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"Good Tidings of Great Joy"

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." - Luke 2:10.

THE great sea of human history has been divided into two parts, B.C. and A.D., and this division was marked off by the appearance of a "great star," the star which guided the Magi of the East to the manger where lay the Babe of Bethlehem. What has the Bible to say concerning this stupendous event? -- for stupendous it was when we reflect upon what really occurred in this humble scene of the nativity. What do we find in the Old Testament which was so clearly defined that men were at the proper time in expectation of the Messiah? Examining the record of the Prophets, we will note a long line of prophetic utterances of such import that they stand out in bold relief against an otherwise dark and hopeless background, in very much the same way that the literal stars stand out in the night sky against the background of the measureless heavens.

A STAR OF HOPE

These prophecies have their beginning at the very dawn of human history, when the violation of God's command had brought upon our first parents the inescapable penalty, "death" -- dying thou shalt die. However, God's mercy, which is ever at work, in keeping with his other attributes, extended a flickering ray of hope in the vague but meaningful words, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Not a very bright star is this one, but at least a twinkle of light in an otherwise darkened sky. From this moment forward "the seed" was to become a most important development of God's great Plan of the Ages, around which all other events would revolve. All of God's dealings with men and nations during Old Testament times were in preparation for that promised "seed." The purpose of God to send into the world his only begotten Son is continually kept in view by means of his own choosing. Even the line of descent from father to son is clearly and uninterruptedly traced from Adam down, until its end is found in the

"Babe in the manger." Here the genealogy ceases since there is no further need for its continuance.

In the generations of Adam it is recorded of each individual that he lived so many years and "he died," but of the promised seed, the Second Man, the Lord from, heaven, it is said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hides and of death" (Rev. 1:18). Thus we see how great a light was lighted at Bethlehem, and how luminous has become the little twinkle in Eden, "the seed of the woman," whose mission has become an accomplished fact.

STAR OF PROMISE

The next star we observe on the horizon of human affairs is in association with the life of Abraham. The story is a familiar one, but always a source of inspiration to the Lord's faithful. Here the light shines with clearer and steadier ray, when in rewarding Abraham's faithfulness the promise comes clear, strong, and definite: "Because thou hast done this thing, and has not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:16-18).

We are all aware of the life of faith and obedience which eventuated in this far-reaching promise to Abraham. How closely it touches the life of every Christian when we read concerning its fulfillment that "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). This promise has been a spiritual beacon, through all the intervening centuries in natural Israel and then to spiritual Israel, for it contains so very much of hope for the poor groaning creation. It is the herald of good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people. Its surety is attested by the oath of him who said, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

The Gospel was indeed preached before unto Abraham, when to him was said: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" -- a comprehensive but positive statement as to what God's purpose is with respect to the human family.

STAR OF JACOB

We come now to a third Messianic. Star, which appears in connection with the closing days of Jacob's life. Brighter and brighter do they shine as we go on. Jacob, aware that his life was drawing to a close, calls for a gathering of his sons. "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.... The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:1, 10).

We are not left to human speculation as to the significance of this prophecy or the identity of the one to whom it refers. We know that our Lord sprang from the tribe of Judah. In fact, he is referred to in Revelation 5:5 as the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the one worthy to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof. Jacob's message to Judah is thus seen to be of deep import and to have far reaching and everlasting results. It sets forth the Lion of the tribe of Judah as the One through whom will come the blessings of the great Millennial Age.

A STAR IN THE TYPICAL HEAVENS

Another prophecy was given in the days of Moses: Deuteronomy 18:15: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." Deut. 18:18: "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."

We see in Moses, to whom these words were spoken, a type of the Prophet to come. Moses, in his Office as mediator and leader of his people, found it his duty to direct the minds of his people to the one true God, and to obedience to that one God. Jesus, the antitype, will perform a far greater and more effectual mediatorial work than did Moses for the children of Israel. His great Kingdom will be from sea to sea, and his kingly sway to the ends of the earth, which will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the great deep.

A STAR OF FIRST MAGNITUDE

We find in the Psalms also a prophecy of our Lord: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. 2:7, 8).

This Psalm, written by David out of his own experience, portrays the great struggle which shall attend the ushering in of the Lord's Kingdom, against the opposition of entrenched powers of evil. The Psalm also refers to certain aspects of our Lord's first advent. Its language is so vivid and comprehensive that it takes its place among the major prophecies respecting the coming of the Lord to take control of earth's affairs. We might therefore consider it as one of the brighter Messianic Stars -- a prophetic star of first magnitude.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

Coming now to another portion of the inspired Word, namely, Isaiah, we also come to a great galaxy of Messianic Stars, for Isaiah is recognized as one of the major Prophets, who spoke out in great detail regarding the coming Kingdom and its King. Notable among these is our sixth Messianic Star, which is found in Isaiah 7:14: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." In Matthew 1:22, 23, this prophecy is applied to the birth of Jesus. Here it is specifically stated that it is a fulfillment of the words of the Prophet; that Jesus was born of a virgin, and that he would save his people from their sins. The details which attended this great event are familiar to all and need not be rehearsed here, but it is pertinent to our theme to call attention to the celestial activity that accompanied it. To the humble shepherds on the Judean hillside it was announced under the glare of a heavenly light by an angel from heaven, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:10-12). What a sign! What a contrast to the general evidences attending the birth of a child! What a condescension for the One who was the Logos, the Creator of all things, to be thus made in the likeness of men! What a humble, helpless- beginning! A babe in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes! This shall be a sign unto you shepherds when you come to present yourselves to worship him. That is, the circumstances surrounding his birth would be so unusual as to leave no doubt in their minds that this was the long promised Messiah: the Savior of Israel. How perfectly adapted were the surroundings to the thought that "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

Here we might also consider another aspect of this most wonderful story. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matt. 2:1, 2). Who were these who had traveled so far by faith, to see what to them the Scriptures and the heavens had indicated so clearly? The Scriptures do not identify them, yet they do leave us with the impression that they were men of faith, a faith

moreover which linked them to the prophecies concerning a coming Messiah, a deliverer for Israel, a king of the Jews.

