

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XXX    December, 1947    No. 11

## Peace on Earth

*"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." - Isa. 9:2, A.R.V.*

"BLESSED BE the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." - Luke 1:68, 69, R.S.V.

It seems most fitting that the Evangel story should begin within the Sanctuary, and at the time, as is supposed, of the Morning Sacrifice. One day, while the priest, Zacharias (the name signifying "he who remembers Jehovah"), was burning incense in the temple, "the angel of the Lord" appeared to him, "And when he came out he could not speak to the people: and they perceived that he had seen a vision." Four hundred years Israel had waited for a message from heaven, every true Israelite eager that it should announce a king to deliver them from bondage, and eager that they should be among those to welcome the king. In quick succession there followed the angel visit to Mary, the prophecies of Elizabeth, Zacharias, and Mary, the heavenly messengers to the shepherds on the fields near Bethlehem, and prophecies of Simeon and Anna, then silence for about thirty years.

To Zacharias the angel revealed that, his son, though great, was only a messenger to go before the face of the Lord to convert the hearts of the people, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:12-17.) That this greater One should sit on the throne of his father David was revealed by Gabriel in his visit six months later to Mary. (28-33.) The mother of our Lord then hastened to the home of Zacharias and Elizabeth, and "Elizabeth filled with the holy spirit lifted up her voice with a loud cry and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And blessed is she that believed that there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord." The almost tumultuous speed of Elizabeth's message vividly contrasts with Mary's equally inspired one that immediately followed, given calmly and in great simplicity. Hers is an echo of the lyrical poetry of the Old Testament, evidencing a mind that had absorbed and retained the phraseology of the sacred Scriptures as heard in the synagogue service since the days of her youth-or is it merely that the same spirit that inspired the messengers

of old was moving her. The latter is the more likely explanation, for even the poetic form of their utterances was followed:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior  
For he hath looked upon the low estate of his bond maiden:  
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.  
For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; And holy is his name,  
And his mercy is unto generations and generations On them that fear him.  
He hath shewed strength with his arm;  
He hath scattered the proud by the imagination of their heart.  
He hath put down princes from their thrones,  
And hath exalted them of low degree.  
The hungry he hath filled with good things;  
And the rich he hath sent empty away.  
He hath holpen Israel his servant,  
That he might remember mercy  
(As he spake unto our fathers)  
Toward Abraham and his seed for ever."

Two minds given over to the influence of the holy spirit as were the minds of these two mothers must have had precious communion in the three months that followed—a three months during which their meditation and conversation doubtless were of the hope of Israel and of the part their two lads might play in it, a three months that must have accomplished much in preparing them to efficiently mother the two infants.

Just as Zacharias may be described as the representative of the good and true in the priesthood at that time, "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, so the holy family of Nazareth may be considered as a typical Israelitish household. The scantiness of particulars supplied by the Gospels was intended, we believe, to prevent the human interest from overshadowing the grand central fact, to which alone attention was to be directed. "The design of the Gospels was manifestly not to furnish a biography of Jesus the Messiah, but, in organic connection with the Old Testament, to tell the history of the long promised establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth." The object was as indicated by St. Luke (Luke 1:4): "That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed," and by St. John (John 20:31): "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." May there not be a lesson here for us in our inclination to give details that merely satisfy human interest and add nothing to the spiritual.

Eight days after the birth of John the rite of circumcision introduced him into Jewish citizenship, a rite without which no one has ever been accepted of the Lord as a member of that favored people. On this occasion a miracle advertised to the populace that God was dealing with their nation. It is recorded of Zacharias, who had been dumb since his vision of nine months before, that "his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, "blessing God." The holy spirit that loosed the tongue also used it for a message of assurance to the people, telling them as the spirit had, done through Mary, that now at last the blessings of the covenant with Abraham would be realized:

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;  
For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people,

And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us  
In the house of his servant David  
(As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old),  
Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;  
To show mercy towards our fathers,  
And to remember his holy covenant,  
The oath which he swore to our father Abraham ...  
And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High;  
For thou shalt go before the Lord to prepare his ways."

Six months passed, and the One whom the closing lines of this inspired message described, visited them, Jesus of Nazareth, by the Lord's providence born in Bethlehem, the city -of David, only six miles from their beloved Jerusalem.

"And it came to pass, while Mary and Joseph were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (translated "Guest chamber" in Luke 22:11). This lowly entrance into life, was not inappropriate to one whose dwelling place and labor were to be of the humblest for thirty years; one who for his closing-years was to have "no place to lay his head," and whose end was to be a thousand times more pitiable than this beginning.

In the same country where Abraham had ranged with his flocks and David had tended his sheep, "there were shepherds in the field, keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this its the sign unto you; Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace, which comes of God's good pleasure, is among men." - Variorum Bible marginal rendering.

### **"NOT MANY GREAT, NOT MANY WISE"**

With haste the shepherds came to "the City of David" and "found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger" and "returned, glorifying God." "The associations of our Lord's nativity were all of the humblest character, and the very scenery of his birthplace was connected with memories of poverty and toil. On that night, indeed, it seemed as though the heavens must burst to disclose their radiant minstrelsy; and the stars, and the feeding sheep, and the 'light and sound in the darkness and stillness,' and the rapture of faithful hearts, combine to furnish us with a picture painted in the colors of heaven. But in the brief and thrilling verses of the Evangelist we are not told that those angel songs were heard by any except the wakeful shepherds of an obscure village."

Forty-eight days later this babe with a name somewhat common among the Jews, but a name now "above every name that is named" because it is *his* name, was presented in the temple for the required purifying rites, probably with two pigeons or doves, the offering permitted to those too poor to bring a lamb. The Law also required that at this time five shekels should be paid into the

temple treasury that that firstborn son might be redeemed from the Aaronic priesthood-in this instance that he might become the High Priest of God for all mankind on the higher Melchisedec plane.

"When the parents brought in the child Jesus, . . . Simeon received him in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

"Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord,  
According to thy word, in peace;  
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,  
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;  
A light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
And the glory of thy people Israel."

And then directing his prophecy to Mary, he continued:

"Behold, this child is set for, the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." - A. R. V.

Once more, this time through Anna, a prophetess, the spirit spoke "to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem," "the consolation of Israel," and the thirty years of silence began. Then again Jesus came to them, but now a man, legally and actually, offering to remove the desolation that had fallen centuries before upon that nation. Short-sighted, unappreciative, a type of the spiritual Israel that began there, they nationally rejected him; and Mary, after three and a half years of ministry at his hand, learned the full force of what it meant to have a "sword pierce her soul." Jerusalem was "left desolate," without a king, as it is to this day. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto her" "if thou hadst . . . known in this day, even thou the things which belong unto thy Shalom," thy peace. - A. R. V.

Again peace, the Christmas message, must wait; this time while the Prince of Peace lies three days in the tomb. Darkness covered the earth as he entered death's portals, but

"The three sad days are quickly sped;  
He rises glorious from the dead."

"Angels, roll the rock away!  
Death, yield up the mighty Prey!  
See, the Savior quits the tomb,  
Glowing with immortal bloom.  
Alleluia, Alleluia."

