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Things Coming to Pass

"When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand." - Luke 21:31.

THE PAST several months have seen world events follow one another in bewildering succession, the like of which has never been duplicated in history. During this period three international figures, Roosevelt, Mussolini, and Hitler have passed from the scene. Two others, Churchill and Hirohito have been relegated to secondary roles. The world has seen the birth of a global organization embodying the hopes of millions in all lands for an enduring peace. England, that citadel of modern capitalism, has turned her face toward socialism in the most significant election of her long parliamentary history. Weeks and days have consummated events that once covered years, even centuries. In Europe, the Nazi Reich which at the height of its power ruled over some 400,000,000 people in an area of 2,500,000 square miles, has collapsed in utter defeat, even losing some of its own ancient lands, and has been reduced to the state of not even having a Government of its own. In Asia, the Japanese Empire, which extended half-way down the globe, ruling almost half a billion people in a land area of nearly 3,000,000 square miles, with dreams of a "co-prosperity sphere" that would give her the dominance over half the human race, collapsed, battered and broken.

All these and the many lesser but momentous events that have transpired have caused a sense of awe and expectancy to move all nations. As Bible students, we have shared their feelings. Six years of horrible destruction, counting its toll in upwards of 40,000,000 dead, countless injured, and unmeasured physical wreckage, have ended in a great dawn of peace. War-weary humanity's sigh of relief was almost audible. And yet that relief has been tempered by solemn reflection on the future, and men are wondering more even than they are rejoicing. For coincident with the war's end has come into existence a force so vast as to startle the imagination and bewilder the senses. The explosion of the atomic bomb over Japan did more than produce the surrender offer. It has brought man face to face with himself.

Under the pressure of war the most powerful destructive weapon ever invented has been given to man, for better or for worse; with implications that are staggering. In short, mankind stand before a door which leads to Utopia or destruction. These are the sober conclusions of the greatest men

in the earth today. As students of God's Word we know that the onward march of human events is inexorably leading to a state of things from which man will have to be saved from himself. There is no salvation in the "arm of flesh." The intervention of Divine power in mundane affairs will result in the establishment of the long-prayed-for Kingdom of God, the unconscious hope of all people.

It would be premature to attempt a full evaluation of the present significant events in their relation to the Scriptures and the Divine Plan. This we must leave for future articles, for fuller comparison with the many prophetic statements, particularly those in -the Book of Revelation. We would, however, urge upon every Christian the desirability, yea, the necessity of becoming well acquainted with these portions of the Scriptures. It is our sincere -belief that in the darker days before us, they will prove founts of Divine wisdom to strengthen the faith of all God's people. We can, however, consider three Scriptures that pertain to these "last days," which have become of even fuller significance recently. With each we shall couple some expressions on these times from prominent men and institutions of our day. The comparison will be obvious to all.

"TERRORS SHALL MAKE HIM AFRAID ON EVERY SIDE"

The first Scripture, the familiar words of Christ, is found in Luke 21:25, 26, Diaglott rendering: "On the earth anguish of nations in perplexity; roarings of the sea and waves; men fainting from fear and apprehension of the things coming on the habitable; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

Concerning this apprehension note the following significant statements:

"Even the inevitable end of a great war cannot wholly lift from men's hearts the burden that was laid upon them by the dropping of an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. By their own cruelty and treachery our enemies had invited the worst we could do to them. Even so, no one could fail to realize that by this invention and this act humanity had been brought face to face with the most awful crisis in its recorded history. Here the long pilgrimage of man on earth turns toward darkness or toward light. . . . We have only to carry out the resolve, which surely every humane person on earth must have felt when he heard the news, that with the surrender of Japan this device must never again be used in war because there must never again be war. Is this torn and embittered world capable of living up to such a resolve? It has to be or die. The San Francisco Charter is a beginning. All our hopes and strivings are only a beginning. The tramp of doom is at our door but the stars of an eternal aspiration still shine.

"The mysteries that have been solved do not reveal the inner secret of the universe, nor destroy our reverence in the presence of powers we cannot control. Bewildered humanity, with this awful instrument in its hands, may feel the ages-old impulse to pray-and rising from its knees to work humbly and unselfishly for the perpetual peace that is now our only *salvation*." - *New York Times*.

"This revelation of the secrets of nature long mercifully withheld from man should arouse the most solemn reflections in the mind and conscience of every human being capable of comprehension. We must indeed pray that these awful agencies will be made to conduce to peace among the nations and that, instead of wreaking measureless havoc upon the entire globe, they may become a perennial foundation of world prosperity." - *Winston S. Churchill*.

"There are problems here calling for statesmanship of the highest order. Establishment of any organization for the maintenance of world peace and security would obviously be sheer mockery if means could not be found of guaranteeing the effective control of an instrument of war of such

potency." - Sir *John Anderson, in charge of atomic bomb research for the Churchill Government.*

"[The atomic bomb] is a challenge to every element of our national life, but most of all to organized religion." - *Dr. Earl F. Adams, executive director of the Protestant Council of the City of New York.*

"Such power of destruction would have been a social hazard even in the civilized thirteenth century. Our savage generation cannot be trusted with it at all. It is a triumph of research, but unfortunately it is also a superb symbol for the Age of Efficient *Chaos.*" - *The Rev. Robert I. Gannon, S.J., President of Fordham University.*

"The last twilight of the war is colored by mortal flames never before seen on the horizons of the universe, from its heavenly dawn to this infernal era. This incredible destructive instrument remains a temptation, if not for horrified contemporaries then for posterity, to whom history we know it very well because we are the posterity of yesterday teaches very little, and which the forgetfulness of experience dominates so willingly." - *Osservatore Romano, Vatican City Newspaper.*

"A DAY OF DARKNESS AND OF GLOOMINESS"

Our second Scripture, again the words of Christ, is found in Matt. 24:22:

"Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

These words are among the most terrible in the Bible. Strange words to be uttered by the gentle Jesus! And yet how truthful they are, for though even a year ago it would have appeared inconceivable that the entire human race (2,000,000,000 people) could ever be in danger of extinction, terrible as are present war implements, we have lived to see it become a stark possibility. Hear the words of the wise of this world:

"Man is at last well on the way to mastery of the means of destroying himself utterly: All future international relations. will be influenced for good or ill by the existence of the atomic bomb... Naturally the first thought in most people's minds will be of how this weapon, so perilous to the world should it fall into the wrong hands, may be controlled." - *Manchester Guardian.*

"Never before has the answer to this question [how to make the human race behave] been so important as it has become . . . by the news flash of the success of the atomic bomb. In a matter of hours we have changed from a world in which humans could go along in their slow and deliberate way, hating and killing, loving and letting live with all eternity to keep on doing so, improving ever so slowly as time, scientific development and education, both religious and academic, wore their slight groove deeper and deeper into the human mind, changed of a sudden to a race and generation which can, with misdirection, wipe out all *civilization.*" - *Letter to N. Y. Herald Tribune.*

"Two victories [over Germany and Japan] more complete and geographically more extensive than any recorded in history combine to leave the world a blank tablet, ready to take the impress of a new age, and confront the United Nations with the soul-testing responsibility of unlimited power. How absolute is the power and how immense the responsibility are shown by the apocalyptic force of the instrument with which they have completed their conquest. Public opinion, though in

some degree confused in its first reactions to a literally shattering event, has emphatically registered its universal and instant sense that a revolution in human affairs has occurred, confronting the world with stark and urgent problems, on which it behooves every man to search his conscience and make up his mind. With the explosion of the first atomic bomb in Hiroshima the world moved for good or ill into an age of new and uncharted forces. There is no way back to the era of steam and electricity, of tanks and guns. This defeat of Germany and Japan is in a most grim sense the last victory. Nations can no longer look forward to victory as the prize of successful war; the outbreak of another war will be in itself the final defeat of civilized man. Ravage and ruin beyond imagination must be the fate of all who engage in it. So far as human foresight can divine, the powers of destruction have now gone beyond the possibility of defense. Henceforth the quest for security can place no more reliance upon the hope of providing that, should war break out, at least the just cause shall prevail; it must be made impossible for war to begin, or else mankind *perishes*." - *London Times*.