THE ROYAL STAR

Isaiah 9:6, 7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." To a people ruled over by a hated usurper not even of their own nation, it must have been a treasured thought that one day there would be a child born whose destiny would be to rule over his people; that a son would be given to sit upon the throne of David, in accordance with the covenant God had made with that illustrious monarch, for he had promised David that one of his seed would be ruler of a Kingdom which would be established forever (2 Sam. 7:12, 13). The character of that great King is well outlined for us in the titles which are ascribed to him by the Prophet.

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

These words describe the One who would possess the wisdom to guide all the affairs of his worldwide dominion. How necessary that seems in our day, when men are wrestling hopelessly with the problems besetting the age in which we live. Men take counsel together concerning the great questions and situations that confront them. They try hard, but failing to seek the "wisdom that cometh from above," their counsel comes to naught. "If any . . . lack wisdom," we are told by the Apostle James, "let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not" (James 1:5). This wisdom is so different from that of the world, which is foolishness and perisheth. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, . . ." (James 3:17). How true this is can be vouched for by those who are privileged during this Gospel Age to follow in the footsteps of this Wonderful Counselor, and thus profit by the wisdom from above, which he is so willing to impart to those who ask for it in faith.

MIGHTY GOD

This Wonderful Counselor is also a mighty One whose power has already been demonstrated in creation; the One, too, in whom is vested the power to carry out the Divine commission with respect to the salvation of the world; "mighty to save" in that he has given himself as the purchase price for the whole race lost in Adam, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22). What greater demonstration of power could we conceive of than that he should raise the dead, for indeed, all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth. He is the resurrection and the life. His mighty power will be marvelously demonstrated when he lays hold of that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and binds him with a great chain, putting him in the pit and sealing it, that thus he should deceive the nations no longer. Then with Satan and his evil influences in restraint, the great work of restoring all things will be carried forward speedily and without hindrance, bringing Divine blessings unto "all people."

EVERLASTING FATHER

Life is invested in the Father, and Jesus is Life-giver because he has the right to impart life to every one who will come unto God by him. He is the One in whom resides the power to regenerate, to give life to all those who were lost in Adam. This not only involves a resurrection from the dead, but a loving and considerate guidance up the highway of holiness; a dispensing of the gifts and blessings of that glorious Kingdom to the obedient, to all who will then hear and obey the voice of "that Prophet."

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. Need we say anything about the fact that "peace" is uppermost in the minds of the people most of the time. The strange thing is that men go about promoting it in direct opposition to the ways of the great Prince of Peace. It is, therefore, a foregone conclusion that there will be no peace until he who stilled the waves of Galilee shall speak peace. This, we believe, will be after the greatest of all storms, which seems now to be building up on the horizon and before which men's hearts are failing them for fear.

Little do men realize what a feast of fat things the Lord has planned for his creatures beyond this vale of tears. The Word of God leaves no doubt as to the character of that Kingdom, for it presents a most amazing contrast to that of Satan's kingdom, under which mankind has been learning the exceeding sinfulness of sin, where there has been sin, sickness and death, violence and bloodshed, unrighteousness and oppression. There, in the Kingdom to come, it will be peace, harmony, and plenty; and there love, goodness, and mercy will prevail, and a harmony which will adjust the separation -of man and beast which is based on fear, for, according to the Prophet, the lion shall lose his carnivorous propensity and be measurably domesticated, as will be all the animal kingdom. Then man's original dominion over that kingdom will be restored. How precious are the thoughts concerning that day as they are portrayed for us by the Revelator in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, where we read:

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:1-5).

How wonderful and significant, then, are the words announced to those trembling shepherds on the Judean hillside: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

- J. B. Webster

Thanksgiving

"Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for He is good; for His loving-kindness endureth for ever." - Psa. 136:1.

TO THE Christian, every day is a day of thanksgiving. The Psalmist expresses this attitude: "O Lord... we Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture will give Thee thanks for ever." "Giving thanks always," says the Apostle, "for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ unto God, even the Father." - Psalm 79:13; Eph. 5:20.

The appointment by the head of the nation of a special Day of Thanksgiving is profitable to the Christian, however, for it prompts him to an enumeration of his many and infinite blessings. When we attempt this we are impelled to exclaim with Paul: "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable bounty" -- which is just another way of saying "The half has never been told." "Unspeakable" here means not something which cannot be spoken of, but that which has not been fully spoken or declared.

For the gift of Jesus, our Savior; for the "peace with God which comes as a result of His sacrifice; for the further "grace wherein we stand" -- the great High Calling to the Priesthood -- as a result of which "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God": for the daily experiences, testings, trials, and for the daily supply of grace which enables us to benefit eternally by these temporal afflictions -- all these are but a part of His "unspeakable bounty." Eternity, and the cumulative capacity of "all saints" will be required to realize and to tell the complete story of our Father's munificence. - 2 Cor. 9:15; Eph. 2:18.

