

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XXXVI December, 1953 No. 11

What Say the Scriptures?

Basic Bible Studies No. 7 - The Ransom Sacrifice

Jesus of Nazareth - the "Stranger of Galilee"!

"Behold the Lamb of God!" - John 1:36.

BEFORE the radiance of His person that of the brightest names pales and wanes. "The young men see and hide themselves; the aged arise and stand up. The princes refrain from talking, and lay their hand on their mouth. The nobles hold their peace, and their tongue cleaves to the roof of their mouth. The ear hears and blesses; the eye sees and gives witness." This historic supremacy of Jesus is incontrovertible. To every thoughtful mind, believing or unbelieving, he is the ideal of humanity, the Son of man, and as no other, the very Son of God. His power over men is still the power of a living personality. The perfect ideal presented by his extraordinary life has been extolled by writers of all nationalities and degrees of culture of all faiths and unbeliefs, by men unlike each other in all respects. Galileo, Kepler, Bacon, Newton, Milton, Kant, Goethe, an innumerable list of the illustrious -- all have paid homage.

"How petty are the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp," says Rousseau, "compared with the Gospels! Can it be that writings at once so sublime and so simple are the works of men? Can he whose life they tell be himself no more than a mere man? Is there anything in his character of the enthusiast or the ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his ways, what touching grace in his teachings! What a loftiness in his maxims, what profound wisdom in his words! What presence of mind, what delicacy and aptness in his replies! What an empire over his passions! Where is the man, where is the sage, who knows how to act, to suffer, and to die without weakness and without display? My friend, men do not invent like this; and the facts respecting Socrates, which no one doubts, are not so well attested as those about Jesus Christ."

Napoleon, who in his day strode the world like a Colossus, also pays tribute: "In every other life than that of Christ, what imperfections, what inconsistencies! Where is the character that no opposition is sufficient to overwhelm? Where the individual whose conduct is never modified by event or circumstance, who never yields to the influences of the time, never accommodates himself to manners or passions that he cannot prevail to alter? From first to last he is the same; always the same, majestic, and simple, infinitely severe and infinitely gentle; throughout a life

that may be said to have been lived under the public eye, Jesus never gives occasion to find fault; the prudence of his conduct compels our admiration by its union of force and gentleness. Everything in him amazes me; his spirit outreaches mine, and his will confounds me. Comparison is impossible between him and any other being in the world. He is truly a being by himself: his ideas and his sentiments, the truth that he announces, his manner of convincing, are all beyond humanity and the natural order of things. His birth, and the story of his life, the profoundness of his doctrine which overturns all difficulties, and is their most complete solution, his gospel, the singularity of this mysterious being, his appearance, his empire, his progress through all centuries and kingdoms -all this is to me a prodigy, an unfathomable mystery. I see nothing here of man. Near as I may approach, closely as I may examine, all remains above my comprehension -- great with a greatness that crushes me. It is in vain that I reflect -- all remains unaccountable."

The purest of saints has not escaped the breath of slander, but against Christ none dare charge any sin save his claim to be the Son of God. In the ineffable purity and beauty of his character, the strictest scrutiny could find no flaw. "Have thou nothing to do with that just man," said the Roman lady. "I find no fault in this man," witnessed the bloodstained Pilate. "This man hath done nothing amiss," exclaimed the dying malefactor. "I have shed innocent blood," shrieked the miserable Judas. His most eager accusers stammered into self-refuting lies. The witnesses of his uttermost humiliation, as they returned, smote upon their breasts with despairing agony and assented to the cry of the heathen centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God."

How sweet is the remembrance of the patience with which he bore wrong, of the gentleness with which he rebuked it, and of the love with which he forgave it, earning for him the name "friend of sinners." The scenes at the gate of Nain, at Jairus' home, at the tomb of Lazarus, the happy family at Bethany, Gethsemane's garden, Calvary's mount, and at the sepulchre -- such memorials of love and sorrow continue to attract and charm the hearts of the weary and heavy-laden who find repose only in him who could say, "Come unto me -- ye shall find rest unto your souls."

This then is Jesus, and a thousand things more. Here is one not merely to be ranked with philosophers and princes of this world. Here, indeed, is none other than the Messiah, the Scripturally promised Savior, and the one divinely appointed to occupy three mighty offices -- Prophet, Priest, King -- in a stupendous scheme of redemption affecting the destiny of every human being.

GOD'S ANOINTED PROPHET

Jesus was unapproachably distant from all that ever were honored with a divine mission, with no predecessor and no successor in the multitude and harmony of his spiritual revelations. The Hebrews epistle opens thus. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days *spoken unto us by his Son*"; a fulfillment of a promise which waited fourteen centuries for its accomplishment, given in the days of Moses to Israel -- "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deut. 18:18). This the Son confirmed: "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49). Again "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me" (John 17:8). Those who heard and saw testified, "This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world." - John 6:14.

For "never man spake as this man!" "His lips like lilies, dropped sweet smelling myrrh." His hearers, enthralled, "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded forth from his mouth" as he appropriated to himself the divine commission recorded by Isaiah eight centuries before: "The

spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18, 19). A wondrous light burst upon sin-sick and weary humanity. He spoke forth doctrines strange for their searching character and revolutionary for their boldness, and always with the air of authority: I am the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Door, the Bread from Heaven, the Light of the World; no man cometh unto the Father except by me. A most astounding message, a message of salvation "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord" . . . a "*hope of eternal life*, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Heb. 2:3; Titus 1:2). It was "the word," said Peter to Cornelius, "which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all;) that word, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." - Acts 10:36-38.

His deeds attracted attention and enforced awe at the mysterious power which lay in his hand and voice. He defended the weak, forgave the sinners, fed the thousands, healed the sick, raised the dead. "The people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?" (Matt. 12:23). Here was a transcendent character and a Teacher without parallel, who could instruct in truth higher than man had conceived, opening vast and pure reaches of the unseen realms of knowledge. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God shone forth from his face. The ruler Nicodemus confessed, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2). "The common people heard him gladly," and would have made him king. - Mark 12:37; John 6:15.

But resolutely rejecting all human exaltation, he "stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," in marvelous obedience to a greater commission entrusted him by the Father. This commission he revealed to his inner circle of disciples in words perplexing and strange: "The Son of Man must be lifted up" (John 3:14). "The Son of Man came to give his life for many" (Mark 10:45). "My flesh I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51). "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15). "This is my body, broken for you. This is my blood, shed for you" (Matt. 26:26-28). But they fell on unbelieving ears for they were incompatible with the disciples' expectation of an immediate establishment of God's Kingdom. They were not to comprehend until after his resurrection when he spoke to them again: "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that *repentance and forgiveness of sins* should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." - Luke 24:25-27; 44-47, R.S.V.

