

# **THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM**

*VOL. LXVI    September / October, 1983    No. 5*

## **Great World Changes Long Foretold**

*"He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." - Rev. 21:5.*

HUMANITY has long hoped for and believed in a new day, in which sorrow, pain, and death would cease, and in which peace, righteousness, and life would prevail; in brief, a dispensation in which the power of evil would be crushed and mankind be delivered from the reign of sin and death, which has so long obtained. The literature of the world shows that many intelligent people have refused to believe that the Divine purpose in the creation of our earth has yet been attained. Aside from the Bible, we continually find reference to the morning of the new day, to the Golden Age, etc.

Not to the longings of men's hearts, however, but to the promises of our God do we look for real instruction on this subject. The Bible most emphatically declares that the entire period of human history thus far has been a nighttime. The Prophet David explained, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psa. 30:5). Thus prophetically we are assured that there will be a morning, whose glory, brightness, and blessing will fully compensate for all the dark shadows of the nighttime past.

## **HUMANITY AWAITS THE DIVINE BLESSING**

One of the most signal promises of the Bible was made some four thousand years ago by God to Abraham. It says, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." For centuries Abraham's posterity waited for the Messiah of promise, with the anticipation that he would use them in connection with his work of blessing all people. The Prophets of Israel foretold the coming King of the line of David -- that he would be a great reigning Priest, Prophet, and King. To him "Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess," and through him a blessing extend to all nations (Isa. 45:23; Isa. 25:6).

Still other prophecies respecting Messiah's Kingdom were repeated and amplified in the Parables of Jesus, in the teachings of his Apostles, "and finally, and graphically, in the last Book of the Bible, the Revelation which Jesus gave the Church, through St. John. It declares that "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). This is without doubt a proclamation respecting the Kingdom of Messiah. Through it, God is to wipe away all tears from

off all faces; and the King of kings and Lord of lords, whom Jehovah has appointed as earth's new Ruler, assures us that he himself will "make all things new."

### **"IN THE TIME OF THE END"**

After all these centuries of waiting, hoping, and praying, "Thy Kingdom come," many thoughtful people today are more and more awakening to a realization of the fact that we are living near the very dawn of the glorious epoch for which we have waited, prayed, and hoped. The past century and particularly the last fifty years have witnessed vast changes; modern knowledge, science, inventions, etc., bringing in labor-saving machinery, have revolutionized the affairs of humanity. Means of communication by telephone, telegraph, and wireless, and modes of travel by steam and electric trains and by airways have introduced marvelous opportunities and advantages to mankind. These are among the improvements and inventions that characterize the days of the Lord's preparation for the "times of refreshing and restoration" promised when the Lord shall appear (Acts 3:19-21).

How comforting and illuminating is the explanation of the Bible! It explains that the wonders of our day are the foregleams of Messiah's Kingdom and its blessings, the foregleams of the Golden Age. It explains that we are in the day of Jehovah's preparation for the Kingdom of his Son. We have numerous Scriptural declarations pointing to the end of this Age and the dawning of a new Age, and assuring us that at this time many would run to and fro, knowledge should be increased, and the wise should understand (Dan. 12:1-10).

### **KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED**

This prophecy of Daniel is worthy of the most careful note, not only because Daniel was a prophet greatly beloved of the Lord, but because Jesus, the Redeemer, specially quoted a portion of this prophecy and thus attested its genuineness. The many running to and fro could seemingly refer to nothing else than the wonderful traveling which is a feature of our day and no other. In no other time was running to and fro a possibility to any extent. It is less than two centuries since the first crude locomotive was built and the first steamboat was launched. How greatly and how rapidly they have been improved! It might be said that there was no opportunity for running to and fro until within the past fifty years. Now, the world is grid-ironed with rails. Now, the ocean voyage of four months is cut down practically to as many days by mammoth vessels carrying three thousand to four thousand at a time. But still more wonderful, almost beyond the wildest flight of human expectation, is the achievement of modern time of the ocean voyage in midair without a stop, by means of both the dirigible and airplane, the latter covering the distance in but a few hours -- at almost incredible speed.

Who knew, at the time of Daniel's prophecy, of these wonderful facilities for running to and fro? Who knew that these facilities would be so generally used in this our day? Only the Almighty! And he gave this as one of the particular signs of the ending of the present Age -- the dawning of the New Dispensation -- the long-promised Messianic Kingdom.

Likewise the marvelous increase of knowledge of our day along all lines marks another significant fulfillment of the Prophet's message. The next statement of his prophecy is that the wise of God's people shall understand. And now in the appropriate time all over the world there are Bible students who, as the wise referred to, are trimming their Bible lamps and being well supplied with the oil of the holy spirit, are receiving light, are understanding the things kept secret from past ages and generations.

## **PREPARING FOR THE REIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

One more token of the end of this Age, and the dawning of the new: God declared through the Prophet Daniel that "there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." The Redeemer, we believe, quoted Daniel's prophecy and referred to the same time -the present time of general distress, uncertainty and trouble which we recognize on every hand and which, in all the nations of the earth, is threatening the foundations of society, political, financial, and religious. The Savior bade his followers rejoice even in the midst of the trouble, because it marks the day of deliverance from the power of sin and death. He said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your deliverance draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

That the coming chastisement upon the world, representing God's rebuke of the nations, will prove a great blessing to humanity, we are fully assured. Well may our hearts rejoice then to note the Scriptural declaration that the Day of Vengeance is limited, that it will be cut short. We are assured that "a short work will the Lord make on the earth." To this end, instead of allowing the time of trouble to run its course and to practically exterminate the race in the reign of anarchy, the Lord declares that in the midst of the trouble he will establish his Kingdom on the ruins of the present civilization, and that under the ministration of the Kingdom, order and peace and blessing will soon be established on the earth, on a sure foundation, on a foundation of righteousness and truth.

St. John assures us that Satan with all his blinding influences will be bound, restrained, that he may deceive the nations no longer. The new Day, for which all creation has so long been waiting and longing, will have been fully ushered in; the fulfillment of the prayer of our Savior will then begin to be realized, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Very early in this new Day there will be realized the hope of all the waiting, suffering saints, who from the days of Jesus down to the present time, have been walking in his footsteps and looking forward, according to his promise, to share in the Kingdom by having a part in the First Resurrection (Rev. 20:5, 6). "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Rev. 3:21).

## **TO THE VICTORS BELONG THE SPOILS - ISAIAH 53:12**

But notice now the course of all belonging to the Kingdom class, throughout this Age: They are not reigning with Christ, but suffering with Christ. Jesus explained this. They are indeed of the Royal Family, because begotten of the holy spirit; they are indeed the Kingdom class, because they are affiliated with the Great King; but they have not yet entered into their glory. They will do so only by the power of the First Resurrection. Thus it is written, "We must all be changed," because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50, 51).