"PEACE, PEACE, WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE"

Our third and final Scripture is found in 1 Thess. 5:3. These are the words of St. Paul, who, caught up to the third heaven, possessed a knowledge of latter day events above those of his fellow apostles.

"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

Obviously, for such a proclamation to have any meaning; the preceding times must have been exceedingly troublous. This expresses mildly the state of world affairs since the year 1914. The great hope of humanity today is "peace and safety," and all the energies of the most capable men are being devoted toward that end. A World State utilizing the atomic bomb as a "big stick" is the new hope of the nations.

"I have asked Congress to consider promptly the establishment of an appropriate commission to control the production and use of atomic power within the United States. I shall give further consideration and make a further recommendation to Congress as to how atomic power can become a powerful and forceful influence towards the maintenance of world *peace*." - *President Truman*.

"The Doctrine of unlimited national sovereignty for the Great Power was much criticized at San Francisco; since the atomic bomb, those who still hold to it must wish the destruction of mankind. We are now drawn inexorably towards some form of world authority, which all nations would accept, for the control of a weapon which we dare not leave in national hands. That we have been ready neither by habit nor by general inclination for a world authority is apparent. But if the challenge of this new weapon is to be met at all, the world must alter its thinking. The work begun at San Francisco acquires new point and urgency." *Manchester Guardian*.

"The prevention of war, however, not the assurance of the power to win wars, is the fundamental purpose of the system inaugurated at San Francisco. If now by recasting and perfecting what they have begun, the United Nations can assure themselves that the evil potentialities of the new force are kept under control, they have a right to look forward to the widening prospect of the good. The release of atomic energy is the greatest single event in the long history of man's advancing mastery over natural forces. How soon can man, the one anachronism -- persistent in the midst of the modernity with which he has surrounded himself, find his way of adjustment to the new climate? There is no salvation in retreat; he has himself destroyed the shelter of the world of

yesterday. He must face the future unafraid. The inquiry into the secrets of atomic energy will and must go on.... This time Nature offers her alternatives with a choice more than ever plain -- the loss more sure, the positive gain more patent. 'I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.' It is a time for courage and solemn resolve that must be sustained through the years. Humanity stakes its life upon its ability to prove itself worthy of its material achievement. The intellect, the skill, the organizing power have already been made visible. Nothing is lacking to a well-found craft-except the rudder. And nothing can provide it save vision, purpose, faith-the very qualities that have triumphed over the dangers and disappointments of these six tragic years. A huge opportunity -- accompanied by the huge risk which is the condition of all opportunity -- opens from this moment before the feet of man." - *London Times*.

"LOOK UNTO ME, ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH"

Thus in sober, reflective words do men appraise the seriousness of affairs today. And while a note of optimism prevails, it is based not on faith in God but in the ability of man himself. Can society lift itself by its bootstraps? God's Word says, No! Man, though not quite so sure of himself as in the past, still says, Yes! The future will show who is true. One thing is certain. "The wages of sin is death," whether it be individual, national, or world-sin. "God is not mocked." Over fifty years ago, God's great servant, Pastor Russell, in his volume, "The Battle of Armageddon," forcefully drew attention to the Scripture teaching that present institutions would collapse violently and be replaced by a Divine order of things. His was a "voice crying in the wilderness," scoffed and derided. Today from the most conservative and soberest sources are heard ominous notes of warning. Will the world wake up in time to know the day of its visitation? The Master said, "As a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." (Luke 21:35.) We conclude therefore that the present "evil heavens and earth" are plunging on to inevitable destruction, to be replaced, thank God, by the "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." - 2 Pet. 3:13.

"What if the clouds do for a moment
Hide the blue sky where morn appears?
Soon the glad sun of promise given
Rises to shine a thousand years.
A thousand years! earth's coming glory!
'Tis the glad day so long foretold;
'Tis the bright morn of Zion's glory,
Prophets foresaw in times of old."

- *W. J. Siekman*.

The Divine Law of Recompense

"The righteous shall be recompensed with good." - Prov. 13:31.

IN THE law of spiritual harvesting they who sow sparingly shall reap in like manner. By the operation of this divine rule, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Prov. 11:24, 25.) Therefore, those disposed to give generously of love and sympathy, unselfishly serving others, will in this be lending to the Lord, and learning that He repays most bountifully. Has He not promised that a cup of cold water given only in the name of a humble disciple shall by no means go unrewarded? When heaven's final rewards are received, there will surely be some happy surprises for generous souls whose kindly acts were marked for remembrance when all such ministry "shall be recompensed with good."

It was of this generous spirit Jesus was thinking when He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35.) This is so because this is the exercise of the spirit of benevolence in which God is always giving out His blessings, even to sending rain and sunshine over all men, just and unjust alike. Bread cast on the water returns sooner or later when we willingly sow beside all waters. Likewise are the results to these who scatter acts of kindness, and pour out words of cheer and comfort fitly spoken. The rule of divine compensations cannot fail. A sure recompense comes when

"We give a scanty draught to one
Who faints beside the way;
There flows a fountain for our thirst
Some weary, woesome day.

"We give a little flower of love
To light a darkened room:
And lo, our gardens overflow
With beauty and with bloom."

In the ministry of Jesus we find some beautiful illustrations of how this law of recompense operates. So that a weary and hungry multitude might not suffer on their return from the retreat into which they had followed Him, Jesus borrows two small loaves and five little fish from a lad, and from these He spreads a feast for the thousands gathered around Him. Need we ask how much of the twelve baskets left over were given back to this boy who so willingly placed his scanty fare in the hands of Jesus? We may well believe that he was recompensed according to the rule always present in the Savior's measure, "pressed down and running over." Peter's boat is borrowed for a pulpit on the seashore and returned to him laden with fish. Simon, the Cyrenian, is compelled by Roman soldiers to assist Jesus in carrying His cross, a task which at the moment must have seemed very undesirable to Simon, but a reward was certain to come in due time. The Lord can never be debtor to any one. In after days the household of Simon has a place of honor in the Apostle Paul's list of intimate friends. By comparing Mark 15:21 with Romans 16:13 we have a substantial basis for the thought that the cross Simon shared with Jesus that day, very shortly thereafter became the emblem of a great salvation for him and his house. What sweet recollections must have been his in recalling that time of unusual privilege. Mary breaks her alabaster box of fragrant ointment, thinking only of a service to be grasped in a passing moment.