In these plain words explicitly and unqualifiedly does Christ, the central and supreme theme of all Old Testament disclosure, affirm *his atoning death* to be the one fact that gives vital significance, substance, and value to the entire body of the Inspired and Written Scriptures of that time. For God has made the Death of Christ the procuring means of Human Salvation. This, the central and cardinal fact of divine revelation found its concentrated expression in the heralding Baptist's sublime announcement when, pointing to the approaching Christ, he exclaimed

"BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHO TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!" - John 1:29.

GOD'S ANOINTED PRIEST

We are thus brought directly to the ultimate objective in Jesus' earthly ministry. He who had existed before the world was -- who had made all things-who had left the glories of a higher nature and been made lower than the angels -- whose birth, supernaturally of a virgin, was heralded by the spirit host-dedicated his life to the will of his Father, and in perfect submission to that will "emptied himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). He became a man for the very purpose of "tasting death for every man." He took on him the human nature "for the suffering of death" -- the very penalty that was against our race. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). "The law was given by Moses, but

grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). The revelation of God through the Mosaic Law resulted only in proving Jews and Gentiles as all under sin; stopping every mouth and making the world subject to divine judgment, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But the revelation of God through Jesus Christ brought justification freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. For though "the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." See Romans 3:9-24; 11:32; 6:25; Galatians 3:22.

Great (worthy of all acceptance) is the inner doctrine of the religion of Christ:

"Who in the flesh was manifest,
In spirit just was shown;
To angel eyes he stood confest,
Was preached the Gentiles' own;
On him the world has glad believed,
In glory now, on high received."

- 1 Timothy 3:16.

This doctrine of the atonement effected by Jesus in the sacrifice of himself, is the grand touchstone by which we may determine what is Truth and what is not Truth. For in the great Plan of God for human salvation the Ransom constitutes the very central feature from which radiates all the doctrines which end in the fullness and completion of that Divine Plan. The vicarious aspect of Jesus' death is the definite teaching of many Scriptures, for example:

Matt. 1:21 - He shall save his people from their sins.

Matt. 26:28 - My blood . . . shed . . . for the remission of sins.

Isa. 53:5 - He was wounded for our transgressions.

Isa. 53:12 - He bare the sin of many.

Dan. 9:24 - To make an end of sins.

1 Cor. 15:3 - Christ died for our sins.

Gal. 1:4 - Who gave himself for our sins.

Eph. 1:7 - We have redemption through his blood.

1 Tim. 1:15 - Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Heb. 9:26 - He was manifested to put away sin.

1 Pet. 1:19 - Redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

1 Pet. 3:18 - Christ suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous.

1 Pet. 2:24 - Who his own self bare our sins.

1 John 2:2 - He is the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 1:7 - The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.

Rev. 1:5 - Washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Typically, also, the elaborate sacrificial system of the ceremonial Law of Sinai revealed the same truth. The substitution of an unoffending animal for the human offender - where nothing less than the lifeblood (Lev. 17:11 -- "Blood maketh atonement by reason of the life.") of the substituted victim sufficed for the remission of deserved penalty, with the offerer's act of laying his hand on the animal, an exercise of faith in the transfer of guilt - conveyed the fact and meaning of Atonement. These sacrifices of Israel were intended and adapted to point onward to him in whose death a real sacrifice was offered, in whose death a real want of mankind was met. This truth is forcefully expounded in the Book of Hebrews, particularly chapters 9 and 10 -- the key thought itself in Heb. 9:22 -- "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." - R.S.V.

Jesus' atonement work must not however be crudely construed as simply shedding literal blood to placate an angry Deity. We may be certain the Philosophy of the Ransom is commensurate with the lofty attributes of God. In seeking to understand the workings of him, "whose thoughts are not our thoughts, and whose ways are not our ways," we may accept the theologian Hooker's dictum: "Let us not think that, as long as the world doth endure, the wit of man shall be able to sound the bottom of that which may be concluded out of the Scriptures." This question as to the ability of the human mind to comprehend absolute truth need not, however, diminish our appreciation of the boundless love of God for his human creatures; ill whose Plan on our behalf the "Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world"; and who "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Students of the Scriptures are generally agreed in a Philosophy of the Ransom which magnifies the Creator; an interpretation whose pivotal truth is expressed by the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22 -- "As by *a man* came death, by *a man* also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

This interpretation has been briefly stated thus: "The ransom views the matter of man's recovery from sin and death as a purchase -- a redemption. The basis of this thought is the divine law, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a man's life for a man's life" (Deut. 19:21). Adam and his entire race of thousands of millions are in dire distress through sin and its penalty. God has provided a recovery by a ransom process -- purchasing back from their fallen condition.

"Our first thought naturally would be that to redeem, or purchase back, the right of humanity to life, would mean that each member of Adam's race must be purchased by the life of another person, holy, harmless, unsentenced. But looking deeply into God's Plan we find that only one man was tried before the divine court -- namely Father Adam; that only Adam was sentenced to death; and that all of his children go into death, not because of their individual trial and death, but simply because Adam failed to maintain his perfection, was unable to give his children more life or rights than he possessed. And so it has been throughout the entire period of six thousand years from the time of Father Adam's sentence until now.

"Here we see a wonderful economic feature connected with the Divine Plan. God would not permit more than one member of the human race to be tried and sentenced to death; for his purpose from the beginning was that the sacrifice of one life should redeem the entire human race. By one man the whole trouble came; by another Man the whole trouble will be rectified.

"Thus we see the value of Jesus' death -- that it was not merely for Adam, but included all his posterity. We see, too, how necessary it was that Jesus should be 'holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners'; otherwise, he, like the remainder of the race, would have been under a divine death sentence. Because all of Adam's race were involved in sin and its penalty, it was necessary to find an outsider to be the world's Redeemer; and that outsider, whether angel, cherub, or the great Michael himself, the Logos, must exchange the spirit nature for the human nature in order to be a corresponding price -- a ransom for the first man.

"It was not a god that sinned; hence the death of a god could not redeem. It was not a cherub that sinned; hence the death of a cherub could not redeem. It was a [perfect] man who sinned, and the ransom for him must be furnished by the death of a [perfect] man. It was for this cause that the great Logos, in carrying out the divine plan for human redemption, left the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, humbled himself and became a man, 'was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. "

To this agree the words of Jesus himself: "The Son of Man came ... to give his life *a ransom* [Gk. *lutronanti* -- a price to correspond] for many." - Mark 10:45.

In Romans 5:15-21, we read St. Paul's contrast between Adam and Christ. The two great heads of the race are introduced, Adam in the Fall, Christ in the Redemption; and the results of the Fall and the results of the Redemption are shown in strong and pointed contrast. Because of its direct relation to our study, we give the following presentation of the passage subdivided into nine antitheses or contrasts of ideas, and marked by Roman numerals. The first part of each contrast shows the fall of Adam (A) and its results; the second, the grace of God in Christ (C) and its results. The several sections of the single verses are marked by the letters of the alphabet. This is a closely literal translation, with a few words supplied [in brackets] as demanded by the current sense or authorized from other parallel passages. In addition, the contrasted and emphatic words have been *italicized*.

