



**"Watchman, What of the Night?
The Morning Cometh, and a Night also!"—Isaiah**

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*"I will stand upon my watch and will set my foot
 upon the Tower, and will watch to see what He will
 say unto me, and what answer I shall make to them
 that oppose me."—Habakkuk 2: 1.*

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Upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves (the restless, discontented) roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking to the things coming upon the earth (society); for the powers of the heavens (ecclesiasticism) shall be shaken. . . . When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then know that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Look up, lift up your heads, rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh.—Matt. 24:33; Mark 13:29; Luke 21:25-31

THIS JOURNAL AND ITS SACRED MISSION

THIS journal is one of the prime factors or instruments in the system of Bible instruction, or "Seminary Extension", now being presented in all parts of the civilized world by the WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY, chartered A. D. 1884, "For the Promotion of Christian Knowledge". It not only serves as a class room where Bible students may meet in the study of the divine Word but also as a channel of communication through which they may be reached with announcements of the Society's conventions and of the coming of its traveling representatives, styled "Pilgrims", and refreshed with reports of its conventions.

Our "Berean Lessons" are topical rehearsals or reviews of our Society's published STUDIES most entertainingly arranged, and very helpful to all who would merit the only honorary degree which the Society accords, viz., *Verbi Dei Munster* (V. D. M.), which translated into English is *Minister of God's Word*. Our treatment of the International Sunday School Lessons is specially for the older Bible students and teachers. By some this feature is considered indispensable.

This journal stands firmly for the defense of the only true foundation of the Christian's hope now being so generally repudiated—redemption through the precious blood of "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom [a corresponding price, a substitute] for all". (1 Peter 1:19; 1 Timothy 2:6) Building up on this sure foundation the gold, silver and precious stones (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Peter 1:5-11) of the Word of God, its further mission is to "make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery which . . . has been hid in God, . . . to the intent that now might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God"—"which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed".—Ephesians 3:5-9, 10.

It stands free from all parties, sects and creeds of men, while it seeks more and more to bring its every utterance into fullest subjection to the will of God in Christ, as expressed in the holy Scriptures. It is thus free to declare boldly whatsoever the Lord hath spoken—according to the divine wisdom granted unto us to understand his utterances. Its attitude is not dogmatic, but confident; for we know whereof we affirm, treading with implicit faith upon the sure promises of God. It is held as a trust, to be used only in his service; hence our decisions relative to what may and what may not appear in its columns must be according to our judgment of his good pleasure, the teaching of his Word, for the upbuilding of his people in grace and knowledge. And we not only invite but urge our readers to prove all its utterances by the infallible Word to which reference is constantly made to facilitate such testing.

TO US THE SCRIPTURES CLEARLY TEACH

That the church is "the temple of the living God", peculiarly "his workmanship"; that its construction has been in progress throughout the gospel age—ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the Chief Corner Stone of his temple, through which, when finished, God's blessing shall come "to all people", and they find access to him.—1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Ephesians 2:20-22; Genesis 2:11; Galatians 3:29.

That meantime the chiseling, shaping, and polishing of consecrated believers in Christ's atonement for sin, progresses; and when the last of these "living stones", "elect and precious," shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Revelation 15:5-8.

That the basis of hope, for the church and the world, lies in the fact that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man," "a ransom for all," and will be "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world", "in due time".—Hebrews 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

That the hope of the church is that she may be like her Lord, "see him as he is," be "partakers of the divine nature," and share his glory as his joint-heir.—1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4.

That the present mission of the church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be kings and priests in the next age.—Ephesians 4:12; Matthew 24:14; Revelation 1:6; 20:6.

That the hope for the world lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ's Millennial kingdom, the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church, when all the wilfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isaiah 35.

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1927 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

The general convention of the International Bible Students Association for 1927 will be held July 18th to 26th, at Toronto, Canada. Announcement is made now to permit the friends throughout the earth to get ready. Brethren are expected from many countries.

Toronto is the capital of Ontario and has a population of more than five hundred thousand, with another hundred thousand in the vicinity. It is a railway center. It is only a short distance from Niagara Falls. The city has provided its beautiful fair grounds and all its buildings for the convention. One of the buildings has a seating capacity of ten thousand. The grounds are situated on the lake front, segregated from the busy travel, and in a very pleasant location. It is expected that the entire proceedings of the convention will be broadcast from our own station, remote control being installed at the convention auditorium.

This will be the only large convention during the year. All classes desiring to hold local conventions should notify the SOCIETY as early as possible so that pilgrims may be routed in that way if at all possible.

RADIO PROGRAMS

The following stations are broadcasting the kingdom message: WBBR, New York City, 416.4 meters, Sun., Tues., Thurs., Fri. WORD, Batavia, Ill., 275 meters, daily. CKCX, Toronto, Ont., 291 meters, daily. CHUC, Saskatoon, Sask., 330 meters, Sun., Tue., Thursday. KTCL, Seattle, Wash., 305.9 meters, Sunday, 9 to 10 p. m. HKQ, Spokane, Wash., 394.5 meters, Sunday, 9 to 10 p. m. KFWM, Oakland, Calif., 207 meters, Sun., Mon., Thurs., Sat.

BETHEL HYMNS FOR JANUARY

Sunday	2 11	9 205	16 68	23 281	30 124
Monday	3 55	10 99	17 73	24 10	31 261
Tuesday	4 165	11 208	18 6	25 157	
Wednesday	5 161	12 96	19 149	26 254	
Thursday	6 89	13 311	20 190	27 230	
Friday	7 83	14 21	21 266	28 204	
Sat.	1 292	8 150	15 54	22 238	29 17

I.B.S.A. BEREAN BIBLE STUDIES

By Means of "The Watch Tower"

"Tollness into the Lord"

"Sacrifice and Service"

Z May 15, 1926

Z June 1, 1926

Week of Jan. 2 . . . 1-19 Week of Jan. 16 . . . 1-15

Week of Jan. 9 . . . 20-40 Week of Jan. 23 . . . 16-34

Week of Jan. 30 . . . 35-49

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JEHOVAH AND HIS WORKS

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."—Psalm 104: 24.