Jesus multiplied that moment into nineteen hundred years of compensating honor by inscribing her act of love on the pages of His imperishable Gospel story. All the recorded and unrecorded acts of loving service given to Jesus in days when He had no place of His own where He could lay His head, we may be sure have already been, or will yet be rewarded a hundredfold. Such things are treasures laid up in heaven where they never decay, and where they will be a joy for evermore.

The same thought may be followed through, the experiences of Paul. Who can measure the recompense laid up for him through God's rule of compensation. How his years spent in prison have been glorified for him. Where can we find in all his ministry a greater verification of Romans 8:28, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." When Paul penned those words he could not know how wonderfully true they would yet prove to be in regard to his own ministry. He yearned to carry the message of Christ crucified to the ends of the earth; but it was only to be hindered it would seem by frequent imprisonments. But he was in God's hands and all that could befall him must be for a greater good than he could see. He accomplished more for Christ and the Church while in chains than he could have done without them. Christ was doing for him "exceeding abundantly above all he asked or thought." His Church Epistles and personal letters written in prison have gone into practically every quarter of the globe, and through these he has spoken to tribes and nations in their own tongue. Today, through New Testament translations he has "a thousand tongues to sing his great Redeemer's praise." From Greenland's mountains to far-flung isles of the seven seas he is proclaiming the Gospel of Christ as "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Instead of a ministry limited to his own day, in God's overruling it continues unending through nineteen centuries. What a recompense for bearing those cruel chains for a few short years!

Thus it is in all aspects of God's dealings with His people. Debtors to His marvelous grace they are, and ever shall be. And it matters not that the sphere of suffering or service be very far short of that which God ordained for the Apostle Paul. The same overruling and law of compensation operates in the smallest fields of spiritual life. All are in God's hands for fashioning into the likeness of Christ. All are God's workmanship in Christ Jesus. In every individual experience the present life has its relationship to the same two worlds—the present world with all of its sorrows and joys, its lessons and meanings, a preparation for the one to come. We live for, and in, eternity from the moment we begin our walk in newness of life through Christ Jesus. Therefore, the compensating joys meant to be a part of present experience are just so many links connecting us with the complete joy awaiting us at the end of our pathway.

This makes it important that we know as a matter of personal joy that "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. 4:8.) If there is any disposition to weigh each trial as it comes, and to measure each sacrifice required as burdensome and something not to be desired, little will be known of the sweet profitableness God wants us to experience now. In such an attitude of mind it will not be long before the complaint will be ready for expression, "It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance?" Growth in grace and spiritual understanding is therefore determined by the measure of joy we show in letting God have His way with us. Those Hebrew brethren had the proper attitude toward God's permissive will, and consequently they were happy in contemplating the recompense sure to be theirs in due time. To them the word was, "Ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." (Heb. 10:34.) This is the spirit always necessary if we would know the "hundred-fold" of blessing Jesus promised for the present life.

Thinking, then, of the little acts of kindness we may perform; of the trials we must have for our testing; of the providences shrouded in a measure of mystery, what recompense there is in remembering that all things are under God's control and each meant to enrich our experience beyond our thought, as in the case of Paul and others. This frame of mind and this harmony with God's will is wholly essential before we can "in everything give thanks" with sincerity. While steadfastly looking forward to the joys set before us when our course is finished, we must also feel a proper concern in respect to a present realization of the joys of salvation, which realization God has made a witness of our resting in His will. And this means much! The rule of compensating blessings will sometimes mean that God's denials are the deepest manifestations of His love. His delays are very often the clearest expressions of His priceless favor. We do not know what is best for us many times. God always knows! We have great aspirations and feel the surges of wonderful hopes. We are capable of visions which we yearn to have brought into living realities, thinking thereby to have life and service crowned with a triumph of rejoicing. But cherished hopes continue to be thwarted, and coveted boons are kept beyond our reach. Nevertheless the Divine compensations are still with us. If not now, some day we will confess, as many others have done, that God's way is best. How many have discovered in time that the afterward of blessing was so much greater than that which would have been theirs if God had allowed them to have matters move in the way of their imperfect understanding. Who of us has not needed to learn the lesson set forth in these lines:

"I asked of God that He should give success
To the high task I sought for Him to do;
I asked that every hindrance might grow less,
And that my hours of weakness might be few;
I asked that far and lofty heights be scaled
And now I meekly thank Him that I failed.

"For, with the pain and sorrow, came to me
A dower of tenderness in act and thought;
And with the failure came a sympathy,
An insight which success had never brought.
Father, I had foolish been, and unblest,
If Thou hadst granted me my blind request."

Then, as God keeps our two worlds united in His providences, so let us strive to keep them thus united in our thoughts. We will be eternally thankful for all of God's overruling when we know as we are known. In the assurance that so it will be, how easy it should now be to "let the little while between, in all its golden light be seen." The word written cannot fail, "The righteous shall be recompensed with good" -- compensated now according to the measure of faith, and recompensed hereafter "according to the riches of His glory."

- J. J. Blackburn.

"Therefore...the More Earnest Heed"

Studies in the Book of Hebrews-Chapter II

"Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her; for she is thy life." - Proverbs 4:13.

IN THIS chapter the Apostle calls to our attention how surpassingly great is the offer of the salvation made to the Church; how careful we should be to listen very earnestly and hold fast the truth, for our very life depends on it. Then he shows how the Father's purpose for the exaltation of His Son involved the redemption of our fallen race; that He should share their nature, their troubles, their sicknesses, and pay the death penalty in their stead, and in the course of these experiences be trained for the highest possible exaltation to the Father's right hand in the throne of the universe. He closes the chapter with such a revelation of sympathetic understanding by our Lord as lifts up our hearts in thanksgiving that we are accounted worthy to be associated with Him in His work now, and in the future.

Heb. 2:1 - "*Therefore*" -- because of the evidence presented in Chapter 1, that Christ is far above all angels and so speaks with the highest authority and the most complete experience -- when He speaks it is not a light matter which we can afford to ignore or forget, but we should "*give the more earnest heed.*" "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her; for she is thy life." (Prov. 4:13.) How our attention ought to be increased and intensified by our appreciation of the dignity of Christ, the speaker! The Greek word *dei* means ought or should, from the verb *deo*, to bind. As children of God it is *binding* on us to heed -- *we must!* The Greek word *perissoteros*, translated "the more earnest" is the comparative of another word which itself means beyond, superabundant or excessive, and so means literally more superabundantly to give close, undivided attention with all our faculties. "Heed" means literally to hold the mind towards or pay attention to, the things heard "*lest haply*" -- without our notice, unknowingly -- we should "*let them slip*" -- literally, to flow by. Time and events are passing onward; we must live our lives in one direction or another; and we must give particular attention to the messages of our Lord, lest while our attention is on other things, these life-giving directions pass by and leave *us* without their helping and guiding influence, which at some time or other we will sorely need. Despite the pulling of our natural inclinations and other influences, we must *hold* our minds with firmness and determination toward the Word of God and its truth. How necessary it is then that we keep reading and studying the things which we know are the truth, and thus keep them fresh and straight in our minds, for we are leaky vessels. The whole thought of the verse is that our spiritual life depends on our heeding the Master's word; that we cannot afford to treat it lightly or ignore it. It is vital to our existence; we neglect it at our peril.