The first word on the lips of the risen Savior when he came into the upper room in the evening of that eventful day was the Christmas message, "Shalom," Peace. The fulfilment of the angelic prophecy that the shepherds heard, there began; not the peace of earthly prosperity, taxes paid, food and clothing provided; but the peace that nothing can disturb, the peace of One who had not where to lay his head, the peace of the One who promised, "My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth give I unto you." "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

The following paragraphs from the pen of our late beloved Pastor will meet a response in the hearts of all who have learned the true meaning of the "Good tidings of Great Joy":

## **"LET HEAVEN AND EARTH REJOICE"**

"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 great 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 . . .

"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 shall be bound, and the good influences of truth and righteousness shall enlighten the whole earth. (Rev. 20:1-6.) The declaration of the Scriptures is that the deliverance of the Church will come early in the morning of the Millennial day. As the Prophet declares, 'God will help her early in the morning.' -- Psalm 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 provide a blessing for every member of Adam's race through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood... .

"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."

"Joy to the world! the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king:  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
And heav'n and nature sing."

*- P. E. Thomson.*

## **Our Heritage of Knowledge**

*"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding." - Prov. 3:13.*

The purpose of this article is to give a summary of what is today termed "Present Truth." Obviously no human listing can bound the limits of spiritual truth, any more than can the human mind comprehend that Divinity which is its source. Truth, like an exquisite jewel, through its many facets reflects the light of Him who is "Light." We can at most but mention some of these "facets," adding thereto brief comments or appropriate Scriptures. Thus conning the truth, and admiring its symmetry and harmony, may we anew realize that God has indeed blessed us with an outpouring of spiritual knowledge. The understanding and appreciation of all or most of these beautiful truths is one of the witnesses of the Spirit to our spirits that we are the sons of God.

### **The Three Worlds and the Three Heavens**

To have a clear understanding of St. Peter's words in 2 Peter 3:5-13 is a blessing in itself. How many who have Bibles know that the Apostle is not speaking of literal things, but rather of three great dispensations, in each of which the ruling power is pictured as a heaven, and the social order figuratively as an earth? The first dispensation extended from Adam's creation to the flood; the second from the flood until the collapse of the present social order in world-wide figurative conflagration and the beginning of Christ's Millennial reign; followed by the third, which continues throughout eternity. Thank God for a true understanding of this difficult portion of His Word. We no longer as others fear that the literal heaven and earth will be destroyed. God hath not formed them in vain. - Eccl. 1:4; Isa. 45:18.

### **The Three Ways**

Two of these ways, both of which are mentioned in Matthew 7:13, 14, are familiar to many. The "narrow" way is generally interpreted to mean the path to Heaven; and the "broad" way, that to Hell and eternal torment. Nominal Christianity recognizes only these. But our eyes have been blessed not only with a clearer understanding of these ways (the one as the narrow way of self-sacrifice walked in by the saints to glory, honor, and immortality; and the other as the road upon which all mankind is traveling to Adamic death), but with the additional understanding of a *third* way, that spoken of in Isaiah 35:8-10, the "highway" of blessing for all humanity in the Millennium. What s, wonderful road that will be, and what a glorious time when "sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Praise the Lord for this "highway of holiness."

## **Permission of Evil**

This is the moot question of all ages, pondered upon and unanswered by philosophers; the burden of the sublime discussions of the Book of Job. Why the terrible sufferings on this earth? Why does an all-powerful Creator bring into existence beings to spend their lifetime in trouble and sorrow with death inevitable? Why does sin flourish, while virtue must be struggled for? Why is it so easy to go down-hill and so difficult to go up? Why is injustice so prevalent? Why the terrible calamities which plague and curse the earth? How grateful we can be for the explanation which still reveals God as Love. (See Volume I, "Studies in the Scriptures," Chapter 7.)

## **The Philosophy of the Ransom**

What peculiar ideas are expressed on this all-important subject, and how much has been revealed to us! On the broad basis of Romans 8:12-21, we understand that Adam, a perfect man, lost the *right* to human life; that Jesus left his prehuman spiritual glory, became a man, and acquired by keeping the Mosaic Law a *right* to eternal human life. By divine permission He laid it down in death (See John 10:17, 18), and having been begotten to the divine nature at His consecration, He was rewarded for His obedience by resurrection to the immortal plane as His life had not been forfeited. This legal *life-right* is still possessed by Jesus and constitutes the ransom-price, which corresponds exactly to that which Adam lost. What marvelous wisdom is here shown in the divine economy which could judge all humanity in one man and provide the redemption price in another! Yea, that "God could be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." - Rom. 3:26.

## **Times of Restitution**

This is a glorious truth! The very words ring with a melody which strikes a responsive chord in the Christian's heart. There are few of the Lord's people who could not quote from memory Peter's words in Acts 3:19-21. So easy of comprehension, so all-embracing of God's Plan in their scope! So explanatory of many difficult passages in the Scriptures! And yet few Bible scholars understand their full meaning; yea, to understand is to mark one out as amongst those "to whom it is given to know." Blessed are our eyes and our ears!

## **Two Phases of the Kingdom**

How clear is the fact that there is to be both a spiritual and an earthly phase to God's Kingdom! And yet even the Master's disciples at first could not understand this. Just as their conception of the Kingdom was limited to the selected Jewish nation under the headship of an earthly visible Messiah, so that of nominal Christians is restricted to a select class inheriting the joys of Heaven! Israel knows nothing of a spiritual phase, while Christians in general deny an earthly. To us the Scriptures harmonize and amplify these extremes of thought. Both phases, in symbolical language, are described in Zechariah 14:4. Isaiah tells us the "law shall go forth from Zion [the spiritual, invisible phase], and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem' [the earthly, visible phase]." (Isa. 2:2, 3.) In connection with this, how difficult to some and yet how easy of comprehension, is that "hard" saying of the Master: "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he." - Matt. 11:11.

## Adamic Death

This subject causes us no difficulty. Theologians have interpreted this death in many mysterious ways. We understand that Adam died neither spiritually, nor was transferred to another state of existence, subjected to horrible torments. In the words of Scripture, dying he died (see margin on Gen. 2:17) within the thousand-year day of the Lord, and thus returned to the dust from whence he sprang. His dying condition, through heredity, was passed on to his posterity; and thus subjected to "frailty," all in Adam die. All sleep in the dust, awaiting the resurrection.

## The Second Death

This has been as much a mystery as the first death. It has even been interpreted to mean life! Despite all exposition to the contrary, its simple meaning, that of a return to the non-existent condition from which the merit of Christ resurrects but once, is still most satisfactory. "The lawless shall *return* to hades." (Psa. 9:17, Rotherham.) In the Millennial Age, "he that will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:23.) The fate of the incorrigible is utter destruction from the presence of the Lord. This Second Death is pictured symbolically as a lake of fire and brimstone, strong symbols of annihilation. In this connection, lest we be considered as lacking in love or understanding, we urge all to very carefully consider the teaching of Isaiah 26:9-11. We desire not to be wise above that which is written, and we consider the many warnings of God's Word to evil doers as ample evidence that the consequences of ignoring these divine "sign-posts" will be tragic. Doing despite to the spirit of grace and treading under foot the Son of God, whether in the Gospel or Millennial Ages, can result only in a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation and sorer punishment. - Heb. 10:26-31.