WITH approval and commendation many clergymen and others quote from Pope's philosophic poem these words: "The proper study of mankind is man." That so-called philosophical statement is not true. It has served as a means of deception for many years. It is a sample of worldly wisdom. In the sight of God, worldly wisdom is foolishness. The true Christian must look at it from the same viewpoint. It has ever been the rule among the worldly-wise to ignore the Creator and magnify the creature. (Romans 1: 25) This is further evidence that man has been overreached by the cunning influence of the Devil.

² The policy of Satan has ever been to turn the minds of men away from God, and one of his ways of doing so has been to magnify the name of man. But the time for the change has come, and that change will cause men to magnify the name of the Creator. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"—1 Corinthians 1: 19, 20.

³ The proper study of mankind is Jehovah God and his works. Such course alone leads to life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17: 3) Jehovah God is the source of life. His works mark out the way and the means of attaining life.—Proverbs 8: 22; John 14: 6.

WHO IS GOD?

How can man study God? The Eternal One reveals himself through his Word and through his works. The Bible is the Word of God and is written for the instruction of man. Concerning himself God caused to be written in his Word that he is "from everlasting-to-everlasting". (Psalm 90: 2) "Whose name alone is Jehovah." (Psalm 83: 18) That name signifies self-existing and eternal One. It was the name by which he declared himself to his chosen people and signified his purpose toward them.—Exodus 6: 3-8.

⁵ Jehovah is the immortal One, dwelling in the light

to which none can approach. No man has seen him nor can see him. (1 Timothy 6: 16) God is the name by which he is known in connection with his creation. (Genesis 1: 1) He is the one who made heaven and earth. (Isaiah 42: 5) He assumes responsibility for all creation. While he acts through his duly commissioned representative, he is the great Creator.

WISDOM

⁶ The wisdom of God is expressed in his creation. "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world." (Acts 15: 18) There is no limitation to his knowledge, and he applies that knowledge always in the right way. It is impossible for him to make a mistake. Possessing the wisdom to know everything in advance, he likewise has the wisdom and ability to withhold from himself all things that he does not want to know, until his due time to know them. He is above, before and beyond all his works. His majesty he reveals outside of himself. For a mantle he wraps himself with the light; he stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and therein makes his abiding place.

⁷ There is none to give God a vice. (Isaiah 40: 14) "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations." (Psalm 33: 11) So completely is his wisdom expressed in his works that "whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it". (Ecclesiastes 3: 14) In his own due time he reveals the deep and secret things of his plan, and until then no man can find them out.—Daniel 2: 22; Ecclesiastes 3: 11.

⁸ It is worse than foolishness to try to run ahead of Jehovah. He numbers the stars and calls them all by name. (Psalm 147: 4) The very hairs of your head are numbered, and not even a sparrow falls to the earth without his notice. (Matthew 10: 29, 30) "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew." (Proverbs 3: 19, 20) It is no wonder that the wisdom of imperfect man is foolishness in the sight of God.

JUSTICE

⁹ Law is a rule of action, commanding that which is right and prohibiting that which is wrong. With man law and justice are not synonymous terms. The laws are not always administered or even made in harmony with justice. With God law and justice are always equal. Justice means that which is right. God is always right. His laws or rules of action for the government of his creatures are always right and true. In justice he executes his law. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face."—Psalm 89:14.

¹⁰ God is no respecter of persons. His law and his justice are administered the same to all, and always without partiality. (1 Peter 1:17; James 3:17) He is absolutely unchangeable, and therefore always and for ever dependable. (Malachi 3:6) Having made a promise to do anything he is certain to carry it out. His Word is never void; it always accomplishes his purposes. (Isaiah 46:11; 55:11) He always judges righteously amongst his creatures. (Isaiah 11:4) His judgments are always true. (Proverbs 19:9) "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments." (Psalm 119:137) "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, thou preservest man and beast."—Psalm 36:6.

POWER

¹¹ The power of God is without limitation. When we speak of the holy spirit we understand that it means the invisible power of God exercised according to his pleasure. God has but to will, and his power is exercised. The waters stood round about the earth and above the earth, enclosing the new earth in a canopy. On the earth it was dark. "The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." (Genesis 1:2,3) Thus he exercises his power. It is but necessary for him to will a thing to be done, and it is done. Nothing can withstand Jehovah. Men build governments and nations and boast of their greatness, and other men sing the praises of the builders. What man does, when compared with the power of God, is as nothing.

¹² "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. . . . All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? . . . It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." (Isaiah 40:15,17,18,22) He has complete and absolute power over all matter and things, and makes one creature to honor and another creature of less honor.—Rom. 9:21.

LOVE

¹³ It is written in his Word: "God is love." Love is the perfect and complete expression of unselfishness. Every act of God toward his creatures is for the good of such creatures, and is unselfishly performed. His love for his creatures is exercised regardless of whether there is a response or reciprocity. When the creature comes to know his God and appreciate him, he revels in his love and in his kindness bestowed upon the creature. Resting in the love of God and under his protecting care the creature is at perfect peace and ease.

¹⁴ "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." (Psalm 36:7) "Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." (Psalm 63:3) "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) He stoops to aid the erring one and bestows his loving kindness upon all.

¹⁵ The wisdom, justice, love and power of God are always exercised in equal and exact balance. These attributes of the Divine One are made manifest in his manifold works.