Heb. 2:2 - "*For*" -- introducing an argument in behalf of the foregoing admonition -- "if *the word spoken by angels,*" a reference to the Mosaic Law Covenant "ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." (Gal. 3:19.) The Law Covenant was introduced by the angels of God, and was enforced with strict precision. It "*was steadfast*" -- *literally*, became basic, or binding. "*Every transgression*" -- *parabasis*, literally walking alongside of and not in the path that is marked out, hence overstepping the ordinances, the outward act of withstanding the Law's precepts. "*Disobedience,*" the Greek word *parakoe*, used but three times in the New Testament, means a mishearing, not listening to the teaching or person, a reluctance to hear *or* carelessness in hearing, so that the hearer does not get the message straight. The Emphatic Diaglott renders it "every deviation and imperfect hearing." These "*received a just recompense of reward.*" The last three words of this phrase is a translation of the Greek *misthapodosia*: *apo* -- *off*, *didomi* -- *give*,

misthos -- wages or pay; for "just" here *is endikon*, right or just. Justice was the basis of the Law Covenant.

Heb. 2:3 - "*So great salvation*" - literally, such as this, or so vast. This is the greatest offer ever made to any being -- angel or human. "*How can we escape*" literally to flee out, as if from an impending disaster. How could we expect anything but disaster, "*if we neglect*" -- the Greek word indicates a lack of interest, or concern. What a world of woe is in that word "neglect"! What might have been had we only paid heed! Careless of such a jewel, of such priceless value, which cannot be replaced if once lost! He that prefers another thing surely is not worthy of "*so great salvation*." How many are now drifting off to other pastures because they did not *hold their minds* to various features of the truth by going over them again and again as the years went by. There are so many ways in which we can refresh our minds about the different items of the truth, by use of the Sunday School lessons, as they come up each Sunday, reading what the back *Towers* (Reprints) have written on them, by attending the Class studies of the truth, by meeting together for study, by rereading of the Studies and Tabernacle Shadows, and by reading the various journals which give forth the truth and are faithful to it.

This Great Salvation "*first began to be spoken by the Lord*." This passage is one of the proof-texts that the High Calling to the heavenly glory is confined to the Gospel Age, that it never was mentioned before, and when the door is closed it will never be offered again. (See Heb. 10:19, 20; John 3:13, 25-31; 2 Cor. 6:2; Matt. 11:11; Acts 2:29;36; John 14:2.) The whole Jewish Age was to prepare the Jewish people for that Call, and when so few of them responded the Call went to the Gentiles, and ends with this Gospel Age. This invitation was so important as a special favor that Jesus Himself was selected to introduce it, as the Captain and Elder Brother. Jesus announced it, and those who heard, the Apostles and disciples, confirmed His words unto us. These writers were eye-witnesses and hearers, and Jesus said: "I pray also for them who shall believe on Me through their word." Accordingly this same Apostle afterward wrote: "The things which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life . . . declare we unto you." And the Apostle Peter confirms this declaration, saying: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty, and this voice we heard when we were with Him in the Holy Mount." - John 17:20; 1 John 1:1-3; 2 Peter 1:16.

Heb. 2:4 - "*God also bearing them witness*." Behind and supporting all these witnesses was the great Creator Himself. So great and important was the work, that its announcement was accompanied by "*signs and wonders and divers gifts of the Holy Spirit*" -- *signs* such as the star in the east, and the song of the angels. "Signs" is a translation of the Greek *semeion*, which means anything or everything whereby a person or saying is witnessed to be true -- anything that *proves*. It has a more general, broader idea than the Greek *teras*, here translated "wonders," which means something marvelous, extraordinary in itself, something which by its very occurrence causes astonishment, and cannot be explained by the known laws of nature; whereas *semeion* may be something that in itself appears an ordinary event, but which gets its character from its associations, such as heavenly messengers. Various mighty works such as healing, causing the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk, further witnessed this announcement; together with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This was -- a distribution as parts from a whole, a progressive assembly of evidence, increasing in weight and importance. In fact, what a multitude of witnesses and proofs are given to the honest, inquiring mind -- enough to announce and establish the fact beyond dispute! What a wonderful introduction to our High Calling; what a vast assembly of divine agencies are used to bring our attention to this great opportunity!

Heb. 2:5 - "*For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.*" On the surface it is a little difficult to see what relation this verse has to the adjacent text and to the argument. But it is introduced by the word "for," showing that there is a relationship as one of the causes for the truth of the things stated. Does it not give us greater assurance of the success of Christ's Kingdom when we know that the Father has placed it under the direct control of His Son rather than under any *of* the angels? Wise as they are, and beautiful beyond our understanding, they have twice failed in their efforts to deliver mankind from the grasp of sin and death, once in the time before the flood of Noah's day, and again during the operation of the old Law Covenant; and even some of their own number fell, ensnared into disobedience. This verse has been used as an indirect proof that some world, such as that before the Flood, was under the administration of angels. Other records show that the old world was thus governed after the expulsion of Adam from Eden. However, the preposition "for" refers back to verse two, where the Mosaic Law Covenant is mentioned. The Lord thus assures us that no such failure will accompany the new world as befell the old, but that it will be under the administration of Christ Himself, who never fails because He always does the will of the Father. Its success is guaranteed by the Almighty.

"The world to come" -- here again occurs that name for the earth, *oikoumene*, meaning the habitable, from *oikeo*, to occupy a house, to dwell. It refers to the habitable earth in its restitution time, when it will no longer be a dying world, but a world again teeming with life and increasing in beauty and vitality.

Heb. 2:6 - "*But one in a certain place testified*" - the indefiniteness is designed. The very omission of the name so well known to all, fastens the attention *upon* it. David is thus brought in to add his testimony, from the Eighth Psalm. This testimony is concerning mankind and the great dominion that was lost. "*What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?*" asks the Psalmist. This question is the inevitable result of thought upon the immensity of creation, and in comparison the puny efforts and nothingness' of man. The vast forces and distances of the universe should surely humble us. How small a thing is needed to destroy human life! A few degrees of extra heat or cold, and we are destroyed; shut off the supply of oxygen and we die, or if we have too much oxygen it is equally fatal; so small a weight is needed to crush out our life. And yet the great Creator who made the vast system of worlds, provides this balance of forces that man may live and be happy, and provides them in immense detail and in abundance and continuity. Surely our gratitude should lead us to supreme confidence and trust in such a Creator, and to consider it a great privilege to be counted worthy to serve Him.

"What is . . . the son of man, that thou visitest him?" This means every son of Adam. The Greek word translated "visit" means to peer about, to inspect, to select, and by extension to go to see, to relieve. Man is God's crowning achievement upon earth, and God visits him daily with many aids and helps and directions. Why should so great a Being be mindful of such a small creature as man? The Greek word is often used of a physician visiting the *sick*. So God visits the *sick* and fallen race of mankind ultimately to cure them of all ills and afflictions.