## Justification

The steps of our being "made right" with our God have been much clarified. It is *of* God's grace, *by* the blood or merit of Christ, and *through our* faith in appropriation of that merit, and revealed in our works, imperfect as they are. Even our steps of approach to God, the philosophy of tentative and vitalized justification, as revealed particularly in the Tabernacle condition of Israel, have their blessings. for all who can "go on to know the Lord." And additionally, the justification of mankind in the Millennium, *by works* and yet *through* faith, is clear now. All this is a wonderful field for thought; well exemplified by St. Paul's masterly approach in the first eleven chapters of his Epistle to the Romans.

## Sanctification

Our brief comments can hardly do justice to this great subject. But suffice it that we can see its two-fold application; first as regards our part, "sanctify yourselves," and second as regards God's part, "I will sanctify you." For "this is the will of God, even your sanctification," or setting apart to God's everlasting service. There must come about that complete transformation of mind, that complete submission to the divine will, and the attainment unto that "holiness without which none shall see the Lord." This is the great work which the Lord is accomplishing now *in us*, that in the ages to come He may do His great works *through us*. All this is in accordance with our Master's prayer, "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth." - John 17:17.



## **Glorification**

How crude is the ordinary thought of disembodied, winged spirits flying through Heaven's courts or walking golden streets strumming harps, in comparison with the lofty conception which is ours. From the glorious "rapture," the catching up of the saints to meet the Lord in the air -- exaltation to glory, honor and immortality on the divine plane-and the "Marriage such as earth has never known, when Bride and Bridegroom are made one before the, Great White Throne," and the indescribable divine fellowship in the limitless ages to come-all breathe forth the truth of the Scripture, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." - 1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

## **Joint-heirship with Christ**

With the heavenly host we can well join in acclaiming, "Worthy the Lamb that was slain," worthy to be heir of God. But the matchless grace that *we*, the "base things," the "things despised," the "things which are nought" - that we should be joint-heirs with Christ, to "sit on His throne," - "how can these things be!" And yet thus it is written. And so we lay hold on the precious promises in amazed gratitude, and rejoice in being "joint-heirs with Christ" - "heirs according to the promise," "heirs of salvation," and "heirs of promise." - Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:29; Tit. 3:7; Heb. 1:14; Heb. 6:17.

## **Baptism**

Volumes have been written and long have been the heated controversies on this subject of Baptism How clear and simple is its deep significance to us, and how appropriately does it picture that death and rising to new life which is the experience of God's true people. "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." (Rom. 6:4, 5.) Yea, Master, we would indeed emulate Thee in saying, "Not My will, but thine, O Lord, be done."

## **Election and Free Grace**

Calvinists and Arminians may continue their Age-long controversy, but to us the truth is now clear on this theological dilemma. Both are true, but each applies to a different period. During the Gospel Age a comparatively small class are the recipients of divine favor -- "as many as the Lord our God shall call"; whereas during the Millennial Age "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." It is this key-thought which makes it possible to harmonize such widely divergent Scriptures as Mark 4:11, 12 and Revelation 22:17.

## Abraham's Seed

God's great Oath-bound promise to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18), was the hope of the Jewish nation as the natural seed; and proud was their boast: "Abraham is our Father." (John 8:39.) But alas, "because of unbelief they were broken off" and "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for." (Rom. 11:7, 20.) For "it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." (Romans 4:16.) Abraham's seed is to be two-fold-an earthly, "as the sands of the seashore," beginning with restored Israel and embracing all humanity eventually; and a spiritual, "as the stars of heaven," the called-out class of this Gospel Age. For "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29.) This is one of the most glorious facets of truth, a true understanding of which comes only from the Source of truth.

## The Judgment Day

What crude views are generally held on this all-important portion of Scripture truth: First, the ordinary idea of a twenty-four hour day in which to pass sentence on the billions of humanity; second, the belief that it will be a day of solemn dread and horror, a rending of graves amid the cataclysmic fury of the elements; heaven and earth being burned up, while above the clash and din, the all-penetrating sound of Gabriel's trumpet shall be heard summoning mankind, already once judged at death, now to have the shameful record of their sins spread out for all to see. What a miserable distortion is this of the world's great Judgment Day. No wonder it is sometimes called "Doom's Day." How thankful we can be for the true Biblical viewpoint. A thousand-year day of restoration to perfection-a day of opportunity to develop mentally, morally, and physically into perfect manhood. For the ransom was given for all, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return from the graves in the day God hath appointed in which He will judge the world in righteousness -- a day when sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Far from it being a day which mankind should dread, the Scriptures exhort all to rejoice at its approach. See the joyful exhortation of Psalm 96.

## Resurrection

When St. Paul preached at Athens, and "they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked." (Acts 17:32.) It is most peculiar that often the same reaction is produced when this truth is presented in all its Biblical force, and that amongst professing Christians. But this is not to be wondered at, inasmuch as the resurrection of the dead is hardly a necessity to the credal teaching, which avers that after death, man is more alive than ever before and goes immediately to his eternal reward or punishment. But to us who know that the dead "sleep in the dust of the earth", (Dan. 12:1) the resurrection is a vital teaching. For if the dead rise not then they which are fallen asleep are perished. (See 1 Cor. 15:13-19.) But there "shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust," but "every man in his own order." (Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:23.) We now see not only one, but three resurrections spoken of in the Bible: the "first" for the faithful of the Gospel Age, the "after" for the world in general, and the "better" for the Old-Testament saints. (1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 20:6; 1 Cor. 15:23; Heb. 11:35-40.) In addition we understand that our English word "resurrection" is the translation of the Greek word *anastasis*, which means more than an awakening. It signifies a re-standing or raising up to fulness of perfection. This can be seen from a careful study of John 5:28, 29. All shall hear Christ's voice (be awakened) and *come forth unto* a resurrection. See also Volume VI, "Studies in the Scriptures," pages F702-F710.

## **The Ancient Worthies**

This expression refers to the men and women of faith, of whom John the Baptist was the last, who lived before the Gospel Age. Not for them will be the spiritual inheritance. Nevertheless they shall be "princes" in the earth, during Christ's world-wide Kingdom. (See Psa. 45:16.) And there are hints in the Scriptures which tend to the thought that God will reward their faithful service during the Millennium with a change to spirit life at its close. We rejoice for these faithful ones who "without us [the Church] shall not be made perfect," but who nevertheless obtained a good report through faith.

## **Spiritism**

Against the insidious belief, that communication with the dead is possible, we have been guarded by the Scripture revelation that all so-called manifestations are the result of deceptions practised by the fallen angels, the "spirits who kept not their first estate." These God has "cast down to Tartarus and restrained in chains of darkness until the Judgment Day." Unable to materialize as previously they have recourse to controlling any human mind which submits to them. Scoffers, who disbelieve the existence of such evil beings, merely lay themselves open to deception. Inasmuch as their powers for evil may become more widespread in the future we do well to be on our guard and heed the Scripture admonition explicitly, to shun all contact with anything which savors of occultism.