(A) I. 15a. Nay, but not, as was the *Fall*,

(C) 15b. So also was the act of *Grace*;

(A) II. 15c. For if, by the *Fall* of the *one* man, the *many* die,

(C) 15d. Much rather the *Grace* of God, and the *Gift* in the *Grace* of the *One* Man, Jesus Christ, abounded unto the *many* [unto justification of *Life*, v. 18].

(A) III. 16a. And not, as was [the *Fall*] through *one* man, having sinned;

(C) 16b. So also was the [perfect] *Gift* [through *One* Man having justified us].

(A) IV. 16c. For the judgment, indeed, was from one [*Fall*] to a sentence of *condemnation* [of *all* men to *Death*, v. 18a];

(C) 16d. But the act of *Grace* was from *many Falls* unto a sentence of *justification* [of *all* men to *Life*, v. 18b].

(A) V. 17a. For if in the *Fall* of the *one* man the *Death* reigned through the *one* man [over *all* men, v. 12];

(C) 17b. Much rather they that receive the abundance of the *Grace* and of the *Gift* of *justification* will reign in *Life* through the *One* Man, Jesus Christ.

(A) VI. 18a. Accordingly, then, as through *one Fall* [the result], was unto *all* men unto *condemnation* [to *Death*];

(C) 18b. So, also, through *one act* of justification [the result], was unto *all* men, unto justification of *Life*.

(A) VII. 19a. For as through the *Disobedience* of the *one* man, the *many* were constituted *sinful*;

(C) 19b. So also through the *Obedience* of the *One* Man, the *many* will be constituted *just*.

(A) VIII. 20a. But law came in besides, that the *Fall* may multiply;
(C) 20b. But where this *Sin* multiplied, the *Grace* over abounded;
(A) IX. 21a. That as the *Sin* reigned in the *Death*;
(C) 21b. So, also, the *Grace* may reign through *justification* unto *Life* eternal, through *Jesus Christ*, our Lord.

In brief, this remarkable passage teaches that Adam, the progenitor of the race, carried all his descendants with him into corruption, condemnation, and death; that Christ the Second Adam, and constructive Head of the race, carried, *potentially*, all the race redeemed by his vicarious death, with him into regeneration, justification, and life.*

*See also May-June 1967 *Herald*.

The Scriptures are thus explicit in their assurance that our Redeemer bought the world with his own life, "his own precious blood." Here is also assurance of the *unchangeableness* of divine law, which could not be broken, but instead provided redemption at so great a cost. The remission of the death penalty is not a violation of God's justice, but its satisfaction by his love; "that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). We may be grateful and satisfied that the *Truth of the Atonement stands as a Fact*, clear, immovable, and supreme among the stupendous verities of Divine Disclosure, and that it is unchangeably interwoven with them all. "Mercy glorieth against judgment." "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." - James 2:13; Psalm 85:10.

GOD'S ANOINTED KING

"Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent which is set up not by man but by the Lord." . . . "Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." - Heb. 8:1, 2; 7:25, R.S.V.

Christ's obedience in carrying out his Father's will brought its exceeding reward. "Wherefore God also bath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." - Phil. 2:9-11.

This sovereignty over all will be realized in the glorious Millennium. For "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by, that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he bath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a *ransom* [Gk. *anti-lutron* -- corresponding price] for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:5, 6). This will be the "times of restitution" which will see the original purpose of God in the creation of man accomplished in the peopling of earth with perfect human beings, restored thus and to eternal life through Christ's Ransom *Work*. Of the result of that ransom, and of the work of redemption as it shall finally be accomplished by the close of the Millennial Age, the Prophet speaking of our Lord says, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." - Isaiah 53:11.

The reason for the intervening centuries between Calvary and Christ's Kingdom will constitute the theme of the next article in this series. We conclude this present study by adding, in spirit, our voice to that of the "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" of angels as they rapturously proclaim:

"WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN TO RECEIVE POWER AND RICHES, AND WISDOM, AND STRENGTH, AND HONOR, AND GLORY, AND BLESSING."

- *W. J. Siekman*

(The subject of the eighth article in this series will be: "GOD'S SECRET PURPOSE.")

Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men"

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men. - Luke 2:14.

CHRISTIAN people the world over have traditionally set aside the twenty-fifth day of December for the observation of Christmas. If asked why they observe this day, the answer might be quite varied. Some would say, "This is the day on which the Christ Child was born." Others would insist that they like the spirit of giving. Many might admit that they like the festive tradition which has been handed down to them from past generations through the church. Thus depicted, Christmas to them is a birthday, a memorial or feast day similar to other days set aside by tradition, though more significant.

If the real importance of Christmas, the birth of Christ, is known and appreciated, it is realized as an event truly worthy of our memory, not only on one day each year, but on every day of our life.

We have heard the Christmas story (Luke 2:1-16) from childhood. But only now, as we associate this Babe of Bethlehem with the Logos, do we get a correct appreciation of the truth respecting Jesus. He was not from Adam (Adamic -- earthly) through Joseph. No, the lives of Adam and Joseph were earthy and forfeited by Father Adam's disobedience to God. Their heritage was death. Had Christ been of their lineage, he could not have paid a corresponding price for Adam -- who was created in the image and likeness of God, a perfect human image of God. Adam lost this perfection only by his disobedience to God's command. Christ could not have been of this parentage, for we are told in 1 Corinthians 15:47: Christ, "the second man, is the Lord from heaven."

Yes, his was a transferred life -- transferred from spirit to human being. As the Logos, he was a perfect spirit being (God's only begotten Son) living with God in the heavens. As such, he served the Father perfectly. Seeing that he might further the Father's purpose toward mankind, he willingly gave up his existence as Logos, this most favored position of all of God's creation, and took on him the form of man, an object of his own creation. (1 Tim. 2:6.) Not only this, but his love and devotion to the Father, and his sympathetic love to fallen mankind was so deep that he willingly forfeited this perfect human life, in order, first, that God's Plan of salvation might be worked out; for God's law required a perfect human life in payment for the perfect human life lost in Eden by disobedience; and second, that mankind might be redeemed from the death penalty and thus restored to the perfection enjoyed in the Garden.

This he did without selfish interest, for he sought not his own will. In his last recorded prayer he asked to be returned to the status he enjoyed with the Father before his human existence. (John 17:5.) Yes, "for our sakes [that mankind might be redeemed] he became poor [human -- the man Christ Jesus], that we, by his poverty, might become rich"-perfect, and at peace with God. - 2 Cor. 8:9.