Heb. 2:7, 8 - "*A little lower than the angels*" -- more literally, "A little less than" -- is used in Greek (*brachu ti par*) just as much of space and quantity as of time, so there is no need that this passage be rendered as some insist -- "a little while inferior to."

God has made man in perfection just a grade or step lower than the angels. They are spirit beings, man is a material being. Nevertheless, "*Thou crownest him with glory and honor.*" This refers to Adam, the progenitor of the human race. The "glory and honor" rested upon him as a diadem, the glory of perfect manhood in the image of his Creator, the honor of rulership over all the lower

creatures whom he was to guide and manage in love and wisdom, so that earth would be a place of happiness and contentment. This was "the first dominion" referred to by the Prophet Micah (Micah 4:8) and the "Kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world," referred to by our Lord in Matthew 25:34. What a wonderful and glorious dominion is the earth even now, filled with the riches of God, of which man is just beginning to learn, and to get some intimation of the joys, beauties, and delights yet in store for restored mankind! - Acts 3:19-24.

But, alas, man lost his dominion and his glory and honor, and we behold him now in misery and distress as the result of his own wilfulness and stupidity. Despite his pride and boastful words he is not yet able to take his dominion nor to rise out of his sickness and dying. (Psalm 49:7-10.) But we do see a beginning of the carrying out of God's Plan for his restoration-we do see Jesus.

Heb. 2:9 - Yes, *"We see Jesus . . . made a little lower than the angels ... crowned with glory and honor."* Note in this verse that the Apostle shows that Jesus became an exact counterpart of Adam in his glory and honor, using the same descriptive terms in reference to each, and then that Jesus yielded up His perfect manhood to redeem Adam and his race. When Jesus "was made a little lower than the angels," to become the "corresponding price" for Father Adam, it was not an "incarnation" of "the second person of the Trinity," or of the Logos, because He did not retain His glory which He "had with the Father before the world was," but "divested Himself" (John 17:5; Phil. 2:7, R.V.) and became a perfect *human* being "crowned with glory and honor" as Adam was. And for what purpose? *"For the suffering of death"* -- that He might go down into the grave and bear the curse of death pronounced upon Adam and his race. (Rom. 5:12, 18.) "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all . . . He poured out His soul unto death" - and thus He has made atonement for the sins of the world. (Isa. 53:6, 12.) What an exhibition from our wonderful God, of His graciousness and His love, which in beauty bends to assist a wounded one! When man was helpless and could not redeem himself, nor could any other savior be found, God Himself provided the ransom. (Isa. 59:16.) See the words of Abraham to Isaac in Genesis 22:8, and the joyful announcement in Job 33:24: "I have found a ransom!" Notice the emphatic statement that this ransom was for all mankind.

Heb. 2:10 - *"For it became Him"* -- it was suitable, proper, just like Him -- God the Father, in accomplishing His purpose of bringing not one but many sons to glory. Starting with them as fallen children of Adam, He adopts them as His sons because of their faith in Him, and brings them to the heights of the divine nature -- from the depths of the valley to the mountain top. For all these sons He provides a pattern in their Captain. So He guides, first their Captain and then each one of them, through- a wondrous way of depths of sorrow and seasons of joy, experiences which teach them to know and trust and love their heavenly Father. The writer expands the discussion to show the Mystery of God, that following Jesus is a company of fellow-travelers, under similar begetting, similar training, similar guidance. Jesus goes first, that He may help us along the way, show us how to overcome the hard trials, the severe temptations, how to bear the loneliness, get the most out of our joys; and profit by all our experiences, even as the Father taught Him. He shows us that none of our experiences are needless, except as we by our blindness or slowness make our way harder or longer. He teaches us how the Father's love and power operate to cure and deliver.

"The Captain of their salvation ... perfect through suffering." "Captain," a translation of the Greek *archegos*, chief leader, ruling leader, is a most suitable title of Jesus as the Head of the Church. "Make . . . perfect" -- the word implies a distant aim or result desired; a more or less long process or journey or experience, to reach the final goal. This goal is only to be attained "through suffering" -- the disagreeable and painful experiences appointed by the Father "in bringing many sons to glory." So of their "Princely Leader" it is written: "Thou tellest My wanderings: put Thou

My tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?" "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" "Ye shall indeed drink of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with." (Psalm 56:8; John 18:11; Matt. 20:20-23.) How perfect was the trust of the Son in the Father! To Him it was a privilege to follow where the Father led; no other course was thinkable, could not for a moment be considered! But what a strange perfection is this! For instance, perfect piano playing is not reached in a short time, but only after days and weeks and months and years of continuing, unrelenting study and practice. How the fingers and hands sometimes ache! But by determination to endure the discomfort, and persistence to, the end, the muscles and the eyes, the ears and the mind eventually become adept, accurate, powerful, and quick, so that what the eyes read is instantly carried through the mind to the fingers and executed with accuracy, expression, and beauty, which fills the hearers with delight. For the average person the discomfort of long study and practice seems too great a cost, for they look at the present aches and pains, and fail to set their eyes on the goal -- the trained mind and eye and hand which can bring forth the loveliest music. But if the whole soul is possessed of a deep love of music, and an ardent desire to attain it at any cost, then the aches and pains and the hardness of the way seem unworthy of consideration, because the mind's eye is looking ahead, steadfast to the end, the goal, the mastery of music. So if we love our heavenly Father and Princely Leader, Jesus, enough, and think of being with Them in Their home and nature, and of helping to bring others to the great joy and happiness of knowing and loving Them and enjoying this fellowship, then we count it a privilege to endure. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." "Behold we count them happy which endure." (James 1:12; 5:11.) These sufferings teach us how terrible is the cost of disobedience, and by contrast how it darkens the mind and degrades man into a beast.

Heb. 2:11 - "*For both He [Jesus] that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one*" -- the Father. "Sanctify" in the Greek is *hagiazō*, which means to set apart to and adopt into God's family and service. In this sanctification, through our high calling, "washing of water by the Word," our offering in consecration and service in sacrifice, we become familiar with God's ways and become at one with Him in mind and heart. This Body, including its Head, are "all of one," because they are all called and begotten by the same Father, by the same Holy Spirit, in a similar way; all drink of the same cup and are baptized with the same baptism to the same nature and to a like glory. For this cause Jesus "is not ashamed to call them brethren." But "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38; Rev. 3:3.) There are some of whom Jesus will be ashamed; but those mentioned in this verse of Hebrews are the overcomers, who appreciate their privileges. Dean Alford has expressed this very beautifully: "Sanctification is glory working in embryo; glory is sanctification come to the birth and manifested."