Not the least of our present and particular blessings is that of living under a civil government that assures to every citizen complete liberty of religious assemblage, worship, and expression -- in speech and in print. For such a government we may well heed the Apostle's words: "I exhort, therefore, first of all, that thanksgiving be made for . . . kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity." - 1 Tim. 2:1, 2.

The Apostle Paul made what might be described as the first general Thanksgiving proclamation, on the Areopagus, or Hill of Mars, in Athens. After gracefully complimenting the philosophers on their regard for religion, he referred to the altar he had observed in passing through their streets, inscribed "*To an unknown god,*" and continued:

"Whom ... ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. . . . He is the Lord of heaven and earth ... He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things . . . All nations of men . . . should seek the Lord ... for in him we live, and move, and have our being. . . . And . . . he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained...." - Acts 17:23-31.

The God that Paul declared is almost as "unknown" to the modern world as he was to the ancient Athenians. The Apostle did not attempt to enlighten the Athenians in respect to God except in regard to the three broad generalities about him: He is the Creator, he is the Preserver, he is the Restorer, of man's life. The modern world shares the skepticism of the Athenians regarding the third of these affirmations -the doctrine of the *resurrection*. While the modern religionist, like the ancient, is willing to grant that God (through some partly understood scientific laws) was the Creator, and, in a vague and secondary way, is the preserver or helper of those who "help themselves," when it comes to the future life, he seems to find it easier to believe in something

intangible and visionary than in the simplicity of the Scriptural resurrection. To believe in *that* he must *believe* in God! The idea of man coming back, through a resurrection, to solid earth and veritable flesh and blood is as absurd even to the majority of professed Christians as it was to the ancient Areopagites, who "mocked when they heard of the resurrection of the dead."

Today the true Christian stands, as alien as was Paul in Athens, in the midst of another and greater Mars' Hill -- a world preponderantly committed to reliance for safety and wellbeing upon force of arms and the god of war. From every direction the winds bring the sound of clanging machinery forging the weapons of warfare, the blare of martial music and the hoarse shouts of the multitude of military hero-worshippers. Few indeed hear the Voice speak behind them, saying: "Yet have I set *my* king upon my holy hill of Zion. Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron." - Psalm 2.

"Oh sing unto Jehovah a new song:
Sing unto Jehovah, all the earth.
Sing unto Jehovah, bless His name;
Show forth His salvation from day to day.
Declare His glory among ""the nations,
His marvelous works among all the people.

""Say among the nations, JEHOVAH *reigneth*:
The [new] world is established that it cannot be moved.
He will judge the people with equity.
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;
Let the field exult, and all that is therein;
Then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy
Before Jehovah; for He cometh,
For He cometh to judge the earth:
He will judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with His truth.

"Mercy and truth are met, together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
Truth springeth out of the earth!
And righteousness hath looked down from heaven.
Yea, Jehovah will *give* that which is good;
And our land shall yield its increase.
Righteousness shall go before Him
And shall make His footsteps a way to walk in.

"Praise ye JEHOVAH!" - Psalms 96 and Psalm 85.

- H. E. Hollister

A Pilgrim's Reverie

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven." - Psalm 107:30.

WHAT would life be without its bridges and its fords, its resting spots where we recline beneath the blossoming boughs and beside the still waters of quietness? What would it be without its royal summits where we gather to our hearts visions of the Home Land that lies beyond the tiresome journey, its halls of friendship where hand grips hand with the earnestness of true love, and heart becomes knit to heart in confidence and trust? And last, but not least, how important its starting places, where having taken a retrospective glance along the years and braced our hearts with new determination, we once more turn our feet toward the road, buoyed up with an optimism which whispers to us that bigger, better, nobler days lie ahead of us, and that some day we shall reach the Palace of Blessedness, the place of life's consummation, which lies beyond the arduous country of endeavor. How often the mind travels back - away back - to air castles built in sunny childhood and buoyant youth, for "The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts." Old scenes and memories, how they throng upon us and will not be lightly thrust aside. And through the varying way how well we know that a great hand has been guiding our steps, leading us into the light of an unfading and wondrous hope.

"So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone."

Ah, yes, for there shall be no night there, and the end shall pay us a thousand fold for all the toil and struggle of the way. Thus we cogitate, and in these meditations which, effulgent in silvery light, brighten the night like stars, we find the quiescence and the joy of faith, affording comfort through every day and keeping alive that hope which is as an "anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. What a forepicture of the Ages of Glory when the cold blasts of selfishness and pride shall be shut out from human hearts, and the purest goodwill and love shall glow and fill the world with the light of God.

And as the years have passed, the advance of time has meant much to some of us. We are richer in experience because of the days and hours God has spread before us. We think our love has a farther range, a fuller sweep, a stronger and truer grip on "Love divine all loves excelling." Our sympathies have broadened, our faith has deepened, our hope bears iridescent hues of a brighter glow. Our craving for righteousness is more intense. We have moved farther up the stream of truth; we are less from its source than we were years ago. Nor have we forgotten to ask, What is truth? If formerly we held up a gem and said, "This is truth," we have learned to qualify the statement. No more we affirm, "The gem that I hold is all the truth, but the gem that you hold is not truth." Rather we now say, "My gem has truth." So the tree has water, but is not water, and the earth has gold, but is not gold, and the diamond has beauty, but is not beauty. Even so my pearl has truth, but truth has not stopped with my pearl. There are other pearls, rare and wondrous pearls. Some day we'll know more about them, for now "we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

And so we have no desire to be severe with the other finders of gems, for the ocean of truth is great, and God is not severe with us. He is glad we have our gem, because when we gaze upon its

liquid-like fairness, we catch glimpses of his face, and he smiles upon us from out the gem and we are glad because of the smile.