According to God's original plan (Gen. 1:28) man was to subdue the earth and rule over all of the other forms of living things placed upon the earth, not to be subservient to them, not to fear them, but to use them for his pleasure. Neither was man to rule over man, but each was to be a king in the earth and live peaceably. The one just reason for the permission of evil is that it is for the good of humanity that they might "*know* good and evil"-that they might gain a knowledge of the difference between good and evil.

Knowing that only those who are obedient sons of God can hope for continued life and inhabit the earth in the ages to come, we can more fully appreciate the song of the angels on the night of our Saviour's birth and understand the reason for their great rejoicing. They were announcing to the world of mankind, the greatest event in the history of our planet since the creation of man -the Logos was made flesh! Oh, what cause for rejoicing! The angel said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people."

Only a few have analyzed this message of the angelic hosts; only a few have seen the true scope, and few have appreciated the comprehensiveness of this simple statement. The eyes of the masses have been dimmed by the many fables of men. The joy of understanding and appreciating the true story of salvation from sin and death, sickness and sorrow, by and through our Savior, the Prince of our Peace, is foolishness to natural man now. Eventually they will realize the folly of their ways, and this same joy will be given to them, to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. Yes, to all the nations of the world.

The birth of the Babe was one step toward that great day. It was first necessary for Christ to grow into the full stature of manhood (Adam, whose place in death he was taking, being a perfect man) prior to carrying out his real mission. During those years he was schooled in God's Word, tested in all things, and proved faithful and perfect. He kept the perfect Law inviolate. Death on the cross was another step toward this "peace on earth." For by it mankind gained the right to life through Christ. He thus purchased the human race. Christ has obtained the full right to life, and has been given power over both death and life and will give life freely to all obedient to his commands.

The resurrection and ascension of the risen Christ again to heaven (into God's presence and favor, his right hand) were other steps. For it was by these that mankind gained a mediator who alone can present them faultless before God, and place them back into sonship relation with the Father.

The selection of a bride for Christ is still another step toward mankind's peace with God. God, who provided Eve to be a companion and helpmate for Adam because "it was not good that man should be alone," will also provide a suitable companion for his dearly beloved and faithful Son, Christ. To those called to be his Bride, our Lord said, "In my Father's house are many mansions [dwelling places]: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." - John 14:2, 3.

Is it any wonder that the angels of God rejoiced to announce the birth of Jesus, the "life-giver"? Picture their great joy, after four thousand years of sin and death, to see this first assuring sign that Jehovah's promised Seed had arrived and that his plan of salvation for man, his crowning earthly creature, was progressing as promised. "For unto you [mankind] is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11.) May our thanks and praise be unto our eternal God for this greatest of gifts, for this "Life giver," the great One, for he is "able to save unto the uttermost." - Heb. 7:25.

The "peace on earth, good will to men" prophesied has not yet been realized, but the day is drawing ever nearer. The Messianic Kingdom will complete this prophecy of peace. All those who will obey God shall then become the "sons of God." (Rev. 21:7.) Only then shall the real tidings of great joy be known and appreciated by men, and mankind be reconciled to God. Then shall there be real "peace on earth and good will to men."

Christmas began this chain of events which will lead up to such a happy conclusion. Because we are favored among men to know the full importance of God's "Gift," we should truly rejoice and be filled with a joy equal to that reflected by the heavenly hosts who sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will toward men." But let us not stop with reflecting such joy one day of the year; such joy is cause for rejoicing every day of our lives. Therefore let us resolve to reflect our joy daily and give thanks always, even until "the Prince of our Peace" and that of the world is reigning over all the earth and every tongue confessing him Lord of all.

- *L. Petran.*

THE MIGHTY KING OF KINGS

From far in the great aions of eternity
From space unlimited, unmeasured by the steps
Of worlds, from silence broken only by the voice
Of him, the self-existent One, whose skilful word
Created him, * came forth the glorious Son of God!

O sacred moment! which with shaded eyes we dare
With holy boldness to approach; not with a vain
Desire to see and know what God has hid, but drawn
Thereto by that blest Spirit which in reverence
Delights to search the deep and precious things revealed. **

O glad Beginning of Creation's early morn!
O glorious Finish of Creation's noon and night!
O blessed Son, begotten of the Father's speech
Thou only Well-Beloved, in whom all fulness dwells!
Silence and space alone were found to worship thee!

But deep within the counsels of th' Eternal One
Lay countless hosts whose praise should celebrate the Son
And to the Son was giv'n prerogative *** to call
Them to existence, in abodes of him prepared
And crown with happiness each creature in its sphere.

Rich in insignia of his high rank, he still
Delighted in the emblems of humility
And wore upon his heart the gem obedience
And clothed his arm with zeal, his feet with haste, to do
The holy will of him who loved and cherished him.

And now reign silence, solemn, still, as that which on
His natal day received him; for the angels watch
With awe constrained, while he divests himself of all
His wealth and glory, and becomes a babe; then loud
Hosannas sing, "On earth be peace, good will to men."

And lovingly they watch him as the perfect man's
Estate he magnifies with like obedience
Unflinching loyalty and firm humility
Till, daunted not by Calv'ry's cross and shame, he gives
His life a ransom for a helpless, dying race.

That awful day the darkened sun and quaking earth
Creation's anguish voiced; but One yet reigned supreme
Who loved him with the power of infinite strength
And in his master hand the mighty issues held --
The matchless Son had won the title to a throne!

What throne? Could all the boundless universe produce
A worthy coronet for his escutcheon which
Nor honor, glory, shame nor death could mar? Behold
The heav'nly myriads worship, while the Father crowns
The risen Son -- divine, **** immortal, ***** Lord of all. *****

O hail, Immanuel! Prince of life and glory, hail!
Let earth with heaven unite in adoration, praise
Thanksgiving to thy God, whose attributes thou hast
Exalted, and to thee, whose love and sacrifice
Constrain to endless gratitude a race redeemed!

* Rev. 3:14,
** 1 Cor. 2:10.
*** John 1:3.
**** Heb. 1:3, Diaglott.
***** John 5:26
***** Rom. 14:9

-- R. B. Henniges. (R4187)

Godliness with Contentment

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." - 1 Timothy 6:6:

TO RECEIVE whatever God gives, without any desire to choose for ourselves, is contentment. This can be on a very rigid basis, according to the eighth verse of the above chapter: "Having food and raiment let us be therewith content." St. Paul in the following verses places the blame for discontent,, in part at least, *on* "the love of money . . . the root of all evil." The means of deliverance from discontent, this almost universal ailment, is in the advice that follows: "O man of God, flee these things [arguments, strifes, evil speakings, etc., the ways of the flesh]; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith" -- form new habits, become a new creature.