Our Lord himself was the Pattern, the Forerunner, of all these. After his consecration and his begetting of the holy spirit, he was tested unto death, even the death of the cross, before he experienced his glorious resurrection change and ascended and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High. Similarly all of his followers, after consecration, must be tested, their loyalty must be proved, before they can share with him in "his resurrection."

Partly for the testing of these, their development takes place in a time when Satan is the prince of this world, and when his power is permitted to be exercised against their Lord. Only the overcomers - the victors-in the fight against the world, the flesh, and Satan, can share the

glorious, promised Kingdom (the *sovereignty*) with their Lord. Note carefully Luke 16:16; 22:28-30; Matt. 11:11; 1 Tim. 6:12; Rev. 3:21, *A.S.V.*

Meantime, for nineteen centuries, the Scriptures declare, "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew Him not." God's saintly ones have not been generally the great, the influential, either in church or state, just as Jesus and the Apostles were not in their day. Nevertheless, the Lord knoweth them that are His. Scattered here and there, during the past nineteen centuries, they have been dealt with by the Lord and been fitted and polished as jewels. And He tells us that at our Lord's Second Coming He will make up His Jewels -- they will constitute the Kingdom class; for "if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him."

The purpose of the establishing of the Kingdom of God on earth in the hands of Christ and His faithful Church is that it may overthrow entirely the dominion of sin, ignorance, superstition, as they now control the human family, bought with the precious blood. His Kingdom will cause the knowledge of the Lord Jehovah to fill the whole earth, that every creature may receive a blessing through that knowledge, and if they will, may have everlasting life.

St. Paul assures us that in due time God will give this Kingdom to the Christ. He tells us that Christ "must reign until he shall have put down all insubordination" -- everything contrary to the Divine will, everything sinful; until he shall have uplifted mankind out of the miry clay and the horrible pit of sin and death. This is the thought brought before us by St. Peter, saying, "Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must retain until *the times of restitution of all things* which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." These times of restitution are the Kingdom times, the times of resurrection, the times of human uplifting from sin and death conditions to life, and joy, and peace, for all who will receive the Lord's favors upon his terms.

## **THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**

Another viewpoint of the work of God's Kingdom is represented in what the Scriptures term the "Judgment Day," which will be a thousand years long, in which all humanity will be individually on trial for life. The clear knowledge of God will then be given to all, as we read, "The knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth," and "all shall know him." It is written that under that judgment-trial in which wholesome disciplines will be administered to all, it shall come to pass that the soul that will not hear that great Prophet shall be destroyed from amongst the people (Acts 3:19-23).

In order to give all of Adam's family that trial for life there is to be an awakening of all the dead, as we read: "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust"; in harmony also with the Master's words, "All that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth" (Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29). We thank God for the wideness of his mercy, "like the wideness of the sea" -- that the Divine Plan is no respecter of persons, that every member of the race, condemned through Father Adam's disobedience, redeemed from the condemnation by the death of Jesus, shall have a full opportunity of coming to a knowledge of the facts and of using that knowledge for his own recovery from sin, sickness, sorrow, pain, and death -- the ultimate attainment of human perfection and everlasting life in Paradise -- the restored earth.

The very essence of the Gospel of the Kingdom then is seen to embrace the hope of the awakening of all the dead-the coming forth from the sleep of death of all the millions of Adam's

posterity, in order that they may benefit by the sacrifice given once for all by Jesus nineteen centuries ago. The angels proclaimed Good Tidings for all people when Jesus was born; but the vast majority have gone into the tomb having but little knowledge of this message, and without deriving any benefit from our Savior's death. Hence the Resurrection Morning will mean the awakening of all in order that they may come to a knowledge of the Truth, and if they will, to attain everlasting life (John 3:16). The Divine law, however, will be the same in the future as now. God never changes and his law will never change. Hence we are told that all the wicked will God destroy. All who willfully reject the grace of God during that full opportunity will be destroyed in the Second Death, from which there will be no recovery (Rev. 21:8). But the way to everlasting life will be easier than now. No longer will it be a narrow or difficult way: no longer will it call for the sacrifice of every earthly right and interest in order to attain eternal life. No longer will the Adversary place darkness before the minds of men as light, and cause light to appear to be darkness; for his power will be restrained. No longer will it be true that "all who live godly shall suffer persecution." But on the contrary, those living godly will receive more and more of God's blessing; and instead of faithfulness leading to death, it will lead upward and onward to human perfection and everlasting life under the blessed conditions of the Kingdom which God has prepared for the blessing of the whole world (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:16, 29).

### **WHY THE NARROW WAY OF THE CHURCH?**

The way for the Church in the present time is narrow, difficult, because evil is dominant now. The Lord makes use of this opportunity of evil's dominance to issue his Call for soldiers of the Cross, in order that the conflict between the evil and the good may serve to prove and to test the faithfulness and loyalty of those whom he has called to so high a station. And since the trials are more difficult, it does not surprise us that the reward is greater. The earthly reward for the world, as we have seen, will be everlasting life as human beings, in Paradise restored, on God's footstool made glorious. But the reward of the Church, if faithful, will be a change of nature from human to Divine, and a share with the Redeemer, Messiah, in his glory, honor, and immortality.

### **NO MORE DEATH**

But, blessed thought, when the Prince of Life has put in force the laws of righteousness and equity with an iron rule, the masses of mankind will learn that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." They will learn that God's Plan and laws are best in the end for all concerned, and ultimately will learn to *love* righteousness and hate iniquity (Psa. 45:7; Heb. 1:9). All who under that reign have not learned to love the right will be counted unworthy of lasting life and will be cut off from among the people (Acts 3:23; Rev. 20:9; Psa. 11:5-7).

Witness then the consummation of the Divine Plan at the close of the thousand years of Christ's reign—a restored paradise, with all pain, sin, death, and the curse removed, and with all tears wiped away, and every voice in heaven and on earth praising God (Rev. 21:1-4; 5:13). Shall we not the more earnestly pray, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," and hail with joyful hearts all the signs and indications of our day that mark the dawn of the New Age and the fact that earth's glorious King draws near!

- *THE HERALD.*

## **"What Shall I Render Unto the Lord?"**

*"His praise shall continually be in my mouth." - Psalm 34:1.*

IN PSALM 116, the Psalmist tells of blessings he had received from the Lord. Realizing his responsibility to manifest gratitude in some way, in Psa. 116:12 he asks, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" Then in Psa. 116:13-14 he answers in the way that you and I answer if gratitude and the desire to do God's will are uppermost in our hearts: "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people."

In former ages as in this age, it required faith to recognize one's debt to God; for, as did Moses, we likewise must "endure, as seeing him who is invisible." Only a "faith that works by love" can prove the heart's devotion; faith itself constitutes the evidence of the unseen realities. Therefore faith, without which it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), is highly regarded by him as being the evidence in us of a relationship to himself that is not possible to one who must have physical proof of his existence.

