness to put ourselves forward, as well as a lack of confidence in ourselves -- then, in these particulars our love is perfect; for "Love vaunteth [boasteth] not itself."

When we can say that it does not make us feel that "we are somebody," when we are praised; when we have a modest opinion of our abilities, successes, or achievements -- we are in these particulars made perfect in love; for "Love is not puffed up."

When we have the inward desire and intent to be kind, polite, and courteous to all; when we would not willingly hurt another's feelings - - we are in this particular perfected in love; for "Love doth not behave itself unseemly."

When in deciding matters as to what we shall do or say, we are influenced, not so much by how it may affect our own selfish interests, but rather by how it will please the Master, how it will help others -- in this particular we can say that the love of God is perfected in us; for "Love seeketh not her own."

When things do not go to please us; when through others we have been put to trouble, and we are not voked to anger or impatience-in this particular our love is made perfect; for "Love is not provoked."

When another injures us in any way, and we can forget it, in the sense of not holding any malignant recollections, but can drop the matter, forget the fault, and act in as far as it will be best for the Cause of the Master as though it had not been -- then is our love in this particular perfected; for "Love thinketh no [taketh not account of] evil."

When we have no feeling of satisfaction or rejoicing on the occasion of another who may have injured us suffering a like injury; when we have no inclination to say, "he is getting as good as he sent; now he

knows how I felt when he injured me" -- our love is made perfect in this; for "Love rejoiceth not in iniquity."

When one trial after another comes, and we do not complain or murmur, but bear it patiently -- we then can say, our love is made perfect; for "Love endureth all things." When we can bear being ill-treated, misrepresented over and over again, and can sing and bear it - our love is made perfect; for "Love suffereth long and is kind."

When we can always put the best construction upon another's conduct, and say we cannot see the heart, we do not know the motive-then we can say our love is made perfect; for "Love believeth all things."

When we can say, after we are compelled to believe that another has gone wrong, "it is so but I hope it will be better with him later" -- then our love is perfect in this particular; for "Love hopeth all *things*."
-- *Selected.*

IN FULLNESS OF TIME CHRIST CAME

"There is born to you this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."-- Luke 2:11; 7-20.

THE message of the angels to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem becomes more and more precious to each child of God in proportion as he grows in grace and knowledge. As his ears and eyes of understanding open more widely to the lengths and breadths of God's Plan of the Ages, that prophetic message is the more highly esteemed as an epitome of the entire Gospel. Nor can our attention be called too frequently to the great event which lies at the foundation of that message -- the Savior's birth.

For more than four thousand years the promises of God, clothed in more or less obscurity, had been given to mankind, intimating that ultimately the great curse of sin and death that 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.

Since the Jews were a people of commercial spirit, many of them were to be found in all parts of the civilized world. 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 Savior's birth, we read, "all men were in expectation" of a coming Messiah. Doubtless this expectation was based upon 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 Priest and as the great antitypical King over Israel and the world. -- Dan. 9:24-27.

FROM BETHLEHEM TO NAZARETH

In olden times there were honorable cities and mean cities. Nazareth was generally recognized as one of the latter, while Bethlehem was distinctly one of the former -- the City of David, Israel's beloved king. The Scriptures explain that Mary, our Lord's mother, and her husband Joseph were both of the lineage of David, and that in a seemingly accidental manner the prophecy was fulfilled which foretold that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. -- Micah 5:2.

At that time the Roman Empire bore rule over the whole world, the Jews being subject to it, but waiting expectantly, restlessly, for the coming Messiah, who would deliver them from being a subject people and make of them the ruling caste in His Kingdom, which would have dominion over the whole world. The great Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus was in power at this time, and had sent forth his decree for a polling or census, of the whole world for the purpose of taxation, etc.

St. Luke informs us that it was in response to this royal decree that Joseph and Mary went up to their native city to be enrolled; that thus it was that Jesus was born in Bethlehem; that on account of the great concourse of people at the same time and for the same purpose, accommodations were scarce and the stable of the khan or inn, was' used by some as a lodging; and that Joseph and Mary, being late comers, were forced to occupy these humble quarters. Thus it was that the King of Glory, whose Kingdom is by and by to rule the world, was in the time of His flesh born in a stable and cradled in a manger.

THE ANGELS AND THE SHEPHERDS

Noble shepherds those must have been to whom the Almighty sent the angelic message respecting the birth of Jesus, the Messiah-the message which has rung down the ages and reached our ears, the message which thrills us the more in proportion as we are able to grasp its meaning. First; an angel appeared to the shepherds and allayed their fears, saying, "Fear not; behold, I bring you good tidings." It would appear that fear is one of the dominating impulses of the human mind, especially in conjunction with Divine revelations.

Men realize -- even the best of the race -- that they are imperfect, and that the Almighty and His laws are perfect. Instinctively the world seems to realize that a curse, or condemnation of the Almighty, rests upon it; and instinctively it fears a further curse, a further condemnation, realizing its continual and increasing sinfulness. The same is true today with all except the comparatively few who are well

informed respecting the Divine Plan. Thus the subject is generally obnoxious to the world -- a subject which they prefer to avoid, because of a feeling of guilt and a dread of further knowledge and condemnation.