This advice would be wasted on a worldly-minded man, for he would tell us that to suggest contentment is the worst of advice, all the advance of the world having been made through people who were discontented with existing conditions. That claim seems well borne out by such illustrations as the electric light; instead of which they say, If it were not for those who were discontented with gas lights, we would still be enduring their inconvenience; or worse still, the kerosene light; or just the burning of a wick dipped in an oil vessel; or -worst of all, a smoking pine knot stuck in a crevice in our cave.

If the comparison had gone back one step further, its folly would have been apparent, for that step would have taken us into the perfect home provided of God for the first family, to be enjoyed eternally without one moment of inconvenience to mar their comfort. All was theirs, the whole earth, except one thing, the fruit of one tree. Discontentment with that arrangement lost for them everything. The history of the world tells us the same thing-that the times of the greatest plenty are the times of greatest discontent. This should warn us of our great danger, for where will any one be found who enjoys such great favors, such unbounded wealth, as the Lord's people? "All things are yours."

Would one have supposed it possible that a Christian having learned that (Deut. 29:29) "Secret things belong to the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us"- "a mine, aye, deeper, too,, than can mortal ever go," would spend his consecrated hours speculating on the things that have not been revealed, or even go to the length of standing before a congregation eager to be "sanctified through the truth," and devote much of his hour guessing about things God has determined in his wisdom best not to tell us yet? This would be discontent of a very unchristian order.

Not all the blame, can be, put on the speakers; however, if such a condition is found anywhere. "There shall arise false Christ's and, false prophets and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that *if it were possible* they shall deceive the very elect." Adding one word to, or leaving one word out of, a text is a form of discontent that Will he very promptly opposed by "the very elect." "The Kingdom of God is . . . righteousness [the godliness of our text], and peace [contentment on the inside], and joy [contentment showing on the outside] in the holy spirit." (Rom. 14:17.). This is not a description of those who will furnish the support that keeps false prophets inspired to keep on prophesying. "From such [prophets and supporters] turn away," is the Apostle's good counsel. - 2 Tim. 3:5, 8.

Note that there is no recommendation for godliness, or a pretense of it, without contentment, nor the converse. To profess godliness while discontented would be a disgraceful condition; to be

contented without possessing godliness in some degree, and signs of growing toward perfection, would be a hopeless condition. But to have contentment on the solid basis of faith in God and his promises is an essential part in the process of the striving toward the goal to be "holy as he is holy," the ultimate of godliness.

CONTENTMENT'S SOUND FOUNDATION

The Christian cannot fail to be contented if he will compare his condition with that of the world: he is enjoying the liberty of the sons of God, the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, while they are slaves to self, sin, and Satan; experiencing the "peace of God that passeth understanding," in contrast with the world's fear and unrest; having fulness of joy, not the effervescent pleasures of the world; friends that are ready to and do lay down their lives for them, and a world approaching near the stage of "every man's hand against his neighbor." Or compare our "hope that fadeth not away," with bursting bubbles; the walk of faith, with the doubt and uncertainty that attends every move of the worldling and his organizations.

Brother John tells of our "abiding in him," the place of absolute peace and safety, but says that they who *so* abide "ought to walk even as he walked." (1 John 2:6.) This will certainly be the walk of faith, giving no excuse for any doubts or discontent. (Heb. 13:5, 6.) "Christ was faithful in all his house [a contented house], whose house are we if we hold fast, the confidence [inner contentment] and rejoicing [outward evidence of it] firm unto the end." But not only the outcome is dependent upon our contentment, but also our present standing: "If any man have not the spirit of Christ [and most assuredly that was contentment of the highest order], *he is none of his.*" (Rom. 8:9.) The shadow of the cross was falling athwart his pathway when Jesus prayed for his disciples: "that my joy might be fulfilled in them." (John 17:13.) His was the joy of doing the Father's will, contented whatever it should be. Nothing else mattered with him, and as soon, as we have a mind like that, we are contented, for, we, too, know that our loving Father is "working all things after the counsel of his own [perfect] will." - Eph. 1:11.

Pride and boastfulness, Satan's favorite sins, will provide a temporary contentment; but only the contentment that comes from full harmony with the Father will abide. "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." - Matt. 23:12.

The exhortation of Hebrews 13:5: "Be content with such things as ye have," does not mean laxity in providing the necessities of life, for the same holy spirit dictated: "Provide things honest in the sight of all men," and, "If any provide not for his own and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." (Rom. 12:17; 1 Tim. 5:8.) Note that the first of these texts follows shortly after the Apostle's exhortation to present our bodies living sacrifices. Evidently sacrificing, in his mind, does not require doing without necessities, but should be accompanied by our best endeavors, directed as wisely as our poor heads can, in order that "all things [may] be done decently and in order." - 1 Cor. 14:40.

There would seem to be no objection to one endeavoring to increase his earning capacity, watching carefully, however, to make certain that the desires of the flesh do not make him overlook the advice the Apostle gave. The latter part of this advice is good for all of us even though addressed to those who previous to conversion had been thieves: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, *that he may have to give to him that needeth.*" (Eph. 4:28.) The extra five dollars in the pay envelope can be a good thing if it is not used to pamper the selfish flesh -- and keep one out of the Kingdom. "Be content with such things as ye have" today, and if the Lord's providence should overrule to the providing of a greater abundance tomorrow, consider well as to whether he did so that you might

satisfy more of the desires of the flesh or that you might have the joy and blessing of helping some needy brother to more health and comfort, or that you might have the privilege of being "fellow helpers to the truth." - 3 John 8.

We all need practice in doing good to all men, for in the coming thousand years of blessing all the families of the earth there will not be one individual invited to share in the dispensing of those blessings whose first thought is self. It is a difficult situation in which we are placed, especially those in whose households there are some of the unconsecrated. The Lord has not gratified our depraved desire for an easy road to the prize by telling us just how many dollars we may spend on our own desires, saving us from making difficult decisions; but he states very clearly that we are to "deny self." The old self gives us an abundance of opportunities to practice that, for it is always making suggestions, all day long in fact. Such suggestions may properly be considered, but every one of them taken up with the Lord and compared with his instructions before being acted on, not forgetting how good the flesh is at arguing its own cause, probably most of the time our great adversary aiding and abetting it. Food and clothing, Brother James (James 2:16) speaks of as "things which are needful to the body"; and Brother John inquires, "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" - 1 John 3:17.