And as we think of these things, our hearts warm more to the journey before us, more to our fellow-travelers, more to the possibility of complete victory, more to the goal. Love has taken his royal seat. We see him crowned. He is there to stay, yea, to subdue all things unto himself. His accents are very gentle as he speaks to us, and his countenance is lit with "the light that never was on sea or land." He stretches out his arms and blessing drops from his hands upon the world of men.

Welcome, love. Your kingship of our minds is monarchy exalted and sublime. Ever wield your scepter o'er us. In every moment of the day we need you, we need your power, your peace, your assuagement of life's woes.

- W. Sargent

My Song

So long have I dreamed of the beautiful goal,
That a touch of its sunshine has lit up my soul;
Its chords are all thrilling, with music divine,
And its song is forever, "Dear Jesus is mine!"

The bird, when the tempest is raging with power,
Flies in haste to her snug little nest in the bower;
Thus safe 'neath his wing I can sweetly recline,
And sing on forever, "Dear Jesus is mine!"

When beautiful Eden awakes from the fires,
And the conflict of ages of sorrow expires,
In the great restitution, and glory divine,
I'll still sing in Paradise, "Jesus is mine!"

Humility

"He that is least among you, the same shall be great." - Luke 9:48, A.R.V.

TO the Greeks meekness was a deplorable lack of courage, so they had no word that Christian writers could use to represent humility as a virtue. For that purpose, therefore, they appropriated two Greek words, one meaning "gentleness," and the other meaning "to depress." The first of these our translators have usually given as meek, and the second as humble. Perhaps because the ancient Hebrews were of a different spirit, the writers of the Old Testament had at their disposal eight words to express these qualities. The most frequently used of these is translated both meek and humble. However, as in English, each of these words is given as a synonym of the other, so in our consideration we will not have to make any fine distinctions between them.

Pride was raising its ugly head when the discussion arose among the disciples as to which would be greatest in the Kingdom. (Matt. 18:1.) Evidently supreme intuition saw some sentiment deeper than that which the mere words conveyed, for in Luke 9:47 we read, "When Jesus saw the reasoning *of their hearts*, he took a little child" "in his arms" -- a child not yet old enough to have been contaminated much by the pride of the elders--and taught them the lesson of humility, a lesson necessary for every Christian of the entire Age. "Whosoever shall *humble* himself as this little child [thus taking an active part himself in cultivating this virtue, not leaving it entirely to the Lord or circumstances], the same is the greatest in the Kingdom."

THE HUMBLE WALK WITH GOD

Jesus' lesson on humility which we have been considering seems to have been imparted soon after Peter, James, and John had been with him in the Mount of Transfiguration. This and other similar favors shown them could easily have caused the three to fall under the temptation to be proud. Heeding Micah 6:8 would have spared them, and us, that danger: "He hath showed thee, O man, *what is good*; and what doth the Lord *require* of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to *walk humbly* with thy God?" One can be sure his walk with God is entirely too limited, or not at all, if being in his presence, the presence of the Emperor of the universe, has not had a humbling effect. Even being in the presence of one of the so called great of earth, will usually leave on the mind of one of the thus honored ones an impression of his littleness.

The margin of the *King James* Version has a reading just as essential for our instruction: "Humble thyself *to walk* with thy God." For the privilege of entering into his presence, it is necessary to be humble; not, "thankful that I am not as other men are," but thankful that he is willing to receive me though I am a sinner just as other men are making me acceptable in his Beloved.

Closely related in greatness and in kind is the assurance of Mark 9:37: "Whosoever shall receive one of such children [disciples are evidently meant] *in my name* [regardless of his imperfections, or the imperfections of the one who receives him] *receiveth me*." How out of all proportion is this reward for humility on the part of one who has not one thing in himself to be proud of, but abundant reason for shame and humility!

JESUS' HUMILITY

As though receiving himself were not honor enough, Jesus, demonstrating his own humility, adds to the reward for the humility that accepts to fellowship those whom he receives, the assurance

that the one who receives him receives the Father. To us the privilege of receiving him would be reward enough, but not so to his humble mind. He knows that the greatest of all blessings is to receive the heavenly Father into our lives. But that, too, like the receiving of Jesus into our hearts, is dependent upon our being humble enough to receive as fellow-members of the Body those whom God has invited into sonship. "If we walk in the light [if we are truth brethren, living the truth] *we have* fellowship one with another." Evidently one is not really "in the truth," "in the light," in the complete sense, *if there is one called one that he is depriving of his fellowship*, except on Scriptural grounds.

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship [partnership, gives the thought more accurately] one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," Brother John adds. Evidently if we do not practice such a partnership, the cleansing blood ceases to be ours. Perhaps this is the key to the reason we cannot have our heavenly Father and Bridegroom in our lives if we do not take our brethren into our fellowship, into our partnership. We, without that blood, are still condemned sinners, and such cannot be partners of the Father and his Son. The standing that acceptance of the cleansing blood gives us, must be maintained. There is no entrance into the heavenly presence for law breakers, but "love is the fulfilling of the law." Love never fails to *desire* the fellowship of the ones loved. Therefore, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." - 1 John 1:7; Romans 12:10.

