

Drama Of The Ages

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

WE LIVE in a wonderful world, surrounded by a more wonderful universe, of which our world is only a small part. The blazing sun, the twinkling stars, the birds, the beasts, the flowers, and a thousand other things in nature all are marvels that stagger the imagination.

Whence came all these things? Did they appear by blind chance, or did someone make them and set them in order?

And man-whence did he come? What was his origin? and what may he know of his destiny?

These questions have puzzled the minds of the great and learned for millenniums, and still many inquirers have not found a satisfactory answer.

The most wonderful things about the universe are its perfect order and symmetry. There are untold millions of planets like our world, all spinning through space at terrific speeds and yet with the exactness and precision of clockwork. There is never any lost motion, never the slightest deviation from the usual path, never a collision between two of these heavenly bodies; everywhere and always is perfect organization, harmony, and beauty.

Many men have believed that the earth and the universe came into being through some process of evolution, behind which was no plan and no intelligence; that the universe just happened; that man came from some lower order of life perhaps from the ape or monkey family-and that this family in turn sprang from still lower orders of life.

The great difficulty about the various evolutionary theories is the fact that not one of them has ever been proved. The most preposterous teaching on earth is that which asks man to believe that an orderly universe such as ours, with all its symmetry and beauty, could come into being without someone's first planning it and then executing that plan. Such teaching staggers faith and leaves man entirely void of any certain knowledge as to his origin or the beginning of things about him.

In fact, the evolutionist knows of no beginning. If he thinks back to a time when there was nothing, then he has gone back too far, since he then has nothing to begin with and no one to plan a beginning. He is always groping in the dark.

Created by God

Several thousand years ago the Biblical prophet Moses, under inspiration, wrote of these things, and said: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1: 1. These are the first words of the Bible, and they are the most logical and satisfactory explanation ever given of the origin of the universe.

The Bible begins with a living, all-powerful all-wise God, who has power to create-to make things from nothing. He is presented as the great Architect and Builder of all things.

"By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Colossians 1: 16, 17.

"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Your hands." Hebrews 1: 10.

The Bible story of creation as found in the first three chapters of Genesis declares that this earth, with all that pertains to it, was made in six literal days, perfect and good.

"And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." Gen. 1: 31; 2: 1.

Everything started in its creation at its highest state of perfection. The first lily that bloomed in the earth was not evolved from some wild plant, but, on the very day that it was created, shone forth in glory greater than Solomon's. The grapes hung in full, luscious clusters on the vine. The giants of the forest were perfect in form and size on the day that they were created.

"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew." Gen. 2: 4, 5.

"And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." Gen. 1: 29. These things did not, therefore, grow up by slow development from atoms or germs. Everything in the world and the universe, whether man, animal, or plant, started with a full grown and perfect life. That is God's creation.

The idea that the first man was a half -developed, savage brute and that his home was among the caves is a fable concocted by Satan, who is God's enemy. It has no foundation in either fact or reason. The most perfect human being, aside from Christ, ever to live upon the earth was the first man. He was like God. The record says: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Gen. 1: 27.

Even after sin deprived the first pair of access to Eden and placed them under the shadow of death, the physical strength of the early 'generations of men was such that many lived to be almost one thousand years old.

Man was God's masterpiece in the creation of the earth. He was to have been God's personal representative and to govern in His new creation. Alas, that man should ever have fallen from that high estate and forfeited his right even to his home in Eden! Alas, for man, that Paradise should be so hard to regain!

Said David, the king of Israel, of the Creator: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork." Psalm 19: 1. Everything in the natural realm speaks of God and testifies to His creative power.

The Earth

Take the earth. There was a time when almost everyone believed it to be flat.

Then came the knowledge that the earth is a round ball some 25,000 miles in circumference. Three fourths of this globe is covered with water, and yet none of it spills out and is wasted. Men and women travel around the earth, north and south, east and west; and yet they have never succeeded in finding its moorings or foundations. In fact, it has none.

Job, God's ancient prophet, declared concerning the Creator: "He stretches out the north over the empty place, and hangs the earth upon nothing." Job 26: 7. When God created this world, He placed it out in space and started it spinning like a top. There it has remained, in obedience to His command.

Nor is this all. The earth sweeps around the sun many times faster than the swiftest modern aeroplane flies. It is constantly on the move through space. The slightest deviation off course or any sudden false motion would result in the instantaneous destruction of its inhabitants. The same is true of other planets. But these calamities never happen. Why? There can be only one satisfactory answer. The God who formed them and started them in motion guides them by His own powerful hand as they fly through space and as each performs its own peculiar functions.

The Stars

One day God asked His servant Abraham, "Can thou tell the stars by number?". No, he could not, nor can anyone today, after thousands of years of effort aided by all the marvelous instruments of modern invention.

Scholars today, of course, know more of the heavenly host than did Abraham, but this increased knowledge does not bring the desired answer. Men become more and more confused and baffled, because with modern instruments, the great observatories, and centuries of study, they still cannot count the number of the heavenly bodies. No one can measure all the distances between them or conceive the millions of worlds which God has created and strewn through immeasurable space.

True, men today can see the same stars that Abraham saw. They are the same today as then; the passing years have not dimmed their glory. The storms of millenniums have not blown them off their courses. There has never been a hair's breadth deviation from their appointed paths. They still appear nightly in the heavens at the very instant they appeared when Abraham watched them in the land of the Chaldees.

Today the powerful 100-inch telescope reveals one hundred and twenty-five times as many celestial bodies as were visible to Abraham. Yet this reveals only the fringe of God's universe. The new 200-inch telescope, mounted in the Palomar Observatory, has opened up the heavens still further, and man can view at least twenty-seven times more than he could previously. But even this will not reveal all of God's wonders. Infinitude of space will stretch beyond.

All Under His Control

The marvel of marvels is that all this vast, limitless universe is constantly under the control of the infinite God. He planned it all. He created it all. He guides and upholds it all.

"Have you not known? have you not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He that sits upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretches out the heavens as a curtain, and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in. . . . To whom then will you liken Me, or shall I be equal? said the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that brings out their host by number: He calls them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power not one fails." Isaiah 40: 21, 22, 25, 26.

It is God, declared Job, "which commands the sun ... and seals up the stars. Which alone spreads out the heavens, and treads upon the waves of the sea. Which makes Arcturus. Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. Which does great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number." Job 9: 7-10.

"But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation.

"He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion.

"When He utters His voice, there is a multitude of ' waters in the heavens, and He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightning with rain, and brings forth the wind out of His treasures." Jeremiah 10: 10, 12, 13.

No- wonder King David exclaimed, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Psalm 53:1. Without a living, all powerful, all-wise God the universe could never have come into being, and without the constant exertion of His power it could not continue either to function or to exist. These things are not the product of blind force, but are the handiwork of God.

Into this wonderful and beautiful universe God introduced man. The earth, though small among the planets, was given to him as a place of habitation. Over it he was to have complete dominion. A garden was planted in Eden for the home of the first pair. This home was to be a model to succeeding generations as they spread over the whole earth.

Adam and Eve, the progenitors of the human race, were created a little lower than the angels and were perfect in both form and character. They were like God, made in His image, and clothed with garments of light and glory. They were commanded to be fruitful and to populate the earth with a race of beings like themselves. This was to be their eternal abode.

Thus the drama of earth's ages began. It is a sad, sad story though it had a bright beginning and will have a glorious ending. The thread of the story leads through a dark night of six thousand years of rebellion, failure, and sin. Happily, it is to end in eternal day and in the complete restoration of man, clothed in immortality and glory, to his original home.

It is with this enthralling story that deals. THE AUTHOR.

1. A REBEL VISITS EDEN

BACK in the remote past, before the creation of this earth, there was among the mighty angels of God one "Lucifer," who was known by his fellows as "the son of the morning." He occupied the exalted position of leader of the angelic choir and stood next to the Son of God in command of the heavenly host.

An Angel Rebels

Stranger than fiction is the Bible record of how this exalted being finally instituted a rebellion against God, led a host of the angels to follow him, and was at last expelled from heaven. This Lucifer, now transformed into "the devil," has become the sworn enemy of God and of all who seek to follow Him.

The Bible record of this outbreak of lawlessness in heaven is both startling and astonishing. The revelator declares:

"And there was war in heaven: Michael [Christ] and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12: 7-9.

So Satan came from heaven. Jesus, who as Captain of the loyal heavenly host cast him out, modestly declared: 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.'" Luke 10: 18.

The mighty Lucifer was one of God's created beings. He was not the Creator, nor was he in any sense equal to God the Father or His Son; but because of his exalted position and the beauty and perfection of his person, he became lifted up, and jealousy filled his heart. This was the beginning of his downfall. Speaking of Lucifer, under the title of the Prince of Tyrus, Ezekiel has left us the following record:

"Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus said the Lord God; Thou seals up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou has been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou was created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covers. and I have set thee so: thou was upon the holy mountain of God; thou has walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou was created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou has sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou has corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee." Ezekiel 28: 12-17.

"Thou art the anointed cherub that covers." Verse 14. This clearly indicates Satan's exalted position in heaven. David declared that God dwells between the cherubims. (Psalm 80: 1.) Two heavenly beings stand by the side of God's throne and overshadow it with their outstretched wings, as was clearly illustrated by the ark and its covering cherubs in the earthly sanctuary. Lucifer was the "anointed" cherub. He stood next to the throne.

"Thou was Perfect in thy ways from the day that thou was created, till iniquity was found in thee." Ezekiel 28: 15.

Not Created a Devil

The fact that Lucifer was created is evidence that he was not equal to the great self-existent God, but he was not created a demon. He was perfect. God had made him so. There was no root of sin or iniquity in him. But it was with him that sin originated. God was in no way responsible for his downfall. Lucifer had the same power to do right as did any of the other created beings in God's universe. There was no legitimate cause or excuse for his disaffection and subsequent transgression. Jesus later declared of him that he was a liar and the father of it. That is, sin had its inception in the heart of this angel, and for it God had absolutely no responsibility.

The chief reasons given in the Bible for the disaffection of Lucifer are pride and jealousy. "Your heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou has corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Verse 17. The proverb was as true then as it is today that "pride goes before a fall." Lucifer became dissatisfied with his position, felt that one as grand, wise, and beautiful as he should receive more recognition, and finally decided to do something about it. He would force his way up. He would even become equal with God. The working of Lucifer's mind at this time is clearly described by the prophet Isaiah:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! For thou has said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars [angels] of God: I will sit - also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." Isaiah 14: 12-14.

Thus Lucifer was determined to be ranked no longer as an angel. Henceforth, he would establish his rule over the angelic host and even displace God Himself.

Rebellion Is Sin

This rebellion against God and His kingdom was sin. "Sin," declares John, "is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3: 4), and Lucifer now regarded himself as no longer amenable to God's rule. Up to this time all the angels of heaven had rendered allegiance to God and His throne. Concerning this David said:

"The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, you His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." Psalm 103: 19, 20.

The rebellion of Lucifer produced a great change. He began at once to seek the support of the angels. He charged God with being a tyrant and declared His laws to be entirely too stringent. He promised that if the heavenly host would follow him, he would give them liberty so that they would no longer be bound by law. This liberty, he claimed, would bring them happiness never before experienced. See 2 Peter 2: 19.

John the revelator indicates that a third part of the angels of heaven finally took their stand with the rebel leader and became involved with him in the open conflict that broke out in heaven. It was of this that John wrote when he declared that -there was war in heaven: Michael [Christ] and His angels fought against the dragon [Lucifer who had now become Satan, the rebel]; and the dragon fought and his angels." Revelation 12:7.

This rebellion was wholly unsuccessful, and the record declares that Satan and his angels lost the conflict, and were cast out of heaven. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell [margin, Tartarus], and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." 2 Peter 2: 4.

Satan became known as the "prince of the power of the air," and he was on hand to bring temptation to bear upon our first parents when they were created and placed in their beautiful home in Paradise.

Why Did Not God Destroy the Devil?

Sometimes the question is asked, "Why did not God destroy Satan at once and thus put down the rebellion at its inception?" The answer is threefold:

Firstly, the angels who had remained loyal to God, as well as the millions of inhabitants of the unfallen worlds in God's great universe, would never have known but that God had done it because He feared that Satan would prove his accusations to be true. They would have said in their hearts, 'Possibly after all Satan was right, and God dared not let him live lest he demonstrate the truthfulness of his charges.'

Secondly, God has always made it very plain that He will accept only such service as is prompted by love. He never tries to force the conscience nor to coerce His followers. He desires no service that springs merely from a sense of fear. If, at the inception of the rebellion, Satan and his angels had been destroyed, it would have inspired fear in the hearts of all God's creatures, and they would have served Him thereafter only because they dared not do otherwise. They would have been no better than slaves, who render cringing obedience to their masters because they fear the lash or the stocks. This would have brought no glory to God, and it would have placed His kingdom upon a most unstable and unsatisfactory foundation.

Lastly, it was absolutely necessary for the entire universe to have the privilege of seeing the principles of the rebellion worked out and its true character revealed in order that all can know of a certainty the baleful results of transgression. God had created all His creatures free moral agents with power to choose between right and wrong; and now, by watching the results of the rebellion, they

must be able to decide of their own volition whether they desired to continue to stand with God and truth, or whether they, too, wished to enlist under the banner of Satan. The choice must rest with each individual.

The Tempter Visits Eden

After the earth was created and man was placed upon it, Satan made his appearance in the garden of Eden with a view to leading man to join him in his rebellious course. He wished to make the earth the center of his kingdom. He hoped eventually to regain his position in heaven and extend his influence throughout the universe.

With subtlety and guile he approached the dwellers in Eden. He did not appear in person, but chose the beautiful serpent as his medium.

God had placed in the midst of the trees of Paradise one tree that was to serve as a test of man's loyalty to Him. It was designated "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Man had been given free access to all the other trees of the garden. His every need was thus supplied. The heart could desire nothing more than the abundance God had provided. It was therefore imposing no hardship upon our first parents when God said to them:---But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eats thereof thou shalt surely die." See Gen. 2: 16, 17.

By refraining from partaking of the fruit of this tree, man showed his reverence for God and recognized HIS ownership and control over Eden and all the earth.

Watching for an opportunity, the tempter caught Eve in an unguarded moment when, leaving her husband's side, she wandered to this forbidden tree and gazed upon it. Suddenly a melodious voice was heard speaking to her from the tree and saying: "Hath God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Satan had spoken through the serpent. Thus he succeeded in arresting her attention, and immediately led her into the great temptation to risk an act of disobedience to her Creator.

"And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, You shall not eat of it neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

"And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die: for God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." Gen. 3: 2-7.

This is the saddest story ever told. It is the record, not merely of what happened to two people in Eden, but of a tragedy that befell the whole human race. All succeeding generations have suffered untold miseries as a result of it. By this rebellious and disobedient act on the part of Adam and Eve, the heads of the new race, the entire course of human history was tragically changed. Man had chosen a new leader. He had disobeyed God and followed the counsel of God's enemy. By joining the rebel leader, he had cut himself off from God's protection and care and now must suffer sin's consequences.

Hiding From God

Following the experience of eating the forbidden fruit, the Lord visited Eden in the cool of the evening and called for Adam and his companion. But now they were ashamed. Already remorse filled their hearts. Their consciences were heavily burdened with guilt, and they were afraid to meet Him whose love and tender care they had disregarded. For the first time they had become self-conscious over the fact that they wore no artificial clothing. To supply their lack they provided aprons of fig leaves, which they hurriedly sewed together.

How could they appear before God? How could they look again into His lovely face? Covered with shame and filled with fright lest they be instantly destroyed by the power of their Maker, they "hid themselves from the presence of God amongst the trees of the garden." Gen. 3:8.

"And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

"And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, Who told thee that thou was naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou should not eat?" Gen. 3: 9-11.

Forced now to make a confession, both Adam and Eve add to their guilt as they seek to shun full responsibility for their transgression by casting the blame upon others. "The man said, The woman whom Thou gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Verse 12.

Here Adam blames both God and his own wife, Eve. God had given his companion to him, and this was the result! She had led him astray. But for her he might not have yielded to the tempter. Thus he endeavors to shift the guilt, at least in part, from himself to those whom he now blamed.

When the woman was questioned as to her part in the transgression, she followed her husband's example. "And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Verse 13.

Sin's Wages

But the guilt could not be shifted so easily. It was clearly theirs. Clear and direct had been God's warning to them before the temptation was ever met. "In the day that thou eats thereof thou shall surely die." That is, from that time on they would be subject to decay and death; they would become dying creatures; their hold on life would be forfeited. They were therefore without excuse. What they had done, had been done deliberately. Now they must suffer the consequences.

"Unto the woman He [God] said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shall bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Gen. 3:16.

"And unto Adam He said, Because thou has hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and has eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life' thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shall eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return." Gen. 3: 17-19.

After Satan had accomplished the fall of man, he then set about the task of degrading him as much as possible. The first disastrous result of this effort was seen in the shameful murder of the innocent Abel by his evil brother Cain.

Sorrow, suffering, misery, and woe began to be the lot of sinful man. He had sown to the wind; he must reap the whirlwind. All the sorrow and heartache of succeeding generations can be traced to this original cause. All the vast cemeteries of earth where countless millions sleep the sleep of death serve

as an awful reminder of man's transgression and rebellion against God. Man had fallen from grace. He had sold his birthright. He had launched his bark on a downward course, and his descent was rapid. Thus began the Drama of the Ages.

Henceforth, this world was to become a vast theatre, and upon its stage the principles of both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan were to be worked out side by side. It was to be the proving ground of the ages, until the mighty conflict between good and evil should be finally decided.

A Second Chance

Had God not mingled mercy with Justice in dealing with Adam and his companion, they would have perished immediately following their sin. This was what they rightly deserved.. They had no claim for clemency. But "the Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy." Num. 14: 18. Already He had a plan laid by which He hoped to bring about man's redemption. He wanted to give time for this plan to be fully revealed to the fallen race; He would give men another chance. It was to this attitude on God's part that David referred when he sang:

"If Thou, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou may be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." Psalm 130: 3-8.

Man had sold himself for naught. For one morsel of food he had bartered his eternal birthright. He had forfeited his life for a piece of fruit, not to satisfy his hunger but only his curiosity.

Some years ago while visiting the site of the old city of Pompeii, the writer stepped into the field museum which had been established by the archeologists who were excavating the ancient ruins; and there he saw the petrified bodies of men and women who had been overtaken by the catastrophe that destroyed this proud city when it was buried beneath rock, lava, and red-hot ashes which were belched forth in the fateful eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

It was said that in the ruins was found the body of one woman whose hands were grasping gems. It seemed that after she had been warned of the impending doom of the city, she had tarried to gather her jewels, and that this slight delay resulted in her destruction. She and her paltry treasure had been swallowed up together in the mighty holocaust that had buried the great city.

She had sold her life for a few pearls.

Recently the Associated Press released a story of a seaman who literally threw away his life in the waters of the southern Philippines. A two-peso note (9s. 2d. in value) blew off the deck into the sea. The seaman dived after it. When they hooked his lifeless form out of the water an hour later. They found the note gripped tightly in his fist just so, for a taste of the fruit of the forbidden tree of Eden. Man had forfeited not only this life but his hope of eternity.

For how paltry a price will man barter the gift of God!

Bible Study Summary

Is there a devil?

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5: 8.

Was Satan always a devil?

No, he originally was one of God's highest angels in heaven. God had created him to be the "anointed cherub" to stand by God's throne and cover it with his outstretched wings. He was very beautiful, full of wisdom, and a skillful musician. He was perfect in all his ways. See Ezekiel 28: 12-15; 26: 13.

What changed this beautiful being into a devil?

Rebellion and sin. He became proud because of his beauty. (Ezekiel 28: 15-17.) He became jealous of God and determined to take His place as Ruler of the universe. (Isaiah 14: 12-14.)

After Lucifer's rebellion, what happened to him?

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth. and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12: 9.

"And He said -unto them. I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Luke 10: 18.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground which did weaken the nations!" Isaiah 14: 12.

After his fall, what place did Satan visit?

He appeared in Eden, where God had placed Adam and Eve. "Thou has been in Eden the garden of God." Ezekiel 28: 13.

In what form did Satan approach Eve in Eden?

He used the serpent as a medium and spoke to Eve through it. See Gen. 3: 1.

In giving man liberty to eat the fruits of Eden, what single reservation had God made?

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou may freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eats thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2: 16, 17. NOTE-This was to be the test of man's loyalty to his Creator. Death was to be the result in case of disobedience. See Gen. 3: 1-3.

How did Satan challenge God's word?

"And the serpent said unto the woman You shall not surely die: for God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Gen. 3: 4, 5.

After yielding to the voice of the tempter and disobeying God, how did Adam and Eve feel?

They were afraid and ashamed. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." Gen. 3: 7-10.

As a result of man's sin, what curse did God pronounce upon him and upon the earth?

"And unto Adam He said, Because thou has hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and has eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken. for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. 3: 17-19.

Where are Satan's headquarters now?

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." Job 1: 7.

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he hath but a short time." Revelation 12: 12.

Will the devil ever be destroyed?

"Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25: 41.

"Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee." Ezekiel 28: 18.

"I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, said the Lord God." Ezekiel 26:21.

2. PARADISE LOST

THROUGH the fall, man forfeited all his rights as a citizen of God's kingdom, and now must be dealt with as a rebel. He no longer could be trusted in Eden where grew the tree of life, lest he eat of its life-giving fruits and live forever in sin. God's only recourse, therefore, was to banish him from Eden.

God had made man in His own image and likeness. He was only a little lower than the angels. (Psalm 8: 5.) His destiny was to have dominion over the earth and to dwell therein as an everlasting inheritance. "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion," was the divine command which was given to him in the garden. See Gen. 1: 28.

But this eternal tenure was based upon one clear condition. That was full and complete obedience to all of God's commands.

The issue was clear and well understood. If man continued in obedience, he would have perpetual dominion. He would live forever. If he proved unfaithful and broke God's commands, he would forfeit his right to live. Man had a choice. The choice was to be his.

All Was Lost

The fact that Adam chose the latter constitutes the greatest tragedy of all time. By his sin he lost all his innocence, his purity, his happiness, yes, and even his life. He had sold out to Satan, and had become his servant, for "know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Romans 6: 16.

Not only did man forfeit his life through sin, but his Eden home, too, was lost. Since he was no longer fit to dwell in Eden, God drove him out. Mighty angels were set as guards to prevent him from returning. His expulsion was complete. Never again could man enter the gates of Paradise so long as sin continued to contaminate his life. He now became a vagabond and a wanderer in a world that reeled under the weight of God's awful retribution. His former personal contacts with his Creator were severed. He was banished from God's presence. The sad record of his expulsion declares:

"So He [God] drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Gen. 3: 24.

As soon as sin entered, the earth, which was beautiful in its Edenic verdure, began to produce thorns, thistles, and briars where before there had been flowers. The ground was cursed. Disease germs began to multiply, until the air itself became contaminated and poisonous. The leaves and flowers began to fade, and all nature started to decay and wax old as a direct result of man's transgression. The beauty of nature was marred, and the earth became an unsafe place in which to live. Man was forced to earn his bread by the sweat of his face, for the ground, thrice cursed, no longer produced its original bountiful harvests. Labor became drudgery, and life became a burden. As disease became rampant, and as men began to die, they were made to realize the meaning of God's original warning to man that the results of sin would be death.

But not only were the first parents lost, their posterity was also lost. Adam's sin would be transmitted to all succeeding generations. Through yielding to sin, he had dragged down the whole world; for by one man's disobedience many were made sinners. (Romans 5: 19.) And "wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5: 12.

Born Sinners

Just as disease is transmitted to succeeding generations, so is sin. "Behold," said the psalmist, 'I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.' Psalm 51: 5. Sin, therefore, is an inheritance. Men are born sinners. Through disobedience, Adam's nature became changed. He was no longer a holy and righteous being but a sinful being. And this sinful nature must, of necessity, be transmitted to his children as an inheritance.

To this inherited sin, Adam's posterity have added the guilt of their own transgressions. They may be prone to reproach Adam for his weakness but they have done no better. They have all followed his example, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3: 23.

"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one." Romans 3: 9-12.

The fall of Adam left the entire human family stranded.

Man was cut off from God and lost. But for God's mercy, there would have been no way of escape. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus likens sin to a great gulf which man is unable to bridge. (Luke 16: 26.) He also declares sin to be an incurable malady:

"For thus said the Lord, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines. All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the

wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of your iniquity; because thy sins were increased." Jeremiah 30: 12-14.

Sin is likened to a pit, an abyss from which man is entirely without means of escape. In fact, through sin man was completely undone. Being thus separated from God through sin, he has no power to change his condition and do right. The sinner cannot save himself. Instead his course is downward. His sinfulness increases with the years. He may struggle to free himself from the quagmire of sin, only to find himself sinking deeper. The history of the human race for nearly 6,000 years is one of increasing wickedness, and we are assured in the Bible that the last generation will be the worst. The Apostle Paul declares: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." 2 Tim. 3: 13.

Sin, unlike certain diseases, never runs its course and disappears. Instead, it tightens its hold upon men and renders them absolutely helpless to do good. Jeremiah says: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may you also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Jeremiah 13: 23. These phenomena are both equally impossible. Man is without strength. If left to himself he must perish.

Sin's Baleful Results

As people increased upon the earth, the sad results of sin began to be seen in the jealousy, strife, and wars that developed among the nations. Men began to destroy one another. Sad and gruesome is the record of the struggles for national supremacy that have blotted the pages of human history for six millenniums. This situation has through succeeding generations grown worse and more violent, and finally culminated in two terrible world wars in which untold millions have been destroyed and billions of earth's treasure have been wasted. Now there sounds in the ears the explosion of the atomic bomb and the rumbling of the engines of war as the nations prepare for their final conflict-the mighty Armageddon-which, according to Scripture, is to bring about the final overthrow of man's earthly rule. Man has delved into the secrets of the Almighty and is using this increased knowledge to wreak further destruction upon himself.

The results of sin are manifold. Sin not only unfits the sinner for eternal life, but also for this temporal life. It robs him of his manhood and weakens both his spiritual and physical powers. It removes the image of God from the soul and renders man little better than the beasts of the field. It destroys his innocence, purity, and god likeness. It expels the love that God planted in the human heart and replaces it with suspicion and hatred. It brings forth sorrow, misery, want, woe, heartache, and bitter tears. Often it reduces man to a level below the beasts of the field about him. In fact, sin has wrecked the human family and rendered it unfit to live anywhere in God's vast universe.

"The wicked," declares the prophet, "are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, said my God, to the wicked." Isaiah 57: 20, 21. Surely, "the way of transgressors is hard." Prov. 13: 15.

When the great Italian artist Leonardo da Vinci was asked to paint a mural for a convent, he chose to sketch "The Last Supper" - a picture of Christ with His twelve disciples seated about the supper table. Several legends have entwined themselves about this beautiful picture, and the following is said to be a true story. According to the story, the incident took place in Milan, in the year 1494. As the great picture was nearly finished-all but the figures of Christ and Judas- Leonardo stood back, critically surveyed his work, and then sank slowly into a chair. He was perplexed.

It was a problem to find a model for either Christ or Judas. Nowhere could he find a face so perfect, so beautiful, and so sublime that he felt truly represented Christ, nor could he find a face so grim, with the lines of sin so etched upon it, as to represent Judas Iscariot. But he determined to find them.

The task was not an easy one. Day after day, month after month passed, and one Sunday morning he entered a small church. Seated in the rear he began to look the people over. But seeing nothing unusual, he leaned back with half-closed eyes and listened to the boys' choir. Suddenly he was wide awake. His gaze centered upon the handsome young choir leader. He knew that here was his model for Christ.

Next day the youth was seated before him. Day after day he posed, until his likeness was transferred to the painting and the face of Christ was completed. As the young man stood before the picture, he gazed upon it in awe, and murmured: "It's wonderful, isn't it? If only I could be like Him!"

The artist said: "You can be like Him, if you will only follow His example." As the choir boy donned his cloak and left, Leonardo stood in the doorway and repeated softly: "Yes, follow His example, walk in His way, and you will be like Him."

The masterpiece with its one unfinished figure stood neglected day after day while the artist wandered about the streets of Milan looking for someone to represent Judas. Nowhere could he find a face so bitter and cruel and depraved as he needed. A year passed, two years, then three years; and when four years had passed, the artist had almost forgotten his unfinished picture.

Then on a cool, crisp evening, in the year 1498, as the artist briskly wended his way home, he collided with a beggar. He looked at the man in rags and found himself confronted by a pair of eyes "Yes, yes, you do remember," said the tramp. "You see- I sat for your Christ."

What a lesson this story contains! If the youth had followed Christ's example, he could have been like Him; but he chose to go his own way and became a Judas instead.

The wicked man may live in a palace and be the envy of all because of his riches and pomp. He may make a bold pretence of happiness, but often in his inner consciousness there is a gnawing sense of guilt and no real peace of mind. He strives for contentment and tranquility, but earthly riches do not bring these blessings.

"A man's life," said Jesus, "consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses. And He spoke a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater;

But these things, terrible as they are, do not constitute the chief result of sin. Beyond all these is the second death. This second death will not be produced by disease germs or by so called natural causes, but by fire and brimstone which God Himself is preparing as a means for the final destruction of the devil, sinners, and sin.

But, thank God, a way of escape from sin's full wages has been provided. See yonder man approaching. "Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save'." Isaiah 63: 1. Who is He? He is the Man of Calvary. He is man's one and only Savior. Than His,-there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby sinners can be saved. (Acts 4: 12.) Only He can remove the curse from the earth and lift from man the condemnation of death and destruction. He has offered to become man's Deliverer, and He is "mighty to save."

Bible Study Summary

When God created man, what was he like?

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Gen. 1: 27.

NOTE-He was perfect physically and morally. He was like God, both in appearance and in character.

How did man compare with the angels?

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visits him? For Thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and has crowned him with 'glory and honor.'" Psalm 8: 4, 5.

What was God's purpose for man?

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that move upon the earth." Gen. 1: 28.

"Thou made him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou has put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas." Psalm 8: 6-8.

NOTE-Man was to be in control of the earth as God's representative, but his tenure was conditioned upon obedience and loyalty. Should he sin, he would thereby forfeit his position as ruler and even life itself.

What was the immediate result of Adam's sin?

"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Gen. 3: 23, 24.

NOTE-Man was expelled from God's personal presence and from his Eden home. His purity and innocence were gone. He was now a sinner.

What changes in the earth now began to take place?

It no longer produced abundantly as formerly. It was necessary now for man to sweat and toll in order to secure a living from the soil. Thorns, thistles, and weeds began to appear, and the entire course of nature was changed. See Gen. 3: 17-19.

How many were affected by Adam's sin?

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5: 12.

NOTE-As a result of Adam's transgression, all his future posterity inherited a sinful nature.

Besides inheriting Adam's sin, how have men added to their guilt?

All men have committed personal sin, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3: 23.

"As it is written. There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one." Rom. 3: 10-12.

How are the results of sin seen in the world today?

All that is wrong with the world is the result of sin: War among nations, hatred, jealousy, and crime are results of sin.

What is sin's final result?

"Then when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death." James 1: 15.

"For the wages of sin is death." Romans 6: 23.

NOTE-Men who do not repent of their sins must die twice. The first or natural death, comes to all. From this death, however, there shall be a resurrection. There is a second death for the unrepentant. From this death men can be saved only by accepting the redemption provided by Jesus Christ.

3. THE RESULTS OF SIN

THE wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Psalm 9: 17.

There is nothing set forth more clearly in the Bible than the fact that the wicked are to be destroyed in a lake of fire.

During the past quarter of a century this doctrine has become exceedingly unpopular; and thousands of men occupying prominent pulpits have been trying to gloss it over, while others have vainly sought to extinguish the flames of hell entirely.

But it will not be glossed over. From Genesis to Revelation the warnings abound that God will destroy both sin and sinners, and that eventually He will again have a clean universe.

True, the fires of hell have been prepared for the devil and his angels. It was never intended that man should suffer hell's torment. Christ uttered the fearful warning that those who willfully follow Satan in his course of rebellion must also share in his punishment.

"Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Matthew 25: 41, 46.

Much is said in the Bible about hell and its horrors, and earnest warnings are given men to try to escape them. Thus, Revelation states that at the time of the resurrection and the final judgment -whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20: 15.

A similar warning was uttered by the prophet Malachi when, acting as God's mouthpiece, he declared:

"For, behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Mal. 4: 1.

And last of all. John the revelator, in closing the Book of Inspiration, repeated the warning:

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Revelation 21: 8.

Upon the Earth

The Bible does not teach, however, that the fires of hell are burning now, nor does it claim that sinners are already being tortured. Hell is not a permanent place of punishment where the wicked are to be kept alive throughout eternity. It, instead, is a place where the wicked, after the day of judgment, will be fully and finally destroyed.

Hell, when it is created, will be located upon this earth. It will be 25,000 miles in circumference and will destroy not only the devil and sinful men, but also all the works of man from off the face of the earth.

This doctrine is clearly taught by the Apostle Peter. He declares:

"Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt ' with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness." 2 Peter 3: 6, 7, 10-13.

It was Solomon who declared: "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." Prov. 11: 3 1.

And this plan is very logical. The wicked will be punished in the very locality where their sins were committed. It would be passing strange if they should be transported to some other planet, where the curse of sin had never before come, and there be made to suffer for their evil deeds. No; just as the antediluvians were destroyed upon the earth, so in the end, all the wicked shall also meet their doom in the earth, not in a flood of water, but in a lake of fire and brimstone.

The Earth Purified

The fires of hell will accomplish a double purpose. Not only will sin and sinners be destroyed by it, but the earth itself will be cleansed and purified. Sin has polluted the very ground upon which man treads and the very air he breathes. The earth is filled with life-destroying insects, disease germs, and filth; and its surface has been horribly marred by the works of man and as a result of the triple curse. It is filled also with weeds, thorns, briars, and a thousand noxious plants that impede man in his struggle to produce food and flowers. In fact, man's abode is so filled with the results of man's sin that it has become a wholly unfit place for righteous people to inhabit. The earth, therefore, must be purified; for it is once again to become a paradise and the future home of redeemed- man. This is an additional reason why the fires of hell will be kindled here upon this planet.

According to the words of Peter, quoted above, the very "The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also." It is clear that the entire earth is to become a mighty caldron of fire, and is to be entirely melted and purified of every evil thing in preparation for re-fashioning and re-beautifying by the - hand of the Creator. For just that is to happen. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness." 2 Peter 3: 13.

Of the new earth we shall learn more in chapter 40; but, suffice it to say here, this new earth which will emerge from the devouring, cleansing fire of hell will become the future home of those members of the human family who have been born into the kingdom of God.

Does someone inquire, How can the earth become a molten mass of fire when it is composed of soil and stone, and when three fourths of its surface is covered with water? God has a way. He is the mighty Creator. He has power over the elements and can change and transform them at will. Just as Jesus instantaneously turned water into wine at the marriage of Cana, so, following the judgment of the wicked will He perform another similar miracle in preparation for the earth's purification.

"For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompence for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch." Isaiah 34: 8, 9.

When this mighty change in the composition of the earth has been accomplished, then a phenomenon such as was seen in Elijah's day, when God sent fire from heaven, will again be witnessed; for "upon the wicked He shall rain snares [margin, quick burning coals], fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." Psalm 11: 6.

Complete Destruction

This destruction of the wicked will be complete. Not having received from Christ the gift of immortality, they must quickly perish in the flames of hell, It will destroy them utterly.

"For, behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, said the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, said the Lord of hosts." Mal. 4: 1, 3.

In picturing the fate of the enemies of God, the prophet Nahum exclaimed:

"What do you imagine against the Lord? He will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time. For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry." Nahum 1: 9, 10.

And to this agrees, the warning to sinners uttered by the psalmist: "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither he thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. . . . For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. . . . But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall he as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. . . . I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." Psalm 37: 1, 2, 9, 10, 20, 35, 36.

There are no fireproof sinners. Possibly God could keep them alive even in fire, but what purpose would be served? Does God desire His beautiful universe to be marred forever by a foul blot where His enemies writhe in pain and torture throughout eternity? A thousand times NO! He will make an utter end of His enemies, and even destroy the very works of their hands. He will cut them off forever. They shall be as though they had not been. See Obadiah 1: 16.

The Second Death

In the Revelation it is pointed out that the destruction that comes to Satan and sinners in the lake of fire is the "second death." "And death and hell [margin, the grave] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Revelation 20: 14.

Because of Adam's sin, all, except the righteous who are alive when Jesus comes, must suffer the first death; but from that death there is to be a resurrection. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Corinthians 15: 22.

But from the second death, which men will suffer because of their own sins, there will be no resurrection. It is the final and complete end of life. The wicked are "cut off." Their death is eternal. Never will they live again.

This then is the final result of transgression, for "sin, when it is finished, brings forth death." James 1:15.

"Is it not foolish," said Spurgeon, "to be living in this world without a thought of what you will do at last? A man goes into an inn, and as soon as he sits down he begins to order his wine, his dinner, his bed; there is no delicacy in season which he forgets to bespeak. He stops at the inn for some time. By and-by the bill is forthcoming, and it takes him by surprise. I never thought of that- I never thought of that!"

" 'Why,' says the landlord, 'here is a man who is either a born fool or else a knave. What! never thought of the reckoning--- never thought of settling with me!'"

"After this fashion too many live. They eat, and drink and sin; but they forget the inevitable hereafter, when for all deeds done in the body the Lord will bring us into judgment."

These awful warnings cannot lightly be brushed aside. Hear it again: "The wicked shall be turned into hell." It is the decree of the Almighty. It will be carried out as surely as God lives.

It is the awful certainty of this fateful end of the wicked that has caused a loving God to utter so many earnest appeals to men to flee from the wrath to come. Through the prophet Ezekiel we bear His entreaty:

"Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, said the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live you." Ezekiel 18: 30-32.

God has made full provision to save all who will accept salvation at His hands; therefore, He will have no responsibility whatsoever for the death of the wicked. He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2) (2 Peter 3: 9.) Those who are lost will be without excuse. They, by their own choice, will have sealed their own doom. They have chosen sin and death rather than righteousness and life and, therefore, must suffer the inevitable consequence, for the wages of sin is death.

True, sinful man is powerless to help himself. Nothing that he can do can atone for his guilt and commend him to God. His every act is polluted by sin. In describing his condition, the Lord declares: "The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." Isaiah 1: 5, 6. A man thus sick unto death is in no condition to become his own physician.

But God has provided a way of escape. As soon as man sinned, the great Creator gave the promise of a mighty Deliverer to come. He predicted the destruction of Satan and his entire kingdom when He declared: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise His heel." Gen. 3: 15. This was the first gospel sermon. It constituted the first ray of hope offered to man after he had sinned. Through the seed of the woman (Jesus), God would reopen the gates of Paradise and make available to man the gift of immortality.

Choose You

Whether or not anyone will suffer the fate of the wicked in hell or share the reward of the righteous in Paradise is a matter of his own choice. God has placed the gift of immortality and eternal life within the reach of all who will accept it. It is a free gift. He offers it to all. His invitation to His kingdom is to "whosoever will." (Revelation 22: 17.) But man must choose. God will force no one to follow Him. He pleads; He entreats; He woos the sinner; but He leaves all free to turn away if they do not desire to walk in His ways. He does not coerce; but, in love and pity, He does make plain the sure and inevitable consequences of sin. There is nothing more that He can do.

Bible Study Summary

Is there a hell?

The doctrine of hell is clearly taught in the Bible. Hell is the place of punishment for the wicked. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Psalm 9: 17.

What will hell be like?

Hell is said to be a mighty "lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Revelation 21:8.

Does hell exist now?

No. The fires of hell are not yet kindled, but they will be after the judgment, when the destiny of all men will have been decided.

"The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." 2 Peter 2: 9.

NOTE-After the judgment, God will destroy all sinners. (Isaiah 1:28, 31.)

Where will this lake of fire be located?

It is here, upon this earth, the wicked will be punished.

"Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." Prov. 11:31.

"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3: 7.

How will the lake of fire be created?

"Upon the wicked He shall rain snares [margin, quick burning coals], fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest." Psalm 11: 6.

"And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch." Isaiah 34: 9.

NOTE-When God is ready to destroy the wicked, He will send fire down out of heaven and devour them. See Revelation 20: 9.

Who will be punished in the lake of fire?

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Revelation 21: 8.

Who besides wicked men will be cast into hell?

"Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25: 41.

NOTE-This is the time when Satan and his angels will come to their end. He and all his followers will perish together.

What besides the destruction of sinners will be accomplished by the fires of hell?

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3: 10.

NOTE-The entire earth will become a molten mass, and all the of man and the results of sin will be entirely consumed.

How long will the fires of hell burn?

The wicked will be as stubble and will be reduced to "ashes" They will, be left "neither root nor branch." (Mal. 4: 1-3.)

"But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." Psalm 37: 20.

How only can men be saved from the second death?

"Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, said the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live you." Ezekiel 18: 31, 32.

4. UNTO YOU IS BORN A SAVIOR

IT WAS night in the little village of Bethlehem. The town was thronged with people who had come from far and near at the command of Caesar Augustus to be counted in the census. For this purpose all must appear at their old ancestral homes.

The inns were filled. The private homes were crowded with visiting relatives and friends, and people were overflowing into the streets. Some had even sought refuge from the chill of the night in the cattle stalls.

During the excitement and commotion resulting from so many newcomers thronging the vicinity, and in an obscure stable at the edge of the village, a child was born. The parents were strangers who had journeyed from Nazareth, and who, failing to find accommodation in any of the village inns, had turned aside to this humble place of shelter. The birth of this babe was entirely unnoticed by the throng. If, indeed, any knew of the event, they passed it off as a matter of common occurrence-only a child born to some strangers.

Behind the village and among the surrounding hills, some shepherds were watching their flocks on the hillsides. Wild animals prowled about, ever watching for opportunity to spoil the flocks, and it was necessary that the shepherds be vigilant and watchful to protect their charges from these dangers.

These men were godly, and they no doubt passed the hours during the night watches in discussing the then-mooted question as to when the long-promised Messiah would come to earth, destroy the tyrannical Roman power, and restore the kingdom to Israel.

Just before Adam and Eve were driven from their Paradise home, they were given the wonderful assurance that God, against whom they had rebelled, would send them a Deliverer. This Redeemer would bear the burden of man's transgression and would destroy the tempter who had led them into sin. This promise God had couched in the scathing rebuke uttered to the serpent, when He said: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Gen. 3: 15.

After Long Waiting

The time of waiting had been long. For four thousand years the worshippers of God had cherished this promise, and had waited and longed and prayed for its fulfillment. Every godly mother in Israel had hoped that perhaps her son might prove to be the promised Deliverer.

But He had not appeared. Many had lost hope, although others, like the watching shepherds, still clung to the promise and watched for any possible sign of its fulfillment.

Suddenly the sky over the Judean hills was illuminated as at noonday. The lonely watchers, terrified by this phenomenon, stood aghast as they looked into the opening heavens.

"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, 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; You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." Luke 2: 9-14.

This was the sweetest message that had ever fallen upon human ears. Their hopes had been rewarded. A Savior was born. Messiah had appeared. The promise that man would be able to regain his long-lost Paradise home was assured.

Forgetting the sheep entrusted to their care, these astonished watchers "said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." Luke 2:15.

"And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds." "And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." Luke 2: 16-18, 20.

Who Was This Child?

Who was this child that was cradled thus in a Bethlehem manger? Why was His birth heralded by angel visitors from the skies? In what respect was He different from other people?

These became burning questions at that time, and these same questions still agitate the mind of the religious world even today.

At that time the Jews said, "He is only a man, and a very bad and dangerous man at that. He ought to die."

Today millions who claim to adore and worship Him declare Him to have been the greatest and best man that ever lived; but they, too, deny that He was anything but human, although still others, like His disciples of old, declare Him to be the very Son of God and their Lord and Savior.

"What think you of Christ?" said Jesus to His followers. "Whose Son is He?" This is the question of all questions, for a man's relationship to Christ depends almost entirely upon what he thinks of Him.

The angel visitor who announced His birth declared of Him that He was "Christ the Lord," and man's Savior.

Immanuel

Seven hundred years before His birth, this child had been named. Said the inspired Isaiah: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah 7: 14. Matthew declares the birth of Jesus was the fulfillment of this prophecy, and the interpretation of His name was, "God with us."

"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matthew 1: 22, 23.

When speaking of His origin, Jesus Himself declared: "I proceeded forth and came from God." John 8: 42.

In His memorable prayer for His believers, Jesus asserted His pre-existence as He entreated the Father: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Your own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." John 17: 5.

Earlier He had declared to the Pharisees concerning Himself, "Before Abraham was, I Am." John 8: 58.

The life of Christ did not begin in the Bethlehem manger. That was only an incarnation. He had existed from eternity. He had shared the companionship and the glory of God. Now He had voluntarily come into the world and taken upon Himself the nature of fallen man. He had been born of woman for the sole purpose of reopening the gates of Paradise to man by saving him from his sins.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. 2: 5-8.

The Great Creator

It is further revealed in the inspired Word that this One, who had thus identified Himself with the human race, was actually associated with His Father in the creation of the world and the universe, and that He had been the Father's active agent in bringing all things into being. Speaking of Himself under the personification of "Wisdom," He declares:

"The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth: when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the beginning of the dust of the world. When He established the heavens, I was there: when He set a circle upon the face of the deep: when He made firm the skies above: when the fountains of the deep became strong: when He gave to the sea its bound, that the waters should not transgress His commandment: when He marked out the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as a master workman: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Prov. 8: 22-30, RV (Revised Version.).

To this agree also the words of Paul the Apostle, when he said concerning Christ:

"For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. - And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell." Colossians 1: 16-19, RV.

"All things were made by Him," declares the Apostle John, "and without Him was not any thing made that was made." John 1: 3.

On this important point the testimony of One other should suffice. Let all listen reverently and with bowed heads. The Witness now is none other than the mighty God Himself:

"But unto the Son He said, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou has loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Your hands." Hebrews 1: 8-10.

Be astonished then, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth; for this wonder child, wrapped in swaddling clothes and cradled among the beasts of the stall, is your Maker. It was He who by His word had made the heavens and had brought all their host into being by the breath of His mouth. (Psalm 33: 6.) He was before "all things," and by Him "all things consist."

The Leader of Israel

Jesus' life on earth was not the beginning of His contact with the people of God. Not only had He created man in His own image, but He had associated Himself with those upon earth who had chosen to be worshippers of God. He was the Mediator between God and the human race that had fallen into sin. Speaking of the experiences of Israel during their forty years of wanderings in the wilderness, Paul succinctly declared:

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." 1 Corinthians 10: 1-4.

It was Christ, therefore, who delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt. It was He who appeared amid the thunders and lightning of Mount Sinai and spoke the Decalogue and wrote its ten precepts with His own finger upon two tables of stone.

It was He who had appeared to Israel in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, protecting them from their enemies. He had given them bread from heaven and water from the rock. He had preserved them in all their wanderings and had finally planted in the Land of Promise those who had believed on Him and had continued faithful to Him. He had been known among them as Jehovah, but now was to be known by His followers as the Lord Jesus Christ. Said the angel Gabriel as he predicted His birth: "Thou shall call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21.

Power to Save

Does the reader inquire why we have taken the pains thus to establish the glorious fact that the Christ of Bethlehem was the very Son of God and mighty Creator? We answer: It is this fact that proves beyond all possible doubt that He is able to accomplish the infinite task of saving men from sin and of opening to them again the gates of Paradise!

Through the fall, man, who had been created in the image of God, had lost that image. Sin had all but obliterated it from his life. He had become foul and corrupt. His whole life had been ruined. He had become an alien to God's kingdom, "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Ephesians 2: 12. Sin had become man's first nature. He was unable to do good, just as the Ethiopian is powerless to change his skin and the leopard his spots, so the sinner could not restore righteousness to his depraved soul. Death must be the dire consequence of his sin. So far as his own power was concerned, he was beyond hope.

Salvation Would Require a Re-creation

If man was ever to be saved from this hopeless condition, it would come about only by a re-creation. His old nature must be destroyed, and he must experience a new birth. If this could be brought about, then he could have a new start.

"But," said Nicodemus to Jesus, when told that he must be born again, "how can one be born when he is old?" Ah, How indeed? That is the burning question, and to it there is only one answer: "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Matthew 19: 26.

Through the power of Jesus Christ alone is it possible for man to experience the new birth. Said the Apostle Paul: "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature [margin, a new creation]: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." 2 Corinthians 5: 17, RV. Christ alone can transform the human heart, regenerate the evil mind, and turn a sinner into a saint.

But some inquire, Why could not this work be accomplished by a heavenly angel? Why only by Jesus Christ the Son of God? It is because He, who was the author of the original creation, is the only One who has power to accomplish the mighty work of recreation. God's crowning miracle was not the creation of man from the dust of the ground, but the transformation of fallen, degraded men into sons of God.

When Jesus began His earthly ministry, He at once set out to prove His creative power. His first recorded miracle was that of changing the processes of nature by turning water into wine. This was done in order to prove to men that He 'who had power over nature and its laws was among them, offering to undertake the work of re-creation in human hearts.

One day a man with the palsy was brought to Jesus. He desired to be healed. Jesus, recognizing that the man had a need infinitely greater than being healed of his disease, declared to him: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee."

Then the scribes began to say to themselves. "This man blasphemeth." With their narrow vision, they saw here only an ordinary man, who claimed to forgive sins. They recognized that such power belonged exclusively to-God; therefore, they charged Him with usurping God's prerogatives.

"And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think you evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then said He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto your house." Matthew 9: 4-6.

With men both miracles here performed by Jesus were equally impossible. If anyone could perform the one, it would prove his ability to perform the other. Thus, by healing this man's palsied body, Jesus declared that those looking on might by this miracle know that He had power also to forgive sins.

He Is Omnipotent

Jesus claimed that His power was infinite. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth," was His stupendous claim. He was omnipotent. With Him all things were possible. Even the winds and the waves were obedient to His commands; He fed the multitudes on five loaves and two little fishes-a lunch that a small boy had brought; under His curse the fig tree withered; devils fled from His presence as slaves, before the lash of their master; the sick were healed; the blind were made to see; the lame were made to walk, the lepers were cleansed; and the dead were raised to life.

At His death all creation was moved with grief-the sun hid its face, the earth trembled and shook, and the veil of the temple in Jerusalem was rent in twain.

How was all this possible? What was the secret of Jesus' power? just this: He was the son of God, the mighty Creator of the heavens and the earth.

He Is Our Savior

And, dear reader, hear it: This miracle-working Jesus, this mighty Jehovah, is our Savior. He can conquer sin, remove its guilt from the soul, and make us fit to dwell with God.

Men have learned to take iron, nickel, and copper from the hills and fashion these materials into powerful engines that are capable of driving mighty ships across the vast oceans, drawing long, heavy trains across the continents and over the highest mountains, driving planes through the air, or turning the wheels of a thousand factories. They have learned to take stone and fashion it into a marvelous edifice.

We behold these mighty achievements and exclaim, "What master minds! What giants these men have become!" We honor them as the great of earth because of their achievements.

But mark this well: It is an infinitely greater achievement to take a weak, impure, vacillating, dishonest, cruel, wretched human being and transform him into an upright, gentle, noble, pure man, fit for the society of angels!

This is the handiwork of God. In the accomplishment of this task, man is wholly impotent. Only the power of omnipotence can perform this miracle of miracles. In His repeated demonstrations, showing that He was possessed of this power, Jesus revealed His absolute qualification to become our Savior.

And what a Savior! for He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. (Hebrews 7:25.)

Bible Study Summary

Where was Jesus born?

In Bethlehem of Judea, a little village about six miles from Jerusalem. See Matthew 2: 1.

Why had Joseph and Mary gone to Bethlehem?

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child." Luke 2: 1-5.

Under what circumstances was Jesus born?

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." Luke 2: 7.

To whom did angels appear at this time?

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid." Luke 2: 8, 9.

What startling announcement was made to these humble shepherds?

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, 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; You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Luke 2:10-12.

What Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled by the birth of Jesus?

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2.

NOTE-In this prophecy the very place of Christ's birth was foretold.

In their announcement to the shepherds, who did the angels say the newborn child was? "A Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11.

What had the prophet Isaiah said about Jesus seven hundred years before?

"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." Isaiah 9:6.

Of what other prophecy was the birth of Christ a fulfillment?

"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Isaiah 7:14.

Did Christ exist before He was born in Bethlehem?

"And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Your own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." John 17:5.

NOTE-He was "before all things." He was "the firstborn of every creature." See Colossians 1:13-19.

What had Jesus done in the very beginning?

"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Your hands." Hebrews 1:10.
"For by Him were all things created." Colossians 1:16.

What is man's condition by nature?

Man was lost through sin. His life had been completely ruined by sin. He was "without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world." Ephesians 2:12.

In order to save men, what was it necessary for Jesus to do? Man had to be re-created.

See 2 Corinthians 5:17.

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Galatians 6:15.

Who only could make sinful men new again?

Only the living God, the Creator who had made him originally from the dust of the ground. "We trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men." 1 Tim. 4:10.

What evidence did Jesus give of His power to regenerate and recreate men's lives and prepare them for heaven?

This evidence was given in the many miracles He performed. He healed the sick, opened blind eyes, cured leprosy, raised the dead, cured insanity, stilled the stormy tempest, and cast devils out of men. He appealed to these manifestations of power as a reason why men should believe that He could save them.

"The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me." John 10: 25.

How fully can Christ save men from sin?

"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7: 25.

5. JESUS THE SON OF GOD

IF, AS many affirm, Jesus Christ was only a man, then the Christian religion is a gigantic system of idolatry, and His death on Calvary was entirely meaningless to the rest of the human race. But that He is divine, the very Son of God, omniscient and

omnipotent, the Scriptures everywhere testify. In fact, in our search of the divine testimony, we are brought face to face with the momentous truth that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was none other than "God, manifest in the flesh!" The Son of God became incarnate and came to dwell with men.

In his announcement of the birth of Jesus, the prophet Isaiah declared: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matthew 1: 23; Isaiah 7: 14. Here is a glorious truth, a marvelous condescension; for God the Son deigned to dwell with men even to the point of taking upon Himself sinful flesh and becoming a member of the human family.

The question whether Jesus was actual deity is absolutely fundamental. It must be satisfactorily answered before we can form any adequate conception of His mission to earth and the meaning of His death on Calvary. And Jesus Himself challenges a most careful investigation. On many occasions He proclaimed His deity and offered convincing proof of His assertions. Hear Him declare: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world." John 16: 28.

"If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though you believe not Me, believe the works: that you may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." John 10: 37, 38.

"But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." John 5: 36.

Thus, Jesus strikes no uncertain note as to His origin. He knew that it was all-important that the church should fully understand His godhead. This must be the foundation of faith in Him, if faith is to be of any avail. To reject His deity is to render Him impotent, and His offer of salvation to sinners a farce.

Christ the Eternal

Jesus Christ claimed eternal existence. "For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." John 5: 26. In Him is inherent immortality, eternal life. As expressed by the Apostle John, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." John 1: 4. And again:

"Therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." John 10: 17,18.

As already noticed, the Apostle Paul declares that Jesus "is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Colossians 1: 17. To the Jews Jesus declared: "Before Abraham was, I Am." John 8: 58. Men are born; things must be created; but Jesus could say, I Am. He is the true Melchisedec, without beginning of days or end of life. (Hebrews 7: 3.) He is the self-existent One, who is from everlasting to everlasting.

Eternal Love

If, therefore, Jesus is eternal, then is His love also eternal. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, the unchangeable God. His love changes not with the passing ages. He is "a friend that sticks closer than a brother." Said He:

"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me." Isaiah 49: 15, 16.

One fault His enemies found with Jesus: He was a friend of sinners. Jesus hates sin, but its presence in the hearts of men does not dim His love for them. It was for sinners that He died.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5: 6-8.

Jesus sees in the sinner, not what he is today, but what he may become through His grace and love. Constantly does He plead for sinners to turn to Him and be saved. His call is:

"O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou has fallen by your iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips." Hosea 14: 15 2.

And His promise is: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him." Hosea 14: 4, (Revised Version).

He Was Jehovah

The One revealed in the New Testament as Jesus Christ is in the Old Testament revealed as Jehovah. But Jehovah is also the name of the great, eternal God, the heavenly Father. Hence, when this name is applied in one scripture to God the Father, and in another to God

the Son, it becomes plain that there are two individuals in the heavenly Trinity who bear the name Jehovah. If it can be established with certainty that the name Jehovah is applied to Christ as well as to the Father, then shall it be settled that Christ, the only begotten of the Father, is Himself actual Deity. He is God the Son.

Let us notice carefully the following comparisons of scripture: "And the people spoke against God.... And the Lord [Jehovah, ARV.] sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died." Num. 21: 5, 6. Who was this Jehovah? Was it God the Father or the Son? The answer is given us by the Apostle Paul: 'Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.' 1 Corinthians. 10: 9. These scriptures admit of only one interpretation: that the person whom the children of Israel tempted, and who sent the serpents in punishment, was God's Son, Jesus Christ, who is also Jehovah.

Consider the statement of Isaiah:

"Hearken unto Me O Jacob, and Israel My called: I am He; I am the first, I also am the last." "Thus said Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am Jehovah thy God, who teaches thee to profit, who leads thee by the way that thou should go." Isaiah 48: 12, 17, ARV.

Then let us place beside this the words of Jesus, uttered through John in the closing chapter of his Book of Revelation:

"And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Revelation 22: 12, 13.

Thus, the Lord Jesus, who is to give to men their rewards at the last day, is also called Jehovah, who is the first and also the last, the Almighty. Again, Isaiah, prophesying of Christ's forerunner and herald, said:

"The voice of one that cries, Prepare you in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places plain: and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it." Isaiah 40: 3-5, ARV.

But who is this whose glory is to be revealed, whose way is to be prepared by a voice crying in the wilderness? Let John the Baptist reply:

"He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." "The next day John sees Jesus coming unto him 'and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." John 1: 23, 29.

When, therefore, Jesus appeared among men as man's Savior, the glory of Jehovah was revealed, for He was Jehovah in the flesh. Again, of Jehovah we read, "I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides Me there is no savior." Isaiah 43: 11, ARV. And of Christ it is said:

"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him does this man stand here before you whole." "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4: 10, 12.

The evangelist John in beginning his Gospel declares that the One who was made flesh and dwelt among us was God. (John 1: 14.) But still more emphatic is the apostle's declaration, recorded in 1 Tim. 3: 16.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.'

Here is no room for argument or doubt. Jesus Christ, who was preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and who ascended to heaven in the sight of the disciples, was God, manifested in the flesh. He was the Lord of glory.

He Is Able to Save

What conclusion can we draw from this great mass of scriptural evidence? It is this and only this: Jesus of Nazareth, who lived among men and died on a Roman cross, was Jehovah of hosts, the Son of the great God, and His claim was true, when He declared: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Equipped with all the power of the Godhead, He undertook man's redemption, and was able, therefore, to offer the inestimable gift of eternal life to all those who would accept Him as their Savior.

The advent of Christ among men was, therefore, the most stupendous and transcendent display of divine love, wisdom, and goodness that has ever been made known in the universe. Those who deny His deity and His vicarious sacrifice for sins do so only at their own peril; and those who die in this rejection are doomed to eternal destruction, which is the portion of all who fight against God.

What man can pass by this glorious truth with indifference? oh, the shame of it, that the great God should deign to come to dwell with men, tabernacle in their own flesh, and yield up His life in their behalf, and yet be despised and rejected by the masses, and accepted only by the few!

Miracles Testify to His Divinity

The omnipotence of Christ is clearly revealed in His miracles. To the leper He said, "I will: be thou clean"; to the blind man, "Receive thy sight"; to the man with the palsy, "Arise, and walk; to the troubled sea, "Peace, be still"; to the dead, "I say unto thee, Arise"; and, miracle of grace, He said to the sinner, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." All these were accomplished by the power of His Word.

"Has thou not known?" inquires Isaiah, "has thou not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fain't not' neither is weary; there is no searching of His understanding. He gives power to the faint; and to him that hath no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary - they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40: 28-31, RV.

Come, then, let us wait upon Him that we may renew our strength. He is omnipotent to deliver, all powerful to conquer all the fiery passions of the flesh, and to give victory over every temptation. He can calm all fears, vanquish all foes, dispel all darkness and gloom, and make the life to become one glorious dawn. But all this He can do only upon condition that we let Him. He says:

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3: 20.

He will not force open the door. He will never coerce the will. But to as many as receive Him, to them He gives power to become the sons of God. (John 1: 12.)

He Knows All Things

Jesus not only is the Creator of all, He not only has all power, but He also knows all. In Him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." Colossians 2: 3; 1: 19. There is no secret that can be hid from the eyes of Jesus. He knows the end from the beginning. The past, present, and future are all open books to Him. Most marvelous of all, He knows even the unspoken secrets of the heart, and declares that men will be judged by these in the last days!

"But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them [those in Jerusalem who believed His miracles], because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man." John 2: 24, 25. Again we read: "These things said the Son of God. . . I am He which searches the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." Revelation 2: 18, 23. Here again His identity as Jehovah is revealed, for in Jeremiah 17: 10 we read: 'I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

Thus Jehovah-Jesus-is the great heart searcher. He sees into its innermost recesses. He understands our thoughts afar off. (Psalm 139: 2.) Though man's heart may be "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," yet He is not deceived, "for the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He ponders all his goings." Prov. 5: 21.

The psalmist declares of Jehovah:

"O Lord, Thou has searched me, and known me. Thou knows my down sitting and mine uprising, Thou understands my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knows it altogether. Thou has beset me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hides not from Thee; but the night shines as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." Psalm 139: 1-12.

Ah, then, dear reader, let us tread softly before this Jesus, under the gaze of whose searching eye we constantly are. Let us have a care for the things we do under cover of darkness, remembering that the darkness hides not from Him. Sins may be successfully hidden from parents, wife, husband, children, friends. and the church, but from Him, never. He sees all we do, hears all we say, and understands the motives prompting the words and deeds. How just, then, will be the verdict when men appear before the judgment seat of Christ, when "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

God only has this divine attribute of omniscience. A mere man, though he be the best of men, as the teachers of modern theology would make Christ to be, cannot know the heart. This is a power peculiar to God, and it is in its very nature incommunicable.

Since we cannot know our own hearts-because they are so very deceitful, we should rejoice that there is One who can search them and discover what is there. With David we should pray: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139: 23, 24.

The loving invitation of Jesus to each one is, "My son, give Me your heart." He desires to search it now, lest in the day of final reckoning sin should be found there. We can well afford to lay the heart bare before Him. We may safely tell Him all. Disclosures we would not dare to make our bosom friends, we may freely make to Him. Corruption and sin we would never admit as existing in the heart, we may tell Him all about. He bids us cast "all your care upon Him; for He cares for you." (1 Peter 5: 7.) He offers to cleanse the soul thus opened to Him and to set up His throne on the ruins of the throne of sin. Then, and only then, will we be able to sing with David: "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgave the iniquity of my sin." Psalm 32: 5.

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned Upon the Savior's brow;

His head with radiant light is crowned, His lips with grace overflow.

No mortal can with Him compare,
Among the sons of men; Fairer is He than all the fair That fill the heavenly train.

To Him I owe my life and breath, And all the joys I have;
He makes me triumph over death, He saves me from the grave.

Since from His bounty I receive Such proofs of love divine, Had I a thousand hearts to give, Lord, they should all be Your.

-SAMUEL STENNETT.

Bible Study Summary

What announcement was made to Joseph and Mary regarding the birth of Jesus?

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matthew 1: 21-23.

What did Jesus say regarding His origin?

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world." John 16: 28.

"The . . . works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." John 5: 36.

What did Christ claim to have?

He claimed to possess inherent immortality.

"For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." John 5: 26. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." John 1: 4.

How does this claim identify Him?

"That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen." 1 Tim. 6: 14-16.

What did Nathanael think of Him?

"Nathanael answered and said unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." John 1: 49.

Even doubting Thomas testified of His divinity.

"Then said He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and he not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God." John 20: 27, 28.

What did Christ have power to do?

"Therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." John 10: 17, 18.

Why did Christ plan to lay down His life?

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Romans 5: 6. Pilate declared that there was no cause of death in Jesus. His was a perfect life. But He came to take the sinner's place, to pay the penalty of the sinner's sins in order to provide a way of escape for those who were under the sentence of death. He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, because He had assumed the iniquity of all men. Therefore, "with His stripes [punishment and death] we are healed." See Isaiah 53: 4-11.