It is for the true children of God today, as it was for the angels at that time, to assure the world that God is better than all their fears -that God so loved the world as to redeem mankind from the just sentence of death, the curse that came upon all as inheritors of Adam's imperfection and sentence.

"Good tidings" is another translation of our word Gospel. How beautiful is the thought that the Gospel is really and truly, good tidings! Alas, for the misrepresentations of God's Plan, because of which so many of His professed people misrepresent His character and His Word, and apply the term Gospel to their various messages from the Dark Ages, teaching purgatory and eternal torment as the portion of the race!.

Let us get away from this false thought and get the truth that the Gospel is good tidings. The angel elaborated, saying that his message was "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.'" Ah, thank God, His Plan is wider, deeper, higher, and grander than anything which we had ever conceived! The Gospel message is not merely to be good tidings to the comparatively few that now have ears to hear and eyes to see its beauties, but in God's due time it is to be good tidings of great joy to all people the world over.

As every member of Adam's race shared in his fall and in the curse of death which came upon him as a result of his disobedience, so every member of the race was included in the great redemptive sacrifice which our Lord Jesus offered and which was finished at Calvary. God's Plan in Christ, as it is being worked out and shall ultimately be accomplished, will mean great joy for all people; and the tidings of this fact were given at the very moment of our Lord's birth, because He was the One through whom all the glorious things of the Divine Purpose and Plan shall ultimately be accomplished.

THE LOGIC OF THE MESSAGE

The message took cognizance of the fact that it was to reasonable people, who would wish to know why the unchangeable God, who had once pronounced a curse upon the race, should at any time so amend and alter matters as to supplant the curse with a blessing. The messenger stated the philosophy of the Divine Plan -- "Unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ [Messiah] the Lord." There we have the key to the entire Gospel statement of how God could be just and yet be the Justifier of sinners who accept Jesus. -- Rom. 3:26.

The word Savior here signifies Life-giver. How beautiful is the thought that as death is the wage of sin, the curse upon the race, this Messiah who was born is to be the One who will rescue the race from the sentence by giving them life again! The explanation of how He would give them life was not made, nor was it necessary at that time. But now, in the light of the developments and with the explanations furnished through the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, we see that our Lord's voluntary sacrifice of His life, dying "the just for the unjust," settles the claims of Divine justice against Adam, and thus incidentally against all who share his death sentence, namely all mankind.

Truly, the more we see of the Divine Plan for our salvation, which began to take shape in the birth of Jesus, the more we feel like shouting with the angelic choir praises to the God of Heaven, thankfulness for his mercy to the children of men! It mattered not that the babe born in Bethlehem was the Savior only in prospect, that He could not even be anointed to do His work until He reached manhood's estate thirty years later. It mattered not that even then it would be necessary for Him to lay down His life gradually during the three and a half years of His earthly ministry, to be finished at Calvary. Nor did it matter that His resurrection was still three days after His death, and His ascension forty days later; and that the blessing in general would be deferred for nearly nineteen centuries thereafter. As the angels could sing and rejoice at the first budding of the Divine Plan of Salvation, so also can all who have faith in the ultimate outcome rejoice with joy unspeakable and give praise to God in the highest and to His Son our Lord.

"SAVED BY HOPE"

Although nearly nineteen centuries have rolled away since that angelic message was delivered, it has not been fulfilled except in a limited measure by faith to those who have the eye and the ear of faith-in all, a "little flock." But the bad tidings of great misery for nearly all people have been spread abroad in the name of Christ, much to the discredit of the Divine Plan and to the dishonor of the Divine character. Instead of carrying joy, the message has very generally carried grief and sorrow, especially to the kind-hearted and more generously disposed. Indeed we may say that no message of the Lord Jesus has ever reached all people. Even today, after nineteen centuries of propaganda, only a comparatively small portion of the human family have ever heard of the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved-"nor is there salvation in any other." -- Acts 4 :12.

What, then; shall we say of the salvation which has come to those who have truly accepted Christ as their Savior, who are today rejoicing in

Him as such, and who by faith are seeing the salvation of God begun in their own hearts and yet to be fully accomplished under the whole heavens? This the Apostle calls the salvation by hope. His words are, "We are saved by hope." -- Rom. 8:24.

We are not saved actually; we are still surrounded by sin, pain, sighing, crying, and dying; the curse is not yet rolled away. All that the best of the Lord's people have yet received is salvation by hope, by faith. Yet this anticipation of the future salvation, of the resurrection from the dead, of a participation in the glory, honor, and immortality of the Divine nature promised to the faithful, is *so* strong, so clear, that those who possess it are enabled to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, even in the midst of trials, difficulties, weaknesses, and unfavorable conditions incident to the curse which still rests upon the world of mankind.

A PROPHECY OF GOOD THINGS

The angelic message was a prophecy of good things to be accomplished for the Church and the world during the Millennial Age. The Church is to have the first blessing. The First Resurrection is to be composed only of the blessed and holy who shall live and reign with Christ during the thousand years. Then Satan will be bound, and the good influences of truth and righteousness shall enlighten the whole earth. (Rev. 20:1-6). The declaration of Scriptures is that the Church will come early in the morning of the Millennial Day. As the Prophet declares, "God will help her early in the morning." -- Psa. 46:5, margin.