To a large extent God's blessings are the common things of everyday life, and are apt to be taken as a matter of course. The enumeration of his blessings would include everything that we have, are, and enjoy. The spark of life we possess is only a remnant of that perfect life which Adam enjoyed, but let some sickness or accident threaten its loss and we will go to any length in trying to preserve it. Our body members and functions may be greatly impaired; but how much we enjoy being able to hear, to feel, to see, to smell, and to use our hands and feet in the many things of daily life necessary to our comfort and happiness. How many ever stop to think that every temporal blessing, and everything that is good in life's experiences, has come to us from God: not very many, we feel sure, considering mankind as a whole. Furthermore, not many realize the significance or the greatness of the blessing bestowed upon us in our ability to look ahead, to hope and plan for the future. The realities of the life to come, which we can now visualize only by faith, based on the promises of God's Word, far surpass anything we have seen or imagined. Paul, quoting from Isaiah 64:4 says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9). Can we contemplate the innumerable blessings received, and the grace divine in making such ample provision for our eternal welfare and happiness, and not desire to make some return in service, in obedience and loyalty to show appreciation for the same?

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me"? Suppose that we put the question in a slightly different form, and ask: "What do I have that I can render unto the Lord that will be acceptable to him?" A similar question was asked in Israel by the Prophet Micah (Micah 6:6, 7), when, in showing the futility of their tithes and offerings as a means of pleasing God, and after recounting some of God's blessings to them, he says: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" God had been very meticulous about these offerings in the making of types. But Micah shows that they were of no value as evidence of personal worthiness on the part of the Israelites. Likewise, all that we possess in time, talent, and means, would be of no value to God; for he is rich, he does not need our mite.

## **"MY SON, GIVE ME THINE HEART"**

But there is something which we can render unto the Lord that he will value very highly -- something that will mean more to him than would untold wealth if we had it to offer -- and that is the sincere love and gratitude of our hearts, made manifest in service, loyalty, and obedience to the extent of our ability. Through one of his messengers God says to us: "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" (Prov. 23:26). If love and gratitude are the motivating characteristics that prompt us to dedicate ourselves and all we possess to the doing of God's will, even though it be little in material value, it is precious in his sight, and through the merit of Jesus it is accepted as a perfect offering.

In types under the Law, God made it plain that blemished and imperfect offerings were not acceptable. Therefore when we offer ourselves in a full consecration unto God, our sacrifice can be approved by him only through the merit of our great High Priest, whose blood makes our offering holy and acceptable. God's acceptance of our consecration has resulted first, in our being baptized into Christ through the anointing and begetting operation of his spirit, which was preceded by the drawing and enlightenment of the spirit (John 6:44, 45).

## **"THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS"**

Then secondly, in coming into Christ we are figuratively decapitated, for he becomes our head; if faithful unto death, we are of the class seen by John under the altar (Rev. 6:9; 20: 4). Thirdly, we are given the great privilege of participation in his suffering and death (Rom. 8:17; Col. 1:24; 2 Tim. 2:11, 12). The death we die after coming into Christ could not be for our own sins, nor because of the sin of Adam, for the death of Jesus has satisfied that penalty (Rom. 8:1; Heb. 2:9). Paul says: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" His was a death of sacrifice on account of sin. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection . . . For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. *Likewise* reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:3-11). Whatever interpretation we may give to portions of this text, it is clear that we share the experiences of our Lord, partaking of his death and resurrection.

By keeping the law Jesus acquired the right to human life and inheritance, and in accord with the purpose of God he will use this right to purchase redemption for Adam and his progeny. In reward; for his willingness to sacrifice himself in rendering full loyalty and obedience to the doing of the Father's will, Jesus has been given the Father's own nature and fullness, and has been exalted far above all else in Creation. Jesus knew that his Father always rewarded faithfulness but seemingly he did not know the extent of the Father's reward for himself, for he prayed to be restored to his former position, but instead was exalted far above what he had been.

During the three and a half years that he was proving his right to be man's redeemer, Jesus was also being developed and fitted spiritually to be a merciful High Priest (Heb. 2:10, 17, 18). But the really astounding thing in this beneficence of God is that the body members of Christ are to become joint-heirs with him in the great reward given him by the heavenly Father. If our faith is strong enough to lay hold of this gratuitous grace of God and to run with patience the race that is set before us, then God will deal with us as sons.

In coming into Christ, a fourth thing that occurs is the relinquishment of all earthly hopes of inheritance. Our sacrifice which takes place prior to our becoming the blessers of mankind was pictured by the Levites, who relinquished their opportunity of inheritance in the land of Canaan that they, in replacing the firstborn of Israel, might be used of God as priests and helpers of the priests to minister to their brethren (Num. 8:5-19). A fifth thing that occurred when we were baptized into Christ, was

the beginning of a development as "new creatures," with spirit life and the hopes of a heavenly inheritance as our prospect, instead of the earthly blessings we would have received as men. This was a radical change and is one of the "all things that have become new" to us (2 Cor. 5:17).

A sixth thing that came to us, was a change in our abode. While as human beings we still occupy the same body, and may continue to live in the same house, city and country, yet our abode has changed to where the mind of the new creature is, dwelling in intimate spiritual relationship with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6, R.S.V.), for we are delivered from "the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. 1:13). "For our citizenship belongs to the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord, Jesus Christ, who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to his body glorious, in accord with the operation which enables him to subject even the universe to himself" (Phil. 3:20, 21, C.V.). These human bodies are not transfigured. It is the Body of the Christ as a whole, that is conformed to the Head.

### **'TAKE MY LIFE AND MAY IT BE LORD, ACCEPTABLE TO THEE'**

In an acceptable consecration we commit all that we have unto the Lord; we cannot reserve a single earthly right or possession, for Jesus says: "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). God does not deprive us of the use of these bodies, these wills, or the earthly things that were once recognized as belonging to us. He makes us stewards, servants that must give an account to him for the way in which we use them (Luke 16:1-11). As regards the things of this world we all, like Paul, "have nothing, yet possess all things" (2 Cor. 6:10). Having committed all unto the Lord, we will not attempt to direct ourselves but will look to our Head for direction. Some criticize the narrowness of this view, and admittedly it is narrow, for Jesus said: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14).

Our Lord knew that it would be difficult for us to carry out our covenant of sacrifice, for he also found it difficult, and said: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke 12:50). Realizing how his powers of endurance were taxed we might hesitate to consecrate and subject ourselves to the wiles of the adversary, who is adept in using the weaknesses of our flesh to trap and discourage us; but we have a power on our side that is equal to any emergency. The Psalmist recognizing this says: "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." Help through our Lord Jesus Christ is always available, and if we rely upon that help, we will be able to stand and to expect that victory will attend our strivings.