In this last text we have an excellent means of testing ourselves on two points-humility, and love for the brethren. Can we honestly say, and can we prove, that it gives us greater pleasure to see another brother taking a higher place than ourselves in the Lord's service? If so, we are near the end of the way in Christian development. And if all the brethren of our association have attained that same degree of Christlikeness, never again will we see difficulties among brethren, never any separations.

EVEN "JEHOVAH HUMBLETH HIMSELF"

Jesus is the answer to the question of Psalm 113:5, 6: "Who is like unto Jehovah our God, that bath his seat on high, that *humbleth himself* to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth?" So we cannot go to a better one for advice as to how to attain this most difficult virtue. He advises, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." - Matt. 11:29.

Love means service. If our heads are to wear crowns in heaven, our necks must become used to the yoke here. Only the humble will accept the yoke, for that meant servitude. "By love serve one another" is the Apostle's advice. (Gal. 5:13.) The cross was Jesus' and the Father's greatest service to mankind; so it is into service with them that we are invited when Jesus' voice reaches us: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16:24.) The brethren to whom he first said that, thought they were already following him; but the lesson of the *full* denying of self, uncomplainingly, yea, rejoicingly bearing their crosses, they had not yet learned.

"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, *with him also* that is of a contrite and humble spirit." (Isa. 57:15.) Since there is "none that is righteous, no not one," what else can we be but "contrite and humble"? And blessed is that attitude, for it will get for us the attention and assistance of the One who can perfect in us holiness. Peter's advice would never have been, "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy," if he had not known of God's promise of "grace sufficient," forgiving and

assisting grace. (1 Peter 1:15.) "Though Jehovah is high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly." And so this very quality of humility will draw from him his assistance.

Humility is a quality usually found in the truly great, whether they be of earth or heaven. Pride, the opposite quality, demonstrates an appalling smallness in the soul that harbors it, colossal ignorance of self.

A HUMBLE TEMPLE FOR THE ALMIGHTY

The sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah describes the glories of the new earth. But the next chapter opens with the assurance that even that will not be glorious enough to be a dwelling place for Jehovah. "Thus saith Jehovah, heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what manner of house will ye build for me, and what place shall be my rest?" Assuredly the most ingenious, the most skillful of men, could not build a temple here suitable for his dwelling. The truth regarding the temple actually planned for him is so astounding that Jehovah himself must be quoted as the authority for its description: "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people!'" The glory of God fills these living temples when they have humbled themselves to walk with their God.

The temples built for the Jewish nation made them think they were essential to God's purpose. Like the Jewish nation, organizations and teachers have a habit of thinking they are necessary in God's plan. As soon as that thought is harbored, they become unnecessary. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word." (Isa. 66:2.) "He forgetteth not the cry of the meek." (Margin, Psa. 9:12.) "God heareth not sinners," but he "has heard the *desire* of the meek." (Psa. 10:17.) The desire of a humble heart is in line with God's will.

Some very helpful and beautiful examples of meekness have come to us from the past. Abraham: "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes" -- a good description of any human being. Jacob: "I am not worthy of all thy loving kindnesses, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant." Gideon: "Behold my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Our list cannot be complete, but Moses and Joshua must not be passed by without mention. And the herald of the new age, John the Baptist, ushered it in with proper humility: "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear." (Matt. 3:11.) This way of expressing humility has lost much of its force for us who live in a different day. In his time the vilest of the slaves, the historians tell us, were given charge of the sandals. Jesus' testimony regarding the Baptist was different: "Verily I say unto you: Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." The Baptist had the humility that God rewards. Paul, classing himself as "the chiefest of sinners," "less than the least of all saints," with all his talents and faithful service, set us an example we will need much educating to be able to follow. "*Put on* therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, *lowliness*, *meekness*, long-suffering, forbearing one another, even as the Lord forgave you, so do ye." - Col. 3:12, 13.

HUMILITY, THEN FORBEARANCE, THEN SERVICE

Ephesians 4:2 enjoins, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another *in love*." We will have to be "clothed with humility" in order to have this love that serves. (1 Peter 5:5.) Jesus, girding himself with a towel, finished his ministry with a visible lesson in humility, a reiteration of the lesson of cross-bearing.

Proverbs 3:4: "Surely he scorneth the scorners and giveth grace unto the *lowly*," should give confusion of face to us who have taken pleasure in scorning others who proclaim themselves followers of the meek and lowly Nazarene, but who struggle in a lesser light than we enjoy. Instead of scorning, we should have had extended pity and a helping hand. One cannot but recognize how stumblingly they walk, but scorning them for it only brings upon us the scorn of the One who is our Judge. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and keep silence, because *He* hath laid it upon him. Let him put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope [because then there will be no boastful, scornful words to disgrace us with our God]. Let him give his cheek to him that smiteth him; let him be filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off forever. For though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses. " - Lam. 3:27-32.

- *P. E. Thomson*

The Question Box

ISAIAH 28:10, 13

Question:

In Isaiah 28:10 and again in Isa. 28:13 these words appear: "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little." The words are generally understood to teach that our Lord fits his instruction to his true followers gradually, as they are able to receive it; starting with the milk of the Word 'in their spiritual infancy and holding back solid food until they start to grow. 'My question is: How can this Scripture be thus understood in relation to its context, and especially in view of the words with which Isa 28:13 closes: "that they might go, and fall backward, and the broken, and snared, and taken"?