CREATION

¹⁶ When man begins to learn something of God, and is properly exercised thereby, he has reverence for his great Creator. Such reverence really marks the beginning of wisdom in man. Wisdom really means to have correct knowledge and then to apply that knowledge in the right way, which is according to the divine rule. (Psalm 111:10) The man of wisdom will seek out the works of Jehovah God. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."—Psa. 111:2.

¹⁷ As the student reverentially seeks to know the works of Jehovah his pleasure therein grows. His efforts are rewarded, because it is only to those who reverence the Lord that he reveals his deep and secret things. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear [reverence] him; and he will shew them his covenant." (Psalm 25:14) Is it not appropriate then that we, as students of his Word, begin 1927 with a study of Jehovah and his works, and that throughout the year we keep this upmost in our minds?

¹⁸ The natural man cannot understand and appreciate the wonders of God's creation. It is only when one has become justified and begotten of the spirit of God that his mind begins to open to an understanding of the precious things that God has created and now holds in reservation for them that love him. (1 Corinthians 2:9,10,14) The true Christian delights to seek out and study the works of Jehovah. Then he begins to walk in the light of the Lord, which light shines with increased brilliancy as he advances along the pathway that God has prepared for those who delight to do his will.

¹⁹ There must have been a time when God was alone, because there was a time when he began his works of

creation. The time of that beginning is nowhere revealed to man. The first one created, "the beginning of the creation of God" (Revelation 3:14), was the Logos, who thereafter was the spokesman and representative of God. That time, though unknown to us, was many long centuries ago. Concerning that great event the Logos himself, speaking, says:

²⁰ "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 highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."—Proverbs 8:22-30.

²¹ Then the Logos, as the active agent of the great Creator, proceeded with the creation of all things that were created. (John 1:1-3) Next came the creation of spirit creatures, aside from the Logos. Among these created ones was Lucifer, who was conspicuous for his beauty. He was a part of the holy organization of God. He was clothed with authority to do work in the name of his Creator. He was perfect in all his appointments and ways, and thus he continued until lawlessness found a place in him.

²² Then came the creation of the cherubim, the seraphim, and the host of angels, each of whom was assigned to his respective duty. The Logos occupied a confidential relationship to the great Creator and was always the delight of the Mighty One, and it reasonably follows therefore that he would be taken into the secret purposes of God in the creation of things. Innumerable planets were made; the sun and the moon and the stars; and then came the time for the creation of the earth.

²³ It is not unreasonable to us that God would inform the beloved Logos of his purpose in creating the earth. The record does show that he conversed with the Logos concerning the creation of man. God created the earth for man and intended that man should reside thereon. (Isaiah 45:12-18) It is reasonable then that he would tell his beloved Logos that he was about to create man in his own image and likeness, to be the king of earth.

²⁴ The Scriptures indicate that some information as to man's creation was given out in heaven; because it is recorded that when God laid the foundation of the earth, which was to be man's future home, the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

(Job 38:4-7) The two Morning Stars, the Logos and Lucifer, joined in a duct of praise to the great and mighty Jehovah; and the chorus of millions of beautiful voices of glorious angels joined in the glad refrain. Why was this praise given? Evidently it was then made known that there was to be a departure from the creation of inanimate things, and that now there was to be the creation of an animate and intelligent earthly creature who should be made ruler and be given dominion over the earth.

²⁵ Then the great Creator furnished the plans and specifications for building Adam. All the minutiae were worked out. Every bone, each and every sinew and nerve, was assigned to its respective place; and even the hairs of the head were numbered. Then the Logos carried out the plan by taking the elements of the earth and therefrom making man in the image and likeness of God, and into whose nostrils God then breathed the breath of life and man became a sentient being. God was pleased with this work and pronounced it "very good".

²⁶ There is no sham, imitation nor imperfection in the works of Jehovah. They are true works, and always bear the closest search and scrutiny. All of his works are perfect. (Deuteronomy 32:4) It follows therefore that all the works of creation accomplished by the Logos have God's approval. The Bible is a record of his works. It was written by holy men of old, who by God's invisible power were inspired to write. Therefore the words of the Bible disclose the works of Jehovah.

²⁷ Now the time has come for God to more fully reveal his works to those who diligently seek to know them, and thus he does. In recent years the great God has opened wider the door of understanding, that the vision of his people may be greater and that they may behold more of his great and marvelous works. The confidence of the Lord's children in the great Creator therefore continues to grow stronger. "For the word of the Lord is right; and all of his works are done in truth." (Psalm 33:4) "His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion. . . . He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the nations."—Psalm 111:3, 4, 6.

OBJECT LESSON

²⁸ Between the date of the creation of man and the present day many marvelous things have transpired. Many of them have been recorded in the Word of God. Many of these events have been attended with much sorrow and with some joy. What things have transpired and have been recorded in the Word of God were there recorded for the benefit of the Christian, that he might learn the needed lessons.—Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11.

²⁹ The first sin committed of which there is a record

made was the disloyal thought in the mind of Lucifer, when he resolved to be like the Most High God. (Isaiah 14:13, 14) That is the time when iniquity was found in him. (Ezekiel 28:9) It was presumptuous on the part of Lucifer to think of putting himself in a position to which God had not assigned him. To accomplish his selfish and wicked purpose Lucifer was willing to disrupt the sweet and beautiful relationship between man and his Creator, turn man away from God, and cause him to become a slave. Above all, Lucifer was willing to be disloyal to Jehovah. Since his first disloyal act he has ever attempted to turn God's creatures away from their Creator.

³⁰ The first law which God gave to his chosen people was: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3) God's wisdom and loving kindness caused him to make that law. Man's only place of safety is to have Jehovah for his God. To go in the way of the evil one means complete destruction. The disloyalty of Lucifer was the great error of the wicked one. God would have his people now learn that lesson fully, lest they should fall into the same pit. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." (2 Peter 3:17) This warning is to those in present truth.