Besides Jesus, is there any other Savior?

"Neither is their salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4: 12.

"I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no savior." Isaiah 43: 11.

Who did the Apostle Paul say Jesus was?

He declared the deity of Jesus by saying, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. 3: 16. Jesus was God the Son.

What was the testimony of the Apostle John regarding Jesus?

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1: 1.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14.

How did Peter regard Christ?

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matthew 16: 16.

How much power does Christ possess?

"And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28: 18.

What evidences did Christ give of His power?

His power was revealed by the miracles which He wrought. He healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead to life, and -stilled the waters of the tempestuous sea.

How was His power first manifested in the salvation of men?

"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Tim. 1: 10.

What does it finally make of man?

"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." 2 Corinthians 5: 17, RV.

What is Christ to one renewed in His image? "Christ is all, and in all." Colossians 3: 11.

6. THE MAN: CHRIST JESUS

JESUS CHRIST was not only divine, He was also human. He was born of woman, came under the law, and took upon Himself our very nature.

Had to Become Man

Deity alone could not fully atone for man's sins. The sacrifice must also have in it the human element. In dying for man's sins, Christ had to die as a man. In His sufferings, prior to His death, He suffered in man's own flesh.

"For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." Hebrews 2: 16-18.

His passing through the tomb also had to be in the flesh, that this might be an assurance of a resurrection from the dead for all those who should believe on Him. The Apostle Paul declares:

"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ he not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." 1 Corinthians 15: 16-23.

Christ's virgin birth is beautifully set forth in Gabriel's announcement to Mary:

"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city in Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee. But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou has found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God." Luke 1: 26-35, RV.

It was of man's flesh and blood that Jesus partook. He became a member of the human race. He became just like men.

"Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death He might bring to naught Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily not to angels does He give help, but He gives help to the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." Hebrews 2: 14-18, ARV.

This, then, was real humanity. It was not the nature of angels that He assumed, but that of Abraham. He was "in all things made like unto His brethren." He became one of them. He was subject to temptation; He knew the pangs of suffering, and was not a stranger to man's common woes.

"For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4: 15, RV.

In order for Christ to understand the weakness of human nature. He had to experience it. In order for Him to be sympathetic with men in their trials, He also had to be tried. He must suffer hunger, weariness,* disappointment, sorrow, and persecution. He must tread the same paths, live under the same circumstances, and die the same death. Therefore, He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. His incarnation was in actual humanity. In fact, so complete was the union of the divine nature with the human, that when the Lord arose from the grave and ascended again to sit at the right hand of God, He went to heaven as a man, there to represent the human race as our Elder Brother and Advocate.

God's Eternal Gift

God's gift of His Son to the human race was, therefore, a complete gift. The Father did not merely lend His Son to the human family. It was an outright gift. He sits at the right hand of the Father today clothed in human flesh. He still bears the marks of the crucifixion in His hands feet, and side. Though now glorified and exalted above all, He is still "The Mad' Christ Jesus, and such He will remain throughout eternity.

He Humbled Himself

It was His very humiliation that later brought about Christ's great exaltation.

"Have this mind in you," urged the great apostle, "which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name. That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2: 5-11, RV.

Archbishop Alexander, of Alexandria, Egypt, writing about AD. 313 - 326, sets forth this marvelous truth of Christ's humanity in the following beautiful language:

"And now O soul, come sing thou hymns of praise to your own imperishable God, because Christ died for us in order that we might live with Him forever. Though He Himself was the fabricator of the universe, He endured patiently and allowed Himself to be begotten in the womb of a woman. And they wrapped in swaddling bands Him that had been arrayed in all the glory of the Father. He who sat on the chariots of the cherubim was laid on a manger. He before whom the seraphim stand in awe, ascribing glory to His

divinity, and who sent forth waters from heaven, received baptism in the Jordan by a mortal man.... He gave His soul for the soul of man. . . . He gave His blood on behalf of all. It was the wicked people whom He loved that put Him to death. They pierced the side of Him who had created them. They hung upon a tree Him that had hung out the earth. He who was the judge was judged. He through whom the whole universe lives, died.... Glory be unto Him for all ages of ages. Amen."-Camden M. Cobern, "The New Archeological Discoveries and Their Bearing Upon the New Testament and Upon the Life and Times of the Primitive Church," pages 288, 289.

Deep Sympathy for Us

Because of His life of humiliation upon earth, the sympathy of Jesus for His people was and is complete. Centuries before His human birth, the prophet Isaiah had foretold Christ's tender compassion for and watch care over those who become His followers. "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them ... and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old." Isaiah 63: 9. Never a path does man tread that He has not traveled before and left His blessed bloodstained footprints. Never is there a sigh nor a tear, but that He fully sympathizes. Never is the night so dark, but that to Him it was darker. Never is suffering so great, but that His was greater. He was tempted in all points like as we are. His flesh was man's flesh, and He became subject to all the temptations, perplexities, worries, tribulations, and trials that are common to man.

An eminent Bible writer says on this subject: "Those who are called to suffer for Christ's sake ... may find comfort in the thought that Jesus has endured the same. He is moved with compassion for them. He bids them find companionship in Him."-E G. White, "The Desire of Ages," page 327.

Christ was not made in the form of the highest of men, coming as a mighty prince or king, but He became a servant. He took the most humiliating form possible in order that He might the more closely identify Himself with human woe and sorrow. His humiliation was complete, and His divinity was so effectually veiled by His humanity that He could freely mingle among men without their being destroyed by the glory of His majestic presence.

Both Divine and Human

This incarnation of God in the flesh is the mystery of the ages. The thought is too big for poor finite minds to grasp. That God should tabernacle in human flesh is the most staggering truth of all times. But there was no other way for the great chasm to be bridged. In no other way could the Son of God qualify as the Redeemer of men. If an atonement was to be made, it had to be made by One who could properly represent both sides-God's side and man's. This could be done only by a God-man. There must be a union of the two natures. God must first come down to man in order to lift man up to Himself.

It was, therefore, Jesus Christ the God-man who suffered and died for sin. It was a Savior who was both divine and human who offered Himself up in man's behalf. This was the basis of the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice.

In Jacob's dream at Bethel he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven. Angels were descending and ascending upon it. Jesus later declared Himself to be this ladder connecting earth and heaven, and that through Him alone man could find his way from this sin-cursed earth back to God and to his lost Paradise home.

The Catholic doctrine of the "immaculate conception" is that Mary, the mother of our Lord, was preserved from original sin. If this be true, then Jesus did not partake of man's sinful nature. This belief cuts off the lower rungs of the ladder, and leaves man without a Savior who can be touched with the feelings of men's infirmities, and who can sympathize with them in their temptations and sufferings. By this teaching Jesus is made out to be altogether and wholly divine. Thus the ladder does not reach to the earth where men are.

The modernistic teaching of thousands of religious leaders today goes to the other extreme and cuts the ladder off at the top. This is accomplished by the denial of the deity of Christ. They reject His claim that He was the Son of God, discredit His miracles, and declare Him to have been only a man. They deny that Christ's death on the cross was a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of men, and ridicule the teaching that He is man's Savior. Thus man is left to try to grope his own way back to Paradise. The ladder does not reach to heaven. It is equally unsatisfactory.

The teaching of both these groups leaves man without an adequate Savior and without hope in the world.

By His human nature Jesus is enabled to reach down to the very lowest depth of human woe and suffering and lay hold of even the vilest of sinners; by His divine nature as the Son of God He is able to lift these suffering and degraded men up to God and heaven.

By His human nature He can sympathize with struggling sinners, and by His divine power He can save them from their sins and fit them for immortality and for heaven.

Behold the Son of God presenting Himself before the Father and offering to come into the world to save the lost race! and behold the great heart of the Father so moved by His love for sinners that He freely "gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16.

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4: 14-16.

In looking through my tears one day,
I saw Mount Calvary,
Beneath the cross there flowed a stream Of grace, enough for me.

While standing there, my trembling heart,-

Once full of agony,
Could scarce believe the sight I saw Of grace, enough for me.

When I beheld my every sin Nailed to the cruel tree,
I felt a flood go through my soul
Of grace, enough for me.

When I am safe within the veil, My portion there will be
To sing through all the years to come
Of grace, enough for me.

Grace is flowing from Calvary, Grace as fathomless as
the sea, Grace for time and eternity, Grace, enough for
me.

ANONYMOUS

Bible Study Summary

What did Jesus declare Himself to be?

"When Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Matthew 16: 13.

NOTE-Jesus had a dual nature. He was not only "the Son of God" but also "the Son of man." He was born of woman, but His conception was brought about through the operation of the Holy Ghost. He had no human father. See Matthew 1:18-23.

How fully did He partake of our human nature?

"Wherefore in all things it became Him to be made like unto His brethren." Hebrews 2: 17. His flesh and blood were exactly the same as ours. See Hebrews 2: 14.

Why was it necessary that the Son of God should become a man in order to become our Savior? "That He might be a merciful and faithful high priest." Hebrews 2: 17. Also, He had to be tempted and tried as men are, in order that He might be able to sympathize with them in their sufferings. He had to endure temptation in order "to succor them that are tempted." (Verse 18.)

How many of our temptations did Christ have to meet?

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4: 15.

After His resurrection, was Christ still in human form?

Yes; when He later appeared to His frightened disciples, He said to them, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have you here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them." Luke 24: 39-43.

Did Jesus go back to heaven as a man?

Yes. He was, at the time, talking to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, and the record says: "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Mark 16: 19.

NOTE - Also see Acts 1: 9. There had been no change in His form. He was just the same as He had always been. He ascended to heaven in person, not merely in spirit.

Why did Jesus retain His human nature after His resurrection?

After His ascension to heaven, He was to minister as high priest in the heavenly sanctuary in man's behalf. But in order to represent man, He must also be a member of the race of men. (See Hebrews 5: 1.) He went there as "our elder brother," as a forerunner of the redeemed from earth. By taking human flesh into heaven, He opened the way for His followers also to be saved in the flesh. Thus, Job declared, "In my flesh shall I see God." (Job 19: 25-27.)

Will Christ still be a man when He comes to earth again?

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." Matthew 25: 31.

Can human beings understand the incarnation of Christ?

No; it is a deep mystery, called the "mystery of godliness."

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. 3: 16.

What is Christ said to be?

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 2: 5. NOTE-Christ came to act as a Mediator to reconcile man to God. In order to do this, He had to be able to represent both sides. Only a God man could do that.

Why was God willing to permit His Son to lay aside His original form and become a man?

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16.

Seeing that Christ is now our High Priest and Representative before the throne of God, what are we invited to do?

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the son of God, let us hold fast our profession. . . . Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4: 14-16.

Before the heavens were spread abroad, From everlasting was the Word;
With God He was, the Word was God! And must divinely be adored.

Ere sin was born, or Satan fell, He led the host of morning stars;
His generation who can tell, Or count the number of His years?

But, lo! He leaves those heavenly forms; The Word descends and dwells in clay,
That He may converse hold with worms, Dressed in such feeble flesh as they.

The angels leave their high abode, To learn new mysteries here, and tell
The love of our descending God, The glories of Immanuel. -ISAAC WATTS.

7. HIS BLOOD FOR OUR SINS

IN THAT day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.- Zechariah 13: 1.

That fountain is the precious blood of Jesus. The atonement Christ Jesus made for sinners by His death on the cross is the central fact of the gospel. It is the sun around which all other truths revolve. In fact, it is the very essence of the gospel, for if it be taken away, nothing of the gospel remains. It forms the ground of faith, the very basis of the sinner's hope.

The teachers of the new theology (modernism) have been trying to dam up the stream of Christ's precious blood, which was shed for sinful men, by their theories that are based upon the evolutionary hypothesis, which seeks to rob Christ of His divinity and power. Yet, if this fountain be successfully sealed, then is the doom of the world also sealed; and man will never be admitted to the Paradise of God. For "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." Hebrews 9: 22, RV.

It would be impossible for a candid mind to study faithfully the abounding evidence of Christ's deity and greatness without coming to the conclusion that the atonement of Christ has infinite value and efficacy. Had Christ been a mere man, or even an angel, His death would have no meaning to a lost world; for the substitutional death of man or angel could never satisfy divine justice, could

not honor a divine law, could not effect pardon for man's sin, could not ease the guilty conscience, nor accomplish the salvation of the soul. It would possess no efficacy whatsoever. If the deity of Christ be successfully refuted, then the atonement is a failure, and all men are still in their sins. If Christ's deity stands, then the atonement stands, and by its effulgent glory it dispels the shadows of the tomb.

Law Demanded Death

As has been previously pointed out, Adam and all his posterity had broken God's moral law, and the law demanded the death of the transgressors. Could the law have been set aside, then sinners could have gone free, and Jesus need not have died. But this would have brought in a reign of anarchy and would have caused the kingdom of Satan to triumph. There was, therefore, only one way to save doomed men from eternal death, and that was for God, as man, to become man's surety, assume his guilt, and die in his stead. This He did not hesitate to do. He gave His only begotten Son as a ransom for the fallen race. When Satan took Jesus to the mountain-top and offered to give Him the kingdoms of the world with their earthly glory, he was thereby offering Him the crown without the cross. It was a short cut to securing the ruler ship of this world.

The kingdom thus offered was, however, made up of sinners. They would have become Jesus' subjects. But from the beginning God had declared that He would rule over those only who were righteous. Although He is a friend to sinners and desires to bring about their salvation, He is not their God and father. "You are of your father the devil," declared Christ to those who rejected Him. Jesus is the God of the righteous.

In order, therefore, for this earth to be restored to His kingdom, and for men and women to become His subjects, He had first to prepare the way for sinners to be transformed into saints. This He could do only by going to the cross. If sinners were to be freed from the sentence of death, He must suffer that sentence for them, for "without shedding of blood is no remission." It must be either their blood or His. There was no other way. It was not an easy undertaking, but for their sakes "He endured the cross," thus winning the right to save men from sin and its penalty, and finally restore them to their long-lost home in Eden.

With His Stripes We Are Healed

Christ presented Himself a sacrifice for men's sins. No other conclusion can be adduced from the many statements of Scripture which declare that His death was made in atonement for sin. His sacrifice was so complete, His subsequent priestly ministry so efficacious that through these means the sins of His people may be entirely blotted out. Note the statements as found in an Old Testament prophecy:

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53: 5, 6, RV.

Let us note carefully that our healing comes through His stripes. It was our transgressions and iniquities for which He suffered, and not His own. He was the Sinless One, yet He suffered and died as a sinner. Why? Because the Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Our sins were imputed to Him, and He died to pay their penalty.

"Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5: 21, RV. "In whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." Ephesians 1: 7, RV. "In whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins." Colossians 1: 14, RV. "This is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins." Matthew 26: 28, RV.

Why, then, was this divine sacrifice made? Why did the Son of God die as a sinner? He did it for us. He was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. His blood brought redemption to us. Pilate declared: 'I find no cause of death in Him.' How true! The cause of death was in us. We had to pay the wages of sin; we were under condemnation, and Jesus stepped in and took our place and punishment.

Major Whittle tells of an experience during the American Civil War in which a number of southern civilians were arrested by a general of the Union Army commanding a district in one of the border states. The general tried them by court martial under the general charge of killing Union soldiers by shooting them from bushes as they passed in small detachments through the country. They were all found guilty and sentenced to be shot. After the sentence the general allowed them to draw lots and selected a few in this way for execution. Those selected by the fatal lot were to be shot the following morning. Tried, condemned, and waiting death, the condition of those to be executed was indeed a sad one.

Among the number thus waiting in despair was a middle aged man, a man of family, who was in deep distress at the fate which awaited him. During the evening a young man, a neighbor of the condemned, and one who had himself been of the number arrested, but had escaped the fatal lot, came in and made the astonishing proposal to this man that he would take his place and die in his stead. He said: 'I have no family to mourn my loss. I trust I am prepared to die; and I am willing, for the sake of your family, to die for you. The general says he will consent to the change and accept my death in place of yours as satisfactory to the law.' The generous offer was accepted by the surprised and overcome man, and the substitute remained under the guard until morning. In the morning the

young man was led out upon the parade ground with his fellow prisoners. A company of soldiers with loaded guns faced them, and as the bullets found their mark, he fell-dying voluntarily for another.

That is what Christ did for every sinner. He tasted death forever man. He was sinless though He bore the burden of sin for others.

As a Sinner He Died

So close, in fact, was Christ's identification with the sinner that He actually carried the entire load of the sinner's guilt. Man's iniquity had been laid upon Him. He must suffer the same pangs of remorse and shame that the unrepentant sinner will suffer after the door of mercy is finally closed, and he is called to account for his life of sin. Not His own sins, but man's sins weighed Him down. He had taken the sinner's place, and He must suffer the just reward of the sinner's guilt. It was then that He temporarily lost the assurance that if He suffered death on man's behalf, He would come forth again from the grave. It seemed that His dying for sin on the cross would surely mean eternal separation from God. He could not see beyond the tomb.

His chosen people rejected Him and clamored for His death. Even His professed followers failed Him in the hour of His greatest trial: one denying Him, another betraying Him, and finally all forsaking Him. The crowd jeered and cried out, "Let Him be crucified." His sufferings were extremely intense. The reproach heaped upon Him was vile. His enemies moved against Him like dogs of war.

Nor was this all. In Gethsemane He prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." It was not the hatred of the world, the unbelief of His disciples, not the thought of the cross that weighed Him down, and caused great drops of blood to ooze from His sacred brow; but it was the fact that even the Father had hidden His face from Him. Jesus had assumed man's sins. He had taken man's guilt upon His head. He had become man's surety. Therefore, as a sinner He must suffer. The wrath of God against sin rolled over Him in mighty billows. He was suffering all the agonies of those who, having rejected the gospel, will, in the last day, weep and gnash their teeth as they suffer the fires of hell.

As eloquently stated by another:

"He felt that by sin He was being separated from His Father. The gulf was so broad, so black, so deep, that His spirit shuddered before it. This agony He must not exert His divine power to escape. As man He must suffer the consequences of man's sin. As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression....

"As Christ felt His unity with the Father broken up, He feared that in His human nature He would be unable to endure the coming conflict with the powers of darkness. In the wilderness of temptation the destiny of the human race had been at stake. Christ was then conqueror. Now the tempter had come for the last fearful struggle. For this he had been preparing during the three years of Christ's ministry. Everything was at stake with him. If he failed here, his hope of mastery was lost; the kingdoms of the world would finally become Christ's; he himself would be overthrown and cast out. But if Christ could be overcome, the earth would become Satan's kingdom, and the human race would be forever in his power. With the issues of the conflict before Him, Christ's soul was filled with dread of separation from God. Satan told Him that if He became the surety for a sinful world, the separation would be eternal."-E. G. White, "Desire of Ages," pages 686, 687.

But in the face of all this, the Son of God did not hesitate to pay the price of man's redemption. He was willing, if necessary, to suffer eternal death in order that through His death men might find their way back to God. Glory be to His name!

Not long ago we read of a man in Denver who was thought to be dying of tuberculosis. It is said that a physician was asked to see him, but upon examination it was found that the man's life was simply wearing away with no apparent cause. Although well supplied with means, the man seemed to be without either friends or relatives. He wrote no letters and received none. He seemed to be drifting out of the world—a bleak, desolate old man, drifting out into the shadows.

When the doctor told him he could find no organic disease, the man replied, "I know it."

"But have you no idea of what brought you to this condition?" asked the doctor.

"Yes," he said, "it is a strange story. And, strange as it may seem to you, I am dying, as you say, not of disease, but of a broken heart. I came out here, not for a longer lease of life, but to die in peace, and alone." "But have you no friends?" queried the physician.

"None that I can claim," was the answer. "My past is sealed in the shadow of a terrible crime. I am already dead to all who ever knew me; and over my nameless grave not even a memory must hover."

"You say you are a criminal?"

"No, but I assumed the stigma to shield another—an only son.

The shadows of twilight were falling about them. The man's breath came fast, for the end was near. Amid the mysterious hush the dying man said: "He murdered a man, and I assumed the crime. Then I escaped, not to evade the law, but to spare my boy the stigma of a felon's death."

"How long ago was that?"

"Twelve years," he said.

"And you have been a wanderer ever since?"

"Ever since," the man answered.

The feeble pulse was fluttering, as the shadows grew more gloomy. "Will you tell me no more?" whispered the doctor.

"It is all I have to tell." The next instant he was dead. But he had kept his secret and sacrificed his life in doing it.

What a sacrifice! What a price to pay! Yet his sacrifice was but as the dust in the balance compared with what Jesus did for us. We were guilty and condemned to die. He voluntarily took the load-the sin, the penalty-and died on Calvary that we might live. All the bitterness of death seemed to be pressed into His cup as He drank its very dregs. He gave His all in one grand effort to lift the condemnation of death from guilty man.

At Infinite Cost

What an infinite price to pay for the world's salvation! Man was lost eternally lost-without God, and without hope in the world. Sin had made a gulf between him and God so deep and so wide that he was helpless to bridge it. Man's own righteousness was as "filthy rags." His sin was so great that all his treasures could not purchase his pardon. Said the inspired Old Testament prophet:

"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 first-born for my transgression?" Micah 6: 6, 7, RV.

No, Micah, all these treasures heaped together would not suffice. The oil wells of California, the gold of the Transvaal, the diamonds of Kimberley, all multiplied in value a thousand-fold, would be a price far too small to rid the soul of the stain of a single sin.

We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but "with precious blood," as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ.--- 1 Peter 1: 18, 195 ARV.

Is salvation from sin free? Yes. But as man accepts it as a free gift from the hands of his Redeemer, let him not value it the less because he pays nothing for it. Let him remember that it was purchased for him at infinite cost. No wonder that the beloved John exclaims:

"Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4: 9, 10, RV.

Well may we say with the Apostle Peter that God "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3: 9.

"A farmer in North Carolina once drove with two high settled horses into town. Stopping in front of one of the stores, he was about to enter when his horses took fright. He sprang in front of them, and heroically seized the reins. Maddened by strange noises, the horses dashed down the street, the man still clinging to the bridles. On they rushed, until the horses, wild with frenzy, rose on their haunches, and leaping upon the man all came with a crash to the earth. When people came and rescued the bleeding body of the man, and found him in death's last agony, a friend, bending tenderly over him asked: 'Why did you sacrifice your life for horses and wagon?' With his last breath he replied, 'Go and look in the wagon.'

"There asleep on a pallet of straw, lay his little boy.

'Herein is love.' He had willingly laid down his life for his child. No sacrifice could be counted too great when the life of his son was at stake.

"But Christ did not die only for His own, but for rebels and sinners. He gave His life for the world."

"He was not willing that any should perish. Jesus enthroned in the glory above, Saw our poor fallen world, pitied our sorrows, Poured out His life for us-wonderful love!

"He was not willing that any should perish: Clothed in our flesh with its sorrow and pain, Came to seek the lost, comfort the mourner, Heal the hearts broken by sorrow and shame."

SELECTED.

He Suffered Alone

Of Christ, the broken law of God exacted its highest and utmost claims. He had to pay the last farthing. In the fateful hour of His death on Calvary, the fearful wrath of God was turned against Him. It could not be otherwise, since He was dying as a sinner. Sin is so abhorrent to God that He was compelled by divine justice to hide His face from the scene. It was then that our Savior uttered that mournful cry of the ages: "My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?" Mark 15: 34. Thus, alone, forsaken by God and man, Jesus bore our sins. As He drained the dregs of this awful cup of sorrow, He could truly say, "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the peoples there was no man with Me." Isaiah 63: 3. RV.

Who was this One who thus suffered? He was the divine Son of God who had come down from heaven. He was the Sinless One, pure and undefiled; but He did this, yes, all this, that I, a sinner, might go free. It was in my stead and yours. Oh, the greatness of such a deed! What love is thus displayed!

What a spectacle is revealed to the unfallen worlds and to angels: the Son of God pouring out His life-blood for us, who were sinners-all in order that He might purchase the right to transfer His righteousness and purity to us and set us forever free! Oh, my soul, how you should love Him!

"Behold, behold the Lamb of God,
On the cross, on the cross;
For you He shed His precious blood,
On the cross, on the cross; O hear His agonizing
cry, 'Eloi, lama, sabachthani,' Draw near, and see
your Savior die,
On the cross, on the cross.

"And now the mighty deed is done, On the cross, on the cross;
The battle fought, the victory won, On the cross, on the cross;
"Tis finished,' now the Savior cries; To heaven He turns His languid eyes; Then bows His sacred head, and
dies, On the cross, on the cross.

"Wherever I go, I'll tell the story Of the cross, of the cross;
In nothing else my soul shall glory, Save the cross, save the cross; And this my constant theme shall be,
Through time and in eternity,
That Jesus shed His blood for me, On the cross, on the cross."

-ANONYMOUS.

Bible Study Summary

What does the Bible say will take away sin?

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1: 7.

Was it necessary for Christ to die in His own behalf?

No. Pilate, after carefully examining Him, declared, "I have found no cause of death in Him." Luke 23: 22. He had no sin, and therefore was under no condemnation.

For what reason, then, did He die?

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Hebrews 2: 9.
It was for sinful men that He died.

What sentence had been pronounced upon the human family?

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world. and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5: 12.

"Now we know that what things so ever the law said, it said to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Romans 3: 19.

How could the death of Christ help to free man from his sins?

He took the sinner's place and assumed the guilt as if it were His own. "The Lord hath laid- on Him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53: 6.
He who knew no sin was made to be sin in our behalf. See 2 Corinthians 5: 21.

When Jesus died, therefore, for whose sins did He die?

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53: 5.

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." 1 Corinthians 15: 3.

What did Christ's death accomplish for us?

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Ephesians 1: 7.

"Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1: 18, 19.
NOTE - When a sinner accepts Christ as his Savior, God counts the death of Christ as punishment for his sins. The sinner is forgiven and goes free. He is "redeemed" from death through the sacrifice of Christ.

For how many has God provided salvation?

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16.

What earnest appeal does God make to the sinner?

"Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, said the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live you." Ezekiel 18: 30-32.

Are any too sinful to come to God?

"Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Isaiah 45:22.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Tim. 1:15.

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.

8. WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

THE greatest question with which all human beings are confronted is: "What must I do to be saved?" This question comes to every individual for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Man by nature is lost. No man has the slightest claim upon immortality.

For six thousand long years men have been seeking for the way of life. When Ponce de Leon stepped upon the shores of Florida, he announced that he had discovered the fountain of perpetual youth; but those who drank of it were quickly disillusioned. Immortality has been the quest of the ages. Men of every generation and of every nation have sought for it. Who is there who has not said with the young ruler who came one day to Jesus: "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Hundreds of religions have arisen, prescribing this or that method of reaching the goal; yet in the minds of millions the question has not found a satisfactory answer.

When the gaoler, who with his family was converted under the preaching of the great apostle, pressed for an answer to this great question, Paul replied without the slightest hesitation: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved, and thy house." Acts 16: 3 1.

Later, as this same apostle wrote to the believers in Rome, he declared:

"But what said it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord' Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture said, Whosoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed." Romans 10: 8-11.

This, then, we earnestly repeat, is the great fundamental truth of the gospel: Men are saved by believing in Jesus. There is no other way.

Man Cannot Save Himself

Let us set it down here as a fundamental fact that man cannot save himself. No number of good deeds, self-abnegation, or philanthropy can remove the guilt of sin from the human soul. Man, if saved at all, must have a Savior; and the only Savior of man is Jesus Christ.

While visiting a Mohammedan mosque near the Mount of Olives some years ago, we fell into conversation with the Moslem who was acting as our guide. As we approached the main altar, he called our attention to an inscription on the wall, in which Mohammed is quoted as saying, "If any man will come to me, let him first cleanse his heart." "That," said he, "is the basis of our religion."

But the religion of Jesus Christ is the very antithesis of that. Man is unable to lift himself by his own strength from the mire and filth of sin, but is offered cleansing, pardon, and salvation through the power and intervention of another. Jesus does not hold the sinner off until he has first cleansed his own heart (an accomplishment that would be altogether impossible), but boldly extends the

universal invitation: "Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Isaiah 45: 22. To Jesus, the vilest sinner may come and find deliverance from his sins; but no man, regardless of how righteous he may appear in his own eyes, can save himself from sin's guilt and power. Neither can he find a legitimate excuse for his sin. If the deliverance offered by Christ be not accepted by the sinner, he is utterly lost and absolutely without hope.

He Is Our Advocate

T. DeWitt Talmage has said:

"There is only one Advocate in all the universe that can plead our cause in the last judgment. Sometimes in earthly courts attorneys have specialties, and one man succeeds better in patent cases, another in insurance cases, another in criminal cases, another in land cases, another in will cases, and his success generally depends upon his sticking to that specialty. I have to tell you that Christ can do many things; but it seems to me that His specialty is to take the bad case of the sinner, and plead it before God until He gets eternal acquittal.

"But what plea can He make? Sometimes an attorney in court will plead the innocence of the prisoner. That would be inappropriate for us; we are all guilty. Sometimes he tries to prove an alibi. Such a plea will not do in our case. The Lord found us in all our sins, and in the very place of our iniquity. Sometimes an attorney will plead the insanity of the prisoner, and say he is irresponsible on that account. That plea will never do in our case. We sinned against light, knowledge, and the dictates of our own consciences. What, then, shall the plea be? Christ will say: 'Look at all these wounds. By all these sufferings I demand the rescue of this man from sin and death and hell. Constable, knock off the shackles-let the prisoner go free.' 'Who is he that condemns?'

Not of Works

While passing through one of the principal streets of Calcutta, in 1937, we found a long-bearded man, clothed only in a scant loincloth, and sitting on a bed of spikes. His face and body were white with wood ash, and his long, filthy hair was matted as if it had never been combed. When asked why he was torturing himself, he stated that he was seeking God's favor, that he might be absolved from his sins.

Thus all over the world many men and women who desire salvation are seeking it through some method of self-inflicted penance or punishment, supposing that in this way they may gain merit and favor with God. But this is not the way of salvation, "for by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2: 8, 9.

Even service for Christ and humanity, good though it be, will not bring salvation. No one through deeds of kindness and mercy can bribe God to grant the gift of eternal life. Though a man should bestow all his goods to feed the poor and give his body to be burned, it would profit him nothing so far as securing salvation is concerned. Man is not saved that way. Service for others is not a means of salvation, but the fruit of it. It is not service, but faith that brings salvation. No one is asked to try to win salvation by, some effort on his part, but he is urged to accept it as a gift from God. Men are not saved by anything they may do for God, but by what He does for them. Jesus saves, and apart from Him there is no salvation.

George W. Truett, D.D., tells a story of Napoleon when he came with his soldiers 'to cross the desert on one of his long marches. In that early morning when they started across the desert, the historian tells us, the hot sun came down on the white sands, and the light and heat reflected made the men pant for water, as they marched across that terrible desert. In their fierce thirst they looked everywhere for water, but the wells were dry, and no water could be found. Then they looked out there a little distance ahead and saw a beautiful lake of water, right out in the desert before them; and they lifted up a shout of joy and started on a run toward the water, but as they ran toward that lake, the lake ran. As they drew nearer, the lake receded, and went farther away. It was not a lake of water at all. It was a mirage of the desert. It was a cheat. It was a delusion. It was a snare.

Oh, my fellow man, travelling with me to an eternity endless, that picture of the mirage in the desert is exactly the picture of human life without God. Without God, life is defeated, and its true aim is vitiated and missed and lost. Without God man stumbles aimlessly on and on. This awful expression is found in the Bible: "Having no hope, and without God in the world." Ephesians 2: 12.

"I am the door," said Jesus, "by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." But He added, "He that enters not by the door ... but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." John 10: 9, 1. What a pity that even today untold millions are still striving to climb up some other way rather than seeking salvation through simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What Shall We Believe?

When Jesus was asked by the Jews, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Jesus answered. "This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He hath sent." John 6: 28, 29. And the promise is that "whosoever believes in Him" shall "not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16.

We may ask, "What must I believe about Christ?" We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is able and willing to save from sin and to bestow upon His followers the priceless gift of eternal life. We must believe in Him as our Personal Savior, that He died for us, and that His death on the cross was the penalty for our sin, which He paid on our behalf.

Believing this, the next step is to repent of sins, confessing them to Him, and then believe with all the heart that He forgives and cleanses, for "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1: 9.

"Return, thou backsliding Israel, said the Lord; and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, said the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that thou has transgressed against the Lord thy God, and has scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice, said the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, said the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." Jeremiah 3: 12-14.

Having thus accepted the pardon that is freely offered through Jesus Christ, the believer must be ready and willing to follow Him by obeying all His commandments and engaging in His service. This is the Christian life, and it results from having accepted salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The Christian does not keep God's commandments nor engage in His service to be saved, but he does these acts because he has become His. Christian service is now a joy.

Let Christ Save

Man's part, therefore, in securing salvation is to accept wholeheartedly the fact that while he can do nothing to save himself, Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. Man is to surrender the matter entirely into Jesus' hands. Let Him save. He gave His life on Calvary to secure that privilege. 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.'" Acts 4: 12.

Will you, then, reader, come to Him and be saved? Your case is not too hard for Him. Your burden is not too heavy for Him to bear. Your sin is not too great for Him to fully pardon. He is able to save even you to the uttermost. His salvation is yours if you will only believe. Hear then the loving entreaty:

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that hears, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17, RV.

"In ignorance I ' thought
(In silly fear, and foolishness and dread) God does remember all the
sins I wrought, And does forget how needy is my lot,

But, lo, instead, When I His message read, I found it was my needs on which He thought, My sins that He, because of Christ, forgot."

-SELECTED.

Bible Study Summary

What question did a certain gaoler ask Paul and Silas? "What must I do to be saved?" Acts 16: 30.

What was their answer?

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved, and thy house." Acts 16: 31.

Can man save himself from the guilt and power of sin?

"For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2: 8, 9.

Who can save man?

"For unto you is born. . . a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2: 11.

When a sinner is impressed by the Holy Spirit to forsake his sins, what is the first step he should take?

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11: 6.

"I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." John 11: 27.

Does the devil try to hinder men from believing in God's power and Word?

"Then comes the devil, and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." Luke 8: 12.

After believing that Christ can save, what is the next step toward salvation? "Repent you, and believe the gospel." Mark 1: 15.

"Repent you therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3: 19.

What was Christ's purpose in coming into the world? "To call ... sinners to repentance." Matthew 9: 13.

What does Christ promise to do for sinners who truly confess and repent of their sins?

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1: 9.

How fully can Christ cleanse away the guilt of sinners?

"Come now, and let us reason together, said the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1: 18.

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1: 7.

How should sins be confessed?

Sinners should bow before God in prayer and, in the name of Jesus, confess to Him that they have sinned. Any outstanding sins should be specifically mentioned. The whole heart should be opened to Him. Tell Him all. Sins of a private nature should be privately confessed. As the sins are confessed, the hearts should repent of them; and they should ask for forgiveness and cleansing through the blood of Jesus Christ, which was shed for all. Men should also surrender their lives to Christ and ask Him to control thoughts, desires, impulses, words, and actions. By our doing this, He will be able to save to the uttermost."

What must the repentant sinner then believe?

He must believe that God forgives his sins according to His promise that if he confesses his sins, He will surely forgive. See 1 John 1: 9.

What must all Christ's children be willing to do?

To obey all the commandments of God. Christ said that new converts were to be taught "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matthew 28: 20.)

Can Christ save all?

"Whosoever will" may come to Him and be saved. He can fully save the vilest sinner. The murderer, the thief, the adulterer, and the drunkard may all come to Him for cleansing and pardon. He will send none away as being too vile. Said Jesus, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6: 37.

What will be the reward of those who faithfully serve Christ?

"Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25: 34.

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22: 14.

In what will they find joy in the new earth?

"But be you glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. . . . And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. . . . Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." Isaiah 65: 18-22.

9. TWICE-BORN MEN

THOSE who are saved through the power of Jesus Christ are twice born. A complete transformation takes place in their lives so that they are no longer the same individuals. Their names may remain the same, but spiritually they are entirely changed. They have been born again: the first time of the flesh; the second time of God's Spirit.

This is conversion. It is mysterious and inexplicable, but it is nevertheless actual. The new birth is as real as is the natural birth. It is recognized both by the individual and by those who know him.

The new birth has to do with the heart, or mind, and is produced by the mysterious operation of the Spirit of God working silently and imperceptibly in the surrendered life.

"A new heart also will I give you," says the Lord, "and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments, and do them." Ezekiel 36:26,27.

At conversion the entire life is regenerated and changed. The old carnal desires, the tendency to sin, and the love of the world become subdued; and these are replaced by a desire to serve God and do right. Through the new birth men and women become "new creatures." "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5: 17.

The promise of God through the Apostle Paul is that if we "walk in the Spirit," we "shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Galatians 5: 16.

A New Man

Changing a sinner into a Christian is a miracle of God's grace. When it is performed, the entire life is altered. He is a new man." "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5: 17. No longer do the works of the flesh, such as "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, reveling, and such like" dominate the life. "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5: 19-21. Once these things may have been prominent, but as the dead leaves that cling to the oak through all the stormy, blasting winds of winter are pushed off by the springing buds of summer, so these works of the flesh automatically drop away when the life is regenerated by the power of the indwelling Christ.

Instead of the works of the flesh, the beautiful fruit of the Spirit begins to appear. This fruit "is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," for, says the Apostle Paul, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Galatians 5: 22 - 25.

By nature "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isaiah 64: 6.

But through the gospel God promises the sinner a complete change. He is transformed into a saint. His whole life is altered. His appearance is changed. His habits, are different.

It is said of Joshua's experience:

"Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And He answered and spoke unto those that stood before Him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zechariah 3: 3, 4.

"He that overcomes," said John the revelator, "the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." Revelation 3: 5.

As White as Snow

It is said that Queen Victoria once disguised herself and visited some of the paper mills of England, where various substances were being transformed into paper.

As she was being shown through one factory, the guide finally took her to a room that was full of bales of dirty rags. The sight was repulsive, and the Queen exclaimed, "Oh, what are these for?"

"Why, madam," replied the guide, "we make our most beautiful paper out of these."

The guide later learned that it was the Queen whom he had guided through the mill. He had the factory make some of the rags into beautiful white paper with the Queen's profile water-marked upon it. These he then sent to her with the words: "Your Majesty, these are some of the rags."

It was a complete transformation, and now the Queen's own portrait shone through the spotless pages.

So it is with the twice-born man. The life that through sin had become as loathsome as a collection of filthy rags is so completely changed by the power and blood of Christ that it becomes spotless and white as snow and reflects the character and image of the Lord Jesus.

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decked himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." Isaiah 61:10.

When David was brought to realize his sinful and lost condition, he poured forth his heartfelt prayer of penitence, in which he sincerely pleaded for pardon and forgiveness. In this very contrite prayer he desired a complete change of heart.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." "Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." Psalm 51: 1-3, 7, 9-11.

This new creation or transformation is absolutely essential to Christian living. By nature man's mind is carnal, and "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." It is absolutely impossible for carnally minded individuals to do the will of God. Their efforts are likened to the attempt of the Ethiopian to change his skin or the leopard his spots. By nature "there is none that does good, no, not one." Romans 3: 12. This is indeed a true picture of man's weakness.

You Must Be Born Again

It was because of these considerations that Jesus said to Nicodemus, "You must be born again." In order for sinners to change their sinful ways and do right, they must, like Saul, king of Israel, "be turned into another man." This is a recreation.

The change that takes place in the heart of a repentant sinner is very real. It is thereafter revealed in his every word and act. His aspirations and ideals undergo a complete change. What he once loved he now hates, and what he once hated he now loves. Whereas before he delighted in the practice of sinful habits and indulgences, he now delights in the service of God. Instead of living to gratify self, he lives to serve his fellow men and his God. "What things were gain to me," testifies the Apostle Paul, "those I counted loss for Christ." Phil. 3: 7.

One night Sam Hadley, a rugged worker among men whose lives had been broken by sin, was speaking in his mission hall to a large gathering of poor wrecks. A trained physician sat among them, drawn merely out of curiosity. The vigorous appeal of the preacher for an immediate decision for a new life impressed the physician, and he arose and said, "Mr. Hadley, you have been appealing here with a glowing passion to these drunkards for a made-over life. I speak as a physician to say that you would not talk to these men thus if you had ever seen what the inside of a drunkard's stomach looks like."

As quick as a flash Mr. Hadley replied, "Sir, I had a drunkard's stomach, and Jesus Christ saved me from it and saves me from it now."

Sergeant Alvin York once said: "I used to drink liquor; drank it for ten years; drank it until I broke the hearts of those who loved me and prayed for me. And then one night in 1914 I knelt at the altar in a little mountain church in East Tennessee, and confessed and repented of my sins. I arose from that altar a new man in Christ Jesus, and I broke with liquor forever." And he is the soldier who in World War 1 disarmed and brought 153 German prisoners into camp.

A Heart of Flesh

When faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sins is exercised, it brings to the heart the sweet assurance of acceptance and pardon, and of the indwelling presence of God's Holy Spirit. The heart that by nature was so hard and calloused that it is likened in the Bible to a heart of stone has been exchanged for a heart of flesh," which is susceptible to the influence and guidance of the Spirit of God. Upon this new heart the Lord promises to write the principles of His immutable law, and within its precincts to set up His throne and control the life. Man no longer is left to stumble in the darkness as he seeks to direct his steps aright, but he is now under the control of the Spirit of God, who, as Christ's personal representative, has taken up His abode in the life.

"I will pray the Father," says Jesus, "and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him: but you know Him; for He dwells with you, and shall be in you." John 14: 16, 17.

When, through faith, one comes to realize that he has received forgiveness of sins and has been translated into the kingdom of Christ, that his life is now under the control of the Holy Spirit, joy and peace that have never been known before flood the heart. This is "the peace of God which passes all understanding," and which the world cannot give, neither can it take away. This peace brings joy in this life and the heavenly reward as well.

Sons of God

When the surrendered heart is cleansed and renewed by the power of Christ, He sets up His throne within. While the heaven, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Him who is high and holy, yet He deigns to dwell in the heart of the humble and contrite one who is fully surrendered to His control. Thus, the converted sinner becomes a son or a daughter of God. He who by nature was a pilgrim and a stranger becomes a fellow citizen with the saints and of the household of God. He becomes a member of God's family and now recognizes God as his loving Father.

"For you have not received the spirit of bondage- again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Romans 8: 15.

It matters little, therefore, how lowly the natural birth may have been, for by the new birth sinners become members of God's family, queens and princes of the royal blood. Marvelous transformation! Wonderful condescension on the part of the mighty God thus to stoop down and lift a fallen man or woman up to Himself and His throne.

Bible Study Summary

What takes place in the life of a sinner when he confesses his sins to God, accepts Christ as his Savior and believes that his sins are forgiven?

He is converted. "Repent you therefore, and be converted." Acts 3: 19.

NOTE-This means that his life is changed. He no longer renders allegiance to Satan and sin, but now counts himself a child of God. He has been transformed.

What is this transformation called?

It is called the new birth. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3: 3. See 1 Peter 1: 23.

What are converted persons said to be?

"Newborn babes." (1 Peter 2: 2.)

"And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Ephesians 4: 24. See Colossians 3: 10.

What change takes place in the heart at conversion?

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." Ezekiel 36: 26.

David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51: 10.

What does God promise to write upon the new heart?

"I will put My laws into their mind and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." Hebrews 8: 10.

What change is noticeable in the converted individual?

Instead of the works of sin and the flesh, the fruits of the Spirit now appear. These are love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, and faith. The whole life has been transformed.

What does the heart of the Christian become?

"What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you 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." 2 Corinthians 6: 16.

How does Christ dwell in men's hearts?

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Ephesians 3: 17.

When Christ is fully in control of the new life, how complete will be the victory over sin?

Every thought will be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. See 2 Corinthians 10: 4,5 and Hebrews 13:20, 21.

What does the new Christian become?

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." John 1: 12.

10. JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

BY HIM every one that believes is justified from all things." Acts 13: 39, RV (Revised Version).

During His life on earth Christ met every requirement of the Father's law. Not in one jot or tittle was it toned down or its claims compromised. He gave all that it demanded in obedience. He kept its every precept. He even magnified it and made it honorable. Not by act, word, or thought did He once transgress it. His obedience was perfect. With full assurance He declared: "I have kept My Father's commandments."

But why must the Lawgiver thus come to earth and become Law keeper? We answer: He did it for men who had broken the law, whose natures had become so weakened through transgression that now it was impossible for them to keep it. He obeyed for them; and now, when they accept Him as their substitute and Savior, accept His full and free pardon for their transgressions, He imputes His law-fulfilling to them, and reckons that they were the ones who kept it. He did it in their name; and if they accept Him as their substitute, He sets over to their credit the record of His sinless life and counts it as though they had always lived righteously, rather than sinfully. This is justification. His record stands in place of their record.

"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say,-at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus." Romans 3: 22-26.

All past sins are covered by His blood; and His righteousness becomes man's. "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5: 2 1, RV. He was made to be sin, that sinners might be made righteous. Their sins were imputed to Him, that His righteousness might be imputed to them.

E. G. White has stated this truth in these beautiful words:

"Our natures are fallen, and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey a holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Savior, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned." - "Steps to Christ," page 67.

The Righteousness of God

A plan of redemption 'Such as this could have been conceived only in the heart of God. It was born of His eternal love.

"Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the church to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5: 25-27, RV.

Therefore, dear reader, if you have today been accepted in the Beloved through the atoning blood of Christ, offered on your behalf in the sanctuary above, the righteousness in which you stand is a royal righteousness. It is the righteousness of a king! Then you may sing with the prophet Isaiah:

'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." Isaiah 61: 10, RV.

If, on the other hand, there is still on the heart a load of guilt, if the garments are still stained and polluted with transgression, you are here and now invited-yes, urged-to come to Jesus, your High Priest and Savior, and let Him give you a change of raiment. The experience of Joshua awaits all who will accept it.

'Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And He answered and spoke unto those that stood before Him, saying, Take the filthy garments from off him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich apparel. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments; and the angel of the Lord stood by." Zechariah 3: 3-5, RV.

The individual who has accepted Christ and who has been justified before God has a new start. He is "justified from all things." His life is clean, and he appears innocent before God. The record declares that the righteousness of Christ is his righteousness, and that instead of having been a transgressor of God's law he has always faithfully kept it. His past sins are pardoned and forgotten, and in this imputed innocence he stands. He is free. 'Blessed is the man of whose sin the Lord will not take account." Romans 4: 8, Weymouth, 3rd edition.

Whosoever Will

God is no respecter of persons. The most hardened sinner may find grace and pardon equally with the man whose sins may seem less flagrant. When, during the American Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Lincoln, the slaves, whether good or bad, were alike set free. No distinction was made. The proclamation included all. None were set free because of what they had done, but because of the president's proclamation. So it is with those who accept the provisions God has made for their redemption. His invitation is that "whosoever will" may come, and that him that comes He will in no wise cast out. All alike, if they will but come, shall be accepted and cleansed because of what Christ has done for them. Said Jesus, speaking through the pen of the prophet:

"I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against Me." Jeremiah 33: 8.

"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103: 11, 12.

And again, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1: 7.

Our Sins Forgotten

But the divine message goes still further:

"In those days, and in that time, said the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I leave as a remnant." Jeremiah 50:20, RV.

"I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." Jeremiah 31: 34, RV.

In Le Tourneau Tech's Now is found the following human interest story of an old account of General Robert E. Lee:

"According to the press, two pairs of shoes purchased by Robert E. Lee for \$2.88 are still on the books.

"Students of Washington and Lee University sent a cheque for the amount-plus interest-to the shoe store where the purchase was made, but it was returned.

"Mrs. Clinton Ballenger, of Alexandria, Virginia, descendant of the store's original owner, found the item among old accounts now in her possession.

"Both she and the shoe store manager say they won't accept any of the various offers to pay the bill, which have been made since she disclosed that purchase price apparently never had been paid."

It was suggested that possibly the reason the store refused to accept payment is the fact that the person paying the debt would have a right to demand that the bill be marked paid and given to him-whereas the bill is worth an inestimable amount of money as an historical document.

But God does not thus hold on to the record of repentant man's debts and sins for which Christ has paid the penalty. When a sinner accepts Christ's death on the cross as an atonement for his transgressions, God declares the demands, of the law are fully satisfied, and that the sinner is free. His sins are gone, and his record is clean. The account has been fully settled, and marked "paid."

"I, even I, am He that blots out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isaiah 43: 2 5.

What astounding message is this! He not only forgives and pardons, but even forgets! "Their sin will I remember no more." Thank God! Only God could be as big as that. He forgives, and He also forgets. Not only so. but if the sins be sought for, "they shall not be found- for "there shall be none." What has He done with them? He has cast them behind His back. He has cast them "into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7: 19), from which place they shall never rise to condemn the contrite and faithful believer.

God's appeal is to each individual. "Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Isaiah 45: 22. His invitation to men to come to Jesus for pardon and complete justification is universal-it is to all. To everyone His nail scarred hands are outstretched today in loving entreaty to come and be saved. The death of Jesus was as surely for each sinner as would have been the case had he been the only sinner who needed salvation. He still would have died just for this sinner alone. Sinners everywhere are the object of His love and tender care. "I have loved thee," declares the Lord, "with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31: 3.

Bible Study Summary

What is meant by the Bible doctrine of justification?

To justify means to absolve or declare one innocent who has been guilty. It is a gracious act of God whereby, after He pardons and accepts a sinner, He imputes to him His own righteousness and declares before the universe that the sinner is guiltless.

How many may be justified?

Everyone who believes in Christ as his Savior and is willing to accept His righteousness. "By Him every one that believes is justified from all things." Acts 13: 39, RV.

How many have sinned?

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3: 23.

Whose righteousness has been provided as a substitute for men's sins?

"Therefore as by the offence of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [Jesus] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Jesus] shall many be made righteous." Romans 5: 18, 19.

How do men receive Christ's righteousness?

It is a gift from God to repentant sinners. "And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Romans 5: 16, 17.

What earnest question is asked by Bildad, one of Job's companions?

"How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Job 25: 4.

What is the answer to Bildad's question?

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Romans 3. 24.

NOTE - Christ's righteousness is declared to be ours. He lived for us. Paul says, "We shall be saved by His life." Romans 5: 10.

How does one receive this justification from God?

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith." Romans 3:28.

It is by faith. The sinner must ask for pardon and cleansing; he must ask for purity and righteousness, but he must also believe that God grants his request.

What concrete example makes clear the meaning of this doctrine?

"And He brought him [Abraham] forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." Gen. 15: 5, 6.

What does God do with the sins of those whom He pardons and justifies?

He casts them into the depths of the sea. "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7: 19.

He casts them behind His back (Isaiah 38: 17) and remembers them against us no more forever. (Jeremiah 31:34)

He blots them out as a thick cloud. "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee." Isaiah 44: 22.

He takes them away. In place of former sins, He now substitutes His own righteousness.

What does God promise those who are clothed with the righteousness of Christ?

"They shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy. He that overcomes the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." Revelation 3:4,5.

What does God declare concerning those whom He has justified?

"Those whom He has called He has also declared free from guilt; and those whom He has declared free from guilt He has also crowned with glory. What then shall we say to this? If God is on our side, who is there to appear against us? He who did not withhold even His own Son, but gave Him up for all of us, will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who shall impeach those whom God has chosen? God declares them free from guilt. Who is there to condemn them?" Romans 8: 30-33. Weymouth.

Alas! and did my Savior bleed? And did my Sovereign die? Would He devote that sacred head For such a worm as I?

Was it for crimes that I have done, He groaned upon the tree? Amazing pity! grace unknown! And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide, And shut his glories in, When Christ the mighty Maker died For man, the creature's, sin.

Thus might I hide my blushing face,
While His dear cross appears,
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness, And melt mine eyes to tears.

But drops of grief can ne'er repay The debt of love I owe; Here, Lord, I give myself away; 'Tis all that I can do. ISAAC WATTS.

11. LIVING BY FAITH

NOW THE just shall live by faith. Hebrews 10: 3 8. What shall the saved sinner do with his justified life? He has been given a clean page. What shall he write upon it? If he would retain the ground he has gained through faith in Christ, what kind of life must he now live? Shall it be one of sin or of obedience? Let the great apostle answer:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are you ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

"For if we have become united with Him by the likeness of His death, we shall be also by the likeness of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death no more hath dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died unto sin once: but the life that He lives, He lives unto God, Even so reckon you also yourselves to be dead unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." Romans 6: 1-11, RV.

Henceforth, the life is to be different. Those who are dead to sin cannot "live any longer therein." This means that from conversion on there must appear in their lives a continuation of that obedience which Christ imputed to them at the time they accepted Him.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8: 3, 4.

There should be, therefore, a higher, holier experience. Past sins are pardoned, and justification is assured. Now we should have the experience of coming into such close unity with Christ that this holy law of God can be actually worked out in the daily life. This is the glorious experience of sanctification.

God's Law Written on the Heart

Hear the wondrous promise: "I will put My laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." Hebrews 8: 10, ARV. Here is more than imputed righteousness. This righteousness is imparted. It actually touches the flesh and brings its actions into harmony with God's law; the nature is changed; the precepts of the law are written upon the heart, and instead of transgression being seen in the life, obedience appears.

"Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds); casting down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10: 3-5, RV.

No more God dishonoring doctrine could be preached than that the atonement of Christ has freed men from the obligation to obey God's moral law. To make it possible for men to obey was its highest and holiest object. Is it reasonable that Christ should die to save men from the guilt of transgression, give them a free pardon for the past, and then say to them, "Now you are free, go steal, lie, commit adultery, kill, desecrate the Sabbath of God"? No - a thousand times, no!

Saved men are not free to break the law of God. True, they are free from its condemnation for sins of the past, which they were powerless to undo, but which God has now freely pardoned; but licence has not been given them to presume upon God's goodness by continuing in transgression. A man who has never kept the law can be forgiven and justified before God. But he cannot remain in this justified state without keeping it. He does not keep the law to become a Christian; but he must, being a Christian, keep it in a manner that becomes one.

"Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor

extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11, RV. "Not everyone that says unto Me,

Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My Father which is in heaven." Matthew 7: 21.

"Be you doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholds himself, and goes away, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. But he that looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continues, being not a hearer that forgets, but a doer that works, this man shall be blessed in his doing." James 1: 22-25, RV.

Christ in You

Let no one be deceived as to how this high standard of obedience in the flesh is to be reached. It cannot be accomplished through human effort. Even after conversion men are still only human, only sinners saved by grace from their past sins, and still much too weak to render any acceptable obedience to a holy law. It is still through Christ. Only now, instead of living the life of obedience without them and then imputing it to them, as though they had done it, Christ comes and lives His life in men, actually imparting to them His righteousness and making it their very own. Thus the Apostle Paul declares:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2: 20.

Here, then, is a new element injected into human nature. It is the divine element—the power of Jehovah-Christ linking up with human weakness and making it powerful to do God's will. It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1: 27.

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that you may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith,—to the end that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations forever and ever. Amen." Ephesians 3: 14-21, RV.

Here is the mighty secret of Christian living. The Redeemer does not cleanse and pardon the sinner only to abandon him again to his own weakness, nor does He grant him license to continue his life of transgression; but He Himself enters the surrendered heart's citadel, made vacant by the departure of sin, and with His kingly power takes control of the life and heart. And what can He do toward bringing these lives into harmony with a holy law? Ah, hear it again:

He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." And again, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." Phil. 4: 13. Is not that enough? No wonder the apostle exclaimed:

"Wherefore also He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7: 25, RV.

He Works in Us

This marvelous truth is stated once again, and in even stronger terms, in the last chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews:

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." Hebrews 13: 20, 21.

Thus we see the Christ of the atonement, by whose blood cleansing from past sins is made, coming to dwell and work in His followers even to the point of making them "perfect in every good work." This is accomplished through the agency of the Holy Spirit, the personal representative of Christ upon the earth.

This is the crowning work of the world's Redeemer. Not only does He pardon repenting sinners, but He fully restores His image in them by bringing them back into harmony with God's holy law through the power of His own indwelling presence.

Dear reader, have you often mourned that you found it hard to be good and to obey God's requirements? Of course you have. You may well go further and say it is impossible. For so it is. "There is none that does good, no, not' so much as one." Romans 3: 12, RV. But the indwelling Christ makes all the difference between success and failure. He has all power in heaven and in earth, and He offers to bring that power to bear upon the weak tendencies of your nature and make you mighty through God to do right.

Commands Become Promises

With Christ dwelling in the heart, the cold, austere commands of His law immediately change into promises. To the sinner the law says, "Thou shalt not," and he is under condemnation. To the Christian it says, "Thou shalt not," but the harshness is gone. It is

not said now as a command, but as a pledge that, because Jesus Christ is in control, the Christian need have no fear about stealing, killing, committing adultery, Sabbath desecration; for Jesus will, if permitted, see that all these sins are subdued in the life.

That is what David meant when he said, "I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shall enlarge my heart." Psalm 119: 32. "I cried unto Thee; save me, and I shall keep [margin, that I may keep] Thy testimonies." Verse 146.

Those who have the sweet, abiding presence of Jesus in their hearts will be led to declare with David, "O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day." Verse 97. And if Jesus is allowed full and complete control, they will have the great joy of seeing the power of sin subdued in their lives and every thought brought into captivity to the will of Christ.

Will you, then, open wide the heart's door and let your Savior in? Will you tell Him that you are willing that He should live His life of perfect obedience to the moral law of God in your flesh? Will you do this, not only today, but every day? If so, you will have daily the blessed experience of wearing the robe of His righteousness instead of being naked and ashamed.

Our eyes are holden that we do not see How patiently He stands, how lovingly, The while we pause, affrighted at the way, Ere we have crossed the thresh hold of the day. The fullness of the joy He'd have us know Often times we miss, because we are so slow To trust Him, even when we hear Him say, "Fear not; lo, I am with you all the way." Sometimes He lifts the veil and lets us see How close beside He stands to you and me. Ah! then we know it is His hand, His touch, Moves this and that, that hinders overmuch. And learn, at last, unflinchingly to say, I know He will abide with me today. -ANNA M. KING.

Bible Study Summary

When individuals are justified from their past sins, how should they then live?

"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him." Hebrews 10: 38.

Must the Christian continue in sin?

"To what conclusion, then, shall we come? Are we to persist in sinning in order that the grace extended to us may be the greater? No, indeed; how shall we who have died to sin, live in it any longer?" Romans 6: 1, 2, Weymouth.

What is a Christian's proper relation to sin?

"In the same way you also must regard yourselves as dead in relation to sin, but as alive in relation to God, because you are in Christ Jesus." Romans 6: 11, Weymouth.

What is God's goal for those whose sins He has forgiven?

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Romans 8: 4.

What will be the attitude of truly converted persons to God's Ten Commandment law? "O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day." Psalm 119: 97.

Since human beings are too weak to keep God's law, what plan has God made by which to give them strength?

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Ephesians 3: 17.

When Christ dwells in the heart, what change is produced?

"That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power." Colossians 1: 10,11.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." Phil. 4: 13.

When Christ controls the life, what can He do through His children?

"Now to Him who, in the exercise of His power that is at work within us, is able to do infinitely beyond all our highest prayers or thoughts." Ephesians 3: 20, Weymouth.

"This then is what I mean: let your lives be guided by the Spirit, and then you will certainly not indulge the cravings of your lower natures." Galatians 5: 16, Weymouth.

How completely can Christ make the surrendered life conform to His will?

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus. . . make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ." Hebrews 13: 20, 21.

What then should be the greatest concern of the Christian?

"Yet all that was gain to me-for Christ's sake I have reckoned it loss. Nay, I even reckon all things as pure loss because of the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for the sake of whom I have suffered the loss of everything, and reckon it all as mere refuse, in order that I may win Christ and be found in union with Him, not having a righteousness of my own, derived from the Law, but that which arises from faith in Christ-the righteousness which comes from God through faith." Phil. 3: 7-9, Weymouth.

12. ARISE AND BE BAPTIZED

AND NOW why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22: 16.

Baptism is an ordinance of the new dispensation. It is not a shadow of something yet to come as were the ordinances of the Old Testament, but is, instead, a great memorial, testifying to the fact that Christ's sacrifice on Calvary has been made and that the participant in the ordinance believes this to be the assurance of his acceptance with God.

"Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." Romans 6: 3-8.

Baptism represents two outstanding events: firstly, Christ's death, burial, and resurrection; secondly, a death to sin, a burial of the old nature, and a spiritual resurrection on the part of those accepting Christ. We are baptized into His death. We are buried with Him by baptism. We shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.

Conversion not only brings a "new-birth" experience to the sinner, but also a definite death to the old life of sin. He must not only turn to something new, but he must turn away from and repudiate something old. The old man of sin must be put to death. Not only does the individual become "a new creature," but it is just as true that "old things are passed away."

Of this experience the Apostle Paul speaks with great clarity: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Galatians 5:24,25.

The old man is crucified; henceforth the individual is not to serve sin. See Romans 6: 6.

From the time of conversion the individual is to live a changed life. The things he once loved and cherished are now to be forsaken and forgotten. The flesh is crucified, with the affections and lusts. He no longer loves sin and the ways of wickedness. "All things are become new."

Thus baptism has for the twice-born man a double significance. It not only becomes a means by which he may express his faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus for his sins, but it also testifies to an actual personal experience through which he himself passes in becoming a child of God.

What a beautiful and fitting Illustration of all this is found in the ordinance of baptism! How perfectly has God provided for the sinner's every need!

Just as Christ died for men's sins, was buried, and three days later was resurrected, so the repentant sinner dies a spiritual death to sin, buries' the old life in the waters of baptism, and arises again in the likeness of His resurrection. He has been baptized into Christ. With him all things have become new.

A Required Ordinance

Baptism is a required ordinance.

When Jesus gave the great gospel commission to His church, He bade them: "Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matthew 28: 19. Mark's Gospel quotes Jesus as saying: "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned." Mark 16: 16.

Surely such language as this would never have been used by Jesus in speaking of an ordinance that had little or no meaning, or that was not essential in the plan of redemption.

True, the performance of the ordinance of baptism alone will not save an individual from his sins, but it serves as a symbol of a spiritual -Cleansing.

When Saul of Tarsus was converted, God's servant Ananias admonished him to be baptized and wash away his sin. It had some significance in the work of conversion and regeneration. The actual cleansing from sin is, of course, accomplished by the blood of Christ. This is the fountain that has been opened for sin and uncleanness. The sinner has redemption through His blood. (Ephesians 1: 7.) His sin-stained robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7: 14.) But just as it was necessary for those under the old dispensation to have an ordinance through which they could express their faith in the atoning blood, so it is needful for those who live this side of the cross. They did it by shedding the blood of a lamb; modern Christians by passing through the waters of baptism.

To this agrees the further testimony of Peter, where he declares:

"The like figure whereunto even baptism does also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 3: 21.

Baptized Into Christ

In Romans 6: 3, as in other scriptures, it is stated that when the repentant sinner is baptized, he is "baptized into Jesus Christ." Professor Sauter, an authority on New Testament Greek, informs us that certain old papyrus manuscripts show that wherever this expression occurs in the New Testament, the person baptized becomes the property of the divine person indicated. Thus baptism serves not only as a testimony that the individual has renounced his old life of sin, but also that from henceforth he is the personal property of his Redeemer. His allegiance has been changed. He is now a child of the King.

Prerequisites to Baptism

The prerequisites to the ordinance of baptism are faith, repentance, and a full acceptance of Jesus Christ as a personal Savior. Jesus said, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." The believing must precede the ordinance. Without faith in God and in Christ as man's Savior, going through the mere motions of this ordinance would be of no avail. It would become a dead form. It would be only as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

Infant baptism, therefore, is not Scriptural. Before this ordinance is administered to a child, he should first be given time to grow up to the age of personal responsibility. He should be carefully taught, the Word of God and, if possible, so led to a full acceptance of the gospel. The child should be old enough to recognize fully the fact of sin, his need of a personal Savior, and that Christ Jesus alone can accomplish his redemption.

The child is not responsible for his sins until he comes to the age of accountability and understanding. Therefore, the ordinance of baptism would have no meaning in his life until this period was reached.

"He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11: 6. Only those who have reached the age at which faith becomes possible are eligible to take part in this important and meaningful ordinance.

The Bible Way

The only mode of baptism recognized in the New Testament is immersion. The Greek word "baptizo," from which our English word "baptism" is derived, means to immerse, to overwhelm, or to plunge beneath.