Answer:

The context, of course, must always be taken into consideration in Bible study; any understanding which does not harmonize a text with its context is likely to prove erroneous or, at best, partial. Let us consider the passage in its setting.

It was in the early years of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, that the 28th chapter of Isaiah was written (Isa 28). For some years the people had been under the yoke of Assyria; that yoke had become intolerable; they were determined to liberate themselves from it.

Isaiah, of course, was just as much a lover of freedom as the rest of the nation; there was no truer patriot than he. But he knew that the people, could not count on the help of God while they continued godless and corrupt; their yoke, he knew, was but the manifestation of the divine displeasure. Accordingly, he counseled them to wait -- to strengthen themselves in piety, in an unselfish devotion to the public welfare, and in the practice of private virtue until, God being once more on their side, they would be able to break the power of Assyria and assert their independence.

The counsel was unwelcome. They had no mind for private or public reformation; nor were they disposed to wait. They, preferred, instead, to try their hand at international diplomacy and statecraft. What if they were to call Egypt to their help against Assyria, to set the one military tyranny, of the time against the other? Might they not thus work out their salvation?

"No!" said Isaiah. "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help ... but look not unto the Holy One of Israel." (Isa. 31:1; Isa. 30:1-4.) Against this proposed Egyptian alliance he set his face as a flint. But there were not wanting other counselors who opposed him. There were plenty of priests in Jerusalem, plenty of prophets, even who, sharing as they did in the popular vices, were willing to pander to the spirit of the times.

These false counselors, it is evident from Isa 28:seven, had lost their way through strong drink.; It may have been that at one time they had had clear vision and could reach sound judgment, but certain mock at the simple words which, under divine inspiration, I have been moved to speak, and, you lisp out your base and drunken imitations of them -- you, who should be the first to welcome and act upon the Word of God. Know then, that God will punish your sin by *a people of stammering* [Rotherham translates: *jabbering*] lips and an alien tongue. (Isa 28:11.) God has taught you, by the very words which you deride, where you might find rest and freedom, how you might give peace to the people who are weary of war and its calamities; but you would not listen.

(Isa 28:12.) . To you the Word of the Lord has become mere, baby talk, at which you jest. (Isa 28:13.) Know, then, that that Word, which might have been a light to your path, shall blaze up into a consuming fire. You jeer at it as an endless series of petty injunctions; instead it shall inflict on you- an endless series of intolerable calamities. In the very teeth of that Word you are about to strike a blow for freedom; seeking it in your own way, not in God's way; but as a reward and consequence of your disobedience, the Word, that might have given you freedom and a stable security and peace, shall become a stone on which you shall fall and be broken, a net in which you shall betaken and bound, a' trap in which you shall be caught and imprisoned. (Last words of Isa 28:13.)

These false counselors, it is evident from Isa 28:7, had lost their way through strong drink. It may have been that at one time they had had clear vision and could reach sound judgment, but certainly this was not now the case. Masters in Israel though they were, it was necessary for Isaiah, if he were to have any hope of penetrating their dull powers of comprehension, to speak with great simplicity -- to speak to them not as to masters, but babes. And this, of course, they would and did resent. In their drunken carousals erring in vision, stumbling in judgment, with their tables full of vomit (Isa. 28:7, 8) they would sneeringly ask:

"Whom would he, Isaiah, teach knowledge? And to whom would he make a message intelligible? To them weaned from the milk, just taken from the breasts? With him it is always precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little." - Isa. 28:9, 10.

In a footnote to Isa 28:10 Rotherham gives the actual Hebrew words and then cites Davies' Hebrew Lexicon as follows: "The repetition and assonance of the short words are intended to set forth mimetically the drunken babble of the scoffers." Others have pointed out that the words may be translated in many ways; for, in the original, they are more like the babble of drunken men than sober, intelligent speech. At the same time, although *the words manifestly imply the condition of those who uttered them*, they were evidently designed as a burlesque imitation of the great simplicity of speech which Isaiah used. The verse is so constructed as to imitate their thickened and difficult pronunciation. Monosyllable is heaped upon monosyllable; and, no doubt, the speakers tipsily adopted the tones of fond mothers addressing their babes and little tots. Using the Hebrew words of the verse, one of these shameless less roysterers would say: "*Tsav latsav, tsav la-tsav; kav la-kav, kav lakav; zeeir sham, zeeir sham; that is how that simpleton Isaiah speaks.*" And then, doubtless, a drunken laugh would go round the table, and half a dozen of them would be repeating: "*Tsav la-tsav, tsav la-tsav.*"

What really angered these men was that Isaiah treated them as though they were children only just weaned. They were weary of hearing him repeat the first rudiments of morality, and apply them to the sins and needs of the time. How dared *he* tutor *them*, who were themselves teachers! How dared he treat them as babes who were grown men, distinguished men, the foremost men and statesmen of the nation!