³¹ The greatest and most important lesson therefore for the creature to learn is absolute and complete loyalty to the great Jehovah God. Object lessons of disloyalty, and with dire results, are set forth in the Word of God as object lessons for the new creation. The study of "mankind" by *man* tends to disloyalty to God. The study of God and his works tends to loyalty and faithfulness.

NEW CREATION

³² When finished, that which will most completely reflect the glory of God is and will be the new creation of which Christ Jesus is the crowning glory. The new creation in fact is The Christ. The body members are but a part of him. The question is not whether you have been begotten to the divine nature and thereby called to an heavenly calling; but now the question is, Will you be faithful unto the end and receive the crown of life? Who will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of the Lord? The answer is, Those who love God and who for that reason are faithful. These he will preserve and bring safely into his house of glory.

³³ The new creation is the work of Jehovah God. The members of the body of Christ are taken from among men. God will use the new creation to establish his kingdom of righteousness, which will supplant the kingdom of the evil one. Of course the Devil diligently puts forth every effort to bring about the destruction of those who are prospective members of the new creation and therefore of the kingdom of righteousness. Satan works in divers and numerous ways to accomplish the destruction of the Christian. One of his

favorite methods is to *turn the mind of the creature away from the great Creator*. This he does by inducing the creature to laud, magnify or worship *anything* other than God, and to forget God. Hence the study of God and his works is the only safe course for man.

HERO WORSHIP A SNARE

³⁴ Many creatures worship the Devil. It is the policy of the Devil to induce others to worship some creature, in order that their minds may be turned away from Jehovah God. The Christian should always keep this fact in mind. To accomplish his purpose the Devil not only resorts to fraud but induces others to become hypocrites. He began this practice in the days of Enos, when he induced men at that time to call themselves by the name of the Lord, who in truth and in fact were the dupes of the Devil. (Genesis 4:26, margin) The cunning and wicked policy of the Devil is here disclosed.

³⁵ Nimrod was one of the wickedest men that ever lived on earth. He was an instrument of the Devil. Students of the Bible are somewhat acquainted with the wicked course of Nimrod. "He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter *before* the Lord." (Genesis 10:9) This statement of the Scripture does not mean that Nimrod walked in the presence of the Lord, or before the Lord in honor; but it does mean that he was preferred by the people before or instead of the Lord God. The wild beasts were a terror to the people. Nimrod became a great hunter and slayer of these beasts; and through Satan's deceptive manipulations the people worshiped Nimrod above Jehovah God. To them he was a mighty hunter and protector, to be preferred before, or instead of, the great Jehovah.

³⁶ At all times the Devil has practised this method of deceit upon mankind. No people nor organization has ever been free therefrom. Not even those of present truth have escaped this snare of the Devil. Of course the Christian could not so clearly see the Devil's methods until he had a clearer vision of Satan's organization. Now being privileged to have this better understanding it behooves him to studiously avoid everything that tends to aid Satan in his wicked work against those who love righteousness.

³⁷ The Christian is righteous and godly by virtue of being in Christ. "The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." (Psalm 4:3) When a man is begotten and anointed of the holy spirit he is sanctified or set aside for the use of the Lord. The subtle and deceptive policy of the Devil is now to devise ways and means to turn the mind of that one to *anything* or *any creature* or *object*, and *away from Jehovah God*. This he accomplishes indirectly, and by fraud and deceit.

³⁸ It is only necessary to glance at the history of the Papal system to see that the people of that system have at all times been induced to honor, worship and magnify the names of men rather than the name of Jehovah God.

Some of the leaders in this great system, even though very wicked in their day, have afterwards been canonized as saints and thereby made objects of worship by the deluded people. Members of the Papal system, even though honest and sincere, are induced to worship images and men, and to pray to Mary and to address her as "the mother of God". The Devil himself induces this to keep the people in his snare.

³⁹ The same condition has existed at all times in the Protestant system. The names of Arius, Calvin, Luther, Wesley, and numerous others, are recorded with reverence; and their sayings are quoted as authority, even though in direct contradiction to the Word of God. Members of the Protestant church have stood in great fear and reverence of these men and their memories. Many have put their trust in these men instead of trusting in the Lord. For this reason they have exposed themselves to the snare of the Devil.

⁴⁰ "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." (Proverbs 29:25) The word "fear" used in this text is from the same original root from which comes the word fear in the text: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." This means that a reverential fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the reverential fear or dread of man is a snare of the Devil, to turn man away from God.

⁴¹ Satan began to operate this scheme in the early days of the church. The congregation at Corinth was divided because of trouble. Some said: 'I am of Apollos'; and others said: 'Paul is the mighty one who brought me into the truth.' This condition caused the apostle, under inspiration, to write to the church at Corinth and say to them in substance: 'Apollos and I are merely ministers being used to bring the truth to you. It is God who gives you the knowledge and the increase. We are merely laborers with you and with God. You are God's building. Self-constituted wise men will appear among you and tell you what to do, but do not be deceived by them. Such wisdom as they manifest is foolishness in the sight of God. Let no man glory in men. God, the great Creator, is entitled to all honor and glory. The adoration and worship of men, and the practice of calling them great heroes, is the Devil's scheme to turn away the minds of men from God.'

⁴² "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. . . . For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. . . . Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord

knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men: for all things are yours."—1 Corinthians 3:5-7, 9, 18-21.

⁴³ The church has never been free from this subtle influence of the enemy. It is not an unusual thing for some man, prominent amongst the brethren in present truth, to be exalted amongst his brethren. He possesses, possibly, more than the ordinary ability; he shows much devotion to the Lord, and the Lord uses him; some of his special admirers give him much glory and honor; he loves the adulation and receives it gladly from his brethren; he begins to think more highly of himself than he should think, and his brethren have their minds upon him as a great example and forget to look to the Lord.