But much as we rejoice in the glorious-hopes of the Gospel set before us who now see, who now rejoice with joy unspeakable, we are glad that the Divine mercy and love are of such lengths and breadths and heights and depths as to encompass the whole world of mankind, and to provide a blessing for every member of Adam's race through Him who loved us and bought us with His own precious blood.

During the Millennium this prophecy will have fulfillment. The great Savior who has already redeemed us by His sacrifice will stand forth as the King, the glorified Messiah, and establish His dominion of righteousness in the world for the blessing and uplifting of every member of the race. In harmony with the words of the Apostle, those will be times of refreshing, "times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21.) If the Lord had based the hope of the world upon some works of merit or righteousness of the world's doing, then indeed we might have feared -- indeed, the more we know of the world, the less hope we would have. But, on the contrary, the Lord has based the entire proposition for the future blessing, not upon our worthiness, but

upon the worthiness and sacrifice of His Son. To you is born a Life-giver, which is Messiah the Lord.

How it adds to our enjoyment of the blessings of the coming Age to know that the trials and difficulties of the present Gospel Age are subject to the Divine supervision in the interest of the Little Flock that is now being gathered in advance from amongst men-the Elect, the Church! We see how the present trials and difficulties are the chiselings and polishings necessary to our development in the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit in character-likeness of God's dear Son, our Lord, our Hope, our Bridegroom. How joyful the thought that soon the elect number called from the world to be "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife," will be completed and enter into her glory! How precious the thought that then they shall be privileged with their Lord and Master to extend the Divine favor of blessing and uplift to the world! What higher honor or privilege or blessing could possibly come to any one?

THE ANGELS' SONG

It was after the giving of the Message of good tidings of great joy by the heavenly one that a host of angels appeared to the shepherds, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." This, too, is a prophecy. It is not yet true, but will be fulfilled in every particular in God's due time, which we believe is now nigh, even at the door. Not yet does God receive glory in the highest. Not yet is there peace amongst men. Quite to the contrary. God's name is blasphemed, not only by those who vulgarly and in ribald jest take the Divine name in vain, not merely by the heathen who worship devils and think that these are gods, but even by Christian people. Every day God's name is blasphemed by those who profess to be His people, who profess to uphold the Holy Name.

For be it known that blasphemy is any dishonorable misrepresentation of another. God be merciful to us! for at some time or other doubtless every one of us has blasphemed His holy name in this manner-by misrepresenting the Divine character and the Divine Plan, by picturing the God of Love, of Mercy, of Justice, and of Truth as the originator, the planner, the perpetrator of the eternal torment of the great mass of His human creatures, born in sin, misshapen in iniquity, prone to sin as the sparks to fly upward

But the Lord had mercy upon us because we did it ignorantly. Therefore we should have compassion upon others who still ignorantly misrepresent our God; and our energies should be continually bent to their assistance, that the eyes of their understanding might open more widely to perceive the lengths and breadths and heights and depths, and to know the love of God, which passeth understanding. Noting that peace on earth and good will to

men have not followed the Savior's birth thus far, and not discerning that this is a prophecy of what is to be accomplished during the Millennium, many have been inclined to change the translation of this verse so as to have it read, "On earth peace amongst men in whom He is well pleased." However, by this change the statement would not be true; for even the Lord's people have no peace upon earth. Whatever peace they have is in their hearts, and is based upon their faith in God and in the glorious things which He has promised. Our Lord Himself and the Apostles testified to this, assuring us that whosoever in this present time would live godly should suffer persecution, and that a man's foes should be they of his own household. -- 2 Tim. 3:12; Matt. 10:36.

Let us not confuse ourselves nor abridge the testimony of the Word, but with the eye of faith look forward to the Day of Christ, in which all these glorious prophecies will have their fulfillment, in which peace shall indeed fill, the whole earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, bringing Divine favor and, rolling away the curse from the entire groaning creation, as pointed out by the Apostle. -- Rom. 8 :22.

FULFILLED IN GOD'S DUE TIME

Not even with the inauguration of the Millennium will this prophecy be fulfilled. Not until its close, when the human family shall have been lifted by the Kingdom regulations out of sin, sickness, pain, sorrow, and death, up, up to all that was lost in Adam-not until then will there indeed be glory to God in the highest,' not until then will there be peace amongst men. Nor are we to understand that the entire race will be appreciative of the Divine love and favor even. after they have fully seen the righteousness of God in Christ manifested. On the contrary, the Scriptures seem to teach clearly that there will be a class who will then prove unfit for life eternal, unappreciative of the Divine favor. And it is with satisfaction that we learn. that all such shall be destroyed from amongst the people in the Second Death.

Thus eventually, by the close of the Millennium, Satan and all willful wrongdoers having been destroyed, the time will come, as declared in the Scriptures, when all voices in heaven and in earth and under the earth shall be heard praising God and the Lamb forever. Hosanna! Glory to God in the highest! Peace and good will to men! This will be the final shout of a redeemed race when the great Plan of Salvation shall have been fully outworked according to the Divine Purpose from the beginning, as set forth in the Scriptures.