Heb. 2:12, 13 - No instance is here given where Jesus actually did call them brethren, but the writer gives far greater proof by citing prophecy-God's own statements: '*I will declare Thy name unto My brethren in the midst of the Church [the congregation -- ekklesia or called out, ones] will I sing praise unto Thee.*' (Psalm 22:22.) "*And again, Behold I and the children [of God, therefore My brethren] whom God hath given Me*" -- as *M_y* associates. (John 17:6-24.) This last quotation is from Isaiah 8:18: here the Prophet says these children were sign-children, part of a wonderful arrangement of God. The quotation "*I will put My trust in Him*" may be from several prophecies; some commentators take it as being from Isaiah 8:17, the verse just before the preceding prophecy, in both Isaiah and Hebrews. [For this reason it seems quite likely that the second "And again" in verse 13 is a corruption of the original text, and should be omitted -Ed.] In John 17, Jesus acknowledges these children to have been given Him by the Father: "Thine they

were and Thou gayest them Me." What a loving exchange between the Father and the Son, the Father's loved ones entrusted to the care of the Son, a reward, and a rejoicing for both.

Heb. 2:14 - *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."* These children were all originally Adam's children, therefore to redeem them He had to become of their nature -- the human nature, flesh and blood. The writer here brings in the philosophy of the Ransom: that Jesus had to become a human being, gladly and willingly fulfil the Law covenant, and thus by obedience win its reward -- the right to life, with its inheritance of joy and blessing; then lay down that life at the bar of justice, that through the help of the Father he might render powerless the Slanderer or Accuser, the Devil (*diabolos*). This is one of the four names of Satan, which the Bible uses to show his characteristics: Satan, opposer or adversary; Dragon, devourer; Serpent, deceiver; and Diabolos, slanderer or false accuser. Jesus proved Satan's slander of Job a lie. He said: "Doth Job serve God for naught?" Jesus showed that there are some who serve God because they love Him and delight to do His will, and do righteous things because they love them, and find in them beauty and delight and happiness. Satan's idea is that selfishness is the key-note of life; but Jesus proves that love is more beautiful, more successful, more effective, and leads to everlasting joys; whereas selfishness winds up with hopeless sorrow and vain regrets. "The harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow." - Isa. 17:11

How does Satan have "the power of death?" The Greek word rendered "power" has the thought of vigor or power from office, and is often translated dominion, or authority. The dominion Satan has seized and misused has become a dominion of death. As shown in Ezekiel 28, the being we now call Satan was originally a cherub, one very near to the Most High, to whom the Father gave position and power as "the covering cherub" in the Garden of Eden, to protect Adam and his race and guide them in the ways of righteousness and truth. But instead of being faithful to this trust, Satan's vanity desired man to worship him instead of the Almighty; and through deceit he became the Father of lies and the murderer of the human race. He seized authority in "the heavens" and became the prince or ruler of this world. (Eph. 6:12; 2:2; John 14:30.) So Jesus comes to bind the "strong man" and take away his dominion and authority, and to restore life and His kingdom and authority to mankind. "I am come," said Jesus, "that they might have life and have it more abundantly." Thus Satan will be rendered powerless at the beginning of the Millennium, and be destroyed at its end.

Heb.2:15 - *"And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* The whole human race are subject to the bondage of death, but not all are held in bondage by "fear of death." Many in the Church and outside of it have dared to die: they held not their lives dear unto them. Who are these who are afraid of death and are held in bondage by that fear? It has been suggested that this may refer to a class of consecrated ones who fear the suffering and sacrificing experiences which they covenanted should be their portion, and who because of this fear are held back from their privileges and opportunities of suffering with Christ. until it is too late to become of the Bride class. These later are delivered through great tribulation, when Babylon falls, and become servants of the Church; and this class is often referred to as the Great Company. There have been such all through the Age. *Reprints*, pp. R4648, R5232.

Heb. 2:16 - *"For verily"* -- Dean Alford points out ..that this word rendered "verily" is used only once in the New Testament, and not once in the Septuagint. It means that the statement made is a well-known, universally admitted truth; Dean Alford renders it "For, as we all know"; Moffatt translates it "Of course." Literally, *"He did not take hold of angels, but he took hold of the seed of Abraham."* Some modern translators render this with the thought of taking hold to help or assist.

The Authorized Version reads: "Took not on Him the nature of angels." Some other translators understand the subject of the verb "take hold" to be not Jesus but "the fear of death." Death did not take hold of the angels, they were not condemned to death, but the children of Abraham were under that sentence. Either rendering would be allowable as far as grammar is concerned, but which is in harmony with the thought of the text? The writer is considering the fact that Jesus was made like unto His brethren, and so this statement should be in line with that thought, namely, that He did not become an angel, did not take the angelic nature, but did become one of the seed of Abraham, and took his nature.

Heb. 2:17 - *"Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest...."* For this purpose He ought, it was morally necessary, that He be made like unto His brethren. How great and how deep is the justice of our Creator here exhibited -not too great a value demanded for Adam's release, but a corresponding price, an *antilutron*. What confidence this begets in us toward our Creator! What depth of wisdom that Jesus should share the woes and difficulties which beset men, so that He might be a merciful High Priest. He is merciful because He realizes the difficulties, the weaknesses, the temptations which beset His followers, and humanity in general. This is the first mention of Jesus' office as priest. He notes here one of the privileges of a true priest is to extend to the repentant one an assurance of forgiveness and mercy, and sympathetic understanding and patience in helping him to regain his feet and standing before God. He is faithful to man, because He loves the human race, and sees in it possibilities of a happy, restored race, in the image and likeness of the Creator, master once more of the earth and its teeming creatures, and stamped with the grandeur of victory and self-mastery, worthy to be entrusted with the care of God's creatures of lower orders. And He is faithful to God, telling man the truth about God, and seeing that every feature of the Father's Plan is properly carried out.

"To make reconciliation for the sins of the people." To "make reconciliation" means to expiate or atone. The Greek word is *hilaskomai*, and refers to one who, paying the price, makes propitiation for the sinner and brings him back into God's favor.

Heb. 2:18 - *"For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."* He suffered aches and pains and agony of heart and mind and body, rather than yield to evil. In those things that He suffered He was tried, and so knows how to bring to our aid the things which helped Him, to help us hold on and endure even as He endured through the help of the Father. He suggests these helps to us, and shows us how to use them. He walked all that lonely way Himself, and so knows by experience not only how hard it is, but also the things which will sustain us. When we come to Him and to the Father in prayer He applies His bountiful merit to our shortcomings and corrects them and renders our puny efforts acceptable to the Father. So let us go to Him in our hour of need and know that we will find in Him an understanding, sympathetic helper. *Dunati boethesai* -- "He is able to render aid" -- by the power of sympathy and knowledge and experience, fully equipped, fully trained.

- J. A. Meggison.

The Crisis of the Christ

*"Father, glorify Thy name." - John 12:28.
(Continued from last issue)*

IT IS significant that this crisis hour of our Lord is associated by St. John with the visit of certain Greeks who sought an interview with Jesus, and to whom our Lord vouchsafed a brief summary of the Gospel hitherto confined to Israel. "We are not told who these men were, or from whence they came. But tradition affirms that more than one effort was made -- notably by the King of Edessa -- to induce Jesus to leave the hostile and ungrateful Jews, and to take up His residence in some foreign Court, where He would be assured of an honorable welcome. And it may be that these Greeks -- for Greeks were to be found in every Court -- were ambassadors from some such Prince, and came on some such errand as this. Or it may be that they themselves were persons of wealth and distinction, who, seeing that Jesus had finally broken with the Jews, and knowing that the Pharisees were compassing His death, sought to save Him from their hands, by offering Him an asylum beyond their reach. Or again, it may be that they had been so impressed by His words and deeds, that they had resolved to attach themselves to Him and to share His fate whatever it might be. Only the day before, He had driven from the temple the money changers who defiled it with their traffic and chicanery, and rebuked them for degrading into a 'den of thieves' the sanctuary which God intended to be 'a house of prayer,' not for the Jews only, but *'for all nations.'* These Greeks may have been impressed by His courage, His purity, His liberality. They may have felt that though Himself a Jew, Jesus was the friend of all men; *their* friend. They may have wished to confer with Him, and to learn *how* He proposed to convert the Hebrew temple into a universal sanctuary.