It is easy to imagine how these proud, prosperous men would lisp or stammer out their drunken sneers over their wine, at the solitary, unsuccessful Prophet, and think it a remarkably good joke to make him, and his message, and the very manner in which he uttered it, a theme of mockery and contempt. Nor is it difficult to imagine the righteous indignation with which he would turn on these blind guides, who were only too surely leading their blind followers into the ditch, and forewarn them that the retribution they had provoked by their sins would speedily overtake them. In effect he said to them: You mock at the simple words which, under divine inspiration, I have been moved to speak, and you lisp out your base and drunken imitations of them -- you, who

should be the first to welcome and act upon the Word of God. Know then, that God will punish your sin by *a people of stammering [Rotherham translates: jabbering] lips and an alien tongue* (Isa 28:11). God has taught you, by the very words which you deride, where you might find rest and freedom, how you might give peace to the people who are weary of war and its calamities; but you would not listen (Isa 28:12). To you the Word of the Lord has become mere baby talk, at which you jest (Isa 28:13). Know, then, that that Word, which might have been a light to your path, shall blaze up into a consuming fire. You jeer at it as an endless series of petty injunctions; instead it shall inflict on you an endless series of intolerable calamities. In the very teeth of that Word you are about to strike a blow for freedom; seeking it in your own way, not in God's way; but as a reward and consequence of your disobedience, the Word, that might have given you freedom and a stable security and peace, shall become a stone on which you shall fall and be broken, a net in which you shall be taken and bound, a trap in which you shall be caught and imprisoned (last words of Isa 28:13).

The prediction was fulfilled. The fierce Assyrians, when they heard that the Hebrews had allied themselves with Egypt, once more swept through the land. The very men who had jabbered their scornful imitations of Isaiah's words, who had affected to think that he used the broken and imperfect dialect which mothers employ to their babes, were destroyed or taken captive by the Assyrian troops, whose language, according to the scholars, while it closely resembled that of the Hebrews, had just those differences which made it sound to them like an imperfect and barbarous dialect. So terrible, and so exact, was the retribution that fell on their sin.

That St. Paul understood Isaiah's words in the manner outlined foregoing is evident from the use he makes of them *in* his first letter to the Corinthians. At Corinth there was a great *deal* of speaking in unknown tongues, often without *profit* to either speakers *or* hearers. In chapter 14, of his first letter to that Church, the Apostle deals with the matter in some detail. After showing that the gift of tongues was inferior to that of prophecy, that without the gift of interpretation it was entirely useless, and that thus exercised it was manifestly misused, he illustrates his point by a reference to this very passage. (Isa. 28:11, 12.) "In the law it is written: 'With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.' " (1 Cor. 14:21.) The Prophet's contemporaries scoffingly rejected his instruction, which seemed to them childish; and he warned them that the next divine message would come to them from Assyrian lips the conquerors with their foreign speech would be upon them, though even so terrible an experience would not bring the frivolous Israelites to listen to their God. And so, (*this is the inference which, in his discussion of the gift of tongues, St. Paul draws from the Isaiah passage*) tongues are for a sign *not* to those who believe, but to the unbelievers; and, not a sign, apparently, which would induce them to repent and be saved, but one which would confirm them still more in their obstinacy or indifference for will they not say that you are mad (1 Cor. 14:23) just, as Israel would not hearken? (Isa. 28:12.) St. Paul's citation of course, has only the value of illustration; there was, in Isaiah, *no prediction* of the Corinthian situation.

In the light of the foregoing discussion may we not summarize our answer to the question thus:

1. That our Lord graciously suits the instruction of his -true Follower according to their several stages of development is a truth none will question. It is abundantly attested in the Scriptures. - 1 Pet, 2:2; Heb. 5:12, 13; 1 Cor. 3:2.
2. That this is not the sense in which the words were originally used in Isaiah, chapter 28, is also clear. On the contrary, instead of being a description of the abundance and variety of the means of grace which God has granted to the Church, the words in Isa 28:10 really constitute a drunken sneer at the simplicity of Isaiah's message to the people of his time. His use of the same

words, in Isa 28:13, was (as Rotherham, in a footnote to that verse suggests) a "giving back to the scoffers their own words now as a stern threatening" of the coming Assyrian conquest. The sincere (unadulterated) milk of the Word which Isaiah gave them did not produce the happy results it might have done but, because not mixed with faith in them that heard it, proved to be a forewarning of impending disaster.

- *P. L. Read.*

The Wrath of God

The wrath of God is love's severity
In curing sin-the zeal of righteousness
In overcoming wrong -- the remedy
Of justice for the world's redress.

The wrath of God inflicts no needless pain,
Merely vindictive, or Himself to please;
But aims the ends of mercy to attain,
Uproot the evil, and the good increase.

The wrath of God is love's parental rod,
The disobedient to chastise, subdue,
And bend submissive to the will of God,
That love may reign when all things are made .new.

The wrath of God shall never strike in vain,
Nor cease to strike till sin shall be no more;
Till God His gracious purpose shall attain,
And earth to righteousness and peace restore.

-*F. G. Wilson*

Report of Our Directors

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms!" - Deuteronomy 33:27.

THE words of our text are the words wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel just before his death. However, in an important sense, *they constitute God's message*, not only to Israel then, but *to all mankind* today.

The eternal God has long been our refuge, and through the years we have known experimentally, the strong support of his everlasting arms. And our confidence is that thus it will prove to be in the days ahead, however many, or however few, they may be.

Usually our Report is presented to the Institute members at their Annual Meeting, before being published in the *Herald*. However, in 1974, circumstances were such as to make it difficult to hold the Institute's Annual Meeting on June, 1, the date scheduled. As a result, the meeting was postponed until 1975. Meantime, in order that the Institute's members, and indeed all *Herald* readers, may be informed, we submit, in the following paragraphs a brief report of the Institute's ministry for the past year, together with our plans for its future, if the Lord will.