⁴⁴ This course persisted in results in defilement of the temple of God. (1 Corinthians 3:17) The one who receives the plaudits of the others usually becomes impressed with his own importance, takes himself too seriously, becomes proud, and makes himself an easy victim of the Devil's scheme. Hence it is written: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18) The worship of heroes, whether in the church or out of it, is surely of the Devil. It is the enemy's scheme to turn man away from God, by inducing man to reverence some other man; and thereby many fall into the Devil's snare.

⁴⁵ There is nothing that man has done or can do that is worthy of glory. If he has a clear understanding of the truth, and expresses it for the benefit of others, he is not entitled to any credit or glory therefor. Men should view themselves in the right light, and not think too highly of themselves. When compared with the greatness of God and his higher creation man is a very insignificant thing. When David thought upon the mighty creation of God he exclaimed: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8:3,4) This is a proper view of the matter.

⁴⁶ Let no Christian glory in his own wisdom, nor deceive himself nor be deceived by glorying in some other man's wisdom or greatness. No truly great men have ever lived on earth since Jesus' time. It is unsafe to magnify the names of men. Men are never so wise that they can glory in their own wisdom, and no man is so wise that he is entitled to the glory and reverence of other men. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."—Jeremiah 9:23,24.

⁴⁷ Since the Lord has been pleased to permit the

Christians now on earth to have a clearer vision of the Devil's organization and his wicked methods of operation, greater is the responsibility of each one to look well to his own course and see to it that he does nothing to aid the Devil in his fight against the new creation. The study of God and his works is the safe course for man.

⁴⁸ The Lord used David and caused him to write for the benefit of the church. In many respects he is a type of the church. David knew that he could not create even a blade of grass, nor the meek little lily that sweetly blossoms beside the babbling brook. He took a right view of matters and is an example for those whom he represented; namely, the Christians. The creation of God so impressed David that he forgot himself as he rendered his adoration and devotion to the Eternal One. We do not find him lauding and magnifying the name of some one amongst men who had preceded him, but always praising Jehovah God. The Christian should follow his example.

⁴⁹ When David beheld the mighty creation of Jehovah he was overwhelmed. His words of adoration give some conception of what was in his mind and how he regarded the great Creator. From the high hills of Judea he looked far to the east, where the lofty mountains lift their hoary heads heavenward, and like silent sentinels stand as watchmen guarding the entrance to the promised land. He saw the domestic flocks feeding peacefully in the sheltered places along the green valleys. He was conscious of the fact that it was the mighty and loving Creator who had provided the high and rugged hills as a refuge for the wild beasts.

⁵⁰ Turning his face northward the Psalmist beheld the great evergreens of Lebanon full of sap and vigor, symbols of perfect manhood and eternal life, waving their mighty arms and joyfully clapping their hands to the praise and honor of their great Master Maker. In their boughs the wild birds had come to make their nests, to nurture their young and to dwell in security and in peace. He saw the mighty fountains spring out from the mountain side and ripple down the valleys, hurrying on to be met and embraced by the majestic waves of the great deep blue sea. He considered the sun, the moon and the stars, which God had hung in the heavens; and seemingly he heard them sweetly singing anthems of praise to the glory of the great Creator.

⁵¹ Then David forgot himself as a mighty warrior and as the anointed king of God's chosen people. His thoughts were only of his great Maker and His mighty works. Like a little child, filled with wonder and ecstasy in the presence of its adorable father, he cried out: "Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great: thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; who maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh upon

the wings of the wind; who maketh his angels spirits: his ministers a flaming fire."—Psalm 104: 1-4.

⁵² Some of the class whom David represented are now on the earth. These are entering 1927 with a keen desire to do whatsoever the great God has for them to do. They want to pursue the right and the safe course. With their faces turned heavenward they mark the divine plan unfolding before their eyes and majestically progressing in obedience to Jehovah's will. With the passing of the tribulation on earth, of 1914 to 1918, they have seen some of the great wonders in heaven. (Matthew 24: 30) One of these wonders is the Devil's powerful organization, long used by him to defame the name of Jehovah God. Another of the wonders is the birth of the kingdom of God, also the expulsion of Satan from heaven and the hastening of the development of events when Satan shall be shorn of his power and can no longer blind mankind to the goodness of Jehovah.

⁵³ They see that Jehovah is the only true God; that he has made the planets, the sun, the moon, and the innumerable stars; the hills and the mountains, the rivers and the mighty deep; that he has made man to be king of the earth; that he has begun, and is bringing to a near completion, the new creation, the crowning feature of his work, which will reflect his glory and be his means of blessing all the families of the earth.

⁵⁴ Filled with awe, reverence and wonderment, love and praise, they exclaim: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom thou hast made them all." (Psalm 104: 24) This text chosen for the year seems a fitting one for the members of the body of Christ this side the veil to keep before the mind. Studying Jehovah God and his mighty works and ultimately, by his grace, bringing themselves into harmony with his expressed will, they may dwell in his house and behold his beauty and continue to learn of him for ever.

⁵⁵ The new creation now sees that God resists the proud ones who pose as heroes, and likewise turns his face from those who are hero worshipers. They see that he shows his favor to the obedient ones, because they are earnestly desirous of being in harmony with his holy will. They see that it is their privilege now to be his witnesses, and to declare his name and his glory in the earth. As his witnesses the great Jehovah God bids these faithful ones to go and tell the glad news to the sorrowing world, and to advise mankind that he is God, that Jesus is the King of kings, and that the day of deliverance is at hand.

⁵⁶ In obedience to the divine command let the Christians magnify the name of Jehovah God, lift up his standard for the people and point them to the way that leads to life and endless joy. So doing, and continuing thus faithful to the end, will guarantee to such an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom.