"WE WOULD SEE JESUS"

"Whatever their immediate motive and intention, there can be no doubt that there was far more in their visit to Christ than lies on the surface of this narrative. For, first, the words rendered in our Authorized Version: 'We would see Jesus,' not only imply a very strong desire to see Him; they also mean, 'We have decided on seeing Jesus'; and seem to imply either that there had been some strife and debate in their own minds before they reached. that decision, or that they had discussed the matter with Philip before, and had only just determined what they would do.

"Nor again, was it only *a sight* of Jesus which they wished to obtain, such a long, lingering gaze as men love to fix on the great and mighty. They could have had that, probably they had had as much as that, as He went in and out of the temple, and passed through the court in which they, as Gentiles, worshiped. Hence it was, we suppose, that Philip was so deeply impressed by their decision. To him it seemed so important that he did not venture to take it straight to Christ. He first goes and consults Andrew, who may be presumed to have been on more intimate terms with the Master, as one of the first four among the twelve. And then, as we are told with a ceremonious formality which denotes the importance of the occasion, Philip having come and told Andrew, Andrew and Philip; the only two of the Apostles who bore Greek names, and therefore fitting ambassadors for Greeks, tell Jesus. Nay, Jesus Himself, ordinarily of so calm and serene a spirit, is much more profoundly impressed and moved than His disciples. To Him the decision of these Greeks is at once as the stroke of doom and the harbinger of victory. He reads in it a sign that the hour is come in which He must glorify God by dying for men, and Himself be glorified by God by being made victor over death and the Savior of the world. He finds in it nothing less than the 'crisis of the world,' an omen of the utter defeat of the usurping Prince of this world, and a promise that men shall be drawn to Him, the world's true Prince and Lord."

"St. John, to whom we owe our only record of this memorable and significant visit, does not tell us how the Lord Jesus responded to their request. But we can hardly doubt that He who was so full of grace acceded to it; that He came down into the Court of the Gentiles in which perforce they awaited Him, and spoke with them face to face." Indeed most expositors are agreed that in the verses which follow we have the substance of what He said to them. "In the parable of the grain of wheat which is fruitful only in death; in the paradox on losing one's life in order to save it; in the promise that as many as serve -- and follow Him here shall hereafter be with Him where He is; in the prediction that by His death on the cross He will draw all men unto Himself -- in all of which we find one dominant and uniting thought, that of gain by loss, life by death, joy by sorrow He sums up in a few sentences what was most precious and distinctive in the Gospel which He had taught at large among the Jews. And, as if to round out the whole circle, as if to give these Greeks a veritable and complete gospel all to themselves, however brief it might be, miracle is added to parable and paradox, promise and prediction, and a great voice from heaven, loud as thunder, but sweet as angel's song, confirms and ratifies all that He had said to them."

**"EXCEPT A CORN OF WHEAT FALL INTO THE GROUND
AND DIE IT ABIDETH ALONE"**

At another time, perhaps, the opportunity, may be ours, of considering our Lord's words with special reference to their effect upon His hearers, upon the Greeks themselves, and to draw for ourselves some of the lessons of faith and patience, of love and joy, the gracious message contains, but just now we want to notice His words more especially, as indicating His own condition of mind, and to study the effect upon our Lord Himself, of this visit of these Greeks. If, as many suppose, they came to beg Him to accompany them to some foreign Court in which they could assure Him of an honorable welcome, it is easy to understand that, as He listened to their request, He would feel more deeply than ever, the gravity of the approaching crisis, and set Himself to consider both how He was to meet it, and how He could prepare His disciples to meet it. That He could meet it only by submitting to the worst which the malice of the Jews could do against Him, that He could redeem men only by freely laying down His life for them all, we suppose He never for a moment doubted. That He did not doubt it at *this* moment, is plain, we think, from His reply to the petition of the Greeks -- from His parable of the grain of wheat which *must* die in order that it may live; and from the paradox which followed it on losing life in order to save it. Nor is it less plain that He was bent on bracing and fortifying *the minds of His disciples* for what was about to happen; or why should He have taken such pains to bring out the bright and hopeful aspects of the death by which He was to glorify God? Why did He remind them of the corn which falls into the earth and dies only that it may live and bring forth much fruit? Why remind them of the saying He had often used before, that to love life more -than duty was to lose it, while to lose life in the discharge of duty was to save it unto life eternal? Why did He promise them that, if they followed Him, if they also were faithful unto death, they -should not only live eternally, but rejoin Him in that more abundant life to which the Father would raise Him, and be honored by His Father even as He Himself was honored?

"But just as we ourselves, when we see that the path of duty grows very steep and will be full of toil and pain may shrink from setting out upon it for a moment, and even pause for more than a moment to consider whether our end may not be reached by some less perilous path, and yet commit no sin, so also it seems to have been with Him who we know was without sin. He had come to teach and save both Jew and Greek. He had thought that there was no way to save them except the way of the Cross. But these Greeks suggest another way. They invite Him to leave the Jews who would not listen to Him and come to Gentiles who would honor and reverence Him. Was it a possible course? Was it possible that He might thus save *them*, and the world through

them? For a moment His soul is troubled, agitated, confused, -- not, we may well believe, by any desire to spare Himself, but by the wish to spare the Jews the great crime on which they were bent, and to save the world, not against its will, but with its free consent. For an instant, then, He pauses to consider this plausible suggestion, feeling from the first, we suppose, that it was only plausible, and nothing more; for deep down in His heart there lay a conviction, a conviction to which He had just given manifold expression, that He had come into the world to die, and by His death to give life to the world. Yet He is not ashamed to let His disciples see the momentary agitation and perplexity of His spirit, how it is torn and confused by conflicting thoughts, although He must have known how much, in this posture and frame of soul, He would seem to them unlike Himself. 'Now is My soul troubled,' He cries; 'And what shall I say?' as if asking their sympathy in the agony of His spirit, almost as if asking their help. But they have no help to give; nor does He really need their help. He *cannot* pray: 'Father, save me from this hour;' He cannot accept any suggestion, however, plausible, to save Himself; for if He save Himself, how shall He save others? He can only pray, 'Father, glorify Thy name,' and take the way of the Cross."

Thus understood, "our Lord's prayer shows Him to us, not as shrinking from the Cross, but as embracing it; not as seeking to evade death, but as freely devoting Himself to death in order that, by His death, the name, the character, the love of God might be rendered so bright, so illustrious, that even the blindest may see it, even the most hardened may be touched and conquered by it.