## **The Soul**

How clear to us is the Bible teaching that man is a soul, and not that he *has* a soul. Far from its being immortal or undieable, we read, "The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die." (Ezek. 18:4, 20.) In Genesis we find that it was the union of the elements of the earth with the "breath of lives" that made a "living soul." (See Gen. 2:7.) The word "soul" means a sentient being, and is applied in Scripture to all forms of animal life. See Genesis 1:21, where "living creature" is the translation of the Hebrew word *nephesh* which is elsewhere translated "soul." This sophistical teaching, that man possesses within himself an immortal, indescribable something, has its roots in the first lie of Satan in Eden. Conveyed down through the ages in human philosophies, it has perhaps more than any other delusion, blinded the minds of men to the simple truth. We can be indeed grateful for a true appreciation of its real meaning.

## **The Holy Spirit**

The personality of the Holy Spirit we deny, on the basis of Scripture teaching. We acknowledge it to be the invisible power of God, holy, because it emanates from Him. This power is manifested in the works of creation and also in its influence on men's minds. We are aware that many devout followers of the Master have believed and taught that the Holy Spirit is the third Person in a Triune God; nevertheless we hold such teaching to be without Scriptural support, and look forward to the time when the Holy Spirit with which we, the members of the Body of Christ, have been anointed, will be poured out upon all flesh, during the times of restitution mentioned in an earlier paragraph.

## **The Trinity**

Closely related is this subject. The word itself is not found in the Bible, although it is scattered voluminously through hymn books and weighty theological tomes. Verily this is a mystery even as its advocates themselves admit. If ever a doctrine were built on pure imagination, it is this of three gods and yet one God. Some have even thought St. Paul referred to it when he spoke of "the mystery hid from ages." Many a faithful Christian paid with his life for refusing to believe it. Let us be especially thankful for clearness of vision on this teaching. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." - Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:6.

## **Immortality and Eternal Life**

To most people these two expressions are synonymous. We have been instructed as to their exact meaning. Immortality is a condition in which life is inherent "As the Father hath life in Himself." (John 5:26.) In this condition, death is an impossibility. Jehovah God alone possessed this quality, but has since bestowed it upon His Son, Jesus, and eventually it will be the reward of the Church. It is a state of existence which applies only to the divine nature. See 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 Cor. 15:53; 2 Peter 1:4.

Eternal life is a condition of existence wherein life is not inherent, but is sustained by an outward source. It is a condition where death is a possibility if the source of life were cut off. This is a proper definition of mortality and applies to all created beings, including those on the spirit plane, lower than the divine nature. All, though mortal, will be sustained in life eternally after their obedience to the divine will is proved. This distinction is shown in St. Paul's words regarding "our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought *life* AND *immortality* to light through the Gospel." - 2 Tim. 1:10.

## **The New Creation**

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.) "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." (Gal. 6:15.) Far from being simply an expression meaning spiritual renewal, the term "new creation" unfolds to us the marvelous work of God; the transformation of an elect class from the human to the highest of all natures, the divine. To those who "walk worthy of God, who path called them unto His Kingdom and glory," there is a special meaning in the Psalmist's words: "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the Highest Himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there." - 1 Thess. 2:12; Psa. 87:5, 6.

## **The Bride of Christ**

Various ideas are held as to whom this expression refers. To us it can mean but the one class called during this Gospel Age "to glory and virtue." (2 Pet. 1:3.) Of the various symbolical expressions which refer to this class of saints, none is more appropriate and beautiful. We rejoice in the privilege of seeing all its deep significance. - Acts 15:14, 17; Psa. 45:10-15; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9, 2; 22:17.

## **The Creative Week**

Once we in common with others considered these to be twenty-four-hour days. Now we believe them to refer to great epochs of time. On the basis of Israel's Jubilee cycle of fifty years and the Sabbatical cycle of seven years some beautiful correspondencies can be built. From the beginning of the ordering of the earth (not its creation) to the appearance of Adam were six great days of 7000 years each, or a period of 42,000 years. On the seventh day, God "rested." This period of time comprises "God's Week". This seventh day, seven thousand years long, is "Man's Week." For six days of 1000 years each, man labors under the burden of sin; and on his seventh day, the Millennium, will "rest." The close of the Millennium will usher in the fiftieth thousand year-earth's Jubilee and also God's great eighth day. It was on the eighth day that all the males of Israel were circumcised. (Lev. 12:2, 3, etc.) This pictures the complete cleansing of the flesh that will be accomplished by the restitution-the perfection and completeness that was Adam's when all the perfection was in him-before the creation of Eve from a portion of his body. All the obedient of mankind will reach this condition at the close of the Millennium, before they are presented to God by the Christ class whose work will then be finished.

## **The Tabernacle**

Many are the beautiful lessons taught us by this typical structure erected by Israel in the wilderness. Its court and chambers, its furniture, its diversity of materials, its ceremonies and sacrifices, its order of priesthood and service-what deep significance is revealed in this "shadow of good things to come." Regardless of our degree of understanding, all surely have been blessed by a study of its typical features.

## **Nature of the Logos**

To us there is no mystery concerning our Lord's prehuman existence. We know He was the "beginning of the creation of God," and that subsequently all things were created by Him through God's power. In the fulness of time, in obedience to the divine will, He left His prehuman, spiritual nature and glory, and became flesh -actually and fully a partaker of the human nature -- in no sense of the word, however, "incarnated", that is, clothed merely with a human form while retaining His spiritual nature. "He who was rich, for our sakes became poor." - See Prov. 8:22-30; Col 1:16, 17; Gal. 4:4; John 1:14; 2 Cor. 8:9.

## **Natures Distinct**

The general idea in the minds of most people is that every human being is not entirely a human being-but a sort of dual creature-partly angelic and partly earthly. We see clearly that all natures are separate and distinct. This clarifies many Scriptures. St. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:38-41 are very appropriate in this connection.

## **Chronology**

While it is hardly possible for us to claim accurate knowledge as regards chronology, yet the purpose for which it was given, a general indication of times and seasons, has undoubtedly proved a blessing to those with hearing ears. There has been much clarification on this grand subject, and it will probably have more blessings for us in the future. Volume II, "Studies in the Scriptures", still stands supreme as a general approach to Bible Chronology.

## **The Harvest**

While there may not be general agreement as to its exact length, we all know it to be a period of time at the end of the Gospel Age; in contradistinction to the prevalent idea of its proceeding all the way down from the time of our Lord's First Advent until He should come again. We can recognize the bundling of the tares today, and can see the elements in preparation for the final consummation. The "summer" is well-nigh ended and the "winter" of sorrows is just before.

## **The Day of Vengeance**

We can rejoice in right views on this terrifying subject. We realize that the Day of Vengeance is the time of vengeance against evil systems and conditions of the present. It occurs just before the full establishment of Christ's Kingdom. The six-thousand year permission of evil will end with a divine judgment that will reveal God's viewpoint on man's systems. God is not going to exercise a spirit of vindictiveness against the race, but in the Day of Vengeance His wrath will come upon the systems and conditions which are out of harmony with Him. There is a blessing in it, for it is necessary to crush the stony hearts to prepare them to receive the hearts of flesh that the Lord will give to the willing and obedient.