CONTENTMENT IN A LOVING HEART IMPLIES SHARING OUR BEST WITH OTHERS

In view of the implication in the verse just quoted, regarding those who fail to open a sympathetic heart to one needing food and clothing, mere earthly necessities, what would be the fate of one withholding spiritual food from the famishing? The murdering of an infant in any stage of the process of its beginning or development, a thing most obnoxious to any sound mind, would be comparable, and perhaps mildly so, to depriving any one of the Word of life because the believer himself is seeking physical satisfaction, busy providing luxuries for his own natural body. Yet how many are there of us who can claim ourselves not guilty of this crime: How many of us are there who have not at least one neighbor who has had no incentive to "ask a reason of the hope" that is in us? We are no more enjoined to be content to keep to ourselves the things we have spiritually, than we are to keep the physical good things we have. Contentment with the provision of an all wise and loving Father, if there is love for others in our hearts, will lead to our wishing that as many others as possible may share in the things that brought us contentment. If we have godliness with contentment, ours will be the great gain of having "all things" ours- now-and for all eternity, for is he not "Head over all things for the Church"? (Eph. 1:22, *Diaglott.*) And among the many precious privileges that are ours, out of his generosity, is that privilege of sharing with others. "All things are yours, whether Paul [the Apostle to the Gentiles] or Apollos [the great orator], or Cephas [the Apostle to the Jews], or the world [as much as was deeded to Adam in the first place], or life [hid with Christ in God], or death [if we be dead with him], or things present, or things to come; all are yours, for ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3:21-23.) Ours is a much larger deed than Adam's, and therefore, ours is that much greater reason for contentment, especially as the test regarding contentment was placed on him before he had an opportunity to develop godliness; and great should be and will be our shame if we fail. Let us hope we are making a better showing than he-content with God's Word as he gave it, with our brethren as he sets them in the Body as it pleases him, content with the fulfillment of such promises as, "Seek ye *first* the Kingdom of God, and his, righteousness [godliness]; and all these things [clothing, food, and drink -- evidently as will be best for the new creature] shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33.) The Father has left nothing undone to supply us with all things necessary for contentment. There has never been a wealthy man in the world who, if he had a sound mind,

and could believe such promises, would not gladly change places with the poorest of Christians-poor in this world's goods.

That "man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the *things* which he possesseth," is well demonstrated by those who have the greatest accumulation of things. (Luke 12:15.) This is true from the small child to the multimillionaire. One eastern magnate bought a square mile of flat farm land. Dredgers dug out basins for several large lakes and piled up the earth from these and the stream that connected them, to make hills. Landscape artists made the place a close resemblance to the best our imaginations can conjure up as the Garden of Eden. But he and his wife lived in two separated ends of the mansion. Perhaps 'it-was still in a vain hope for contentment that another house was planned. It was to stand facing thirteen acres of beautiful velvet, the other views looking out, one on the hills, another on the largest of -the lakes, and the last upon formal gardens. None of these things were to be disturbed by the common" type of man that might shatter the life of contentment its -wilts were to enclose, for a tunnel had been constructed from the ground's entrance into the subbasement for all deliveries. But construction never rose above the foundation-human scheming had utterly failed, in the presence of selfishness that is always the genesis of discontent.

"My Lord, how full of sweet content
My years of pilgrimage are spent!"
"Content whatever lot I see
Since 'tis my God that leadet'h me."

One of the sweet voices of the past sang, "Prisons would palaces prove, if Jesus still dwelt with me there." The writer was a very wealthy woman, moving in the highest circles, numbering the noblest of the nation and church -among her close acquaintances. From the story just related, it evidently .was as much a mark of the power of the spirit for this wealthy woman to write these words, as for the poorest of; us. But it is reported that this song was on her lips for the first time after all that the world holds dear, was lost. Living and talking the life of sanctification-,had-put her behind prison bars-a contented Christian, rejoicing to be "filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ." She, like the great Apostle, gladly suffered the loss of all things for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Here is contentment that our discontented Adversary cannot disturb.

God's servant class never lacked bread, we are assured: - But "now are *we* the sons of God," from the standpoint of a God who counts those things which are not as though they were;, :for we have been begotten by the Word-of Truth, imperishable seed that gives hope of a birth on the plane of glory to (hose who do not, before the process is complete, reject the seed in their discontent with God's arrangements. "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of" (Matt. 6:8), and he still has in full control the ravens that fed Elijah, whether they were Arabs or black birds makes no difference in his power to use them then and now. As it is still true that "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly," then, not to be content with things as he provides, is to be either discontented with God or to confess that we have not walked uprightly. We should of course do with our might what we can to make conditions better, *especially for other people*. - Psa. 84.11.

While attempting to improve conditions, directed by God's Word as to time and method, there can be no disturbing of our contentment if his providences should thwart, or seem to thwart, our efforts. The well informed child of God will know that there are not only seasons, but also times in God's plan. This is the season for reaping ripened grains of wheat; but spiritual wheat has this difference from the natural, that the time of ripening varies greatly in different grains. Regardless

of how eager we are to see the ripening completed in any of those dear to us, faith will teach us that even that feature is under the care of the all-wise Husbandman. In another phase of the figure, it is ours to scatter the seed, to "sow beside all waters," and his to give the increase; ours to be contented with the seed he supplies and with the increase he grants-or with his withholding of the increase. As to whether the seed shall reach the heart of the individual, is his, not ours, to decide. There has not been much development of contentment in the one who can leave all his own affairs in God's hands, but is very much disturbed if the ones he prefers are not invited into the Kingdom.

One of the houses of contentment frequently visited by our Pilgrim brethren, had little that was new in it except two very new creatures. One glance revealed that what furnishings had not been constructed from packing boxes were articles that had been discarded by others, now patched nip to do service that only contented Christians could rejoice in. A visit of an hour or two with this couple was not marred by one word of complaint. What there was requiring to be told of the blessings heaped upon them, crowded all that out. There had been tribulations; but we learned of them from others: several weeks of sickness for the sister with a body so frail; and voice so weak she could neither do anything for herself or tell the very deaf brother what her needs were. A few weeks after her recovery, the shed in which they kept their "beastie," a horse that was rented to their neighbors to bring in a slight income, burned and the horse perished in the flames, but not until he had knocked the sister down one day and sent her to several more weeks of suffering with broken bones. Such items would be considered by the flesh as the most entertaining matters for conversation. These contented Christians preferred to talk of the open windows of heaven and the blessings that had been showered upon them.

Discontent is an evidence of ignorance or lack of appreciation for our blessings, perhaps a combination of the two. A right appraisal will decide that "Godliness with contentment is great gain." In fact, that "Godliness is profitable unto *all* things." (1 Tim. 4:8.) Can this be really true? It can be, for it has the "promise of the life that now is," whereas, on the contrary, discontent, jealousy, envy, will take out of life all the profit. Contentment takes possession now. But the blessings have just begun, and the contentment of today, if on the solid foundation of his Word, is surety of the blessedness of the future. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is ' and of that which is to come." "Of the increase of his government and peace [contentment] *there shall be no end.*" (Isaiah 9:7.) Can we not resolve to "let the peace of God [contentment] rule in our hearts"?

Let us "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and we *will be contented Christians.*

- P. E. Thomson.

"That Your Sins May be Blotted Out"

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." - Psalm 32:1-2.