FROM GLORY TO A MANGER

The notable census made by order of Caesar Augustus included the civilized world of that day; and according to Jewish custom each family and tribe had their names enrolled therein. Both Joseph and Mary, being of the Davidian line, went to the City of David -- Bethlehem -- to be enrolled. The city is a small one, located on a hillside. The inns or hotels of that land are very different from ours. They are neither hotels nor drinking saloons, but are entered from a court-yard. Various large, unfurnished rooms are at the service of the traveler; who carries with him his wraps, in which he sleeps, and also his food and utensils for such light housekeeping as he may choose to do. Stalls for horses, camels, etc., are provided on the ground floor; and in the event of a crowd, as on such an occasion, it is no uncommon thing for people, finding the upper rooms crowded full, to make themselves nearly as comfortable in the stabling department.

Thus it came that our Savior was ushered in a most humble manner into the world which, as the Logos, He had made. (John 1:10.) It was there in the stable of the overcrowded inn that the shepherds found the babe, as predicted by the angels, and went forth proclaiming the fact. Mary made no boasts, however, but waited for God's due time.

DANIEL THE BELOVED OF JEHOVAH

SIXTY-NINE WEEKS TO MESSIAH THE PRINCE

SERIES XXIII

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." -- Dan. 9:25.

THE prediction of the First Advent contained in this chapter was communicated by the angel Gabriel to the prophet Daniel while _____ he was in the natural state of consciousness. The matters revealed, if we except the brief statement of verse 25, concerning the building of the city, wall, and street, at the time in ruins, and the statement of verse 27, concerning the desolations to come upon the Jewish land and people after their rejection of the Messiah, all transpired in the brief period of a "week," that is, a week of years. The word "*heptad*" translated weeks would be better rendered "sevens." The fulfillment, however, discloses that seventy "sevens" of years (490 years) are referred to.

The general statement, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city," shows that the prophecy relates to Daniel's people and land. The words, "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness," were indeed, as one has said, "a response to Daniel's deepest yearnings," and brought strong consolation to the aged saint of God. The prophetic threatening to the seed of the serpent, and the covenant with Abraham, had not been forgotten by Jehovah, and were approaching their fulfillment. Sin was to be atoned for and put away; through the Messiah redemption was to be brought to the world, and God's everlasting righteousness was to be brought within the reach of mankind. "This," says the writer just quoted, "was a renewal of all the highest and holiest hopes of the nation, through whom the redemption of the world was to come; and for the first time the period of Messiah's coming was indicated."

REVIEW OF THOUGHTS OF OTHERS

It will not be our purpose to consider particularly the meaning of these expressions. They are frequently referred to as meeting their fulfillment in Christ in the New Testament writings. To recall their oft repeated occurrence we cite a few passages. In Heb. 9:22 we read that there was to be a putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Christ. In 2 Cor. 2:19 we learn that He was to make reconciliation for iniquity. In Rom. 10:4 it is stated that, there would be introduced by Christ the righteousness of God. The book of Hebrews makes frequent reference to the confirmation of a covenant.

There is probably no prophetic Scripture that has excited so much attention, and concerning which, in several of its features, there has been so many different interpretations. Prof. Stuart, a writer on prophecy, who lived during the first half of the nineteenth century, has thus referred to these varied interpretations:

"It would require a volume of considerable magnitude even to give a history of the ever-varying and contradictory opinions of critics respecting this *locus vexatissimus*; and perhaps a still larger one to establish an exegesis which would stand. I am fully of opinion that no interpretation as yet published will stand the test of thorough grammatico-historical criticism; and that a candid, and a searching, and thorough critique here, is still a desideration. May some expositor, fully adequate to the task, speedily appear!"

Another writer of more recent years thus writes

"There is some obscurity as to certain points of this great prediction, though the drift of the whole is perfectly clear; the extreme condensation and brevity which mark it are one cause of the difficulty, and an occasional ellipsis in the Hebrew affords room for alternate

constructions in one or two of the expressions. An immense amount of controversy has for ages been carried on about this prophecy -- controversy attributable to several causes: first, its absolute clearness as a whole combined with its difficulties in minor points; secondly, the inveterate determination of Jews to silence its glorious witness to the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth; thirdly, the equal anxiety of infidels to blunt the edge of a prophecy which establishes indubitably Divine inspiration; and lastly, the intrinsic difficulties of sacred chronology:"

Most writers begin their studies of it with an attempt to fix the date of our Lord's birth -- this, because it is generally and correctly believed that He began His ministry at the age of thirty; and therefore calculating just thirty years from His birth, would reach the date when He began His official work, at which point the sixty-nine weeks would end. There is a very general agreement among scholars at the present time that our Lord was born somewhere about the first of October, whatever may have been the year. The Divine prediction reads, "know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and [plus] threescore and two weeks." The divinely authorized way to begin the study of this prophecy then, according to these words, would be to discover first the date of its commencement, instead of that of its ending.