## **Hell**

What a flood of light has been thrown on the true meaning of this word! This little word which conjures such frightful pictures to millions, holds for us no terror. The Hebrew word "shall" and its exact Greek equivalent, "hades," Biblically mean simply "the hidden state." All go there after death, whether saint or sinner, good or bad, rich or poor, noble or mean. The word itself gives no clue as to the condition of the dead. This we ascertain from other Scriptures, which inform us that "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave [sheol] whither thou goest." (Eccl. 9:10.) "The dead know not any thing." (Eccl. 9:5.) "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." (Psa. 146:4.) It is from the creeds of men that we are instructed the very opposite. The Bible describes the condition of the dead, in view of the fact that they shall all be resurrected, as a "sleep." Knowledge on this one facet of truth is sufficient to sweep away many of the fears and terrors of this life.

## **Restoration of the Jews**

In the light of God's great Plan, we now see the true position of the Jewish nation. Though they have been terribly oppressed during the past twenty-five centuries, "God hath not cast away His people, whom He foreknew." "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead." (Romans 11:2, 26, 15.) The Bible is replete with promises which yet await their fulfillment when Israel is restored to divine favor. The present restoration of the Jews to their own homeland and the remarkable development of Palestine, constitutes a major proof of the proximity of God's Kingdom.

## **Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation**

While not claiming full knowledge of all God has for us in these two wonderful Books, how thankful we can be for all the discernment we already possess. The least developed of God's people can find there strong assistance for his faith, especially in view of present events. And who shall limit what there is yet hidden in these books for our encouragement in the trying days to come. Let us all be diligent to watch "what He shall say unto us."

## **Symbols and Parables**

How clear to us are many passages of Scripture which because stated as parables or in symbolical language are hid from the eyes of many! The "lake of fire," "the wheat and tares," women-clean and unclean, horns, mountains, sun, moon, stars, fire, wind, seas, etc. - what a wealth of truth is thus revealed to us while concealed to others.

## **The Great Pyramid**

Disregarded by the world and even "wounded in the house of its friends," this great edifice yet remains, to those who will, a tremendous corroborative testimony to the truth of God's Word. No one who has devoted sufficient study to have really grasped its record will scoff at this "altar in the midst of the land of Egypt and pillar at the border thereof." (Isa. 19:19.) Its primary purpose is doubtless to stop the mouths of the wise during the Millennium, who desire now to know God not by faith but by "tools of measurement." Although their attention has been called to the Pyramid's testimony, and that by men of their own class, they have chosen to scoff and deride, although the "very stones cry out" to the existence of a Wisdom and Omnipotence of which they know not. How vain will be counted the wisdom of man in that Day when God shall bring all things to light.

## **The Return of Christ**

What a flood of light has been vouchsafed us on this vital subject. Regardless of differences of opinion on certain aspects, we can rejoice in a clear appreciation of the Object of our Lord's return. And of the times and seasons we are not in ignorance. Also of the Manner we are fully informed. As of His First Advent, Scripture foretold events which were spread over a period of thirty odd years and yet all related to His first coming, so likewise does the Bible speak of events concerning the Second Advent which unquestionably cover a period of time. In the very nature of things, Christ's coming for His saints cannot occur at the same time as His coming with His saints, both of which events are most definitely taught. We believe that the light of present truth and the signs of the times both indicate that the first of these events occurred at some time in the past, while the second will be fulfilled in the near future. We are living in the "days of the Son of Man." "Blessed those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh shall find watching." (Luke 12:37.) Regardless, however, of how complete is our understanding of the features of the Second Advent, let us all diligently "watch," to merit that "crown of righteousness" which shall be given "unto all them that love His appearing." - 2 Tim. 4:8.

## **The Great Company**

While this is our subtitle, the writer feels that inasmuch as this expression is found in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 7:9-17), a book of deep symbology, and the expression as used there seems to some to be inconclusive as to whether a spiritual or earthly class is described, it were preferable that in all discussions regarding a secondary spiritual class, the term "Levites" were used. After all, the main point is whether or not the Scriptures teach of a class, taken out from earth, who will ultimately occupy a subordinate place to the Bride of Christ. A careful study of the Levites seems conclusively to point to an antitypical class who build on a good foundation, but whose work abides not, who, nevertheless, are eventually saved. (See 1 Cor. 3:10-15.) No building work can begin on the foundation of Christ unless preceded by consecration and begetting of the Spirit. All who make this "covenant by sacrifice" can have no hope of an earthly inheritance. This is pictured by the Levites receiving no share in the promised land when it was divided amongst the tribes, for "the Lord is his inheritance." (Deut. 10:9.) The Levites represented all the first-borns saved on the Passover night in Egypt and typed the "Church of the First-borns whose names are written in heaven." (Heb. 12:23.) From among this class, God chose the priests. All the priests were Levites, but not all the Levites were priests. There is room here for much prayerful consideration before we reject the suggestion that we have here pictured a class of Christians who, while they love the Lord, yet overcome not their own wills and thereby lose the promised reward. Like Lot of old, they attempt to do both God's will and their own; and succeeding in doing neither, they lose all, yet are spared by the Lord's grace.

## **The Covenants**

Various covenants are mentioned in the Bible. Three most particularly concern us: the Abrahamic Covenant, Israel's-the Law Covenant, and the New Covenant. While fully recognizing the disparity of opinion among the Lord's people concerning these deep features of God's Word, we deplore any spirit of contention or ill-feeling which is engendered because of these differences. Children of the Lord never forfeit their relationship because of honest intellectual variance. There is nothing to lose and much to gain in mutual consideration of all God's Word. None of us knows it all. The writer's own opinion, after long and prayerful study, and with due consideration of the thoughtful expressions of others, is best summed up in the words of another: "The whole subject becomes transparent when we see that the Abrahamic Covenant (which needed no mediator because it was God's unconditional promise, and confirmed by His oath) is the full, broad statement of the divine Plan, and that as the Law Covenant was added (to illustrate the inability of sinners to help themselves and) to manifest Christ Jesus as the Seed of Promise, so the New Covenant is added (to the Abrahamic Covenant) also, not to hinder the blessing of every creature, but to make that blessing of knowledge and the Millennial Kingdom opportunities more effective, -even unto everlasting life-to those approved under it."

Finally we urge all students of the Covenants to very carefully consider Peter's words in Acts 3:25. Note that Peter, speaking to Jews, refers to them (by anticipation, if they will accept Jesus) as the children of the covenant which God made with Abraham. This is strong evidence against the conclusion that the New Covenant is operative in the Gospel Age.



## Mediator and Advocate

Briefly, we believe that the Bible restricts the use of the word Mediator always to a covenant. Moses was the Mediator of the Old Law Covenant, and typed the Christ class, Head and Body, the Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant. A Mediator stands between; an Advocate stands alongside of. The Church needs no mediator; there cannot be a mediator between a Father and His children. Nevertheless, these finer shades of interpretation need cause no contention amongst Christians possessing the Master's spirit. "Let every man be persuaded in his own mind."