Dr. Dean Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, of the Church of England, in his *Christian Institutions*, states that "for the first thirteen centuries [after Christ] the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word 'baptize'-that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water." Pages 256, 257.

This was the manner in which Jesus was baptized. At that time John the Baptist was baptizing converts in the Jordan River. Hundreds were flocking from Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region round about to be baptized by him.

"Then comes Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and come Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.", Matthew 3: 13-17.

There are a number of most vital and interesting facts brought out in this record of Jesus' baptism. Firstly, He was baptized in Jordan. He journeyed all the way from Galilee to Jordan to find a proper place for baptism. Secondly, when He had been baptized, He "went up straight way out of the water." This clearly indicates that the method of administering this ordinance to Jesus was by immersion, since He had gone into the water to be baptized. Lastly, as God the Father in heaven looked upon the scene, He approved of what was done, and spoke directly from His throne to those who stood by, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Thus, Jesus, who is the example in all things, passed through the waters of baptism and was immersed, thereby illustrating His death, burial, and resurrection which were soon to be experienced for man's salvation.

The same form of baptism was also administered by Philip the evangelist when, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, he led the Ethiopian eunuch to an acceptance of Jesus. After being convinced of the eunuch's sincerity and faith, "he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." Acts 8: 38, 39.

John the Baptist, with whose ministry the ordinance of baptism was instituted, recognized that in order to administer this sacred ordinance properly it was essential to have much water. Usually he baptized in the Jordan, though at times he shifted the scene

of his activities to other localities; but in doing so he chose places suitable for baptismal services. Thus it is recorded of him: "And John also was baptizing Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized." John 3: 23.

Sprinkling or pouring for baptism was not introduced into the church for hundreds of years after the early Christian church passed off the stage of action. Therefore, these forms have no basis either in Scriptural teaching or in the example of Christ's followers. They are among the errors that crept into the church during the period known as the Dark Ages, that resulted from the great apostasy foretold by the Apostle Paul. See 2 Thessalonians. 2: 3, 4, 7.

A Marriage Ceremony

Baptism may well be likened to the marriage ceremony. A young man and woman indicate their desire to be united in marriage. Why? Because they have come to love each other. Their hearts are already united. They have decided that they desire each other's companionship for life-till death do them part. They have agreed together that leaving all others they will cling to each other so long as they both shall live. The spiritual bond already exists.

But to make their marriage legal there must be a wedding ceremony. They must publicly pledge their troth to each other. They must through the marriage service announce to the world their decision to live together. It must be understood by society, and a record of their union must go into the archives of the county or state.

Just so it is with baptism. A sinner hears the voice of Jesus calling, "Give Me thy heart." He soon finds himself being drawn to Christ by the cords of love. He learns to love Jesus because Jesus first loved him, and gave His life a ransom for him. Jesus offers him pardon, cleansing, a new heart, and the gift of immortality-all this without money and without price.

"Come now," pleads the voice of Jesus, "and let us reason together, . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Isaiah 1: 18. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him., and will sup with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3: 20.

The sinner can resist no longer. He surrenders his heart, soul, and body to his Redeemer. He decides to follow Jesus, even to death. Henceforth, nothing shall be able to separate them because Jesus has keeping power as well as saving power. The deed is done., He has become a Christian.

No, not entirely done. One thing yet is lacking. He must not, like Nicodemus, be a disciple secretly. There Must be a marriage ceremony. He must announce to the world his changed allegiance. He must make a public confession of Christ before men. (See Matthew 10: 3 2.) Then he will in very fact become the property of Christ, just as the husband and wife are the property of each other.

This public ceremony is baptism. Through this ordinance men are publicly wedded to Christ and enter into full fellowship with Him, as well as with His church upon earth.

"And I will betroth thee unto Me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shall know the Lord." Hosea 2: 19, 20.

Therefore "as many ... as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Galatians 3: 27. They constitute His bride. To them He grants that they should be arrayed with fine linen, white and clean, which is the righteousness of the saints. They have become candidates for heaven, and if through His' grace they remain true and faithful to the baptismal vow, His promise to them is that they shall walk with Him in white in His kingdom.

"Thou has a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." Revelation 3: 4, 5.

Buried beneath the yielding wave The great Redeemer lies;
Faith views Him in the watery grave, And thence beholds Him
rise.

Thus do these willing souls today Their ardent zeal express,
And in the Lord's appointed way Fulfil all righteousness.

With joy we in His footsteps tread, And would His cause
maintain; Like Him be numbered with the dead, And with Him
rise and reign.

His presence oft revives our hearts,
And drives our fears away;
When He commands, and strength imparts,
We cheerfully obey.

Bible Study Summary

When was the ordinance of baptism instituted? It began with John the Baptist and Christ.

Of what is baptism a symbol?

It is a symbol of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for our redemption. See Romans 6: 3-8.

NOTE - Just as Christ died for the sins of the world, was buried in the tomb, and was resurrected again, so the sinner must die a spiritual death to sin; his old life must be symbolically buried in the waters of baptism, and then he must be raised from the watery grave to live a new life in Christ Jesus.

What does Paul say should be done to the old life of sin?

"Our old man is crucified with Him." Romans 6: 6.

"That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Ephesians 4: 22.

"Put of the old man with his deeds." Colossians 3: 9.

After the old man of sin is crucified and put of, what else should be done with him?

"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death.. . . That the body of sin might be destroyed." Romans 6: 4, 6. See Colossians 2: 12.

What is represented by the candidate's being raised from the watery grave at baptism?

A resurrection; a rebirth; the beginning of a new life.

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." Romans 6:5.

After baptism Christians are to "walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4.)

Is baptism necessary?

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2: 38.

In refusing the baptism of John, what did the Pharisees and lawyers reject?

"And all the people that heard Him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Luke 7: 29, 30.

What should precede baptism?

Belief in Christ, repentance of sin, and conversion. See Mark 16:16; Matthew 3:1,2,7,8; and Acts 8: 36,37.

What is the only mode of baptism recognized in the Bible?

Immersion. The Greek root word "baptizo" means to dip, to plunge, to immerse.

What is the only form of baptism that properly represents Christ's burial and resurrection?

Burial beneath the water, entirely hidden from the world, the eyes closed and breath held, just as in a real burial, then raised again from the water, opening the eyes, catching the breath, and again associating with loved ones, just as in an actual resurrection.

Does baptism take place in the water?

"And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." Matthew 3: 16.

Do the candidate and the administrator both go into the water?

"And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both Into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the' eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." Acts 8: 38, 39.

Why did John sometimes baptize in a place called Aenon?

"And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized." John 3: 23.

NOTE-The water in the Jordan at certain seasons of the year was low, and baptism by immersion would have been difficult. So at such times John went to .1Enon.

What should every newly converted individual do?

"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22: 16.

Baptized into our Savior's death, Our souls to sin must die; With Christ our Lord we live anew, With Christ ascend on high.

There by His Father's side He sits, Enthroned divinely fair; Yet owns Himself our Brother still, And our Forerunner there.

Rise from these earthly trifles, rise On wings of faith and love; Above, our choicest treasure lies And be our hearts above.

Let not earth's pleasures draw us down; Lord, give us strength to rise, And through Thy strong, attractive power, At last to gain the prize.

13. AT THE LORD'S TABLE

IT WAS Jesus' last evening with His chosen disciples. They had all come together to eat the Jewish Passover. Before morning the Lamb of God would be in the hands of the infuriated mob. Judas had already been plotting His betrayal. The stage was set for His great humiliation, but knowing all that was before Him, Jesus chose this auspicious occasion to introduce to His disciples the new ordinances (other than baptism) that were to be recognized and celebrated in the new church, following His crucifixion and resurrection. These ordinances are a part of the worship of Christian churches in all parts of the world even to these days.

In a few short hours His death would bring the ceremonies and types of the old Jewish economy to their end; and, the post crucifixion ordinances must be established in the church before His death, to be ratified by the shedding of His blood. This was in accord with a plan that had been in the mind of the Father and the Son for ages past.

The new ordinances would include the breaking and eating of unleavened bread as an emblem of Christ's broken body and the drinking of sweet grape wine as an emblem of His blood that was to be shed for sinners. These ceremonies were emblematic occasions pointing the believer back to Christ's offering.

Jesus Washed the Disciples' Feet

This holy ordinance (the Lord's supper) was, however, to be preceded by a ceremony of washing with water, typifying the cleansing away of sin by the blood of Jesus. This washing ceremony was to be observed in addition to the ordinance of baptism. The latter was to be celebrated only once-at conversion; the former from time to time as the church should meet to partake of the emblems of the bread and wine at the Lord's table.

Baptism would represent the big cleansing-when the blood of Christ covered and cleansed away all the past guilt of a sinful life. This additional ceremony would represent the lesser, but none the less important, work of cleansing the followers of Christ from sin and defilement that would accumulate in the life from day to day, following the ordinance of baptism.

Of the institution of this ordinance of cleansing, we find a clear record in John's Gospel when he says:

"Now before the feast of the pass over, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He rises from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He pours water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." John 13: 1-5.

This was the work of a servant. Before gathering to eat the Passover feast, the members of Jesus' company had taken a full bath; for thus it was prescribed in the law of Moses, with which law He was now complying for the last time. Travelling with open sandals on their bare feet over the dusty paths en route to the place where the Passover was to be eaten, they had accumulated a certain amount of dust on their feet; and it was customary for a servant to perform the service of washing the feet of the guests as they arrived.

No servant being present on this occasion, this service was not performed. It was clearly the duty of some one of the disciples to accept the role of a servant and carry out this menial task, but not one of them was willing to do so. Their hearts were still filled

with selfishness and the desire for high rank in the kingdom. Not one of them would humble himself to the point of accepting a servant's role.

As they sat at the Passover table and ate the flesh of the roasted lamb that typified Jesus in His sacrificial death for sinners, He read their selfish, proud hearts. He desired to rebuke their pride and teach them that true greatness is measured by one's willingness to serve others. Already He had said to them: "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." And again, "He that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Jesus also recognized that the disciples were not in a proper spiritual condition to partake of the holy emblems of bread and wine and that there was need for deep heart searching on their part that they might make suitable preparation for this new and meaningful service. Concerning this He a little later said to them:

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." 1 Corinthians 11: 27-29.

With these considerations before Him, Jesus arose from the Passover table and began to wash His disciples' feet, as astonishment and self-condemnation filled their hearts. They had proudly declined this humble service, but now their Lord and Master was freely performing it. He had taken upon Himself "the form of a servant," and was revealing His greatness through His great humility.

Peter watched in astonishment as Jesus washed the feet of some of the others. Now He came also to him, and Peter, overcome with shame and remorse, exclaimed, "Lord, does Thou wash my feet?"

Peter felt he could not possibly permit his Master to perform for him such a menial service. Surely this was far beneath his Lord's dignity. Was not Christ the Son of David? Was He not about to wrest the kingdom from the Roman usurpers and establish Himself as king over Israel? How then could he permit Him to stoop to perform this servant's task?

In reply to Peter's earnest inquiry, Jesus said: "What I do thou knows not now; but thou shall know hereafter." John 13: 7.

This declaration from Jesus revealed the fact that there was in this act a hidden meaning, which did not at once appear to the disciples. They knew Jesus was washing their feet, and yet He said that they did not now know what He was doing.

A Spiritual Cleansing

Feeling certain that his attitude was correct, Peter rashly declared: "Thou shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him: "If I wash thee not, thou has no part with Me." John 13: 6-8.

Did Peter's part with Christ depend upon having the dust removed from his feet? No; but his salvation and hope of eternal life did depend upon the cleansing away of all the defilement of sin by the blood of Christ. This work of cleansing was symbolized by this simple and fitting ordinance.

The true significance of what Jesus was doing began to dawn upon Peter's sluggish mind, and in astonishment he exclaimed: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Verse 9. To this Jesus answered: "He that is washed needs not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Verse 10.

In a literal sense, no doubt, Jesus here referred to the fact that they had just come from the full bath, and their bodies were clean except for the dust that had gathered on their feet. With the washing of the feet they would then be clean "every whit."

But in a spiritual sense He clearly referred to the cleansing from sin that was symbolized by this new ordinance.

Just as they had already bathed, so at conversion they had been baptized. This complete washing in the waters of baptism signified the cleansing of the life from all sins of the past. This was the big washing. It was typical of the fountain that was opened for sin and uncleanness. Through the cleansing signified by baptism, the sins that were as scarlet had become as white as snow. The stains were all removed. The life was clean. The soul was free from guilt. - All things had become new.

But conversion and baptism had not removed the disciples from sin's environment. They were still surrounded with evil influences. They were still subject to temptation. Although Christ was abundantly able to keep them from falling again into sin, they had not always fully trusted themselves into His keeping, with the result that sin had been committed. Some of these acts were known to be sinful, although others constituted sins of ignorance.

Following conversion and baptism, sins may accumulate in the life of a follower of Jesus. As he travels the Christian pathway in a world filled ' with sin's foul miasma, the feet become soiled. The past life of sin is not again charged to the Christian unless he entirely repudiates his conversion and turns his back upon Christ. He does not require a complete reconversion and cleansing. But he does require the lesser cleansing. Day by day he must come to God through Christ, confessing his failures, his pride, his selfishness, and his fallings into sin through the temptings of Satan. He must exercise faith that just as all his past sinful life was forgiven and cleansed when he first came to Jesus, so now the blood of Christ cleanses him anew from these additional sins. This lesser cleansing is symbolized by the ordinance of feet washing.

It was because of this deep spiritual significance that Jesus said: "If I wash thee not, thou has no part with Me."

This act on the part of Christ was performed not only for the purpose of impressing upon the minds of His disciples the virtue and grace of true humility; it was not only for the purpose of rebuking their pride and self-seeking and their envy of one another; but it

was also for the purpose of setting in the church a new ordinance that would be symbolic of the fact that the blood of Christ can keep the Christian clean by its continual application to the life of him whose trust is in Jesus. In this way only would men and women become prepared to sit at the Lord's table. After performing this service Jesus announced to His disciples: "I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you." John 13: 15.

Each Man a Priest

But why did not Jesus meet the situation by commanding His disciples to each wash his own feet in preparation for the Lord's supper? We answer: Because in such an act there would have been no service typical of the work of Jesus.

No man can save himself. No individual can cleanse his own soul from sin's guilt. This work must be done for him by another. In carrying out this holy ordinance in the church, each member thus ministering to his brother would become a personal representative of Jesus. As he applied the symbolic cleansing water to his brother's feet, he would proclaim, in that act, once again the old, old story that only through the application of the blood of Christ can the guilt of sin be removed from the soul. Thus, each member of the church upon earth would in turn become a priest to his brethren.

The Lord's Supper

As soon as this service was performed, Jesus again seated Himself at the Passover table, and there proceeded to institute the additional ordinance that is now commonly called the Lord's supper. The record says:

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. 'And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'" Matthew 26: 26-28.

Already Jesus was living in the very shadow of death. In a few short hours He would be taken by the mob to be reviled, persecuted, and slain. His body was to be broken by the nails and the spear. His blood was to be spilled upon the ground. All this was to be endured, not because of any cause for death in Him, but for the remission of the sins of others. It was for them that He was permitting these things to be done to Him By His stripes, they were to find healing. By His death, life was to be made available to them. His death was to be entirely substitutionary.

Jesus desired to place in the church an ordinance that would be symbolic of the very sufferings He must endure on man's behalf. As His followers would meet from time to time and break the unleavened bread and crush it between their teeth, they would have before them a vivid reminder of the agony and woe that Jesus passed through on their behalf on Calvary in order to atone for their sins. The breaking of the bread would symbolize the piercing of His hands, feet, and side, as He suffered death at the hands of His enemies. The drinking of the wine (unfermented grape juice) would symbolize the flowing forth of His blood from His broken body, as it was shed for the remission of sins. Of the institution of this ordinance the Apostle Paul has written:

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He, come." 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26.

Just as the offering of the blood of animals, looking forward to Christ's redemptive work on the cross, was to continue until His first advent, so these new ordinances, commemorating His death, were to be in the church until He should come the second time. "This do you ... in remembrance of Me." As His followers gather at the Lord's table and partake of these emblems, they show "the Lord's death till He come.

Only those who wholly reject the provisions made for their redemption through the glorious work of the atonement can lightly regard these sacred ordinances of Christ's church upon earth. Those whose faith in Him is strong will see in these provisions a means of demonstrating that faith in His power to save by coming often to the fountain for cleansing and purity. They will rejoice over every opportunity of surrounding the Lord's table to meditate upon His eternal love, which led Him to pour out His life for their redemption, and to testify of their full acceptance of the provisions of the atonement by partaking of the emblems of His humiliation and sacrificial death.

An Example

Jesus made it clear that the ordinances which He instituted on that memorable evening in the Jerusalem upper room were to be accepted as examples, and were to be repeated by the church during the years that would intervene between His ascension and His coming again.

Concerning the bread and wine He said: "This do you.... For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He come." 1 Corinthians 11: 25, 26.

It was left to the church to determine the exact intervals when they would meet and celebrate this ordinance, but the intervals were to be of sufficient frequency to serve as a constant reminder of the Lord's sufferings on behalf of sinners. No particular day of the week was designated upon which these ordinances were to be celebrated. Jesus instituted them on Thursday night at the close of the Passover supper. No doubt, however, the most fitting time for the observance by the church is the Sabbath day, when God's people are accustomed to gather for divine worship.

Concerning the ordinance of humiliation and cleansing, Jesus said:

"Know you what I have done to you? You call Me Master and Lord: and you say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and, Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If you know these things, happy are you if you do them." John 13: 12-17.

14. OUR HEAVENLY ALLIES

NOT only is the Christian assured of the constant presence of Christ to uphold, protect, and sustain him, but he has the additional promise of the help and protection of an innumerable company of angels. Just as cherubim were placed at the gate of the garden of Eden to prevent sinful man from re-entering it, so angels of God are sent to guard and help those who are struggling to regain man's lost home. "For," said David, "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Psalm 91: 11.

These angels are heavenly beings, created by God; and they are all busily engaged in helping to bring to fruition the plan to deliver man from the thralldom of sin. "Are they not all ministering spirits,-wrote the great apostle, as he referred to the heavenly angels, "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Hebrews 1: 14.

The exact number of these heavenly beings is not revealed in the Scriptures, although a number of attempts to estimate the number are made by some of its inspired writers who, finding the veil drawn aside, were permitted to gaze upon this heavenly host. For example, the prophet Daniel declared that he saw thousand thousands of these creatures ministering before God, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before Him. (Daniel 7: 10.) This would make up a company of more than one hundred million, but, of course, this was but a small number compared with the vast hosts of these heavenly beings. The Apostle Paul, in fact, speaks of them as "an innumerable company of angels." Hebrews 12: 22.

Jacob found, in his flight from Esau, that these angels formed a connecting link between earth and heaven. The record of his experience declares:

"And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it." Gen. 28:11,12. When upon his return journey, many years later, Jacob again met these same messengers of God, he said, "This is God's host." Gen. 32:2.

Not Spirits of the Dead

Let us hasten to explain that these millions of beings are not the immortal spirits of those who have died upon the earth. They are an entirely different order of beings from men. They were in existence before the earth upon which we live was created, and when man was placed upon the earth, he was "a little lower" in rank than were the angels.

Men will never become angels. God has made no such promise. The change brought about by and through the gospel does not change man into another form or order of being, but simply restores him to his original state-that of a perfect human being. But he will still be human in form and will again bear the image of God, as did Adam in the beginning. See Revelation 21: 3.

Angels All About

The angels of God are about us at all times, although we are unconscious of their presence. To men they are invisible, not because they are intangible, but because our eyes are holden. When the prophet Elisha and his servant were surrounded by the hosts of the Syrians, who were bent upon their destruction, and the heart of the servant was stricken with fear, Elisha encouraged him with these assuring words:

"Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Elisha then prayed: "Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." 2 Kings 6: 16, 17.

It is just so with many a child of God. It may seem from all outward appearances that one or two are left alone to struggle against a powerful enemy, as was the case of Elisha and his servant; but it is not so. God never abandons His children. If only our eyes could be opened, we would see constantly about us these heavenly allies, and would find that they are far greater in number than are those who seek to do us harm.

Near the end of World War II, Germany put into the field a secret weapon known as the rocket bomb. These bombs were launched from the European coast and directed toward England. Tremendous havoc was wrought by them as they exploded. They were very real and tangible, made of real steel, and yet those who lived in England at the time say no one ever saw a rocket coming. When in flight, they were not visible to the human eye. Their speed was so great that the eye could not be focused upon them. They could be heard only after they had passed. The destruction caused by their explosions could be seen with clarity, but the bombs were invisible.

Knowing of this and similar experiences which have now become somewhat commonplace, it does not seem so incredible that the angels of God, too, can be all about, yet not be seen.

There is an Old Testament record that a false prophet called Balaam was met by an angel as he rode upon the back of an animal. The animal saw the angel and refused to pass. Balaam saw nothing. He punished his animal, until "the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face." Num. 22:31.

Real Beings

The angels, though invisible, are real, tangible beings. Isaiah, in describing the seraphim (a high order of angels) that stand in the presence of God, declared they had wings, faces, and feet, and he heard them speak.

Abraham, "the friend of God," had the high honor at one time of entertaining at his table three of these heavenly visitors, and the record declares that they ate in his presence. (See Gen. 18: 1-8.) David, in speaking of the manna upon which Israel existed during their wilderness journey, declared that upon that occasion "man did eat angels' food." Psalm 78: 25.

Angels, therefore, are not myths. They are real beings, and they are in league with those who desire to follow God and regain their Paradise home. Jesus revealed the angels' interest in man's salvation by declaring: "Likewise, I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents." Luke 15: 10.

Appear as Men

Angels have the power to transform themselves so as to appear in human form, and in this way they have often appeared to men upon earth. Men associate with them, although they are totally unaware of the fact that they are heavenly visitors. For this reason the Apostle Paul admonished the believers: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Hebrews 13: 2.

It was in this manner that the Lord Himself appeared to Joshua, as he and the people of Israel were encamped against the walled city of Jericho.

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with His sword drawn in His hand: and Joshua went unto Him, and said unto Him, Art Thou for us, or for our adversaries? And He said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto Him, What says my Lord unto His servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou stands is holy. And Joshua did so." Joshua 5: 13-15.

Angels in human form appeared to Abraham on the plains of Mamre, and discussed with him God's plan to overthrow the wicked city of Sodom. (See Gen. 18: 1-33.) A little later two angels appeared at the home of Lot, whose dwelling was in Sodom, and warned him and his family to escape from the doomed city lest they perish with it. (Gen. 19: 1.) The prophet Daniel declared that it was an angel, sent from God, that had visited him in the den of lions and had shut the lions' mouths so that they had not hurt him.

On numerous occasions the disciples of Jesus, finding themselves imprisoned by their enemies, were liberated by angels of God. These angels smote the chains from their hands, removed their feet from the stocks, opened the prison doors, and led them forth to liberty and safety. After one such experience, Peter testified: "Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." Acts 12: 11.

Attending Angels

There are clear indications in the Scriptures that each human being upon earth has at least one special attending angel, who is constantly by his side from the cradle to the grave. Jesus alluded to this when He said to His disciples: "Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven. Matthew 18:10. Again, when incredulous fellow believers were told that Peter, whom they thought to be in prison, stood at the gate and desired to enter, they refused to believe it was actually he, but said: "It is his angel." (Acts 12: 15.)

These attending angels serve not alone in constantly seeking to influence the individual for good and turn the heart to God, but they also keep an absolutely unerring record of the lives of their charges. Ezekiel was shown one of these heavenly attendants clothed in white linen, with a writer's ink horn by his side. (Ezekiel 9: 2.) The fact is that books of remembrance are kept in heaven, in which are found the records of the dwellers of earth. (Mat. 3: 16.) Because of this daily chronicle of the lives of all men, God, when

the final judgment is set and the books are opened, will be able to bring to light all the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4: 5.)

The angel recorders make no mistakes. Their records are unerring. Every act, whether good or bad, every spoken word, and even the thoughts of the heart are all written in the books of remembrance. Even the motives behind the words and deeds are recorded, so that in the final day of testing, when men's cases are brought into review, God can "bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes. 12: 14.

How comforting it is to know that these heavenly watchers are interested only and always in the welfare of human beings and are constantly seeking to protect and lead them heavenward! The Bible abounds with evidence of this fact and with stories of deliverances they have brought to men who were in trouble. Their watchfulness over God's children is so constant that King David in wonder and gratitude exclaimed: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them." Psalm 34: 6, 7.

It is said that on the shores of the Adriatic the wives of fishermen, whose husbands have gone far out upon the deep, are in the habit at eventide of gathering on the seashore and singing the first stanza of some beautiful hymn. After they have sung it, they listen until they hear, borne by the wind across the sea, the second stanza sung by their gallant husbands, as they are tossed upon the waves. Though separated far from their loved ones, they are able to unite with them in worship and praise at the close of the day.

Just so the angels of God join in the songs of praise sung by the followers of Christ upon the earth. They are interested in all that pertains to the happiness and welfare of God's children. Angels are constantly working for men's salvation and happiness. "There is joy," said Jesus, "in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents."

What an inspiration it should be to every Christian to know that his songs of praise are echoed throughout the heavenly palaces as the angelic choir take up the strains and with voice and harp Join in ascribing honor and glory to the God of our salvation.

Let us thank God for these heavenly allies and be grateful that all heaven is interested in man's salvation and is seeking in every possible way to bring it about. Angels that excel in strength, yes, legions of them, are even now by our sides and are yearning for the privilege of assisting us on our way back to the Paradise of God.

Hark! hark! my soul, angelic songs are swelling
O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore;
How sweet the truth those blessed strains are telling,
Of that new life when sin shall be no more!

Onward we go, for still we hear them singing,
"Come ' weary souls, for Jesus bids you come";
And thro' the dark, its echoes sweetly ringing,
The music of the gospel leads us home.

Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea;
And laden souls by thousands meekly stealing,
Kind Shepherd, turn their weary steps to Thee.

Angels, sing on! your faithful watches keeping,
Sing us sweet fragments of the songs above,
Till morning's joy shall end the night of weeping,
And life's long shadows break in cloudless love. -R W. FABER.

15. ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH CHRIST

THE gift of immortality and eternal life which God has promised to all His children is His most precious gift to man. It was to make possible the bestowal of this gift that Christ went to Calvary. He died that we might live. Through His stripes we shall be healed of the malady of sin and freed from the sentence of eternal death. We shall receive a gift of life that will measure with the life of God.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6: 23.

This Life Transitory

It is difficult for the finite mind to grasp the thought of eternity. The average span of human life is less than threescore years and ten. Man's transitory nature is likened in the Scriptures to the grass of the field, which may flourish today but tomorrow is cut down and cast into the oven. It is further spoken of as "a tale that is told," only to be immediately forgotten, or as a vapor that almost instantly passes away.

No sooner is the youth prepared for life by his training in college than he is faced with the necessity of also preparing for death. He must see that a plot is provided for his last resting place and that something is laid aside to cover the funeral expenses.

This world, which was once a happy Paradise, where sorrow and crying, pain and death were unknown, has become a great graveyard. It is bathed in the tears of numberless generations. Most of its happiness is gone, as is its Edenic beauty; and the darkness of despair has settled down upon the world like the blackness of night.

Everywhere is heard the voice of weeping for the dead. Death and decay are constantly in evidence. Even the things of nature have come under the sentence of death. Wherever we turn, the results of the curse are seen. Said the poet, "There is nothing on earth that we cherish but must wither and die with the year," and no one can claim to be uninterested. There is not a family but has its vacant chair, not a heart but has suffered the pangs of parting with someone who was loved and cherished. Whole generations of our forbears have already passed into the silent tomb. Countless millions today sleep the sleep of death, and nothing is more certain than the fact that all are rapidly passing down into the valley of the shadow.

"For the living know that they shall die." Ecclesiastes. 9: 5. Death has become the lot of all mankind, because it is the natural heritage of sin.

These sombre facts have so depressed the thinking of men that it is all but impossible to persuade them to look forward to a grand eternity beyond the grave. Yet to bring this within man's reach is the whole purpose of the gospel. It was for this that God gave His only begotten Son. It was for this that Jesus was willing to die.

Oh, that it were possible to comprehend what eternal life will mean to the redeemed! How much more all would desire it! How much less would the poor baubles of this life lure and tempt! How much more willing men would be to sacrifice in order to receive it! How much less all would fear to die! Eternal life! A life with no end! No sorrow, no pain, no crying, no funeral trains, no cemeteries, no death!

O glorious gift of God to fallen man! What a pity that men do not treasure it more! Little wonder that the Apostle Paul exclaimed: "But as it is written, 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 Corinthians 2: 9.

In the Book of Job the burning question is asked, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Job 14: 14. The entire Bible is filled with the affirmative answer. Yes, men shall live again, and those who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior shall inherit eternal life. This is as certain as the fact that God lives, for He has pledged His word that it will be so.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16.

"And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." Hebrews 5: 9.

"And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life." 1 John 2: 25.

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God." 1 John 5: 11-13.

The Unsaved Die Twice

The unsaved of earth will die twice. The first death, which is the common lot of all men, is temporary; the second death, which will be experienced only by the wicked, will be eternal. The gospel of Christ does not save men from the first death; but it promises emphatically that the righteous "shall not be hurt -of the second death," for over them it shall have "no power." See Revelation 2: 11; 20: 6.

The First Death

The first death is not a state of consciousness in which the spirit or soul is separated from the body and continues to live. It is, instead, a temporary, actual cessation of life. It is likened in the Bible, both by Jesus and Paul, to an unconscious sleep. Said Jesus to His disciples:

"Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said His disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spoke of his death: but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." John 11: 11-14.

Paul declares of the righteous dead that they have "fallen asleep" in Christ. (1 Corinthians 15: 18.) They are simply resting, according to the revelator, from their labors. They are entirely unconscious of what is going on in the world they have left behind, because their thoughts have perished, and they know not anything. (Psalm 6: 5; 146: 3-5; Ecclesiastes. 9: 5, 6.) The dead peacefully slumber as though taking rest in sleep. They heed not the lapse of time. Time spent in the sleep of death will seem no longer to those who wait in the tomb a thousand years than to those who are the last to die. From the time men lay down their burdens and fall asleep, until the hour when the Son of God calls them to life again will be to them as only an instant-as the twinkling of an eye. As they hear the voice of the Life-giver, they will feel as one who, being suddenly awakened, says. "Well, I must have fallen asleep."

"Then cheer your souls, you sons of men,
And be you glad at heart,
For Calvary's day and Easter day,

(Earth's saddest day, and earth's gladdest day)
Are just one day apart."

What a sad experience the loved ones would pass through if, during death, they were conscious of all that transpired on earth! What a tragedy if they were constantly beholding the sorrow, tears, and sufferings of those they had left behind, and yet were unable to render any help or comfort! Regardless of their own condition, the knowledge of the sufferings of their dear ones would make them most unhappy. Their heaven would become a place of mental torture.

How much more comforting it is to know that those who have passed on before are simply resting in sweet, undisturbed, untroubled sleep.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea said the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." Revelation 14: 13.

Sweet be thy rest, and peaceful thy sleeping; God's way is best, thou art in His keeping. O blessed sleep where ills never molest thee! Why should we weep? For Heaven hath blessed thee.

Sweet be thy rest.

Thy work is done, thy sowing and reaping; Thy crown is won, and hushed is thy weeping. From tears and woes, from earth's midnight dreary, Your is repose where none ever weary.

Sweet be thy rest.

-K E. BELDEN.

Man Is Not Immortal

By nature man does not possess immortality. He is mortal, which means he is subject to death and decay. This is clearly stated in Job 4: 17. The word "immortal" is found only once in the Bible, and there it is applied to God alone. See 1 Tim. 1: 17.

The word "immortality" appears five times, but is never said to apply to man in his natural state. Quite to the contrary, we read that God "only hath immortality." See 1 Tim. 6: 15, 16. Man is admonished to "seek" for this priceless boon. Thus the apostle declares that God "will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." Romans 2: 6, 7. The only way man can receive immortality is to seek for it, so it is self-evident that he does not possess it by nature. If he is ever to possess it, he must acquire it; and, since immortality is an attribute of God, it can be acquired by man only as a gift from the One who possesses it. This is why Paul declares that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Tree of Life

When man was placed in Eden, God gave him access to the tree of life, which was to perpetuate his life as long as he partook of its fruits. Had man never sinned (and thus forfeited his right to this life-sustaining tree), he would have lived forever. But herein is revealed the outstanding tragedy of the human race. Man did sin, and as a consequence the Lord sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to cultivate the ground from whence he was taken.

"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Gen. 3: 23, 24.

Why was man driven from Eden? The answer is at hand:

"The Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever. . . . So He drove out the man." Gen. 3: 22, 24.

His expulsion from Paradise was for the purpose of depriving him of access to the tree of life-it was to prevent him from living forever. Cut off from this life-giving tree, man immediately became subject to disease and decay. He became a dying creature. He was mortal. The cherubim continued to guard the gate of Paradise, and man has continued to die. The flaming sword successfully barred the way.

The Dead to Be Raised

Man will never receive the full gift of immortality and life eternal until the way is again open for him to return to his Paradise home. When once again he gains access to the tree of life, he will eat and will live forever. This experience does not come to man in death, but will come in the glorious hereafter when the dead are raised to life again.

"For if the dead rise not," declares the Apostle Paul, "then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming."

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put- on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Corinthians 15: 16-23, 51-55.

To this also should be added the promise of Jesus:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5: 25, 28, 29.

Then there is to be a resurrection of the dead, and it is in this fact that the child of God finds hope. Death is not the end of all. There is life-glorious, immortal life-beyond. This constitutes "the blessed hope" of the Christian.

Although in this life man is to experience salvation from sin and its power, yet the work of saving men is not completed this side of the grave. There is a future salvation. The first is glorious, but the second exceeds in glory.

Here we who are Christians are saved from sin's guilt and penalty, but we are still surrounded by the foul miasma of this corrupt world. Our bodies are mortal and subject to pain, disease, and death. We continue to suffer disappointment and sorrow, much the same as does the non-Christian. Oftentimes the lot of the Christian is made even harder than that of the avowed sinner, because, in addition to the sufferings that are the lot of all men in this life, he must endure reproach, cruel mocking, and bitter persecutions from the enemies of Christ. Some must even sacrifice life itself for the sake of Christ and the gospel.

Future Glory

If God had nothing better in prospect for His children than simply to keep them from sin in a wicked world where they must continue to suffer, both physically and mentally, He would be ashamed to be called their God. But this experience of present salvation is only a prelude to what is to follow. There is a glorious future salvation; and this will be full and complete, so that those who experience it shall not only be entirely free from sin and temptation, but also from its influence and environment.

"For which cause we faint not," continues the apostle, "but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Corinthians 4: 16-18.

This future glory does not come at death, but at the time of the resurrection of the dead at the Second Coming of Jesus. Death is not the gateway to heaven. Death is a peaceful, unconscious sleep, and not a transition from one form of life to another. To die does not mean to go to heaven, hell, or purgatory. It means a cessation of life.

"The dead praise not the Lord," says the psalmist, "neither any that go down into silence." And again: "For in death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?" Psalm 115: 17; 6:5.

Thus, it is evident that the Christian cannot look to death for the fruition of his hopes. Death is an enemy-the last enemy God will destroy. It is not, as some have thought, a friend opening to us the gates of Paradise. No, we must look beyond the grave for our future salvation, and-thank God! Looking there we shall not be disappointed.

The Dead Shall Live Again

Yes, the dead in Christ are to live again. Those who have been torn away by the cruel hand of death have not perished. True, they are resting today beneath the sod in unconscious slumber. They have been cruelly snatched away by man's archenemy, but the tomb shall not hold them forever. The voice of the Life-giver is to be heard in the land, and it will burst the portals of the tomb. He who made man in the beginning from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, making him "a living soul," will exercise His mighty creative power once again, and will deliver His people from death and the grave.

"Thus said the Lord God; Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." Ezekiel 37: 12. "I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord." Verses 5, 6.

We Shall Be Changed

Life after the resurrection will be infinitely different from what it is now. No longer will the saved be subject to disease and suffering and death. No longer will they suffer persecution at the hands of their enemies. No longer will they be subject to temptation and sin, with all its baleful consequences. Over all these they are "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Romans 8: 37. Old things shall have entirely passed away. All things shall have become new.

"The body is sown in a state of decay," says the apostle, "it is raised free from decay; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." 1 Corinthians 15: 42,43, Weymouth.

Some Will Never Die

Not all Christians will have to die the first death. When Jesus comes He will find true followers scattered among the tribes, nations, and kindreds of earth; and they will never have to pass through the grave. "We shall not all sleep," was Paul's inspired message to the church of Christ, "but we shall all be changed." Some will be "alive and continue on earth until the coming of the Lord."

The change from mortality to immortality will take place in both the living and the resurrected saints at the coming of Christ, and together they will ascend to heaven. The righteous living shall not "prevent" (or precede) those that sleep; for the first act of the Redeemer at His coming will be to awaken those who sleep in Jesus. One group will have no advantage over the other except for the fact that some have never had to face death. They have escaped the tomb entirely.

As pointed out in other chapters, the signs of the times as given by both Jesus and the prophets clearly point to the present generation as the one to witness the second coming of the Lord of glory. In thunder tones God is announcing this fact in things that are going on all about us. In earthquake, fire, flood, invention, war, famine, pestilence, and the increase of wickedness, the prophecies are being fulfilled. This generation is marked. The coming of Christ is even now at the door.

What an additional incentive this should be to men to turn to Christ now! Those who do so may never die! Thousands will not. They will be among those who will witness the final triumph of Christ over all His enemies and will be redeemed from among men without tasting death.

O joy! O delight! Should we go without dying, No sickness, no sadness, no dread, and no crying. Caught, up through the clouds with our Lord into glory, When Jesus receives His own. -H. L. TURNER.

Whether we enjoy the glorious future salvation that awaits the people of God depends entirely upon whether we are saved here. Today is the day of salvation. It is here and now that we are admonished to make our "calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:10,11.

No Future Probation

Those who become sons of God here will be heirs of His kingdom in the hereafter. See Romans 8: 16-19. But there will be no probation beyond the grave. The plan of redemption is strictly limited to this life. For those who here and now reject the offer of God's mercy and saving grace, there is no hope. They are lost, hopelessly lost; and they must suffer the fate of the wicked, which is eternal death in a lake of fire. Christ will not die for them again, neither will He extend the time of their probation.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God," declares the Apostle John. Through the new birth we become members of God's family and are here and now recognized as His sons. This is our only hope of heaven. To continue in an unsaved, unregenerate condition until Jesus comes, or until death, hoping to be accepted of Him notwithstanding our sins, is fatal. If we grieve His Spirit here, we shall have no part with Him in the hereafter.

The Choice Is Ours

The momentous decision as to whether we shall be saved rests not with God, but with us. God has already shown His willingness, yea, His yearning, to save us by sending His Son to die for our sins. Whether He will accept us it not an open question. That was settled at Calvary. There Jesus tasted death for every man, and He has extended a universal invitation to all men to come and be saved.

The burning question is, Do we want to be saved? If so, we shall be; for God only awaits our decision. If today we shall receive Christ and accept Him as our personal Savior, we shall be given "p6wer to become the sons of God" (John 1: 12); and, becoming God's sons, we shall thereby also become heirs to His riches in glory. Eternal life is ours for the taking. God in His matchless love has made it so. Let us come to Him today and be saved!

Bible Study Summary

What great gift does God promise to His followers?

"And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life." 1 John 2: 25. "The gift of God is eternal life." Romans 6: 23.

Does man possess immortality by nature?

No. Man is mortal and subject to death. See job 4: 17. "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5: 12.

How has immortality been brought to light?

"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Tim. 1: 10.

Who only has inherent immortality?

"Which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality." 1 Tim. 6: 15, 16.

How may men obtain this marvelous gift?

By receiving Christ. "He that hath the Son hath life." 1 John 5: 12.

NOTE-Apart from Christ there is no immortality; hence, the sinner must die.

What is the only reward for sin?

"The wages of sin is death." Romans 6: 23.

"Then when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death." James 1: 15.

NOTE-The wicked will die twice. The first or natural death is the result of Adam's transgression. The second death will be the result of men's own sins. The first death is temporary. The second death is eternal.

To what does Jesus compare the first death?

To a sleep. "And after that He says unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said His disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spoke of his death: but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." John 11: 11-14. See 1 Corinthians 15: 16,18.

Where are the dead?

"If I wait, the grave is mine house." job 17: 13.

"For now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shall seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." job 7: 21.

Are the dead conscious?

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in any thing that is done under the sun." Ecclesiastes. 9: 5, 6.

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Psalm 146: 3, 4.

Why were Adam and Eve driven out of Eden?

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken." Gen. 3: 22, 23.

NOTE-The fruit of the tree of life would continuously sustain the life of those who partook of it; therefore, sinful men had to be separated from it to prevent them from becoming immortal sinners.

What promise is given to those who are saved? They will be restored to Paradise and the tree of life. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches; To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Revelation 2:7.

How can the unconscious dead be restored to Paradise?

"Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus says the Lord God; Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." "And shall put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall you know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, says the Lord." Ezekiel 37: 12, 14.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that axe in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5: 28, 29.

What change will take place in the bodies of the righteous at the resurrection?

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Corinthians 15: 51-54.

After the righteous are changed, how will they appear?

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3: 2.

16. THE GREAT DECEPTION

WHEN Lucifer rebelled against God, he was followed by a host of the angels of heaven. The record declares that both he and his angels were cast out of heaven. They are now confined to this earth. For "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell [Tartarus], and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." 2 Peter 2: 4.

Already we have seen that angels are real beings, with hands, feet, mouths, and wings, and that they are able to appear to men and converse with them. This is true of the good angels, who are the Christians' allies; and it is equally true of the fallen, evil angels, who are the foes of the Christians. These fallen angels are still in league with Satan, and their chief work consists in an effort to deceive the human family and turn men away from God.

Known as "spirits of devils," these evil angels have, throughout the ages, carried on their deceptive and nefarious work. According to the writings of the ancient prophets, however, this work will be greatly intensified as the world draws near to its latter days. The Apostle Paul warns: "Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." 1 Tim. 4:1.

John the revelator, in speaking of the forces of evil that lead the nations into universal war and carnage in the last days, declares: "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16: 14.

The devil and his angels can work miracles. They can appear to men in a materialized form. They can influence human beings, and can practice deception upon them. So powerful, in fact, will the deceptions of Satan become in the last days that God's people are earnestly warned lest they, too, be overcome by them.

"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians. 2: 9-12.

"For there shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chamber; believe it not." Matthew 24: 24-26.

Spiritualism

These Biblical prophecies have been and are now being fulfilled before our eyes. During the past century a new form of religion has swept over the various countries of the world like a prairie fire. It is known as spiritualism. At first it was placed under the ban of all the Christian churches. Its seances were secret and mysterious, and Christians feared and shunned them.

But today the exponents of spiritualism are found everywhere, even in the Christian churches; and the cult numbers its adherents by the millions!

On June 16, 1932, there was published in the London Daily Mail a lengthy apology for spiritualism, written by one Ernest W. Oalin, who was heralded by the editor as being "one of the world's leaders of the spiritualist movement." In this article Mr. Oalin declared that at that time there were tens of thousands of family and community circles in England meeting every week in the homes of the people to investigate the claims of spiritualism, who were convinced that in this way they can actually establish personal contact with their deceased relatives and friends.

The writer further stated: "Every Sunday night there are at least 200,000 people gathered at public spiritualist meetings. There are some 8 5 0 spiritualist churches or societies in Great Britain, the majority of which are affiliated to the Spiritualist National Union." The same story might have been told of all the other countries of the world. That was in 1932. Since then, due to World War 11, its growth has been phenomenal. Millions of people having lost their loved ones and friends through the war have sought to renew their contacts through spiritualism.

In view of this tremendous movement toward this comparatively new cult, it surely is most fitting that we inquire, What is spiritualism? Is it true or false? Is it of God or Satan?

Its Claims

Spiritualism claims to be a form of Christianity.

It claims to put the living into direct touch with the dead.

It claims to materialize the dead so that they can be seen, touched, and heard.

It claims that messages giving counsel and advice are received from the dead for those who are living.

It claims to have proved that there is life beyond the grave, that the dead really are still alive, and that they take an active and interested part in the affairs of those still living upon the earth. Spiritualism, therefore, is based upon the theory of the natural immortality of the soul. It actually has its roots sunk deep into the old pagan mythologies, often based upon ancestor worship.

Unless the Bible is entirely false and wholly unreliable, it is impossible for spiritualism to be what it purports to be. For instance, its claim to put the living in communication with the dead is wholly unscriptural. It is contrary to the whole teaching of inspired Scripture. The testimony of the Bible concerning the dead is:

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun." Ecclesiastes. 9:5,6.

This testimony is conclusive. The dead are not alive—they know not anything; they neither love, hate, nor envy. They have nothing to do with anything that is done under the sun. Therefore, whatever may be seen felt, or done in the seance chambers of the spiritualists is not the work of human beings who once lived upon the earth and have died. The prophet David uttered the warning:

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Psalm 146:3,4.

To this also agree the words of Job:

"But man dies and wastes away: yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea' and the Hood decays and dries up: so man lies down, and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that Thou would hide me in the grave, that Thou would keep me secret, until Thy wrath be past, that Thou would appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." Job 14: 10-14.

A Great Deception

From these clear statements of scripture it will be readily seen that spiritualism is one of the world's greatest deceptions. To die does not mean to continue living only in another form and sphere. Death means the cessation of life.' The dead cannot talk to the living, nor can they in any way influence their lives. Their thoughts have perished. They do not think, speak, nor act. They are asleep, and were it not for the promise of a resurrection they would never live again.

In Mr. Oalin's article, already referred to, he makes the astonishing statement: "Just think of it! Ten thousand families [in Great Britain] in their own homes are convinced that they are talking to their own deceased relatives every week.... The conviction borne in upon spiritualists who thus practice communion in the home is that they have bridged the gulf dividing this world from the next and are indulging in heart to heart talks with people who live in the next world." What a fatal deception! And what a pity that it should thus engulf the world!

The impact of spiritualism upon the Christian church has been tremendous. It has in fact, all but destroyed it. Concerning this Mr. Oalin says:

"Creeds and professions do not count. Conduct is everything, and the future happiness or misery of any man must depend entirely upon the life he has lived within the limitation of his possibilities and powers.

"It is certainly leading to the breakdown of all authority in religion, whether the authority be of priests or books. All authority comes from the spiritual worlds. Spiritual truth comes from on high. The parson is not necessarily its repository, and is only sometimes its privileged mouthpiece, and that when he is chosen by the spirit world itself.

"In the centuries gone by, there were two great churches in Europe which embraced all the people. The development of individual thought caused the break-up of these churches into many sects (Nonconformity, etc.).

"The tendency today is towards a further breaking up, and if I am asked whither spiritualism is leading, I reply it is leading us to a point where every man will have his own spiritual life, based upon a personal communion and contact with a living spirit world.

"That sections of men may get together for mutual worship and mutual assistance is always true, but spiritualism is leading to individualism in religion, and the break-up of authoritative churches." -London Daily Mail, June 16, 1932, Continental edition.

Although spiritualism parades in the garments of Christianity, its chief exponents boast that its result is the overthrow and breaking up of the Christian church and "the breakdown of all authority in religion." How can this be? If spiritualism be Christian, how then are the Christian institutions, destroyed by it?

Mr. Oalin further points out that spiritualism can join hands as easily with heathenism as with Christianity, when he declares:

"Since all religions stand for a life beyond death, where the consequences of earth life will be reaped, there is a common platform upon which spiritualism can unite with every phase of religion in the world. The Buddhist, the Moslem, the Brahmin, and the Christian may each practice spirit communion, while still retaining his allegiance to the basic principles of his own faith." Ibid.

Surely this is carrying matters too far. When a form of Christianity goes so far as to embrace the religions of Buddha, Mohammed, and the Hindus, with all their millions of false gods, it ceases to be Christianity. Spiritualism, therefore, has no valid claim whatsoever to the term Christian, since, professedly, it is able to unite with these non-Christian religions.

What Is Spiritualism?

We do not deny the phenomenon of spiritualism. It cannot be explained away as mere sleight of hand. The spiritualist really does talk to beings from the spirit world, but they are not the spirits of the' dead. They are instead the fallen angels, whose allegiance to Satan has led them to practice this master deception upon the human family.

Spiritualism, although posing as a new religion, actually dates back to the fall of man in Eden, and has appeared in various forms through all succeeding ages.

When the first parents were placed in their Paradise home, they were earnestly warned that the wages of sin would be death. "In the day thou eats thereof, thou shall surely die."

When Satan appeared to the woman in the garden, using the serpent as his first medium, he made the bold and diabolical denial: "You shall not surely die." Gen. 3:4. This was a direct contradiction of God's declaration and was clearly an effort on the part of Satan to discredit God's word. Throughout succeeding ages it has been Satan's studied purpose to continue this deception and make men believe that they possess inherent immortality and eternal life.

Many who have investigated spiritualism are entirely disarmed by the fact that the spirits are able to impersonate their dead relatives and talk with them about things that were so secret that no one else had any knowledge of them. This has seemed to them to be absolute evidence that they are face to face with the departed.

Satan Wiser than Daniel

But there is an explanation for all this. Paul declared that the devil is able to transform himself into an angel of light and to appear to men. See 2 Corinthians 11: 13 -15. Also, when the Lord addressed Lucifer as the Prince of Tyrus, He declared:

"Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee." Ezekiel 28: 3. "Thus says the Lord God; Thou seals up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." Ezekiel 28: 12.

If Satan knows all the secrets of our lives, and if he can transform himself so as to appear to men in

various forms, how reasonable it is to believe that he can impersonate the dead, and talk freely of things that were formerly held as secrets between them and the living.

It was in exactly this manner that King Saul was deceived by a spiritualist medium into believing that he had been put into contact with the prophet Samuel, who was dead. The record is that Saul said unto his servant:

"Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.

"And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knew what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then lay thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord lives, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

"Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spoke to Saul, saying, Why has thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what saw thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man comes up; and he is covered with a mantle.

"And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why has thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answered me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou may make known unto me what I shall do." 1 Sam. 28: 7-15.

God had strictly prohibited Israel from having intercourse with any who claimed to consult the spirits of the dead; and Saul, being king, was well aware of this prohibition. The Lord's instructions were:

"When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God gives thee, thou shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a

necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God does drive them out from before thee." Deuteronomy 18: 9-12.

When Saul had so far departed from God that he sought counsel from the dead, Satan was able to impersonate Samuel, and the king was deceived. It was this turning from the living God to Satan that brought about his downfall and untimely death.

"So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it; and inquired not of the Lord: therefore He slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse." 1 Chronicles. 10:13,14.

What a fearful warning this sad experience of the king of Israel should be to men and women who today profess to be followers of God and His Son Jesus Christ, but who, like Saul, are turning aside to inquire of familiar spirits.

Rejects Christian Fundamentals

Spiritualism tends to destroy all the great fundamentals of the Christian religion.

It denies that the Bible is a true book.

It denies the personality of God.

It denies the deity of Christ.

It denies the resurrection of Christ and of the dead.

It denies the second, personal, and visible coming of Christ to re-establish His kingdom over men.

Therefore, to accept spiritualism means to reject God, Christ, the Bible, and all those truths that make up the Christian faith. It means a turning back to the darkness of heathen worship. It is for that reason that the Lord so earnestly warned Israel against this great deception. Said He:

"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter. Should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:19,20.

We are never to seek for the living among the dead. The Bible test of all religious faith is the "law" and the "testimony." That is the Word of God. If they speak not according to God's law and the Holy Scriptures, there is no light in them.

The attitude of spiritualism toward the Bible was well* stated some years ago by a spirit in a Philadelphia seance. He claimed to be the spirit of the Apostle Paul. He was asked the question: "What do you think of the Bible since your entrance into the spirit world?"

"The spirit then proceeded to make the following statements about the various books of the Bible:

Genesis

'About as true as any fictitious work now in print.'

Exodus

'As good a book as could be expected at that day.'

Leviticus

'Not directly from God, as man supposes.'

Numbers

'Such an absurdity as that, the facts stated in chapter first, ought to be cast into the lowest depths of the infernal regions.'

Joshua

'Almost the whole book is false.'

Judges

'About the same as the others; and it needs no argument to show that it is void of inspiration.'

Ruth

'Without inspiration, the same as the others.'

Samuel

'A part of it is correct.'

Kings

'Multitudes of mistakes-not correct-no inspiration.'

Ezra

'By a person bearing its name, without inspiration.'

Job

Written through mediums-would have been correct, had it not been that men destroyed its purity.'

Psalms

'Written in the same way, and some of them correct.'

"Spiritual Manifestations in the City of Philadelphia, by a member of the First Circle, pages 10-14.

The books of the New Testament were likewise discredited.

In League with Satan

In the early days of spiritualism it did not make the proud claims of being a form of Christianity but frankly acknowledged that it was in league with the devil. Its leaders addressed their prayers to the devil and made no effort to conceal the fact. For example, in 1861 and 1862 the official spiritualist organ, *The Banner of Light*, published the following prayers to the devil:

"O Lucifer, thou son of the morning, who fell from thy high estate, and whom mortals are prone to call the embodiment of evil, we lift our voices to thee. . . . From the depths of your infamy stream forth divine truths. Why should we turn from thee?. . . So, O Lucifer, do we come up and stand before the throne of the Ancient of Days, hand in hand with thee. As thou has been the star of the morning thou wilt again become an angel of light. O Satan, we will subdue thee with our love and thou wilt yet kneel humbly with us at the throne of God." - *The Banner of Light*, December 21, 1861, page 8.

"O thou prince of darkness and king of light, god and devil, greater and lesser good, perfect and imperfect being! we ask and demand of thee that we may know thee, for to know thee is to know more of ourselves. And if to do this it be necessary to wander in hell, yea and amen, we wander there with the spirits of darkness. The church and the world tell us that the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, but we know thee only as God's vice-regent, to stand at His left hand, the regenerator of mankind, the means of bringing up all things, intellectually and morally to perfection." - *The Banner of Light*, March 1, 1862.

Later, in 1874, on January 29, Professor W. Chaney, a spiritualist medium, engaged in a debate on the subject of spiritualism with a Christian minister in San Jose, California; and before he began to speak, he prayed as follows:

"O devil, prince of demons in the Christian hell! O thou monarch of the bottomless pit, thou king of scorpions having stings in their tails, to whom it is given to hurt the earth for five months, I beseech thee to hear my prayer. . . . Bless thy servant in his labors before thee. Fill his mouth with words of wisdom. Enable him to defend thee from the false charges about to be made against thy sulphurous majesty, and triumph by truth and logic over his opponent, so that this audience may realize that thou art a prayer-hearing and a prayer answering devil." - *Signs of the Times*, May 10, 1877.

Dear reader, if perchance you happen to be one of those who have been carried away by this mighty deception, let me appeal to you in the name of Jesus to break from it at once. The Lord is not in the secret chamber of the seance. Your loved ones are not there. They are safely in God's keeping. No good can ever come to your soul through a religion that is anti-Christian and that is in allegiance with the powers of darkness.

Once in the clutches of this deception it will be hard to break away, for the devil will not let you go without a struggle. He will battle every inch of ground. But God has laid help on One that is mighty. Jesus Christ can set you free. Surrender yourself to Him and ask Him for complete deliverance. Read again and again the wonderful counsel of the Lord:

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching there unto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Ephesians 6: 10-18.

The living know that they must die, But all the dead unconscious lie; Their powers of thought and sense are gone, Alike unknowing and unknown.

Their hatred and their love are lost, Their envy buried in the dust; They have no share in all that's done Beneath the circuit of the sun.

Then what my thoughts design to do, My hands must hasten to pursue; Since no device, nor work is found, Nor faith, nor hope, beneath the ground.

ANONYMOUS.

[17. HOW TO GET ANSWERS TO PRAYER](#)

IF MY people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now Mine eyes shall be open, and Mine ears attend unto the prayer that is made in this place." 2 Chronicles. 7: 14, 15.

One of the most astounding facts of the spiritual life is that God hears and answers prayer. The Bible abounds with the testimony of those whose prayers have been signally answered, and every sincere Christian can add his own personal experiences in which God has opened the windows of heaven and granted his petitions.

Prayer puts man in touch with God. It forms the connecting link between human weakness and God's omnipotence. Out of weakness men are made strong. See Hebrews 11: 34.

When the sinner, through repentance and conversion, becomes a son of God, he thereafter has a right to approach God just as a child would approach his earthly parent. He belongs to God's family. He has the rights of son ship, and he has before him a standing invitation to bring his petitions and present them before his Father in full expectation that they will receive attention.

In fact, God desires His children to come to Him in prayer. The Bible shows the picture of Him bending His ear' that He may hear the faintest cry of His children. His greatest joy is found in granting the requests of those who come to Him for help and succor.

Prayer brings definite results. It was when Daniel prayed that God sent the angel to shut the mouths of the hungry lions. It was when Paul and Silas prayed that the doors of the prison were opened, and they were set free. It was when Elijah prayed-that-God shut up the heavens, so that there was no rain. (See James 5: 1 It was when Joshua prayed for victory for Israel over her enemies at God lengthened the day by causing the sun to stand still in t heavens, thus giving Israel time to win the victory. It was when Christ prayed on the banks of the Jordan that the heavens woe opened, and the Father's voice was heard acclaiming Him to be His Son.

Concerning the efficacy of prayer, the Apostle James declares: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." James 5: 16.

We Must Ask

God has established a law to the effect that men must ask if they would receive, seek if they would find, and knock if they would have the door opened unto them. See Matt, 7: 7. God's blessings are never forced upon His children, but they are freely bestowed upon those who reverently come to Him and request them from His hand.

"For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened." Matthew 7:8.

"And all things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive." Matthew 21:22.

"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He hears us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." 1 John 5: 14, 15.

Prayer, therefore, is the Christian's greatest and highest privilege. Through this means he is able to hold constant communion with the King of the universe. He is in touch with God. To him heaven's store of eternal riches is open. And to him is the promise: "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19.

From the Heart

Prayer, to be effectual, must, however, come from the heart. It cannot be read out of a book. It cannot be composed by another and placed in the hands to be read to God. Prayer consists not of reading to God, but of talking to Him-pouring the heart's inmost desires into His sympathetic ear, and then being still to hear His gracious answer. He tenderly entreats His children: "Turn you even to Me with all your heart." Joel 2: 12.

The reason many so-called prayers receive no answer is the fact that they are made all too casually.

They are said, perhaps repeated, but not prayed. Prayer to be real must become the breathing forth of the inner spiritual longings of the soul into the ear of One' who is recognized as the heavenly Father.

Faith Is Essential

In order to receive answers, prayer must be made in absolute faith. Otherwise, it becomes altogether meaningless.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11: 6.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." James 1: 5-7.

This is why Jesus said to His disciples:

"Therefore I say unto you, What things so ever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them." Mark 11: 24.

Must Obey Him

Another condition of answered prayer is implicit obedience to God's Word. Unless we are willing to follow His instruction and live in conformity to His will, we have no claim whatsoever upon the least of His mercies.

"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3: 21, 22.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart," declared the psalmist, "the Lord will not hear me." Psalm 66: 18. Solomon made it even stronger. Said he, "He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Prov. 28: 9.

This of course, is only reasonable. If men will not ally themselves with God by following Jesus' example of obedience to God's requirements, they are actually enemies of His and not disciples. "He that is not with Me," said Jesus, is against Me." This is the test. If we are with Him, He is also with us to bless and keep. "He that hath My commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves Me: and he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." John 14: 2 1.

Secret Prayer

No one can possibly be a true Christian without engaging in secret prayer. Jesus realized this when He gave the earnest admonition:

"And when thou prays, thou shall not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prays, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which sees in secret shall reward thee openly." Matthew 6: 5, 6.

This is the real life of the soul. -Enter into thy closet." No experience in Christian living is as sacred as a quiet hour spent with God alone. Power to live for Christ in the crowd is gained in the secret audience chamber with God.

If daily the Christian will practice the habit of withdrawing into some retreat where just he and God can meet in quiet holy communion, he will find there the source of spiritual power. He shall be rewarded openly. When the stress of temptation comes in his struggle with the enemy he will find within himself a power of resistance born not of earth but of heaven. He is in touch with God, and God's power is manifest in his life.

Family Prayer

One of the greatest bulwarks of Christianity is the family altar. There can be no substitute for family prayer, if the family unit is to count for Christ and to hold its members loyal and true to God and the church. One thing radically wrong in the world today is that in most Christian homes family prayer is no longer a part of the daily program. The family altar has been abandoned.

It was not always so. A half a century ago many Christian people had family worship. The children were gathered by the parents at the hearthstone, either in the morning or the evening (sometimes both). A portion of Scripture would be read, and then together all would kneel and pray. In this way the children learned to pray. Prayer became a regular habit in their lives. By the holy influence of the family altar the hearts of all were bound together as well as to Christ and the church, and spiritual fervor was at high tide.

But this tide has gradually been ebbing away. Life now is too busy and complicated for family prayer. Prayer is so easily crowded out. No longer do the children of Christian homes hear their parents praying for them, as at the family prayer circle each one is presented before God. Thus, a mighty Christian influence is lost, and this is one of the causes for the church's becoming weak and impotent.

Oh, the pity of it! When a loving and gracious God, possessor of the riches of the universe, so longs to bestow His blessings upon His children, why should they become so careless about coming to Him in prayer? Why should their lives be so destitute of the power He is so ready to bestow!

Someone may inquire, "Does God always give His children what they ask for?" No, not always. Every prayer that is made in simple faith is answered, but the answer is given according to God's understanding of the needs, and not according to the asking. His wisdom is infinite, and His love is boundless. He loves His children far too well to give them things that would be injurious to them. Therefore, in His great love He sometimes says, "Yes," and at other times He says, "No."

A child may see a beautiful, gleaming knife and plead with his parent for it. His desire is intense, and his plea is insistent. But the parent sees that the bestowal of this gift would be a definite danger to the child. In love, but with firmness, the parent says, "No, you cannot have that. You would only injure yourself with it. It is not for your good or happiness that you should receive it, but, here, I will give you this toy. It is even more beautiful, and also it is entirely harmless."

Just so it is with God; He withholds from His children those things that, though desired, would prove hurtful to them, and from His abundant supply substitutes those things that He knows are for their best good and eternal happiness.

In My Name

In coming to God in prayer it is essential that all realize the fact that this contact would never have been possible had not Jesus opened the way. Sin had cut man entirely off from God and made him unfit to approach His presence. It also reduced man to a condition in which he was not, worthy of God's notice.

But Jesus opened the way back to God's presence. Through the Savior it again became possible for sinners to approach unto God. It is because of this fact that Jesus said: "And whatsoever you shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." John 14: 13, 14.

A story is told of two boys who served in the American Confederate Army. One, Edson Rogers, was the son of a wealthy southern planter. The other, Robert Sawyer, was an orphan, and poor.

In the service these boys were drawn to each other and became real friends. They were inseparable. They fought together; they played together; they bunked together.

Months of such close association only tended to cement and deepen their friendship, and they decided that when the war closed they would go into business together.

One day, however it became painfully evident that their plans were to be frustrated. Edson was mortally wounded in battle. Calling his pal to his side, he said: "Robert, my time has come; I can live but a few minutes more, but before I die I want you to promise me that when the war is over you will go to my Virginia home and visit my parents. I want them to know and love my best friend. And I want you to tell them of our friendship in the army."

"But," replied Robert, "they will think I am an impostor. They will neither receive me nor believe my story. After all, I am only a poor orphan boy, and I would not even know how to approach such people as your parents."

"I have thought of that," said Edson, "and it will not be difficult. When you meet my father, just mention my name. Tell him you were with me during my last hours. Here is a letter of introduction which I have hastily written and which you will hand to him. When he reads this in my own handwriting and with my name signed to it, I am certain that he will receive you and be kind to you.

Months later the war came to a close, and Robert Sawyer remembered his promise to his friend. He traveled to Virginia, and seeking out the Rogers' mansion, he tremblingly approached the door and knocked. An aged man with a sad countenance came to the door and seemed annoyed that any one so weather beaten and tattered should have presumed to knock.

"What do you want?" said the old man.

"I came to fulfil a promise I made to your son Edson as he lay dying upon the field of battle," replied Robert.