WHEN THE SIXTY-NINE WEEKS COMMENCE

Now there is one thing that must not be overlooked in regard to this, and that is that while the Scriptures do not give sufficient data to establish the *exact year* when this commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem went forth, they do give us the exact Jewish month. This was the sacred month, Nisan, which corresponds with the period from about the middle of March until the same in April. It matters not whether we begin to reckon these sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years, in solar time, with Ezra's going up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, as many do, or Nehemiah's going up in the twentieth year of the same Persian king -- 483 years end in the month Nisan. It was the month Nisan in both instances that these events occurred.

Does it not seem, then, that in this fact we have the key to open the way to understand the kind or manner of time the revealing angel had reference to? It seems evident from the expression, "unto Messiah the Prince," that the sixty-nine weeks, 483 years, must end with the beginning of Christ's official ministry. This ministry did not begin at Nisan in the spring, but in the fall, when He had reached the age of thirty. The significant thing to be noted about this is that sixty-nine weeks, 483 years, reckoned in solar time from Nisan in the spring cannot possibly be made terminate in the fall.

On this account, if we are to look for *exactness*, as it would seem we should, and if we believe what is scarcely questioned by any one, that Christ's ministry began some time about October first, then is it not a fact that to solve the problem we shall have discard solar calculations? In other words, no matter what year begin the sixty-nine weeks, they will end in the spring and not the autumn -- that is, 483 solar years from the spring must end the spring. There can be no doubt about this. May it not be that this fact we have the fuller meaning of St. Peter's words, that prophets searched diligently concerning the "manner of time," whether solar or lunar, the spirit of Christ that was in them did signify when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ? And may it not be true then, that the hidden feature of these seventy weeks is discovered in the fact that they are calculated lunar instead of solar time?

Does it not seem from the foregoing that we are compelled to believe one of two things -- either that the Lord did not intend to the *exact* dates of the ending of these prophetic periods, or that they are not to be calculated by solar time measures? Solar measures must of necessity be defective six months, no matter what year the commandment went forth to restore and to build Jerusalem.

THREE DECREES

The angel states that the period begins with a commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, and not a commandment or decree permitting the Jews to return from their captivity; nor with one granting permission to rebuild the temple, and restore the temple worship.

In the book of Ezra three decrees relating to the Jews are recorded. In the opening verses of Ezra we have the decree of Cyrus; but this one specifies very definitely that it was the building of the "house [temple] of the Lord God of Israel," that is referred to. At the time this decree was made, the seventy years of servitude to Babylon ended. (Jer. 27:6-17; 28:14; 29:10.) It will be recalled that another judgment was predicted by Jeremiah, to begin in Zedekiah's reign -- that of the seventy years of desolation, because of continued disobedience and rebellion on the part of the nation. This prediction was made in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, after the servitude had begun. The desolations continued after the servitude had ended, until the second year of Darius Hystaspes, when the second decree relating to the Jews went forth--some sixteen years after they began to return under Cyrus. Nothing had been done up to this time to build the city -- a city with walls for defense, as the Hebrew word means. -- See Ezra 4.

A third decree was issued by the Persian king Artaxerxes Longimanus in his seventh year, and this is understood by some writers to be the one referred to. A careful examination of this decree will discover that it had reference to the beautifying of the house of the Lord. (See Ezra

7:19 and 27.) The temple had been completed long years before; the city, however, was still in ruins thirteen years after the decree in Artaxerxes' seventh year.

No mention is made of a decree to "restore and to build Jerusalem" anywhere in the book of Ezra. The book of Nehemiah, however, opens with a record of such a decree. Chapter one relates that Nehemiah, who was occupying the position of cup-bearer to the Persian king, a place of no mean honor, was visited by some of his Jewish brethren who had just returned from Jerusalem, and he "asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem." The answer they gave was: "The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire." -Neh. 1:1-3.

IN NEHEMIAH'S DAY

The effect of this news on Nehemiah is described in his words: "And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven." This prayer is recorded in chapter one. The prayer closes with a petition that the Lord would move upon the Persian king to show him favor., The second chapter shows how this prayer was answered. We are told that in the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, as Nehemiah was performing the duties of his office, his countenance betrayed to the king the sadness of his heart, and the king requested him to make known the cause of his grief. Nehemiah replied: "Let the king live forever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request?" As bearing on the beginning of the sixty-nine weeks, Nehemiah's reply should be carefully noted: "If it please the king," he said, "and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it." -- Neh. 2:5.

The record states that Artaxerxes granted the petition, and immediately issued the necessary order or command to give it effect. The account of Nehemiah's visit to the city,, his viewing the ruins, his being recognized by the discouraged Jews as their leader or governor, the commencement of the building of the walls, the opposition and difficulties encountered, and the completion of the work are next recorded. Some have said that this decree of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes is but an enlargement of his first decree, made in the king's seventh year. One writes regarding this:

"If this assertion had not the sanction of a great name [Dr. Pusey], it would not deserve even a passing notice. If it were maintained that the

decree of the seventh year of Artaxerxes was 'but an enlargement and renewal of his predecessors' [Cyrus' and Darius'] edicts, the statement would be strictly accurate. The decree Artaxerxes in his seventh year was mainly an authority to the Jews 'to beautify the house of God, which is in Jerusalem' (Ezra 7:27), in extension of the decrees by which Cyrus and Darius permitted them to build it [the temple]. The result was to produce a gorgeous shrine in the midst of a ruined city. The movement in the seventh of Artaxerxes was chiefly a religious revival (Ezra 7:10), sanctioned and subsidized by royal favor; but the event of his twentieth year was nothing less than the restoration of the autonomy of Judah. The execution of the work which Cyrus authorized was stopped -- on the false charge which the enemies of the Jews carried to the palace, that their object was to build not merely the temple, but the city. 'A rebellious city' it had ever proved to each successive suzerain, 'for which cause' they declared with truth-its destruction was decreed. 'We certify to the king' they added, 'that if this city be builded again, and the walls thereof be set up, thou shalt have no portion on this side the river [the Euphrates --Ezek. 4:16].' To allow the building of the temple was merely to accord to a conquered race the right to worship according to the law of their God, for the religion of the Jews knows no worship apart from the hill of Zion. It was a vastly different event when that people were permitted to set up again the far-famed fortifications of their city, and entrenched behind those walls, to restore under Nehemiah the old polity of the judges. This was a revival of the national existence of Judah, and therefore it is fitly chosen as the epoch of the prophetic period of the seventy weeks." -- Anderson.

THE DATE MARKED IN SECULAR HISTORY

A comment by Tregelles on this matter is interesting "This last decree, which we find recorded in Scripture, relates to the restoring and building of the city. It must be borne in mind that the very existence of a place as a city depended upon such a decree; for before that [time], any who returned from the land of captivity, went only in the condition of sojourners; it was the decree, that gave them a recognized and distinct political existence."

We quote the words of Milman, the historian, as showing that this permission to build the walls and fortify the city was more a political matter with Artaxerxes than the personal influence of Nehemiah over the king:

"On a sudden, however, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, a man of Jewish descent, cup-bearer to the king, received a commission to rebuild the city with all possible expedition. The cause of this change in the Persian politics is to be sought, not so much in, the personal influence of the Jewish cup-bearer, as in the foreign

history of the times. The power of Persia had received a fatal blow in the victory obtained at Cnidos by Conon, the Athenian admiral. The great king was obliged to submit to a humiliating peace, among the articles of which were the abandonment of the maritime towns, and a stipulation that the Persian army should not approach within three days' journey of the sea. Jerusalem, being about this distance from the coast, and standing so near the line of communication with Egypt, became [to the Persian king] a [military] post of the utmost importance."

A further confirmation of this is found in the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, which reads: "And among the elect was Nehemias, whose renown is great, who raised up for us the walls that were fallen, and set up the gates and the bars, and raised up the ruins again." On the other hand Joshua and Zerubbabel are extolled as builders of the temple: "How shall we magnify Zerubbabel? even he was a signet on the right hand. So was Joshua the son of Josedec, who in their time builded the house, and set up the holy temple to the Lord." -- Ecclesiasticus 49:11,12,13.

Two important points regarding the beginning of the sixty-nine weeks seem thus to be established by the Scriptures alone. One is that the month date to begin the reckoning was that of Nisan; and the other is that it was in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia. That which next needs to be discovered is the year B.C. in which this event occurred. It is a fact admitted by all that the Scriptures furnish no data whereby this may be discovered. We are, therefore, dependent upon the records of secular history. Concerning one very important record of ancient history the following words of an eminent Christian expositor are worthy of consideration

"The uncertainty which attaches to remote periods of secular chronology disappears at the date of the accession of Nabonassar [the first king of Babylon], . . . From this time forward we are able to verify the chronological records of the past; and the dates of ancient history are confirmed by astronomic observations. The astronomical records of the ancients, by whose means we are able to fix with certainty the chronology of the earlier centuries of the 'times of the Gentiles,' are contained in the 'Syntaxis,' or 'Almagest' of Ptolemy.

"In the existence of this invaluable work, and in its preservation as a precious remnant of antiquity, the hand of Providence can clearly be traced. The same Divine care which raised up Herodotus and other Greek historians to carry on the records of the past from the point to which they had been brought by the writings of the prophets at the close of the Babylonish captivity; the Providence which raised up Josephus, the Jewish historian, at the termination of New Testament history, to record the fulfillment of prophecy in the destruction of Jerusalem, raised up also Ptolemy in the important interval which

extended from Titus to Hadrian, that of the completion of Jewish desolation, to record the chronology of the nine previous centuries, and to associate it in such a way with the revolutions of the solar system as to permit of the most searching demonstration of its truth." - H. G. Guinness.

IN THE YEAR 444 B.C.