⁵⁷ The members of the church are commanded to love one another. It is vitally essential that they do love each

other. That means that each one will unselfishly watch for the interest of his brethren. If one loves adulation and willingly receives it from his brethren, he is not safeguarding his brethren's interests. It is the solemn duty of each one to encourage every other member with whom he comes in contact to magnify and worship Jehovah God. Honor the Creator and not the creature. Stand shoulder to shoulder and help each other to stand.

⁵⁸ The proper study of mankind is God and his works. The anointed "Servant Class" must set this example, because Jehovah has told us to do so. "Ye are my witnesses that I am God." The true Christian will magnify the name of Jehovah and not give glory to his creatures. (Isaiah 42:5-8) "Whoso trusteth in the Lord shall be safe." (Proverbs 29:25) "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." —Isaiah 26:3, 4.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

Cite an example of worldly philosophy that has misled many Christians. What has every been Satan's policy and purpose? ¶ 1-3.

How can man study God? What may we know of his wisdom? ¶ 4-8.

Define law and justice. What may we know of God's justice? ¶ 9, 10.

How does Jehovah exercise his power? Paraphrase Isaiah 40:15-22. ¶ 11, 12.

What is love? Cite scriptures and examples showing God's love for his creatures. Summarize Jehovah's attributes and show how they are equal. ¶ 13-15.

Why is reverence for God the beginning of wisdom? Who only can appreciate God's wonderful works? ¶ 16-18.

When did God's creative work begin? Paraphrase Proverbs 8:22-30. Of what did the work of creation consist prior to the creation of the earth? ¶ 19-22.

What was God's purpose in creating the earth, and why did the sons of God shout for joy at that time? Who were the "morning stars" that sang together on that occasion? ¶ 23, 24.

How was man created? How do we know that he was created perfect? How did the Psalmist sing of God's works, and how much did he know of them compared with what the new creation knows about them now? ¶ 25-27.

What is the purpose of the Bible's historic records? When did sin begin? Why did God command that he alone should be worshiped? What is "the error of the wicked" (2 Peter 3:17), and how may it be avoided? ¶ 28-31.

What eventually will most fully reflect the glory of God, and who will participate therein? How does Satan seek to thwart this crowning work of Jehovah? ¶ 32, 33.

When and why did Satan originate hypocrisy among men and hero worship? Why was the wicked Nimrod called a mighty hunter "before the Lord"? ¶ 34, 35.

Has mankind ever been free from hero worship? How has Satan overreached Christians in this respect? ¶ 36-39.

What is meant by "the fear of man bringeth a snare"? How did the Apostle Paul rebuke the Corinthian church concerning man worship? ¶ 40-42.

Show how the temple of God may become defiled. Is there anything man can do that is worthy of glory? Why does special responsibility rest upon us now? ¶ 43-47.

Of whom is David a type? How and why did he so exultingly praise the name of the Lord? ¶ 48-51.

What wonders do the David class now behold? What exclamation of the Psalmist now fittingly voices their attitude? ¶ 52-54.

What commands have they received from the Lord and how are they obeying these? What is the proper study of mankind? ¶ 55-58.

MAKING OUR HOMES CHRISTIAN

—FEBRUARY 13—EPHESIANS 5:25; 6:4—

"Let us love one another: for love is of God."—1 John 4:7.

WHEN Jesus was on earth he said about domestic happiness, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law." (Matthew 10:34, 35) Yet when he was born the angels sang of him as God's Messenger of Peace: "On earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14) It is certain that the essence of Jesus' ministry is peace; and the effect in the heart of those who receive it is to bring that "peace of God, which passeth all understanding". (Philippians 4:7) Of course Jesus did not contemplate a violent division in every family, but he knew that sharp divisions would arise between those who would receive his message and those who would receive it not. However, he must have contemplated many a home where father and mother and children would be his disciples, and where his peace would dwell.

² In his ministry Jesus gave no particular instructions to his followers as to how they should conduct themselves in the particular circumstances of life. He sowed the *seeds* of truth and gave the *principles* of conduct; but he gave no guidance as to how home life should be conducted, nor direction for communal life. Nor did he give guidance for the Jews as to how they might rearrange their national life to advantage, nor for better relationships with the Romans, their governors. Nor did he give any direction for the nations amongst whom his disciples were soon to be sent.

³ Further, it is to be noted that, save in the matter of settling disputes amongst themselves, the Lord gave no particular guidance for his church. (See Matthew 18:15-18.) It is evident from all this that Jesus did not contemplate the establishment of a Christian community, much less did he make any attempt to reform the world.

⁴ The ministry of the apostles, at Pentecost and im-

mediately after, resulted in a great increase in the number of believers; thousands then believed in Christ because of what they saw and heard. (Acts 2:41) This great movement would certainly mean that many husbands and wives, fathers and mothers of children, would jointly become disciples, and that these would assuredly make an attempt to train their children in their new-found faith and hope. Further, as the truth spread abroad in the earth the same thing would in a measure happen amongst the Gentiles, and so it became necessary to give some direction for these. It is of such homes that Paul writes in his Epistle to the Ephesians, in the passage from which today's portion of Scripture is taken.

⁵ It should not be thought that any Jewish home, now Christian, could in itself be more devout because of acceptance of Jesus than such a home had been in the days of the law and the prophets, though added knowledge of God would increase their love for him. God-fearing parents under the law had as much obligation to train their children as they had as disciples of Jesus. Also the relationship between husband and wife could be as ideal in the older days as in the new. But the home life was sanctified by the added knowledge which Jesus brought, and by the relationship which he revealed of his loving devotion to his Father, and by this relationship which Paul now, for the first time in his writings, shows exists between the Lord and his church, his bride.