"What! You knew my son? You were with him when he died? Ah, but how can I know that this is true?"

"Here," replied Robert, "is a note he asked me to give to you. It is the last message he ever wrote, and I am sure you will recognize his signature."

With trembling hand Edson's father took the note and eagerly read every word. Yes, it was Edson's handwriting. The note was genuine. This lad standing before him was a friend of his son, of whom he was bereaved.

It mattered not that the attire was shabby and the social background known. He had been a friend of Edson. That was enough. No other credentials were needed.

"My boy," said the old man, "Edson was all we had. He was our only child. Our lives were bound up in him. Now that he is gone, nothing could make us so happy as to have his best friend come and take his place in our hearts and our home. Won't you stay with us and be our son?"

What had opened the door of the Rogers mansion to this lad who had no home of his own? What had opened a father's heart to him? It was the name of Edson Rogers. He had gone in Edson's name.

And just so it is when we go to God the Father in prayer. We are all poor orphans. Yes, we are worse; we are sinners and rebels. We have nothing to commend us to God. We have no claim on His love. But Jesus, the friend of sinners, has bidden us go in His name. And His promise to us is that whatsoever we ask the Father in His all-prevailing name shall be given to us.

When the Father is told that we are friends of His only begotten Son, who died for our sins, and that we have accepted Him as our Savior and great High Priest, our appeal becomes irresistible. Our unworthiness is a matter of no consideration. Jesus is worthy, and He invites us to come claiming His worthiness as ours. Our poverty also is of no consequence, since with God are stored all the boundless resources of omnipotence; and, by becoming friends of His Son, we shall also be made heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Coming in Christ's name, the Father receives us into His heart and home and loves us just as He loves His own Son.

God Hears Prayer

God's promise is that when we pray, He will hear our prayers. "Then will I hear from heaven." (2 Chronicles. 7: 14.)

But to many, prayer does not seem real. When they kneel down and begin to speak to God, they wonder whether He really hears. Heaven seems far away. How can their prayers reach God?

Some years ago the writer was in Chungking, China, and needed very urgently to communicate with his wife, who was in the city of Shanghai, some one thousand miles away. The war between China and Japan was raging, and there were no telephone or telegraph connections between East and West China. The possibilities of immediate contact seemed nil.

Learning of my desire, a Chinese friend who owned and operated an amateur radio set volunteered to establish contact with my wife by radio, and permit me to speak with her. Calls were immediately sent out over the air, and in a short time I heard a familiar voice. It was my wife in faraway Shanghai, who had been notified that her husband was calling, and who had responded to the call. Her voice came in clearly and distinctly, as though she were in the same room. In an instant my message had reached her in Shanghai, and in another instant I had her reply.

It all seemed impossible. Yet it was so just so it is with prayer. If man can invent an instrument that projects the human voice thousands of miles through space, how then shall we question God's ability to hear prayer! His power, wisdom, and knowledge are omnipotent. With Him nothing is impossible.

God Answers Prayer

'We are to send our petitions through the darkest clouds that Satan may cast over us, and let our faith pierce to the throne of God encircled by a rainbow of promise, the assurance that God is true, that in Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. The answer may appear to be delayed, but it is not so. The petition is accepted, and the answer given when it is essential for the best good of the petitioner, and when the fulfillment of the request will work most for our eternal interest.' - E. G. White, Review and Herald, November 19, 1895.

Yes, God hears prayer. He hears the faintest cry of His own children, when they go to Him for help. Not only so, but He can read and interpret the unspoken longings of the hearts that in humility and penitence are lifted up to Him. And he will turn away none who come to Him in sincerity and truth. On one occasion, after hearing Jesus talk to His father through prayer, His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." This should be the heart longing of every Christian. We need to learn to pray, not casually, nor occasionally, but it should become a habit of life. We should pray without ceasing -that is, daily at regular periods, and whenever the soul feels the need of divine help. There is no time or place when or where it is inappropriate to pray. Some prayers should be audible, while others may be only the whispered pleadings of the soul, as the heart turns to its God for strength and heavenly guidance.

Night and day, hour by hour, Jesus our High Priest and Advocate stands before the throne in readiness to present our petitions to God. He is waiting there today, just now, He is ready to bear your name and mine before the mercy seat, and secure from the Father just those things that are needful to us. Coming to Him in full assurance of faith, we shall receive of His boundless supply all that we need. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4: 16.

Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence would avail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parched grounds revive as with a shower;
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth a sunny outline brave and clear.
We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care.
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?
ARCHBISHOP TRENCH.

18. THE GOSPEL ILLUSTRATED

SOON after the fall of Adam, a typical service was instituted in order ever to keep before the human mind the only plan by which man could be redeemed from sin. It was to serve as a living illustration of the plan of redemption. The first practical object lesson of this nature was taught by the act of God Himself when He slew some animals, and made coats of skins for the first pair, to replace their aprons of fig leaves which they had made themselves. This evidently was to teach them that man's guilt and shame could not be covered by his own efforts or by the works of his own hands, but only by the substitutionary death of another.

Later we see Cain and Abel offering sacrifices to God. Abel's offering, which was of the firstlings, of his flocks, was acceptable because the sacrificial blood properly typified the promised death of the Son of God as man's real substitute; whereas

Cain's offering was rejected because it furnished no type of the atoning blood. It consisted only of the fruits of the ground. It was illustrative of man's efforts to gain the favor of God by his own accomplishments.

This plan of offering typical sacrifices became quite universal among God's people. We read of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and many others of the ancient patriarchs performing this service regularly. It was their means of showing faith in the promise of a Deliverer, and it was God's way of keeping before man an object lesson and reminder of the plan of redemption.

During the sojourn in Egypt this system fell largely into discard as a result of the oppression, and one of the chief reasons for deliverance by the special intervention of God was that it might be restored. Moses and Aaron said to Pharaoh: "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest He fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword." Exodus 5: 3.

A Sanctuary Built

During the wilderness journey, the children of Israel, acting under the instruction of God through Moses, erected a sanctuary in which the typical service could be carried on under a regular system. Priests were appointed whose duty it was to conduct this service, and a regular daily and yearly routine was established by direct command of God. The service was so arranged as to teach the whole gospel plan. The sanctuary, for instance, was to represent the heavenly sanctuary, which Paul declares, in Hebrews 8: 2, was pitched by the Lord and not man. The priests represented Christ as the minister of the heavenly sanctuary. The offerings that were made also represented Christ as the offering for man's sin.

The Law of Moses

A law was given by the Lord through Moses regulating all the various activities of the priests in their service in the sanctuary and specifying just when and how each particular part of the service must be performed. Of this law Moses says in Lev. 7: 3 7, 3 8:

This is the law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings; which the Lord commanded Moses in Mount Sinai, in the day that He commanded -the children of Israel to offer their oblations unto the Lord, in the wilderness of Sinai."

In many places in the Bible this law is referred to as the law of Moses, in contradistinction to the Ten Commandments, which are often designated as the law of God. It was, in fact, the transgression of the Decalogue (which constitutes God's great moral standard for the entire world) that made necessary the addition of this typical service.

This entire service had to do with the removal of guilt from those who had broken the moral code, the transgression of which is declared to be sin. (1 John 3: 4.) It must be this typical law, therefore, to which Paul refers in Galatians 3: 19, when he declares, "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Paul further declares, in Hebrews 9: 9, 10, that the whole typical service was a temporary arrangement constituting "a figure for the time then present" and consisting of "ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." In other words, this entire system was given for the purpose of illustrating just how God proposed to release man from the penalty of sin through a substitutionary sacrifice. It was given, also, to provide for man a means by which he could show his active faith in the provision thus made for his redemption.

When anyone in the camp of Israel committed sin, he, by that act, had transgressed the Ten-Commandment law which had been written by the finger of God upon tables of stone, and which was contained in the ark that rested in the sanctuary. No sin could be committed without affecting the sinner's relationship to this law. The law condemned sin. It declared that the sinner by his act of sin had become a transgressor of the law. For this reason the sinner was placed under condemnation of death, which is sin's penalty; and only as some proper substitute might be provided, would it be possible for him ever to escape from the condemnation. The law of Moses pointed to a way of escape from the penalty of such transgressions.

The Lamb a Sin Bearer

The substitutionary plan was illustrated in the sanctuary service by the sinner's going to the flocks and selecting a lamb or a kid without blemish and bringing it to the door of the sanctuary as a sacrificial offering. He would lay both hands on the head of the sacrifice and would there confess his sin. In this way the sin, in type, was transferred to the lamb, which now stood as the sin bearer; and the sinner, who had been the real transgressor, was symbolically released from guilt.

The lamb was slain, and its blood was carried by the priests in a basin to the altar of burnt offering, where a portion of it was sprinkled upon the altar and the rest poured out on the ground before the altar. This testified to the fact that the substitute had died for the transgressor. The blow which should have fallen upon the sinner's head had fallen on the innocent victim, and its blood now was poured out in confirmation of the fact that in type the demands of the law had been met, at the wages of sin had been paid.

Christ, the Lamb of God

Although there was actually no efficacy in the shed blood of the sacrificed animals, yet this service pointed forward to Christ, to His sacrifice on Calvary, and to the subsequent offering of His blood by Himself as high priest in the sanctuary in heaven before the throne of God. Therein lay the efficacy of this typical service. The Jews, however, soon fixed their eyes entirely upon the ceremony itself, and most of them altogether forgot Its meaning. This is the reason they rejected Christ. They felt that because they were literal descendants of Abraham and had strictly carried out the provision of the law governing the earthly sanctuary typical service, they were absolutely sure of heaven; whereas, this earthly service actually served only as an object lesson. It was God's purpose that the Jews should see in this service a daily illustration of the coming of Christ as the Lamb of God to shed His blood in sacrifice for the sins of men.

It would be impossible for anyone to study and believe in the earthly sanctuary service and at the same time deny that Jesus' death was a substitutionary sacrifice for sin. The sanctuary service, better than any other portion of the Old Testament, sets forth Christ's true position in the plan of redemption. It absolutely establishes the doctrine of the blood atonement. It makes clear the fact that man's only hope of redemption from the power of sin and transgression is in the sacrificial substitutionary death of Jesus, the lamb of God. In Hebrews 9: 22 the Apostle Paul declares that "without shedding of blood is no remission"; that is to say, nothing short of death can possibly atone for the transgression of the law of, Jehovah.

If man had not found a substitute in Christ, then not a sinner on earth ever could have had any basis for hope for release from the guilt of sin or for the gift of eternal life. The wages of sin must be paid. There is no alternative. And this is the reason it is absolutely certain that sinners who ultimately reject the provision for salvation made by Christ, and face the judgment without having confessed Him as their Savior, will die an eternal death. For them there is no redemption.

Christ Died for Every Man

In Hebrews 2: 9 Paul makes the statement that Christ "by the grace of God Should taste death for every man." In His death and subsequent ministry full provision was made for the redemption of every man, woman, and child who would live upon the earth; but this provision becomes effective only as the individual sinner accepts Christ in the capacity of substitute and Savior. Let it be noted that Christ did not die in His own behalf. Even Pilate, after examining Him, declared to the mob that was clamoring for His life that he found no cause of death in Him. Never having committed sin, it was, of course, unnecessary that He should die because of His personal sin. The only reason that Jesus Christ gave up His life on Calvary was that He might voluntarily become man's substitute in death. Thus the Scriptures declare:

"You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1: 18, 19.

"He was oppressed, yet when He was afflicted He opened not His mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who among them considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? And they made His grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in His death; although He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.

"Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall . . . prolong His days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of Himself shall My righteous servant justify many; and He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Isaiah 53: 7-12, ARV.

God Provides a Lamb

This provision of God to redeem man was foreshadowed also by the experience of Abraham on Mount Moriah, when he offered up his son Isaac. The record tells that as father and son were winding their way up the mountain-side, "Isaac spoke unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together." Gen. 22: 7, 8.

When, however, they reached the top of the mountain and the altar had been built, the wood laid in order, and everything was in readiness for the placing of the sacrifice, no special provision was apparent; and, therefore, in harmony with God's command, the Scripture states:

"Abraham ... bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And He said, Lay not your hand upon the lad, neither do thou any. thing unto him: for now I know that thou fears God, seeing thou has not withheld thy son, your only son from Me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh [margin, that is, the Lord will see or provide]." Gen. 22: 9-14.

It is just so that God provided a substitute sacrifice for all in the death of His Son Jesus. All were under condemnation of death. There was no way of escape until God voluntarily set forth Jesus to be a propitiation for our sins through His atoning death. He is "the Lamb of God," and through His substitutionary death and priestly ministry He takes away the sins of the world. This is the fountain that was to be "opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." (Zechariah 13: 1.)

The sacrifice Christ Jesus made for sinners by His death on the cross is the very heart-of the gospel. And it was this sacrifice that was shadowed forth in the sacrificial service of the earthly sanctuary. Through the offering of lambs, calves, goats, or doves the suppliant showed his faith in the efficacy of the atoning blood of Christ, which was yet to be shed. He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, Takes all our sins away; A sacrifice of nobler name And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand On that dear head of Your, While like a penitent I stand, And there confess my sin. ISAAC WATTS.

19. SHADOWS OF THE CROSS ABOLISHED

IT IS IN the service of the earthly sanctuary which we shall now discuss that God has worked out for us a graphic picture of the whole scheme of human redemption. It is here that the atonement of Christ becomes clear and understandable. It is the gospel in action. In fact, the service in the earthly sanctuary constituted a living demonstration of Christ's every act in His supreme effort to save the members of the fallen race.

But, on the other hand, it is in the heavenly sanctuary that Christ's actual work in behalf of man's salvation is carried on. There He is both priest and sacrifice. There He offers, not as on earth the blood of animals, but His own blood in behalf of sinners. That is the true tabernacle of which He is the great High Priest.

Just as the stars dim and fade from view, as the morning sun arises in its splendor and effulgent glory, so, when the blood of Christ was shed on Calvary and He ascended to the sanctuary above to begin His priestly ministry, the earthly sanctuary with its symbolical services and ritual faded from view. Its purpose had been fulfilled, and now it must be taken out of the way.

Two Sanctuaries

Two distinct sanctuaries of God are brought to view in the Scriptures. One was on earth; the other is in heaven. One was built by the Israelites in the wilderness and later rebuilt in Solomon's temple at Jerusalem, while the other was built in heaven by God Himself. Concerning the building of the earthly sanctuary, the Lord said to Moses, the leader of ancient Israel:

"And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall you make it." "And thou shall put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shall put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." Exodus 25: 8, 9, 21, 22.

This earthly sanctuary was to be divided into two rooms, or apartments, by a dividing veil, or a curtain; and definite instruction was given as to the various articles of furniture which were to be placed in the respective rooms. "For there was a tabernacle made; the first ... which is called the sanctuary [margin, holy]. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all." Hebrews 9: 2, 3.

Before the entrance to the first apartment there was also a veil, or curtain. In the first apartment were to be the table of show bread, the golden altar of incense, the seven golden candlesticks, and the golden censer. Within the second veil, or in the second room, the ark of the covenant was to be kept. This was to contain the tables of stone upon which were written the Ten Commandments, and above it the mercy seat was to rest.

"The True Tabernacle"

Regarding the heavenly sanctuary the Apostle Paul declares:

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For

every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if He were on earth, He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, says He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." Hebrews 8: 1-5.

Thus, it is clearly revealed that there is a true sanctuary in heaven. There also was a miniature replica of it here upon earth. The one was a type of the other. The one on earth served only as an illustration of the heavenly and of the service' that was to be carried on there in behalf of sinners.

An "Example and Shadow"

In the earthly sanctuary the blood of animals was daily offered as a type of the shedding of the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, who had been promised as the sinner's substitute. In the heavenly the blood of Jesus is actually presented as a sacrificial atonement for the sins of His people.

In the earthly sanctuary the services were performed by men. In the heavenly Christ is the minister, and daily pleads the merits of His own blood in behalf of repentant sinners. Since in the earthly, or typical sanctuary, the priests were ordained to "offer gifts and sacrifices," it was necessary that Christ, the Priest of the heavenly sanctuary, should ---have somewhat also to offer." (Hebrews 8: 3.) His service was the antitype and was to be similar to that of the type. Hence, Jesus could not begin His priestly ministry until after His death on Calvary. He was to be the successor of the Levitical priests, who were of the house of Aaron.

The earthly sanctuary with its typical service was a temporary arrangement and was to continue only until the cross, of which its service was a shadow. It was instituted by God for the purpose of setting before His people the great fundamental truths of the gospel; that is, that remission of sin is essential to eternal life and can be secured only through the shed blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, and through His priestly ministry of that blood in behalf of sinners in the sanctuary in heaven.

"The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Hebrews 9:8-14.

Until the Gospel

Here it is seen that the earthly sanctuary is designated "the first tabernacle" and that it was a figure for "the time then present." Its service was imposed on God's people only until the time of reformation," or the opening of the gospel dispensation. From that time forth Christ would take up His work in the "greater and more perfect tabernacle" in heaven, where He, as priest, would minister His own blood in behalf of sinners; and the earthly sanctuary service would terminate.

Although the sanctuary of which Christ is minister is called the heavenly sanctuary, this does not mean that it is heaven' itself. Heaven is not the sanctuary, but the sanctuary is in heaven. This is very definitely revealed in Revelation 11: 19, where we read: "The temple of God was opened in heaven." It does not say heaven was opened, but that the temple of God was opened in heaven. This temple is the sanctuary, for the text says there was seen in it the ark of the testament. It is claimed by some that all heaven is the sanctuary, but that teaching clearly contradicts the plain statements of Scripture.

Its Furnishings

A study of the heavenly sanctuary shows us that it was furnished in the same way as was the earthly. In Revelation 4: 5 John speaks of seeing "seven lamps of fire" inside the open door of the heavenly temple. In Revelation I 1: 19 he sees the ark of the testimony, and in Revelation 8: 3 he sees the altar of incense and the golden censer. In Hebrews 8: 5 we are told that the earthly sanctuary was built after a pattern and that it was a "shadow of heavenly things." If that be true, then the shadow that we see in the earthly must of necessity reflect what was to be found in the heavenly. In essential arrangements the two must be the same. Also the typical services performed in the earthly must find their antitype in the heavenly. Christ's ministry in the heavenly temple began after His sacrifice on Calvary. When Jesus died the priesthood was changed.

"I Am He"

It was of this change that Jesus spoke to the woman at the well of Samaria. She had said: "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and you say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." John 4: 19, 20.

To this Jesus replied:

"Woman, believe Me, the hour comes, when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.... But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The woman says unto Him, I know that Messias comes, which is called Christ: when He is come, He will tell us all things. Jesus said unto her, I that speak unto thee am He." John 4: 21-26.

"I am He." Jesus had appeared according to His promise. The new dispensation was about to eclipse the old. Soon He would yield up His life on Calvary, and the priesthood would shift from Aaron to Himself. The heavenly sanctuary was about to supplant the earthly. The Sun of Righteousness was arising with healing in His wings, and the starlight of the Aaronic priesthood was fading from view.

"And for this cause He is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." Hebrews 9: 15, RV.

"Knowing that you were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake." 1 Peter 1: 18-20, RV.

The Temple Veil Rent

Now we come to Calvary. It was the time of the evening oblation; and just when Christ yielded up His life, the priest in the temple at Jerusalem was preparing to slay the lamb for the evening sacrifice. But when the earth began to tremble and the veil of the temple was torn by unseen hands, from top to bottom, his knife fell from his nerveless hands, and the lamb escaped. Why? Because on Golgotha the Lamb of God had yielded up His life as an atonement for sin, and the typical offerings were ended. They no longer had any significance.

The Earthly Passes

The shadows had passed. Now that the death of Christ, the Lamb of God, the sinner's Substitute and Redeemer, was an accomplished fact, the ceremonies prefiguring that event became entirely meaningless, and by His death were "blotted out."

No longer was it necessary for the worshipper to go up to Jerusalem with his sacrificial offerings of goats, calves, sheep, or doves, that by the shedding of blood he might show his faith in the promise of a coming Redeemer. The Redeemer had come. No longer need the priest wear his prescribed robes, engage in his ceremonial washings, and offer in behalf of the people the burnt offerings, the meat offerings, and the sin offerings, since Christ had now offered His own blood upon Calvary as a ransom for many. No longer need the people observe the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, etc., since Christ had appeared. They had lost their sacredness, as they were "shadows of things to come." The door to the heavenly sanctuary was swinging open. Christ was about to enter upon His glorious priestly ministry, and "a new and living way" back to Paradise was opened to man.

20. GOD'S TWO LAWS

WHEN Jesus was crucified, one of God's laws was nailed to the cross. It came to its end there. This was the law governing the services of the earthly sanctuary, referred to in the Scriptures as "the law of Moses." The Apostle Paul made definite reference to the passing of the earthly sanctuary service, with all its rituals and ceremonies, when he said:

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Colossians 2:14,16,17.

The type had met its antitype. The shadow had been replaced by the substance. The priesthood was now changed from Aaron to Christ, and this made necessary a change of the law of the priestly ministry. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." Hebrews 7: 12.

Before the cross the offering of sacrifices was an evidence of faith in the promise of a Redeemer to come, who would deliver from sin. But after the cross the same sacrifices would be contrary to that faith, since the promise had been fulfilled. It would, in fact, be nothing less than a denial of faith in Christ to continue these sacrificial offerings, since Christ's atoning blood had been shed, and there was no longer need for a ceremony prefiguring it. True, after the crucifixion scenes passed, we find the Jewish church resuming its round of ceremonies and typical services just as before; but this was because they had rejected the Messiah, who was typified by

these ceremonies. They have to this day continued to look for another Messiah. Their service quickly deteriorated into a hollow form, and it soon became evident that the glory had departed and their temple had been left desolate.

Thus it was by dying that Christ blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. Christ, our Passover, was slain, and the law concerning the offering of animals was blotted out.

Ten Commandments Not Blotted Out

Some have believed that it was the Ten-Commandment law, spoken by the Lord from Mount Sinai, that was nailed to the cross. They have reckoned that, as a result of this "blotting out," those who live this side of the cross are no longer under obligation to keep the Ten Commandments, but are entirely free from all law, and enjoy a far greater degree of liberty than did those who lived in the Mosaic dispensation.

But this is a mistake. Never is the moral law of the Ten Commandments said to be "against us" or "contrary to us." Never has it been in the way of Christians. Never has it been called a "shadow" of coming events. Never is it declared to be abolished or "blotted out." This reference of the apostle is clearly to a law that dealt with ceremonies and ordinances. He speaks of "meats" (meat offerings), "drinks" (drink offerings), "divers washings" (the washings of the priests in preparation for certain services), "carnal ordinances" (the regulations governing the sanctuary services, etc.), "new moon" (prescribed as special feasts by the ceremonial law of Moses), and of "the sabbath days," which were "a shadow of things to come." These sabbaths, seven in number, came once a year on different days of the week, just as Christmas does now; and upon them special sacrifices were to be offered, all of which pointed forward to the death of the Lamb of God on Calvary. "The body is of Christ." Therefore, when Christ, "the body," appeared, the "shadow" passed away. Thus, when the nails pierced the hands of Jesus and His blood flowed forth, the type had been fulfilled, and the law governing the types was ended.

Two Laws

In order to understand this matter clearly, it is necessary that it be recognized that there are two distinct codes of law set forth in the Bible—that one law, comprising the 'Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, constitutes the standard of God's moral government, and that the other law deals with the rites and ceremonies pertaining to the Jewish economy, and foreshadowed the death of Christ, the Lamb of God, who was to be slain as an atonement for sin. It was this ceremonial law, and not the Decalogue, that was a shadow of the cross, and that had to be changed.

Two Laws Are Distinct

We find that the moral law, the Ten Commandments, was written by God Himself after having been spoken in the hearing of all the people: "He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." Exodus 31: 18. "And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." Exodus 32: 16. There is no finger of man here. The rest of the Scriptures were written by men under inspiration of God. The Ten Commandments were written by God's own finger on stone; they are His own handwriting and inscription.

In contrast to this, the ceremonial law was written not by the finger of God but by Moses through inspiration—and in a book. Thus we read: "Moses wrote his law, and delivered it unto the priests." Deuteronomy 31:9. "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished." Verse 24.

Concerning the Ten Commandments, Deuteronomy 32: 2 declares: "The Lord came from Sinai... from His right hand went a fiery law for them." Speaking of the ceremonial law, verse 4 states: "Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob."

The one law contained only the Ten Commandments: "He wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord spoke unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the Lord gave them unto me." Deuteronomy 10: 4, RV. When these words were written on the stone, "He added no more." (Deuteronomy 5: 22, RV.) This law, therefore, deals only with moral duties and not at all with types, ceremonies, or shadows.

The other law was largely ceremonial, consisting of instruction given to the Israelites concerning the intricate and varied forms of service connected with the Aaronic priesthood. It specified that special offerings should be made for special occasions; how to prepare these sacrifices; who should minister in the sanctuary; how and when the priests should wash their clothes; and what portion of the flesh offered they should eat.

It "stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances." Hebrews 9: 10. "This," says Moses, "is the law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings." Lev. 7: 37. It was the law of the earthly sanctuary.

The Higher Law

The one law "is perfect, converting the soul." (Psalm 19: 7.) The other, "the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the corners thereunto perfect." Hebrews 10: 1.

The moral law contains no types and shadows, but only moral precepts. The other was "a shadow of good things to come." The sacrifices offered pointed to the death of Christ.

The one law was holy, just, good, righteous, and true. (Romans 7: 12; Psalm 119: 142, 151, 172.) The other law was not good. It was a temporary expedient. (Ezekiel 20: 25.)

The moral law is a law of liberty. (James 2: 10-12.) The ceremonial law is a yoke of bondage (Galatians 5: 1), a "bond written in ordinances" (Colossians 2: 14, RY).

There was one law "which if a man do, he shall even live" in it. (Ezekiel 20: 1 1.) There was another law whereby a man should not live. (Verse 25.)

The one law Christ did not destroy. (Matthew 5: 1.8.) The other was abolished by His death. (Ephesians 2: 15.)

Of the one law Christ said that its every precept should be observed and taught. (Matthew 5: 19.) Of the other, no man is to be permitted to judge you. (Colossians 2: 16.)

The law of God is a delight. (Romans 7: 22.) The law of Moses was contrary to us, and stood in the way of Christ's appointment to the priesthood. (Colossians 2: 14; Hebrews 7: 12-15.)

The moral law contains the whole duty of man. (Ecclesiastes. 12: 13.), The other dealt only with ceremonies (Hebrews 9: 10.)

One law is established by faith in Christ. (Romans 3: 31.) The other was abolished by the cross of Christ, and is "contrary" to the faith of Christians, since it pointed forward to that which Christians believe has already taken place. (Ephesians 2: 15; Colossians 2: 14.)

The one law is eternal. Its principles apply to all time. It stands "fast forever and ever." (Psalm 111: 7, 8.) The other was temporary. It was "Imposed on them until the time of reformation" (Hebrews 9: 10), and was taken out of the way when Christ died on Calvary (Colossians 2: 14).

Concerning the moral law, Christ declares: "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall." Luke 16: 17 ' RV. Also, "Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished." Matthew 5: 18, RV.

The Eternal Law

Heaven and earth are still in existence. The same stars that Adam saw still shine in the heavens. The same sun and moon still rise and set. Though the earth is waxing old "like a garment," yet it has not passed away. This, then, is absolute evidence that not even a jot (the smallest letter), or a tittle (the smallest part of a letter), has passed from God's law. The other law, however, ended at the cross.

As we shall show later, the moral law will be the standard of the final judgment; and God will declare that those who have kept it will have a right to the tree of life and will be permitted to enter through the pearly gates into the New Jerusalem, the city of God. (James 2: 10-12; Revelation 22: 14.) The other law will judge no man. (Colossians 2: 16.)

To This Distinction the Churches Agree

There is agreement among a number of Christian bodies upon these points of distinction between the moral and the ceremonial law. For instance, we find that the Baptist Church Manual makes the following declaration: "We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government. ."-The Baptist Church Manual, Article 12, page 54.

Also, John Calvin, who was prominent in the movement which resulted in the establishment of at least certain branches of a Reformation Church, says as follows: ". . . we must not imagine that the coming of Christ has freed us from the authority of the law; for it is the eternal rule of a devout and holy life, and must, therefore, be as unchangeable as the justice of God, which it embraced, is constant and uniform." - Calvin's Comment on Matthew 5: 17 and Luke 16: 17, in Commentary on a Harmony of the Gospels, Vol. 1, page 277.

The Baptist Church is not alone in this position that the moral law did not come to an end when the ceremonial law was nailed to the cross. In the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, pages 43-45, we read: "The moral law is the rule of duty growing immediately out of the relations of rational creatures to their Creator and to each other. These relations being the product of the divine purpose, the law has its ultimate source in the will of the Creator. This law is of universal and perpetual obligation. It was sufficiently known to Adam to enable him to know and do the will of God. . . . After Adam's fall, and that of his posterity through him, a written form of the law became necessary. This was given in the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments.... This law is not set aside. but rather established by the gospel.... It accordingly remains in full force as the rule of conduct. It must not. therefore, be confounded with the ceremonial law, which was abolished under the' New Testament dispensation. . . . The penalties of this law (the Ten Commandments) are the natural and

subjective sequence of transgression, and, unless set aside by the provisions of the gospel, must of necessity be eternal; and such they are declared to be by the Holy Scriptures."

Again, in the Methodist Episcopal Church Doctrines and Discipline, edition of 1900, page 21, we read: "Although the law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites does not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral."

We find that the Wesleyan Discipline and also that of the Church of England read the same as the above.

Dwight L. Moody declared: "The commandments of God given to Moses in the Mount at Horeb are as binding today as ever they have been since the time when they were proclaimed in the hearing of the people. The Jews said the law was not given in Palestine (which belonged to Israel), but in the wilderness, because the law was for all nations.

"Jesus never condemned the law and the prophets, but He did condemn those who did not obey them. Because He gave new commandments it does not follow that He abolished the old. Christ's explanation of them made them all the more searching. In His sermon on the mount, He carried the principles of the commandments beyond the mere letter. He unfolded them and showed that they embraced more, that they are positive as well as prohibitive. "-Weighed and Wanting," page 15.

"The people must be made to understand that the Ten Commandments are still binding, and that there is a penalty attached to their violation. "Id., page 16.

Will the reader stop a moment to reflect upon the appalling state of society that would prevail if the theory advanced by some that the Ten Commandment law is abolished were to be accepted by the people of the world? If this law be abolished, then there is no need to observe its principles longer, "for where no law is, there is no transgression." Romans 4: 15. And "that sin is not imputed when there is no law." Romans 5: 13. If the moral law be abolished, it is legitimate to worship images, to murder, to break the Sabbath, to dishonor parents, and even to worship other gods. What was once sin now becomes virtue! May God spare us from the awful state of chaos which would result from the acceptance of this theory on the part of the people! What husband or father would not prefer to have his family surrounded by neighbors who believe that the law of God still condemns these vices!

The Mosaic Law Abolished

The Mosaic law was blotted out. But the Ten Commandments are not a part of the Mosaic law. Moses' law was given by inspiration through Moses, and was temporary. The Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, was above inspiration, in that God Himself spoke it to the people and wrote it with His own finger. Man's finger had no part in writing it. Moses repeated it often (and so do religious leaders today), but that did not make it Moses' law.

The law of which sin is the transgression is not, therefore, the ceremonial law of Moses, but the Ten Commandment law of God. Let it be remembered that the sacrificial system was established because of the presence of sin. It was to make an atonement for sin and transgression. But "where no law is, there is no transgression," and "sin is not imputed when there is no law"; for "sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4.) The moral law, therefore, the violation of which is sin, existed before sin. It points out sin. (Romans 7: 7.) Through it sin was imputed, and the necessity for an atonement revealed. The other law was added afterward because of transgression.

The sacrificial system was established to "offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Hebrews 5:1); that is, this system and the priesthood were established because the law of God, which condemns sin, had been broken, and to provide a remedy, in type, for the transgression of this law. The ceremonies and offerings enjoined by it pointed forward to the fulfillment of the promise that God would in Christ provide a substitute who would die in the sinner's stead.

As Christ expired upon the cross and the dividing veil of the temple was rent in twain, God indicated that the entire earthly sacrificial system had ended. The shadow had met the substance and had passed away.

Bible Study Summary

Does the Bible recognize more than one law?

Yes. There are two laws that are given special prominence in the Bible-the "law of God" and the "law of Moses."

Where is the law of God found? It is recorded in Exodus 20: 3-17.

What is contained in the law of God?

The Ten Commandments.

"And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even Ten Commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone." Deuteronomy 4: 13.

Where and by whom were they first given?

"The third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.... And God spoke all these words, saying.... Thou shall have no other gods before MeExodus 19:11,17; 20: 1-17.

Who first wrote the Ten Commandments?

"And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." Exodus 31: 18.

Who wrote the law of Moses?

"And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel." Deuteronomy 31: 9.

What was included in the law of Moses?

This law regulated the sacrificial services of Old Testament times, especially those pertaining to the earthly sanctuary. It had, nothing to do with moral standards, but dealt with ceremonies, ordinances, and forms of service. "As it is written in the book of the law of Moses." Joshua 8: 31.

"This is the law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings; which the Lord commanded Moses in mount Sinai, in the day that He commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations unto the Lord, in the wilderness of Sinai." Lev. 7: 37, 38.

What is said of the law of God?

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Psalm 19: 7.

What is said of the ceremonial law?

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers there unto perfect." Hebrews 10:1.

How long is God's law to endure?

"All His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness." Psalm 111: 7, 8.

"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." Luke 16: 17.

What time limit was placed upon the ceremonial law?

It was to continue only until Christ should die on the cross. After His death the types and ceremonies of this law would have no further meaning.

"The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Hebrews 9: 8-12.

Which law was nailed to the cross?

The law that had to do with the sacrificial services and ordinances, which pointed forward to Christ's death. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Colossians 2: 14, 16, 17.

Does the Bible teach that the Ten-Commandment law was also abolished at the cross?

"But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall." Luke 16: 17, RV. "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished." Matthew 5: 18, RV.

By which law will men be judged?

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak you, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." James 2: 10-12.

NOTE - The Ten-Commandment law is called "the perfect law of liberty." (James 1:25.) It is by this law that all men will be tried in the final judgment. "As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." Romans 2: 12.

Are any to be judged by the ceremonial law, which was nailed to the cross?

No. By it no man is to be judged. It did not set forth moral standards, but consisted of instruction concerning offerings, sacrifices, various washings, holy days, and carnal ordinances.

What does Solomon, one of the world's wisest men, say about man's full duty?

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His ' commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes. 12: 13, 14.

What promise is made to those who keep God's law?

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.' and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22: 14.

21. GOD'S WAY IN THE SANCTUARY

THY WAY, O God, is in the sanctuary. Who is so great a God as our God?" Psalm 77: 13.

Christ Becomes a Priest

Now that the law of the earthly priesthood, which limited that service to the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron, was taken out of the way by being nailed to the cross, the way was open for Christ to enter upon His priestly ministry in heaven. At His ascension He appeared before the Father, who by a solemn oath appointed Jesus to the exalted position of high priest, to officiate in man's behalf in the sanctuary above. Of this experience the Apostle Paul declares:

"For those priests were made without an oath; but this with ail oath by Him that said unto Him, The Lord swore and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." Hebrews 7: 12. That this appointment was made subsequent to Christ's sacrifice on the cross seems to be indicated by Paul, when he says: "The law makes men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, makes the Son, who is consecrated forevermore." Hebrews 7: 28. The oath which made Christ a priest was since the law. That is, the law which specified that only Levites could serve in the priesthood acted as a bar to Christ's serving in the capacity of priest; but when the ceremonial law was set aside, He who sprang out of Judah," could be sworn in, becoming a priest forever.

Types Found Only in Levitical Service

Some have mistakenly looked to the priesthood of Melchisedec for the types of Christ's priestly ministry instead of to the Levitical service. If the types are to be found in Melchisedec's priestly ministry, it is important that we understand them in order that we may also understand the work of Christ in heaven. But no record of the priestly ministry of Melchisedec is to be found in the Scripture, neither is there found a record of the shedding of blood nor the offering of sacrifices by him. No work of atonement is revealed.

We do, however, find all the work of a priesthood in type and symbol set forth in the work of the Levitical priests. Here is revealed every detail of the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Without the types of the Levitical priesthood, we are left entirely without a typical ministration. Looking to the Levitical ministry, however, we have a complete typical service, which teaches every essential principle of 'the plan of redemption.

Paul, speaking of Christ's priesthood, declares: "If He were on earth, He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." Hebrews 8: 4, 5. From this declaration it becomes evident that it is the service of the priests, prescribed by the ceremonial law, that is to be taken as an example of the work of Christ in heaven. These were the Levites. They were designated as priests by the law of Moses. It was their service that was set forth as an "example and shadow of heavenly things."

It is true that in one outstanding respect (that of appointment to the priesthood) Christ was a priest after the order of Melchisedec rather than after the order of Aaron. (Hebrews 7: 21.) Melchisedec could not have served as a priest under the law of Moses, f or he did not become a priest by inheritance. He was "without father, without mother, without descent [margin, pedigree]." Hebrews 7: 3. His genealogy could not be traced to some particular tribe or family in Israel, and thus prove that he had an inheritance in the priesthood. The sons of Aaron were priests, because their fathers were priests. It was an inheritance. The office was handed down from father to son. But not so with Melchisedec. He was appointed to the priesthood by an oath.

This was also true of Christ. He was of the tribe of Judah and not of Levi. According to the ceremonial law, therefore, Christ had no inheritance in the priesthood. He was without priestly parentage, or pedigree.

"He of whom these things are spoken pertains to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there arises another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." Hebrews 7: 13-16.

The Priesthood Changed

Like Melchisedec, Jesus was made a priest by special appointment and an oath of God, and not by inheritance. (Hebrews 7: 20.) But since He was not of the tribe of Levi or of the house of Aaron, He could not serve as priest so long as the ceremonial law governing the priesthood remained in force. This made it imperative that the Mosaic law be set aside so as to clear the way for the new priest Christ Jesus to begin His ministry. Thus the Apostle Paul declares:

"The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." "For the law makes men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, makes the Son, who is consecrated forevermore." Hebrews 7: 12, 28.

In this respect, therefore, Christ was a priest after the order of Melchisedec. Let it be carefully noted that it was not Christ's priestly service that was likened to that of Melchisedec, but rather the manner of His appointment to the priesthood. The types of Christ's ministrations as priest are found only in the Levitical service. It was in the services of Israel's sanctuary that Christ's ministry was prefigured. Of Christ's glorious entry upon His priestly service, the apostle says:

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Hebrews 8: 1, 2.

The Hope of Sinners

Upon the facts of Christ's sacrificial death and subsequent priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary rests the hope of all repentant sinners. There, at God's right hand, He offers His precious blood as an atonement for sin; and there He receives the prayers of His people and, as Mediator, offers them before the Father with sweet incense. Describing this work, John the revelator says:

"Another angel [Christ] came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto Him much incense, that He should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." Revelation 8:3,4.

It is through His mediation that sinners find their way back to God, and through His daily ministry of His shed blood that they obtain forgiveness for sins and the gift of eternal life.

Taken from Among Men

Paul states that the priests who ministered upon earth were taken from among men. They were chosen from among those whom they were to serve, in order that they might be compassionate toward the people, and be sympathetic with their human frailties.

"Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." Hebrews 5: 1, 2.

Thus, the priests were taken from among their brethren and not from some strange tribe which had nothing in common with the people whom they were to serve.

This was also true of Christ. He Himself had to become like unto His brethren before He could serve as a priest.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it became Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be [become, ARV] a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." Hebrews 2: 14-18.

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4: 15, 16.

If, therefore, it was necessary that in all things Christ should become like His brethren in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest, it naturally follows that His priesthood could not begin until after His incarnation and suffering here on the earth.

Note in the above scriptures the apostle declares it was after Christ "took on Him the seed of Abraham" He became a priest, and this was one of the prerequisites to His priesthood. This He took, of course, at the time He was born of Mary. Christ's priestly ministry in the sanctuary above could not begin until the priesthood of Aaron closed, since the antitype does not run parallel to the type, but follows it. The changing of the priesthood from Aaron to Christ prepared the way for Christ to begin His priestly ministry in heaven.

Must Have an Offering

Also, before Christ could perform priestly ministry, it was necessary that He have some offering to present to God. Said the Apostle Paul: "Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." Hebrews 8:3.

In the earthly sanctuary service the initial sacrifice was offered by Moses (who in this act represented God), before Aaron was anointed to the priesthood. The priestly service must be performed with shed blood; thus, Christ had first to serve as a sacrifice and shed His blood in behalf of sinners in order that when He as priest should appear before God in man's behalf, He would not appear empty-handed.

Since the Cross

We emphasize this point because it shows conclusively that the entire priestly work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary has had to be performed since the cross. It could not have begun before He came to earth.

His priestly service subsequent to the cross is, however, efficacious for those who lived before and for those who have lived after the cross. His death on Calvary was in behalf of all penitents. He died for sinners who lived before the cross, and His ministry as priest is equally efficacious for those who lived after the cross.

Begins in First Apartment

In the earthly sanctuary the service was carried on in the first apartment for 359 days of the Jewish year, and on one day of the year the work was transferred into the second apartment. Since the service of the earthly priests was an example or a type of the service of Christ, He, too, must serve both in the first and in the second apartments of the heavenly sanctuary; and His service in both these apartments must come after the cross. He must begin His ministry in the first apartment, or "holy place," then later transfer to the second, or "most holy place." Since the earthly priests ministered in the first apartment of the sanctuary for the entire year except for one day, it follows that when Christ began His ministry as our High Priest in heaven, He would be occupied most of the time from His ascension to His second advent in the first room of the sanctuary in heaven. Accordingly, He will spend only a short time in the second room, or most holy place, just before the end of time.

Within the Veil

When Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary to begin His priestly work, Paul tells us that He entered "within the veil."

"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entered into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." Hebrews 6: 19, 20.

This statement has been wrongly understood by some to mean that Christ passed immediately into the holy of holies, or second room, of the heavenly sanctuary when He ascended. If there were only one veil in the sanctuary, there might be ground for this deduction, but the truth is that the sanctuary has two veils. In describing the earthly sanctuary Paul, in Hebrews 9: 3, refers to "the second veil." The fact that there are two veils is also clearly set forth in Exodus 26: 31-36, where we read:

"Thou shall make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: and thou shall hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. . . . And thou shall make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework."

Here, then, is a dividing veil which separated the two rooms of the sanctuary from each other, and another veil, or hanging, forming the entrance door into the first room of the sanctuary. When Paul refers to the first veil, he simply says, "within the veil"; but when he speaks of the dividing veil, he says, "the second veil."

It is apparent from the foregoing that when the apostle declared that Christ, our High Priest, had entered "within the veil," he meant He had entered the first apartment beyond the first, or entrance, veil. He did not indicate He had gone within the second veil.

Therefore, this statement of the apostle is in confirmation of the fact that when Christ ascended to heaven, He passed into the first room of the sanctuary within the first veil, or entrance door, there to begin His priestly ministry in this heavenly temple.

His Work in the Holy Place

What was Christ's work in the first room of the heavenly sanctuary? Was there anything for Him to do there? There was. His ministry in the first apartment was to plead the merits of His righteousness and of His shed blood in behalf of sinners on the earth who would accept Him. He had said to the people on the earth: "Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth." Isaiah 45:22. It was through the ministry of His blood that He was able to save.

In 1 John 2: 1 Jesus is said to be our Advocate. In Romans 8:34 Paul states that He "makes intercession for us." John the revelator sees Him in the holy place before the golden altar, offering up incense with the prayers of the saints; and Jesus Himself declared that He would confess before His Father those who confess Him before men. (Matthew 10: 32.)

This, then, was His work in the first apartment of the sanctuary. As sinners came to God for pardon, and pleaded the shed blood of Jesus in their behalf, Jesus became their Advocate, and made intercession for them before God. He offered up their prayers with sweet incense to the Father, and pleaded that since His blood had been shed in behalf of sinners, and since these had accepted Him as their sacrifice, they might receive pardon. Yes, since He had taken upon Himself the guilt of their sin, He offered to impute to them His life of righteousness. By accepting Jesus as their substitute and sacrifice, the sins of the sinners were transferred from themselves to Him; and from the time He began ministering in the heavenly sanctuary, the sins were accumulating there.

Thus did Jesus perform a continual service in the holy place until the time came for Him to begin His work in the holy of holies just as in the earthly sanctuary the altar fires were to be kept burning continually, in readiness to consume the sacrifice for sinners who would seek pardon, so Christ has stood ready, day and night, continually, to receive sinners and to offer His shed blood in their behalf. His standing invitation to sinners is: "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11: 28. He gives them rest by taking away their load of sin, lifting the burden entirely from their shoulders, and ministering pardon and grace to them. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." Isaiah 53: 4.

"The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan-of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in - heaven."-E. G. White, "The Great Controversy," page 489.

Christ Before the Throne

When Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary, He found Himself in the throne room of the Father. Said the Apostle Paul: "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Hebrews 8: 1.

For the purposes of the sanctuary service, the throne of God had been established in the first room of the sanctuary in order that Christ's ministry might be before the throne, and that He might occupy it jointly with the Father. This placing of the throne is described by John the revelator in Revelation 4: 2-5, where we read:

"Immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."

From the picture given by John it is evident that the throne of God and the additional seats occupied by the four and twenty elders were placed in the sanctuary, and in that part of the sanctuary where the "seven lamps of fire" were burning. This, of course, was in the first apartment, since these seven lamps of fire must necessarily correspond to the golden candlestick of the earthly sanctuary with its seven lamps. And here it is that John sees Christ beginning the priestly ministry of His shed blood, for he adds: "I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain." Revelation 5: 6.

It may be thought by some that the fact that Christ appeared in the presence of His Father and before the throne to begin His priestly ministry constitutes evidence that He went immediately into the most holy place, or second room of the sanctuary, since it is supposed that God's throne is located there.

What Is the Throne of God?

We do not find support in Scripture for the idea held by some that God's throne is stationary, and that it is and always has been situated in the most holy place in the sanctuary. On the contrary, it is very clearly set forth in the Word that the throne of God is movable and that its location is changed from time to time. It does not consist of a great chair that has been built of stone, gold, or wood, but is composed of living creatures who are capable of , moving with the swiftness of lightning. According to Ezekiel 1: 12 -14, 19, 24, 2 5, it is evident that

wherever the Majesty of Heaven goes, His living throne goes with Him. In this way He is not limited to one location as a seat of government, but He is king on the throne wherever He may be.

Another description of this living throne is given by John in Revelation 4: 6-9. Here the writer pictures the living creatures who compose and uphold the throne as intelligent beings who cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

From Daniel's prophecy it is evident that the Father's seat was not to be located in the second room, or most holy place, in the heavenly sanctuary until the time of the judgment. Preparation for the work of judgment is described by the prophet, when he says:

"I beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit: His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool; His throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Daniel 7: 9, 10, RV.

This indicates that God the Father and Christ the Son moved to a new location when the time came for the opening of the judgment, near the end of time. God's throne had been situated in the first room of the sanctuary from the beginning of Christ's priestly ministry, but now both He and the Father move into the second room, or most holy place. This corresponds exactly to the type set forth in the earthly sanctuary, where the priest ministered in the first room 359 days of each Jewish year, and only one day, at the end of the yearly round of service, in the holy of holies.

This transfer of Christ's place of ministry from the first apartment to the second in the sanctuary in heaven, and the opening of the judgment, were to take place at the close of the 2300 days of Daniel 8: 14, which period we shall later show has already been reached.

Thus did Christ minister as high priest in the holy place, receiving there the sins of the people who came unto God by Him. And thus, the heavenly sanctuary has become defiled by the sins of men. This defilement required a cleansing at the close of His priestly ministry.

By His Own Blood

The most glorious feature of this heavenly ministry of our great High Priest is the fact that He offers, not the blood of animals slain by men's hands as an atonement for sin, but His own precious blood, which was shed upon Calvary. Thus, God's way is in the sanctuary. The blood of the animal sacrifices was typical, and could not take away sin. (Hebrews 10: 1.) But His blood "cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1: 7.) It constitutes "a fountain. . . for sin and for uncleanness." (Zechariah 13: 1.) In its crimson flood the vilest sinner may find cleansing. Whosoever will may come to God through Him and find pardon, peace, and acceptance through His mediation and atoning sacrifice; for He went into the sanctuary above, not with "the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Hebrews 9: 12.

The sprinkled blood is speaking Before the Father's throne, The Spirit's power is seeking To make its virtues known;

The sprinkled blood is telling Jehovah's love to man, While heavenly harps are swelling Sweet notes to mercy's plan.

The sprinkled blood is speaking Forgiveness full and free, Its wondrous power is breaking Each bond Of guilt for me;

The sprinkled blood's revealing A Father's smiling face, The Savior's love is sealing Each monument of grace.

O wondrous power, that seeks From sin to set me free!
O precious blood, that speaks! Should I not value thee?

The sprinkled blood is shedding Its fragrance all around, It gilds the path we're treading, It makes our joys abound.

ANONYMOUS.

22. FULL PARDON THROUGH THE ATONEMENT

WHAT, then, is the true significance of the sanctuary service in heaven? It is this: that through the vicarious sacrifice and priestly ministry of Jesus Christ there is full and complete pardon for all sins and requisite power for lives of holiness and obedience. Said Jesus, speaking through the pen of the prophet:

"I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me: . . . and whereby they have sinned against Me." Jeremiah 33:8 RV. "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103: 11, 12. And again, "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin," for "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1: 7, 9, RV.

O soul, bowed down with a sense of guilt, look up and behold your full pardon in the bleeding hand of your great High Priest in heaven. Take it today from the hand that still bears the mark of the crucifixion, and go on your way rejoicing. Provision for your full emancipation was provided when Jesus came forth from the tomb. He tasted death for you and for every man; and His blood, when offered before God in the sanctuary in behalf of all, is counted to be a price sufficiently great to atone for every sin.

No merely human savior could have paid such a price and purchased redemption. The demands of the broken law were too exacting. It had been broken by finite beings, and it required an infinite being to repair the breach. The right of divine government must be upheld, and the honor of the divine law must be vindicated. A perfect obedience must be rendered. But man, as man, could never accomplish this. It required a God-man, Jehovah, incarnate in human flesh to do it. And then He did it, He did a perfect work. He did not purchase a half pardon; He did not provide a partial blotting out, but He gave a pardon as full and as broad as the transgression. Yes, and He did even more, for Paul states that "where sin increased, grace has overflowed." Romans 5: 20, Weymouth.

It is hard for sinners to realize that it is possible for God actually to forgive their sins and set them free. Men become accustomed to the feeling that they are lost, and that there is no hope nor possibility of changing their situation.

The following story, told by Dwight L. Moody, illustrates how even in this life men are often incredulous when pardon and liberty are freely offered them:

"I was in Ohio a few years ago," said Mr. Moody, "and preached in the state prison. Eleven hundred convicts sat in front of me. The chaplain said to me, 'Mr. Moody, I want to tell you of a scene which occurred in this room. A few years ago our commissioners went to the governor of the state and got him to promise that he would pardon five men for good behavior. The governor consented, with the understanding that the record was to be kept secret, and that at the end of six months the five men highest on the roll should receive a pardon, regardless of who or what they were. At the end of six months the prisoners were brought into the chapel. The commissioners came up, and the president stood on the platform. Putting his hand in his pocket he brought out some papers, and said, 'I hold in my hand pardons for five men.'"

"The chaplain told me that he never witnessed anything like it. Every man was as still as death; many were deadly pale and the suspense was awful; it seemed as if every heart had ceased to beat. The commissioner went on to tell them how they had got the pardon. But the chaplain interrupted him. 'Before you make your speech read out, the names.'

"'Reuben Johnson will come and get his pardon' - and he held it out, but none came forward. He said to the governor, 'Are all the prisoners here?' The governor told him they were all there. Then he said again, 'Reuben Johnson will come and get his pardon. It is signed and sealed by the governor. He is a free man.' Not one moved. The chaplain told me he looked right down where Reuben was. He had been there nineteen years, and men looked around to see him spring to his feet. But he himself was looking around to see the fortunate man who had got his pardon. Finally the chaplain caught his eye and said, 'Reuben, you are the man.' Reuben turned round and looked behind him to see where Reuben was. The chaplain said the second time, 'Reuben, you are the man,' and the second time he looked around thinking it must be some other Reuben. The chaplain had to say it three times, 'Reuben, come and get your pardon.' At last the old man got up and came along down the hall, trembling from head to foot, and when he got the pardon he looked at it and went back to his seat and buried his face in his hand and wept."

It seemed absolutely incredible to Reuben that the pardon was actually meant for him. He had not deserved it. It came as an act of overflowing grace from the governor of the state, who alone had the power and authority to set him free.

A Sufficient Sacrifice

The justice of God demanded a sacrifice equal to the enormity of man's transgression, and in Jesus this demand was more than fully met. Therefore, the vilest transgressor may come to Him today confessing guilt, and receive pardon for every sin. The law, which before condemned him and demanded death, now pronounces him acquitted; and it can never again bring him into condemnation for past sins unless, perchance, he should willfully renounce his confession and his faith in the atoning blood. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8: 1. How soul-stirring and inspiring is the following testimony of the Holy Spirit on this point:

"But God's free gift immeasurably outweighs the transgression." "If therefore we have now been pronounced free from guilt through His blood, much more shall we be delivered from God's anger through Him." "It follows then that just as the result of a single transgression is a condemnation which extends to the whole race, so also the result of a single decree of righteousness is a life-giving acquittal which extends to the whole race." Romans 5: 15, 9, 18, Weymouth.

Long ago this marvelous truth was beautifully stated by another:

"He bore the sin, and consequently the penalty of sin. Had we been left, Christian reader, to bear our sins, we must inevitably have borne alone the punishment of our sins. But Jesus took upon Himself our sins. For this, He became a party in the covenant of redemption; for this He assumed our nature; for this, He sorrowed in Gethsemane; for this, the law of God exacted its utmost claim; and for this, the justice of God inflicted the utmost penalty. Oh, what a truth is this! The Son of God offering Himself up a sacrifice for sin! He who knew no sin; who was holy, harmless, and undefiled; not one thought of evil in His heart, yet made sin, or a sin offering! Oh, the bigness of the thought! If God Himself had not declared it, we could not have believed it, though an angel's trump had announced it. God Himself must proclaim it; and because He has so proclaimed it, we believe it. And God alone can write it upon the heart. 'O Thou blessed and adorable Immanuel! and was this the end and design of Thy intense and mysterious sufferings? Was it that Thou should obey, bear the sin, endure the curse, and bow Thy head in death, that I might go free? Was it in my stead, and in my behalf? O love unexampled! O grace infinite and free! That God should become incarnate: that the Holy One should so take upon Him sin as to be dealt with by stern justice as though He were Himself the sinner: that He should drain the cup, give His back to the smiter, endure the shame and the spitting, and at last be suspended upon the cross, and pour out His last drop of most precious blood-and all this for me-for me a rebel -for me the chief of sinners!"

Entire Pardon

"The pardon of a believer's sins is an entire pardon. It is the full pardon of all his sins. It were no pardon to him if it were not an entire pardon. If it were but a partial blotting out of the thick cloud-if it were but a forgiveness of some sins only then the gospel were no glad tidings to his soul. The law of God has brought him in, guilty of an entire violation. The justice of God demands a satisfaction equal to the enormity of the sins committed, and of the guilt incurred. The Holy Spirit has convinced him of his utter helplessness, his entire bankruptcy. What rapture would kindle in his bosom at the announcement of a partial atonement-of a half savior-of a part payment of the debt? Not one throb of joyous sensation would it produce. On the contrary, this very mockery of his woe would but deepen the anguish of his spirit. But, go to the soul weary and heavy laden with sin mourning over its vileness. Its helplessness-and proclaim the gospel. Tell him that the atonement which Jesus offers is a full satisfaction for his sins ... that the bond which divine justice held against the sinner is fully cancelled by the obedience and sufferings and priestly ministry of Christ, and that ... God is ready to pardon. How beautiful will be the feet that convey to him tidings so transporting as this." - O. Winslow, "The Atonement," pages 86-91.

Billy Sunday once told the story of a criminal by the name of John Calihan, who was a lifer at the Joliet, Illinois, prison near Chicago. As a result of mission work carried on among the prisoners, this man was converted and became an exemplary Christian.

Years passed, and the great change that had come to Calihan so impressed those who knew him that finally a number of leading citizens and prison officials joined in petitioning the governor of the state to grant him a pardon. After a careful examination of his case, the pardon was signed, and John Calihan was once more a free man.

Finding himself at liberty, Mr. Calihan decided to spend the remainder of his life and strength in working for others who were in need of Christ. Affiliating himself with a city mission, he began preaching the gospel.

Those who are acquainted with the religious history of Illinois will remember that a half century ago Calihan traveled the length and breadth of the state drawing vast crowds and leading large numbers of men and women to renounce sin and accept the gospel. But John Calihan was not entirely happy. There was still a shadow over his life and a longing in his heart.

In the state archives, where the record of crime is kept, there was a complete history of his former crime, his arrest, trial, and imprisonment. There was also the record that he was sentenced to life imprisonment. True, the record of the governor's pardon was also there, but the record of his crime greatly disturbed him. He could not be fully satisfied while it existed.

One day Mr. Calihan determined to write his friend the governor and request that the record of his crime be destroyed.

The governor replied that the request was very unusual but that out of his great respect for Mr. Calihan, whose life now revealed such a great transformation, he had decided to comply with the request by sending all available records to him so that he himself might have the satisfaction of destroying them.

As the envelope was opened and Mr. Calihan withdrew the crime records, he stepped over to the fire of logs on the grate and threw the documents one at a time into the fire. As the last document was reduced to ashes, he straightened up and said, "Now, John Calihan, you are a free man."

He not only had the governor's pardon, but now the record was gone. It had been blotted out in the flames. It would never rise again to plague him nor to remind either himself or others of his past. The condemnation was gone. All things had become new.

Just so, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8: 1. But the divine message goes still further: "In those days, and in that time, said the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I leave as a remnant." Jeremiah 50: 20, RV. "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." Jeremiah 31: 34, RV.

"What an astounding message is this! He not only forgives and pardons, but even forgets. 'This sin will I remember no more.' Glory be to His name! Only God could be as generous as that. He forgives, and He also forgets. Not only so, if the sins be sought for, 'they shall not be found,' for 'there shall be none.' What has He done with them? He has cast them behind His back. He has made an end of sin. He has cast them 'into the depths of the sea' (Micah 7: 19), from which place they shall never rise again. 'So fathomless are the depths of the sea of atoning blood, which Christ has poured out, that in it are cast, never to be found again, all the sins of the believer.' -"The Atonement," page 93.

If you who read these lines are not already a child of God, will you come just now to your crucified Lord and High Priest, and be made clean? His salvation is available to all "whosoever will" may come. "Seek you the Lord while He may be found; call you upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55: 6, 7, RV. His call is to you. It is a personal appeal. Jesus died for you individually just as surely as if you had been the only sinner needing pardon. Had you been the only one, He still would have died. His appeal, therefore, is personal. Your burden is not too heavy for Him to bear. Your case is not too hard for Him to undertake. Your sin is not too grievous for Him to pardon. Today He chides you saying, "Thou has made Me to serve with thy sins, thou has wearied Me with your iniquities. I, even I, am He that blots out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isaiah 43: 24, 25.

Will you come today and be saved? Wait not until tomorrow. Tomorrow may be too late. Behold, now is the day of salvation. Only today is yours. Come then, while the door to the throne room of God is still ajar, and while Christ, your great High Priest, still waits there to secure full pardon for all your sins.

All night I fled from God, along the waste, And dreary spaces of an unknown land Where sorrow and sighing dwelt. I heard the cry Of stormy winds behind me, and I knew That darkly on their awful wings He rode Whom I would fain escape. The thunder pealed Above me, and in the thunder was

the sound As of a trumpet, speaking terrible things, And waxing ever louder. For I had sinned, And God was now awake, and had arisen, And left His ancient place to deal with me.

Through the long night I fled; yet God is fleet, And scorned time and space. How is it that He, Thus hastening after me, hath never laid His grasp upon my shoulder, hurling me Beneath His feet in death? Perchance His will Is not to smite me from behind; He trusts That I, being spent, must shortly turn and meet The majesty of His offended face, And die at sight of Him. And still I pressed Trembling across the rough and desolate ground, And went through swollen streams; and in the dark Fell, and arose, and faintly struggled on. Until at last, when night was almost done I heard the sorrowful thunder of the sea, And saw the white waves breaking at my feet, And no way of escape on either hand. Then death being close before and God behind, I turned at last to meet His face. And, lo, The storms were over, and the morning stars Shone sweetly on the face of the One who wore The likeness of a man, and smiled on me.

At sight of Him I cried aloud. For clear On the fair hair which caught the dawn, I saw A crown of knotted thorn; and on the white, Cold feet, mysterious scars; and on His mouth That smile, a smile for me. And I had drawn Those wounded feet behind me through the night Over the rough and stony ground; for still And ever He is seeking what is lost, And finding what had sought to hide from Him. Ah, this was He from whom all night I fled In trembling and despair. But at the dawn He showed Himself thus marvelous to me, And rose upon me, making darkness light.

-ANONYMOUS.

23. THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY CLEANSED WITH BLOOD

ONCE EACH year, on the tenth day of the seventh month. the earthly sanctuary was cleansed from the accumulated sins of the people. This special service was performed in the second apartment, or most holy place, of the sanctuary and was called a work of atonement.

During the other days of the year the priest served in the first apartment and in the court, and only on this one day, the last day of the yearly round of service, did he enter within the second, or dividing veil to appear before the sacred ark, which contained the law and above which rested the mercy seat.

"Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people." Hebrews 9: 6, 7.

The Ordinary Ministration

During the daily ministrations in the court and in the first room of the sanctuary the sins of the people were brought into the sanctuary. As previously pointed out, the ceremonial law provided that when anyone in the camp of Israel committed sin, he could bring a lamb or other sin offering to the sanctuary court, place his hands upon the head, and confess his sins over it. In this way the sins of the individual, in type, were transferred from himself to the sacrifice. The lamb now bore the guilt. This done, the animal was killed and its blood carried by the priest to the altar of burnt offerings, where a portion was sprinkled upon the horns of the altar and the rest poured out at its base. On certain occasions the flesh of the sin offering was borne by the priest into the first apartment of the sanctuary, and eaten there.

This entire service typified the removal of sin from the penitent sinner, transferring it first to the sacrifice, and then, through the blood of the sacrifice and by the ministry of the priest, to the sanctuary itself. Thus, throughout the entire year the sins of Israel's host continued to flow into the sanctuary by means of the sprinkled blood, and in this way the sanctuary became symbolically defiled with their uncleanness. This necessitated a cleansing. Full details in Leviticus 16 show how the cleansing ceremony was to be carried out. Verse sixteen states:

"He [the high priest] shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness."

Ceremonies for the Atonement

Upon that day two kids of the goats were furnished by the congregation and brought before the high priest, who was to cast lots over them, thus choosing one for the Lord and the other for Azazel. ("Azazel" means adversary, or Satan.) In other words, one goat was to represent the Lord, and the other was to represent God's adversary, the devil.

When this selection by means of the lot had been made, the Lord's goat was slain, and its blood carried by the priests into the sanctuary and through the second veil into the second, or most holy, apartment. There it was sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat, and this act was declared to "make an atonement for the holy place," which was necessary "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins." Verses 15, 16.

Further proof that this was a cleansing service is given in verse nineteen: "He shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it."

This was a cleansing of the sanctuary from spiritual defilement and was accomplished with blood. It was from sin and uncleanness that it was being purged.

The sins of the penitents had been accumulating in the sanctuary throughout the year, as they were borne in by the priest through the sacrificial blood; now they were to be removed. By the sprinkling of the blood upon the mercy seat, a complete and final atonement was made for the sins of the people; they were thus forever separated from them. The people were then reconciled to God.

The Scapegoat

The live goat, which represented Satan, was then brought; and the priest's hands were placed upon its head. He confessed over it "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat." Verse 21. This goat was then led into the wilderness, far from the camp of Israel, and there allowed to perish. Thus, in type the sins were entirely removed from the camp of Israel, the sanctuary was cleansed, and the work of atonement for the sins of God's people was completed.