In the Father's sight we are dead as human beings from the moment our consecration is accepted and our induction into the body of Christ through the operation of the holy spirit is accomplished. But in actual experience the flesh is only reckoned dead, and we find it to be very fearful of the fiery trials that consume it; therefore it must be securely anchored (Heb. 6:19). But what are the cords that will hold it? Will fear of consequences be effective? No! We have seen what a vain cord this has proven to be in the preaching of eternal torment. Will a sense of duty, a full knowledge of doctrine, or even faith and hope in themselves, be strong enough to keep the sacrifice on the altar? No! The only cord strong enough to hold the rebellious flesh in subjection to our covenant, is Godlike love. Faith and hope are also essential to the binding, but "It is the love of Christ that constraineth us." It is love that constitutes the tie that cannot be broken.

"Now abideth faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

- *John T. Read*

## Knowledge, Doctrine, and Love

WHEN ONE speaks of "doctrine" he very often has in mind some confession of faith that he deems necessary to hold in order to be considered a follower of Jesus, but a little study of the Greek words translated by our English word "*doctrine*," soon convinces him that the whole teaching of Jesus and the Apostles is embraced in the word; and that it literally means instruction, teaching. Of course it can and sometimes does mean some particular point in our faith, but we should never lose sight, of the true meaning of the word, for like our English word "hell" it seems to have taken on an ecclesiastical meaning, which often makes clear thinking difficult. As an illustration of this, the following remark was made by one of the brethren after listening to a discourse: "Wasn't that a splendid talk -- and not a word about doctrine." Now it is quite evident that such a statement shows lack of thought, and it also shows how much we are influenced by previous training.

The word "doctrine" has been very prominently held before the minds of the Lord's people in the harvest time of this Age, and properly so, because its meaning contains all that we hold dear to our hearts. But because it has been used in controversy with certain points of faith that have been under discussion these last few years, it has become odious to many of the brethren, and that is not to their benefit.

When rightly understood, our doctrine is in a sense just about the most important thing to us, excepting our Lord himself. It is that knowledge of himself which he has so beneficently given us, without which we would be as nothing, could hope for nothing, understand nothing; let us then not be afraid to look at doctrine, look at it thankfully, look at it honestly. By that we mean to look down deep into our hearts, and try to see just how much or how little the Lord has given us to have and to hold as our very own, not because of what some person mayor may not have said concerning it. We ought to look at it lovingly, holding it above anything that this world could offer. By it we are informed what **to** believe, and also what to do. When we think of the infinite care with which our heavenly Father laid the foundation for our faith in the ages preceding our Age, the care bestowed on the making of examples for us, recording everything of instructive importance from Adam down to the beginning of the Gospel Age, and from there on writing our history in advance, and not ours only but giving such knowledge of the world in general as would be helpful to our spiritual welfare, surely our hearts should overflow with love both for the truth and for our God who gave it.

Now our instructions seem to make it very clear that there are two fundamental principles upon which we are to base our hopes of being with Jesus as members of his glorious Bride: the one is to know, and the other is to do; the one pertains to a knowledge of our instructions, the other to carry them out. Jesus said: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John 13:17.) Since our instructions have been given by our heavenly Father for the definite purpose of "bringing many sons to glory," it behooves each of us who has this hope within himself (the hope of being with Jesus as a member of that glorified Body) to know all he possibly can concerning those "instructions." This is knowledge. How much or how little any given member will have to acquire is not for us to decide. One thing we may be sure 'of though, the great judge will expect of each one according to his ability. Even in this world the scholar who applies himself to his task of learning, though he may not be brilliant, is looked upon with favor; but he that is slack, careless, is looked upon with disapproval. It has often been said that "we are in the school of Christ." Surely we are expected to be "diligent in business" in the study of our instructions, that we may know the will of our God concerning us.

The evidence that we must have knowledge to be accepted as a prospective member 'of the Body of Christ, is amply shown in the 'experience of "Cornelius" (Acts .10:1-6) , when the angel of the Lord came to him in :a vision and told him to send for Peter and said, "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." And again, Paul speaking of his people (Israel after the flesh) said concerning them: "They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." (Rom. 10:1, 2.) Also we are not to forget the admonition in 2 Tim. 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Now these Scriptures alone prove the absolute necessity of knowledge, and there are many more that lead to the same conclusion. However it does not seem likely that' many of the Lord's people will come short of pleasing him by underestimating the value of knowledge, especially those who have accepted "present truth." They indeed have come to know both how necessary, and how good it is. Through it they" have been given a wonderful vision of God and of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ-a vision so glorious that many of us are still trying to comprehend the grandeur of it. It seems that the Prophet David had this class in mind when he wrote: "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." (Psa. 4:7.) The corn and wine was promised to Israel after the flesh, but the gladness of heart was promised to us.

Aside from the inspired Apostles, it seems safe to say that the Church has never had so much knowledge as at the present time, and this knowledge is sweet indeed. It has satisfied the longings of our hearts in a manner that we never could have hoped for. Our blessed Master, true to his promise, has come forth and served his loved ones through that faithful servant. And how happy our hearts have been made, only the Master knows. Who then can sound the depths 'of joy that came with a knowledge of present truth. It has dispelled the doubts and fears engendered by higher criticism, evolution theories, and other "nightmares" too numerous to mention. By gaining an understanding of God's purposes, that peace which "passeth all understanding" came into our hearts, and as our minds became clear of the fog and superstition of the Dark Ages, joy took the place of sadness. Surely those that mourned in Zion, were given "beauty for ashes" and the "garment of praise" for the "spirit of heaviness." - Isa. 61:3.

But in this exuberance of joy some of us seemed to overlook the plain fact that gaining knowledge was not our goal, but that it was given to us as an aid to reach our goal, that we might wisely follow our "instructions" and reach the promised land. Like the Israelites of old, who had to follow their Lord awhile before they came to know his will concerning them; they had to go from Goshen through the "baptism" of the Red Sea, and beyond to Mt. Sinai before they really 'began to be instructed. So it is with us. It is from Sinai on that we begin to learn, and with some of us, it is a long way from Goshen to the Mountain.

Many of the Israelites who came out of Egypt never learned to do the Lord's will: "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said they do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest." (Heb. 3:10, 11.) The Apostle Paul, writing to the Church at Corinth, tells them that these things happened to them for examples (1 Cor. 10:6), and in Hebrews 12 'we are warned in the most forceful language, yet in language most tender, that we should not refuse him that speaketh (God speaks to us now through his Word). It behooves us therefore to apply ourselves diligently to obedience, and not be like unto them that "fell in the wilderness." When we study their behavior now, we probably think how foolishly they acted, and very likely we think had we been there, we certainly would not have done as they did; but let us not be too hasty in our conclusions, but rather let us as spiritual Israelites see to it that we do not err in spirit, as they did in the flesh. It is expected of us that we bear fruit to the glory of God. Jesus said: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." (John 15:8.) If we do not succeed in doing this, are we any wiser than they? Surely it has been

proved by precept and by example, that knowledge is one thing, and bearing fruit is quite another; and that sometimes we are more concerned about the former than the latter. This seems to be about as serious a mistake as we could possibly make, for it is our fruit-bearing qualities that will constitute our worthiness to be with Jesus in glory.