⁶ After speaking of the need for the saints of God in Christ Jesus to walk with each other in love, "as Christ also hath loved us," and to avoid all uncleanness and looseness of conversation because of its tendency to injure the mind, the apostle bids the disciples to redeem the time; he bids them to be filled with the spirit, giving thanks always unto God, and to submit themselves one to another in the fear of God.—See Eph. 5:20, 21.

⁷ The Epistle to the Ephesians touches the highest points of Christian life and experience. Yet it is in this epistle more than in any other than Paul dwells upon the disciple's need for care in his Christian course, for right living in the more human side of his life and its experiences; and with considerable measure of particularity he dwells on the need of the disciple to be clean in himself.—Ephesians 5:5.

⁸ There is no evidence that Paul any more than his Master expected to see a Christian community established, or the world to be converted to the teachings of Christ by the ministry of Jesus and his church. In those days the world was pagan, and the standard of morality was very low. The pagan convert needed training in the Christian life; and the believing Jew also needed reminding that though the law covenant of Sinai was no longer operative to the believer in Christ, yet the truths which it embodied were unchanged.

⁹ Paul proceeds to address the brethren particularly in relation to their home life. He speaks to wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants and masters. Begin-

ning with the wives he bids them to submit themselves to their own husbands as unto the Lord; and the reason he advances for this is that the husband is the head of the wife in the same way that Christ is head of the church; in both cases the head is the savior or caretaker of the body. It is clear, therefore, that any consideration of this passage must be in the light of the fact that Paul is addressing true Christians only, and is making no attempt to regulate an ordinary worldly home on general Christian principles.

¹⁰ He next bids husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; true disciples should love their wives as their own bodies. In support of his words, which set a true union of husband and wife on the highest possible plane of communion, he quotes God's ordination of marriage at the beginning, when God said, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall become one flesh." (Ephesians 5:31, *R. V.*) There is much more in this than the union of man and woman in marital relationship for the propagation of children. The union here contemplated is that of a close copy of the original union which God presented in Adam. Eve was formed out of Adam, that though separate they might be considered as one.

¹¹ So with the children of that first pair; the ideal union of marriage would be that, as closely as possible, the twain would be one flesh. Paul brings this union into prominence because, while giving instruction as to Christian home life, he would make use of it to show the close relationship which exists between Christ and his church. He is not merely their Lord and Captain, or princely Leader; he is not merely the Head of the church his body; the church is married to him, and he and they are one in the most absolute sense possible to human life and thought. It is in this relationship particularly that Christ's love for the church finds outlet, and the church also finds expression for its love. There might be loving loyal submission to the Head, but that of the marriage union brings a greater possibility, a closer union.

¹² It is impossible however to consider Paul as saying that under all circumstances a husband must love his wife as himself. The wife might not be of the same mind as her husband, and indeed might be opposed to him. In this case Paul's injunction could not apply. Nor can it apply if the wife does not submit herself as enjoined by Paul. There is no suggestion of woman's inferiority, but it is the relationship which the church has to Jesus which must determine the situation. To the Lord and in their standing before him there is no difference made between male and female; but in service for God it has pleased the Lord to make a difference, and if there is an agreement to marriage of two who are already "in the Lord" the above difference is to be maintained.

¹³ As the true husband can and does love a true wife, so Christ loves and cherishes the church. It is impossible for us to consider that the love of Jesus for his Father could ever lessen; and yet, following the illustration, we may consider that having the church given to him he must give of his love to the church, and that the church would call for and receive some of that love and attention which otherwise would be given entirely to the Father. Paul says that this is a great mystery. It is part of God's gift to Jesus and the church.—Eph. 5:32.

¹⁴ Paul now proceeds to enjoin obedience in children to their Christian parents. (Ephesians 6:1-4) He says, "Obey your parents *in the Lord*." It is manifest that a child cannot under all circumstances be expected to obey every command given by a parent who is ungodly. Christian parents must not provoke their children to wrath. Paul reminds his hearers of the first (and only) commandment of the law which is accompanied by a promise. The fifth commandment was, 'Honour thy father and thy mother that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.'

¹⁵ In the eyes of their children parents are not always wise, and there is ever the tendency in parents to despise the growing knowledge and intelligence of their children. But in the eyes of the Lord no child who despises his parents may expect to be pleasing to God. It is frequently found in human experience that the son and the daughter who consistently give respect to their parents rarely go wrong in later life.

¹⁶ The bringing of children into the world, and their training to maturity that they also may take their place as the fathers and mothers of the next generation, and as those who may receive the truth in the love of it, is a great responsibility. It is not sufficient that parents provide a Christian home for their children; there must be constant watchfulness and care in training if the best is to be gained. The objective is to nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.

¹⁷ The tendency of the present day, and indeed the spirit of the times, may be said to be in entire opposition to such unity in the marriage tie as Paul speaks of, or to such relationship between children and parents as he

says should exist. Too frequently a marriage is the union of two lives for companionship, without respect to the relationship intended by God and described by the apostle.

¹⁸ One of the marks of the present day is that of disobedience to parents. On the one hand it is an observable fact that parents of today take very little control over their children, professing to act on the theory that the child should have its liberty and learn to express itself; which is really to allow the child to run wild, and is contrary to all experience indicative of what is good for the child. It is a foolish experiment. On the other hand there is today a marked disrespect for parents, and the rising generation has no reverence or respect for what has gone before.

¹⁹ The conditions outlined by Paul as conducive to happiness in the home are simple; but they are hard for fallen human nature, and can be gained only where there is a strong determination to serve the Lord, and a desire to live before him to his praise. If life is lived as though one had the right to do what he would with it, it is impossible but that selfishness should rule. But if the Christian father and mother truly recognize that their joint life is to be lived in consecration, there is every reason for expecting the ideal to be closely approximated.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

If Jesus is the Prince of Peace why did he say, "I came not to send peace, but a sword"? Did Jesus instruct his disciples or the Jewish people as to their home or national affairs? ¶ 1-3.