THE GREEK word *exaleipho*; translated in the New Testament "blot out" and "wipe away," is very positive and expressive. Its literal meaning is, "smear out, i.e., obliterate, erase" (*Strong*); "to destroy utterly, to bring to nothing" (*Liddel & Scott*). Thus the "handwriting of ordinances that was against us" (Col. 2:14), the tears which God will wipe away (Rev. 7:17; 21:3), and the burden of sin of which St. Peter spoke that day in the Temple (Acts 3:19), will all be forever and utterly destroyed. A highly interesting discussion of the subject is to be found in the following quotations from the writings of the late Pastor C. T. Russell.

"COVERED SINS TO BE BLOTTED OUT"

Many make the mistake of confounding the "blotting out" of sins with the covering of sins; but the two thoughts are distinctly separate. The covering of sins takes place instantaneously, as soon as the believer has repentantly accepted of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. This covering of *sin*, and of all the blemishes of the believer, is symbolically represented as accomplished by his putting on the "wedding garment," the pure robe of Christ's righteousness imputed to true believers.. This constitutes the justification by faith of which the Apostle speaks, saying, "David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works [righteousness which he had not worked out], saying, 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.'" - Rom. 4:6-8.

While it brings to the believer joy and peace to realize that his imperfections are covered, and not permitted to hinder his approach to the Heavenly Father, he nevertheless properly battles against those imperfections, a continual warfare -- the newly begotten and renewed or transformed mind being resisted by the natural, depraved will of the flesh. But, nevertheless, every true child of God, rightly instructed from the Father's Word, is distinctly looking forward to the end of his warfare-probation, when his "covered" sins and weaknesses shall all be "blotted out.

This blotting out of sins, so far as the overcoming Church is concerned, will not be completed until the first resurrection' has been completed; for, as the work of grace began by the covering of the imperfections of the flesh for believers, it will end with the complete destruction of the flesh in death, and the raising off the elect Church spiritual bodies; free from all the blemishes and imperfections which belong to these present, mortal bodies. Now the consecrated "have this treasure [the new nature] in earthen vessels:" and all know how seriously marred is every one of these vessels, so that our very best intentions and desires are liable to have more or less of blemish or imperfection, when viewed from the Divine standpoint. But by and by this treasure, the new will, the new creature in Christ Jesus, will be delivered into the perfect condition, the new spiritual bodies, described by the Apostle (1 Cor. 15:42-44, 48-50), saying: "Thus also is the resurrection of the dead [the first or chief resurrection of the overcoming class amongst the dead] . . . It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption" -- all the marks and blemishes of sin which belong to the earthen vessel will be destroyed, "blotted out." When buried in death, the Church is actually imperfect, dishonorable and weak, except as her Lord's robe of righteousness is her covering, and his strength is made perfect in her weakness. But all these dishonorable, weak and imperfect conditions now covered are to be completely, and everlastingly blotted out with the passing of the present, life; for the promise to the overcomers is: "It is sown in dishonor,

it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown an animal body, it is raised; a spiritual body" -- the image of the heavenly one, our Lord.

It was in harmony with this view of matters that the Apostle wrote, "We [the newly begotten spirit, beings, the, Church] while in this tabernacle [earthly body] do groan;" not that we desire to be unclothed [that we should lose our imperfect human bodies in death, and be obliged to wait or "sleep in Jesus" until his second coming]; but that we might be clothed upon with our heavenly house [or spiritual bodies]"experience the blessings of a participation in Christ's resurrection - the first resurrection. - Phil. 3:10-12; Rev. 20:6.

The Apostle had in mind the same earnest desire of the spirit-begotten ones for the completion of the work of grace in them at the resurrection, when he said: "Ourselves, also, which have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption -- to wit, the deliverance of our body -[the Church -- from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of full sonship]." (Rom. 8:23.) The "wedding garment" of Christ's imputed righteousness, under which are granted to us all the privileges of sons without removing our weaknesses and frailties, leaves us to wage a warfare with these, thus to prove our love of righteousness and our faithfulness to the commands of "him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light," and to become sharers of his sufferings, and of the glories to follow. Through the merit of our robe we were begotten to the new mind, the new nature; and it will serve every purpose until such time as we shall have proved ourselves faithful as new creatures, and shall be permitted to pass from the probationary sonship to the enjoyment of the full measure of the Father's blessing and complete adoption into his family and nature. But there, at the moment of transition, when being received from the begotten and probationary stage of sonship into the everlasting state, it is eminently proper, and all that we would ask or desire, that every trace of the hitherto covered and forgiven sins and blemishes should be blotted out, and no longer need covering. And all this is a part of the Divine provision for those who love God, "the [faithful] called ones according to his purpose." Then, it will be that that which is perfect having come, "that which is in part [our present standing graciously covered with Christ's imputed righteousness, covering our defects] will be done away."

The tears and sorrows and battlings in strife against the world, the flesh and the devil are all very necessary in the present time; and we should neither hope nor expect to be crowned as victors, without passing through such experiences. In this battle, we learn not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; we learn of our own weaknesses and imperfections and our need to walk closely with the Lord, if we would keep our garments unspotted from the world. We learn also to trust his grace, and that "our sufficiency is of God." We learn that "greater is he who is on our part than all they that be against us." We learn that the victory that overcometh the world is neither the strength and perfection of our flesh, nor merely the strong resolution of our minds, but the latter helped and strengthened by him who assures us that his strength can be perfected in our weakness. It is here that we learn that all things are working together for good to them that love God.

In this battle with the world, the flesh and the devil we learn also to appreciate the whole armor of God: the value of the "helmet of salvation," the intellectual appreciation of the Divine plan and promises; the value of the "breastplate of righteousness," Christ's righteousness covering our most vital parts; the value of "the shield of faith," which is able to quench all the fiery darts of the Adversary; and the invincible quality and sharpness of "the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God"; and to put on the preparation of the gospel in a meek, patient and quiet spirit, which, as sandals, permits us to pass over the sharpest difficulties of life successfully. In this conflict we learn to cultivate the graces of the spirit, through many trials and temptations; which though for

the time being are not pleasant but grievous, nevertheless work out for all who are rightly exercised thereby, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The Apostle in our text declares that the blotting out of the Church's sin shall be in connection with "times of refreshing" or spirit outpouring, at the second advent of our Lord. How consistent this is with reason, and with all the facts of the case: it was after our Lord Jesus had bought us with his precious blood that the Heavenly Father granted to his Church a great blessing, a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, at Pentecost, as marking his approval of all covered by the "wedding garment," and as a foretaste of his greater blessing, to us bestowed when her trial would be complete, and the sins actually blotted out. That season of Pentecostal refreshing from the Divine presence, under the blessed influence of which Peter was preaching when he used the words of our text, was only an earnest or hand-payment of the great, perfect refreshment and spirit-energizing that will come to the Lord's people at the farther end of the narrow way, when the Bridegroom shall come to receive to his nature and his throne and to confess her before his Father and the holy angels. As the Apostle intimates in our text, the very first work then will be the complete blotting out of the Church's sins, in the first resurrection.