That there were several kings named Artaxerxes is well known. Concerning which one is referred to in Ezra and Nehemiah, the following is to the point "The position and period of the Artaxerxes T, of the Canon of Ptolemy correspond with those of the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7, and the book of Nehemiah. The forty-one years assigned by the Canon to the reign of Artaxerxes I, give room for the events and dates in Ezra and Nehemiah. The missions of these reformers took place in the seventh, twentieth, and thirty-second 'years, and fell within these forty-one years. The reigns of Artaxerxes' predecessor and of his successor, were respectively twenty-one and nineteen years, and therefore shorter than that of the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah." The seventh year of Artaxerxes as fixed by Ptolemy's Canon is B.C. 457; that of the twentieth, which of course is thirteen years later, is 444 B.C. It will be of interest at this point to note how these dates are established by the Canon of Ptolemy. This may be done in two ways First, by beginning with the date of the accession of Nabonassar, the grandfather of Nebuchadnezzar, the first king of Babylon. That this date was February 26, 747 B.C. is a fact that has never been questioned by any noted historian and chronologist. Ptolemy gives the names of all the kings of Babylon, and the years of their reign, as also the same of the Persian kings, their successors. The sum total of the reign of the Babylonian kings is 703 years. The Persian kings up to the twentieth year of Artaxerxes as given by Ptolemy are

Cyrus 9*years
Cambyses 8 years
Darius Hystaspes 36 years
Xerxes 21 years
Artaxerxes to his 20th year 20 years
303 years

* Ptolemy leaves out the names of those kings who reigned less than a year.

747-303=444 B.C., as the date of the "commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." Another method of determining this date is as follows Artaxerxes is said to have begun his reign 465 B.C.; his twentieth year would be from 445 to 444 B. C.

Now it is very evident that as the command to build Jerusalem was given in the month Nisan, 483 solar years from this time must end in the month Nisan. If we should say that, they must end with the event of Christ's assuming His Messiahship, which occurred in or about October (and this is the place that they should end) is it not evident .that there would be six months defection, no matter what year they began? That the 483 years must end in the autumn is apparent not only from the fact that Christ began His ministry in the autumn, at the age of thirty, but also from the fact that it was in the midst (middle.) of the seventieth week that the angel said, He should cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease by His sacrificial death; and this, as is plainly stated in all Scripture accounts, took place on the occasion of a Passover in the month Nisan, which would be in the middle of the seventieth week. And as Christ suffered death three years and a half after the sixty-ninth week, or 483 years ended, it is plain that 486 1/2 years from this commandment bring us to the death of Christ, which would be the middle of the seventieth week. And as this is the greatest event of human history, it will not be thought remarkable that the ending of these 486 1/2 years brings us that which solves the problem -- what kind of time is referred to in the angel's words.

"ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS"

"Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." -- Luke 2:40-52.

IN these days of the decline of the Christian faith, these days of the flourishing of modernism -- infidelity, when the foundations of all real faith in God and His message are fast being removed, it is indeed refreshing to review the earthly life of our blessed Master and consider again the unmistakable evidences that mark Him as truly the Son of the living God, designed to be the great Deliverer of the human race.

Again we observe that one peculiarity of the Bible, which differentiates it from all other religious books, is its candor, its faithfulness to facts. Without specially preaching against them it mentions the weaknesses, the blemishes, the failures of the various heroes which it draws to our attention: Mother Eve's deception, father Adam's disobedience without deception, Abraham's error in not properly acknowledging his wife, Moses' mistake in respect to the smiting of the rock the second time, the shortcomings of Eli, Samson, Saul, David, Solomon, and others of the Old Testament times. The New Testament similarly mentions the strife amongst the Apostles as to who should be the greatest, the wrong spirit of James and John in connection with the Samaritans, Peter's denial of the Lord, the dispute between Barnabas and Paul respecting John Mark, etc. This

faithfulness of the Word of God in pointing out that there is none righteous, no not one, amongst all the race of Adam-that all need forgiveness, reconciliation to the Father through the atoning sacrifice--proves the reliability of its testimony.

Noting that the Scriptures were written by various pens during a period of sixteen centuries, and that they all manifest the same uniformity, honesty, impresses upon us all the more the full import of their declarations respecting Jesus-that He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." This was in accord with the predictions of the Prophets respecting the Messiah, also with the narrative of His birth, boyhood, youth, manhood, to His resurrection and ascension to glory. Angels and men declare to us that He was separate from sinners, that His life came not from the impaired and condemned Adamic stock, but was a transference from a spirit existence previously enjoyed. His perfection, His keeping of the Divine law, His acceptance with the Father, were fully demonstrated and assured to us in that "God raised Him from the dead on the third day." -- 1 Cor. 15:4.

THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS

Our lesson (ver. 40) declares that prior to His reaching His twelfth year He had been growing in stature and in strength, and was gradually being filled with wisdom. We are not to forget that He was separate from sinners, nor to expect that other boys at His age should manifest the same degree of wisdom. Quite to the contrary -inheriting blemishes, mental, physical, moral, they would not belong to the same class at all. Our Lord Jesus is riot a pattern for the natural man, and in harmony with this thought He is not introduced to us as our exemplar until He reached the age of manhood, consecrated His life to the doing of the work which the Father had committed to Him, and had begun His ministry under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Nor is His earthly ministry nor. His teachings the example or pattern for the world: these are merely for His foot-step followers, His disciples those who, justified through faith in His blood, have similarly made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice, by full consecration of themselves to live not unto themselves but unto Him who died for them. Doubtless there is heavenly wisdom in connection with the limited description given us of the childhood and youth of our Savior. These were not our examples, and indeed any attempt to measure the ordinary boy or youth by that glorious and perfect standard would have undoubtedly been discouraging-perhaps to an injurious degree. Let us not, then, attempt to imagine with particularity what the Lord has seen fit to cover and not reveal. Let us content ourselves with the simple narrative, with the meager

testimony of the Gospel on this subject -- that Jesus developed in wisdom as well as in physical strength.