But did not the blood of the first goat fully atone for the sins of the people? Yes, it must be so. Why then was this second goat necessary? When the live goat was brought, the priest had already made an end of reconciling the sanctuary: "When he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat." Verse 20. What part, then, did the scapegoat, representing Satan, have in this work of atonement? We answer: Satan is the instigator of all sin. He has a definite responsibility for all the sins that men commit, because he is the father of evil. It is his temptations that lead men to break God's law. The atoning blood of Christ does not atone for his (Satan's) share of the responsibility and guilt. After the blood of Christ has atoned for the sins of God's people, Satan must yet answer for his part in those same sins. That is the reason they are eventually placed upon his head, and he is made to suffer for them. He must suffer for his own guilt in leading men into sin. He is the one primarily responsible.

The Judgment Day in Israel

Now, the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary was connected with a solemn work of judgment; therefore, the day of atonement was a day of judgment. This truth is clearly set forth in Lev. 23: 27-30:

"On the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And you shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same

day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul it be that does any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people."

A record was faithfully kept of all the families of Israel; but Moses clearly states here that on the day of atonement the careless and indifferent were no longer to be reckoned in the genealogies of God's people. They were judged unworthy of any further part with Israel, and were cut off from the congregation,

This day was, therefore, a day of investigation, a day of decision in Judgment, and a day of separation for the families of Israel. The Jewish people have always recognized the day of atonement as a judgment day. Even to the present time it is so regarded by modern Jewry, and it is looked upon as the most solemn service connected with the Jewish religion.

"Yom Kippur"

Some time ago the Philadelphia North American published the following very significant announcement of the Jewish day of atonement:

"Yom Kippur, or the day of atonement, the most sacred day in the Jewish calendar, will be ushered in tonight. With the setting of the sun today a twenty-four-hour fast will begin. Not a morsel of food nor a drop of water will touch the lips of any orthodox Jew until tomorrow night, when a long blast of the shofar, or ram's horn, will announce the fast at an end.

Pious Jews will spend all day tomorrow in the synagogues, and the ultra-pietists will spend even the entire night in prayer.

"Yom Kippur is the judgment Day, when the fate of every man is sealed for the ensuing year, on the strength of his past record."

Let it be remembered that the entire earthly sanctuary service was typical of the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary; therefore, the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary must necessarily find its counterpart in the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. Also, the work of judgment which accompanied the earthly cleansing must find its antitype in the great judgment Day in heaven, which would naturally be connected with the heavenly cleansing and the final removal of sin.

As the service of the high priest on the typical day of atonement marked the end of the yearly round of ministration, so the priestly work of Christ in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary marks the end of this world's history. When it closes, human probation will close and Jesus will come.

For this solemn work in heaven a definite time has been set. (Acts 17: 3 1.) Of this we shall speak further in succeeding chapters.

Would you be free from your burden of sin? There's power in the blood,
power in the blood, Would you o'er evil a victory win?
There's wonderful power in the blood.

Would you be free from your passion and pride? There's power in the
blood, power in the blood; Come for a cleansing to Calvary's tide,
There's wonderful power in the blood.

Would you be whiter, much whiter than snow? There's power in the
blood, power in the blood; Sin stains are lost in its life-giving flow,
There's wonderful power in the blood.

Would you do service for Jesus your King? There's power in the blood,
power in the blood; Would you live daily His praises to sing? There's
wonderful power in the blood. -L. E. JONES.

24. THE CLEANSING OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

JUST AS the earthly sanctuary required cleansing, so does the heavenly. But the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary involves the work of the final judgment. "As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering, and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary; so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ, and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded." - E. G. White, "The Great Controversy," pages 421, 422.

Evidently, it was the transferring of sin to the sanctuary of which Paul spoke, when he said: "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." 1 Tim. 5: 24. Whenever a sinner accepts the sacrifice of Christ as the propitiation for his sins, and in contrition and penitence seeks God for forgiveness through the merits of Christ's shed blood, his sins are removed from him to the sanctuary in heaven. There Christ ministers in the sinner's behalf. He spreads His nail-scarred hands before the Father and pleads that because He Himself has paid the penalty, the sinner should go free. To this the Father agrees, and Christ lifts the burden of guilt from the sinner and substitutes His own righteousness instead. The sins are borne into the sanctuary, of which Christ is the priestly minister; and although they are forgiven, the record of them must remain until they are blotted out in the time of the judgment.

Those, therefore, who have through the years accepted Christ's death as a sacrifice for their sins, and who have in penitence turned from them, have by those acts been sending their sins into the heavenly sanctuary for judgment. The sins of the unrepentant sinner are never brought into the sanctuary, since it is only by confession and the offering of a substitutionary sacrifice that sins are admitted there. Christ deals only with the sins of the righteous in His priestly ministry. Confessed sins alone are placed under the, sacrificial blood. The sinner who utterly rejects Christ has no claim whatsoever upon the grace of God and has no part in His gracious efforts through His priestly ministry to deliver His people from the burden and bondage of sin.

Sin Taken Away

When sins are confessed and forgiven, are they entirely removed from the sinner? Yes, so far as the individual is concerned. But this does not mean that the sins are at the time finally disposed of. Christ removes them from the records in the books of heaven, but they are then charged against Him. He takes the responsibility for the sins and imputes His righteousness to the sinner. The record of sins still remains, only now they stand no longer charged to the one who committed them, but to Christ, his substitute. He has become the sin bearer (Num. 18:1); but the record of sin, now transferred to the sanctuary, must remain until the judgment.

Again it may be asked: "Why wait until the judgment to blot out and make an end of confessed sins? Why should they not be immediately disposed of?" We answer: "There must first be an investigation of the records."

Let us illustrate: Take an individual who accepts Christ as his Savior and humbly confesses his sins to God. By these acts and by His acceptance his sins are transferred to the sanctuary. But they cannot at that time be blotted out. The final blotting out must wait until the end of his life or until probation closes for him. Why? Because he may not continue in the faith. Ezekiel declares that if the righteous man turns away from his righteousness, all the righteousness that he has done shall not be remembered. See Ezekiel 33: 12, 13. If the forgiven sinner later forsakes God and repudiates his former repentance, all his past sins will be imputed to him again. Jesus will not plead for the unrepentant backslider in the final judgment; for although his sins were once removed, he has not remained faithful, and Christ no longer ministers in his behalf. Of this class the Lord declares: "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into My lips." Psalm 16: 4.

Thus, before the Lord can blot out the sins from the record books, a very careful examination has to be made to see whether those who accepted Christ are still worthy. "Be thou faithful unto death," says Jesus, "and I will give thee a crown of life." Revelation 2: 10. It is not the beginning of the race that gives assurance of the crown of life through the final blotting out of sin. It is the successful finishing of that race.

From these considerations it is clear that before the record of sins-even of the righteous-can be closed, and the sanctuary cleansed by a final disposal of those sins, it is necessary that there be an examination of the books of record to ascertain who, through repentance of sin and continued faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, are finally entitled to the benefits of His atonement.

A Work of Judgment

The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, therefore, involves a work of investigative judgment, just as was the case in the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary.

Fearful are the warnings that God has given throughout the ages, of the time when men would have to give an account of themselves to God: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his

body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5: 10. At that time the destiny of every soul will be determined. Just after the judgment, the rewards or punishments will be meted out.

If men were sent to their places of reward or punishment at death, then the judgment must have been going on for the past six thousand years, ever since sin first entered and men began to die. Untold millions would already be suffering the fate of the lost. But this is impossible, for the reason that a just God would never punish any man for his sins until the individual had first been properly tried and found guilty. Thus, it is clearly taught in the Scripture that there is to be a final judgment, in which all men must be tried, and that this judgment will be near the end of the world. The judgment does not come at death, but sometime after death. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Hebrews 9: 27. Paul reasoned before the Roman governor Felix of a "judgment to come." Acts 24: 25. Just before the coming of Jesus, God will try in heaven's tribunal those who have lived upon the earth, so that it can be clearly determined what the reward of each shall be.

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works." Matthew 16:27.

The punishment of the wicked must wait for this coming judgment. The fire that is to destroy them will not be kindled until the judgment has taken place and the sentences are handed down. For--the heavens and the earth, which are now.... are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3: 7. The judgment comes first. The fire in which sinners will meet their fate follows. The Apostle Peter states it thus: "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." 2 Peter 2: 9.

The Book of Life

The Bible states that God keeps a faithful record in heaven of the names of all His people upon earth. The book in which, these names are enrolled is called – "the Lamb's book of life." Thus, John the revelator tells that those who will finally enter the city of God are they who "are written in the Lamb's book of life." Revelation 21:27.

Paul declared of his fellow Christians that their names were written "in the book of life.", (Phil. 4: 3.) David declares that as a result of judgment there will be those whose names were once recorded in this wonderful record of God's earthly family who will be found unworthy at last, and whose names will finally be "blotted out of the book of the living." (Psalm 69: 27, 28.) Others there are, according to the beloved John,

who will be adjudged "overcomers," of whom it is said, "He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." Revelation 3:5.

In addition to the books containing the names of the righteous, God also has books of record, that are kept by the unerring hands of heavenly angels. In these books are exact transcripts, faithful records, of each life. Of this the prophet, Malachi says: "A book of remembrance was written before Him." Mal. 3: 16. Again, in Isaiah 65: 6, God reproves His people for their iniquities, and He declares to them: "Behold, it is written before Me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom."

When God, speaking through Moses, chided His people for their disloyalty to Him, He said: "Is not this laid up in store with Me, and sealed up among My treasures? To Me belongs vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He sees that their power is gone." Deuteronomy 32:34-36.

From these record books the righteous will be judged. By what is written in these books the Lord will determine who have remained steadfast in their faith in Christ and in following Him. Those who have been "faithful unto death" will be given "a crown of life." Their names will be retained in the book of life, and they will be sealed for heaven.

"He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches." Revelation 3:5,6.

The Books of Record

The sins, though forgiven when confession was made, are still found in the books of record. These now are blotted out, and final disposal of them is made. Those, on the other hand, who have become careless and have turned back from following Christ will have their entire record of sin turned back upon them, and their names will be blotted from "the book of the living." This startling truth is forcibly set forth in Hebrews, where it is declared:

"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongs unto Me, I will recompense, says-the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Hebrews 10: 26-31.

These persons, though once enlightened and having tasted the good Word of God, have fallen away and by worldliness and sin have crucified the Son of God afresh. See Hebrews 6: 4-6. The investigation of the books of record in heaven is graphically described by John the revelator:

"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Revelation 20: 12.

It is clearly stated in the Scriptures that the blotting out of sins is to take place just before the return of Jesus. Thus Peter declares:

"Repent you therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the 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 heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3: 19-21.

Thus, the blotting out of sin will take place just before Jesus comes who brings about the "restitution of all things." It will be accomplished in the very last days of the world's history. After this event comes the day of rewards.

The mere fact that one at sometime in life has become a Christian and has united with the church is no guaranty of his final salvation. The doctrine of "once in grace, always in grace" will not do. There are thousands who start well, but who "cast away" their "confidence" (Hebrews 10: 3 5), and who in the final judgment will be "weighed, and found wanting."

Now this work of judgment-the searching of the records and the blotting out of sin-is a part of the work of cleansing the sanctuary in heaven. In fact, its cleansing can be accomplished only as decisions are reached in each case and final disposal made of the record of the sins of each individual. It is self-evident that no final removal of the sin from any individual would be possible until his record had been thoroughly searched and a decision reached as to his final relationship to Christ and the plan of redemption.

When this work of searching and cleansing is completed, probation will close, and the work of the gospel will end. At that time Christ's priestly ministry in behalf of sinners will cease, and a mighty fiat will go forth from the throne that will settle the destiny of every soul.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11,12.

Two Phases of Judgment

The work of judgment has two phases. First comes the trying of the case-the searching of the records, the hearing of the witnesses, and the pronouncing of the sentence. Then comes the work of execution. The first is investigative; the other, executive.

The first phase of the judgment begins simultaneously with the work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary; the other takes place subsequent to the close of probation and in connection with Christ's coming. When the investigative phase of the judgment begins, it begins with those who have at sometime in life accepted the plan of salvation and have been numbered with the household of God. Thus Peter declares: "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" 1 Peter 4:17.

The first phase of the judgment work-the investigation of the records of the righteous-is to be carried on while people are still living upon the earth, and while the call to repentance is still being sounded throughout the nations. Thus John declares:

"I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Revelation 14: 6, 7.

This work must necessarily all be done before Jesus comes the second time to the earth. At His coming He will bring men's rewards with Him. (Revelation 22: 12.) At that time He will receive His people unto Himself. (John 14: 1-3.) Naturally, it will have to be decided beforehand just who are to be numbered with the redeemed and who are to be "cast out." Every man's case will have been settled for weal or woe. The unrepentant wicked who have never accepted the plan of salvation, having no claim whatsoever upon God's mercy, are already adjudged to be lost. In the investigative judgment the tares have been separated from the wheat in the household of God. The way is thus prepared for the final disposition of sin.

Satan, the Scapegoat

Just as in the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary the high priest came forth bearing the sins of his people for which atonement had been made, and placed them upon the head of the scapegoat, so at the close of the investigative judgment in heaven, Christ, the High Priest, will lay aside His priestly garments, will garb Himself in kingly attire, and will come forth from the heavenly sanctuary bearing the sins of His redeemed people. He will roll them back upon the head of Satan, the great instigator of all evil, who is

primarily responsible for all transgression the blood of Christ has covered. The psalmist declared that when God judges the righteous, He will be angry with him who led His people to sin.

"He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordains his arrows against the persecutors. Behold, he travailed with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and dig it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate." Psalm 7: 13-16.

Just as the scapegoat was led away from the camp of Israel and the habitation of man into a desolate wilderness place to perish, so will Satan be cast into the "bottomless pit" (Revelation 20: 1-3), finally to be consigned to the lake of fire and brimstone, prepared for him and his followers, where he will have to suffer sin's utmost penalty before he finally perishes in the flames. It is in this manner that the sanctuary will be cleansed, and Christ our High Priest will make an end of sin.

With these considerations before us, we are led to inquire earnestly: When is the heavenly sanctuary to be cleansed, and when does the judgment work begin? We shall consider this phase of the subject in the next chapter.

When Jesus shall gather the nations, Before Him at last to appear,
Then how shall we stand in the judgment, When summoned our sentence to hear?

Shall we hear, from the lips of the Savior, The words "Faithful servant, well done," Or trembling with fear and with anguish, Be banished away from His throne?

He will smile when He looks on His children, And sees on the ransomed His seal; He will clothe them in heavenly beauty, As low at His footstool they kneel.

Then let us be watching and waiting,
With lamps burning steady and bright;
When the Bridegroom shall call to the wedding
O may we be ready for flight!
HARRIET B. M'KEEVER.

25. THE JUDGMENT DAY FIXED

BECAUSE He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world." Acts 17: 3 1.

A most startling truth found in the Scriptures is that God has fixed a definite time for the beginning of the final judgment. This time is not a secret. It has been revealed to His people, even to the very day.

This is set forth in the prophecy of Daniel 8: 14. The time for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the opening of the work of the judgment is unalterably fixed. The prophet records that he heard the divine "numberer of secrets" (margin) declare: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

It is only necessary, therefore, to determine the time at which this 2300-day period was to begin in order also to determine the exact time for the cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven and the opening of the judgment. All this is made very clear in the prophecy itself.

At the time of this startling prediction Jerusalem was lying in ruins. Nebuchadnezzar's hordes had broken down its walls, destroyed its temple, and burned its homes. Many of its political and religious leaders had been carried away-some to be cruelly slaughtered, and others to be captives in Babylon.

Daniel the prophet, one of the captives, was distressed and disturbed over the desolation of the holy city. The pitiable condition of God's cause weighed heavily upon his heart. Clothed in sackcloth, his head covered with ashes, he poured forth earnest supplications to the God of heaven in behalf of Jerusalem and the temple service:

"Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Thy servant, and his supplications, and cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Thy name." Daniel 9: 17, 18.

Several months before, in vision, Daniel heard from the lips of Gabriel the announcement that at the end of a 2300 - day period the sanctuary would be cleansed. At that time part of the vision was not clear to him. He was unable to comprehend its meaning. No details concerning it had been given. He had no starting point to enable him to reckon the time.

Gabriel had said: "The vision of the evening and the morning . . . [the part that pertains to time days] is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days." Daniel 8: 26.

When told that this part of his vision was to be "shut up" and that no interpretation of it was to be given, it was more than the prophet could stand. Of this experience he says: "I Daniel fainted, and w* as sick certain days; afterwards I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." Verse 27.

Daniel Seeks for Understanding

Still seeking for light that would open up the vision to his understanding, Daniel turned to the prophetic scrolls. Still he found little to comfort or help. The whole matter was a hidden secret. For long months he studied and prayed. Then the answer came. When it did come, it shone with the glory of God's throne.

In desperate earnestness Daniel had pressed his petition before the throne: "O our God, hear the prayer of Thy servant, ... and cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary that is desolate." Daniel 9: 17. He was thinking of the desolation – of Jerusalem. He was burdened over the temple that lay in ruins. What had God's messenger meant when he had declared to him in vision: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed"? Was he speaking of the earthly temple or the heavenly?

The answer to this mighty appeal from God's prophet was immediate. Once more the mighty Gabriel stood before him. He had come, as on the wings of light, to outline to the prophet God's plans, not only for Jerusalem, but for the future as well. In astonishment the prophet relates the wonderful experience of answered prayer:

"Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision." Daniel 9: 21-23.

"I am come to show thee; . . . therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision." Every feature of Daniel's previous vision had been fully explained by the angel except that part about the cleansing of the sanctuary—the part pertaining to the 2300 - day period. The entire vision is recorded in the eighth chapter of Daniel; and it deals with the rise and fall of world empires, the persecution which God's people must endure through the coming ages, and the appearance of antichrist. (See Daniel 8: 3-12.) As was stated, part of the vision was made clear. But the startling announcement concerning the 2300 days and the cleansing of the sanctuary was still a dark, deep mystery. This was the part that had been "shut up," because, said the angel, "it shall be for many days." It pertained to the distant future.

But now Daniel is to be shown even this mystery. "I am now come forth," declared Gabriel, "to give thee skill and understanding. . . . Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."

Gabriel Explains the 2300 Days

As Gabriel launches into an explanation of the vision, he begins exactly where he had left off. He undertakes to make clear to Daniel the prophetic time period of the 2300 days and its relationship to the cleansing of the sanctuary and the judgment. He begins by dividing and subdividing the period in order to stake out great way marks, so that no possible misunderstanding may arise. He gives a definite starting point for the prophetic period and makes clear the time when it will end.

"Seventy weeks," began Gabriel, "are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince, that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

"And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Daniel 9: 24-27.

Here is a definite series of events from which readers may compute a number of most important and astonishing prophetic dates. In fact, we shall find in our study that the cleansing of the sanctuary and the work of final judgment have not only already begun, but have actually been going on in heaven for more than a full century.

No other conclusions can possibly be reached through a candid study of the above declaration of the angel Gabriel to the prophet Daniel.

"Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," was the announcement formerly made. In the interpretation given by the "numberer of secrets," Daniel was instructed to begin the counting of this prophetic period of 2300 days from "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." That was to be the starting point.

The period of seventy weeks, or 490 days, brought to view in Gabriel's interpretation, is only a division of the full period of 2300 days. The seventy weeks also had several divisions, each terminating with some definite event, such as the completion of the work of rebuilding Jerusalem, the baptism of the Savior, the cutting off (or crucifixion) of the Messiah, and the end of the Jews' reign as God's chosen people. Taking the Bible method of reckoning prophetic time, i.e., each prophetic day for a literal year (Ezekiel 4: 6). These seventy weeks, or 490 days, equal 490 literal years, and they date from 457 BC., at which time the final decree to restore Jerusalem went forth. This decree is mentioned in the prophecy as the signal for the starting of the period.

The restoration decree was given in three instalments: first by Cyrus, king of Persia (Ezra 1: 2-4), repeated by Darius (Ezra 6: 6-12), and again repeated by Artaxerxes in the year 457 BC. (Ezra 7: 12-26). In Ezra 6: 14 we read:

"The elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia."

The commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem was, then, according to the scripture itself, a threefold decree, given in its final phase by Artaxerxes in 457 BC. From this date then we begin to count the seventy weeks, as well as the long period of 2300 years. Here we have a definite starting point. This is way mark Number One.

Seven weeks, or forty-nine years, of this time were to cover the period of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Forty-nine years this side of 457 BC brings us to 408 BC., and this is the very year in which the reconstruction work in Jerusalem was completed. This is way mark Number Two.

Date of Jesus Baptism

Sixty-nine weeks, 483 years, were to reach to Messiah the Prince. The 483 years, beginning with the decree of Artaxerxes (made effective in the autumn of 457 BC.), brings us to the autumn Of AD. 27. This is the year when Jesus was baptized of John in the Jordan. The Hebrew word "Messiah" means "the anointed one," as does also the Greek word "Christ." At that time He was anointed by the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 3: 34), and was proclaimed the Son of God by a voice from heaven. (Luke 3: 21, 22; Acts 10: 3 8.) This is way mark Number Three.

Messiah was to be cut off in the midst (middle) of the last, or seventieth week. A week is seven prophetic days, or seven literal years, and half a week is three and a half years. Christ was anointed for His earthly ministry in AD. 27. Three and a half years later, or in AD. 31, He was cut off by His crucifixion. This is way mark Number Four.

Now the whole of the seventy weeks was to be devoted especially to the Jews. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people." By that time they would have filled their cup of iniquity by finally rejecting Jesus, and thus the way would be opened for the gospel to go in power to the Gentiles. Sixty nine and one half weeks ended at the cross. Said the angel: "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." Daniel 9: 27. (This was the seventieth week.) This was fulfilled by Christ's personal ministry to the Jews for three and a half years before the cross and by the ministry of His apostles after the cross. The apostles for three and a half years labored almost exclusively for the Jews. After that time the Jews were no longer to be considered the specially chosen people of God. See marginal reading, Daniel 9: 24.

Beginning with Christ's ministry in AD. 27, this week, or seven literal years, reaches to AD. 34. In that year Stephen died as a martyr, and the Jewish nation, as such, was rejected. In rejecting Christ and His gospel, they rejected the only means of salvation, and God no longer considered them His nation. Soon after, the disciples turned to the Gentiles.

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou should be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Acts 13: 46, 47. This is Way mark Number Five.

This division of the first part of the 2300-day prophecy, the seventy weeks-absolutely confirms the fact that 457 BC. is the correct starting date for the entire period. The great way marks are all in place. Figured from the year 457 B.C.1 every detail of the prophecy works out to perfection, showing beyond all doubt that the date is correct.

Christ's Death Fixes the Time

Now, to be absolutely certain that these dates are the right dates for the beginning and the end of this great prophetic period, let us reverse the order and begin with the cross of Christ. From the cross as the starting point in our reckoning, we can count backward to find the beginning of the period and forward to find its close. The first sixty-nine and one half weeks of this period were to reach down to the cross, A.D. 31. At the end of sixty-nine and one half weeks, or 486 years (reckoning a prophetic day as a literal year), the sacrifice and the oblation were to cease (Daniel 9:27), which signified that at that time the earthly sanctuary service would come to an end.

The event which terminated the earthly sanctuary service was the crucifixion of Jesus. When He died, the entire sacrificial service ended as signified by the rending of the veil in the temple from the top to the bottom. We know, therefore, that when Christ was crucified, sixty-nine and one half weeks or 486 years, of the 2300-year period had passed. That fact certainly is as clear as the sunlight. Now we have only to figure 486 years back from Christ's death on the cross, which is generally accepted as occurring in AD. 31, to find the correct starting point. This brings us again to 457 BC. We also count forward 1813 years to find the end of the period. This brings us to AD. 1844.

The way marks all stand. This seventy-week period was to "seal up" (make sure) the vision and prophecy. It serves to prove the starting point that is so essential. When we take 457 BC as the date for beginning this period of 2300 prophetic days, or years, it clearly brings us down to the year AD. 1844. The evidence of this is absolutely conclusive, as the subdivisions of the prophecy leave no room whatever for doubt.

Sanctuary to Be Cleansed; Judgment Opens

But why are we at such pains to prove this point? We answer: It is because these considerations bring us face to face with the stupendous fact that in the year AD. 1844-just over a hundred years ago-the hour struck for Jesus, our High Priest, to pass beyond the dividing veil into the most holy place and begin the solemn work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary from the accumulated sins of all past ages. Since the cleansing of the sanctuary involves the work of judgment, we also must conclude that then the great investigative judgment began in heaven. With the death of Jesus, the usefulness of the earthly sanctuary passed away. The only sanctuary of God in existence in 1844 was the one in heaven, of which Jesus is priest and minister. It follows, therefore, that the sanctuary which the angel Gabriel predicted would be cleansed at that time must be the heavenly one.

The beginning of the judgment in the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 is graphically described by the prophet Daniel. Said he:

"I beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit: His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool; His throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:9,10, RV.

The Judgment Scene

This, then, is the time when the "Ancient of Days," the great God, moves from the first to the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. Then the heavenly host assemble to join in the solemn work of judging those who are candidates for salvation. After God is seated upon His throne in the holy of holies, or the inner room of the sanctuary, Daniel describes how Christ, accompanied by the angelic host, is ushered in before Him.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven [the angels of God], and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him." Daniel 7: 13.

The scene of the ministry of Christ the High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary is changed from the first to the second room, or apartment. The opening of the work of judgment is pictured by the prophet Malachi:

"The Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, He shall come, says the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Mal. 3: 1-3.

Without a Wedding Garment

In the parable of Matthew 22:11-13, God is represented as a king who has prepared a wedding feast for his son. The guests have been invited, and are assembled. The appointed hour is near. The marriage is about to take place. But this important ceremony is preceded by the king's coming in to inspect the guests, to ascertain whether they are all properly attired.

"When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he said unto him, Friend, how came thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 22: 11-13.

In verse two of this chapter Jesus is recorded as saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son." This parable, therefore, is illustrative of the final inspection by the great King of heaven of those who have accepted the invitation to the "marriage supper of the Lamb [Christ]." (Revelation 19: 9.) The prescribed robe to be worn at the marriage of God's Son is described by John:

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Revelation 19: 7-9.

In this time of awful searching, those who are found without the wedding garment, those whose robes are not washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb are "cast out." Among those cast out -there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." They are cast "into outer darkness." In other words, they are rejected by the great judge and are numbered with the lost! The "wonderful numberer" has weighed them in the balances of divine justice, and they are found wanting.

Those, on the other hand, who are found wearing the wedding garment are accepted of God, sealed for His kingdom, and are declared to be His jewels. Of them He says:

"Thou has a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments: and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." Revelation 3:4,5.

The Investigative Judgment

This work of the examination of character and of the determination of who are to be accounted worthy of eternal life and of a home in God's eternal kingdom is the investigative judgment. The investigative judgment is the closing work to be performed in the heavenly sanctuary. When this work is completed, the sanctuary is cleansed from all record of sin and defilement, and God rewards both saints and sinners. In each case the judgment is absolutely just. Every case will have been tried; every word, thought, or action will have been scrutinized; every weight of evidence will have been taken into account, and a just and righteous sentence will be passed upon every soul. Said the Apostle Paul: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5: 10.

The Hour of His Judgment Is Come

For this solemn work God in the long ago appointed a definite time. Acts 17: 31 reads: "He has appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness." God's plans are laid with precision, and He is never late in their accomplishment. When the time prophecy of Daniel 8: 14 ended, in the year 1844, the hour struck for the great and final judgment to begin on those who were candidates for heaven. The time was fulfilled, and the work was begun. As described by Daniel, "the judgment was set, and the books were opened." John the beloved pictures the dead as standing before God:

"And the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." Revelation 20:12,13.

In the light of these considerations we are brought to the inevitable conclusion that for more than a century we have been living in the time of judgment! These are earth's most solemn hours. That which makes it most solemn is the fact that when this work of investigating and cleansing is finished, human probation will close forever. The door of mercy will swing shut. In the parable of the ten virgins, this closing of the plan of redemption is described thus: "And they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage; and the door was shut." Matthew 25:10. This final scene of the judgment work is further described by

the words of Jesus recorded in Luke 13:25-30:

"When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and you begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are: then shall you begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou has taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last."

This, then, is the great decision hour! In the words of the hymn, "We are living, we are dwelling, in a grand and awful time." The judgment is in session, and every individual who has ever at any time accepted the provisions of the gospel has his case pending there judgment begins at "the house of God." (1 Peter 4: 17.) The great wicked world that has openly spurned God's proffered mercy will be judged later. Without Christ as a Savior and Mediator the wicked have "no hope" and are "without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:12.) The only judgment necessary in the cases of unrepentant sinners will be to determine the degree of punishment to be meted out. There will be time for this after the subjects of God's kingdom are all determined.

How Shall We Stand?

O. A. Newlin, D.D., tells a story of a Hungarian king, who, finding himself on a certain day depressed and unhappy, sent for his brother, a good-natured but rather indifferent prince. To him the king said: "I am a great sinner and fear to meet God." Here was a king facing Job's question, "What shall I do when God rises up? And when He visits, what shall I answer Him?" But the prince only laughed at him and treated the matter as a joke, just as some of you are doing now. This did not serve to relieve the royal unhappiness. When you get a vision of your guilt before God, you want help; and your friends may laugh at your seriousness, but that will never answer the question.

It was a custom in Hungary at that time that if the executioner at any time sounded a trumpet before a man's door, it was a signal that he was to be led forth to execution. The king sent the executioner in the dead of night to sound the fatal blast before his brother's door. The prince, awaking from sleep, realized its awful import. Quickly dressing, he stepped to the door and was seized by the executioner, and dragged pale and trembling into the king's presence. In an agony of terror he fell upon his knees before his brother and begged to know in what way he had offended him. "My brother," answered the king, "if the sight of a human executioner is so terrible to you, shall not I, having grievously offended God fear to be brought before the judgment seat of Christ?" The sense of sin makes us all fear to face God. We are reminded in the Bible that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Mercy Still Lingers

Let us pause to assure all who may chance to read these lines, but who are still outside the ark of safety, that there is still opportunity for them to send their sins into the sanctuary in heaven, and have them blotted out forever. In the earthly sanctuary the priest continued his work of mediation for sinners until he finally-left the most holy place on the day of atonement. So it is with Jesus.

Jesus still offers His blood for repentant sinners who come to Him. His hands are outstretched. He is still the Mediator between God and man, holding in His hands the golden censer of mediation; and His gracious words still ring in sinners' ears: "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6: 37. Thank God, the door to the mercy seat is still ajar! There is still mercy and pardon for the vilest sinner who in penitence and faith will accept Jesus as his Savior and Friend.

Oh, then, will you not come to Him now? Why linger? Why imperil your soul by rejecting His offer of mercy, To you today is this loving message sent:

"Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will you die, O house of Israel?" Ezekiel 18: 30, 31.

Called to the feast by the King are we, Sitting, perhaps, where His people be; How will it fare, friend, with thee and me When the King comes in?

Like lightning's flash will that instant show Things hidden long from both friend and foe; Just what we are will each neighbor know, When the King comes in.

Joyful His eye shall on each one rest Who is in white wedding garments dressed; Ah! well for us if we stand the test, When the King comes in.

Lord, grant us all, we implore Thee, grace, So to await Thee, each in his place, That we may fear not to see Thy face When Thou came in.

J. E. LANDOR.

26. GOD WARNS THE NATIONS

IT IS NOW court week in heaven. Already men are being tried before the great white throne. Over a century has passed since the judge of the Universe took His seat and opened the books of record. Already decisions are being made. The most staggering truth of all, dear reader, is the fact that you and I have a case pending at the bar of God. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5: 10.

The Nations Are Warned

But God has not left us without warning. Even now, in mercy, He is sending us an appeal to prepare to stand before Him. John the revelator declared. that as the judgment opened, he saw a mighty messenger with a solemn warning from God arise and hurry quickly to all the nations of earth. This work was carried on with such rapidity that the prophet describes it as an angel flying in the midst of heaven, crying to all the peoples of the world and warning them that the judgment of God had begun in heaven. Let us note his words:

I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Revelation 14: 6, 7.

Here is a message which is to be heralded to every tribe and nation of earth after the judgment hour has come. It will constitute God's last appeal to the people of earth to turn to Him and be saved. It will prepare a people from among the nations for the return of Jesus, and lead them to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. (Verses 12-16.) It will be a message of reform. As on the day of atonement in the earthly sanctuary service the people were bidden to afflict their souls before God and confess their sins in final preparation for judgment, so this message will lead men and women everywhere to turn to God, in preparation for judgment before the great tribunal of heaven.

The Trumpet Sounds

In the earthly sanctuary service on the Day of Atonement, a special warning call was given to the people by the continued blasts of trumpets. (Lev.25:9) This was done throughout all the land to make sure that every individual knew that the Day of Atonement had arrived. They were given an opportunity to make last-minute preparation for it.

The great message of Revelation 14:6,7 is the antitypical blowing of trumpets for the real Day of Atonement and final judgment in heaven. As of old, the warning is to sound throughout the land. It is a worldwide message, going to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

Other Bible prophets also have spoken of this final appeal from God to the nations of earth and have described it in graphic language.

"Blow you the trumpet in Zion," cried the prophet Joel, "and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord comes, for it is nigh at hand."

"Therefore also now, said the Lord, turn you even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repents Him of the evil." Joel 2: 1, 12, 13.

The Time for the Message

As shown previously, the hour struck for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the opening of the judgment at the close of the 2300 year prophecy of Daniel 8:14. This time period ended in 1844. At that time "the judgment was set, and the books were opened," and the judgment hour message of Revelation 14 was due to be carried to the world.

Previous to 1844 it could not have been truly said that the hour of His judgment is come." Paul reasoned of judgment to come, but never until the judgment actually started could God's servants say that the time for its opening had been reached. This became "present truth" in 1844; and in that year the great clock of time struck the hour for the angel messenger of Revelation 14 to arise and hasten to the nations with the solemn and soul-piercing cry, "Tear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come."

The message came at the appointed time. In the very year 1844 that the High Priest entered through the second veil of the sanctuary in heaven to begin the work of final judgment, the light of the sanctuary truth and the judgment broke forth. Companies began to spring up in the New England states that set for themselves the task of heralding the judgment message to the uttermost parts of the earth. These heralds are now to be found on every continent and on most of the islands of the sea. They are laboring under the profound conviction that they have been commissioned of God to give this solemn message, and that their task will be completed simultaneously with the closing of Christ's work in the hall of judgment in the sanctuary above.

A Message of Reform

The judgment-hour message is a message of reform, calling men and women away from the paths of sin and worldliness to an acceptance of Christ as their Savior and to the keeping of God's great moral law. This is the reason John exclaims of those who accept the preaching of this message: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12. They have heard the warning, "Prepare to meet thy God," and have by God's grace, squared their lives by the holy precepts of His commandments.

This great worldwide message of reform, which began upon earth simultaneously with the opening of the judgment in the sanctuary in heaven, must do its entire work while the judgment is in progress. It was therefore necessary that the judgment open long enough before the close of probation and the end of the world to make possible the carrying forward of such a world movement.

When the message has done its work, and when the great High Priest has completed the work of judgment in the heavenly courts, Jesus will take the golden censer, in which He has offered incense before God with the prayers of His people, and cast it upon the earth. (Revelation 8: 5.) This will indicate that His work of mediation is finished, that the judgment is completed, and that human probation is forever closed. At that time the final decision will be rendered that will fix the destiny of every individual. The voice of mercy will die out of the Earth, and Jesus as King of kings will ride forth upon the clouds of heaven to reap earth's harvest.

Men Still Living on the Earth

That the judgment will take place before the second advent of Christ and while people are still living upon the earth is clearly revealed in the Scriptures. Revelation 11: 18 says:

"The nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou should give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and should destroy them which destroy the earth."

Here the prophet declares that when the time comes for the judgment to open, the nations will be angry. Other scriptures reveal the fact that this anger will burst into fury, and that during the judgment the greatest wars in human history will be fought upon earth, ending in the Battle of Armageddon. John calls it "the battle of that great day of God Almighty," which opens as the judgment comes to its close. (Revelation 16:14.)

The Standard of the judgment

The great judgment-hour message must of necessity incorporate the teaching of the binding claims of God's immutable law upon all men, for this law will be the standard of the final judgment. The supreme test that will be applied to man by the judge of the universe will be to ascertain whether his life is in full accord with the principles of the Ten Commandment code. In the Book of James are recorded the words:

"Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou does not commit adultery, but kills, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak you, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty." James 2: 10-12. R.V.

It will be seen by the preceding statement that a man's being reckoned guilty or innocent will depend entirely upon whether he has kept the whole law. It is the law that works wrath to the transgressor. If there were no law, all men, and even the devils, would escape sin's penalty, as there would be no instrument of condemnation. But since the law does exist, it serves as a witness to the righteousness of those who, through the power of the indwelling Christ, comply with its requirements. It just as faithfully condemns those who violate, it as being guilty of sin. "The wages of sin is death." Romans 6: 23.

Referring to the importance of obedience, Christ declared:

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5: 19, RV.

That is to say, when a man breaks even one of the least of the commandments and teaches others that it is not necessary for them to keep the moral law, God and the holy angels in heaven count that man least among the people of earth. He is established in sin. But when a man keeps them-all of them himself and teaches others the importance of this obligation, the heavenly host look upon him with approbation. He is called "great" in the kingdom of heaven. This will be the basis of the decisions in the final judgment.

"This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes. 12:13, RV. A Christian who through faith in Jesus Christ has faithfully kept the law's requirements will be acquitted; there is no condemnation, for the law finds no fault in him. If, on the other hand, it is found that one has broken even a single precept, and this transgression is unconfessed, he will be dealt with just as if he had broken all ten.

A man's love for the whole law is no stronger than his love for each particular commandment contained in it. Therefore, there is no possibility of his being able to pile upon the ledger of heaven enough good deeds to offset a few willful transgressions, for David declares: "The wicked shall not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." Psalm 1:5, RV.

Sin Separates from God

Sin separates man from God. Because of sin man was driven out of the Garden of Eden, and became subject to all the woes and miseries of life. God announced when man was first created that sin would not be tolerated in His kingdom. He warned the human family against it. Hence, sin will cause the destruction of the lost in the lake of fire. It was God's desire to save man from this fearful doom that led Him to devise the plan of salvation. Christ came to "save His people from their sins," and in doing so to remove that which separates man from his Maker.

In view of the fact that a whole century has passed since the judgment began in heaven, we must be very near its close. Just when your name and mine will be called in review before God, we know not; but it must be very soon. Even now the signs of the times clearly indicate that the hour is growing late and human probation is rapidly drawing to an end. What we do to prepare for the judgment must be done without further delay. To put it off this preparation is perilous. Already we have waited too long. We must now redeem the time lest we be forever too late.

As Paul reasoned before Felix of a "judgment to come," Felix trembled. This wicked ruler was mightily shaken as he looked into the distant future and contemplated the ordeal of finally appearing before the judge of the universe to give an account of his earthly life. There he would answer for every unjust sentence he, as An earthly judge, had handed down; for every bribe he had taken; for every indulgence in sin and iniquity.

But we, too, are judgment bound. We, too, must appear at His judgment seat. We, too, must face our records as we stand before the judge.

The investigation of the records of men will be exceedingly thorough. Paul declared that God will both "bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and . . . make manifest the counsels of the hearts." 1 Corinthians 4:5.

"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Said the Lord. Do I not fill heaven

and earth? Said the Lord." Jeremiah 23:24. ,

No, we cannot hide our secrets from God. He sees all we do and hears all we say, and the hands of the angel recorders keep faithful and accurate records of even the least details of our lives. Thus, every work shall be brought "into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil," for it is by these records that we shall be judged. (Ecclesiastes. 12: 14.)

Sin may lie buried in the secret recesses of the heart where no one can see or discern it-even our bosom companions may not know. It is completely hidden from man, but never from the eye of God.

"O Lord, Thou has searched me, and known me. Thou knows my down sitting and mine uprising, Thou understands my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knows it altogether. Thou has beset me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hides not from Thee; but the night shines as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." Psalm 139:1-12.

It is not necessary that our records of sin remain to plague us in the judgment. Jesus offers today-even as you read these words-to take them all away, cleanse the heart from all defilement, and impute His righteousness. He offers to exchange His beautiful garments of salvation for our filthy rags. Yes, He even offers to blot out our sins and "remember them against us no more forever."

"Repent you therefore, and be converted," is His loving entreaty, "that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3: 19.

Christ is not willing that any should perish but that all men should come to repentance. He tasted death for every man. He has provided salvation for all who will receive it. But He cannot force the will. We must accept Him willingly, or we will be left to perish in our sins.

He waits today to save. His nail-scarred hands are still outstretched in loving invitation, and His voice still may be heard pleading, "Whosoever will, let him come."

27. SALVATION THROUGH THE NEW COVENANT

THE NEW Covenant is a covenant of grace. It introduces Christ to the sinner in his struggle to reach the standard of a holy law. It transforms man from a hopeless failure to a glorious success. It changes defeat into victory. It lifts man's feet from the miry clay and plants them upon a solid rock.

What is the New Covenant? It is God's promise that Christ by the Holy Spirit shall dwell in the hearts of His people and impart to them divine power to keep His holy law. It is Christ writing the law in the heart and not merely upon stone. It is the restoration of God's image in man by perfect obedience 'through the power of Christ. It opens the way back to Paradise. Note the promise of this New Covenant as given by the prophet Jeremiah:

"Behold, the days come, said the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, said the Lord.

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, said the Lord; I will put My law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, said the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." Jeremiah 31: 31-34, RV.

Some have said that those who are under the New Covenant have no obligation to keep the law of God. What folly! The New Covenant was given for the express purpose of making it possible for men to keep God's law. Through it the law is written on the heart by the finger of Jehovah Jesus. The keeping of the law becomes man's nature, for it is Christ's nature.

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be." Romans 8: 7. But under the New Covenant the mind is renewed. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Verse 6. Only a spiritual mind can comprehend God's law, and only a spiritual life-one under the control of the Holy Spirit-can keep it. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Verse 14.

The Old Covenant

Two covenants are brought to view in the Bible: the New and the Old. One is an instrument of salvation, the other of death.

The Old Covenant was an agreement God made with Israel to demonstrate to them their weaknesses and their entire dependence upon Christ for power to keep God's law. They were permitted to promise what was impossible to do, in order that they might have the lesson of "righteousness only through Christ" indelibly impressed upon their minds and hearts.

God had just led Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and was about to give them a new revelation of His law. He knew they were a proud, self-reliant, stiff-necked people, who did not appreciate their actual poverty of spiritual power. He called them "a seed of evildoers, a people laden with iniquity," because they had forsaken Jehovah. See Isaiah 1: 3-6.

This was the spiritual condition of Israel long after their establishment in Canaan. What must it have been when they were just emerging from four hundred years of bondage in Egypt, where they had been slaves and wholly surrounded by heathenism and idolatry! In this sad condition they approached Sinai. They were now within three days of the time when Jehovah was to appear in fire, cloud, and thunder on the mountain and speak His righteous law, which is the moral standard of His kingdom. Notwithstanding

their corrupt state, they were filled with conceit and pride. They reckoned themselves capable of the highest spirituality. It was to divest them of this conceit that Jehovah entered into the following covenant agreement with them:

"And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain saying, Thus shall thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel. You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if you will, obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be Mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is Mine: and you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shall speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Jehovah commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do. And Moses reported the words of the people unto Jehovah." Exodus 19: 3-8, ARV.

Paul, in Hebrews 8: 6-8 declares this old covenant was faulty; it had poor promises; and the fault was with the people.

"But now hath He obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second. For finding fault with them He said, Behold, the days come, said the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." RV.

God's part of this covenant was good and perfectly reliable. He said, "If you do, you shall live. If you will obey ... you shall be a kingdom of priests and an holy nation." If, if, if, but they could not. Yet the people said, "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do." This was the weakness of the agreement. They promised what they had no strength to perform.

Three days later Jehovah spoke His law in the hearing of the people, and again they repeated the promise and the covenant was written in a book. The blood of an ox ratified the covenant agreement.

"And Moses came and told the people all the words of Jehovah, and all the ordinances: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which Jehovah hath spoken will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the mount, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto Jehovah. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words." Exodus 24: 3-8, ARV.

Yet, before Moses could finish his audience with God and get down again from the mountain, these people who, had made such noble and high-sounding promises were bowing down to a molten calf, doing homage to a god of gold.

"And Jehovah spoke unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Exodus 32: 7, 8, ARV.

What was wrong? Just this: The people could not fulfil their part of the agreement. The fault was with them. They were carnally minded and could not be subject to a spiritual and holy law. They were seeking to establish their own righteousness by their own efforts, not realizing that without divine help they could do nothing. When they had tried to clothe themselves with right doing, they found themselves covered only with the filthy rags of sin.

The Old Covenant, therefore, was a system of reform without Christ. It was a covenant of works from which Christ, the only Mediator of righteousness and peace, was entirely excluded.

"What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone." Romans 9: 30-32.

What the Old Covenant was Not

Many have erroneously supposed that the Old Covenant was the moral law, the Ten Commandments, and that when the New Covenant was ratified, the law was annulled and set aside. The Old Covenant was not the Ten-Commandment law, but was instead an agreement made between God and the people regarding the keeping of His commandments. "If you will obey, you shall live," was God's promise. To this the people replied: "All that Jehovah hath said, will we do, and be obedient." This was the covenant agreement. It was about the keeping of the Ten-Commandment law, but it was not the law itself. The law was only the subject.

The Old Covenant was "faulty," but the "law of Jehovah is perfect." (Psalm 19:7, ARV.) The Old Covenant was poor; whereas, "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good." Romans 7:12, RV. Some of the Old Covenant promises were poor. But in the law of God the promises are all good. The Old Covenant became old, decayed, and ready to vanish away. (Hebrews 8:13.) Whereas, of the Ten-Commandment law it is said, "The works of His hands are verity and judgment; all His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness." Psalm 111:7,8. Again, "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." Luke 16:17.

No one should fall into the error of supposing that the ratification of the New Covenant in any way affected the validity of the moral law, or lessened any obligation to keep its every precept. Instead, the New Covenant establishes the law forever and points the way to its complete fulfillment in every human heart. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Romans 3: 3 1.

Better Promises

The fault with the Old Covenant was its promises. Man's side was weak in that he could not do what he had promised to do. He had not learned that without Christ he could do nothing.

The strength of the New Covenant as compared with the Old is that it is "established upon better promises." (Hebrews 8: 6.) Why are the promises of the New Covenant better than those of the Old? Because Christ makes them all. God's side of the agreement stands as before: "If you will obey." But man's side is changed. Instead of feeling self-sufficient and boldly declaring, "I will do," he now feels his utter helplessness; he turns to Jesus for strength. And Jesus says: "I will do for you, and through you. I will put My laws into your mind, and on your heart also will I write them: I will be merciful to your iniquities, and your sins will I remember no more." This great truth is beautifully set forth by the Apostle Paul, when he exclaims:

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will. Working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." Hebrews 13: 20, 2 1.

The New Covenant Brings in a Mighty Helper

Thus, the New Covenant brings in Christ. It introduces into human flesh the power of divinity. It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." And it leads the weakest and most vacillating sinner to look up and exclaim, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." Phil. 4: 13.

Paul declares that the law "was weak through the flesh." (Romans 8: 3.) That is, humanity unaided was powerless to keep the law. By it no flesh could be justified, for no flesh could perfectly obey. The flesh had been weakened by sin. Under the Old Covenant men were confronted with the paradox of being required to do what they could not do. But God was not without a plan.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8: 3, 4.

In Weymouth's translation this scripture is rendered: "For what was impossible to the law-powerless as it was because it acted through frail humanity God effected." And how did God effect that which the law could not do? He sent His Son into the world in the flesh, who lived in perfect obedience to the law. Thus, He demonstrated His ability to bring human flesh into full conformity with God's law. Now He offers to duplicate the miracle by dwelling again in men's flesh, where He will once more perfectly obey this law in and through them. He offers to change the heart from stone to flesh and write His law upon it.

"Forasmuch as you are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." 2 Corinthians 3: 3-5.

Oh, glorious provisions. We need not depend upon our own feeble efforts, but upon His sufficiency. When the New Covenant relationship is entered into, and by faith Christ is received into the heart, He writes upon it exactly the same law as was written upon the tables of stone. There is not a change of a jot or a tittle. (Luke 16: 17.) Every command reads just as it did when it first came forth from the lips of Jehovah and was engraved by His finger upon the tables. The standard of God's moral government never changes. He declares Himself to be the same yesterday, today, and forever, and His law to be eternal. The condition of entrance into New-Covenant relationship with Christ is a willingness to have His entire law written in the heart and acted out in the daily life through the power of the indwelling Christ. This is the way back to Paradise. Our success or failure in Christian living is "according to the power that works in us." (Ephesians 3: 20.) If that power is merely our own, then failure and defeat ensue; but if the power is that of the indwelling Christ, there is glorious success and victory. Paul declares that when Christ's power is at work in our flesh He works in us mightily. (Colossians 1: 29.)

The New Covenant Not New

But this New Covenant is not new in point of time. It is called new only because it was ratified later than the other. When Christ died on Calvary, the New Covenant was ratified by His blood; whereas, the Old Covenant was ratified by the blood of an animal at Sinai at the time of its making. Thus, the Covenant of Grace is spoken of as new, but in actuality it dates from eternity.

The foundation of the New or Everlasting Covenant was laid before the creation of the world. In secret counsel between the Father and His Son, a plan was laid to create the earth and place man upon it. Thus, a new race was to be started. A new world would be added to the vast universe of God.

But grave risks were involved. What if the enemy, Satan, would endeavor to persuade man to join him in his course of rebellion and sin?

What if man should fail? Should he be left to perish or should some plan to save him be laid in advance?

There the fateful decision concerning man's destiny was made. God determined He would save man at all cost. A plan would be ready with which to meet the terrible emergency if and when it came. God would not be taken unawares.

In the counsels of peace that were held between the Father and the Son, a complete plan was devised by which, if man sinned, he could be redeemed. (See Zechariah 6: 12, 13.) It was impossible that the plan should be based upon the idea of setting aside the death penalty, and there must be provided a substitutionary death that would meet all the demands of a broken law. In order to save man, God would have to pay the penalty of man's sins.

Christ Volunteers

It is with awe and reverence that we see, Christ present Himself before the Father and willingly offer to act this part in human redemption. He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2: 14. He offers to go to the cross.

This was to be Christ's part in saving man. It was thus that He became the lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It was all prearranged that He should become the sin bearer and offer His blood in atonement for man's transgressions.

The Father's Part

The Father's part in the Everlasting Covenant was equally important. Though it was a terrible struggle, yet He "so loved the world that He gave His Son." He accepted the offer so freely made by Christ. There was no other way open to Him. There was no alternative.

The Father also agreed that those who should accept the provisions made through the sacrifice of Christ should be given power to become the sons of God.

He would forgive their sins.

He would hear their prayers.

He would impute and impart to them Christ's righteousness.

He would raise Christ's children from the grave.

He would grant to them the priceless gift of eternal life.

He would restore them to their long lost home in Paradise by renewing the earth and placing the redeemed in it.

He would dwell with them forever.

So God was ready with a perfect plan. Not a single essential detail had been overlooked. He would go the whole way in a supreme effort to save the human race.

From these considerations it will readily be seen that the New Covenant extends both sides of the cross. In fact, it is called the "Everlasting Covenant" because it covers the entire span of human life from Paradise lost to Paradise regained. It constitutes the only plan by which men can be saved and receive the gift of immortality.

A Deliverer Promised

When the tempter succeeded in leading Adam and Eve into sin, God immediately came to their rescue by promising them deliverance. When they were told that "the seed of the woman" would bruise the head of the serpent, God was actually making known to them the provision He had made for their redemption through the Everlasting Covenant.

The "seed of the woman" was Christ. (See Isaiah 7: 14; Galatians 4: 4.) He who was man's Creator was now to be born of woman, to undertake man's salvation and eventually to destroy both Satan and sin. The gospel had begun to be preached. This was the first sermon.

This same covenant was renewed to Abraham when Jehovah promised him: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18. (See Gen. 17: 7; Galatians 3: 16.) Abraham's faith in this promise caused God to pronounce him righteous. His trusting in Jesus, the coming Redeemer, for salvation and power to obey enabled God to say: "Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." Gen. 26: 5. Without divine help and succor, no such record of his life could ever have been written.

The New Covenant was taught in every sacrificial service enjoined under the Aaronic priesthood, and those who discerned this truth were saved by God's grace. The gospel was preached unto them as well as unto us, and those who accepted it by faith were accepted under the terms of the New Covenant.

Try Jesus

No one was ever saved under the Old Covenant. It was not an instrument of salvation. Those who have been saved, on either side of the cross, have been saved by faith in Jesus Christ and by His power dwelling in the heart.

"For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2: 8-10.

Is there someone now reading this page who, through repeated failure in his efforts to obey God's requirements and keep His commandments, has become discouraged? Have you been tempted to say, Religion is a failure; it is impossible to reach the standard set up by God in His holy law?

Ah, then, the difficulty is in your trying. You are working under the provisions of the Old Covenant. You are trying to "do" to live. Like Israel of old, the fault is with you. Will you not, then, recognizing your utter helplessness and lack of ability to please God, just "try" Him? Jesus is not a failure. For thirty-three years He demonstrated His ability to keep God's law, and He waits only for the loving invitation to come into your flesh and repeat the demonstration. He can "make you perfect in every good work to do His will." (Hebrews 13: 2 1.) Jesus "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3: 20), and He stands at the door and knocks. Will you let Him in? He will make music, sweetest music, in your soul, where hitherto has been only discord and failure. Let Him in. Let Him in now. Let Him write His law on the tables of your heart and restore His image in the soul. Then, instead of crying over failure and falling again into the "Slough of Despond," you will be constrained to exclaim with the Apostle Paul, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." 2 Corinthians 9: 15.

O that the Lord would guide my ways
To keep His statutes still!
That my God would grant me grace
To know and do His will!

Send Thy Spirit down to write Thy law upon my heart,
Nor let my tongue indulge deceit, Nor act the liar's part.

From vanity turn off my eyes,
Let no corrupt design Nor covetous desires arise
Within this soul of mine.

Make me to walk in Thy commands, 'Tis a delightful road;
Nor let my head, nor heart, nor hands Offend against my God.
ISAAC WATTS.

28. HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

THOSE whose lives are transformed by the gospel immediately become citizens of the kingdom of Christ.

They "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Ephesians 2: 19. For, "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." John 1: 12. They are gathered by the gospel out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." (Revelation 14: 6.) They are welded together into a "holy nation." They become "the people of God." (1 Peter 2: 9, 10.)

This transfer of allegiance changes everything. The old desires and lusts are crucified, and the affections are now set on "things above." (Colossians 3: 2.) Those things which once were loved are now hated, and in the heart is a desire to do the entire will of God. Of this change the Lord declares: 'I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.' Hebrews 8: 10.

The Christian's God is "a great king." Actually He is King over all kings and Lord of lords. (Revelation 19: 16.) His kingdom extends throughout the universe, and when He finally puts an end to the rebellion which was instigated by Lucifer in heaven and makes a full end of sin and sinners, His rule will forever be established. Then will be fulfilled the vision of John on the Isle of Patmos: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Revelation 5:13. Then saved men can be restored to Paradise. God's rule henceforth will be undisputed, and of His throne and kingdom there shall be no end. "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." Daniel 7: 27.

This is the glorious prospect that is set before the people of God. They are to become citizens of God's eternal kingdom and dwell therein forever. And this citizenship begins here and now. Through the provisions of the gospel men today may be delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of Christ. See Colossians 1:13. This is a spiritual change effected by the operation of the Spirit of God upon the heart. When it is accomplished, men become "sons of God," and "joint heirs with Christ" to all the riches and pleasures of heaven. They are of God's nation.

The Standard of Citizenship

There must, however, be some standard of citizenship by which God can test the eligibility of those who desire to become members of His nation. This is recognized to be a necessity even in earthly governments. If, for instance, a native of China applies for citizenship in the United States of America, he is required to become familiar with the Constitution of the United States. Then he appears before a federal court and swears allegiance to the Constitution, and declares his purpose to become a law-abiding citizen of the country of his adoption. Such procedure is absolutely necessary. Otherwise the country might soon be overrun by lawless and dangerous elements.

Because of sin and disobedience, Lucifer and his angels were cast out of heaven, and Adam was driven from Paradise. Sin is the transgression of God's law. (1 John 3: 4.) This is what wrecked the world. It was man's sins that made necessary the death of the Son of God. They have caused all the sorrow, suffering, and death that have become the lot of mankind. It was sin, therefore, that God set out to destroy, and He will never permit it to enter His future kingdom of glory. To do so would jeopardize His throne.

When the angel keepers of the gates of Paradise sheathe their flaming swords, and the people of God are bidden once again to enter in, those who enter will be a group who have definitely pledged allegiance not only to Christ but also to God's law. Of this company, John the revelator declared: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12. And again, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14.

Jesus also made it clear that commandment -keeping is a prerequisite to eternal life in His kingdom.

"And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him, Why call Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Matthew 19: 16, 17.

When Jesus replied thus to His questioner, He was requested to specify which commandments He referred to. In His answer He quoted from the Decalogue, or Ten-Commandment law. (Verses 18, 19.) To this agree the words of David, when he said: "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide." Psalm 37: 29, 31.

The Apostle Paul declares that God's law is "holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good," and that through it alone was he able to learn what sin actually was. (Romans 7: 7, 12.)

God Supplies the Power

Because of the perfection revealed in the law of God, it is quite impossible for man, unaided by Christ, to keep it in an acceptable manner. Man's nature has become so weakened by sin that he has no power to do good. He cannot lift himself from the pit of sin to the state of holiness demanded by a holy and righteous law. "Without Me," said Jesus, "you can do nothing." John 15: 5.

It is just here that the gospel supplies all his needs. What is impossible to man, Christ has made possible. He stands ready to change and transform the yielded heart, write upon it the eternal principles of His holy law, and then impart the necessary power to keep it. This secret Paul had learned, when he exclaimed, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me" "For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Phil. 4:13; 2:13.

Christ does not save men in sin, but He saves them from their sins. Since sin is the transgression of God's law, Christ must save His people from lawbreaking, or He can never qualify them for heaven.

Adam Broke the Law

The law of God was made known to Adam in the garden of Eden. It was this law that he transgressed when he ate of the forbidden fruit. It was this that cost him his home in Eden.

The first commandment in the Decalogue declares: "Thou shall have no other gods before Me." Exodus 20: 3.

In yielding to the voice of Satan, who appeared in the form of a serpent, the first pair turned their backs upon God their Creator, disregarded His commands and warnings, and gave allegiance to Satan.

The tenth commandment condemns covetousness. The eighth prohibits stealing. Both were broken by our first parents. Eve saw that the fruit of the forbidden tree was to be desired; therefore, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." Gen. 3: 6. They both coveted and stole that which had been withheld from them by their Creator. This was a clear violation of the moral law, and this was sin; for "sin is the transgression of the law." Paul calls Adam's traitorous act "disobedience" and declares that through his disobedience many were made sinners. (Romans 5: 19.) Adam had a full knowledge of God's law. Its transgression cost man his home in Paradise and brought upon him the sentence of death.

From Adam to the time of Moses the principles of God's law were handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another. There are many clear indications that its requirements were well understood by the people. Thus, when God made the promise to Abraham that He would multiply his seed as the stars of heaven, He gave as His reason: "Because that Abraham obeyed

My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." Gen. 26:5. This was several hundred years before the Exodus, but God's people had an understanding of His law and their obligation to obey it.

Written on Tables of Stone

When God led Israel out of Egyptian bondage in preparation for establishing them in the land of Canaan, He saw fit again to speak His law to His people and to give them a written copy of it engraved upon tables of stone. This was one of the outstanding experiences in the history of the children of Israel. It was perhaps the most impressive scene in all human history.

"And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightning, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice." Exodus 19: 16-19.

"And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

1

Thou shall have no other gods before Me.

2

"Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments.

3

"Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain.

4

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shall not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

5

"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God gives thee.

6

"Thou shall not kill.

7

"Thou shall not commit adultery.

8

"Thou shall not steal.

9

"Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

10

"Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's." Exodus 20: 1-17.

Above Inspiration

The Ten-Commandment law is the only part of the Old Testament that was not written through inspiration. The rest of the Scriptures were written by holy men of God, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1: 21.)

But God's law is above inspiration. It is the summing up of all righteousness, the moral standard of

God's eternal kingdom, and is the code by which all men will be judged. For these reasons God did not commit to man, even to Moses, the responsibility of transmitting its precepts to the world. It was God's own voice that spoke in the hearing of the people and His own finger that engraved the law upon stone. The record declares:

"And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." Exodus 31: 18. "And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." Exodus 32:15,16.

Some have sought to lessen the binding claims of the Decalogue by designating it "the law of Moses." But from the above record it is clear that Moses had absolutely nothing to do either with its authorship or its promulgation.

It was God's voice that spoke amid the lightning and thunders of Sinai; the tables of stone were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God graven upon the tables. This was God's law. It was not to apply to Israel alone, but to all the sons of Adam. It was and is the standard of citizenship in the eternal kingdom, and all who desire to qualify as sons and daughters of God must be willing to have its principles written upon their hearts and to obey its precepts in their lives.

The moral law of God as given to man in the Decalogue is as lasting as the eternal ages. Said David: "The works of His hands are verity and judgment; all His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness." Psalm 111: 7, 8. The law stretches on both sides of the cross. It reaches from the eternity of the past to the eternity of the future. Nothing can ever alter a single one of its requirements, because it is the essence of truth and perfection. "My tongue shall speak of Thy Word," declared David, "for all Thy commandments are righteousness." Psalm 119: 172. And again, "Thy law is the truth." Verse 142.

Christ Exemplifies the Law

The life of Christ was a full and complete revelation of the requirements of the law of God. He said, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15: 10. What the law demands of all men, Christ was. He came to fulfil its every requirement. He recognized its perpetuity.

"Think not" said He, "that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Matthew 5: 17,18. And again, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." Luke 16:17.

No more soul-destroying doctrine could ever be inspired by Satan than that Christ, during His earthly life, set aside His Father's law and left man at liberty to violate it. Isaiah prophesied concerning Jesus that He would "magnify the law, and make it honorable." This He constantly did. He showed by His teachings that the provisions of the law are exceedingly broad. Not only its letter but its spirit must be obeyed. He declared that the command against adultery can be broken by a lustful look, and that the prohibition against murder can be violated by harboring hatred in the heart. He revealed that those who truly met its requirements would love their enemies, bless those that curse them, and do good to those who spitefully use them.

Thus, He magnified the law and set forth the eternity of its applications. "I have written to him the great things of My law, but they were counted as a strange thing." Hosea 8: 12.

Testimony of the Churches

It is the testimony of the leading churches of Christendom that the Ten-Commandment law is still in full force, and that its precepts must still be recognized and kept by Christ's followers.

From the Baptist Church Manual, Article 12, page 54, we read: "We believe that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government. That it is holy, Just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfil its precepts, arises entirely from their love of sin: to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to a holy law, is one great end of the gospel."

"God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

"This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mt. Sinai in ten commandments, and written in two tables. The first four commandments containing our duty toward God; and the other six, our duty to man." - The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, pages 88-90.

"The people must be made to understand that the Ten Commandments are still binding, and that there is a penalty attached to their violation."-Dwight L. Moody, Weighed and Wanted, page 16.

"Although the law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites, does not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral. --Methodist Episcopal Church Doctrines and Discipline, page 23.

If we permit Him, Christ Jesus will come, even now, into the life and do the Father's will in and through us. He comes and condemns sin in the flesh, and supplies the power which makes it possible "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." (Romans 8: 4.) Only let Him in, in the fullness of His power, and the difficulty is past. The beautiful fruits of righteousness will then appear in the life as naturally as the lilies bloom in the springtime, and this will destroy all fear of the judgment. To make it possible for men to obey is the highest and holiest object of the atonement.

O law of God! blest and divine! Penned by the Everlasting Hand! Long shall thy sacred precepts shine, Firm as the eternal hills shall stand.

God's covenant shall ever abide,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away;
That rule which is the angel's guide Shall I not fear to disobey?

With all my power, from morn till night, I'll publish among the sons of men That sacred law,
though others scorn To keep Thy holy precepts ten.

O that an angel's tongue were mine! Then would I magnify that word, Which, echoing from lips divine,
From Sinai's rugged mount was heard.