One thing we can be sure of while this side the veil (and perhaps beyond it) that "knowledge" is progressive. With some, knowledge is easily and quickly acquired, while with others it is more or less a laborious task. This being true, it should not surprise us to find that some of the Lord's people have a better understanding of doctrine (our instructions) than do others; but unless this greater knowledge is accompanied by a correspondingly greater fruitage of the spirit of Christ, the one possessing it is no better off for having it, because the very reason we have been given this knowledge is that we might be conformed to the image of Jesus, and if it does not assist us in doing that, it will have been given in vain in so far as we are personally concerned. But whether some gain knowledge more quickly than others 'or not, being "changed from glory to glory" is a slow process. "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." Moreover it has been made very easy for all of us to acquire knowledge at this time, for the vision has been made plain upon tables that "he may run that readeth it." But the "mark" for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14) has not been changed, not been made easier. By that we mean it will not be easier for us to love our enemies, and do good 'to those' that hate us and spitefully use us now, than it was for our brethren in the past. It is because we have need of this greater knowledge in these perilous 'times that it has been given.

But all our knowledge will prove no better than a life-boat without food or water, unless it helps us to grow in the likeness of Christ. If we were left to our own understanding of knowledge, and asked to define its relationship to spiritual growth, or how deep a knowledge one could have without a corresponding manifestation of the Spirit of Christ, we would in all probability modify it with the word, elementary, and content ourselves with the thought that one could not go far in knowledge without developing the graces of the spirit. However the Apostle Paul gives us a very clear-cut statement of the relative importance of knowledge and love when he says: "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love] I am nothing."

Another thing we do well to remember in connection with general knowledge is, that no matter how well we may be instructed, our knowledge at the present time is not perfect. In our imperfect condition we can no more be perfect in this knowledge than in any other quality. Why then should we defer our love for those who (while giving every evidence of consecration to the Lord) may see less or more than ourselves. If the great Apostle Paul could say: "Now we see through a glass darkly," he who was abundant in "revelations," caught- up to paradise, and saw things not lawful to utter, surely we must admit that we do not see plainly. That does not mean that we should not endeavor to see alike. To dwell together in unity of thought and action is certainly the ideal for which to strive. This would be perfection, but we are not perfect. We must let love abound, and cover the imperfections of our brethren with the mantle thereof. Even the Apostles did not see alike on all points, without discussion, and endeavor. This is made *very* plain in the Apostle Paul's Epistle to -the Galatians. Seventeen years after he began his ministry, he went up to Jerusalem, to compare notes so to speak. At that time there was controversy over circumcision and uncircumcision; and later when Peter was come to Antioch, Paul "withstood him face to face." This proves to us that it takes endeavor on our part, and the manifestation of the spirit of the Master to overcome our difficulties.

What a calamity it would have been had love not prevailed among the Apostles. What calamities often come among the brethren today because love does not prevail.

It seems quite certain then that love is a final test; and we might add, love for the brethren, for says the Apostle John: "If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment we have from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." (1 John 4:20,21.) This being true, we have never had better opportunities for demonstrating our love for our heavenly Father than at the present time.

The Lord's people are divided into little groups throughout the world, and unless we take the attitude of the Papacy, we would not dare to say his saints are all in this group, or in that. No, we must admit they are in all the divisions; and since we are not able to judge who, or where, we must say they are all our brethren. If that is true, then how are we showing forth the love of Christ? Surely not by indifference. There is no such thing as "the love of indifference." Neither can we show the love of Christ by lukewarmness. What kind of love is that, you ask -- the love of lukewarmness? It is this kind. It is the kind of love that says: "I love the brethren in all these divisions, I wish them well, I certainly do not wish them any harm. I can not do anything about it, so I forget the whole thing." That is not the love of Christ. If his love went no further than that, we would be lost today. The love of Christ is a saving love, it reaches down to help us up. Jesus had to humble himself to demonstrate that love. Let us therefore go and do likewise.

Let us endeavor by prayer, and by supplication, and by doing the things we know, "grow in grace" and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

- *W. W. Boutlier.*

## MY LORD AND I

*(Sung in the rocks and caves of France during the fierce persecution of the Huguenots 300 years ago.)*

I have a Friend so precious,  
So very dear to me,  
He loves me with such tender love,  
He loves so faithfully,  
I could not live apart from him.  
I love to feel him nigh,  
And so we DWELL together,  
My Lord and I.

Sometimes I'm faint and weary;  
He knows that I am weak,  
And as he bids me lean on him,  
His help I gladly seek;  
He leads me in the paths of light  
Beneath a sunny sky,  
And so we WALK together,  
My Lord and I.

He knows how much I love him,  
He knows I love him well;  
But with what love he loveth me  
My tongue can never tell;  
It is an everlasting love  
In ever rich supply;  
And so we LOVE each other,  
My Lord and I.

I tell him all my sorrows,  
I tell him all my joys,  
I tell him all that pleases me,  
I tell him what annoys;  
He tells me what I ought to do,  
He tells me what to try;  
And so we TALK together,  
My Lord and I.

He knows how I am longing  
Some weary soul to win,  
And so he bids me go and speak  
The loving word for him;  
He bids me tell his wondrous love,  
And why he came to die;  
And so we WORK together,  
My Lord and I.

I have his yoke upon me,  
And easy 'tis to bear;  
In the burden which he carries  
I gladly take a share;  
For then it is my happiness  
To have him always nigh --  
We BEAR THE YOKE together,  
My Lord and I.

## To Be With Christ

*"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ' which is far better."  
- Phil. 1:23.*

TOGETHER with the epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon, that to the Philippians was written by the Apostle Paul when "a prisoner of Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:1; Phil. 1:9). This phrase shows how the Apostle regarded his imprisonment. He was there not by the will of the Roman Emperor, but by the will of his Lord because of his faithful allegiance to Christ. He knew his Lord could deliver him from his chains (Eph. 6:20) just as miraculously as He had earlier rescued Peter. The "chains fell off from Peter's hands" when the angel of the Lord came to deliver him. (Acts 12:7; 5:19.) Paul knew the Lord could do no less for him and since He did not do so, was content in the will of his Lord. But "the word of the Lord was not bound" and from those prison walls the epistles above named issued forth, rich in profound spiritual truth. There are lessons in this experience of the Apostle that we can apply to ourselves and take to heart. Some of these are in the last chapter of the Philippian letter but are not our present meditation.

The Apostle addressed "all the saints in Christ Jesus" at Philippi together with "the overseers and deacons." He mentions his fond remembrance of them, with thanks to God and supplication on their behalf, rejoicing for their fellowship in the gospel. They were one with him in love for the Lord and the furtherance of the gospel. In his final words, recalling the love they had shown in their generosity to sup 1 his necessity and how *they had fellowship with him in his affliction*, he refers to them as "my brethren *dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown.*" - Phil. 4:1, 18.