## The Sin Offering

We all agree that associated with Christ in the work of restoration will be a class selected during this Gospel Age who walk the same way of self-sacrifice. What we -do not all agree on is as to whether this class is shown in the types of the sin-offerings, particularly that of Leviticus 16. In the Ransom-price the Church can have no part; in the Ransom-work, the Church unquestionably shares with her Lord. The Ransom-price was laid down at Calvary; the Ransom-work will not be finished until the end of the Millennium. The Ransom-price is the all-sufficient merit-the human life-rights of Jesus -the basis for the entire resultant Ransom-work. A careful study of the Scriptures leads most of us to the conclusion that the philosophy of the Ransom price reveals a two-fold application of its merit; first, by imputation to those who during the Gospel Age make the "covenant by sacrifice"; and, second, by direct application for all mankind in the Millennium. This conclusion immediately resolves the difficulty of understanding why the death of Jesus at Calvary did not free the human race from Adamic condemnation. They are still under the bondage of sin and death. Thus far the merit of Christ has been made available only on behalf of the Church, who once "were by nature the children of wrath even as others." (Eph. 2:3.) Their present condition in contrast to that of the rest of mankind is given by St. John: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." (1 John 5:19.) Nevertheless the Man Christ Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all," and He is the propitiation "not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 Tim. 2:6; 1 John 2:2.) The application of Christ's merit for the world will be effected at the close of the Gospel Age, when the called-out Church is all selected.

In the light of these thoughts the writer feels that the types of Leviticus 16, reveal the *manner* in which the merit of Christ is made available: first, "for Himself [His Body members] and for His house" [the household of faith]; and, secondly, "for the people." (Lev. 16:11, 15.) There are two applications of blood on the mercy seat. Thus is shown, in brief, that the merit of Christ is passed *through* the Church class ere it reaches the world. In no sense of the word does the Church add to the Ransom price. As human beings they have no standing with God except under the covering merit of Christ, which alone makes them acceptable sacrifices. The blood of the Bullock, and, subsequently the blood of the Goat in the hands of the priest, symbolically said, This animal is dead, and here is a proof of it. Inasmuch as we were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), the human rights which would accrue to us in the Millennium are now imputed to us by faith, to the end we may "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." (Rom. 12:1.) We thus by faith die to all earthly rights and privileges secured by the blood of Christ, to the end we might be with Him partakers of the spiritual inheritance. The application of Christ's merit on behalf of His footstep followers precludes its use on behalf of the world until the Church is all completed. This is shown in the type by the blood (the evidence of shed human life) of the goat being sprinkled on the mercy seat, signifying the completion of the Church's sacrifice collectively, which return, as it were, of the merit of Christ, makes it available "for the people."

While some will contend for the limitation of all of Leviticus 16 to the work of Jesus alone, we believe careful and reverential consideration will reveal that more complete work in association with His Church as we find it explained to us in the New Testament. It is difficult to see why it should be necessary that a bullock (a comparatively large and fat animal) should be required to simply make a man and his associates ceremonially clean, in order that a type might be instituted, utilizing a small and thin animal such as a goat. It seems far more reasonable to see pictured in the bullock and the goat, the Master and His Church. However, let us not be dogmatic. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." (Rom. 14:5.) It hardly behooves Christians, who agree in substance, to be overly contentious as to the meaning of two animals offered' on Jewish altars. To all of us, the things in God's Word are holy. "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth." (Rom. 14:3.) Let us all in brotherly love, gather the "manna" according to our individual needs.

### **Verities from God's Word**

In this panorama of spiritual truth we have touched on many points and by no means have exhausted them all. Whether we accept all as they have been briefly expounded or whether we accept only the half, can we not all rejoice in the wonderful heritage that is ours? Can we not offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Giver *of* every good and perfect gift for a clearer comprehension of even some -of these truths? Surely "the lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage. We will bless the Lord, who hath given us counsel." (Psa. 16:6, 7.) And finally, brethren, we can find mutual agreement and brotherly fellowship in the following verities of God's Word:

"We *know* that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." - Rom. 8:28.

"We *know* that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." - 1 John 3:14.

"We *know* that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." - 1 John 3:2.

"For we *know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building *of* God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." - 2 Cor. 5:1.

"For I *know* whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." - 2 Tim. 1:12.

"Blessed Bible, precious Word!  
Boon most sacred from the Lord;  
Glory to His name be given,  
For this choicest gift from heaven."

-*W. J. Siekman.*

## Wait My Soul Upon the Lord

*"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say on the Lord." - Psa. 27:14.*

THE PSALM from which this beautiful text is taken cannot be studied by the receptive mind with care without bringing important lessons intended to enlighten those who sincerely desire divine guidance. It also contains much inspiration in the direction of attaining a strong and abiding confidence in God that nothing can destroy. Further, it emphasizes the importance of forming the habit of waiting on God whatever may be our experience, even though that waiting The long. Thus waiting and trusting, it is revealed, there will be assured relationship, a sense of security, and, as the last verse of the Psalm suggests, the heart will be strengthened in the Lord, making such an one "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might."

It will be noted that the first six verses are chiefly occupied with this confidence in God enjoyed by the Psalmist. Out of a personal experience of God's revelations to him he affirms with assurance, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?. The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" His confidence is in the Lord, therefore it matters not how great an array of enemies are round about him, for God is more than all that be against him. He can affirm that the fixed determination of his heart is to seek after the Lord, and in language most similar to the Apostle's, "This one thing I do," David here expresses the supreme purpose of his own life: *"One thing* have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold, the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." Need we wonder why he was a man after God's own heart? Surely not! The Bible abounds with evidence that God ever delights to show special favors to such characters as this. And today as ever before, all such as thus concentrate their minds on relationship with himself, have the promise that he will likewise reveal his will to them. They are assured of a personal guidance of his spirit, as in a oneness of fellowship and sweet accord they walk with him.

### INSPIRING LESSONS

However, only the humble-minded can thus fellowship with God, and so we find the Psalm teaching us. Notwithstanding all the full assurance confidently expressed previously, the Psalmist, in verses 7 to 9, visualizes the possibility of some dark cloud at some time shutting out the face 'of God. Then where will he turn to find solid ground for assurance? Ah, if humility is not present in the heart at such a time, will there not be a recounting of his works of merit, of sacrifices made in the vineyard of the Lord, of the exceptional character of his devotions -- a coming with the hands filled with "unprofitable service" as a basis for continued favor? But David's inspired words teach us a better way, and the way in which all who live close to God will be found. When trouble assails, and every support seems to be withdrawn, while the fire burns and the waters seem likely to overflow, the place in which comfort and strength may be found for David, can never be in any rehearsal of his own works or merits, but only on the ground -of God's abounding grace. "When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I seek." Had he lived in our day of greater privilege, his language would surely be, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." In the darkness of trial his cry would be heard reminding God of his grace in calling him into fellowship with himself, and this would be his only plea.

Applying his experiences and words to ourselves, do they not teach us valuable lessons? Are we not reminded of our Savior's way of showing us how to estimate ourselves, as when he said, "So also you, when you shall have done all the things commanded you, say, We are unprofitable

servants; for we have done only what we were bound to do." (Luke 17:10, *Diaglott.*) The initial step is always taken by the Lord in the matter of our redemption and sonship, and if "our hearts condemn us not," then, when darkness seems to hide his face so that faith may be tried, will he not delight to have us come to him and plead, Thou, O God, of thine own free grace called me to thyself through Jesus Christ, and in a glad response thereto I came. Thy gifts and calling are not things to be repented of, therefore thou wilt not forsake me. Our God will never fail to recognize that plea upon our lips. And how surely the answering sense of assurance will come to us as it did to David. Immediately he is ready to affirm, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." "He abideth faithful, for he cannot deny himself," nor fail in giving grace sufficient for every time of need.