And when old earth shall be restored To Eden beauty, fair and bright,
And God Himself shall dwell with men,
Still in that law shall I delight. MRS. L. D. AVERY STUTTLE

29. THE TRUE ISRAEL OF GOD

AND so all Israel shall be saved." Romans 11: 26.

The Bible abounds with promises that the people of Israel will be saved. They are called "the people of God," His "holy nation," "a kingdom of priests." (See Exodus 19: 5, 6.) "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure." Psalm 135: 4.

"What advantage then hath the Jew?" inquired" the Apostle Paul. And he immediately answers: "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Romans 3: 1, 2.

God's promises of salvation and eternal life were made to Israel. His covenants were with them. Even the "New Covenant," under which men must be saved, was made, not with Gentiles, but with Israel. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, said the Lord." Hebrews 8:10.

The Scriptures abound with promises that Israel, though scattered throughout the world, will yet be gathered again, returned to their own land, and dwell therein forever.

"For, lo, the days come, said the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah, said the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." Jeremiah 30: 3.

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Romans 11: 26.

The Jewish Nation Not True Israel

The promises of Scripture have led many to suppose that the time would come when the literal descendants of Abraham-the members of the Jewish race-would return to Palestine, regain their nationhood, accept Christ as their Savior, and become. God's dispensers of light and truth to the nations.

Because of this interpretation the present Zionist movement, sponsored by Jews in many lands, which aims to restore the Jewish nation in Palestine, has been heralded by many religionists as a sign that these predictions are about to be fulfilled.

But neither the Zionist movement nor the establishment of the modern nation of "Israel" in Palestine has any connection with these Biblical prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel. Neither of these can have any part in establishing God's kingdom upon earth. They have not even been mentioned in Scripture. They have no standing whatsoever in God's scheme of things. Why? Because the literal Jewish race does not constitute Israel.

An Israelite in God's sense of the term is one who accepts His plan of salvation through Jesus Christ and who follows God fully. A true Israelite may have been born of Jewish parents, or he may have had Gentile parents. It is not his natural or first birth that makes him an Israelite. It is the new or second birth. Israelites are twice-born men and women, who have accepted the grace of God, and who recognize Christ Jesus as their Redeemer from sin and death.

If You Be Christ's

That which decides the question as to whether a man can be classed as an Israelite is his relation to Christ.

"If you be Christ's," declared Paul, "then are you Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3: 29, 27, 28.

Again the same apostle speaks on this subject in no uncertain manner:

"For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Romans 9: 6-8.

Weymouth's translation of verse eight is as follows:

"In other words, it is not the children by natural descent who count as God's children, but the children made such by the promise are regarded as Abraham's posterity."

Of Nathanael, Jesus said:

"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." John 1: 17. "For the true Jew is not the man who is simply a Jew outwardly, and true circumcision is not that which is outward and bodily. But the true Jew is one inwardly, and true circumcision is heart-circumcision-not literal, but spiritual; and such people receive praise not from men, but from God." Romans 2: 28, 29, Weymouth.

These clear, positive statements of Scripture leave no room for further doubt. The house of Israel which God recognizes is "not literal, but spiritual." Its membership consists, not of people of a certain race, but of those who, by acceptance of Christ and His atonement, are recognized as the people of God.

Where the Jews Failed

God gave to the literal descendants of Abraham, the members of the Jewish race, an opportunity to become His true Israel; and they were so recognized until their final rejection of Christ.

After leading the Jews out of Egypt, the Lord said to them:

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth." "The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself, as He hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in His ways.

"And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee." "And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them." Deuteronomy 28: 1, 9, 10, 13.

Thus, the continuance of God's favor to this people was based upon definite and well-defined conditions: "If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments."

Only by following God fully could they hope that He would continue to recognize them as His peculiar people and continue His blessings to them. But they became a nation of rebels, and turned their backs upon God. They rejected His proffered plan of redemption, and became guilty of the death of the Son of God. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." John 1: 11. They crucified "the King of glory" and thus proved themselves unworthy of continued recognition as God's nation. They declared, "We will not have that man to rule over us." They forfeited their right to be termed "Israel." Through the mouth of Ezekiel, the Lord said to the Jews:

"And say unto them, Thus said the Lord God; In the day when I chose Israel and lifted up Mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up Mine hand unto them, saying, I am the Lord your God. In the day that I lifted up Mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for

them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands. Then said I unto them, Cast you away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

"But they rebelled against Me, and would not hearken unto Me. They did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out My fury upon them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

"But I wrought for My name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made Myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt. Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them My statutes, and showed them My judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them.

"Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness: they walked not in My statutes, and they despised My judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and My Sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out My fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them." Ezekiel 20: 5-13.

Warning after warning of the dire calamities that would befall them as a nation if they continued in their course of rebellion was sent to Jewish Israel. Even as they were encamped on the borders of the land of Canaan, the divine prediction was:

"Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded thee." "Therefore shall thou serve your enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and He shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until He have destroyed thee." "And you shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou would not obey the voice of the Lord thy God.

"And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you. So the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to none; and you shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goes to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shall serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shall thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind." Deuteronomy 28: 45,48,62-65.

God Illustrates

About nine hundred years after Moses' death, the prophet Jeremiah uttered a similar warning to apostate Israel:

"Thus said the Lord, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests. And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee, and say, Hear you the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus said the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever hears, his ears shall tingle. Because they have forsaken Me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents."

"Then shall thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, and shall say unto them, Thus said the Lord of hosts. Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel that cannot be made whole again. And they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury." Jeremiah 19:1-4,10,11.

In Daniel's vision concerning the 2300 days, it was announced that the first seventy weeks of this long period would be allotted to God's people (the Jews). During this time they were to fill up their cup of iniquity by rejecting and crucifying the Son of God, and they were then in turn to be rejected by God as His people. Thus, Gabriel declared to the prophet: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people [margin, and the Jews they shall be no more His people]." See Daniel 9: 24-27.

When Jesus stood face to face with those who had been chosen of God, but who had rejected Him who was God's Son, He repeated the solemn warning given by the early prophets:

"And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21: 20-24.

All these stern predictions as to the destiny of the Jewish nation have been fulfilled in every particular. In AD. 70 Jerusalem was destroyed by Roman armies, and in the conflict it is estimated that at least a million Jews were destroyed. This destruction put an end to the Jewish government. Those who escaped death were scattered throughout the world. As a "potter's vessel" they were broken, and the divine fiat was that it could never be made whole again.

When the Jews denounced Jesus before Pilate and, declared, "His blood be on us, and, on our children," they were assuming a fearful responsibility. They were sowing to the wind, and they were to reap the whirlwind.

Long and terrible has been the divine retribution. No other people through succeeding ages have been so sorely persecuted. At times they have been reduced to slavery and sold as chattels, burned at the stake, slaughtered by the millions, buried alive, banished and robbed-all in fulfillment of God's fearful warnings.

Repeated efforts have been made to restore the Jewish nation to its former position as God's chosen people, but all have come to naught. This can never be again. The potter's vessel is broken. "Ichabod" is written over the door of the Jewish temple, and their house is left desolate. The glory is departed, and never again shall the Jewish nation, as such, be known as the chosen Israel of God.

God Visits the Gentiles

When the Lord rejected the Jewish nation, He turned to the Gentiles to take from among them a people for His kingdom. Of this experience we are given the following testimony:

"But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou should be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13: 45-48.

When discussing the virtues of circumcision with the leaders of the new church at Jerusalem, the Apostle Peter declared: - You know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe; . . . and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Acts 15: 7-9. This declaration was followed by a recital by Barnabas and Paul of the miracles and wonders God had wrought by them among the Gentiles. The Apostle James replied:

"Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets. As it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down. And I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, said the Lord, who does all these things." Acts 15: 13-17.

In extending the gospel to the Gentiles it was not God's plan to build up two separate churches in the earth, nor to have two separate groups of redeemed people in heaven-one composed of Jews and the other of Gentiles. His plan was to take out of all nations those who will accept the plan of salvation, provided by Christ's atonement, and weld them into one nation, one family, one household-the house of Israel.

Gentiles Must Become Israelites

Gentiles, as such, cannot be saved. To obtain salvation they must, through the new birth, become Israelites. Thus, in speaking to the Ephesian Christians, Paul said:

"Wherefore remember, that you being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands. That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one. and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

"Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2: 11-14,18-22.

Here the great truth regarding a spiritual Israel is clearly set forth. Those who once were Gentiles, and were without God and had no hope, are through the blood of Christ brought into the household of God. They are no longer strangers and foreigners; they belong to the family. The wall of partition, between Jew and Gentile is broken down, and they have become one in Christ. It is then that there is neither Jew nor Greek; bond nor free; male nor female; but all have become one in Christ Jesus.

Promises to Abraham's Seed

The promises of God were made chiefly to Abraham and reaffirmed to Isaac and Jacob, or Israel. It was Abraham's seed that was to receive God's special blessing and inherit the land of promise. God said to him, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Gen. 12:7.

"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him', Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward. For all the land which thou sees, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." Gen. 13:14-17.

As Abraham observed the land of promise, his vision was enlarged to take in the whole earth, and all this was included in the promise. "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Romans 4:13.

But these promises were not confined to the literal descendants of Abraham. In respect to this the Apostle Paul sets forth the truth with great clarity: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Galatians 3:16.

Christ, then, is the true Seed of Abraham. He was a literal descendant of Israel, as well as the spiritual head of the church of God upon earth. It was through Christ, "the Seed," that all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. It was He who was to inherit the world. Therefore, those who are His children are heirs to the promises of God.

"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith And if you be Christ's then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3: 14, 29.

Gentiles, therefore, may become the seed or children of Abraham. They may enjoy the blessings of the covenants and promises of God. Not as strangers and foreigners, but, as members of the household they come directly into the family of God.

Thus it is "the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Romans 8: 16, 17.

When Christ came as the second Adam to become the new head of the human race, He, by His sacrifice, redeemed the earth from the curse of sin, and it became His in a twofold sense. He had both created and redeemed it. He became the true heir of the world. Every promise made to Abraham was in its fullest, truest sense fulfilled in Christ.

When Christ undertakes the task of gathering out of the nations those who will finally make up the subjects of His eternal kingdom, He shows no respect to persons or nations. "Whosoever will" may come. "Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth," is His earnest entreaty. None who come will be rejected as strangers or refused full admission because they are not Jews. All will be welcomed to His heart and home and counted as members of the Israel of God.

God Illustrates Again

The great truth that Gentiles may become Israelites is graphically illustrated by the Lord in the writings of Jeremiah and Paul. The Jewish nation, or literal Israel, is likened to a cultivated olive tree; and the Gentiles are likened to a wild olive tree. How both may become one is also revealed. Thus, through Jeremiah, when Israel was in a state of apostasy, the Lord said:

"Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto Me for their trouble." "The Lord called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult He hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken. For the Lord of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke Me to anger in offering incense unto Baal." Jeremiah 11: 14, 16, 17.

Paul, in speaking to the Roman Christians, and referring to this illustration, clarifies it further by saying:

"And if some of the branches have been pruned away, and you, although you were but a wild olive, have been grafted in among them and have become a sharer with others in the rich sap of the root of the olive tree, beware of glorying over the natural branches. Or if you are so glorying, do not forget that it is not you who uphold the root: the root upholds you." Romans 11:17,18, Weymouth.

The branches that were broken off were the Jews who rejected Christ. They were a part of Israel, but because of unbelief lost their standing as members of God's household. But Christ, the stock and root of the house of Israel, remained. New branches must be found and grafted in so as to complete God's nation. Here the Gentiles were to have their chance. They were to step in and take the place of those who had fallen out.

But they were warned to "beware of glorying over the natural branches." Christians today, too, are in danger of falling from grace and being cut off from the olive tree, which they have been grafted:

'Branches have been lopped off,' you will say, 'for the sake of my being grafted in.' This is true; yet it was their unbelief that cut them off, and you only stand through your faith. Do not be puffed up with pride. Tremble rather-for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you." Romans 11: 19-21, Weymouth.

Unbelief versus faith; this is the test. One's natural birth does not count. Through unbelief the Jews as a nation were cut off. Through faith Gentiles may be grafted in, but a continuance in faith is essential to remaining a part of the cultivated olive tree. God will spare no one who gives up his faith in Christ, regardless of his nationality or earthly standing.

"Notice therefore God's kindness and God's severity. On those who have fallen His severity has descended, but upon you His kindness has come, provided that you do not cease to respond to that kindness. Otherwise you will be cut off also." Romans II: 22, Weymouth.

Jews Individually May Again Become Israelites

Is it, therefore, impossible for Jews to become Israelites today? Not at all. The way is open to them, as to all others. That is the way of the cross. By accepting Christ they have the same access to the promises of God as do others. It is possible even for those who have once been cut off to be reinstated into God's grace and kingdom if they are willing to accept the means of salvation. Concerning this, the Apostle Paul added:

"Moreover, if they turn from their unbelief, they too will be grafted in. For God is powerful enough to graft them in again; and if you were cut from that which by nature is a wild olive and contrary to nature were grafted into the good olive tree, how much more certainly will these natural branches be grafted on their own olive tree?" Romans 11:23,24, Weymouth.

After completing this illustration of the olive tree, the Apostle Paul exclaims: "And so all Israel shall be saved." It is declared in Scripture:

"From Mount Zion a Deliverer will come: He will remove all ungodliness from Jacob; and this shall be My Covenant with them when I have taken away their sins." Romans 11: 26, 27, Weymouth.

Of course, all spiritual Israel will be saved. Israel is made up of those whose sins Christ has taken away.

Promises Not Fulfilled to Abraham

The promises made to Abraham concerning the inheriting of the earth were not fulfilled either to him or to his literal descendants. Both he and they sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents and tabernacles. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Hebrews 11: 13.

These promises are yet all to be fulfilled, but the fulfillment will not take place until the curse of sin is removed from the earth and man's home is restored to its original condition before sin defiled it. When this restoration is complete, both Jew and Gentile members of the house of Israel will enter into the enjoyment of the promised inheritance.

Of Abraham it is said that "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Hebrews 11: 10. This is the New Jerusalem, the capital city of Christ's future kingdom. John the revelator, describing his vision of this city, reveals that on its twelve gates of pearl are written the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. See Revelation 21: 12.

Surely this fact has great significance. It can only mean that all who enter the holy city must enter as Israelites. All will have been assigned to the respective tribes, perhaps according to their peculiar characteristics; and as they approach the city for their triumphal entry, they will go in as full fledged tribesmen. They are not strangers nor foreigners. They are not Jew and Gentile: they are one vast united nation. They are the Israel of God. "And so all Israel shall be saved."

30. THE SIGN OF THE TRUE GOD

WHILE walking down a street in Calcutta, India, some years ago, the writer noticed that many of the people he met had strange marks on their faces and foreheads. Some markings were similar, and others were very different in shape and size. Wondering whether these markings held any significance, a companion, who was a resident of the city, was asked to explain.

"Yes," said he, "those marks indicate the particular deity of India of which the respective bearers are devotees. If, for instance, a man is a worshipper of Ganesa, he makes known that fact to the world by bearing the sign of Ganesa on his forehead. If he is an apostle of Siva, then he bears the sign of Siva, which is very different. And so with the other gods. Each god has a special sign, and by displaying the sign, a worshipper announces his special allegiance, to a particular deity."

Our God's Sign

It may be surprising to some to learn that the God of heaven, the great Creator, also has a sign by which He is known to His people and by which they are marked as His followers. This sign is clearly set forth in the Creator's own words: "And hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 20:20.

God's Sabbath is the sign between Him and His people. It constitutes the mark of distinction by which men and women show allegiance to the Creator and indicate to the world that He is their God.

When Christ, acting as the Father's agent, had perfected the work of the original creation, pronouncing it "very good," He did not leave the world without an adequate memorial of that mighty accomplishment. He instituted the weekly Sabbath as a perpetual reminder of the fact that He was the author of all things. The record is:

"And the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it: because that in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." Gen. 2: 1-3, RV.

Two thousand five hundred years later, when Jehovah stood upon Mount Sinai and declared God's eternal law to men, He definitely enjoined upon them the duty of Sabbath observance, stating as the reason the fact that in six days He had made heaven and earth and sea and all that in them is and had rested upon the seventh day. Let us note carefully His solemn words:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shall not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20: 8-11.

Thus, the weekly Sabbath was given to commemorate creation. It became the sign of the power of the great Creator. It was ever to distinguish Him from the false gods of the nations.

In Ezekiel's prophecy He declares: "I am the Lord your God; walk in My statutes, and keep My judgments, and do them; and hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 20: 19, 20.

Sign of Jesus' Power

Since, therefore, the Sabbath was given as a sign of God's work in creation, it becomes a sign also of the power of Jesus Christ our Savior. For it was Jesus who created the heavens and the earth. This fact is clearly set forth in the words of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Colossians:

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Colossians 1: 13-17.

In his Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle Paul repeats his declaration that Christ is the world's Creator:

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds But unto the Son He said, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou has loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Your hands." Hebrews 1: 1, 2, 8-10.

The disciple John declares:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1: 1-3, 14.

The truth stands out in bold relief: that Jesus of Nazareth, the One who was made flesh and dwelt among us, the One by whose blood we have redemption from sin, is the One who, in the beginning, created all things. He made the heavens and the earth. When God said, "Let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1: 26), He was speaking to His Son; and the Son carried out His Father's desires. He was the Father's active agent. He was the Mediator or Middleman between God and all His works. It was the Son of God who "spoke, and it was done"; who "commanded, and it stood fast." (Psalm 33: 9.) It was by His word that the heavens were made, "and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." (Verse 6.) He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Colossians 1: 17.

To what conclusion then does this bring us? There can be but one answer.

Since Jesus Christ, God's Son and man's Savior, was this world's Creator, and since the Sabbath was given as a sign of the power of the Creator, the Sabbath is Christ's sign. It was He who gave it to man, that he might have it as a constant reminder that Jesus, who had undertaken man's salvation and sanctification, was the Author of the original creation. It is, therefore, the Christian Sabbath. It was because of this that Jesus could say: "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark 2: 28.

Given at Creation

The Sabbath was given to man at creation. That is when it was made. That is when it was hallowed and sanctified. Upon this holy day, the Creator rested and was refreshed. It was then that He gave it to man as a weekly reminder of His power and work in creation. Let us note the record again:

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." Gen. 2: 1-3.

"God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." Now to sanctify, says Cruden, means "to separate and appoint any thing to an holy and religious use." - Cruden's Complete Concordance, Edition 1769. Therefore, the seventh day was separated from the other days of the week and was appointed by the great Creator as a day to be used and observed by His people upon earth as a holy day.

Upon this important point the following comments from a professor of Hebrew and Oriental literature at the New York City University are worthy of the most careful consideration.

" 'And sanctified it.' Hebrew, kadash. It is by this term that positive appointment of the Sabbath as a day of rest to man is expressed. God's sanctifying the day is equivalent to His commanding men to sanctify it. As at the close of creation the seventh day was thus set apart by the Most High for such purposes, without limitation to age or country, the observance of it is obligatory upon the whole human race, to whom, in the wisdom of Providence, it may be communicated.

"This further appears from the reason why God blessed and sanctified it, viz., 'because that in it He had 'rested,' etc., which is a reason of equal force at all times and equally applying to all the posterity of Adam; and if it formed a just ground for sanctifying the first day which dawned upon the finished system of the universe, it must be equally so for sanctifying every seventh day to the end of time.

"The observance of the day is moreover enjoined in the Decalogue, which was not abolished with the peculiar polity of the Jews, but remains unalterably binding upon Christians in every age of the world... . The sanctification of the seventh day in the present case can only be understood of its being set apart to the special worship and service of God."- George Bush, Notes, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Genesis (Presbyterian), Vol. 1 (two-volume edition), pages 48, 49, note on Gen. 2: 3.

We add also the testimony of another, as he comments upon that same, scripture:

"By this is meant, 1. The day appointed of God, at the close of creation, to be observed by man as a day of rest from all secular employment, because that in it God Himself had rested from His work. (Gen. 2: 1-3.) Not that God's rest was necessitated by fatigue (Isaiah 40: 28); but He rested, that is, ceased to work, on the seventh day as an example to man; hence assigned it as a reason why men should rest on that day. (Exodus 20: 11; 31: 17.) God's blessing and sanctifying the day, meant that He separated it from a common to a religious use, to be a perpetual memorial or sign that all who thus observed it would show themselves to be the worshippers of that God who made the world in six days and rested on the seventh. (Exodus 20: 8-11; 31: 16, 17; Isaiah 56: 6, 7.)" - Amos Binney and Daniel Steele, Theological Compend, pages 169, 170.

"As a memorial of that fact [the creation of the world], He set apart the Sabbath, kept it, sanctified and blessed it, for the benefit of all. Thus the keeping of the Sabbath makes God known. Gives efficacy to His moral government.... It commemorates the work of God as Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, and Redeemer."- Justin Edwards, The Sabbath Manual, pages 16, 19, 22.

And again:

"The Sabbath was appointed at the creation of the world, and sanctified, or set apart for holy purposes, 'for man,' for all men, and therefore for Christians; since there was never any repeal of the original institution. To this we add; that if the moral law be the law of Christians, then is the Sabbath as explicitly enjoined upon them as 'upon the Jews.'" -Richard Watson (Methodist), A Biblical and Theological Dictionary, pages 829, 830.

A fourth witness declares:

"As this was the most ancient institution, God calls them to remember it; as if He had said, Do not forget that when I finished My creation, I instituted the Sabbath, and remember why I did so, and for what purposes." -Dr. Adam, Clarke, A Commentary and Critical Notes, Vol. I, page 387, note on Exodus 20: 8.

We find that the religious leaders are in almost universal agreement upon the fact that the seventh-day Sabbath was definitely instituted at creation as a memorial of that great event and was intended for the whole human family. Since it is contained in the moral law, every jot and tittle of which stands forever, it is as much in force today as when it was first given as a blessing to man.

A Particular Day

It should be carefully noted in passing that the Sabbath was made of a particular day. The commandment declares "the seventh day is the Sabbath." It is not one day in seven, not a seventh part of time, but "the seventh day." The Sabbath is not an institution that may be shifted from one day to another at the will and caprice of man, but it is the seventh day of the week.

It was not an institution that the Lord blessed, but a day. As houses are made out of stone and wood, so the Sabbath was made out of a particular day-the seventh day, now commonly called Saturday. If, therefore, the seventh day be separated from the Sabbath, the Sabbath is destroyed. This conclusion is foregone and inevitable.

Sabbath-breaking Leads to Idolatry

It was the failure of the nations to keep the Sabbath and recognize its sanctity that led many of them into idolatry. By disregarding the Sabbath, men have lost the constant, weekly reminder of God's creative power. They have looked upon the visible objects of His creation and have been led by Satan to reverence and even worship the creature rather than the Creator.

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the un-corruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." Romans 1: 21-25.

Had the human family always regarded and observed the Sabbath, this lapse into heathen worship would have been impossible. They would have had before them a constant reminder that there is a living God who is Creator and the only true God. He being the Creator is greater than the things created and, therefore, the only object worthy of man's worship and adoration.

The Seal of God

The Sabbath is also referred to in the Scripture as the "seal of the living God." This is because of the fact that the Sabbath command alone, of all the Decalogue, reveals the name, authority, and realm of the Author of the law. This command reveals the fact that the Lawgiver is "Lord God," the Maker of the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is. (Exodus 20:10,11.) This is absolute proof that this law did not emanate from any of the gods of the heathen, but is the product of the mind of the Creator. This commandment stamps the entire law with His signature. It seals it as genuine.

This great seal of God is to be impressed on the minds and hearts of Christ's followers and is to constitute a sign of allegiance to His kingdom. Of one of John's visions of the redeemed, he declared:

"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Revelation 7: 1-3.

This seal of God will mark the followers of Christ for heaven. It reveals that He is their Lord and Savior, that they belong to Him, and that they have been saved by His grace. It is His sign that they are His.

Sabbath Not a Shadow

There are those who reason that the weekly Sabbath was one of the types and shadows in the Mosaic dispensation, and that although the other nine commandments remained in force after the cross, this particular one passed away. This reasoning usually seems to be based upon the following statement of the Apostle Paul, in Colossians 2: 14-17:

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.... Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

But the seventh day weekly Sabbath was not a shadow. As we have learned in former chapters, the shadows of the Old Testament were ordinances that had to do with the offerings and sacrifices pertaining to the sanctuary services, all of which typified the death of the Son of God upon the cross for the sins of men. It was a way by which God's people might express their faith in a Savior to come, just as through baptism and the sacrament we today express our faith in a Savior who has come.

True, there were some shadowy Sabbaths. In the ceremonial law governing the sacrifices, there were several yearly Sabbaths. Upon these days special sacrifices were offered. Of one of the annual Sabbaths we read:

"And this shall be a statute forever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that journeys among you. For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all Your sins before the Lord. It shall be a Sabbath of rest unto you, and you shall afflict your souls, by a statute forever." Lev. 16: 29-31.

This day of atonement, like all other annual Sabbaths enjoined in the law of Moses, came only once a year. They were, of course, "shadows of good things to come"; because they were days of offering sacrifices that pointed forward to Christ's death. At His death they would naturally cease, just as all the other shadows did. This, then, is what Paul refers to when he says: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Colossians 2: 16, 17.

But the seventh day weekly Sabbath belongs to another code of law entirely. The command enforcing it says nothing about offering sacrifices. It does not point forward. It points backward. It is a memorial. It is not a shadow. The command enjoining it

observance is set up to be an eternal reminder of a great event in the past. That event was the creation of the world in six days by the God of heaven. (Exodus 20:11; Gen. 1: 1-3.) It was intended to form a barrier forever against the worship of other gods and against such theories as evolution.

Just as baptism is a memorial of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, so the Sabbath is a memorial of the fact that Jehovah Christ is this world's Maker; that the earth did not come into being by chance, as many religious teachers today believe. It is the handiwork of God.

The Sabbath Before Sin

The sacrificial system was instituted after sin entered, and by pointing forward to the Lamb of God, the true Sin Bearer, it was to serve as a means of avoiding the penalty of sin. The Sabbath, on the contrary, was instituted before sin entered and, therefore, was not created because of sin. The ceremonial law, which included these yearly shadowy Sabbaths, was added because of transgressions," and only till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." (Galatians 3: 19.) But the weekly Sabbath was instituted before transgression, and is to remain for all time, even into the new earth, the eternal home of the redeemed. (Isaiah 66: 22, 23.)

"Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am the Lord that does sanctify you. You shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defiles it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever does any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever does any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed. And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." Exodus 31:13-18.

Thus, the Sabbath is a sign of the true God. That is the reason God commanded men to remember it and to keep it holy. That is the reason He placed the Sabbath commandment in the very heart of the moral law, or Decalogue. It was to be of perpetual obligation. It stretches from Paradise before man fell into sin to Paradise regained. It will be His holy, blessed rest day throughout eternity and will be kept by His children in the coming kingdom of glory.

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, said the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, said the Lord." Isaiah 66:22,23.

Bible Study Summary

What is one of the outstanding, distinguishing features between the living God and the gods of the heathen?

God alone can create.

"But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation. Thus shall you say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion." Jeremiah 10: 10-12.

How did our earth come into existence?

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1:1.

Who made the heavenly bodies?

"God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good." Gen. 1:16-18.

"Thus said God the Lord, He that created the heavens and stretched them out." Isaiah 42:5.

What was man's origin?

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Gen. 1:27.

"I have made the earth, and created man upon it." Isaiah 45: 12.

What great memorial did God give to man of His creative power?

The seventh day Sabbath. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shall not do any work.... For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea,

and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore [for this reason] the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20: 8-11.

NOTE - These verses show clearly that the weekly Sabbath was instituted for the purpose of giving men a constant reminder of the fact that God was their Creator and also the Maker of all things. It was meant to protect them from being led away after false gods.

Of what is the Sabbath a sign?

It is a sign of the true God.

"And hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 20:20.

NOTE - When people observe the true Sabbath, it serves as a sign that they are worshippers of the Creator, the true and living God. It is also a sign to the world that they are His people.

When was the Sabbath made?

It was made at the end of creation week, the first week of this earth's history.

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." Gen. 2: 1-3.

Out of what did God make the Sabbath?

Out of a day, the seventh day: "But the seventh day is the Sabbath. . . . Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." Exodus 20: 10, 11.

How did God make the Sabbath?

After spending six days creating the earth and man, He rested on the seventh. Thus, it became God's rest day. After resting, He blessed the seventh day (for all future time), and this day became God's blessed rest day. Then He sanctified it (set it apart for a holy and religious use by them), thus making it God's blessed, sanctified, rest day. (See Gen. 2: 1-3.)

What kind of day is the seventh day Sabbath?

It is a holy day. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day." Isaiah 58:13.

Which day of the week is the seventh day? The day commonly called Saturday.

For whom was the Sabbath made?

"The Sabbath was made for man." Mark 2: 27.

NOTE - No distinction is made here of race, color, or nationality. The word man is used here in the generic sense, meaning for the human race as a whole. The Sabbath was made for all men of all ages and races. All who are of God's creation need this weekly reminder of His omnipotence.

What is man asked to do with the Sabbath?

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Exodus 20: 8.

It is to be a day of physical rest and worship of God. No ordinary business nor work should be done upon the Sabbath. "In it thou shall not do any work." Exodus 20: 10.

How long is the Sabbath to remain in force and be observed?

Throughout all time and eternity.

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, said the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, said the Lord." Isaiah 66: 22, 23.

31. THE SIGN OF CHRIST'S POWER TO SAVE

THE plan of salvation is based upon the principle of re-creation. When hearts and lives are marred and spoiled by sin, they cannot be remodeled or improved they must be remade. There must be a new heart and a new life. The old man must die, and a new man take possession of the body. It is said of King Saul that "God turned Saul into another man." Paul says: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is [margin, Or, let him be] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17. Ezekiel declares that there must be "a new heart and a new spirit." (Ezekiel 18:3 1.) Peter speaks of the new Christians as "newborn babes." (1 Peter 2:2.)

It takes the same power to restore the image of God in fallen man as it took in the beginning to create man in His image. This is creative power. This is the reason an angel could not become man's Savior. Only the Creator, Jehovah, Could re-create and restore man to his original condition of innocence and purity. This He was ready to undertake. "For God so loved the world, that He, gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16.

What confidence in the plan of redemption this fact inspires. He who became Redeemer from sin was the world's Creator. The One who stretched out the heavens, who marshals the stars calling them all by name, who controls the seasons, the day and the night, and by whose power all things consist, offers to take these poor lives and purify and sanctify them. Say not then, "I am such a great sinner that Christ could not save me." He is an infinitely greater Savior than you are a sinner. His power to save is measured by the vastness of His creation. He is omnipotent to save as He was omnipotent to create. "He is able. . . to save ... to the uttermost." Hebrews 7: 25.

The Sign of Sanctification

But what is the sign of Christ's power in the new creation? It is the same as in the original creation. It is the seventh-day weekly Sabbath rest. It not only is the memorial of the literal creation but also the sign or pledge of Christ's power in the spiritual creation. Hear then the words of Jesus, spoken through His prophet, as He definitely claims the Sabbath as a sign that He is fully able to accomplish man's redemption.

"Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." "And hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 20: 12, 20.

How fitting that the Lord should choose the Sabbath as a sign of His power to save! It is the sign which distinguishes Him from every false god and sets Him apart as the only divine sovereign having creative power and the ability to remake the lives of men after they have been wrecked by sin. The Sabbath was intended to be a perpetual, weekly reminder of both the creative and redeeming power of the true God.

Had the people of earth faithfully observed it from creation, the nations never would have drifted away from the worship of the true God.

Jesus Kept the Sabbath

When Jesus was upon earth, He recognized the binding obligation of the Sabbath He had given; and He sacredly kept it as an example to man. He honored it as the day for public worship. He met with the people on that day in their houses of worship and taught them the principles of the gospel. "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." Luke 4: 16.

It was not simply by chance that Christ, on this particular Sabbath, went to the house of worship; for such was "His custom." He was a Sabbath-keeper. He made a practice of going to the house of worship on that day. As Jesus later foretold the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Roman armies and warned His people to flee from the doomed city, He added: "But pray you that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." Matthew 24:20. Some forty years later Jerusalem fell to the Romans. It is evident, therefore, that Jesus recognized the sanctity of the Sabbath, and that -this sanctity would not be lessened after His death, resurrection, and ascension. In fact, no change in the Sabbath was ever recognized either by Christ or by His disciples. They always observed the original seventh day.

The Lord's Day

In speaking to the Pharisees one day, Jesus made the startling declaration: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark 2: 27, 28. If, therefore, the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath, the Sabbath must be the "Lord's day."

To this also agree the solemn words of the Lord by Isaiah:

"If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day. And call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable. And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words: then shall thou delight thyself in the Lord. And I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:13,14.

The Scriptures clearly teach that the Sabbath is the Lord's day and that it falls upon the seventh day, Saturday, and not upon the first day of the week. The Lord definitely claims to be Lord of the Sabbath.

He does' not claim to be Lord of any other day. He states nowhere that Christians should regard any other day as being holy. When John the revelator declares: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Revelation 1: 10), he

does not say this was Sunday. He simply says, "On the Lord's day," and the only Lord's day known in Scripture is the seventh day Sabbath (Saturday). The Scriptures abound with declarations of this fact. "My holy day," He calls it. -Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark 2: 28. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shall not do any work." Exodus 20: 8-10.

A Great Church Leader's Testimony

Here we wish to call attention to a remarkable statement by E. T. Hiscox, eminent Baptist author and speaker:

"There was and is a commandment to keep holy the Sabbath day, but the Sabbath day was not Sunday. It will, however, be readily said, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week, with all its duties, privileges, and sanctions. Earnestly desiring information on this subject, which I have studied for many years, I ask, Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament, absolutely not. There is no Scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week. I wish to say that this Sabbath question, in this aspect of it, is, in my judgment, the gravest and most perplexing question connected with Christian institutions which at present claims attention from Christian people." - From an address before a Baptist ministers' meeting in New York City, as reported in the Examiner of November 16, 1893.

Why is the Sabbath called the "Lord's day"? Because Christ is its Author. He has been the active agent in all God's works of creation. He is the Author of the new creation, and He made the Sabbath to commemorate these two mighty manifestations of His power.

Christ with Israel

It was Jesus Christ who spoke the Ten-Commandment law from the summit of Sinai, and who accompanied the children of Israel in all their wanderings through the wilderness. He is the Mediator between God and man. The Father does not speak to man directly, but only through the Son: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1: 18.

Paul clearly states in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 that those who were led by Moses "drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." Christ, therefore, is the Author of the Ten-Commandment law, and it was He who included the seventh day Sabbath among its precepts.

When Christ was upon earth in the flesh, He spoke one day from a mountain, this time the mount of blessing. In Matthew, the fifth chapter, we have the record of His sermon; and in this, the beginning of His public utterances, He made it clear that no alteration was to be made in the law which He had given to Adam and spoken from Sinai's summit.

"Think not," said He, "that I am come to destroy the law." Matthew 5: 17. He knew that people might draw a wrong conclusion concerning this matter, so He proceeded to place a safeguard against such an error at the very outset of His ministry.

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so ' shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:18,19, RV.

This settles the question for all time. Christ did not destroy the law. As long as heaven and earth remain, not a word will pass from it. It will forever remain intact. Christ reaffirmed the law in its entirety by this one statement. He was its Author; He had written it with His own finger; He had commanded it with His own lips; He had said He would not destroy it; and now He declares it will stand fast forever. Thus, the moral law, which includes the seventh day Sabbath, remains in full force in the Christian dispensation; and the Sabbath is, therefore, still the "Lord's day."

The Sabbath After the Cross

Was the seventh day Sabbath recognized after the cross? We find that it was. The Sabbath of the New Testament is the Sabbath of creation. Sunday, the first day of the week, has not, as many suppose, been substituted for Saturday, the seventh day, on New Testament authority. From Matthew to Revelation no record of any such change can be found.

The example and writings of Christ and the apostles testify that no such change was ever made or contemplated by them. Those who observe another day as a day of rest and worship do so without any Scriptural warrant whatsoever and fail to honor the memorial of Christ's creative and redeeming power.

In fact, God never changes. His moral standard is always the same. Changing ages have no effect on the law of His kingdom. A new era in the affairs of men on this earth is not of sufficient moment to warrant a change of the moral standards of citizenship in God's kingdom. The first advent of Christ, His death, or His resurrection in no way affected the great Sabbath rest that Christ as Creator had set up four thousand years before.

The resurrection was considered worthy of a memorial that would serve constantly to refresh the Minds of men regarding that wonderful event. The ordinance of baptism was chosen for this purpose. True baptism is a real burial and resurrection, and very

fittingly represents the burial and resurrection of Christ. But nowhere has Christ or an apostle said that the first day of the week should be kept in commemoration of these events.

God does not overthrow one sacred memorial of creation and proceed to set up another on its ruins. He makes no mistakes, nor does He have to alter His plans. "For I am the Lord, I change not." Mal. 3:6. With Him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17.) Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8.)

Paul's Example

The Book of Acts has many references citing the fact that Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, faithfully observed the Sabbath. We shall briefly notice some of these.

"But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on." Acts 13:14,15, RV.

This sermon, of course, was preached to the Jews in the synagogue; and by reading verses forty-two to forty-four, we learn that the Gentiles requested Paul to meet with them the next Sabbath.

"And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.... And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God."

The next record of Paul's Sabbath-keeping is found in Acts 16: 12, 13, RV:

"And from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. And on the Sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spoke unto the women which were come together."

Another interesting record of Paul's attitude on the Sabbath is given in Acts 17: 1, 2, RV:

"Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures."

This text clearly shows it was not merely by chance that Paul met with those who worshipped God on the Sabbath, but it was "his custom." In fact, he knew no other Sabbath. Speaking of his experience at Corinth, where he labored in AD. 54, twenty-three years after the cross, Luke declares: "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks." "And he dwelt there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." Acts 18:4,11, RV. Thus, twenty-three years after the cross, this apostle was regularly observing God's original Sabbath and encouraging others to do so by meeting with them in public worship upon that day.

In Hebrews 4: 4 the Sabbath is again mentioned by the Apostle Paul: "For He hath said somewhere of the seventh day on this wise, And God rested on the seventh day from all His works." RV. Verse nine declares, "There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God." Verse ten tells us that to enter into "His rest," we must cease from our work as God did from His. God rested on the seventh day, not on the first day. The first day is not God's rest day. Therefore, it never can be the Sabbath of rest.

Sunday in the New Testament

The first mention of the first day of the week in the New Testament is by Matthew, in connection with the record of the burial and resurrection of Christ: "In the end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." Matthew 28:1.

The next text we shall notice is much the same as this one:

"And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." Mark 16: 1, 2.

Here is a plain statement that the Sabbath is past when the first day of the week comes. Let it be borne in mind that this statement was made by Mark some thirty years after the crucifixion of Christ. It is conclusive evidence that the Lord had given no instruction as to any change of the Sabbath after His death. Those, therefore, who persist in waiting until Sunday, the first day of the week, to keep the Sabbath, are one day too late. When Sunday comes, the Sabbath is past; and not until after six days will another Sabbath come. Those who by laboring on Saturday prepare to keep the Sabbath on Sunday are by that very preparation breaking the institution they are preparing to observe. One cannot keep the Sabbath when it is past. A man may say, "I will work today (Saturday) and wait until the first day of the week to keep the Sabbath"; but the Sabbath will not wait for him. When the seventh day closes, the Sabbath closes; for "the seventh day is the Sabbath."

Let us notice a text in Luke's Gospel:

"And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath

day according to the commandment." "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them." Luke 23: 54-56; 24: 1.

Three Days Identified

This text is a powerful reply to those who claim that the New Testament teaches first-day sacredness. Three days are mentioned here: first, the preparation day; secondly, the "Sabbath according to the commandment"; thirdly, the first day of the week. The preparation day is Friday, the sixth day of the week. This is shown in Exodus 16: 22, 23, where the Israelites were taught to prepare their food on the day before the Sabbath.

Hence, these verses teach that the Sabbath is the day between Friday and Sunday; that on the Sabbath Christ rested in the grave from His labors, persecution, and struggles of the past week, and was raised upon the first day, to begin again His activities in behalf of the human race; that while Christ rested in the tomb on the Sabbath, His followers rested at their homes. That the commandments were regarded as still binding after the death of Christ; and that the Sabbath commandment had not been changed.

On this question the Reverend G. Campbell Morgan states:

"Much has been made of the attitude of Christ in speech and deed toward the Sabbath. Some have imagined that by words He uttered and by deeds He did He relaxed the binding nature of the old command. This view, however, is to absolutely misunderstand and misinterpret the doing and the teaching of Jesus." - G. Campbell Morgan (Congregationalist), "The Ten Commandments," page 50.

Thus, Bible teaching and the example of Bible writers are in perfect harmony. The Bible from Genesis to Revelation is one perfect whole; and one great standard of morality and righteousness runs through it all like a silver thread, without the slightest alteration. The Sabbath of the New Testament is exactly the same as the Sabbath of Eden and Mount Sinai. Solomon was led to exclaim: "I know that, whatsoever God does, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God does it, that men should fear before Him." Ecclesiastes. 3:14. How foolish, then, to suppose that Christ during His earthly life attempted to change the law or the Sabbath that He had originally given to the whole race!

Sabbath of the New Covenant

The seventh day is also the Sabbath of the New Covenant. "For this is the covenant that I will make.... said the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Hebrews 8: 10. God's law written upon the heart is unchanged even in one jot or tittle, for thus Christ declares in Matthew 5:18. All His commandments "stand fast forever and ever." (Psalm 111: 7, 8.) When He Writes this unchangeable law in our hearts, the fourth commandment still reads: "The seventh day is the Sabbath." Indeed, Sunday observance came too late to get into the New Covenant; for when Christ died on Friday, the New Covenant was sealed, or confirmed, by His blood. (Luke 22: 20.) It was then forever too late to add to or take from it. (Galatians 3: 15.) Hence, as Sunday did not come into the church until long after Jesus' death, it can have no part in the New Covenant.

The original Sabbath, therefore, forms a part of the New Covenant relationship, and was strengthened rather than weakened in its authority when this covenant was ratified by the blood of the Lamb of God. The New Covenant brings in Christ as a mighty Savior and Helper. It lifts man from self-effort and despair to the glorious experience of trust and sanctification. Through it sinners are saved from transgression by faith in Jesus Christ, and the Sabbath is the sign whereby they may show their faith in His wondrous ability to save.

Follow Jesus

"If a man wishes to be My servant," said Jesus, "let him follow Me; and where I am, there too shall My servant be. 3 John 12: 26, Weymouth.

Dear reader, are you willing this day to take up your cross and follow Jesus? Are you willing to bear His sign or seal and thus attest to the world and the universe that you are His child?

Jesus left us an example that we should follow in His steps. This applies to Sabbath observance, as well as to other features of godly living. He was a Sabbath-keeper. Never did He lessen the sanctity of the Sabbath nor transfer its sacredness to any other day. With Him there is only one Sabbath.

We, too, then, should reverence this sign of His power and honor Him by keeping the Sabbath holy unto the Lord. Let us follow Him.

Sweet is the Sabbath of the Lord To those who in His law delight; Who love the precepts of His Word, And tread the narrow path of right.

This holy day Jehovah blessed Ere sorrow, pain, or death were born, And sanctified for man his rest In glad creation's sinless morn.

It speaks of Him whose wondrous might The heavens and earth from nothing made;
Who formed the glorious orbs of light, And the deep sea's foundations laid.

Its sacred hours, you saints of God, Remember with respect and love And through
obedience to His Word Your love for your Creator prove.

And, when, immortalized we see The treasures of the new earth bright, God's holy
Sabbath still shall be A source of blessing and delight.

J. S. THORN

Bible Study Summary

Upon what principle is the plan of salvation based?

Re-creation. A new birth. Complete regeneration.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Corinthians 5:17.

"And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."
Ephesians 4:24. See Psalm 51:10.

By whom only can this work of re-creation be accomplished?

"There is a new creation whenever a man comes to be in Christ; what is old is gone, the new has come. It is all the doing of the
God who has reconciled me to Himself through Christ." 2 Corinthians 5: 17, 18, Moffatt.

"So if anyone is in union with Christ, he is a new being.... All this comes from God, who through Christ has reconciled me to
Himself." 2 Corinthians 5: 17, 18, Goodspeed.

What evidence does God give of His power to redeem and save?

The fact that He made man and created all things.

"Thus said the Lord, thy redeemer, and He that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that makes all things; that stretches forth
heavens alone; that spreads abroad the earth by Myself." Isaiah 44:24.

What special sign has God given that He is able to save and sanctify repentant sinners?

"Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify
them." Ezekiel 20: 12.

NOTE - Since the Sabbath was given as a sign of God's power in the original creation, so He gave it also as a sign that He is able to
re-create that which was spoiled by sin-the hearts and lives of men.

How long was this sign of God's power to redeem to continue?

"Verily My Sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am
the Lord that does sanctify you." "It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever." Exodus 31: 13, 17.

Who actually did the work of creating the earth and man?

Christ the Son of God was the active agent in all God's work of creation.

"But unto the Son He said, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou has
loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.
And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Your hands." Hebrews 1: 8-
10.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All
things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1: 1-3.

Jesus is the One here spoken of as the Word. See verse 14.

How much of the universe did Christ create?

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or
dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things
consist." Colossians 1:16,17.

Since Christ is the Creator of all things, who then rested on the seventh day of creation week and blessed and sanctified that day?

Christ. He was the Author of the Sabbath.

Which day, then, is the Christian Sabbath?

It could only be the day on which Christ rested. He is the Author of the Christian religion and gave the Sabbath as a sign of His power in the work of re-creation.

"Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark 2: 28.

Of what, then, is the Sabbath a sign?

It is a sign of Christ's power to save and sanctify His people.

When Jesus was upon earth, which day did He observe as the Sabbath?

"And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." "And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days." Luke 4: 16, 31.

Which day did the Apostle Paul recognize as the Sabbath?

"And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures." Acts 17: 2.

"And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." Acts 18: 4. See Acts 13: 13-15, 42, 44.

NOTE - Some of these meetings by the Apostle Paul were held twenty three years after the resurrection, and still it was his custom to attend the house of worship on the Sabbath. He preached both to Jews and Gentiles on the seventh day. (See Acts 13: 42.)

Upon which day of the week was Christ crucified?

Upon Friday, the sixth day of the week. In the Bible Friday is called the preparation day. "And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." Luke 23: 54.

What did the followers of Jesus do on Saturday, the day following the crucifixion?

"And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." Luke 23: 56.

NOTE - These Christians still continued to observe the original Sabbath.

What does the Apostle John call the Sabbath? "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Revelation 1:10.

Is Saturday, the seventh day of the week, the Lord's day?

"The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Exodus 20: 10.

"If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day." Isaiah 58: 13. "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark 2: 28.

When does God's Sabbath begin?

"From even unto even [evening], shall you celebrate your Sabbath." Lev. 23: 32.

When does the evening begin?

"At even, at the going down of the sun." Deuteronomy 16: 6. "And at even,' when the sun did set." Mark 1: 32.

NOTE - The beginning of the Sabbath is not dependent upon the clock, but is marked by God's timepiece, the sun. When the blazing sun sets below the western horizon on Friday night, the Sabbath of the great God begins. The Sabbath should, therefore, be observed from Friday evening sunset to Saturday evening sunset.

Is it right to transact business on the Sabbath, such as buying and selling? No, this is strictly forbidden. See Nehemiah 13: 15-22.

Should the farmer gather his grain on the Sabbath?

"Six days thou shall work, but on the seventh day thou shall rest: in caring time and in harvest thou shall rest." Exodus 34: 21.

What promise does God make to those who faithfully observe His Sabbath?

"Blessed is the man that does this, and the son of man that lays hold on it: that keeps the Sabbath from polluting it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil." "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, every one that keeps the Sabbath from polluting it, and takes hold of My covenant. Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer." Isaiah 56:2,6,7.

32. GOD'S SIGN ALTERED BY MAN

ALTHOUGH there is abounding evidence that the seventh day Sabbath is the sign of the true God and Christ's power, as manifested in the original and new creations, today we are confronted with the fact that the world has largely forsaken this divine rest day. Everywhere in Christendom men and women are resting upon a day other than the one sanctified and commanded by Jehovah. What is the explanation? Just this: Man has attempted to alter God's sign.

But the change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday was not made upon any divine or Scriptural authority. God does not alter His moral precepts. Solomon declares: "I know that, whatsoever God does, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God does it, that men should fear before Him." Ecclesiastes. 3:14.

David, speaking for God concerning Christ, says:

"Also I will make him My first born, higher than the kings of the earth If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.... My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips." Psalm 89:27,30-34.

"It is easier," said Jesus, "for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." Luke 16:17.

Paul corroborates these statements by declaring that the law is not made void by the gospel, but rather established. (Romans 3:31) A careful search of the entire Bible reveals no hint that God has ever altered any one of the Ten Commandments. Men, without Bible authority, have tampered with the law of the Most High in substituting Sunday for Saturday. History states that the change began to be made by some during the early centuries after Christ. But the first law requiring Sunday observance was made by the Roman Emperor Constantine in the year AD. 321. The Bible contains no law enforcing Sunday, the first day. Neither Christ nor the apostles ever observed Sunday; it stands only upon human ordinances.

The Testimony of Protestant Leaders

That the Sabbath was not changed by Christ or His apostles, many eminent Protestants agree. The belief that this is true is not confined to any one group of Christians. Practically the entire Christian world is united on this matter. Protestant and Catholic church historians bear united testimony to the fact that the change from Saturday to Sunday was made without command from Christ and without example from His disciples.

For the benefit of those who may not have ready access to the published works of these church leaders, we quote some typical statements from them on this very important point. We feel sure that the reader will be deeply impressed by the frankness of their testimony.

Doctor Lyman Abbott, in an editorial published in the Christian Union, June 26, 1890, said: "The current notion that Christ and His apostles authoritatively substituted the first day for the seventh is absolutely without any authority."

Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, Baptist author mentioned previously, asserts: "There is no Scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week."

Section ten of the "Augsburg Confession of Faith," a Lutheran document, as quoted in Cox's Sabbath Manual. reads as follows: "The observance of the Lord's day (Sunday) is founded not on any command of God, but on the authority of the Church."

In Rose's translation of Augustus Neander's "The History of the Christian Religion and Church" is this statement:

"The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a Divine Command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday." - Page 186.

Even after the observance of Sunday began, the Sabbath was still kept as before. Thus testifies the historian Coleman:

"But their Sabbath, the last day of the week, was strictly kept in connection with that of the first day, for a long time after the overthrow of the temple and its worship. Down even to the fifth century the observance of the Jewish Sabbath was continued in the Christian church." - Lyman Coleman, "Ancient Christianity Exemplified in the Private, Domestic, and Civil Life of the Primitive Christians, and in the Original Institutions, Offices, Ordinances, and Rites of the Church," page 527.

Sunday Instead of Sabbath

In the same chapter, the author also says: "During the early ages of the church it [Sunday] was never entitled 'the Sabbath,' this word being confined to the seventh day of the week."

Neander, one of the greatest of church historians, says:

"The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to, Sunday. Perhaps, at the end of the second century a false application of this kind had begun to take place; for men appear by that time to have considered laboring on Sunday as a sin." Neander, "The History of the Christian Religion and Church," page 186.

From A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities, we read:

"The notion of a formal substitution by apostolic authority of the Lord's Day for the Jewish Sabbath and the transference to it, perhaps in a spiritualized form, of the sabbatical obligation established by the promulgation of the Fourth Commandment, has no basis whatever, either in Holy Scripture or in Christian antiquity." - Smith and Cheetham, A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities, page 1,823.

Dr. Peter Heylyn remarks:

"Take which you will, either the Fathers or the moderns, and we shall find no Lord's day instituted by any apostolic mandate, no Sabbath set on foot by them upon the first day of the week." - Dr. Peter Heylyn (Church of England), "History of the Sabbath."

The Reverend R. W. Dale says:

"It is quite clear that, however rigidly or devoutly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath... The Sabbath was founded on a specific, divine command.. We can plead no such command for the obligation to observe Sunday.... There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating. the supposed sanctity of Sunday."-R. W. Dale (Congregationalist), "The Ten Commandments," pages 106, 107.

Also, Canon Eyton declares:

"There is no word, no hint, in the New Testament about abstaining from work on Sunday. . . . The observance of Ash Wednesday or Lent stands on exactly the same footing as the observance of Sunday.... Into the rest of Sunday no divine law enters." - Canon Eyton (Church of England), "The Ten Commandments," pages 62, 63,65.

The Reverend Isaac Williams says:

"And where are we told in the Scriptures that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day.. . . The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things, not because the Bible, but because the church, has enjoined it." - Isaac Williams (Church of England), "Plain Sermons on the Catechism," Vol. I, pages 334, 336.

The Methodist Episcopal Theological Compend, pages 180, 181, says: "It is true there is no positive command for infant baptism. Nor is there any for keeping holy the first day of the week."

Dr. Albert Barnes, the great Presbyterian commentator, states concerning Sunday observance: "No precept for it is found in the New Testament."

And Dr. T. H. Morer, another eminent church historian, adds:

"The Primitive Christians had a great veneration for the Sabbath, and spent the Day in Devotion and Sermons. And it is not to be doubted but they derived this practice from the Apostles themselves, as appears by several scriptures to that purpose." - "Dialogues on the Lord's Day," page 189.

Sunday Observance Crept in Gradually

The first recorded instance of Sunday observance by Christians which has any claim to be considered genuine is mentioned by Justin Martyr, AD. 140, when some Christians met on the first day of the week and read the writings of the apostles. This was more than one hundred years after the cross. He does not even intimate, however, that this day was looked upon as having any divine authority, either from Christ or from His apostles. About this time the great apostasy set in, which is foretold in Acts 20: 29, 30; 2 Tim. 4:3,4; 2 Thessalonians. 2: 3, 4. As we shall see later, this decline of spirituality led to the adoption of many new forms in religious practice which had no sanction in Scripture.

The pagan Romans who nominally accepted Christianity often remained unchanged at heart. Through them the "mystery of iniquity" began its work in the church, and the religion of Christ and the apostles began to undergo great changes. A Baptist historian says:

"Toward the latter end of the second century, most of the churches assumed a new form; the first simplicity disappeared; and insensibly, as the old disciples retired to their graves, their children came forward, and new-molded the cause." - "Ecclesiastical Researches," page 51.

Dr. W. D. Killen adds his testimony:

"In the interval between the days of the apostles and the conversion of Constantine, the Christian commonwealth changed its aspect.... Rites and ceremonies, of which neither Paul nor Peter ever heard, crept silently into use, and then claimed the rank of divine institutions." - "The Ancient Church," Preface, pages xv, xvi.

The unconverted pagans had for generations held Sunday as a feast day in honor of the sun god, and when many of them nominally accepted the Christian religion, they soon brought their Sunday observance into the church. Morer, a leading church historian, says:

"The Christians thought fit to keep the same day [as that observed by the Pagans], and the same name of it, that they might not appear causelessly peevish, and by that means hinder the conversion of the Gentiles." "Dialogues on the Lord's Day," pages 22, 23.

First Law Enforcing Sunday

The old Chamber's Encyclopedia, in its article "Sabbath," says:

"By none of the Fathers before the fourth century is it [the first day of the week] identified with the Sabbath; nor is the duty of observing it grounded by them either on the fourth commandment or on the precept or example of Christ or His apostles.

"Unquestionably the first law, either ecclesiastical or civil, by which the Sabbatical observance of that day is known to have been ordained, is the edict of Constantine, A.D.321, of which the following is a translation:

"Let all judges, inhabitants of cities, and artificers, rest on the venerable day of the sun. But in the country, husbandmen may freely and lawfully apply to the business of agriculture; since it often happens that the sowing of corn and the planting of vines cannot be so advantageously performed on any other day.'

"But it was not until the year 538 that abstinence from agricultural labor was recommended, rather than enjoined, by an ecclesiastical authority [the third Council of Orleans], and this expressly that the people might have more leisure to go to church and say their prayers."

In its article "Sunday," the Encyclopedia Britannica says:

"It was Constantine who first made a law for the proper observance of Sunday; and who, according to Eusebius, appointed that it should be regularly celebrated throughout the Roman Empire."

The Encyclopedia Britannica also declares:

"The earliest recognition of the observance of Sunday as a legal duty is a constitution of Constantine in AD. 321, enacting that all courts of justice, inhabitants of towns, and workshops were to rest on Sunday (*venerabili die solis*), with an exception in favor of those engaged in agricultural labor." Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. XXVI, eleventh edition, article "Sunday," page 95.

Robert Cox says:

"He [Grotius] refers to Eusebius for proof that Constantine, besides issuing his well-known edict that labor should be suspended on Sunday, enacted that the people should be brought before the law courts on the seventh day of the week, which also, he adds, was long observed by the primitive Christians as a day for religious meetings. And this, says he, 'refutes those who think that the Lord's day [Sunday] was substituted for the Sabbath -a thing nowhere mentioned either by Christ or His apostles.' "-Hugo Grotius, "Opera Ornna Theologica," cited in – "The Literature of the Sabbath Question," Robert Cox, Vol. I, page 223.

Not a Christian Act

Emperor Constantine's Sunday law was not based upon Christian teaching or doctrine, but upon the pagan philosophy with which he was best acquainted. Though nominally converted to the Christian faith, this ruler actually remained pagan at heart and during his reign did much to degrade the Christian religion to the level of pagan ritualism and teachings.

When his famous Sunday law was promulgated, he did not call Sunday the "Lord's day," but instead "the venerable day of the sun." He was not enforcing a Christian institution, but a pagan custom. The chief purpose of his edict was to enforce the heathen festival of Sunday upon Christians, thus bringing about a fusion of the two religions. He was laying the foundation for modern, spiritual Babylon, which was to be developed by the confusion that would result from the mingling of truth and error.

Not only do we see this semi-pagan emperor endeavoring to enforce Sunday observance, but he also tried to destroy the Christian Sabbath by ruling that the law courts should be open on that day and -that attendance there should be compulsory. This was definitely an anti-Christian act on his part and calculated to exalt pagan customs rather than Christian doctrine.

On this point Professor Hutton Webster states:

"This legislation by Constantine probably bore no relation to Christianity; it appears, on the contrary, that the emperor, in his capacity of Pontifex Maximus, was only adding the day of the Sun, the worship of which was then firmly established in the Roman Empire, to the other ferial days of the sacred calendar."- Hutton Webster, "Rest Days," pages 122, 123.

"What began, however, as a pagan ordinance, ended as a Christian regulation; and a long series of imperial decrees, during the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, enjoined with increasing stringency abstinence from labor on Sunday." - Id., page 270.

The Reverend Arthur Stanley declares:

"The retention of the old pagan name 'Dies Solis' [Day of the Sun], or 'Sunday,' for the weekly Christian festival, is, in great measure, owing to the union of pagan and Christian sentiment. With which the first day of the week was recommended by Constantine to his subjects, pagan and Christian alike, as the 'venerable day of the sun.' . . . It was his mode of harmonizing the discordant religions of the empire under one common institution." - Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, "Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church," page 184.

Catholic Testimony on the Change

So much for the testimony of Protestant church leaders. Now we turn to the writings of some of the world's most prominent Catholic authorities and hear their testimony upon the important question, "Who changed the Sabbath?"

First, we present a statement from an outstanding Catholic publication The Catholic World.

"The church took the pagan philosophy and made it the buckler of faith against the heathen. . . . She took the pagan Sunday and made it the Christian Sunday Hence the church in these countries would seem to have said, 'Keep that old, pagan name. It shall remain consecrated, sanctified.' And thus the pagan Sunday, dedicated to Balder, became the Christian Sunday, sacred to Jesus."- The Catholic World, page 809, March, 1894.

Index Canonum, containing in Greek and English all the 'canon laws' adopted at the church councils up to AD. 364, and a 'Digest,' by John Fulton, show that at the Council of Laodicea (AD. 364), the bishops still arranged for meetings on the Sabbath. 'Canon XVP says: 'The Gospels are to be read on the Sabbath day, with the other Scriptures.' But toward the close of the council, the Sabbath was stigmatized and forbidden in Canon XXIX. This was the first ecclesiastical law against the Sabbath. Constantine's civil law had preceded this church law by some forty-three years. Further, this Canon merely suggests their 'resting' on Sunday 'if they can.' (Pages 255,259.) The Christians were still doing their farm work on Sunday as on other days, but kept the seventh day holy. Even after this council, the Christians paid very little attention to its decree for several hundred years."- John Ley, "Sunday a Sabbath," page 163.

Prophecy Points Out the One Responsible

Before pursuing Catholic testimony further, let us pause to note that in the prophetic utterances recorded in the Book of Daniel, God clearly indicates that some proud world power would seek to change His law and also His holy time.

Under the symbol of " a little horn," the angel Gabriel explained to Daniel that before the time of the judgment a power would arise in the world that would exalt itself against the God of heaven and would seek to destroy both God's truth and His people.

"He shall speak great words against the Most High" declared Gabriel, "and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." Daniel 7:25,26.

"He shall think to change times and laws." This would, of course, be God's law and God's time. His words are spoken against the "Most High," and his efforts are to destroy the power and authority of the "Most High." This could best be accomplished by altering God's law and changing the Sabbath, which is a sign of His power.

The Sabbath is the seal of the living God. By it the great moral code of the Ten Commandments is stamped as the production of His mind. It shows Him to be its Author. It sets Him forth also as the great Creator and the Lord of heaven and earth.

No more effective blow, therefore, could be struck at God's power and authority than to tear the Sabbath seal from the Decalogue and substitute in its place a man-made institution, which has no rightful claim to holiness. This would be changing God's time and His law.

The only time which God especially claims as His own is the Sabbath. In the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, He declares, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Exodus 20: 10. In Isaiah He calls it "My holy day." (Isaiah 58:13.) Jesus claimed to be "Lord ... of the Sabbath"(Mark 2: 28), and John calls the Sabbath the "Lord's day."

The Sabbath, then, is God's time, and it is this that the power symbolized by the little horn was to think himself able to change.

Catholic authors clearly show that the papal church has completely fulfilled this prophecy. Frankly admitting that the Bible recognizes only one Sabbath, they claim that the church had the right and the power to change God's true Sabbath to another day of the week. This religious organization also claims that the act of changing the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday constitutes a sign of its power and authority in religious matters.

Thus, by the change of the Sabbath, a sign or mark of an earthly power has been substituted in God's law for the great seal or sign of Jehovah.

Catholic Testimony Continued

The Catholic Mirror, at one time the official organ of Cardinal Gibbons, in its issue of September 23, 1893, stated:

"The Catholic Church, over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday.... The Christian Sabbath is therefore to this day the acknowledged offspring of the Catholic Church; ... without a word of remonstrance from the Protestant world."

Some years ago Father Enright, a Catholic priest of Des Moines, Iowa, formerly of Kansas City, Missouri, offered a thousand dollars to the one who would prove from the Bible that Sunday is the day Christians are bound to keep. He declared: 'The Bible says, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,' but the Catholic Church says, 'No, keep the first day of the week,' and all the world bows down in silent obedience to the mandates of the Catholic Church.'

One who was until his death considered the highest Catholic authority in America said: "Of course, the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act: it could not have been otherwise, as none in those days would have dreamed of doing anything in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical and religious without her. And the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." - Cardinal Gibbons, of Baltimore, Maryland.

In a Catholic work called Abridgment of Christian Doctrine, page 58, appear the following questions and answers:

"QUESTION: How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days? "ANSWER: By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday."

And from A Doctrinal Catechism (Catholic):

" QUESTION: Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?

"ANSWER: Had she not such power, she could not have. .. substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority." - Stephen Keenan, A Doctrinal Catechism, page 174.

Another catechism, The Catholic Christian Instructed, page 202, says:

"QUESTION: What warrant have you for keeping the Sunday, preferably to the ancient Sabbath, which was Saturday?

"ANSWER: We have for it the authority of the Catholic Church, and apostolical tradition.

"QUESTION: Does the Scripture anywhere command the Sunday to be kept for the Sabbath?

"ANSWER: The Scripture commands us to hear the Church ... but the Scripture does not in particular mention this change of the Sabbath."