Turning to the text from which the article title is taken, we draw attention to the Diaglott translation with its clearer rendering supported by the context. It reads: "I am indeed, hard pressed by the *two* things; -- (I have an earnest desire for the returning, and *being with Christ*, since it is very much to be preferred)." The word in the original which is translated "depart" in the A.V. is "*anulusai*" and is given as "return" in Luke 12:36 where the meaning is clear. The Apostle could not have been thinking of departing from this present life through death. That was one of the "two things" he had already referred to in Luke 12:20-22; the other being to continue in life. This *third thing* -- much to be preferred than the other two -- can therefore be seen as applying only to the *return* of Christ for then, and only then, would he be "with Christ." This was the deep longing of his heart, as it is of every child of God, the one in "living union" with Christ here and now.

### "HAVING A DESIRE"

The word translated "desire" in this text is one that is mostly used in connection with wrong or evil desires, when it is invariably rendered "lusts." In this passage however, and in Luke 22:15 and 1 Thess. 2:17, it is used in a righteous, tender, and noble sense.

The essential meaning of the word, no matter how used, is that of craving, longing, a yearning, an intensity of desire. Used by our Lord when He partook of the last Passover and then instituted the Memorial feast alone with the immediate disciples, the word betokens the close identity of them with Him and looks forward to the day when they would drink the cup of joy, of victory and blessing *new with Him* in His Father's Kingdom. (Matt. 26:29; Luke 22:28-30.) In Philippians the Apostle speaks of his earnest longing to be "*with Christ*" and then, in his letter to the Thessalonians he expresses his great desire to see them again as he loved them so dearly. (1 Thess. 2:8.) Writing to the Philippians, he does not speak of a "desire" either for life or death (Phil. 1:20-22) but only of "*being with Christ.*" He knew that this transcendent joy and blessedness, in all its glorious reality, would be experienced only at the return of Christ. This had been

specially revealed to him as he wrote the Thessalonian brethren (1 Thess. 4:16, 17): "and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

What was it that created this intense love and longing within the heart of Paul who had been such a zealous opponent and persecutor of Christ and His followers? What changed the heart of a blasphemer into one that loved and adored? (Acts 9:5; 22:1-16; 1 Tim. 1:12-14.) Furthermore, what explains the existence of this longing, this unusual and humanly unnatural intense desire in the hearts of many thousands since, to "*be with Christ*"? After all, these have the same common origin as members of the fallen human race. Yet theirs is this same deep heartfelt longing which "*being with Christ*" alone can and will satisfy. It is not natural for one born of the flesh, "of the earth earthy", to have such a desire and deep longing for Heaven, to "*be with Christ*." Such a longing cannot be self-generated. There are two explanations as to its cause. First and foremost, indeed of necessity, it is wrought by God who also has "given us the earnest of the Spirit" as a foretaste of that which is to come. (2 Cor. 5:5; 1:22; Eph. 1:14-the only three instances of the word in the original being translated "earnest".) A further and second explanation -- a corollary of the first -- is the experience in a personal and intimate sense of the love of God and of Christ His Son throughout our earthly pilgrimage. This serves to increase the desire and longing.

By the Will of God, those possessed of this ardent longing have been brought into a personal relationship to Him as His children, and into living union with Christ. They are a "New Creation" -- God's workmanship. He works in them throughout their earthly pilgrimage to fulfill His marvelous purpose for them. On their part, they also live for this same Divine purpose; they "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling." (James 1:18; John 1:14, 17; Eph. 2:10; Heb. 13:20, 21; 1 Pet. 4:2; Phil. 2:12, 13.) They are brought into an entirely *new life*, the realm and life of the Spirit, having died to the flesh, to sin, and to the world. In Rom. 6:3 the Apostle sets forth this truth in *respect of some*; that when they were baptized, they were "baptized into *Jesus Christ*" and thereby "baptized into His death." Let us note carefully the particular wording: "Know ye not that *as many of you as* were baptized into *Jesus Christ* were baptized into *His death*?" The words are precise and particular, not general; they apply to *some* but not to *all*. Paul does *not* say "when *you* were baptized, *you* were baptized into *Jesus Christ* and into *His death*, but rather "*as many of you*." He uses similar language in Galatians, an epistle addressed generally to "all the churches of Galatia." - Gal. 1:2; 3:27.

## THE LIVING UNION

This truth of a "living union" with Christ is forcefully taught in the illustration of the Vine and the Branches by our Lord in John 15:1-16. The branches cannot survive apart from the vine which is the source of their sustenance. Thereby they live and bear fruit, for "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, no more can ye except ye abide in Me" (John 15:4). Only those who experience this vital union here and now, will be "with Christ" forever. (John 17:22-24.) May this amazing, glorious and vital truth "stir up our pure minds", to use Peter's words.

This life in union with Christ means that we live in and for Him and He in us, so that there is nothing in life apart from Him. All our unwitting sins are being continually cleansed through faith in His blood and as we "walk in the light as He is in the light", all known and confessed sins are forgiven. (1 John 1:7,9.) There is no aspect of light into which He is not brought. To please the Lord and do His will is our chief concern. It brings with it the unspeakable joy and blessedness of communion and fellowship with the Lord and an increasing awareness of His presence; a walking with the Lord. He "manifests" Himself, causes us to know the tenderness of His love, care and protection. The "things unseen" by natural sense and which are eternal, become more real and precious than the "things that are seen" which are only temporary. These recede and have less and

less interest for both heart and mind. True abiding rest and "the peace of God" are realized as all burdens are taken to and "cast" upon Him. All wisdom, grace, life and strength are derived from Him, "our all sufficiency in all things."

Often there is a clear awareness of the presence of the Lord and His protective guardian power. The Apostle Paul wrote of one occasion when "all forsook me but the Lord stood by me." He knew he was not alone. But this is equally true at all times though we may not be conscious of it. Even when we may be in a subconscious state, for He has promised "Lo, I am with you always." A hymn expresses it thus: "A Sovereign Protector have I, unseen *yet forever at hand*." What then have we to fear. - 2 Cor. 4:17, 18; 5:1; John 6:57; Gal. 2:20; 1 Pet. 5:7; Psa. 55:22; Rev. 3:20; 2 Cor. 3:5; 2 Tim. 4:17.

Above all, is the experience of the Heavenly Father's tender love, care and pity "like as a father" for us, His abundant mercy as He chastens and disciplines us. Also the redeeming love of Christ "who gave Himself for us" and said "the Father Himself loveth you." These precious words spoken to His immediate disciples are no less intended for us who likewise have been made One with Him (John 17:20, 21.) As this infinite Divine love is experienced, the heart is overwhelmed by the wonder that this is now possible. The heart is constrained by the Holy Spirit to love the Lord supremely. This desire, together with the endeavor, increases. There is a hallowed rest in prayer with the blessed assurance as we pray that we are "in the Holiest of all", the Father's presence. (John 16:26, 27; 1 Pet. 1:8; Matt. 11:27; John 14:21-23; Heb. 13:5.) These are some of the priceless blessings now enjoyed by which flow from a "living union" with Christ throughout our earthly pilgrimage.