THE GRACE OF GOD UPON HIM

The word "grace" signifies that which gives pleasure, as loveliness of form or character, or the most admirable virtues. Hence the grace of God signifies His favor, that Jesus as a child was such a one as the Father had pleasure in, and, reversely, such a one as reflected in His form and character the grace, perfection, the beauty which is of God. John, speaking of our Savior, says, "We beheld His glory, the beauty of the only begotten of the Father." All this speaks perfection in its most absolute sense, and would be very discouraging not only to other children but to their parents also were it understood that the boy Jesus was given of God to be a pattern or model for others. On the other hand it is important for us to know this, as corroborating the testimony that He was undefiled, separate from sinners, holy and acceptable to the Father from infancy to manhood.

In Divine providence our Lord was not only born under favorable religious influences, but trained in that way. His mother and her husband were pious, reverent, and evidently disposed to be obedient to every feature of the Divine Law to the extent of their ability. In accord with the demands of the Law they went annually to Jerusalem to the Feast of Passover, the great religious gathering which called the typical people from one end of their land to the other to a special worship of the Lord, to a special remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt, to their adoption as His people and incidentally to the observance of a type of the coming blessings through the killing of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, and whose flesh is meat indeed and whose blood is drink indeed-symbolically.

JESUS A SON OF THE LAW

It had been the custom of Joseph and Mary to go to these feasts every year, and doubtless Jesus, as He grew older, went with them. The one mentioned in our lesson was, noteworthy above the others because of our Lord's conduct on this occasion -- different from what it had previously been and what it subsequently was. Nor can we really imagine what profound and holy emotion was stirred in the heart of the boy Jesus at the sight of "the City of the great King." Glorious as a view of Jerusalem must have seemed to a child coming to it from the retirement of a Galilean village, we must bear in mind, that He who now looked upon it was not an, ordinary child. Mr. Edersheim has made some interesting notes bearing upon this incident of the visit of the child Jesus to Jerusalem:

"Nor are we, perhaps, mistaken in the idea that the sight of its grandeur would, as on another occasion, awaken in Him not so much

feelings of admiration, which might have been akin to those of pride, as of sadness, though He may as yet have been scarcely conscious of its deeper reason. But the one all-engrossing thought would be of the temple. This, His first visit to its halls, seems also to have called out the first outspoken-and, may we not infer, the first conscious-thought of that temple as the house of His Father, and with it the first conscious impulse of His mission and being. Here also it would be the higher meaning, rather than the structure and appearance, of the temple, that would absorb the mind. And yet there was sufficient, even in the latter, to kindle enthusiasm. As the pilgrim ascended the Mount, crested by that symmetrically proportioned building, which could hold within its gigantic girdle not fewer than 210,000 persons, His wonder might well increase at every step. The Mount itself seemed like an island, abruptly rising from out deep valleys, surrounded by a sea of walls, palaces, streets, and houses, and crowned by a mass of snowy marble and glittering gold, rising terrace upon terrace. Altogether it measured a square of about 1,000 feet, or, to give a more exact equivalent of the measurements furnished by the Rabbis, 927 feet. At its northwestern angle, and connected with it, frowned the Castle of Antonia, held by the Roman garrison. The lofty walls were pierced by massive gates -the unused gate (Tedi) on the north; the Susa Gate on the east, which opened on the arched roadway to the Mount of Olives; the two so-called 'Huldah' (probably, 'weasel') gates, which led by tunnels from the priest-suburb Ophel into the outer Court; and, finally, four gates on the west."

Under the Jewish custom a boy at twelve years of age was supposed to make some kind of a consecration of himself, some kind of a special recognition of the Law, on account of which he was called a "son of the Law," a child of the Law.

The wisdom in which our Lord had been growing up to that time, like an other things pertaining to the Jewish system, was intimately interwoven with the Law and the Prophets. He recognized Himself as being not the son of Joseph but the Son of God, and knew that He had come into the world on a special mission, and it was a preliminary step on His part to gain wisdom respecting the work He was to do as it had been outlined in the promises, in the Law, and through the testimonies of the Prophets. Wise far beyond His years because of His perfection, His mind doubtless seized upon the custom of the twelfth year: doubtless He wondered if this custom of becoming a son of the Law did not in some sense of the word imply that He at that age should become in some measure identified with the Law as a student, or in some other capacity.

Of winsome manner, as was the boy Jesus, in favor with man as well as with God, and wise hearted, Joseph and Mary found little necessity for keeping close watch over His doings. He was apparently, for a

child of His age, especially well able to take care of Himself. Hence it was that on returning from the feast they went a full day's journey before noticing that He was not with any of their company, and had evidently been left behind at Jerusalem. It required a day to return to Jerusalem, and on the third day seeking Him they found Him in the Temple. They were amazed to see a child of twelve years seated amongst the doctors of the Law, listening to their discussions and asking questions. We are not told of the nature of the questions of those three days, but we may be sure that they all pertained to the Law and the covenants and the prophets respecting Messiah and His work.

Continued in the next issue