And immediately following this perfecting of the Church will come a work for the world-"times of restitution of all-things which God hath spoken by the mouth- of all the holy prophets, since the world began." This signifies a similar blessing (blotting out of Sins) upon all the world of mankind, who shall then, after being brought to a knowledge of the truth, obediently accept the Divine mercy under the terms of the New Covenant. Since man as originally created was in the moral likeness of his Creator, but has lost that likeness by the blemishes of sin, restitution to the likeness lost, would signify the blotting out of those blemishes wrought by sin. But there will be a great difference between the blotting out of the sins of the obedient, overcoming Church and the blotting out of the sins of the, obedient ones of the world. The Church's sins will be instantly blotted out in the moment of the resurrection; the world's sins will be gradually blotted out during the period of Christ's reign-during the Millennium. The terms and conditions will be different also. While the Church has her sins and imperfections covered during the period of her trial, and does not have her efforts to overcome the weaknesses of the flesh rewarded by physical restitution, but is rewarded instantaneously at the end of her race, according to her faith and her endeavors to conquer, the obedient of the world, in the next Age, will, on the contrary, have their sins blotted out, not as the reward of faith and effort merely; but as the reward of successful and continuous effort, which will then be possible, and be rewarded step by step with restitution blessings or the gradual blotting out of sins.

Describing the judgment (trial) of the world during the Millennial Age, our Lord shows that all will then be "judged according to their works" -- not according to their faith, as the Church is now being judged. (Rev. 20:12, 13; 1 John 5:4.) Faith, which is now difficult and therefore highly rewarded, will by and by, when the mists have rolled away, be the most easy and only reasonable thing; and while it will be required, being easy it will not be specially rewarded as now. And perfect works, which under present conditions are impossible with all our efforts, because of our blemished bodies, will then be the standard for which and toward which all who attain to everlasting life will be required -to labor, building up character in breaking off evil propensities and in bringing themselves into full accord with righteousness in thought, word and deed. And under the favorable conditions of that time, a restitutionary blessing will be present to reward every effort, not only with an upbuilding of moral character and will power, but also with proportionate strength and upbuilding of the mental and physical powers.

Thus, item by item and step by step, throughout the Millennial Age, the worthy ones of the world will be helped out of their weakness and imperfections, back to the perfection originally lost by the disobedience of Father Adam, the right to return to which (by the cancellation of Adam's

sentence) was secured by the ransom price given by our Redeemer. And since every victory over self and sin and imperfection will be promptly rewarded, it will be rightly seen that the blotting out of the world's sins will gradually progress little by little, until at the close of the Millennial Age, all who have been willing -to hear and obey the voice of the Great Prophet (Head and Body) will have attained to an unblemished perfection, mental, physical and moral, with none of the blemishes of sin remaining

This blotting out of sins for the world during the Millennial Age will begin with Israel according to the flesh "to the Jew, first." So the Apostle" informs us in so many words. Read Romans 11:25-29. As spiritual Israel is the first-fruits of all God's creatures, the first to enter into the fulness of his blessing and be recovered from death, so natural Israel is to constitute the first-fruits of the nations to be saved from the blinding influences of the Adversary, and to be granted a blessing under the New Covenant.

The time for the blotting out of sin is, thank God, near at hand. So far as the overcomers of this Age, the Gospel Church, are concerned, the blotting out of every vestige of their sins, to be remembered no more, comes with the destruction of the flesh in death. In our flesh (in our imperfections, mental, moral, and physical) is the record of sin; and this which God so graciously covers from his sight, will entirely disappear in the grave. In the resurrection these overcomers will be granted new bodies, free from all the marks or blemishes of sin, perfect, likenesses of their Lord; not only free from sin *reckonedly*, but free from *sin actually*, and without a trace or mar thereof. Oh, how we long for the blotting out of sins! -

"Oh, hail happy day!
That ends our tears and sorrows,
That brings us joy without alloy;
Oh, hail happy day!
No more by doubts and fears distressed,
We now shall gain our promised rest,
And be forever blest,
Oh, hail happy day!

- *Reprints, pp.* R2194-R2195, R2295.

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Greetings of Christian love in His precious Name; and may he bless you abundantly and continue to guide you in your faithful laying down of your lives in his service, as you daily strive to walk in the footsteps of our dear Lord and Head. May all the dear brethren who are blessed by receiving the "Herald of Christ's Kingdom" be helped and refreshed, as I have been, by partaking of the spiritual food it brings to us. May we all grow "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10), for we are indeed living in "perilous times" and need to keep on "the whole armor of God" that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, who is *ever watching*, endeavoring to stumble some of the Lord's striving ones. I have been much refreshed by studying the July "Herald" and the report of your faithful labors. God bless and guide you every one; and be assured of our constant prayers for you.

My heart was thrilled and strengthened' by the visit and encouraging message of our dear Brother Kirkwood. To think that the dear, faithful friends brought him way out here to my little cabin to minister to *the least of his little ones*, made me appreciate even more the faithful watch-care of our dear Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep and careth for each one, of them. But I must not take any more of your precious time.

Am sending a "widow's mite" to *help just a little with the Lord's blessing*. Please send about, three each of the tracts, and one copy of the pocket edition of "The Divine Plan of the Ages." I want them to give to friends who come to my humble little cabin to visit with me. Even though this is but a very small service, the Lord can use it to his praise.

With Christian love and prayers,
In the One Hope,
A. C. -- Wash.

Dear Brethren

Herewith check for which our little class voted unanimously to send you to be used in God's service as you see best.

In July we had the wonderful privilege of having dear Brother Kirkwood with us. He gave a public talk on "WORLD PEACE: How and When?" It was a masterpiece. How we wished many more could have heard his message. Truly it was God's message, and he was God's representative. It rejoices our hearts to know that not too far distant God will speak to the groaning creation of humankind in his "still small voice," PEACE, "Be still, and know that I am God."

We are looking forward with joyful anticipation to having him in our midst once more during our annual October convention. He is such an inspiration and encouragement to spur us on with renewed zeal and determination, for the time is very short, and ere long the invitation to joint-heirship will be ended.

Christian love and greetings and our continued prayers.
Your brethren in Christ,

M. C. N., Treas., Ill.

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed find \$1 for subscription to "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom." I happened by chance to pick up an old issue of the journal and found it very stimulating, and I want to read more.

Sincerely,
L. E. -- Ore.

The Scriptures give four names to Christians, taken from the four cardinal graces so essential to man's salvation: Believers, for their faith; Disciples, for their knowledge; Brethren for their love; and Saints, for their holiness.

- A. Fuller.