A PRACTICAL LESSON

"But if we read it thus, in its natural and Christian sense the prayer becomes full of valuable, because practical, instruction for us. It teaches us how *we* ought to pray; more specifically, it teaches us *what we are to ask for*, if we would pray as we ought, *when our soul is troubled*, agitated, confused, when for a while we may honestly doubt what our petition should be.

"You are at a point, let us suppose, at which you cannot be true to your inmost convictions, without running some grave risk, or incurring a loss which you dread to provoke. You take, your case to the Throne, to the Mercy Seat of God. And as you bow before Him, troubled in spirit, the question rises within you, 'What shall I say?' If you resolve to say: 'Father, save me from this hour;' if you ask that you may be true to your convictions and yet suffer no loss, *we will* not condemn you; we dare not even affirm that *God will* condemn you; for He knows our weakness and makes large allowance for us all. But this we will say, that if instead of praying, 'Father, save me from this hour,' your prayer should be 'Father, glorify Thy name:' if, that is, you ask that, with loss or without it, you may be kept true to your convictions, if you are willing to sacrifice what you hold dear in order to glorify God and help to further and spread the convictions for which you suffer; then God your Father will certainly approve your prayer, and you will rise far nearer to the Christian ideal than if to be saved from loss were wellnigh as much to you as to be loyal to the truth.

"Again, if you are in any deep distress, if any pain of body oppress you, or any wound of heart; if you have lost your health or energy, or fortune, or hope; and as you come before God the question rises: 'What shall I say to Him?' *We* would not condemn you, we dare not affirm that God will condemn you, if you should ask that you may be redeemed from the oppressions of pain, disease, care, fear, or wounded love, or impaired confidence. It is but natural that such a desire should rise within you, and that you should utter it in the ears of the Divine Mercy and Compassion. But if, instead of crying, 'Father, save me from this hour,' you could honestly say, 'Father, glorify Thy name; help me to hear my burden or relieve me from it as may be best for me, or for my fellows, and therefore most for Thy glory'; who can doubt that this would be the nobler of the two, the

more acceptable to your Father in heaven, because it springs from that which is most like to Him within your soul?

"Finally, if, when you reach a still sorer strait, when it is not you who suffer, but one dearer than yourself, and you can only stand by and see your beloved pass through days of anguish and nights of weariness and slowly travel down to the bourne at which he and you must part, he to tread the common road into the great darkness, and you to return, maimed and crippled, to the toil and burden of life; -ah! who would have the heart to blame you, if, in your agony, you should cry unto God to spare you, to avert the stroke of death, and not condemn you to pass the poor remnant of your days solitary and forsaken? No man who knows himself, and can put himself in your place, would dare to blame you. Nor is God angered by the prayers of love. even when *His* love will not suffer Him to grant them; though He refuse the prayer, He reads and approves the love which prompts it. But none the less, *you* know as well as we do, that there is a higher prayer than 'Father, save me from this hour;' and if in the strength of faith, you could honestly say: 'Father, glorify Thy name; show Thy goodness, illustrate Thy love, whether by taking this dear one to Thyself and enabling me to confide him to a tenderness beyond my own, or by restoring him to life and health,' you do not need to be told that this would be to breathe the very spirit of Him who said, 'Thy will, not mine, be done.'

"Oh, it is very hard, harder than many of you may perhaps imagine, for any reflective speaker, any man, that is to say, who speaks to himself as well as to others, to take this tone, and pursue this line of thought. And for ourself we must confess that we can never take it without a certain questioning within; without hearing an inward voice which demands: 'What if God should take you at your word? What if He should expose *you* to the trial to which He has exposed so many of those to whom you speak, and after all you should prove yourself unable to face the test?' But none the less we are bound to pursue this line of thought with you, and to urge it upon any who may now be mutely asking: 'How *am I* to bear this heavy burden which God has laid upon me? How can I ever reconcile myself to so great a loss?'

"Here, then, lies our supreme opportunity for glorifying God. And if, instead of exhausting ourselves in fruitless struggles, we brace ourselves, by His strength, to make the sacrifice God requires of us, to consent to His will from the heart, to bear our crucial experiences with patience, with courage, with hope, we will be following Him, who even when His soul was most troubled, would not say, 'Father, save me from this hour,' but only, and simply, 'Father, glorify Thy name,' and that although He knew His prayer to mean, 'Father, I embrace the Cross.' In that fellowship with Him of suffering and patience there will also be a fellowship of joy. And while there may not be a voice from heaven proclaiming, 'I have both glorified it and will glorify it, again,' there will be an equivalent voice within, for we shall have the assurance in our hearts that our Father's will is being done in us, and that even in the midst of the stress and trouble, it is a good and loving will, the will of a Father ever seeking the welfare of His children."

- P L. Read

Great Hindrances to Prayer

Satan sentinels the gateway of prayer. Andrew Bonar has left it on record that he never entered into a season of pure prayer without a fierce battle at the threshold. Satan dreads nothing like prayer. He knows he cannot frighten the saints with hideous features or overcome them by coarse enticement. He stands at the portals of the -Holy of Holies as an "angel of light." He does not openly attack; he diverts. The Church that lost its Christ was full of good works. (Rev. 2:24.) Activities are multiplied that meditation may be ousted, and organizations are increased that prayer may have no chance. Souls may be lost in good works as surely as in evil ways. The one concern of Satan is to keep the saints from prayer. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion; he laughs at our tail, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray. - *Bible Students Monthly, Eng.*

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren:

Yours of March 26th is before me; also the remittance, which moved me profoundly -- a token of your love and sympathy to those who chanced to be in the area where this terrible war has passed. God bless you for your act of love. We recall the words of our Master: "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water . . . I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

It is true that God permitted us to pass through water and fire, but it is also true that His promises were equally fulfilled in our behalf: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." No saint of God ever lived without affliction; and no child of His ever remained without discipline. Without faith it is impossible to please God, and faith -- that individual faith -- cannot be proved real without tests. This is the lesson for us all to learn.

We pray to God that He will grant us and to every one who loves Him and who fears and obeys His Word -- His truth as it is revealed through the Holy Spirit -- opportunities to preach the glad tidings to humble souls. The world has nothing to offer for peace and comfort. Christ is the hope of the world. Christ is the peace and salvation today to every one who believes in the efficacy of His precious blood, and life for evermore to all who will accept Him when He comes to establish His blessed Kingdom on earth. Meanwhile the prayer should ascend from all saints remaining on earth, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

Your fellow servant by His grace,
C. J. C. -- Athens, Greece.

Dear Sirs:

Some time ago I requested your leaflets that I found answer the questions of so many I contact. Inasmuch as I travel throughout the State of Wisconsin I have distributed these wonderful pamphlets, and have received many requests for more. Quite a number request in particular the leaflet entitled, "Where are the Dead?" If possible I should like to get a few hundred of this leaflet.

It may also be of interest to you to know that your book, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," I advertise on the screen, as I do most of my work through illustrated lectures. This winter I expect again to continue the same work, and I am sure I will be able to dispose of more of your literature as it coincides so wonderfully with my work.

Thanking you, and wishing you God's blessing in your efforts,

Rev. G. J. K. -- Wis.