On page 15 of Volume Four of a work entitled "Clifton Tracts" (Catholic), in an article "A Question for All Bible Christians," the Sabbath question is dealt with as follows:

'You Catholics, then, have precisely the same authority for keeping Sunday holy, instead of Saturday, as we have for every other article of our creed, namely, the authority of 'the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth' (1 Tim. 3: 15). Whereas you who are Protestants have really no authority for it whatever; for there is no authority for it in the Bible, and you will not allow that there can be authority for it anywhere else. Both you and we do, in fact, follow tradition in this matter; but we follow it, believing it to be a part of God's Word, and the Church to be its divinely appointed guardian and interpreter. You follow it denouncing it all the time as a fallible and treacherous guide, which often makes the commandment of God of none effect."

More Catholic Testimony

In the Catholic Press, of Sydney, Australia, in its issue of August 25, 1900, there appeared this statement:

"Sunday is a Catholic institution, and its claims to observance can be defended only on Catholic principles.... From beginning to end of the Scriptures there is not a single passage that warrants the transfer of weekly public worship from the last day of the week to the first."

Cardinal Gibbons, in his book "The Faith of Our Fathers," edition of 1876, on page 89, says: "But you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify."

Again he says:

"They [the Protestants] deem it their duty to keep the Sunday holy. Why? Because the Catholic Church tells them to do so. They have no other reason." -The Ecclesiastical Review, February, 1914, Vol. L, Number 2, page 236.

The following questions and answers will be found in The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, by the Reverend Peter Geiermann, page 50, fifteenth edition, 1942, a work which received the apostolic blessing of Pope -Pius X, January 25, 1910.

"QUESTION: Which is the Sabbath day?

"ANSWER: Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"QUESTION: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"ANSWER: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church in the Council of Laodicea (AD. 336) transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." (The date usually given for this council is AD. 364.) The Kansas City Catholic, of February 9, 1893, said: "The Catholic Church by its own infallible authority decreed Sunday a holy day to take the place of the Sabbath of the old law."

Thus, God's prophetic Word has been fulfilled: a human power has arisen and has thought to change God's time-His holy Sabbath and His law.

But actually there has been no change. Not even God can alter the great moral principles of His eternal law. This law is the foundation of His kingdom. It forms the basis of His moral government, and it can no more be altered than God Himself can be blotted out of existence. Not a jot nor a tittle will ever be altered. It is as eternal as God's throne. It will constitute the standard of the final judgment, and when men stand before the great white throne, it will be their relationship to Christ and the great moral law that will determine their destiny. When men are called before the great tribunal of heaven and there must face the law of God's kingdom it will

be unchanged. Every word will be exactly as it was spoken by the lips of Jehovah from Sinai. The fourth commandment will still declare: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shall not do any work."

Shall we not then cast away the unscriptural practice and doctrine of Sunday observance and follow the Bible, Jesus, and the apostles in the observance of the true Sabbath, the seventh day of the week?

The great question is, What does the Bible say? If the Bible is not a safe guide, then we are all lost. There is no other anchor for the soul. There is no other ground for faith. Upon this old Book, which has weathered the storms of the ages, we take our stand. And by the grace of God, we look forward with all confidence to the glorious day when we shall hear the voice of Jesus calling to the keepers of the gates of Paradise, "Open you the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in." Isaiah 26: 2.

"For thus said the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep My Sabbaths, and choose the things that please Me, and take hold of My covenant Even unto them will I give in Mine house and within My walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters. I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants. Every one that keeps the Sabbath from polluting it, and takes hold of My covenant; even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon Mine altar. For Mine house shall be called an house of prayer." Isaiah 56: 4-7.

What says the Bible, the blessed Bible? This should my only question be; Teachings of men so often mislead us What says the Book of God to me?

Few ever study the law eternal,
Few ever seek to know or do;
Yet there are some who try to improve it, Touching the fourth
commandment, too.

How will you answer at Jesus' coming-
You who Jehovah's law construe?
Can you reply, "I've kept the commandments"?
Answer the question, each of you.
K E. BELDEN.

33. MAN IS AKIN TO GOD

SO GOD created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Gen. 1:27. This is the Bible record of the beginning of the human race. The method employed in man's creation is also explained: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Gen. 2:7.

Man is declared to be the creation of God. His ancestry stems not from the animal creation, but from the great Creator Himself.

Conflicts with Evolution

These declarations of Scripture are in direct conflict with the present-day theory of evolution through natural selection, which, though entirely unproved, is generally accepted even by members of the Christian churches.

Whether one accepts the theory of creation or the hypothesis of evolution, he, in either case, must have a starting point in his effort to account for human existence. He must go back to some point of beginning.

Begin with God

The creationist, accepting the Bible record as true, begins with God. He finds in God an all-pervading power and person, and from Him he reasons down through all creation. Since God was-all things were possible.

God claims to be the Creator not only of man, but of all the vast universe as well. "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Your hands." Hebrews 1: 10.

Of the vast work of creation, the psalmist said: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." "For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:6,9.

One of the prerequisites of acceptance with God is to "believe that He is." (Hebrews 11: 6.) Once this faith in God's personal existence is established in the heart no trouble is experienced in accounting either for life or for the universe. If God lives, and if He is

omnipotent, then everything in nature can easily and readily be attributed to His power and handiwork. He is the ultimate cause of life and of all things, for "without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1: 3.)

Where Does the Critic Begin?

But not only must the believer in the Bible have a beginning, so must the evolutionist.

Where does he begin? This question confronts him with the greatest difficulty, for since he denies the existence of a personal, all-powerful God, he must seek to find some other satisfactory explanation of life. This is not easy. Having discarded the Bible record, he has to rely upon presumption and speculation.

Often an evolutionist will say, "Let us suppose that far back in the remote ages of the past, matter and force existed. This force began working upon the matter, and the processes of evolution began." And there he has his beginning. It is based entirely upon a supposition, absolutely without proof or reason.

Why, we ask the evolutionist, do you not go back farther? Why begin after the appearance of force and matter? Who made the matter? Who released the force into the universe? Even these things have to have a beginning. But without God the finite mind cannot think farther back. It becomes lost in a great maze of speculation and finds no satisfactory explanation of life and nature.

How much more reasonable it is to begin with God and reason down, than with a few molecules of matter and try to reason up to a finished universe and man. Surely the former requires much less faith than the latter.

They Cannot Understand God

The critics of the Bible story of creation declare that they wish to be guided only by reason: they will believe nothing they cannot reason out. Therefore, since they cannot understand God nor His origin, they refuse to believe in Him at all. But this is not a valid argument. Every man living believes in things he cannot explain or understand.

Who of us can understand life? What is life? What is it that we have today, and tomorrow departs and leaves the body only an inanimate form?

"Consider the lilies," said Jesus, "how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Matthew 6:28,29.

Can anyone really understand the beautiful flowers and active animals, the flora, or the fauna of earth? And yet we all accept them, we love them, we handle them, we appropriate them to our use without question as to how they came into being.

It is as easy to explain God as it is to explain the beauty of the lily, which rears its snowy white head above the foul miasma of the filthy pool in which it often has its roots, and from the depths of which it draws its life.

It is true that men cannot explain or understand God. To be able to do so would reduce Him to their own level. Men would be as wise as He.

"Can thou by searching find out God? Can thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what can thou do? Deeper than hell; what can thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Job 11: 7-9.

God "dwells in a light which no man can approach unto." He has withdrawn Himself into His vast eternity, but this is no excuse for our refusal to believe in Him.

Everything in the universe testifies to the existence of a personal God. Said the psalmist:

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Psalm 19: 14.

The Missing Link

Rejecting the Bible teaching that man's ancestry stems from God, the evolutionist is forced to turn to the theory that both man and beast have a common ancestry. He reasons that at first plant life appeared, then came the lower forms of animal life, such as tadpoles, etc. From this beginning there is said to have been a gradual ascent to the higher forms of animal life: frogs, birds, four-footed animals, monkeys, chimpanzees, apes, and finally man. All appeared in succession.

The evolutionist concedes that there is a long gap between the ape and man, and for generations he has been frantically searching for something to fill this gap, in an effort to prove the theory of man's direct ascent from the animal creation.

Some years ago, while the author was in South Africa, Professor Dart, of the Witwatersrand University, sent out a claim to have discovered the long looked for "missing link" -the common ancestor of all modern species. His discovery was a skull, found in the lime beds at Taungs, Bechuanaland -a skull which Professor Dart claimed was of neither anthropoid ape or human being, but an intermediate between the skulls of both in structure and brain capacity.

There appeared at the time a full-page, illustrated article in the Cape Argus of February 7, 1925, under the caption, "Are These, Then, Our Ancestors?" The illustrations were of dinosaurs and a huge gorilla. The question in the title referred to these

animals. The implication was that if the skull discovered by Professor Dart was found to be that of a creature neither man nor monkey, but halfway between them in appearance, it would furnish ample proof of the theory that man is the offspring of the brute kingdom and that he did not have a separate creation as recorded in the Scriptures.

Up to that time, the Darwinian theory of the origin of man had been subject to challenge, because there was no tangible evidence anywhere that there had been a transition period when monkeys or some of the lower animals developed into men. The earth had been opened at a thousand places, and millions of pounds had been squandered in the frantic search for the so-called "missing link" between the ape and the

man, in an effort to prove the truthfulness of this much vaunted theory of natural evolution. The evidence had not been forthcoming.

For years-whenver some unusual skull or other strange bone was unearthed-there was great excitement for a time until the leading scientists were forced to agree that the new find did not quite bridge the gap between man and his supposed ape ancestors. The search went merrily on.

Then Professor Dart appeared with his Taungs skull.

But what had Professor Dart really found? In the same number of the Cape Argus as referred to was found the report of an interview with the English scientist, Professor Keith, who said:

"We want to know when Professor Dart's manlike ape was living.

My own opinion is that it is not perhaps so very old geologically. Then we have to consider what sort of beast it is that Professor Dart has got hold of... What he has discovered appears to be an unknown form of manlike ape. The photographs impress me with the similarity to the gorilla and the chimpanzee, and the impression I form is that it is really nearer akin to them.

"My opinion is that it probably does not lie in the line of human descent. Between the highest form of anthropoid ape and the lowest form of man there is a huge gap... But this find of Professor Dart's does not lie, I think, there, but on the border line among the higher apes."

So what Professor Dart really found was the skull of an ape. Perhaps a bit more manlike in appearance than the apes and monkeys we see today, but still only an ape. Professor Keith did not think that this ape belonged in the huge gap between the lowest forms of man and the highest forms of anthropoid apes, but rather on the border line among the higher apes. In other words, it was a fine specimen of monkey, but it was all monkey and not part man. The "missing link" was still missing. The search had to begin all over again.

Effort to Eliminate God

Why this frantic attempt to find a connecting link between man and the animal kingdom? It is an effort to get rid of God. The hypothesis that all forms of life came into being through a process of natural evolution, that species have resulted from natural selection, places God in obscurity-in fact, it makes Him unnecessary. It eliminates Him from the original creation and leaves man without proof of His power to regenerate the hearts of men. It lowers man to the lowest forms of life and makes, him a descendant of the brute, instead of a creature formed in the image of God.

For generations, evolutionists have compassed land and sea for evidence of transition from one form of animal life to another, but they have not found it. There is no such process; men all come into being by other means than evolution. This other way corresponds exactly to the Bible plan.

If the Darwinian hypothesis were true-that man had ascended from the brute creation-there should be evidence of it everywhere. All about us would be signs of life in transition from one stage to another. Wherever monkeys or apes are found, we should find many of them partly developed into men. The earth would be literally filled with evidence of this transition. But transition is found nowhere.

After His Kind

The principle upon which evolution is based makes every living thing to be of the same kind.

The Bible teaches, however, that there are different kinds and that everything reproduces only after its own kind. See Gen. 1: 21, 24, 25. We find that in all nature the declarations of God through the Scriptures are vindicated.

The kinds never cross. All man's efforts to make them do so have proved failures.

No man has ever produced a new species. He has never been able to produce a rose from a turnip, nor a pineapple from a stalk of corn. These are not of the same kind. Cattle have never been produced from sheep, nor fowls from swine. These also are not of the same kind.

It is true that man may, by cultivation and selection, increase the beauty and the size of the bloom of the rose or of the lily; he may make it variegated in color, and even change its shape and appearance, but it still is of the same family. It is only made to produce better fruitage of its kind.

Things Have Degenerated

The geologist proudly boasts that the fossils in the rocks forming the earth's surface will prove the succession of life theory, and yet every spadeful of earth turned over has given the lie to this assertion and has proved that God's law-that everything should produce "after its kind" - has held sway from the beginning. It has further proved that instead of a steady progression upward there has been a steady degeneration.

Thus, the oldest human skeletons found at Gibraltar, in Belgium, and in France are of size and shape to show that their owners had great brain power, and great stature. Professor Horatio Hale, of the Royal Society of Canada, said that cc primitive man showed the highest intellectual powers."

The geologist George McCready Price declares that "the fossils, regarded as a whole, invariably supply us with types larger of their kind and better developed in every way than their nearest modern representatives, whether of plant or of animal. Our modern plants and animals, whether in the sea or on the land, are degenerate dwarfs."

Thus, geologists have found that the common frog, for instance, was from six to ten feet long in his primitive state; and some fossils of frogs have been found indicating that the frog's head was about twenty inches in length. The frogs were more powerful than an ox of today. The ancient dragonflies had bodies from twelve to sixteen inches long and had a wingspread measuring two feet.

The elephant was originally about one third taller than the modern ones and about double their weight. The same can be said of plant life.

Sir William Dawson declares, "Nothing is more evident in the history of fossil animals and plants of past geological ages than that persistence of degeneracy is the rule rather than the exception." Then he adds, "We may almost say that all things left to themselves tend to degenerate, and only a new breathing of the Almighty Spirit can start them again on the path of advancement."

The eminent English biologist, Thomas H. Huxley, though a world renowned apostle of the evolutionary theory, admitted that the hypothesis cannot be proved. He declared, "In the present condition of our knowledge and of our methods, one verdict (not proved and not provable) must be recorded against all grand hypotheses of paleontologists respecting the general succession of life on the globe."

Thus, the world is in a maze; and men are floundering about trying in vain to explain the origin of things, but unwilling to accept the theory of divine creation.

Man is not a development of the animal kingdom. He has not been pushed upward by some blind power of force, behind which no mastermind was working. He has, instead, fallen from a high estate of human perfection, as a result of the transgression of the law of our great Creator.

But his case is not hopeless. The One who originally made him again offers to restore His image within him and exalt him to God and His throne. Though made a little lower than the angels, saved man will eventually be exalted far above the angels and will reign with Christ in His glorious kingdom.

Looking heavenward we Christians find inspiration in our lineage, realizing that though fallen yet are we the children of God.

Evolution Destroys Christian Faith

The teaching that makes man a descendant of the brute, instead of a creature formed in the image of God, at one stroke sweeps away the entire foundation of Christianity.

It destroys faith in the Bible as an inspired revelation and robs God of the glory due Him as Creator. If God's part in the original creation be successfully denied, then we are left without proof of His power in the spiritual re-creation.

It destroys faith in the record of the fall of man and makes of no value the plan of redemption.

It destroys the spirit of brotherhood and leads to war and strife. If men really are only the offspring of the brute creation, where is the harm in their destroying one another?

It destroys faith in immortality and the future life.

It makes death an eternal sleep and the resurrection of the dead impossible.

Should, therefore, the theory of evolution be proved, that proof would at once eliminate God and Christ and make the Bible a myth and a deception.

The Bible Is True

But this theory has not been and cannot be proved. The Bible is still the sure Word of God, and those who build their faith upon it shall never be confounded.

The Word of God will stand forever. All through the long history of the world, men have arisen who have vaunted themselves against God and have challenged His Word; but they have one and all come to naught. They have withered as the green herb." They have shared the fate of all who have lifted up their hands against God.

But God's truth goes on forever. It has weathered the storms and criticisms of countless generations, yet it shines brighter today than ever before-the Bible is the most-read book in the world.

So it is with those who believe God's Word. They, too, "shall never be moved"; they have built their house upon a rock, and it will withstand the fiercest storms of doubt and scepticism that can be launched against it.

A strong belief in God and His Word is absolutely essential to an understanding of the origin of man and of the vast universe. It is through faith that the Christian understands, that the worlds were framed by the Word of God. It is by faith that he knows that he was created in God's image.

Man does not spring from the lower orders of life, but he is the handiwork of the Almighty. "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; ... for we are also His offspring." Acts 17: 28.

Man is not mere dust of the earth. He is of royal descent. He is kin to God. He is greater than the beasts of the field, over which he was originally given dominion. He is God's masterpiece in the creation connected with this earth, and he had a beginning entirely separate and distinct from the lower forms of life. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and, thus, he who was formed of the dust of the ground became a living soul. He was God's kind.

34. JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

SO CHRIST was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9: 28.

When Jesus died on Golgotha, that act made possible the redemption of man from sin and from sin's influence and results. He did not at that time actually complete His redemptive work., After His resurrection He ascended up to heaven, leaving His followers behind in a sin cursed world. Most of the saints of past ages were still sleeping in their graves. He had definitely announced to His disciples, "I go to My Father," and to Simon Peter, "Whither I go, you cannot follow Me now; but thou shall follow Me afterwards." John 13: 36.

So long as Christian men and women are surrounded by sin and are subject to its influences; so long as the grave holds one sleeping follower of Jesus; so long as the curse continues to rest upon the earth; just so long the plan of human redemption is not complete.

God's plan to save man incorporated more than the idea of forgiveness for sin and victory over it. It involved the restoration of man's Eden home, the resurrection of the body, the bestowal of immortality, and the complete destruction of Satan, sin, and sinners. It was to rid the universe of the curse and of all its baleful results.

"We ourselves," sighed the Apostle Paul, "groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Romans 8: 23, RV. And again, "Christ also is the head of the church, being Himself the savior of the body." Ephesians 5: 23, RV. "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Romans 16: 20, RV. "And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." Micah 4:8.

These things were not accomplished at the time of Christ's first advent. His death made their realization possible but did not actually accomplish the fact. The bodies of the dead are still in their graves. Satan continues to go about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The earth is still filled with violence, and the first dominion, lost by man, has not been restored. It is still in the hands of the wicked.

The plan of redemption is, therefore, an unfinished task; and were Jesus forever to remain away from the world, its provisions would never be carried to fruition.

But Jesus is coming again! Oh, glorious truth! This is the greatest news of all time. Note again His parting message to His disciples, so feelingly spoken just before He was separated from them by His ascension to heaven:

"Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." John 14: 1-3.

Yes, Jesus will come again. This is the sweetest message that ever fell upon human ears. He is coming "without sin unto salvation." That is, He will not come this time as a sin bearer, to suffer and die in man's behalf. That He did once and forever, when He gave His life on Calvary. (See Romans 6: 9, 10; Hebrews 7: 27.) But He will come this time to bring the fullness of salvation to His people. He will come to finish His work of redemption.

A Literal Coming

Christ's return will not be in secret. His ascension was a literal event, and so will be His second coming. His disciples beheld Him as He went away, until a cloud enveloped Him and received Him out of their sight. Angels from heaven, who appeared to the sorrowing spectators, declared that He would return in the same manner as they had seen Him go away.

"And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, You

men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven." Acts. 1: 9-11.

Testimony that Jesus will return personally, visibly, and literally abounds everywhere in the Scriptures. John declares that the event will be visible to every eye: "Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all people of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." Revelation 1:7. Jesus Himself, speaking of this momentous event, likens it to the flashing of lightning.

"For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24: 27 3 30.

Not as a babe lying quietly in an obscure Bethlehem manger will He come, but as a mighty king and conqueror. In His train will follow all the heavenly host.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Revelation 19: 11-16.

All Shall See Him

Those who are alive at Christ's return will not need to depend upon wise men from the East to tell them they have seen His star, nor shepherds from the hills to tell of the angels' song announcing His advent. They will not require the daily press to announce the event by an extra edition, nor the radio newscasters to flash the news to the world. Ah, no! All the light and glory of the celestial world will suddenly burst upon our little Earth, and the name of Jesus will be breathed simultaneously by every lip. The glory of God the Father, which is so dazzling as to veil His person; the glory of Jesus, whose garments are as white as light, and whose eyes are "as a flame of fire"; the glory of ten thousand times ten thousand angels, each with a countenance like lightning, all will be displayed together and will constitute the most awe-inspiring scene mankind has ever witnessed.

Some will be looking for Him and will not be fearful nor afraid. They will look up into His lovely face and exclaim: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isaiah 2 5: 9. These are they who have accepted the gospel and have made their peace with God.

Many Will Not Be Ready

Not many will be ready to meet Him with joy. It is a straight and narrow way that leads to life, and only few find or choose it. Of the others it is said, "And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." (Matthew 24: 30.) The rich men will cast their gold and silver to the moles and bats (Isaiah 2: 20) and will plead for annihilation in preference to standing before the gaze of His searching eye.

During the mighty earthquake which will immediately precede His appearing, the mountains will be leveled, the islands of the sea will disappear, the cities of earth will be reduced to ruins, and the heavens will open as when a scroll is rolled together, revealing the King of kings seated upon a great white throne, attended by all the angels of heaven.

"The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man and every free man hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Revelation 6: 15-17.

What a sad spectacle! As in the days of Noah, men are eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, studying the stock market, seeking pleasure in the theatre and the ballroom, buying and selling, engaging in a mad race for gain, writing books against God, and making light of religion. Now they are overtaken by an overwhelming surprise. They suddenly realize that the one thing worth while in life is that which they have neglected or even spurned.

Behold the sad plight of the unsaved! They have refused to pray to a loving God who could have saved them, and now they cry to the inanimate mountains and rocks for shelter from His awful presence. They thus pass sentence upon themselves, and since they cannot stand in the presence of a holy God, they will be suddenly struck dead by the glory of His person. David exclaims: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him." Psalm 50:3. Paul declares that this consuming fire will destroy all the wicked who live upon the earth. (2 Thessalonians. 2: 8.)

The Dead Awakened

As Jesus nears the earth, His voice will ring out through space in a mighty rallying call to all His people. It will be as the call of a general to his army. Even the righteous dead will hear His voice. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," said Jesus, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." John 5:25.

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they rise. Awake and sing, you that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Isaiah 26:19. This awakening of the sleeping saints is the first great act in the closing drama that is to complete the work of man's redemption. The last enemy that God will destroy is death. Millions of His people are today sleeping beneath the sod, locked securely in the prison house of death; but they will be delivered at Christ's appearing. They will hear His voice and come forth. Satan's last shackles will be stricken from them. They have the victory over death and the grave.

Immortality Given at the Resurrection

At this time the promise of immortality is fulfilled. The Apostle Paul declares that we shall not all sleep. Some will live till Jesus comes. But all of God's people will receive the gift of immortality.

"We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Corinthians 15: 51-55.

Thus those who are called forth from the grave at the Second Coming of Christ, and those who are righteous and are found alive will suddenly be changed from mortal to immortal beings. They will be susceptible no longer to disease and death. They will never more grow gray and bent with age, but the bloom of youth will be upon every brow; and pain and death will, for them, be forever abolished.

"Blessed and holy is he," said the revelator, "that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ." Revelation 20:6. "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." Revelation 21:4.

The Gathering Time

This will be the gathering time when the saints of God of all ages will be gathered out of the earth for the heavenly kingdom.

"He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Psalm 50: 4, 5.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [margin, precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians. 4:15-18.

From the above it is evident that the feet of Jesus will not actually touch the earth at His Second Advent. He will remain in the open heavens, in the full view of all those upon the earth. The angels will gather His waiting people together to meet Him in the air. This will include both the living righteous and those who are raised from the dead. They are all now immortalized and glorified. When this gathering work has been completed, He will return again to heaven with His ransomed people. They are henceforth to dwell with Him.

This Same Jesus

When Jesus returns to earth, He will still be "the Son of man." It will be Jesus in the flesh. The angels from heaven testified to this fact. "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come." Acts 1: 11.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He was in the flesh. He had man's form. He was a human being. just before His departure, He had said to Thomas, who would not at first believe: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing." After doing this, Thomas replied: "My Lord and my God." John 20: 27, 28.

Again, to His disciples, He said: "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me have. And. . . He showed them His hands and His feet." Luke 24: 39, 40.

When God gave His Son to the human family, He formed a tie between Himself and man that can never be broken. The gift has never been recalled. He is still "the man" Christ Jesus.

Even after His resurrection, Jesus retained His human form and convinced His disciples that His personality and humanity were real. He was still our kin. He ascended to heaven as a man. He appeared before God as a member of the human race-as a kind of first fruits of those who will be redeemed through Him.

When Jesus comes to earth the second time, He will be as He was when He went away. It will be the same Jesus. He will come as a glorified man-as king of the human race.

In the Bible, Jesus is called the second Adam. After Adam's sin, He became the Mediator for the human race, and as such He is to remain until His Second Coming. We are not, therefore looking for a stranger, but for the head of our family to return and deliver us from the bondage of sin and death.

Men Saved in the Flesh

If Jesus is to appear in the flesh, it follows that His people also will be redeemed in the flesh. This clearly was Job's expectation, for we hear him say:

"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Job 19: 25-27.

David also looked forward to this personal, literal salvation, when he sang: "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." Psalm 17: 15.

Men and women who are redeemed from the earth will continue to be real people. Men will never become angels, nor members of any race other than the human. Angels are of another group. They do not belong to man's order. The gospel was never given to change men into a different order of being, but rather to change sinful men into righteous men. Men will be restored to that perfect state of manhood which was given to the first pair in Eden, but they will still be men and women.

The results of the curse of sin will be left in the grave. The corruption wrought by sin and disease will give place to incorruption. Mortality will be replaced by immortality. The saved will all be changed, but they will still be human beings, just as Christ is. He is our kin.

Someone, perchance, may be troubled at this point over the words of Paul, where he declares: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption." 1 Corinthians 15: 50.

The meaning here is not difficult to ascertain. It is true that flesh and blood do not inherit the kingdom of God. We become members of God's kingdom by a spiritual inheritance, not a fleshly.

By our first, or natural, birth, we inherit things in this earth, but, not things in heaven. It is only through the new birth that we become children and heirs of God. When we are born again through the operation of His Spirit upon the heart, we then have a birthright to His riches in glory and a home in His kingdom. We are born into His family, and what He possesses becomes ours. See Romans 8: 17-19.

But this does not mean that flesh and blood will be banished from God's kingdom. Quite to the contrary. The spiritual birth gives us-in the flesh a right to the tree of life and to enter through the pearly gates into the city and Paradise of God.

The Blessed Hope

Oh! How we ought to love His appearing! To the Apostle Paul, it was "the blessed hope."

"For the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." Titus 2: 11-13. To Job it was to be the day of release from the grave and of beholding his Redeemer face to face.

"If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of thy appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Your hands." Job 14: 14, 15.

To the beloved John, it was to be the final answer to the secret longing of his inmost heart; for as he closes the Book of Inspiration, hear him breathing forth the prayer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Revelation 22:20.

To Jesus it is to be the time of reunion with His people. "That where I am, there you may be also" was the expressed desire of His heart. To the righteous dead, it will be the day of release from the tomb.

To all Christ's followers, it will be the day of all days. The families of earth, torn asunder by death, will be united once more. They will receive from His hand the wondrous gift of immortality and be welcomed to the everlasting kingdom of God. It will be their coronation day. It will be the fruition of the hopes of God's people in all ages.

In the light of these solemn considerations, our one all absorbing interest should be centered in making a suitable preparation for the glorious appearing of our Redeemer. "Be you also ready," warned Jesus, "for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes." Matthew 24:44.

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch

you therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21: 34-36.

Many are sleeping whose years have been few, Resting in peace beneath the daisies and dew, Stricken in childhood, in darkness they lie, Waiting the trump that shall sound from the sky, Waiting the time when the Savior, in love, Opens their prison and calls them above; Lips that are silent shall burst into song; Life shall be given them, blissful and long.

Many who have perished by battle and sword, Wait now in silence the call of the Lord, Sleeping in hope beneath the storm or the sun, Calmly they rest, with their life journey done, Lying on shores where the angry waves sweep, Ocean's loud thunder disturbs not their sleep, Resting on hillsides, still and alone, Waiting the call from the King on His throne.

Hands that were palsied and heads that were gray

Sank to their rest as the light faded away, Sank to the silence so long and so deep
That none but the Savior can waken from sleep, Passed from a world that shall know them no more, Calmly they're waiting for heaven's bright shore, Resting in peace till the trump shall resound, Waking to life from their couch in the ground.

Heads that were heavy and hands that were worn, Feet that the thorns of the journey had torn, Eyes that were sunken, and dim with their tears, Waken no more till the Master appears; Infant and sire lie low in the dust
Till the voice of the Life-giver wakens the just,
And the voice of the trumpet peals out from the skies, And the righteous immortal in glory shall rise.

-L. D. SANTEE.

Bible Study Summary

Before Jesus; ascended to heaven, what definite promise did He make to His disciples? "I will come again." John 14: 3.

What assurance was given to the disciples as they watched their ascending Lord disappear into heaven?

"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:11. See verses 9 and 10.

Will His coming be secret?

"Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all peoples of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." Revelation 1: 7.

What glory will attend the person of Jesus when He comes?

"For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." Luke 9: 26.

Will everyone be expecting Jesus when He comes?

"The day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." 1 Thessalonians. 5: 2.

"Therefore be you also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes." Matthew 24: 44.

Will everyone be taken by surprise?

"But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. You are all the children of light, and the children of the day ~ we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." 1 Thessalonians. 5: 4-6. 478

Will Christ's followers be expecting Him when He comes?

"Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9: 28. "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isaiah 25: 9.

What blessing is promised to those who are ready and watching for Him?

"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he comes shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Luke 12: 37.

What will take place upon the earth when Jesus comes?

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." 1 Thessalonians. 4: 16.

How will the dead be raised at His coming?

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." John 5: 25.

NOTE - Christ calls and awakens His people from the sleep of death.

Will those who are resurrected at the coming of Christ be real, flesh and bone people?

"Thus said the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon, you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live. And you shall know that I am the Lord." Ezekiel 37: 5, 6.

What will happen to the wicked at Christ's coming?

"When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven together with the angels of His power in flaming fire, to inflict punishment on those who ignore God, even on those who refuse obedience to the gospel of our Lord Jesus. Men who will pay the penalty of being destroyed eternally from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might." 2 Then. 1: 7-9, Moffatt.

"And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." Jeremiah 25: 33.

When the righteous are resurrected, what will then happen?

"Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Corinthians 15: 51-54.

What will Christ command His angels to do?

"And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matthew 24:31.

Where will the saints be gathered?

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians. 4: 16, 17.

In view of all this, what are we all exhorted to do?

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch you therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21: 34-36.

35. SIGNS THAT HIS COMING IS NEAR

AFTER Jesus had assured His disciples that He would come again, they came to Him with the earnest in enquiry: "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Matthew 24:3. Jesus' answer to this question was positive and clear. As recorded by Luke, He declared, "There shall be signs." (Luke 21:25.) This was an encouraging assurance. Christ's people would not be left in darkness concerning this crowning event in the work of redemption.

Comes Not in Secret

Since the visits of the Son of God to this earth are of vital importance to those who live here, they are not carried out in secret. Long before His coming, He makes strong announcements of His intentions and warns men everywhere to prepare for the momentous event.

Prior to Christ's first coming, He revealed through His prophets the very year in which He would be baptized and anointed and the exact time of His crucifixion. Had His people believed the Scriptures, they would have been expecting Him and would have made preparation of heart to meet Him. When John appeared in the wilderness of Judea, he announced with great earnestness and power, "The time is fulfilled." He realized that the hour had struck for Christ to appear, and he warned men everywhere to seek a preparation of heart to receive Him.

Most of the people were engrossed in slothfulness and sin. Their hearts were overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and with the cares of this life. They were filled with pride and self righteousness, and felt no need of a Savior who could deliver them from sin's bondage. They were not watching and waiting for His appearing; therefore, they were not prepared to receive Him when He came.

Just so it will be with the masses of humanity when He comes the second time. It will overtake them "as a snare" or as a thief in the night," and they will be taken "unawares." It will come upon them as an overwhelming surprise.

But it is not necessary that the people of earth be surprised by His coming, for "there shall be signs"; and these signs, if heeded, will clearly indicate the time of His appearing.

Yes, "there shall be signs." Signs where? There will be signs everywhere in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth. (Luke 21: 25.) Wherever one looks-in earth, sea, or sky-the signs of His coming will be on display.

These were Jesus' words. It was His divine prediction; and it is, therefore, with confidence that we may look 'for these promised omens that will reveal the time when His coming is due. The exact day and hour is not revealed, but so nearly so that His people may know when He is near, yes, even at the door. See Matthew 24:33.

Jesus personally revealed some of the signs of His coming, but not all of them. Others had long since been foretold by the ancient prophets. The Bible, from beginning to end, is filled with prophetic utterances foretelling conditions that will prevail on the earth in the last days. These conditions will constitute signs of His coming. Some of the prophets were led by the Spirit of God to foretell the entire history of the world, including the rise and fall of nations from the time of the prophecy to the end. The burden of every such prophecy was to warn men of that day of days and urge them to prepare to stand before Him.

Daniel's Prophecy

Thus it was with Daniel's prophecy which was based upon the great metallic image shown to King Nebuchadnezzar in vision. When called to stand before the king to explain the meaning of the vision, Daniel declared:

"Thou, O king, saw, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou saw till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors. And the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Daniel 2:31-35.

This was the dream. In interpreting its meaning, Daniel stated that the head of gold represented the empire of Babylon, over which Nebuchadnezzar ruled. "Thou art this head of gold." Verse 38.

"And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron." Verses 39, 40.

The second kingdom, represented by the breast and arms of silver, was Medo-Persia, which conquered Babylon in 538 BC.

The third kingdom "of brass?" was Grecia, which overcame Medo-Persia in 331 BC. And the fourth kingdom, represented by the legs of iron, was the "iron monarchy of Rome," which overthrew Grecia in 168 BC.

Then came the disintegration of the fourth great universal monarchy, as was represented by the ten toes of the image, which were a mixture of iron and clay.

"And whereas thou saw the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou saw the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou saw iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." Verses 41-43.

What a fit illustration is this of the breaking up of the great Roman empire into many fragments! Through internal disintegration, Rome in her later years lost her moral and political power and became a prey to the hordes of barbarians that began to pour across her borders about AD. 351. This started the falling apart, the separation of the weak from the strong; and in a short time ten separate and independent kingdoms were established on her ruins.

The ten kingdoms of western Europe, into which Rome was divided, find their posterity in some of the modern nations of today. The Alemanni were the sires of the Germanic race; the Franks were the forbears of the French; and the Anglo-Saxons are now known as the English, etc.

The prophecy indicates that efforts would be made again to cement these nations into another world empire, but that all such plans would fall. "They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men." Verse 43. This would indicate intermarriage among the rulers of the nations, which is exactly what has been done through the centuries since Rome's decline and fall. "But," declared the Word of God, "they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." Verse 43.

Christ the Next World Ruler

There are to be no more universal world empires "until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." Ezekiel 21:27. This is a declaration of the Almighty. Christ's kingdom is to be the next in succession. Hear it, as the prophet of God continues his interpretation:

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold. The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." Daniel 2:44,45.

This is God's program. Not a Hitler nor a Stalin nor a Hirohito, but the Christ of Calvary will become the next universal ruler. As He appears in the opening heavens, His face will far outshine the sun, and His garments will be as white as the light. His eyes will be as a flame of fire, and on His head will be many crowns. On His vesture, which has been dipped in blood, will be written in glowing characters, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." See Revelation 19: 11-16.

At that time the nations of earth will be broken in pieces, and become "like the chaff of the summer threshing floors," and will be blown away. Then they will be supplanted by the eternal and glorious kingdom of the Son of God. We are now living "in the days of these kings," and this is a sign that the time for the setting up of the kingdom of Christ is at hand.

Increase of Knowledge

Another sign of Christ's coming is revealed in the prophecy recorded in Daniel 12: 4: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

What an accurate picture this is of today! The increase of knowledge during the last century and a half has been phenomenal. Nothing like it has been witnessed since the creation of man.

If we go back 150 years, the world was about as it was in the days of the patriarchs. For thousands of years, very little in the way of advancement, improvement, or invention was seen. Then came the dawn of the nineteenth century, and the world seemed suddenly to awake from its long sleep. A new era had begun.

Between 1799 and 1825, five large Bible societies were organized in England and America, and the distribution of the Bible soon became worldwide. Knowledge concerning God's Word began to increase.

General knowledge has also increased. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, one invention has followed rapidly upon the heels of another.

Men traveled the seas in sailing vessels until Fulton's steamboat was launched in 1807. Now we have the mighty leviathans plying the seven seas and making all nations neighbors. The air has been conquered, and today men fly through the heavens at a speed of hundreds of miles an hour. Great airliners, now in process of construction, will each carry hundreds of passengers from continent to continent within a few hours.

Then there is the modern railway train, with its spider web like network of tracks covering the earth; the comparatively recent invention of the motor-car, which has now become an indispensable means of transportation; and scores of other machines too numerous to mention. The prophet Nahum was given a picture of this situation, and he described it in the following graphic language:

"The chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of His preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings." Nahum 2: 3, 4.

Note that this was to be seen "in the day of His preparation," or at the time He is preparing a people for His coming. The prophet Isaiah also speaks of this situation: "Their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots." Isaiah 2:7. Verses twelve, nineteen, and twenty show that this was to be the condition when God was about to arise "to shake terribly the earth."

This is the picture the prophets have drawn of the last days before Christ comes. This pictures our day. Today the world is on wheels, and those who must travel faster have taken wings and fly as the birds of the heavens. Men are running to and fro. The greatest human migrations in the history of man have taken place in our day. We are living witnesses and actual participants in the fulfilling of these prophecies.

There are other evidences of the rapid increase of knowledge. The telegraph, the radio, the wireless transmitter, electricity for lighting and power, motion pictures, television, and the telephone all are creations of our day. Finally, men have dug into the secrets of the Almighty and have split the atom, opening up entirely new vistas of possibilities of invention and progress never dreamed of by former generations. Knowledge is increased. We are in the last days.

Industrial Strife

Isaiah declares that we should look for the Lord at a time when the people of the nations of earth are associating themselves and forming confederacies in an effort to better their conditions; when they shall pass through the land, -hardly bestead and hungry,. . . and curse their king and their God"; a time when atheism and anarchy are rampant. See Isaiah 8: 9-22.

The Apostle James prophesied that in the days just prior to the Lord's Second Coming there would be "rich men" who would heap up treasure, would defraud the laborers, and would live in pleasure and wantonness while the poor cried for bread.

"Go to now, you rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, cries: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; you have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and killed the just; and he does not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husband man waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be you also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws nigh." James 5: 1-8.

The picture thus drawn, both by Isaiah and James, fits the present day perfectly. Just now the whole world is torn asunder as a result of bitter strife between capital and labor. The cry of the laborer is heard throughout the whole earth. The demand for bread, for better living conditions, and for the luxuries of life is becoming more and more insistent on the part of the producer everywhere. Industry is paralysed through strikes and industrial strife of every kind. According to The New York Times of April 20, 1946:

"Work stoppages [in the U.S.A.] resulting from labor - management disputes in 1945 totaled 4,750, with 3,467,000 workers involved (about 12 per cent of all total employed wage-earners). A loss of 38,025,000 man-days resulted. While the United States was at war, there were 14,731 stoppages, in which 6,744,000 workers were involved. (Workers were counted separately each time if they participated in more than one stoppage.) The result was 36,301,000 man-days lost."

The public, caught between the upper and nether millstones of capital and labor, has become restless and impatient almost to the point of desperation. The entire situation is ominous. But over the din of the strife and turmoil may be heard the clear voice of the prophet. "Be you also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws nigh." James 5: 8.

To the student of prophecy, this situation constitutes one more sign that Jesus is soon coming again; and this knowledge enables him to endure the strife patiently until Christ brings sweet release by establishing peace upon earth.

A Great Religious Revival

Isaiah predicted that there would be a great influx of people from all nations into the Lord's house (the church) in the last days.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Isaiah 2: 2.

This indicates that as the time of Christ's coming approaches, the church is to take on popularity and prestige in all parts of the earth. "All nations shall flow unto it." It will be a universal movement toward Christianity.

This prediction may presage a union of the world's great Christian bodies, which will bring a mighty influx of men and women of all nations into the church. Thus, Christianity will become popular. "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains."

But great care should be exercised in quickly drawing from this prediction the conclusion that these millions flowing into the church are true followers of the Christ. It is easy to follow a popular movement, even though it leads into the church. But being a Christian, is another thing.

Let us for a moment compare this prediction of Isaiah with one made by the Apostle Paul, when he took up the prophetic telescope and saw the conditions that would prevail in the last days:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents. Unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God: having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Tim. 3: 1-5.

But someone may say, How can both these prophecies be true? How can the church be exalted to the mountain tops, with the nations flowing into it, while at the same time formalism and worldliness prevail among those who profess Christianity? We answer: Isaiah's prophecy is not a converted world flowing into a loyal and righteous church, but a worldly, apostate church opening her arms to welcome those of the sinful world to her communion.

Popularity of the church has always been an indication of worldly conformity, not Christ likeness. There is no actual conflict between the predictions of Isaiah and Paul. Isaiah said that he saw the church expanding and developing rapidly on every side in the last days.

But Paul utters a warning: This increased membership and favorable standing on the part of the church will not make the world a safer place in which to live, but will greatly increase the peril surrounding those who truly desire to follow Christ. Nineteen terrible sins are catalogued as found in the lives of those who have "a form of godliness." The world and the church have become just alike. No distinction can be seen between her members and those who make no pretence of being Christians. They go through the religious forms, but the power of Christ to save from sin is denied and rejected. The church has become careless and worldly.

Here is a Bible pen picture of a popular, but decadent church. Religion has become a mockery and a cloak for sin. The members can drink, gamble, lie, steal, cheat flout the marriage vow and still remain in good and regular standing in the church. There is no resemblance to the Christ life in their lives. There is no passion for souls, no missionary zeal, no real searching after God.

This situation constitutes a grave peril. "Perilous times shall come." And said Jesus, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Matthew 24:12. Even those who are true must beware lest by beholding sin in the lives of other professed followers of Christ they become changed.

We think it is not necessary to try to convince the reader that these prophecies find a complete and perfect fulfillment in the very conditions that surround us at this time. These are the days of which Isaiah and Paul spoke; therefore, these are "the last days." The very spiritual decadence of present day Christianity is in itself a sign that the coming of Christ is near.

Without Natural Affection

One of the outstanding sins of the last days, as enumerated by Paul, is the loss of natural human affection. (2 Tim. 3: 3.) The "natural" order that God has ordained for men and women is that of monogamous marriage. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Gen. 2:24. This is one woman for one man so long as they both shall live.

But this order is rapidly being changed, until today the divorce courts are overburdened with the cases of those who are seeking the annulment of their marriage ties. Marriage is no longer considered a sacred relationship to be guarded and preserved. By many it is entered into carelessly and casually, and its bonds are broken without compunction. The San Francisco Chronicle of September, 1946, states:

"One American family broke up for every three-approximately -that were formed last year, the Federal Security Agency reported. More than 502,000 marriages ended in divorce courts in 1945, an all-time record representing a 25.5 per cent rise over the previous peak divorce year, 1944. The divorces were 31 per cent of the marriages, which totaled 1,618,331 last year, or about 8.7 per cent below Cupid's biggest year, 1942.

"The rate has gone steadily up since 1938, when 244,000 decrees were granted. Except for the depression years, the divorce curve in the United States has gone up virtually without interruption since the first estimate 77,062 -was made in 1906."

"In Marriage for Moderns, Henry A. Bowman states that the divorce rate in 1870 was 1 to about 34 marriages. By 1900 it had risen to 1 to 12; in 1930 it stood at 1 to 6. Currently it may be 1 to 4, or higher. Probably the flood of "war divorces" will boost it much higher in the next couple of years, and experts predict that by 1960 or thereabouts (after the flood has subsided) the normal rate will be one divorce for every two marriages-with the trend line still pointing upwards."- Francis Sill Wickware, Pageant, April, 1946, pages 5, 6.

Thus, God's order is being reversed. Conditions of our day again fulfil the prophetic outline. The breaking up of the home ties, the rush to the divorce courts, and the loss of proper regard for the vows of wedlock are "signs of the times" and among those that show that the time is rapidly approaching when Jesus must come and set all things right again.

Jesus Gave Signs

Jesus also gave several specific signs of His coming.

"Then said He unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." Luke 2 1: 10, 11.

How accurately Jesus described the things that have happened in this and recent generations! The most destructive earthquakes on record have come during the last one and a half centuries. Some of them are within the memory of those now living. One of the world's worst earthquakes dates back only to December, 1946. This took place in southern Japan just south of the city of Tokyo, which some years ago was almost entirely destroyed by another earthquake.

Famines and pestilence have followed in the wake of the great world wars to the extent that the loss of life by starvation and disease has in some countries exceeded that of the war.

The influenza epidemic came in the wake of World War 1, taking the staggering toll of 20,000,000 lives. Never had the world been swept by such a plague before. One authority stated at the time that "through Europe, America, Asia, and Africa, this fatal pandemic held universal sway."

Sir Hall Caine, the famous novelist, wrote the year following the war: "As if the elements were not cruel enough, war itself creates diseases. Partly from the new conditions of warfare, and partly from its churning up the earth, full of human remains, the war of the last few years has apparently liberated innumerable diseases which are now sweeping through the world." -Hearst Magazine, January, 1919.

Pestilence follows wars, and famine follows pestilence. World War II brought the climax. The worst famine conditions in the history of man spread over many parts of the earth, taking a ghastly toll of human life that has been appalling. Millions of pounds worth of food and clothing have been hurried into the world's famine-stricken districts through various government and church agencies in an effort to save life. But despite all that organized relief on a world scale could accomplish, the toll from famine and pestilence has run into many millions.

Predicting unprecedented famine and suffering for China in 1950, the editor of The Hong Kong Telegraph published the following statement in the issue of September 13, 1949:

"Predicting for China in the coming year conditions of misery and disruption on an unprecedented scale, foreign experts on Chinese affairs lay particular stress on the prospect of a great famine which, in their opinion, may be far more acute than that which ravaged the country in 1931-32. During those years, hundreds of thousands perished from starvation, brought on by natural disasters as well as by the depredations of invading Japanese forces.

"Floods last year and this year in the Yangtze basin have drastically reduced the rice output in this normally most productive area; similarly, floods have greatly curtailed rice production in the south. Floods and drought in Hopeh and other North China provinces have cut grain yields there as well. It must be remembered that, for decades, China has never grown enough food to feed herself. Since the end of the Pacific War, the shortage has been greater than ever. Despite government purchases, UNRRA, and other aid contributions, hunger has stalked the country from one end to the other. The civil war, spreading to more and more provinces, dislocating whole populations and interfering with normal productive activities, has made the situation much worse than it would otherwise have been. With the stoppage of foreign aid supplies, with the closure of ports to imports from abroad, and with inland transportation facilities-never at any time adequate or reliable-further reduced through war destruction and fuel shortages, the position is becoming grave in the extreme."

Distress of Nations

One of the outstanding signs mentioned by Jesus was that in the last days there would be:

"Distress of nations, with perplexity.... men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke 21: 25-27.

Again the picture is of our day! Were Jesus upon earth now, surely He could not portray twentieth-century conditions more accurately. Before the outbreak of World War II, Ramsay MacDonald, then premier of England, said: "The affairs of the nations have gotten beyond human control."

Sometime before his death, H. G. Wells, the great English writer and historian, wrote in the following gloomy strain:

"Destruction is not threatening civilization; it is happening to civilization before our eyes. The ship of civilization is not going to sink in five years, nor in fifty years. It is sinking now.

When the present Duke of Windsor was Prince of Wales, he gave utterance to the following doleful words: "We have before us today a world sick with fearful doubt, weary with repeated disappointments. . . . And we see in almost every land widespread distress and perplexity."

All this was before the days of the atomic bomb. Already men's hearts were failing for fear; already the nations were distressed. But now they are in a state of shock.

As a result of their success in splitting the atom, men are now prepared to destroy whole nations-men, women, and children-in a few hours. Because of this mighty discovery, the nations of earth fear and quake. Even earth's rulers declare that the end of civilization is clearly in sight. Religious leaders of the popular churches are predicting doom within the next few years, and scientists and statesmen are foretelling the end of the race.

General George Marshall declared in his biennial report, published October 10, 1945, that the harnessing of atomic power has brought on a "new age, . . . that the possibilities of the future are terrifying."

Later, President Truman warned that the "atomic bomb is too dangerous to be loose in a lawless world."

But it is loose. Such bombs are being manufactured in quantity and stored for future use.

In despair the editor of the Christian Century inquires:

"What does all this add up to? Is it not to the arrival in Europe of a new Dark Age, when the last controls exercised by an international order which has been disintegrating since 1914 are finally being destroyed? ... Here is a world in which terror is triumphant. Here is a world in which ruthlessness is the requirement of successful statecraft. In such a world, what can be ahead but

misery and anguish; a reversion to the brute; a society in which trust is unknown and men's days are lived under a continual and corroding fear."

It all adds up also to something else and very different. It means that the end is at hand, for Jesus declared:

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws nigh." "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke 21:28,27.

Signs in the Sun, Moon, and Stars

"And there shall be signs," said Jesus, "in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." Verse 25. 'Tearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.' Verse 11.

Just what was meant by this startling announcement was given in greater detail, when Jesus added: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24: 29, 30.

The tribulation here mentioned is the 1260 - year period of persecution of the church foretold in Daniel 7:25. The period, of persecution was to be shortened a little in order that some of God's people should be spared; it would stop a little before the 1260 years ended. This is important. Actually the period of 1260 years of papal oppression here referred to ended in AD. 1798, but the persecution largely ceased some twenty five years earlier, about 1770-1775.

It was "immediately after the tribulation" of those days that the sign in the sun was to be seen. Mark quotes Jesus as saying: "In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." Mark 13: 24.

On May 19, 1780, there occurred what has since been known as "the dark day." The night following, the moon had the appearance of blood. Those who have recorded this phenomenon declare that the darkness was so dense that one could not discern even white objects. It could almost be felt. White paper was equally invisible with the blackest velvet.

"The Dark Day, May 19, 1780 - so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England. In some places, persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barnyard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degrees and duration in different places. For several days previous, the wind had been variable, but chiefly from the south west and the north-east. The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known." - Noah Webster's Dictionary (edition 1869).

"The dark day of New England, so familiar to old and young, came May 19, 1780.... Near eleven o'clock, it began to grow dark, as if night were coming. Men ceased their work; the lowing cattle came to the barns, the bleating sheep huddled by the fences, the wild birds screamed and flew to their nests, the fowls went to their roosts. ... At night it was so inky dark that a person could not see his hand when held up, nor even a white sheet of paper." - History of Weare, New Hampshire, 1735-1888. (Boston Public Library.)

It came at the right time to constitute a sign of the coming of Jesus and to fulfil His word.

"And the stars shall fall from heaven."

On November 12-13, 1833, on the American continent, this prediction was also fulfilled in the mighty celestial display of falling stars such as had never before been witnessed by man.

Of the American display, we are told: 'From the Gulf of Mexico to Halifax, until daylight with some difficulty put an end to the display, the sky was scored in every direction with shining tracks and illuminated with majestic fireballs.' Agnes M. Clerke, "History of Astronomy in the Nineteenth Century," page 328.

"The morning of November 13, 1833, was rendered memorable by an exhibition of the phenomenon called shooting stars, which was probably more extensive and magnificent than any similar one hitherto recorded. . . . Probably no celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with so much admiration and delight by one class of spectators, or with so much astonishment and fear by another class. For some time after the occurrence, the 'meteoric phenomenon' was the principal topic of conversation in every circle."- Denison Olmsted, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in Yale College, in the American journal of Science and Arts, Vol. XW (1834), pages 363, 364.

"I witnessed this gorgeous spectacle, and was awe-struck. The air seemed filled with bright descending messengers from the sky. It was about daybreak when I saw this sublime scene. It was not without the suggestion at that moment that it might be the harbinger of the coming of the Son of man; and in my state of mind I was prepared to hail Him as my friend and deliverer. I had read that the 'stars shall fall from heaven,' and they were now falling. I was suffering much in my mind. . . . I was beginning to look away to heaven for the rest denied me on earth." -Frederick A. Douglass, "My Bondage and My Freedom," page 186.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. . . and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory." This is the next great act in the drama.

We have seen His signs; we are seeing them today. They are everywhere in evidence. We cannot possibly be mistaken. The return of Jesus is at the door, and our chief consideration in life should be to prepare to meet Him.

"And He spoke to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, you see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise you, when you see these things come to pass, know you that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Luke 21: 29-31.

If you could know that Jesus would appear Before another morn should
give its light, Oh, would your heart be filled with joy or fear, If you could
know that He would come tonight?

The things 'you'd do, the words that you would say, Perchance the letter you
had thought to write, How many plans would have to change today If you
were sure that Christ would come tonight?

How many acts would then remain undone? How many wrongs would
have to be made right, If you should meet Him ere another sun,
And knew for sure that He would come tonight?

How many things would you find time for then, Now crowded out or else forgotten quite The kindly deed, the hour of prayer
again Would aught be different, should He come tonight?
Some day that dawns will make all time as past; Then may we keep our lamps all trimmed and bright. Oh, may we live each day as
were the last, And ready be if Christ should come tonight! PEARL WAGGONER HOWARD.

36. THERE SHALL BE WARS

JESUS will return to the earth during a time of unprecedented war and conflict among the nations. It will be at a time of universal destruction, on a scale never witnessed since the creation of man.

In reply to His disciples' question, "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming?" Jesus answered in part, "And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars,. . . for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." Matthew 24: 6, 7. Jesus was not the first to mention this sign of His coming. All through the pages of Biblical prophecy, dire warnings of unprecedented bloodshed and carnage among the nations, merging into the great Armageddon just at the time of the world's end, are repeatedly predicted.

John the revelator clearly connects the judgment and the overthrow of all earthly rule with scenes of strife and conflict among the nations, when he declares:

"And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged. And that Thou should give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great. And should destroy them which destroy the earth." Revelation 11: 18.

Jeremiah, the prophet of doom, cried out, as he was shown the events that would characterize the last days:

"I am pained at my very heart; my heart makes a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou has heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment." "I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger." Jeremiah 4: 19, 20, 26.

It is true that there have always been wars between rival tribes and kingdoms, but not until the present generation has destruction ever been witnessed on the world scale here outlined. Those who have lived through World Wars I and II understand without the slightest difficulty just why the prophet was pained at his very heart. He had been given a preview of what to us has become an awful reality. It is in our day that this new terror has come upon the world something past generations never dreamed of.

The scenes of carnage that swept over the earth during World War II absolutely beggar description. The anger and hatred of the nations and the lust to kill and destroy knew no bounds. In some countries men acted like drunken demons in their wantonness and destruction of human life. The casualty list of World War I was said to have exceeded ten millions who were slain, maimed, and missing. The toll in human life of World War II has not as yet been ascertained. Perhaps the true picture will never be drawn. The slaughter was on too vast a scale. It included not only armies and navies, but entire populations. An accurate count of losses cannot be made. Unnumbered millions perished; other millions were driven from home and country and became vagabonds and wanderers in the earth.

Bruce Barton, in describing present-day warfare, is quoted as saying, "War is not the name for it. The name for it is Hell. Should we not recognize," said Barton, "that the old time warfare is gone; that the thing which will happen if nations fight again is just plain hell? Why not use the word hell in every sentence where war has been used?" Someone has estimated that more people were slain in this last war than during a period of 130 years before.

Commander Herbert Agar said: "If the European war had gone on for another six months, it is quite possible that this planet would have ceased to exist, because it was probable that someone would have learned to break the atom without controlling it." He also said: "There was a danger that the Germans would learn how to split the atom first. I sincerely believe that in a very few years human beings will know how to destroy the human race."

While Men Talk Peace

It is paradoxical that this unprecedented destruction should have been visited upon the nations at a time when there was a universal cry of peace and safety. But this, too, was clearly foretold by the ancient prophets of God. Isaiah declares:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come you, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people. And they shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah 2: 2-4.

It should be carefully noted that this is what "many people" will say. The same prediction is made by the prophet Micah, except that he credits these sayings to "many nations." See Micah 4:2, 3.

Never has God said that the nations would beat their swords into plough shares and their spears into pruning hooks. Never has He predicted that they would learn war no more, but He revealed that the people themselves would declare these intentions.

And this is exactly what we have witnessed. We have lived through the era of the International World Court and the League of Nations. Both of these great institutions caused hope to rise high in the hearts of men, as they gave promise of banishing war from the earth.

The Covenant of the League of Nations, which was signed by almost sixty governments, represented one of man's mightiest efforts to ensure peace and goodwill among men.

Then came the Kellogg Pact, known also as the Paris Peace Pact, which was an agreement entered into among the nations to outlaw war. This covenant provided:

"Article 1. The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare, in the name of their respective peoples, that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations one with another. Article 2. The High Contracting Parties agree that the settlement of all disputes or conflicts, of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means."

Sixty-one nations signed this pact, and cries were raised that reverberated to the ends of the earth:

"War is a thing of the past."

"This treaty sounds the death knell of war."

"For the first time in the history of the world, world - wide and everlasting peace is to be had." "War is banished from civilization.

Herbert Hoover, then president of the United States, declared: "We are at the beginning of a Golden Age." The preachers were preaching it. Statesmen were proclaiming it. The man in the street believed it. The heart of humanity swelled with hope that peace and tranquillity had come to our World to stay.

There Is No Peace

But God through His prophets had indicated that this peace movement would be short-lived. Through Jeremiah He had declared:

"For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." "We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!"; Jeremiah 8: 11, 15.

And again through Paul:

"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." 1 Thessalonians. 5: 2, 3.

Prepare War

But the prophetic Word of God goes further. It reveals not only the fact that there will be destruction rather than peace, but it also tells in detail how this is to be brought about:

"Proclaim you this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plough shares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all you heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord.

"Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen.... Put you in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, . . . for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great." Joel 3: 9-13.

So here we have the paradox. The people say, "We will not learn war any more; we will beat our swords into plough shares." But they do not as they say. As was stated by Alexandre Millerand, ex president of France, "We are marching to war behind the

banner of peace." While talking peace, they actually were beating plough shares into swords and pruning-hooks into spears. This is what God declared would be. This is exactly what we of this generation have seen.

We are told that World War I cost the United States alone some thirty thousand million dollars. That sum seemed colossal and staggering. It was feared, at the time, that under the financial load the nation must go bankrupt. But the sum proved later to be only small change. World War II cost the nation ten times as much: \$300,000,000,000 were expended during the years of terror that the second world holocaust raged. This country became the arsenal for the entire allied world. The New York Times of May, 1946, stated:

"America's wars have cost more than all the wealth the country has piled up since the Declaration of Independence, according to the Bureau of Economic and Business Research of the University of Illinois. Wars have cost the United States \$414,000,000,000. All the farms, homes, factories, stores, and other property of the United States are valued at \$300,000,000,000, the report said. For what the country has spent on wars, every family in America could have a new \$8,000 home, a \$1,200 car, and \$2,000 in the bank."

Beating Plough shares Into Swords

During World War II, the manufacture of agricultural implements and even household necessities all but stopped, in order that the nation's entire resources of money, material, and plant power and man power might be turned into channels of warfare.

Millions of old ploughs, tractors, engines, rakes, and harrows were gathered from the farms and shipped to the smelters to be melted down and converted into tanks and guns. The call of the government was for "total war," and so it was. The plough shares of the entire nation were turned into swords.

And so the Word of God by Joel was literally fulfilled. By this we know that "the day of the Lord is near." See Joel 3: 14.

Vast outlays did not cease with the close of the "hot" war. According to the news magazine, Time, Harry S. Truman, the then president of the United States of America, stated that the cost to the American nation for the next fiscal year of wars past and future will amount of \$32,000,000,000! Thus, more is to be spent in twelve months of the postwar period than the total cost to the United States of World War 1. So the beating of plough shares into swords continues apace, notwithstanding the fact that we have reached a temporary lull in the storm.

Atomic War

The closing year of the war brought the atomic bomb. This changed everything. Only two of these demon-inspired weapons were used in battle, and those in far-off Japan; but the effects of their explosions reverberated around the earth. An entirely new era in human warfare had dawned. Old weapons that had been produced at such tremendous sacrifice, were practically obsolete, and rearmament along new lines was undertaken. Mr. Truman, in a speech about this time, described the bomb as a "harnessing of the basic powers of the universe."

This mighty weapon, as used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, is said to have more power than 22,000 tons of TNT and more than 2,000 times the blast power of the famous British "12 Tonner," the largest and most destructive bomb previously used in human warfare. As these bombs fell, two of earth's great cities were destroyed, and the people of the world were shocked.

One writer described it as "hell from the skies." On September 11, 1949, the United Press released a report of a survey of the fatalities suffered from the bomb that was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, which revealed that 73,884 persons were killed. This is more than three times the original estimate.

In his speech on October 24, 1946, Mr. Truman warned that another war, now that the atomic bomb was available, would shatter the hopes of mankind and completely destroy civilization as we know it." A prominent journalist declared that by the use of the atom in warfare, it was now within the power, of man to produce the "chaos of creation."

The day Hiroshima was destroyed a prominent radio commentator announced to the world: "If we fight again, the next war will be the last chapter in the history of mankind."

The Very Reverend Charles Warr, preaching at St. Giles's Cathedral, Edinburgh, said that the atom bomb had plunged in the melting pot the whole setup of human affairs. Man might have turned a deaf ear to God's gospel, but he could not help having heard this explosion. The preacher maintained that unless war could be abolished, all that civilized man had built up would henceforth be exposed to the risk of annihilation.

Preaching at Brighton, the Bishop of Chichester said: "If man does not limit his powers of destructive invention, civilization is doomed, bringing in an era in which so-called savage, primitive people will dominate. It rests with men to choose between life and death."

Professor Neall Mott, an expert on the atom, in a speech in London, said, "The center of the atom bomb explosion was very much like the core of the sun; but if anything, hotter.

"It is said to produce certain death to any living thing within a wide radius of its center.

"Even those who were only slightly scratched died in agony days or weeks later.

'Post mortem examinations of some who died revealed that pernicious anaemia had been produced by a destruction of both white and red blood cells. That the marrow, liver, spleen, kidneys, and lymph glands were badly damaged even in those who, at first, seemed to be only slightly burned by the explosion but later sickened and died.'

The effects of the bomb upon the human body were uncanny.

"The Japanese reported that as a result of a 'second radiation' following the explosion, the green hills behind Hiroshima were turned brown several days after the atomic raid. Green rice fields five miles distant were also turned completely brown; that many of the wounded victims in hospitals became insane. Physicians said that they could find no remedy for the effects of the bomb.

"One survivor ducked for shelter, but was touched by a thin, bright, white ray which caused a burn on his arm. People ten miles away became paralyzed in the spine." - Sydney Morning Herald, September 5, 1945.

A graphic eyewitness account of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, written by William Laurence, science writer for The New York Times and special consultant to "Manhattan Engineer District," which developed the atomic bomb, has been released by the War Department. Laurence flew in one of two Super-Fortresses accompanying the B-29 which released the bomb, which was a different type from that dropped earlier on Hiroshima.

"I saw the atomic substance placed in the bomb before leaving," Laurence said. "It was not dangerous to handle, except under the special conditions produced by the bomb. Even then it yielded only a small fraction of its energy, which, however, was equivalent to 20,000 to 40,000 tons of TNT."

Giant Light Flash

"We watched the bomb fall. In spite of the broad daylight, a giant flash pierced our arc-welders' glasses and flooded the cabin with intense light. We removed our glasses, but a bluish green light still illuminated the entire sky.

"A tremendous blast wave struck the plane, which trembled from nose to tail. Four more blasts followed rapidly, each resounding like cannon and hitting our plane from all directions.

"A giant ball of fire rose as though from the bowels of the earth, belching enormous white smoke-rings.

"We next saw a giant pillar of purple fire shoot skyward at enormous speed, like a meteor coming from earth instead of from space, and becoming more brilliant as it climbed.

"It was not smoke, dust, or even cloud. It was fire. It was a living thing. A new species of being was born right before our incredulous eyes.

"At one time it assumed the form of a giant totem pole, with its three-mile base colored brown, its center amber, and its one-mile top white. But it was a living pole, with many grotesque masks grimacing at the earth.

"Finally, a giant mushroom shot from the top, which increased the height of the fire pillar to 45,000 feet."