### THE FUTURE UNION

What will it mean *to be "with Christ"*? The illustration of bridegroom and bride is used in the New Testament of the relationship of Christ and His Church, and with references to the "marriage and marriage supper of the Lamb." This will be fulfilled completely when the Church is glorified and united with her Lord. (Eph. 5:27; Rev. 19:7,9; 1 Thess. 4:16-18.) We cannot begin to conceive the wonder, transcendent beauty, ineffable joy and glory to be! A beautiful hymn describes one aspect:

The Bride eyes not her garments,  
But her dear Bridegroom's face:  
I will not gaze at glory,  
But on my King of grace --  
Not at the crown He giveth,  
But on His outstretched hand;  
The Lamb is all the glory  
Of Immanuel's land.

There will be the welcome "Home"; to the home our Lord has prepared. (John 14:3, Roth.) "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." He will give Himself to the overcomer in the fulness of His infinite love. "I will give him the Morning Star" is the promise. (Rev. 2:28; compare Rev. 22:16.) Our capacity to receive and *reciprocate* the wealth of that Divine love will then be unlimited; now it is finite.

Above all, beatific "fulness of joy and pleasures forevermore" in the Heavenly Father's presence; to SEE HIS FACE whom "no man hath seen or can see". The holiness of God will be ours endlessly. To be with Christ will mean *being with Him forever. Where He is we shall be. In all*

*the future works and purpose that the Father has centered in Him, we shall share. Then as the countless ages follow, ours will be the great honor and boundless joy to be "to the praise of the glory of His grace" bestowed upon us who were at one time alienated from God, "dead in trespasses and sins even as others." (Psa. 16:11; Rev. 22:4,5; Heb. 12:10; Eph. 1:10-12; 2:1, 7)* This transcendent day and blessedness is very near. Soon "the mystery of God shall be finished." Let us then not be faint or weary but continue to be faithful, relying upon the promised grace and strength day by day. The Lord will never, never, fail us, as we continue faithful and steadfast.

- G. H. Jennings

## **Entered Into Rest**

Ada Cooper, Boise, Idaho.  
Sharon L. Dahlberg, Kenosha, Wis.  
Bessie Ensley, Wenatchee, Wash.  
Floyd Greggs, Warren, Ohio  
Mary Ignacak, New Britain, Conn.  
Mary Olesiak, Chicago, Ill.  
Leslie F. Shephard, Cardiff, Wales  
John H. Snoes, Essex, Ont.

## A Few Closing Words

"Of the things that we have spoken, this is the sum." - Hebrews 8:1,

THE MORAL and political history of mankind for the last twenty five centuries has been working out a program divinely revealed beforehand to Daniel in Babylon. This grand outline, which includes the chronological relation of the events predicted to the coming kingdom of God, is given in the brief but pregnant sentence of the angel, "Four kingdoms shall arise out of the earth; but the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess it for ever, even for ever and ever." - Dan. 7:18.

The period in which the saints are destined to do this -- fixed from the beginning in the eternal counsels, mysteriously indicated in this prophecy, and made plain in these days by providential fulfillments -- is, as every sign of our time indicates, at hand. *It will be a day of sore judgment* on false professions of the name of Christ, but a day which will bring eternal glory to the true Church, and unspeakable blessing to the repentant remnant of the Jewish people, as well as to the spared nations of the Gentile world. *It will come suddenly and unexpectedly, when least looked for by men.* With united voice history, chronology, astronomy, and Scripture endorse this solemn conclusion, and bid the Church lift up her head, because her great redemption is now close at hand.

Now knowledge is the guide of action. If we know these things, happy are we if we act accordingly. We do well to learn and to believe; but "faith without works is dead." Let all who believe in the Lord show their faith by their works.

TRUE BELIEVERS, hold fast! Trim your lamps, and be ready; we have not long to wait. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." "Let us not sleep, as do others." "The Lord is at hand." Let us awake, and act!

YOUNG CHRISTIANS, with all your fresh powers, your vigor of mind and body, your attractiveness, your sympathies, your knowledge of the truth, your warmth of first love, what are you doing with your priceless possessions in this closing period? *Redeem the time*; for the last sands are running in the hourglass of this evil age, and on every side work in profusion is awaiting willing hands and loving hearts.

UNSAVED READER of these lines, what are you doing to *lay hold on eternal life*? You may be moral in your relationships to your fellowmen, but what are your relations to God? He claims, and justly claims, the first place in your heart and mind; your deepest trust, your warmest love; you are not giving Him these, and hence the day of Christ, which glows with glory and joy to His people, looks dark and dreadful to you. We speak to you in His name. He died upon the cross that all who believe in Him should be justified and saved. His message to you is in your mouth and heart. Believe and live! Turn. Trust. Be reconciled to God. Take His gift *freely*. Learn, and you will love. Then Christ shall be *in you-your own, your All*.

SKEPTICS, you who reject with a smile of superior wisdom the very notion of inspired prophecy and of God in history, we challenge you to account for the numerous and unquestionable facts set forth in the Bible. Here are *proofs* of foreknowledge and prediction which *you cannot honestly gainsay*. The day for denying the true date of Daniel is past. Can you give any credible account of the fore-view of human history contained in his book? Is it within the power of man to discern and delineate the events of twenty five future centuries, with their times? Yet you are witnessing

in the political condition of Europe this day that which was foreseen and foretold in the days of Nebuchadnezzar! What does this mean? It means that the Mind which made your mind is appealing to it. God has not left Himself without a witness! He is saying to you "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: *before they spring forth I tell you of them*" (Isa. 42:9). "Who hath declared this from ancient time? ... have not I, the Lord? and there is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me" (Isa. 45:21). If the Bible be not Divine, you will lose nothing by studying it candidly; while if it be so, you may gain more than tongue can tell! "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Search the Divine word. He who will not *search* shall not *find*.

STUDENTS of the sure word of prophecy, let no anti-Christianism surprise you. *Before Christ, Antichrist*. Such is the foretold order. We have had the great predicted historic Antichrist in the self-exalting head of Papal superstition; we have now its soul-destroying result and outcome in the existence of modern infidelity. But the darkest hour is that before the dawn. Let us gird on our armour for the final conflict, and strive for the reward promised "to him that *overcometh*."

The "sure word of prophecy" was given for the guidance and establishment of faith. The apostasies of the falsely professing Church, its fall into vice, superstition, and infidelity, viewed as *foretold*, ought to be a confirmation of our faith! The fact that the Jews fulfilled prophecy in rejecting Christ is one reason why we receive Him. The fact that so large a portion of Christendom now in another way rejects Him was equally foretold, and is an added reason why we should cleave to Him in faith.