### **IF ANY MAN LACK WISDOM**

Now comes the prayer of verse 11, which is really a confession of a deep sense of responsibility, and an utter dependence on God for guidance and instruction. The marginal reading of the Authorized Version seems to give the intent of this prayer very much better than the rendering given in the text itself. According to the marginal reading it would be, "Teach me thy way O Lord, and lead me in a way of plainness, because of those that observe me." What a beautiful way of confessing the felt, need of a simple and clearly defined revelation of God's will. Fitting language surely when present limitations and imperfections are remembered, and the possibility of misunderstanding in so many ways, remains present with us. How suggestive such a prayer is of one who recognizes his lack of wisdom-coming, as the Apostle James urges us to do, asking God for the enlightenment he waits to dispense liberally to all who acknowledge their special need of it. Yes, wisdom from above, easily distinguished, because "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." - James 3:17.

The Bible abounds with assurances that only such as are thus painfully aware of their poverty in this matter, may entertain any hope of having all their steps ordered of the Lord, for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." And who that recognizes the burden of responsibility resting upon him, because there are those who observe him, and over whom he may exercise an influence for good or evil, can fail to feel that it is most important that his own vision of God and his will should be clear. Therefore the constant emphasis of Scripture upon the need of waiting on the Lord. Self-assurance, impatience, enthusiasm, expediency, may all cry "make haste"; nevertheless it is written, "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Wait until the word is heard distinctly, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

This waiting on the Lord suggested in our text is not such waiting as would be represented in service for him, waiting on him as a servant waits on his master. The thought is manifestly that of waiting before God for the clear understanding of his will. Such an attitude should characterize every child of God. Well indeed, has the wise man admonished us, to "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, *and lean not unto thine own understanding.* In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Prov. 3:5,6.) To thus trust and wait will, according to God's Word, insure an experience more free from mistakes, and bring us closer to the realization of that desirable outcome promised us in the first Psalm, wherein we read: "He [who meditates day and night in God's law] shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; *and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*" - Psalm 1;3.

## IMPORTANCE OF ASCERTAINING GOD'S WILL

As bearing on this point we call to mind the words of Brother Russell. After remarking that "Many of the children of God have made mistakes along this line," he goes on to say: "Having committed our ways to the Lord, we should go forward only as he leads us. If we are not clear as to his will, let us not be in too great a hurry, nor try to guide ourselves, but present the matter to the Lord in earnest prayer, asking that we may have no will or way of our own, but may be guided only as he wills. Then let us wait and watch for the indications of his providence, and follow as he seems to lead, leaving the results with him. We are not to follow our own choice, without evidences that it is God's will. The question may sometimes be asked of us, 'Are you going to do this way or that? Are you going to this place or to that place?' Our attitude and -our reply, if we have not as yet clearly ascertained the Lord's will in the matter, should -be,. 'I am not yet fully decided. I will consider the Word of the Lord, to see how his instructions seem to apply in this case.' Or, 'I am watching to see what the Lord's providences seem to indicate, and am praying over the matter, that I may be guided aright.' The poet has expressed the right thought:

"I am afraid to touch  
Things that involve so much.'

"Those who wait upon the Lord do not always seem to prosper best, from outward appearances. But -the Psalmist declares that we should be of good courage as we thus wait on God. We are pursuing the right course, and shall have his blessing. We make no mistake when we wait upon him. Others may seem to be getting ahead of us at first, but we are to 'wait on the Lord.'

"Take no step unless you feel sure that the Lord is directing and guiding. Watch for *the meaning of his providences. Study his Word.* Let not your faith depart from its moorings. 'Be of good courage!' 'Good' courage is courage of a good degree, not merely a little courage. Be of strong courage; 'and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord,' . . . There are many difficulties to be surmounted, and it requires courage to surmount difficulties. But the courage born of faith in God and in his 'exceeding great and precious promises' strengthens them when otherwise they might be overwhelmed. It gives them a strength to which all others are strangers."

## WATCH AND PRAY

Two outstanding statements in this Psalm are worthy of special attention. First, we have David declaring his fixed purposes in life as he looks for ward to the days yet to be: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." Then, in what would seem like a' retrospective look, we have him saying, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." At one time he is looking into a future filled with great possibilities for knowing God, many days illuminated with the light of his countenance. At another time he would seem to be reviewing a past all radiant with Divine favor, wherein God had helped him by the might of his imparted strength. And surely this is all wonderfully suggestive of the actual experience of all who truly walk with God. The one who starts out with a fixed determination to adhere steadfastly to the one great purpose of gaining that knowledge of God which is eternal life, will most assuredly find plenty of occasion to discover that only he who *endures to the end shall be saved.* It will not be long before such will see a world of meaning in the words of one of Israel's kings: "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." (1 Kings 20:11.) It means much to have set such a goal as this of David before one's mind, and to have faithfully held to it through all the inevitable warfare, discouragements, and trials awaiting any who venture on so great an undertaking. Oh! how many, in looking back over the years, are ready to say, I had fainted and grown utterly

disheartened many, many times, unless I had believed that God's grace and guidance constantly overshadowed me. Only because I have set the Lord always before my face, and made him my refuge and strength, have I been able to maintain this singleness of purpose, undaunted and unchanged-"kept by the power of God." Happy retrospect indeed, when one can look back over years made rich with these memories of God's faithfulness. When the Lord's people can feel and know in this way what God has been to them, and what, in his grace, they have been to him through the years, surely it must stamp their lives with an impress to which all the future will blessedly conform. Such may not only look backward with boundless gratitude, but look forward also with confidence to both the immediate and eternal future. Yes, and look forward with a gaze that will be both prayer and praise offered in all lowliness of mind, to the glory of him who has given, and who will continue to give strength to all who wait on him.

The favor and loving-kindness of the Lord is indeed better than life, and the very preciousness of such a treasure increases the truly awfulness of the thought that one might lose it. But such is the possibility. As in material things, so in the spiritual, costly treasures require vigilant guarding lest thieves break through and steal. And how full of robber hosts our pathway is! Ten thousand foes may seem an exaggeration, but like David, it will be well to remember that a "host" encamps against us, and thus safeguard ourselves from underestimating their strength. The wily Adversary in subtle ways stands ready to storm the citadel of our hearts. So with the poet we pray:

"Sun of my soul, my Father dear,  
I know no night when 'Thou art near.  
O! may no earth-born cloud arise  
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes."

### **I WILL GUIDE THEE WITH MINE EYE**

Beautiful indeed are the ways of the Lord! He very properly expects our obedient response to his laws, but how utterly displeasing to him would be the obedience of a slavish fear. The mind at once recoils from the thought of God being satisfied with obedience secured by the lash of fear, for even we ourselves could have no pleasure in such obedience on the part of those whose love and confidence we desire. But the beauty suggested in an obedient, loving heart, alertly watching the eyes of the Lord to learn his will, is readily acknowledged as the only consistent attitude on the part of his children. Their heart's cry can be nothing less than "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." (Psa. 119:97.) And such are they who sincerely pray, "Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us." "Hide not thy face far from me," lest my feet wander from thy way. "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a way of plainness, because of those which observe me." This is waiting on the Lord in the sense of our text, and this is the attitude of patient endeavor to know of a surety what his will for us may be.