A Sign of Christ's Coming

Can any candid mind question that the explosion of the atomic bomb constitutes one of the "fearful sights and great signs" which Jesus predicted would be seen in the earth just prior to His coming?

"And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." Luke 21: 11.

Bikini Test Increases Horror

The Bikini underwater test of the atom bomb proved to be even more terrifying than those exploded over the land. In describing this experiment, Joseph L. Myler, United Press staff correspondent, who was an eyewitness, said:

"The second Bikini test, in effect a depth charge, added enduring and spreading horror, with overtones of inevitable doom.

"Exploded below the surface of Bikini lagoon, it saturated with radioactive poison millions of tons of erupting water which descended in atomized form. It poisoned not only the waters but the very bottom of the lagoon, and the poison was spread to areas far from the burst by contaminated currents.

"Many ships that survived the air burst, even though seriously damaged, could have carried on afterward. Ships more than three quarters of a mile from the explosion suffered only slightly.

"But scores of ships too far distant to be damaged by nuclear violence in the underwater test would have been put out of operation sooner or later as a result of creeping sickness spread among their crews by radioactive fog and spray.

"And they would have been kept out of action for weeks and months. Forty-five days after Test Baker some target ships still were too 'hot' radiologically for crews to live aboard them.

"Moreover, changes in ship design, while useful against air blast, would have little effect on a vessel's vulnerability to radioactivity. Deadly emanations from split atoms permeated even the water-tight compartments below decks on Baker Day."

Worse Yet to Come

But the end is not yet.

Soon after the explosions over Japan, it was announced from Washington that Congressman Amends, a member of the House Military Committee, had told Congress that a super-atomic bomb had been developed which would make the Hiroshima bomb look like a small firecracker. "It is already possible," he said, "to drop atomic charges into our large cities and kill millions of unsuspecting inhabitants in one operation." -Daily Telegraph, Sydney, September 25, 1945.

Defensive Weapons

The creation of any new weapon of warfare immediately calls for the invention of some means of defense against it.

Already the scientific talent of the nations has been pressed into service in a feverish effort to find some means of protection against the atomic bomb terror.

The Washington bureau of the New York Herald Tribune is quoted as saying: "The navy is seriously concerned with the damage atomic bombs might cause the fleet in the future. It has perfected weapons which, it hopes, will prevent any atomic bomb laden enemy plane getting within ten miles of a battleship or carrier.

"The chief weapon is a long-range, radar controlled gun which, it is stated, is capable of locating and shooting down an enemy plane ten miles away, but the range may be extended 'with almost foolproof accuracy.'

"Another weapon is a pilotless aircraft capable of supersonic speed which can be sent out to intercept and destroy a hostile plane many miles from its objective despite evasive tactics."

Armament Race

And so the new race is on. It is reckoned by scientists that it will require from three to ten years for other nations to perfect the atom bomb, so that it will no longer remain an American or an Allied secret. Already Russia has announced her possession of the deadly weapon. When the European phase of World War II ended, it was found that the Germans were advanced far in their research along this line. In some respects their work was superior to that done in America and England.

Other Horrors

Nor is this all. Other horrible secrets were also uncovered. It is reported that a war gas one hundred times more deadly than mustard gas had been manufactured by the Germans as a final secret weapon to bring the war to an early end. Said the London Daily Express of September 4, 1945:

"Scientific workers at the I. G. Farben laboratories discovered this colorless gas, a single drop of which on the skin would cause complete paralysis and kill within twenty minutes.

"The Germans had 10,000 tons of bombs and shells filled with this liquid gas. The Farben scientists worked in special rubber clothing, which they changed ten times during each shift. In spite of these precautions, some workers were killed by the gas seeping through to their skin."

What a picture of horror to be drawn by so-called civilized nations that only a few years ago were signing pacts to outlaw war! Surely they have cried, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." Jeremiah 8: 11.

What Do These Things Mean?

What do these scenes of horror that have come upon us mean? George Bernard Shaw declared his belief that the atom bomb might well bring a sudden end to the world. At the United Nations' Conference held in San Francisco in the spring of 1945, General Smuts of South Africa said:

"Scientific discoveries have been made in this war which have not yet been embodied in war weapons, have not yet materialized in a munitions program-discoveries which, if any war were to take place in the future, would make this calamity seem small in comparison. Would multiply this calamity tenfold, or one hundred fold, and might mean the end of the human race."

In a later address, he amplified this warning with these solemn words:

"There can be no doubt any more that for us, for the human race, the hour has struck. Mankind has arrived at the crisis of its fate, the fate of its future as a civilized world. ... A third world war may well prove beyond the limits of what civilized society can endure, perhaps even beyond the limits of our continued existence as a human world."

At the surrender of Japan, General MacArthur said:

"Military alliances, balances of power, League of Nations, all in turn failed.... We have our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door."

Examples of Atomic Destruction

In Bible history it is recorded that some 4,000 years ago two of Earth's great cities were visited by a blast of devouring fire and brimstone, the effects of which were similar to that wrought by atomic energy. So terrible was the effect of the divine visitation upon these ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah that even until the present day the very ground where they stood is barren, as if some mighty curse still rested upon it.

Jesus in speaking of the world's end used the judgment visited upon these two cities as an example of the terror that was to come upon all the earth just prior to His second coming.

When, therefore, the atomic bomb fell upon the Japanese cities, the event constituted a clarion call to the inhabitants of all the earth to prepare immediately for the end of human rule and the appearing of the King of kings, who will establish His kingdom upon the utter ruins of worldly governments.

"The use already made of the atom bomb has shocked us all," says the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Fisher) in his diocesan gazette.

"Not only the Christian conscience but every conscience is afraid and ashamed that another long step has been taken towards the abyss. The shame of having taken it rests upon US. The question now, having looked into the abyss, is: Can mankind recover itself? Not if there is another major war, not if every nation secretly exploits atomic energy for its more efficient military uses against the day of another war."

The Morning Comes

Yes, these things have taken us another long step toward the abyss. The night of eternal destruction for the wicked is rapidly settling down upon the earth. The world is passing through its death throes. It is reeling to its destruction. But it will not be night to God's people. To them it will be the dawn of eternal day

"He calls to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning comes, and also the night: if you will inquire, inquire you." Isaiah 21:11,12.

Those events that bring night to the world will bring morning to Christ's followers. This night and day begin together. As destruction and doom come to those who have rejected God's grace, deliverance and immortality come to the righteous.

The prophet Joel, after drawing a graphic pen picture of" the final death struggle among the nations of earth, declares that all these things are but preludes to the coming of Christ to ransom His people.

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision [margin, concision, or, threshing]: for the day of the Lord is near Ill the valley of decision." Joel 3: 14.

"The Lord will be the hope of His people." In these fearful sights and great signs, they see the final omens of early and sweet release from sin and of full and complete salvation in the kingdom of Christ. As they see the iron and the clay of earth's kingdoms falling apart, the nations of earth crumbling about them, they confidently look for the new heavens and the new earth, which God promises shall supersede the old. "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows them that trust in Him." Nahum 1: 7.

Yes, the Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble. His name "is a strong tower: the righteous runs into it, and is safe." (Prov. 18: 10.) War, suffering, or even death itself cannot separate God's children from His love and tender care. "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me." Psalm 27: 5.

As Jesus foretold these very signs of His coming, He said to His disciples, "And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that you be not troubled." Matthew 24:6.

It is said that in the Indian mutiny, a group of English who were awaiting death in the Cawnpore prison pen were led by the Campbell children, a boy and a girl, in singing the soul comforting hymn:

"From every stormy wind that blows, From every swelling tide of woes, There is a calm, a sure retreat; 'Tis found beneath the mercy seat.

"Ah! whither should we flee for aid, When tempted, desolate, dismayed? Or how the hosts of sin defeat, Had suffering saints no mercy seat?"

Thank God, there is a shelter from the storm. When the world shall finally be swept with the besom of destruction, when the very foundations of the earth crumble beneath our feet, when the cities of the nations fall and "great Babylon comes in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath," His people will be safe in His hands. See Revelation 15: 19.

"Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you." Isaiah 3 5: 4.

37. ARMAGEDDON AND THE END

THE final conflict among the nations will be "Armageddon," known in the Scriptures as "the battle of that great day of God Almighty." While this battle is in progress, Jesus will come. In this struggle God, devils, and men will all act a part. Concerning this conflict, Bible prophecy makes the following startling announcement:

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Revelation 16: 12-15.

A number of astonishing features of this titanic struggle are here depicted:

- 1.The great river Euphrates is to be dried up. (Verse 12.)
- 2.The way of the kings of the East is to be prepared. (Verse 12.)
- 3.The spirits of devils will promote the struggle. (Verse 14.)
- 4.The whole world will be involved. (Verse 14.)
- 5.The military forces of the nations will be gathered together for conflict. (Verse 16.)
- 6.It will be the battle (or war) of the great day of God Almighty. (Verse 14.)
- 7.In connection with this struggle, Jesus will come to earth again and put an end to the rule of sinful nations. (Verse 15.)

The word "Armageddon" is properly spelled with an "h" at the beginning, "Harmageddon," and is so rendered in many English versions of the Bible.

The first part of the word, "Har," is the Hebrew word for mountain, and is thus rendered nearly five hundred times in the Old Testament. The last part of the word, "Megiddo," is generally understood to be derived from the word "Megiddo," which is mentioned twelve times in the Old Testament. This would make the complete word "Harmageddon" mean "mountain of Megiddo."

Since there is no literal mountain of Megiddo, this word must be understood to be symbolic, as are other names used in connection with the prophecy of Revelation 16.

We do read in the Old Testament of a place called Megiddo. This name applies to a plain or valley lying a little north of Jerusalem in Palestine and stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. In 2 Chronicles. 35: 22 this section is called "the valley of Megiddo." In Zechariah 12:11 it is spoken of as the "valley of Megiddon." This valley has, through past ages, been the battleground of titanic struggles between the nations of the Middle East. Great battles have been fought and won there. It has been the scene of great carnage and slaughter.

The historian George Cormack informs us: "Megiddo was the military key of Syria; it commanded at once the highway northward to Phoenicia and Coele-Syria and the road across Galilee to Damascus and the valley of the Euphrates.... The vale of Kishon and the region of Megiddo were inevitable battlefields. Through all history they retain that qualification; there many of the great conquests of South-eastern Asia have been decided. "-Egypt in Asia," page 83.

It was here that Barak won a great victory over the Canaanites. (Judges 4.). In this valley Gideon conquered the Midianites. (Judges 7.). Here Saul met his death at the hands of the Philistines. (1 Sam. 31: 8.). This also is the place where Josiah was killed by the Egyptians. (2 Kings 23: 29, 30.)

It was probably for the above reason that John, in describing the place of the final great conflict of the nations, coined the symbolic word "Harmageddon," or mountain of Megiddo, since the past struggles that had taken place in this Palestine valley were typical of the world-scale carnage and destruction that are to be witnessed when all the nations of the world go forth to do battle in the great day of the Lord God Almighty.

This will, no doubt, be the greatest military gathering of the ages. The exact alignment of the nations is not revealed in the prophecy, but we are assured that all nations, both weak and strong, will be represented. The way of the kings of the East has been prepared, and therefore their hordes are present. The heathen have been awakened and armed. The armies of the great Western nations will be there with their atomic bombs. None will be excused, for they must all be present when God makes a final settlement with the nations.

"For thus said the Lord God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink of it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among themTherefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus said the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink you, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.

"And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at your hand to drink, then shall thou say unto them, Thus said the Lord of hosts; You shall certainly drink. For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by My name, and should you be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, said the Lord of hosts.

"Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation. He shall mightily roar upon His habitation. He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, said the Lord." Jeremiah 25: 15, 16, 27-31.

"The Lord of hosts declares: from race to race calamity extends, a mighty storm is stirring from the earth's far ends." Jeremiah 25: 32, Moffatt's translation.

"Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come." Joel 1: 15.

"Blow you the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord comes, for it is nigh at hand. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; their hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations." Joel 2:1,2.

Euphrates Dried Up

The drying up of the great river Euphrates is said to prepare the way for the kings of the East to be present at Armageddon. In Bible prophecy waters symbolize peoples, nations, and tongues. See Revelation 17: 15.

This war of Armageddon could not be fought in any one small corner of the earth because of the fact that the entire world is to be involved. Satanic spirits are to gather the kings of the earth and of the whole world to battle. (Revelation 16:14.)

"And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." Jeremiah 25: 33.

No nation shall escape. The entire earth will flow with the blood of the slain. Nations will punish nations for their rebellion against God. None shall be spared. Through the prophet Joel the Lord declares:

"Proclaim you this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plough shares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all you heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be awakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

"Put you in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." Joel 3: 9-14.

Kings of the East

When in prophecy John the revelator speaks of the way of the kings of the East being prepared, he no doubt refers to the gathering of all the nations or kings of earth, including those from the Far East. It is to be a global war. "The Lord has a controversy with the nations." A whirlwind is to be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

John's special attention was doubtless called to the inclusion of the Eastern nations; on the other hand the attention of other of the ancient prophets, who also wrote of this titanic conflict, was called to the participation of the nations in other parts of the earth.

Thus Jeremiah points out that Egypt and other of the Middle East nations are to be involved. (See Jeremiah 25: 17-26.) He also mentions the kings of the North, and finally includes the world by exclaiming, "And all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth.... For I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, said the Lord of hosts." Jeremiah 25: 26-29.

The River Euphrates

The drying up of the river Euphrates is likewise to be considered symbolically. The drying up of the literal river could have little or no significance in the world wide events of the last days of human history.

Often the Lord has caused His prophets to use water in a symbolic sense and has very clearly indicated its meaning. For example, in Revelation 17: 1, John was given a vision of a corrupt power symbolized by a great whore sitting upon many waters. Then in verse fifteen, where the vision is being interpreted, the prophet is told, "The waters which thou saw, where the whore sits, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

Thus the prophet Isaiah used the waters of the river Euphrates to represent the nations of people living in proximity thereto.

"Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of Thy land, O Immanuel." Isaiah 8: 7, 8.

The river Euphrates waters that portion of the earth where the human family was cradled, and where the first of its nations were founded. The drying up of the river could therefore fittingly represent the overthrow of certain of the Middle East nations that would light the torch that would set the entire world on fire. This would prepare the way for the gathering of all the nations for world conflict, including those from the great Eastern countries, where they have slumbered for so many long centuries. This designation could include China, Japan, and India. Russia might also be classed as an Eastern power, and probably is included in this group, "the kings of the East."

Devils Act a Part

As already stated, it will not be human beings only who will engage in this death struggle at Armageddon. Both God and devils will act a part.

John speaks of seeing "three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet." Revelation 16:13. These three symbols the dragon, beast, and false prophet-are familiar figures of the Book of Revelation; and they represent all the false religious systems of the world, both heathen, and professed Christian. These religious forces, all under the control of Satan, will be prominent in determining the issues at Armageddon. It will be more than a political strife among the nations. It will also be a conflict between earth's great religions. We may say that it will be a so-called "holy war." Through paganism and the two great forms of apostate Christianity, the devil will succeed in bringing the entire world under his control; and as the time draws near for Armageddon and the end, he will use the mouths of these false religionists to accomplish his purpose in pitting nation against nation, and in pitting all the nations against God's church and people.

The spirits that speak through the mouths of these religious bodies, though they will proclaim themselves as being emissaries from God, are unclean spirits-" the spirits of devils." They will perform miracles. They will make a great show of power, even to the point of causing fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men. They will successfully deceive the nations.

"And he does great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do." Revelation 13:13,14.

These evil spirits are pictured as going forth "unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:14.

Today, as we stand at the eve of Armageddon, the leaders of earth recognize that already devilish influences are at work, making it impossible to bring order out of the present chaos.

When Ramsay MacDonald was prime minister of England, he commented freely on this situation. "It would seem," said he, "as if they were all bewitched, or laboring under some doom imposed upon them by devils or something else, going on and on until once again they are launched into war.... People are beginning to feel that there is something devilish in the operations now going on to increase armies, navies, and air forces." -London Times, July 24, 1923.

This is the exact truth. There is "something devilish" about all this carnage and bloodshed that has been visited upon the nations during the past few decades. The people have not wanted war. They do not want war now. Yet they have had no option. They have been led into it by mighty, wicked spirits, which they were unable to resist. The devils are already 'On the warpath. By them hatreds and jealousies that know no bounds are being engendered in the hearts of men and nations. Soon these will burst forth into a mighty flame, and the entire world, will be swept into the mighty holocaust.

The present truce that has been declared among the nations is merely a short breathing spell, during which new alignments will be made and new engines of war prepared. Already we can hear the rumblings of war and the tread of armed millions of earth's fighting hordes as they line up for the great final battle.

Armageddon is now at hand. The forces of evil are in Control. No power on earth is sufficiently strong to ward off this inevitable collision among the nations. It must come.

The Real Issue

The real issue at stake in Armageddon will not be so much material and international as spiritual. It will actually be a struggle between the devil and wicked nations on the one side and God and His people on the other.

The nations, now completely under the control of "evil spirits," having entirely rejected God and His truth and having persecuted those who still maintain the right, must reap their just reward for their sinful and rebellious deeds.

God Is to Fight at Armageddon

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

"He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure." "Thou shall break them with a rod of iron; Thou shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Psalm 2:1-5,9.

It is at this time that He shall "Put all His enemies under His feet."

As the prophet Joel described the gathering of the nations at the valley of Jehoshaphat, he also exclaimed, "Thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord." Joel 3: 11. As He comes down with His mighty ones, He will declare war upon all the wicked inhabitants of earth, who have rejected Him, and will visit them with utter destruction.

The mighty, flaming "sword of the Lord" will be unsheathed, and with it He will smite the nations and destroy them that destroy the earth.

"For I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, said the Lord of hosts. . . . The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; ... He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, said the Lord.

"Thus said the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." Jeremiah 25: 29-33.

Of this awful visitation of God's wrath, the prophet Isaiah speaks:

"For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the Earth for their iniquity: the

earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." Isaiah 26: 21.

"Behold the day of the Lord comes, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." "And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." "Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger." Isaiah 13: 9, 11, 13.

This is known as the day of God's wrath-His day of vengeance when He shall terribly punish the wicked of Earth and bring glorious deliverance and victory to His people.

Seven Last Plagues

In the Book of Revelation is found a prophecy of seven last plagues that God will pour upon the wicked of earth after human probation is finished. There it is stated that as the plagues begin to fall, the temple of God in heaven (the heavenly sanctuary) is filled with smoke. "And no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." Revelation 15:8. As the plagues close, a voice comes from the temple saying, "It is done," and the cities of the nations fall. See Revelation 16: 17-19.

These seven plagues, which will fall after the close of human probation, will contain the fullness of God's wrath against a world that has rejected Him. His mercy will have been withdrawn from sinners, and His vengeance will have full sway. It is then that men will find that He who is mighty to save is also mighty to destroy.

Solemn are the warnings that the time will come when Christ will no more plead at the mercy seat for the sinner. Before He destroyed the earth with the Flood, He declared, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." So it is today. God is long suffering and is not willing that any should perish. Yet there is a limit even to His forbearance. When that limit is finally reached, Jesus will lay aside His priestly robes, put on the garments of vengeance, and come forth to punish His enemies. At that time the mighty decree of Revelation 22: 11 will go forth from the throne. It will forever seal the destinies of all men. And it will prepare the way for the visitation of God's wrath upon His enemies without having it mingled with mercy. The day of salvation will be past. The time for a final settlement of accounts will have come.

Under the Sixth Plague

Armageddon constitutes the sixth of these plagues. It will be followed by a mighty earthquake, "such as was not since men were upon the earth," a great hail, every stone of which will weigh about one talent (fifty-seven pounds), and by the coming of Jesus. (Revelation 16: 12, 18, 21.)

When God arises "to shake terribly the earth," the so called impregnable fortifications will melt as wax. No power can stand before Him. As contrasted with Him, all the nations are but as a "drop of a bucket" or as "the small dust of the balance." He will turn the earth upside down, scatter abroad the inhabitants thereof, and make an end of sin. The conflict will be short; it will be decisive, and God will be the victor.

This brings us to the end. As this conflict rages, a voice from God's throne in heaven will be heard to declare with awful solemnity, "It is done." (Revelation 16: 17.) The history of nations will be closed. Man's misrule of God's earth will be over. The pilgrimage of His people will be ended; and Jesus, whose right it is to rule, will appear in His effulgent glory and establish His kingdom of peace upon the ruins of a rebellious world.

Where will you and I stand in that awful day of God's vengeance? The decision rests with us. For every man He has provided a way of escape. We still hear His pleading voice as He entreats us:-

"Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together. O nation not desired; before the decree bring forth. Before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. Seek you the Lord, all you meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Zeph. 2: 1-3.

38. DELIVERANCE AT LAST

THOSE who love and serve Jesus are soon going to heaven. The day of their final deliverance is just at hand.. Man's misrule over God's earth and people is rapidly nearing its end. The time has come for the Prince of Peace to come and take His people to Himself.

Christ's purpose in atoning for the sins of men was that they might be with Him throughout eternity. Eloquently He pleaded with the Father on that fateful night in Gethsemane. "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou has given Me, be with Me where I am." John 17: 24. It was the prospect of having this desire fulfilled that led Him to endure the shame and reproach of the cross. It was this that kept Him from turning back, when in the garden, as great drops of blood oozed from His brow, He drained the awful cup of bitterness that had been placed in His hands. With anticipation He looked forward to the time when He would have the privilege of presenting His redeemed people before His Father's throne as trophies of H's supreme sacrifice. Then He would see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. See Jude 24 and Isaiah 53:11.

Yes, God's people are going to heaven. The cross of Christ has reopened the gates of Paradise to men. The veil that has separated God from His people for six thousand years is to be removed, and they are once again to be restored to His hearth and home. The flaming sword wielded by the seraphim that have guarded the gates of Paradise since man's expulsion from Eden is to be sheathed, never to be drawn again. Man's period of banishment is to be ended. Only when this is accomplished will the plan of redemption be consummated.

Jesus, Is Coming

When Jesus returns for His people, all the millions of angels in heaven will accompany Him. (See Matthew 25:31) This is to be the chief event of the ages. John the revelator declared that there would be "silence in heaven about the space of half an hour". Seven days literal time-because the entire family of God in heaven will be on a tour to the earth to bring back the members of the family that have so long been isolated in an enemy's land. See Revelation 8: 1.

When the righteous dead come forth from the graves at the call of the Life-giver, it will be the angels of God who will gather them together.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matthew 24: 30, 31.

The Gathering of the Saved

What a gathering that will be! Our first parents, who were expelled from Eden, but saved by God's grace, will be there. Abraham, Noah, Job, David, and the apostles of Jesus will be there. Men and women of great stature from the early ages of earth's history will be there. The poor thief who received forgiveness as he hung with Jesus on the cross will be there.

Like the stars for multitude, shall they come from the north and the south and from the east and the west. Every tribe and nation of earth will be represented. For in all nations some have been found who were willing to accept God's great salvation. At that time all earth's artificial distinctions will fall away. Jews and Gentiles will be as one people. The slave and his former master will be on an equal footing. The rich will no longer have an advantage over the poor, for they will have all become one in Christ Jesus. These people, gathered from the four corners of the earth, constitute God's nation. They are the sons and daughters of God, and they will be bound together so closely by the cords of Christ's love that there will be perfect accord and unity among them. They are one people, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ... which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God." See 1 Peter 2: 9, 10.

Think of a company of untold millions of people, all of whom are upright, honest, and good-not a liar, thief, murderer, or drunkard among them. True, many there are who in the past were guilty of these sins, but they were saved from them through the grace of God. They are the overcomers. They, like Paul, have fought a good fight the fight of faith -and have become victorious through the power of Christ. Now

they are accounted righteous and are able to take their places among the redeemed host. They are fit to dwell even with angels, yea, to live in the very presence of God and His Son. And they are now going home! They are about to leave behind them all earth's sorrows, perplexities, and cares and go to dwell in Immanuel's land. The breach that sin has made, and which separated men from God, is removed; and the saved will spend an eternity basking in the sunlight of His presence.

In Immanuel's land they will not be serfs, but kings and priests. Their former humiliation, which resulted from sin, is changed into marvelous exaltation; for they are to be higher than the angels who have never fallen into sin. Jesus, their Savior and King, is also

their Elder Brother. He is of the same race as they, for He took upon Him the seed of Abraham. He recognizes these twice-born men and women from the earth, who have been saved through His sacrificial death, as constituting His nation. They will be dearer to the heart of God through eternity than any of the untold millions of created beings who have never experienced the bondage of sin; for those whom the Lord forgives most, He loves most.

The Procession of the Ages

The greatest pageantry of all time will be witnessed when Christ leads this triumphant company of the sons of God from earth to heaven. The rapture of the saints is not to be secret. Far from it! God will make of this event the most wonderful demonstration of His power and glory that has ever been seen. Christ, who leads the mighty procession, will be clothed in His majestic robes and will be revealed in all His glory. As King of kings, and Lord of lords, He will ride forth at the head of His army. "His eyes" will be "as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters.... And His countenance" will be "as the sun shines in his strength." (Revelation 1: 14-16.) "A fire shall devour before Him," declares the psalmist, "and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him." Psalm 50: 3.

The saints, too, will have been glorified; and their countenances will reflect the glory of God, whose image has been restored in them. Their bodies, which were "sown in disolution" when they entered the grave, have been "raised in glory." Clothed in robes of light, they will present to the entire universe a demonstration of the transforming power of Christ the Lord; and they will be acclaimed God's sons, in whom He is well pleased.

For this crowning event of the ages, the entire universe has long been looking and waiting. In anticipation of this experience, the Apostle Paul exclaimed: "Why, what we now suffer I count as nothing in comparison with the glory which is soon to be manifested in us. For all creation, gazing eagerly as if with outstretched neck, is waiting and longing to see the manifestation of the sons of God." Romans 8: 18, 19, Weymouth.

As the redeemed host wing their way past planets and worlds, where the curse of sin has never come, they will be the objects of the admiration and wonder of their unfallen inhabitants. But they cannot tarry; for they are on their way to the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem. There a royal welcome awaits them.

The Gates Open

As they approach the gates of this city of wonders, the dwelling place of the mighty God, the voice of Jesus rings out over the multitude as He calls to His attendant angels, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in." Isaiah 26:2. At this command the gates of solid pearl swing ajar upon their glittering hinges; and Jesus bids His people enter, saying, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25: 34.

As the saints enter the city of God, they are escorted to the sea of glass, which is like crystal, and which is situated immediately before the throne of God. Here they take their stand in preparation for the most thrilling moment in their experience. They are to be presented to the Father. Jesus introduces them with the words, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given Me." Isaiah 8: 18.

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." "And one of the elders answered saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knows. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the

blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light oil them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Revelation 7:9,13-17.

The Song of Moses and the Lamb

This ceremony completed, the saints touch the golden harps that have been given them and lift their voices in singing. Their song is a song of victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. It is called the song of Moses and the Lamb.

When Moses and Israel, by crossing the Red Sea, were delivered from their enemies, they sang a song of triumph and praise to God, their mighty Leader and Deliverer. The same was evidently true of Jesus when, after meeting Satan upon earth's battlefield, He ascended to His Father as conqueror over all His foes. Just so, the saints will, in perfect unison lift their voices in song declaring how God, through Christ, has delivered them from the power of darkness and translated them into the kingdom of His dear Son. This

is a new song. Never has it been sung before, nor will the angels, who surround God's throne, and who have been accustomed to furnish heaven's music, be able to join in the singing; for this song tells of battles and victories which angels have never experienced.

Every trial that has been endured, every sorrow that has crowded the heart, and every victory that has been gained by faith in Christ will enable us better to sing that song of the redeemed. Heaven's arches will ring with the music. John describes it as "the voice of many waters." (See Revelation 14: 2, 3.) The inhabitants of the universe, together with the angelic host, will listen in wonder and admiration as the saved of God pour forth their praises to Him, who loved them and saved them with so great a salvation.

"At the sounding of the trumpet, when the saints are gathered home, We will greet each other by the crystal sea;
With the Lord Himself from heaven to His glory bids them come, What a gathering of the faithful that will be!"
SELECTED.

Christ Gives a Banquet

The climax to the welcome ceremonies will be the marriage Supper of the Lamb. Yes, we shall eat in heaven, and we shall have food there such as we never have had here. One of the most blessed promises of God's Word is that those who are saved will eat and drink at His table in His kingdom. See Luke 22: 30.

Jesus declared to His disciples on the night of His betrayal that He would not again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when He would drink it with them in His Father's kingdom. This, no doubt, He will do on the occasion of the great welcome feast that is to be held in honor of the redeemed in the city of God. This is the "marriage supper of the Lamb," because at that time Jesus is to be inseparably united with His bride, the New Jerusalem; and the banquet is in celebration of that event.

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Revelation 19: 7-9.

The banquet table will be laden with the luscious fruits of Paradise, fruits untasted by man since Adam was exiled from Eden. The fruit of the "tree of life," which is to perpetuate the lives of the redeemed, will be there. Man in his sinful, mortal state has not been permitted access to this tree, lest he should live forever in sin. When, however, sin will have been overcome and entirely removed, man will be given access once again to this life - sustaining tree, which still bears twelve manner of fruits and yields its fruit every month.

When the banquet is spread, the saints will be bidden to sit down to meat; then, wonder of wonders, Jesus, the Lord of glory, girds Himself and comes forth and serves them! (See Luke 12: 37.) This

will be the climax of their welcome home. As they partake of the fruits of Paradise, they realize that their long pilgrimage is ended, and they are home at last. "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Luke 14: 15. Yes, twice blest that happy man shall be; his cup runs over.

O God, my heart is crushed,
It bleeds beneath this fearful blow.
In one fell stroke it took his life,
And with this aching, bleeding heart
I feel as though My life must needs go out.

Oh, help this darkness-black, appalling night
That gathers so, and hangs so long,
O God, stretch forth Thy hand, and lead me now along.
I cannot see, I cannot understand,
Indeed may even dare not ask to understand;
But I must bear the sorrow, pain, and agony,
That comes with death.

How cruel is death!
And with its coming, death brings up the grave,
The insatiate, yawning cavern of a dark abyss.
Oh, help me now, and hold me firm,
Lest in my stumbling, blinding darkness I follow still the form of him I love
Into its depths.

O Man of Sorrows, friend of mine in grief, Soothe this cruel sting, and bring this heart relief. Beat back the powers that would engulf my soul, Make me Thy child, all purified and whole.

O thought divine, oh, help in such a time! The blessed Jesus trod this way of mine; He suffered agony, and sore oppressed, alone, Down to the grave, His precious form was borne;

But not to stay there, thank our God for that. The mighty forces of all evil beaten back, He rose a conqueror! over death and grave A mighty Victor, with a power to save!

He burst the portals of the silent tomb,
Scattered the darkness, and dispersed the gloom.
And in His love, He sends a gladdening ray
Of light and promise for the coming day
Of resurrection time.

O blessed hope! O animating power!
Keep me all true to Thee for that glad hour. Keep me as precious till
earth's time pass by, When we shall meet-this "well beloved and mine,
And with immortal forms, our lives shall be Spent with our Savior,
through all eternity. MABEL V. WHITE.

We Shall Grow Up

Compared with man in his original state as he came from the hand of his Creator, men of today are mere pygmies. Since the time of the Flood, the span of man's life has been gradually shortened from almost one thousand, years to sixty or seventy. Adam lived 930 years. Seth died at the ripe old age of 912, and Methuselah lived to be 969. See Genesis 5.

What is true of the shortening of the span of life is likewise true of man's stature. We read of men before the Flood who were of great stature, giants who were noted for their strength and endurance. In later times Og, king of Bashan, required a bedstead over thirteen feet long and six feet wide upon which to stretch himself. (See Deuteronomy 3: 11.) There were whole races of such giants, and the entire human family was larger, stronger, and healthier than at present. As one of the results of sin and disease, men have become dwarfs.

Provision has been made, however, for all these defects to be overcome after God's people are taken to their heavenly home. At the time of the resurrection, all, though perfect, will come forth the same in stature as when they went into the grave. The change from mortal to immortal beings will not alter their size. But God has provided that "the leaves of the tree" of life shall be "for the healing of the nations". And the promise is, "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." Mal. 4: 2.

Thus, the last vestige of the physical result of sin and sinning upon the human form will be removed. Then man will have been restored both spiritually and physically to his original state. At that time he bore the image of his heavenly Maker.

If we can gain access to heaven, nothing else matters! All trials, sacrifices, and persecutions for Christ's sake will fade into absolute insignificance as we enter the shining gates of Paradise. Of its glories and joys, the half has never been told. Its transcendent beauty has never been conceived by the mind of man. No human eye has ever beheld such grandeur. No tongue has ever been able adequately to picture its wonders. There will be music such as men have imagined but few have heard upon earth. Like God's love, it passes knowledge. It will, in fact, require an eternity for the redeemed to fathom completely the entire riches which the Father is waiting to bestow upon His redeemed sons and daughters from this earth.

Let us then hear the message of the Holy Spirit and lay hold of the "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled.... that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you." 1 Peter 1: 4. Then, "in the ages to come," He will be able to show to us and through us "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2: 7.

"The light of His love shines brighter and brighter
As wider and wider God opens my eyes;
My trials and burdens seem lighter and lighter, And fairer and fairer the
heavenly prize.

"The wealth of this world seems poorer and poorer As farther and farther it fades from my sight; The prize of my calling seems surer and surer As straighter and straighter I walk in the light."

-SELECTED.

39. CHRIST'S FINAL VICTORY OVER SIN

AT THE coming of Christ, mighty changes will take place upon the earth. Its cities will be destroyed, it will be entirely depopulated, and it will become a place of total darkness.

For an entire millennium, the earth's only inhabitants will be Satan and his angels. It is at Christ's Second Advent that Satan is to be bound and cast into what in Scripture is called "the bottomless pit." There he is to be held prisoner for a thousand years.

This binding of Satan is graphically described by John in the Revelation, where, in portraying the scenes clustering about the end of time, he exclaims:

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in His hand. And He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." Revelation 20: 1-3.

Of course, the angel here seen coming down from heaven is Christ, as He comes the second time to earth. Only He has the power to lay hold of and bind Satan. Only He can cast him into the bottomless pit.

The time has come for God to settle accounts with the great adversary. For six thousand years, Satan's nefarious work of deception and destruction has been going on, until the entire earth is corrupt and defiled. Now he must "lick the dust." (Psalm 72: 9.) "For He [God] will finish the work [margin, the account], and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." Romans 9: 28.

The sure promise of God to His people is:

"The captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contends with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Savior and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob." Isaiah 49: 25, 26.

Jesus comes and lays hold on the dragon, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, and binds him with a great chain. This is in direct fulfillment of the promise given in Eden when God declared that the Seed of the woman would eventually bruise or crush the head of the serpent. The time for the death blow has almost come; and in preparation for the final execution, Satan is bound and imprisoned.

Into the Bottomless Pit

The term "bottomless pit" used here has the same meaning as does deep in Gen. 1:2. There we are told that when the earth was first created, and before it was beautiful and perfected, it "was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

The expression in Revelation 20 refers to this earth when it has once again become a great abyss. At the Second Advent of Jesus, it is reduced to a pile of rubble. The Bible abounds with divine predictions of this impending destruction.

D-Day

As Jesus prepares to leave for the earth, a great voice proceeding out of the temple and from the throne will announce, "It is done." (Revelation 16: 17.) This closes human probation and the work of the gospel. D-Day has now arrived. It is time for the great invasion. Christ and His armies are about to go on the march. Now the softening up process begins.

"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." Revelation 16: 18, 19.

Warns the prophet Isaiah:

"Howl you; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travails: they shall be amazed one at

another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." Isaiah 13: 6-9.

Not only will the cities of the earth fall, but God promises to make the earth empty, to turn in upside down, and to scatter abroad the inhabitants thereof. During the mighty earthquake, the earth is to move exceedingly. (Isaiah 24: 19.)

"The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the, high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously." Isaiah 24: 20-23.

Here again the pit or abyss where Satan is to become a prisoner is mentioned. It is the world reduced to chaos. Upon the frightful scene, even the sun and moon seem to refuse to shine. They hide in shame, as it were, from the awful tragedy sin has wrought in the earth; and as a result the earth becomes a veritable dungeon. It is of this same terrible experience that Jeremiah also prophesied:

"I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it." Jeremiah 4: 23-28.

This is the bottomless pit-the dark, sunless prison into which Satan is to be cast as a prisoner, when Christ arises to shake terribly the earth, and when He prepares for His great invasion into His enemy's kingdom.

The Wicked Destroyed

Not only will the cities of the nations fall, but as the 'heavens burst asunder and reveal the returning Lord, the wicked of earth will find that they are not able to stand before Him. They will instantly perish upon the earth; they will be destroyed by the brightness of His appearing. (2 Thessalonians. 2: 8.)

"Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Revelation 19:15.

Thus, Jeremiah could truly say, 'I beheld, and, lo, there was no man'. for the earth will be entirely depopulated during the long period of Satan's imprisonment in it. The wicked dead will be strewn from one end of the earth to the other. They shall not be gathered, neither lamented nor buried, but shall smolder away upon the ground. See Jeremiah 25: 33.

Righteous in Heaven

But where are the righteous during this time of awful retribution? They are in heaven. As Jesus appears, they are caught up to meet Him and are evacuated from the earth. They do not belong in the environment of chaos caused by the wickedness of man, to which the world will be reduced at the advent of Christ. Until the time comes for the renovation of the earth to take place, they are to have a long sojourn in heaven. Of them the earth was not worthy, and they are delivered out of it.

No wonder the revelator exclaimed of the righteous: 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him' a thousand years." Revelation 20: 6.

Righteous Judge the Wicked

During the thousand years that God's people spend in heaven, they are to reign with Christ. There is serious work to be done in preparation for the final overthrow of sin, which occurs at the close of the millennium. During the investigative judgment (carried on in the heavenly sanctuary before Christ's second coming), only the cases of those whose names were written in the book of life were considered. The unrepentant sinners, who had never accepted the gospel, are still to be finally judged.

This is the work that will occupy the righteous during their heavenly sojourn. "Do you not know," asked the apostle, "that the saints shall judge the world?" 1 Corinthians 6: 2.

Even the fallen angels, who are now held "In chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2: 4), will be judged by the redeemed. "Know you not that we shall judge angels?" 1 Corinthians 6: 3. The full punishment of these allies of Satan is yet to be determined. How fitting that those who have been tempted and buffeted in the world should now be called upon to join in passing sentence upon these offenders and in determining their punishment.

"Let the saints be joyful in glory," exclaimed the psalmist, "let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people. To

bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all His saints. Praise you the Lord." Psalm 149: 5-9.

What a revelation of infinite wisdom is seen in this provision. Since the saved will have a part in passing sentence upon the wicked, since they will have freely and fully searched all the records, all will be absolutely satisfied that every case has been dealt with fairly and justly. The decision reached in each case will be theirs as well as God's. Now God can safely bring about the destruction of the wicked, knowing that in doing so He will have the approbation of all the subjects of His kingdom. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Romans 11: 33.

Bound by a Chain

The chain that binds Satan while he roams to and fro throughout the devastated earth during the millennium will not be of steel, but is a series of circumstances with which he will be surrounded. The righteous will be in heaven. They will be forever beyond Satan's reach. No longer can he buffet and tempt them. No longer will they suffer persecution at his hands. The prey of the mighty will have been delivered.

All the wicked will be either in their graves or lying dead upon the earth and will be beyond his reach. He will have no one to victimize. He will be isolated, and for one thousand years he and his allied angels will be confined as prisoners amid the revolting scenes produced by their rebellion and iniquity.

Satan to Be Loosed Again

Satan's work of deception will not be entirely over, however. Said the revelator: "He should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." Revelation 20:3.

The circumstance that will loose Satan from prison is revealed in verse five of this chapter. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Only the righteous dead arise at Christ's second coming. These are the blessed and holy. The wicked will all come up later in the second general resurrection, at the end of the thousand years. To this agree the words of Jesus:

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5: 28, 29.

There is, then, a resurrection of life; and there is a resurrection of damnation. These two resurrections are a thousand years apart. They are divided from each other by the millennial reign of Christ with the saints in heaven.

As soon as the wicked dead are raised to life, Satan is loosed out of his prison. Circumstances have been definitely altered as a result of the second resurrection. He again has subjects to work with and prey upon; and he resumes his work at once. "And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number, of whom is as the sand of the sea." Revelation 20: 8.

The City of God Comes Down

Just at this point a spectacular move is made in heaven by God. By His omnipotent power, He removes the capital city of the universe from heaven to earth, where in the future it is to be located. He chooses to change its location when Satan is busy trying to reconstruct his kingdom upon earth.

As John saw all this in vision, he described the scene thus: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Revelation 21: 2.

The Wicked Flee

As the wicked behold the city of transcendent beauty and glory floating down through the skies, they are seized with consternation, and try to flee from the scene. Speaking as if to the wicked who will witness this startling phenomenon, the prophet Zechariah declares:

"And you shall flee to the valley of the mountains. For the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, you shall flee, like as you fled from before the earthquake-in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. Zechariah 14: 5.

Jesus precedes the heavenly city as it descends to the earth, and instead of remaining suspended in the air as at His second coming, He will come all the way to the earth.

"His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." Verse 4.

The Mount of Olives will not be able to hold Jesus up. As His feet touch it, it will divide into two parts. A massive valley will thus be formed, and into this place the Holy City of God will settle. Thereafter the universe will be governed from this center, "and the Lord shall be king of all the earth.... but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." Zechariah 14: 9-11.

A Battle Is Staged

After the first fright has passed, Satan begins marshalling the nations of earth for a siege of the City of God. He is still the great deceiver, and now he succeeds in leading the resurrected wicked to believe that the New Jerusalem can be taken by force. They have stubbornly refused an inheritance therein, through the merits of Christ's atonement; but now, realizing what they have lost they determine to gain admission and Control by siege and battle.

Inside the city are the righteous, who have now returned to the earth from their long vacation in heaven. (See Zechariah 14: 5 and 1 Thessalonians. 3: 13.) Christ is about to give them the earth as an everlasting inheritance.

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." Daniel 7:27.

Thus, the promise that the meek will inherit the earth is about to be realized. Now they are to enter into their rightful possession. But Satan will not yield his control of the earth without a mighty struggle. He failed in the rebellion in heaven, he failed again at the cross, but now he is determined to make a final stand against God. Let us note again the words of John, as he describes Satan's actions at the close of the thousand years:

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." Revelation 20: 7-9.

Wonder of wonders! The City of God is under siege. What an array of soldiers is there! Many of the great generals of past ages lead the armies, which are made up from those who lived in their respective eras. Untold millions of men trained in battle encompass the great city. Surely such a force cannot be overcome. How can it be possible for one city, even God's City, to hold out against a world?

The great engines of war have been wheeled into position. The roar of mighty bombers, like a mighty cyclone, fills the air. The terrible atom bomb, the secret of which was discovered just before Jesus' Second Advent, is ready for its frightful work of destruction. No detail has been overlooked. He who is "wiser than Daniel" is ordering the battle, and he is determined that this time he shall be gloriously victorious. The siege is laid. The dogs of war, ready for the mighty onslaught, are pulling the leash. The command for attack has been given, and now the mightiest army ever marshaled upon earth, confident of early victory, begins to move toward the pearly gates and the jasper walls.

City Walls Transparent

As the mighty war machine draws near the city, a startling discovery is made. The jasper walls with which Jerusalem is surrounded are seen to be transparent; and from this forward position, those outside can witness the life going on within. Soon, to their utter astonishment, they begin to recognize familiar forms and faces among those who are moving about the streets of the City of God. Some see mothers or wives who are among the saved. Women on the outside may see their husbands. All the righteous of all ages are within. All the wicked are without.

As a result of this experience, the courage of the armies fails. The morale of the soldiers is absolutely destroyed. Their hearts fail within them as they now see and partially realize what they have lost. Like Esau they have sold their heavenly birthright for a mess of pottage a life of pleasure and sin. Instead of an attack, a mighty wail arises from their lips as they acknowledge that they are lost.

"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." Luke 13: 28. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." 8: 20.

This will be the last meeting of families of earth. Never again will the righteous and the wicked look upon one another's face. Between them, at this time, "is a great gulf fixed." (See Luke 16: 19-31.) No one can go in or out of the city. Probation has closed. God's nation is made up, and no further mercy will be shown the sinner. God is even now about to pour upon them the vials of His wrath and destroy them forever from the face of the earth.

All Must Confess Christ

But before the devil and his followers are put to death, they will, with unanimous voice, confess that God is true. This will be done within the hearing of those in the City of God and the inhabitants of the entire universe. They acknowledge that God is righteous, that they through rebellion and transgression have no claim upon immortality and the joys of heaven, and that God is justified, therefore, in destroying them forever from the face of the earth.

Instead of the noise of battle, there now is heard the wailing of the lost; and soon every knee in the vast throng is bent in adoration and acknowledgment of King Jesus, the only rightful Ruler of the earth.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him [Jesus], and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of, God the Father." Phill. 2: 9-11.

"For it is written, As I live, said the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14: 11, 12.

The Hour of Execution

Thus, God's justice is vindicated. The entire universe, witnessing the scene, has heard the testimony of the unsaved. They have confirmed their own guilt; they have pronounced judgment upon themselves. Never will God's right to destroy them be brought into question.

The hour of execution has come at last. God, who is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, finds it absolutely necessary to rid the earth of sinners. To permit them to continue to live would bring only continued misery to them and certainly no glory to God. His divine mercy, which is as fathomless as the sea, has at last reached its utmost limit. The foul curse must be removed from the earth,

and His universe must be cleansed of rebellion and sin.

There is nothing more God can do for the unsaved. He has poured out His life's blood for them, but they have spurned His love. They have "trodden under foot the Son of God" (by denying Him), have counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and have done despite to the spirit of grace. Now there is "no more sacrifice for sins." Christ will not die for them a second time. Nothing is left now but "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." See Hebrews 10: 26-31. At this time apply the words of the prophet:

"The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act.... For I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth." Isaiah 28: 21, 22.

Yes, the destruction of men and women will be a strange act for a God of love. But He has no other course. They have brought the wages of sin upon themselves. They have chosen to walk in the ways of death.

Fire from Heaven

Reverting again to the pen picture of these scenes, as drawn by the revelator, we are brought face to face with the final overthrow of the wicked as Satan's army marches forward.

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20: 9, 10, 14, 15.

This is the end of the wicked. Hell-fire, kindled here upon the earth, will devour them. They shall burn as stubble. As the fat of lambs shall they consume away. They shall be reduced to ashes upon the earth.

"And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth." Zechariah 14: 12.

"Your hand shall find out all Your enemies: Thy right hand shall find out those that hate Thee. Thou shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shall Thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men. For they intended evil against Thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform." Psalm 21: 8-11.

The saved, inside the jasper walls, witness the final punishment of the lost. Said the psalmist, "When the wicked are cut off, thou shall see it." Psalm 37: 34. And again: "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with your eyes shall thou behold and see the reward of the wicked." Psalm 91: 7, 8.

The Devil Destroyed

Not only will the fire of God bring about the utter destruction of wicked men, but also of Satan and of his angels. Isaiah, after taunting Lucifer regarding his self-exaltation and fall from heaven, concludes with the warning, "Yet thou shall be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." See Isaiah 14: 12-15. Ezekiel also foretells the end of the rebel leader in the solemn declaration:

"Thou has defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic. Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shall be a terror, and never shall thou be any more." Ezekiel 28:18,19. Though thou be sought for, yet shall thou never be found again." Ezekiel 26:21.

Jesus made it clear as He dealt with the question of Satan's destiny that the fires of hell have been prepared especially for the devil and his angels and that his destruction would be utter and complete. (See Matthew 25:41.) Contrary to a popular opinion, Satan is not the superintendent of hell, but instead he will be its chief sufferer. Since he is the great instigator of all sin, his punishment will be comparable to the degree of his guilt. He will be the very last to perish in the flames.

Eternal Fire

True, the fire with which the wicked will be destroyed is called "eternal fire." They are to go away into eternal punishment"; that is, it will be eternal in its effects. The punishment to be meted out to sinners is death, eternal death-not an eternal life in hell, but eternal destruction by the fire of hell, a destruction so complete that the sinner can never be brought back to life again. They will be as though they had never been.

The fact that the Bible speaks of everlasting punishment for the wicked has caused many to draw the conclusion that the wicked would continue to suffer in hell eternally. These have grossly misunderstood the teachings of Scripture. One text thus interpreted is Matthew 25: 46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

This verse teaches "everlasting punishment," but it does not mean eternal torment in hell. On the contrary, it means that those who suffer the second death will be everlastingly dead. "The wages of sin is death," and the second death is everlasting. From it there is no resurrection. They shall never live again. Thus, their punishment death - is eternal.

There is a vast difference between everlasting punishment and everlasting punishing. There will be no everlasting punishing. God is neither a tyrant nor a fiend. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and surely He would have no desire to continue torturing them forever. He must destroy them, in order to put down sin and rebellion and make the universe a safe and decent place for His people to inhabit. The sinner's destruction will be like that of stubble fully dry." They will consume as the fat of lambs; into smoke shall they consume away." (See Psalm 37: 20.) And that shall be their end.

Here the curtain drops upon an era of rebellion and sin. Christ the Deliverer has shown Himself mighty to save. His archenemy is no more. The results of the curse have been destroyed. Fire has melted and purified the earth. Once more the universe is clean. Once more perfect harmony is restored. Now Jesus is Lord of all.

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders. And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Revelation 5: 11-13.

Enthroned on a cloud, the judge will come. Bright flames prepare
His way;
Thunder and darkness, fire and storm, Lead on the dreadful
day.

No more shall bold blasphemers say,
"Judgment will never begin"; No more abuse His long
delay By carelessness and sin.

Then shall the Lord a refuge prove For all His poor
oppressed,
To save the people of His love, And give the weary rest.

Bible Study Summary

When Christ comes the second time, what will happen to the cities of earth?

"And the cities of the nations fell." Revelation 16: 19.

I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate;

yet will I not make a full end." Jeremiah 4: 26, 27.

To what condition will the earth be reduced?

"Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment." I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light." Jeremiah 4: 20, 23.

After the righteous are taken to heaven by Christ at His coming, how many persons will be left living on the earth?

I beheld, and, lo, there was no man." Jeremiah 4: 25.

What has happened to the wicked?

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." 2 Thessalonians. 2: 8.

"And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." Jeremiah 25: 33.

NOTE - The wicked will be utterly overwhelmed by the awful splendor of His coming and will all fall dead to the ground. (See 2 Thessalonians. 2: 8.) Unnumbered millions of dead of all nations will be scattered over the earth. There will be no one to lament them or bury them. Wherever they fall, they must remain until the second resurrection.

What will happen to Satan at Christ's coming?

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in His hand. And He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." Revelation 20: 1, 2.

After Satan is bound, where will he be cast?

"And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." Revelation 20: 3.

NOTE - The bottomless pit here referred to is the earth after it has been broken down, made waste and void, and when the sun no longer shines upon it, as described above. It will become a desolate dungeon, and in this abyss Satan and his angels will be confined for one thousand years. He can "deceive the nations no more," because the righteous are in heaven, and the wicked are dead upon the earth. Thus, he is bound.

What is to happen at the end of the one thousand years?

The wicked will be raised to life: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Revelation 20: 5. This is "the resurrection of damnation" spoken of by Christ, as recorded in John 5: 29. Only the righteous are raised in the first resurrection. See Revelation 20: 6.

How does the resurrection of the wicked affect Satan?

It looses him, for now he has someone to tempt again. "After that lie must be loosed a little season." Revelation 20:3.

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall he loosed out of his prison." Revelation 20: 7.

After the wicked are raised, what glorious event next takes place?

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Revelation 21: 2.

NOTE - Christ and the righteous return to the earth with the City of God.

When the wicked see Christ and the city, New Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, what will be their reaction?

They shall flee in terror. "And you shall flee to the valley of the mountains; ... and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." Zechariah 14: 5.

When Satan is loosed, what nefarious work does he begin?

"Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog." Revelation 20: 7, 8.

How many people are then subject to his deceptions? "The number of whom is as the sand of the sea." Revelation 20: 8.

What is the object of his deceptions?

"To gather them together to battle." Revelation 20: 8.

What diabolical attempt is made by Satan and his host?

They lay siege to New Jerusalem. "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." Revelation 20: 9.

As they surround the city, what scene meets their vision?

"You shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." Luke 13: 28.

How will they react to the situation?

"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Luke 13: 28.

As the wicked look upon the city and mourn over the fact that they are shut out, what terrible calamity befalls them?

"And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Revelation 20: 9.

"Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." Psalm 11:6.

What is created by this rain of fire and brimstone? A "lake of fire." Hell.

See Revelation 20: 10.

Who besides the wicked are cast into the lake of fire?

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." Revelation 20:10. See Matthew 25:41.

How completely will the fire destroy the wicked?

"For, behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, said the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Mal. 4: 1.

Will Satan also be destroyed in the fires of hell?

In Ezekiel's prophecy, Satan is referred to under the title of the prince of Tyrus; and to him God says: "I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shall be a terror, and never shall thou be any more." Ezekiel 28: 18, 19.

What is the death in the lake of fire called?

"And death and hell [the grave] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Revelation 20: 14.

Besides destroying wicked men and the devil, what else will the fires of hell accomplish?

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3: 10.

NOTE - The earth and the elements will be melted with fervent heat, and the works of man are to be burned up. As the Nagasaki atomic bomb caused even steel to melt and disintegrate, so the fire of God will completely destroy man's cities and inventions. Also, the results of the curse which God pronounced upon the ground will be destroyed. Disease germs, noxious weeds, thorns and thistles, and poisonous gases, will be burned up. The fire will completely purify the sin-cursed earth.

[40. PARADISE RESTORED](#)

THE rebellion is ended. Christ Jesus is gloriously victorious. The fires of hell have done their purifying work. Satan, sin, and sinners are gone; they have utterly perished from the face of the earth. Gone also are all the works of man. Every defiling and hurtful thing has been destroyed in the flames. The results of sin are past.

Now that all this is fully accomplished, the destroying, purifying fire will go out for want of material to burn; and the smoke of the great conflagration will clear away. Thus, Isaiah indicates that when the fire burns up the wicked as stubble, and has completed in work of destruction and cleansing, it shall become so completely extinct that thereafter - there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it." The fire will die out. See Isaiah 47:14.

The destruction of Satan and all his followers will finally open the way for the complete establishment of Christ's kingdom upon the earth and the restoration of man to his Paradise home.

It was God's original purpose that righteous men should dwell on the earth, and this purpose, though temporarily halted by the intrusion of sin, finally will be carried out.

"The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth." Prov. 11:3. This earth is man's inheritance. The promise to Abraham that he and his seed should be heirs of the world was not an idle promise. It is as certain of fulfillment as that God lives, for "He is not slack" concerning His promises. Not one of them will fail. "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Romans 4:13.

After describing the purification of the earth by the fires of hell, the Apostle Peter exclaims in ecstasy, "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth." 2 Peter 3:10-13.

A New Earth

The lake of fire, therefore, is not to destroy the earth but only to melt and renovate it. When the smoke has lifted and only ashes remain, the Lord will once more exercise His creative power by making it new again. This, too, is God's promise., for "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." Revelation 21:5.

This arrangement is as old as the plan of redemption. When God set in motion the program for saving man, it included not only his person but also his home. The Bible abounds with God's promises of a renewed earth in which His people shall dwell. Thus, He declared through Isaiah the prophet:

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." Isaiah 65:17-19.

To this agree the words of Jesus spoken on the mount of blessing, when He said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5.

John the beloved tells us that in heavenly vision he saw the home of man in its restored state. "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." Revelation 21:1.

To the new earth, the glory of Eden will be fully restored. The earth will be as it was before the blight of the curse fell upon it. What a fitting place this will be for an eternal abode for God's people!

And this is exactly what is in store for them. As soon as everything is fully restored, Christ will present the entire earth to His people, who have returned with the Holy City. The promise is:

"But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, said the Lord of hosts." Mal. 4:2, 3.

Yes, they will go forth from the City of God and will once more possess the earth. For "the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." Daniel 7:18. In graphic language the prophet Isaiah describes the new earth as it is restored to man and as it was shown him in vision.

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and, the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes." "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah 35:1,2,5-7,9,10.

This is man's long-lost home. All that was lost by him in the fall will be restored to him again in the new earth. There is to be a "restitution of all things." (Acts 3:21.) The first dominion is to be restored to man through Christ (Micah 4:8); and-thank God! - This restoration will include the return of the Garden of Eden to the earth. Once again man will walk by the side of the river of life and drink of its sparkling, life-giving waters. Once again will he have free access to the tree of life, from which he has so long been exiled. Yes, Eden, the garden of God, the first home of man, will once more shed forth upon the earth the fragrance of its bloom and verdure.

The New Jerusalem

The New Jerusalem will become the eternal capital. This wonder city, with its towering walls of jasper, its twelve gates, each of one solid pearl; with its streets of transparent gold; with its "many mansions?" prepared for the saints by Jesus and the angels, will be already resting upon the earth. It will have safely out ridden the awful conflagration which destroyed the devil and sinners, and from within its walls, King Jesus will govern the nations.

John attempts a description of this mighty metropolis as he saw it descending out of heaven from God. He pictures it as "having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Revelation 2 1: 11.

"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." Verse 3.

This city is of sufficient size to furnish a home for all the saved. John declares the measure of it to be "twelve thousand furlongs" and that "the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." (Verse 16.) Whether this measure is of one side only or of the entire circumference of the city is not clear. In the one case, it would be 375 miles square; in the other, it would be 1,500 miles on each side. Many times larger than any metropolis we have seen upon earth before, it will become the very center, not of the earth only, but also of the entire universe, for God will dwell there.

"And I saw no temple therein," John declared "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." Verses 22-25.

Thus, the earth, the battlefield. of the forces of good and evil, which for nearly six thousand years has been in the hands of the rebel leader, will not only be restored to God's kingdom but will be exalted above any of the millions of worlds and planets in God's vast creation. The City of God, as a memorial, will be located on the very spot where Jesus was put to death by His enemies. At that time Satan thought the victory was his. He had succeeded in placing the lifeless form of the Son of God in the tomb and had sealed it with the Roman seal.

But He who came forth from the tomb, a conqueror over the devil and death, will establish His eternal throne on Mount Zion as an everlasting memorial of His complete triumph over all His enemies.

"The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.... And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." Zechariah 14: 4-11.

Country Homes

But the saints are not to dwell only in the city. They are also to establish homes in the country. The entire earth will be theirs; for "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High." Daniel 7:27. As Adam and his posterity were bidden to go forth from Eden and replenish and subdue the earth, so the redeemed will go forth from Jerusalem to inhabit all sections of the new world. They are not to spend their time in idleness. They will be real people, living in a real earth; and their time is to be employed in useful labor.

Adam was told in Eden that he was to dress the garden and keep it. (Gen. 2:15.) So will it be with the redeemed. Concerning this the Lord has spoken through the prophet Isaiah, saying:

"They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." Isaiah 65:21-23.

Peace

Think of it! The saved will have eternity in which to build and beautify a home and develop a country estate! No invading armies will march in to pillage and destroy. No thieves will break through and steal. No one will molest or make afraid, for God will plant His people, and they will move no more. The soil, which was cursed for Adam's sake, will yield its strength once more. No chilling frosts nor summer heat will destroy the fruit of the ground. The climate will be perfect. No destructive insects will attack the crops, for all these pests will have been destroyed. No pestilence will come, no storm will sweep over the land, no floods will inundate the crops; for the forces of nature, thrown out of joint as a result of sin, will have been adjusted again, and everything will work to man's interest and not against him as now.

The species of animals we have known this life will be seen in the new earth also, but none will be ravenous or cruel; they will have lost their ferocious natures.

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah 11: 6-9.

Sweet birds of this Paradise will carol their songs of praise to their Creator; rich verdure will cover hill and valley; majestic trees, which dwarf the giant sequoias, will wave their proud branches in the breeze; and the entire earth will be a place of glory and beauty.

There will be no hospitals there, for the inhabitants of that land will never say, 'I am sick.' (See Isaiah 33: 24.) There will be no graveyards, no crepe on the doorknob; no black-plumed hearse will ever go creaking down the streets of glory. The bloom of eternal youth will be upon every brow. The defects of the former life having been left in the grave, everyone will be physically perfect.

That will be a country of riches without want, health without sickness, pleasure without pain, joy without sorrow, laughter without tears, and life without death.

'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, . . . I make all things new.... Write: for these words are true and faithful.' Revelation 21:4,5.

But who can picture the glory of that land? Who can estimate the value of eternal life. Not in man's fondest dreams can he conceive it. "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 Corinthians 2: 9. Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's love for His children, and this love will be made manifest in the reward that He waits to lavish upon them in the future life. Only then will we enter fully into the "more abundant life" that Jesus declared He had come to give.

The Bible opens with Eden lost, with the curse resting heavily upon man, who has been cut off from God and is under the sentence of death. It closes with Eden restored, with man fully reinstated in his lost home and enjoying the honor and blessing of immortality and eternal life.

The Cross Stands Between

Do you ask the question, "What makes the difference," Our answer is: "The cross of Christ." It cost the life of the Son of God to bring sinful man again to his lost home. Christ is "the way" back to God and Paradise. Only through Him can man regain his forfeited "right to the tree of life" that he may eat and live forever. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee -the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent." John 17: 3.

Will you come to Him today and be saved? He waits to welcome you to His heart and home. He longs to take from you the filthy garments of sin and clothe you with the white robe of His righteousness. He will wash you in His blood and make, your life as white as the driven snow. Even now His voice is calling you oh, so earnestly-saying, "My son, give Me your heart." He longs to have you with Him throughout eternity.

It was for you that He suffered, bled, and died on Calvary.

Some time ago a man was travelling in the great Sahara, and had run out of water. He was famishing with thirst and was upon the verge of utter despair. As he attempted to struggle on a little further in the apparently vain hope of relief, he suddenly noticed by the side of the path a sign which said:

"Ten paces to the East, O Traveler, you will find the treasure of Paradise."

Quickly he took the ten steps, dug into the loose sand, and found clear water. His life was spared.

Just so the treasure of eternal life and heaven is near us, perhaps less than ten paces away. God is not very far from any one of us. In the light of eternity's joys, there is so little to give up. Will you just now take the few necessary steps to enable you to drink of the water of life freely? Christ beckons you to come.

For you He is even now preparing a crown of glory and a home in the City of God. Hear Him as He pleads, "Why Will you die?" It is to you He is speaking. Will you say to Him, "Nay"? Will you harden your heart against His great love? Will you say, "I am ashamed to own Him"? Oh, how can it be! How can we despise God's matchless love! How can we, by refusing to come to Christ, crucify Him afresh and put Him to open shame! How can we neglect His great salvation!

"To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Revelation 2: 7.

Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest, Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed.

I know not, oh, I know not What holy joys are there;
What radiancy of glory, What bliss beyond compare.

O sweet and blessed country, The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country, That eager hearts expect!

Jesus in mercy bring us To that dear land of rest; Who
art with God the Father, And Spirit ever blest.

BERNARD OF CLUNY

Bible Study Summary

When God created the earth, to whom did He give it?

"The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath He given to the children of men." Psalm 41: 16.

In what position did God place man?

"Thou made him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou has put all things under his feet." Psalm 8: 6.

How did man lose that dominion? To whom?

"For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." 2 Peter 2: 19.

"And the devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whom so ever I will I give it." Luke 4: 5, 6.

Is this first dominion to be restored? How?

"And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion [Christ], unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." Micah 4: 8.

When will this restoration occur?

"Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shall see it." Psalm 37: 34.

What will the earth look like when re-created?

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it.... they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." Isaiah 35:1,2.

In what activities will the righteous participate in this new earth?

"And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.... And Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." Isaiah 65: 21, 22.

What has God prepared for the righteous in this new earth?

"God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." Hebrews 11: 16.

What does John tell us of the magnificence of this city?

"And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Revelation 21 2-27; 22.

What will be the privilege of those who enter the city?

"The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; ... and they shall see His face." Revelation 22: 3, 4.

What seasons of worship will be observed in the new earth?

"And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, said the Lord." Isaiah 66:23.

How will the ransomed of the Lord return to their home?

"The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah 35: 10.

How long will this kingdom last?

"The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." Daniel 7: 18.

What is the essential requirement for citizenship in this country?

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22: 14.