May we see through this anti-Christianism, tracing it to its roots in the historic past, and to its fruits in the foretold future! May the despairing infidelity, the scoffing unbelief, the Christ-rejecting, God-ignoring blasphemy of these days be seen in their true light, as the natural, predicted consequence of the long continued corruption of the professing Church! It is a question of the rotting of dead branches severed from the true and living Vine, of the mortification of lifeless members. Modern infidelity is the legitimate outcome of the great Apostasy, which, having passed through many and various stages, is now assuming its final form. Long has been the warfare waged by the powers of darkness "against Jehovah and His Anointed"; now the last conflict has set in. Let us not shrink from it! The world has never changed in its rejection of Christ nor the true Church in its faith in Him. The cross is still "a stone of stumbling and rock of offence" to the disobedient, but still also "the power of God unto salvation" to every one who believes. Let us remember the solemn and repeated warnings of the Word of God. Is it not written, "They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables"? Is it not written, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful"? Is it not written also, "But ye, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness"? But instead of apostatizing thus, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever." - 2 Pet. 3:17, 18.

May the spirit of careless security, the popular "peace and safety" cry of these days, which is the foretold precursor of the coming of "sudden destruction," have no power over us to lull us into unwatchfulness and unbelief! Let us not expose ourselves to the reproachful question, "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" May we "be diligent," that we "may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless"! May we "abide" in Him, and abound in the work of His service according to His word, "*Occupy till I come*"! May we stir up the gift that is in us, utilize the buried talents, and bring in the precious sheaves of the harvest field! "*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*" - Titus 2:13.

- H. Gratton Guinness

## Report on the 1983 Nigeria Convention

THE FIRST African Bible Students Convention was held in Ibadan, Nigeria, May 1-6, under the sponsorship of the Bible Students Committee for Africa. The convention was the latest in a series of efforts over the last twelve years to encourage growing interest among Nigerians in their studies in the Scriptures and the Bible Students position.

The twelve hour convention days contained a variety of studies, discourses, testimony meetings, and other special services. Daily two and one quarter hour studies were held on such subjects as The Divine Plan of the Ages, Work of the Holy Spirit, Organization of the New Creation, Consecration, God's Great Covenants, and the Book of Revelation.

Although the attendance was limited, partly due to severe economic conditions that presently prevail in Nigeria, the interest own in the studies and continued Bible discussions during intermissions was very impressive. The regular attendants from Nigeria only numbered ten, but they represented five different states of Nigeria from distances as far as 500 miles.

As a result of the convention, the Nigerian brethren have been encouraged to organize a Nigerian Bible Students Association and are making plans for regular get-togethers for the brethren from the various areas of the country. They will attempt to have these national gatherings about four times a year.

Because of the scattered interest in Nigeria, there are only three areas where there are sufficient brethren to have meetings. In the city of Ibadan, the largest city in Nigeria, a small class of four brethren and their children meet together two times a week for Bible study. In the city of Warri three brethren meet together once a week. Another meeting is held in the state of Cross River.

During the convention there was an immersion service, and Donatus Ariowodor from Imo State was baptized. Most of the other brethren in Nigeria have already been immersed, with the concept being a full immersion into Christ's sacrificial death.

The brethren from America who attended to lead the studies included David Rice, of San Diego, California; Richard Evans, of Fresno, California; Timothy Krupa, of Portland, Oregon; Rick Buss, of Albuquerque, New Mexico; Paul Lagno, of Omaha, Nebraska; Carl Hagensick, of Chicago, Illinois; and Raymond Luke, of Jersey City, New Jersey.

The work of the Bible Students Committee for Africa began in 1972 with two visits to that country by brethren from the United States. During those visits the great religious interest in Nigeria was apparent. At that time it was particularly in the area now known as Cross River State, then known as Biafra. However, as annual visits continued, much of the interest appeared to be superficial; yet, there was always sufficient depth of interest to encourage brethren to go back the following year. Each of the annual trips have found abundant new interest in the Bible, at the same time containing disappointments with a lack of continuing former interest.

The nucleus that met at this particular convention however, represented only continued interest from prior years. On this occasion no attempt was made to give a public witness for new interest, but merely to encourage those who responded from the prior trips of brethren.

The Nigerian brethren who are studying the *Scripture Studies* face a unique set of problems from those in other parts or the world. Many of them were born to parents of pagan ancestry. In their

early adult years they made a move from the pagan religions into one of the various Christian missionary religions that prevail throughout the country. Several have a Catholic background, some the Pentecostal, and a few the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Religious backgrounds in Africa are somewhat different from what they would be in other parts of the world. As the various churches have endeavored to work within Africa, many have found it expedient to "Africanize" their religion, bringing a blend of pagan customs into their Christian religion. This is more evident among the Protestant religions and not particularly the case with Catholics and Jehovah's Witnesses. There are also a large number of indigenous churches in Africa, some very sizable. A few brethren come from the background of one of these, the Church of the Cherubim and Seraphim.

The African brethren have found that their current beliefs are sufficiently diverse from the churches with which they were once associated, that they have made a complete break from them. This has caused some problems, because organized churches play such an integral role in the society of Nigeria. All cemeteries and burial plots are supervised by the churches. Brethren who have excluded themselves from them find themselves without the privilege of access to a cemetery and must bury their dead in their back yard or a private plot. Marriage ceremonies are another area of difficulty, since Nigerian marriages are religious and not performed by the civil authorities. For these reasons the brethren hope that by organizing the Nigerian Bible Students Association, they will be able to provide an alternative to these necessities in their regular lives.

In addition to the ten Nigerian consecrated brethren who attended the convention, there are probably another ten to twenty of equal interest scattered in various parts of the country. In fact, twenty-nine had originally indicated their intent to be at the convention, although only ten were able to make it.

Besides this solid core interest of some twenty to thirty people, there are many thousands who have received literature and expressed interest in the Scriptures. It has been the policy of the Bible Students Committee for Africa, in responding to the thousands of requests for literature, to send a booklet with a questionnaire which must be completed by the reader in order to show his comprehension of it before he is sent an additional free booklet. Questionnaires have also been prepared on the First Volume of *Scripture Studies* and are currently being prepared on the Fifth volume. There are many repeated requests for literature accompanied by these returned questionnaires. One of the members of the Bible Students Committee for Africa goes over the questionnaires before issuing the next piece of literature.

Currently, the Frank and Ernest Radio Program is being aired on two stations throughout Nigeria as a continuing public witness. Two of the Bible Students' films are now in Nigeria for the brethren to show to their families and others. Interest is encouraged by continued correspondence organized on a state by state basis by the various members of the Bible Students Committee for Africa.

Anyone interested in more details regarding the work in Africa should contact the Bible Student Committee for Africa, the current chairman of which is Carl Hagensick, 11000 S. Mansfield Avenue, Chicago Ridge, Ill. 60415.

- C. Hagensick