Imperative, therefore, beyond question, is the necessity of obedience on our part, once the will of the Lord is discerned. Any unnecessary delay after the perception of our duty, must certainly lower the force of resolution, and dim the vision of God's face.

Along with the ever-proper question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" there must be so complete a willingness to promptly obey his leadings, that we can truthfully sing,

"O! speak, and I will hear;  
Command and I obey;  
My willing feet with joy shall haste  
To run Thy righteous way."

Only as we live with a vivid consciousness of God's eye beholding us all the time, marking our every reaction to all his providences, and only when the realization of this fact is a joy and inspiration to our hearts, can we receive of the strength he has promised to impart to us. And particularly important is it that our first and constant recollection of his all-seeing eye be, as it was with David, "Thou hast set our secret sins in the light of thy countenance." Such a thought may well awe our minds, and we trust that it does do so. Nevertheless, where could we find a saint, living as all saints should habitually live, with a conscience clean, and "quick as the apple of an eye," who would not gladly (bear testimony to the fact that there is a deeper joy in that awe, than could ever be known away from his searching gaze?

True, pure, upright and blessed indeed are those who, though painfully conscious of unprofitableness and nothingness aside from Christ, are able to live happily in the divine presence, knowing of themselves their own heart-hunger for his righteousness, and knowing that God also knows how fervently and frequently they plead for the completion of their entire sanctification. There is no fear in such love, but there is a power-yes, a power felt in every fiber of the life where consecration's objective remains, unalterably set where God put it, namely, in letting him have complete sway in the life, to teach us, to use us, to mold us, to transform and cleanse us, until he can present us to himself, "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Happy the one who willingly suffers the "sharp two-edged sword" of Scripture, to pierce even "to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." Surely this is a very real feature of "the power" of the Gospel unto salvation to every one that believeth, and obeys it.

### **DO HIS WILL AND KNOW THE DOCTRINE**

A multitude of problems beset us round, and we are concerned about a great many things on which we surely would appreciate much clearer light. Yet, after all, it is evidently not so much a matter of our having perfect knowledge with which to meet our problems one by one, as it is a matter of keeping close to God. We cannot forget the many, many promises of the Word, wherein assurance is repeatedly given in one form or another, that "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Remembering these promises, and having intimate acquaintanceship with the One who has made them, and knowing his character of holiness, may not all, learned and unlearned, be well equipped thereby for every emergency connected with obedience to *God, if so be they know him*. Deficient some may indeed be in a knowledge of many of the ramifications of doctrine, and far from possessing the ability to grasp much that may be seen by other more analytical minds, but they *can know the God of truth* most intimately, and become so enriched by his indwelling holy spirit that they never lose their way. The Christian life is so much a matter of relationship to the Lord, that we greatly err when we put the emphasis elsewhere. God has settled for all time the question as to whom he is ready to reveal himself: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This is the last word on this matter. Seeing therefore, that heart purity is of the first importance, if we would see God, is it not equally true that only the pure in heart could understand him and rightly interpret his will? Is this not what Jesus meant when on another occasion he said, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light"? Manifestly, then, heart purity is of inestimable value as an aid in discerning right and wrong, truth and error, as these factors enter into the problems of life. Little wonder that the Bible urges upon us the necessity of keeping the heart with all diligence. Only let Christ in all his

purging, transforming power fill the heart, and there is no fear that we will mistake the way, for he is made unto us both wisdom and deliverance, present and final.

The secret of the Lord's keeping power, is then, just as suggested in our text-waiting on God. Waiting on him for all we need of wisdom and grace, accompanied, as this will be by increasing realizations of how unwise it is to lean on our own understanding, will secure to us the certain guidance and fellowship of the Lord. We then can sing,

"Through this trial state below,  
Lead me ever, ever, as I go;  
Trusting Thee, I cannot stray;  
I can never, never, lose my way."

What consolation there is in these facts of God's Word! What encouragements they are to us to emulate David in his singleness of purpose, and like him to determine to live where the face of God may be most clearly seen, persisting in that purpose whatever else may come to us. Then we too will not wait in vain. God's purposes may sometimes ripen fast, unfolding every hour, but it is not always so. Times there are, when he will say to us as we wait for the light we seek on present problems and the answer is not immediately given, Wait-though it tarry, wait for it, it will surely come. And then what? Ah! what more can he say than to such waiting ones He has said, "Delight, thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." - Psa. 37:4-6.

- J. J. Blackburn.

## **Items of Interest**

### **Recently Deceased**

Mrs. Susana Bodía, Pinckney, Mich. - (August).

Clara McDermid, San Bernardino, Cal. - (September).

Mrs. Lola Stevens, Riverside, Cal. - (September).

Mr. Thomas G. Wanless, Kamloops, B. C. - (September).

Mr. Louis A. Kuntz, St. Louis, Mo. - (October).

Mrs. Bertha Calway McNiece, Elizabeth, N. J. - (October).



## Christmas Greetings

The following Christmas message was received from Brother Blackburn, the last before his passing, and is now published by your Board of Directors, Editors, and Office Staff as a Christmas message to all:

Another Christmas comes, adding one more to the long list of such dates now passed; subtracting one more from those which may yet be before us. We are farther away from Bethlehem, and nearer the throne. We are farther away from the Babe and nearer the King. The long journey is behind us, and the gates of heaven rather than the gates of Bethlehem are opening to us. What a time for meditating on the special favors and joys now within our reach! The day should not be just another Christmas to us, as we stand so close to an end so sublime. If angels, shepherds, and wise men rejoiced over the beginnings of God's redemptive work, what unusual joy should be ours as we contemplate the endings in which we have so wonderful a part.

If the clouds do for a moment seem to give a reason, to little faith for concluding the angel song was meaningless and Christmas joys a myth, we remember Calvary. What a dark hour that was, viewed from all angles except God's. That dark hour when human sin and lovelessness crucified the Lord of life was dark indeed; but it ushered in the great light of a new Age. So today, we stand in a world of strife and darkness in which the spirit of Christmas seems utterly lacking; but it is the hour of greatest darkness, just before the Morning we have been waiting for. Let us rejoice accordingly.

Am glad for another year of happy and blessed service with you. Thanks for all your patience and acts of kindness.

A blessed season to you all!

## Backward Forward

I stand upon the threshold of two years,  
And backward look, and forward strain my eyes,  
Upon blotted record fall my tears.  
While brushing them aside, a sweet surprise  
Breaks like a day-dawn on my upturned face  
As I remember all Thy daily grace.

Thou hast been good to me; the burdened past  
Thou hast borne with me, and the future days  
Are in Thy hands, I tremble not, but cast  
My care upon Thee, and in prayer and praise,  
Prepare to make the coming year the best  
Because of nobler work and sweeter rest.

- *Anonymous.*