Each year, as we report the Institute's activities of the past twelve months, it is with an increased realization of the evidences, both in the world and in the Church, that the Kingdom for which we pray is near at hand. This has seemed particularly true in the year now ending. In these circumstances the words of the Apostle take on a deeper significance: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:12). How timely, too, is our Master's exhortation that "when these things begin to come to pass" we should "lift up our heads" knowing that our deliverance "draweth nigh." - Luke 21:28.

THE INSTITUTE'S POLICY

In view of the fact that a number of our readers have only recently become acquainted with us, it may not be amiss to restate here the principles which the Institute has consistently maintained from its inception in 1918.

According to its charter, it was organized for "the dissemination of Bible truths by means of the publication of tracts, pamphlets, papers, and other lawful means which its Board of Directors, duly constituted, shall deem expedient for the furtherance of the purposes stated." In emphasizing the principles of liberty, fellowship, and unity of all consecrated believers in Christ, we believe that we are conforming not only to the teaching of the Lord Jesus and his Apostles, but also to the spirit and practice of our late Pastor's ministry. He, too, emphasized that to walk in the footsteps of the Master to the extent of one's ability constituted the one requirement for Christian fellowship; (not the many ramifications of doctrine which mistaken human wisdom holds should be applied as tests of fellowship).

Our Institute is not a church organization. Moreover, it does not now exercise, nor has it ever exercised, supervision over any Bible Class. It is, however, pleased with every privilege of service granted it, rejoicing to be the servant of the Lord's brethren in any detail, however minor. Furthermore, it rejoices to report that it remains today what it was originally formed to be -- a group of brethren voluntarily associated for mutual comfort and assistance, brought together by a unity of spirit, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." - Ephesians 4:3.

THE PILGRIM MINISTRY

Last year, in writing our report we noted that, in recent years, this branch of our ministry had been considerably curtailed. Comparing notes with our British brethren, we found the same is true with them, too. Last year we lost one of our pioneers, Brother Paul E. Thomson, who ended his earthly journey August 17, 1973. Our two remaining full-time Pilgrims, Brothers Fred A. Essler and John T. Read, for reasons of health, have found it necessary to restrict their services to local groups.

The part-time ministry of these two brethren is presently being augmented with the services of Brothers Alex Gonczewski, James Jordan, Loyal Petran, Will Siekman, and James Webster.

THE HERALD

Encouraging reports reach us that the *Herald* continues to be used of the Lord for the spiritual comfort and strength of many.

We again urge upon all to take advantage of our offer to send a free six-months' subscription to any names supplied to the office. We believe from past experience that its "balanced" spiritual diet will prove a blessed witness to some.

HELPS TO BIBLE STUDY

Inquiries continue to be received regarding residence and correspondence courses in Bible Study, neither of which are offered by our Institute. Instead it recommends inquirers to consider, before other methods are adopted, an intensive personal study of the Bible itself. To assist in such study, we do offer a number of helps. Foremost among these we continue to rank the *Divine Plan of the Ages*; a volume unexcelled in the presentation of the Bible's basic teachings.

Other helpful works such as Bible translations, concordances, etc., are in limited supply for the benefit of *Herald* subscribers.

SUMMARY

As we enter upon a new year of activity, perhaps a most momentous one, may the realization of the abundance of God's grace which is the portion of his children, spur us on to larger sacrifices and greater endeavors in behalf of him who has so wondrously blessed us. Let us each seek to have a larger appreciation of his own responsibility. Let us seek to be more faithful in serving the Master by ministering to his brethren.

Your brethren in the Master's service,
Board of Directors
By: I. B. Webster
Chairman

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FISCAL YEAR ENDED APRIL 30, 1974

(1) Balance Sheet as of April 30, 1974

Assets

Cash in Bank		\$20,652.22
Accounts Receivable		266.50
Prepaid Expense		650.00
Inventory of Books, etc.:		
Pocket Edition-Divine Plan	(1,026)	\$1,026.00
Revelation Exposition-Vol. 2	(63)	94.50
Miscellaneous Items		<u>859.40</u>
Total Inventory		<u>1,979.90</u>
Total Assets		\$23,548.62
Liabilities		<u>409.74</u>
Net Worth (as per Analysis below)		\$23,138.88

(2) Statement of Income and Expense and Analysis of Net Worth
Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1974

Income

Contributions		\$18,664.90
Herald Subscriptions		5,141.00
Legacies		<u>9,541.59</u>
Total Income		\$33,347.49

Operating Expense

Pilgrim Expense	\$ 4,819.64	
Herald Expense Including Printing, Mailing and Clerical	13,096.92	
Free Literature	588.14	
Administrative and Office Expense	<u>1,159.71</u>	
Total Operating Expense		<u>19,634.41</u>
Net Expense for Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1974		\$ 13,713.08
Net Worth, May 1, 1973		<u>9,425.80</u>
Net Worth, April 30, 1974 (as per Balance Sheet above)		\$ 23,138.88

Entered Into Rest

William R. Cooper, Coopersville, Mich.
James P. Holmes, San Antonio, Tex.
Samuel W. Huyck, Kansas City, Kans.
Alice L. Joslin, Lebanon, Conn.
Chester O. Krukowski, Milwaukee; Wis.
Walter Kupinczynski, Ludlow, Mass.
Della E. McCarthy, Coventry, R.I.
Alma M. Perry, Dos Palos, Cal.
Anna Pierson, Lawton, Mich.
Caroline Puzio, New Britain, Conn.
Grace Rieder, Columbus, Ohio
Anna E. Taylor, Belfast, N. Ireland