What effect did Christian faith have upon Jewish home-life? ¶ 4, 5.

What is the purport of Paul's instruction in today's study, and in the epistle generally? Was he trying to establish Christian communism or reform the world? ¶ 5-8.

What is his argument respecting the marital relationship, and is it applicable to the worldly? Can it apply where one of the twain is not a Christian? Does he urge wifely submission on grounds of inferiority, or for what reason? What is the "mystery" of Ephesians 5:32? ¶ 9-13.

In Ephesians 6:1-4 was the apostle giving instructions to the world? Is his advice there good for the world? What is one of the marks of the present day mentioned in this lesson? ¶ 14-19.

AN INTERESTING LETTER

BY EXAMPLE AS WELL AS PRECEPT

DEAR BROTHER RUTHERFORD:

Three hundred brethren assembled in local convention at Wausau, Wisc., by unanimous vote directed us to convey to you a message of appreciation and love. We rejoice to send you this message, and to add to it our own fervent love which we are endeavoring to prove day by day by zealously and loyally engaging in the work as mapped out.

We would like to tell you of the beautiful spirit which prevailed throughout this entire convention. At the conclusion of it all seemed more than ever to be imbued with the spirit of service and the determination to be loyal to the Lord and his arrangements unto the end. Several of the classes, misunderstanding the announcement about pil-

grims canvassing during the two-day appointments, have also held canvassing parties on the one-day appointments. This has given us both the privilege of an earlier start, and at this convention some of the "first fruits" were visible.

One elder from a nearby class, who had been inactive, testified that he had formerly had no intention of canvassing, but that when he saw the pilgrim start out he thought he would go along. He made sales even in the first two houses, and appreciated the many blessings he received, and said he intends to keep on in the canvassing work.

Daily we remember you at the throne of grace, and ask an interest in your prayers.

Your brethren in Christ,
H. E. HAZLETT.
W. J. THORN.

SERVING IN AND THROUGH THE CHURCH

—FEBRUARY 20—MATTHEW 5:13-16; ACTS 2:42-47—

"We are God's fellow-workers."—1 Corinthians 3:9, R. V.

PAUL'S words, "We are God's fellow-workers," taken for our golden text, are more familiarly rendered in the Authorized Version, "We are labourers together with God." In these days this is a much-used text in religious circles, especially amongst the clergy. But if these leaders are asked, What is the object of the labor? What is God doing? there is no reply. On their own showing the leaders of organized Christianity do not know what God's purpose is for his church, what he is doing by his church, or what the end is toward which his providences are moving.

² There is amongst the clergy as much diversity of opinion about colaboring with God as there is a diversity of churches. None knows; none understands. Generally, or most frequently, this text is made to mean little more than that men should have good desires, be kindly in their actions one to another, keep some ideal of kindness before their minds; and in this way they say that they are helping in the general scheme of things and bringing nearer the time when all men will be of good will. Many of those who preach these things are themselves doubtful as to the personality of God, and would rather consider him as merely a great force than as the living God and Father of Jesus Christ.

³ The four verses from Matthew (chapter 5:13-16) are generally taken as the guide to God's purpose in the church, and a statement of what the results of its faithfulness on the part of the church will be. Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth," and "Ye are the light of the world". He added that men do not light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but place it where it may so shine as to give its light to all in the house; and then he said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—Matthew 5:16.

⁴ The churches of Christendom, ignoring the tenor of the Scriptures as well as the direct statement of Jesus, have interpreted these words as meaning that the light which Jesus was then lighting should by them be given to the world, and would shine forth until all men were lit by it; also that they should be as a city set on a hill, a guide and a refuge to all mankind.

⁵ Jesus' added words, "That they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," appear on first consideration to give support to their claim that the effect of the bright shining of the truth concerning Jesus would be to bring men into the light of truth and cause them to glorify God. That this is the ultimate end of the work of God through Christ there can be no question; but the claim that the intention of Jesus' words that this was to happen before his return,

and in preparation for it, involves a direct contradiction between these words in the Sermon on the Mount and his further statement, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"—Luke 18:8.

⁶ But if world conversion be not the end of the preaching of the gospel by the church, the question is, What is to be understood by Jesus' words? How are his disciples, the church, the salt of the earth? How is the church of God a city set on a hill, and how will men get the light of the glory of God and magnify his name? These questions can be answered only by a knowledge of the divine plan.

⁷ Paul says that there are appointed times, other than these in which the disciples of Jesus are now ministering and serving in hardship and misunderstanding, in which God will bring all things together in one in Christ. He says of God, "He hath purposed in himself that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." (Ephesians 1:9,10) "The dispensation of the fulness of times" is not included in this present age, that is, between the two advents; but it is that appointed period of years known as the millennial reign of Christ, when his church will be established in power in the earth, and when the kingdom of heaven is set up for the particular purpose of bringing all things into one harmonious whole, whether they be things in heaven or things on earth.

⁸ Jesus foresaw the action of truth among men. He very well knew that the truth which he preached to the Jews would not be acceptable to them; and he likewise knew that his message, which the disciples were to carry abroad and which would be continued by his faithful ones until the time of his return, would not be acceptable to the Gentiles. He knew that God's purpose was to gather out of the world a people who would correspond with Israel who, as a nation, had been separated from the other nations.

⁹ This purpose was not understood by any of the disciples until a considerable time after Jesus had returned to heaven. It was reserved for the Apostles Peter and Paul to show that God, through the holy spirit, intended to form a new nation called from Gentiles as well as Jews, and to bring them into fellowship with the apostles and have them all one in Christ Jesus. These are also to be a priesthood unto God, a royal priesthood. Thus these are a holy nation, corresponding to Israel; they are priests, corresponding to Israel's priesthood; and they are kings, corresponding to Melchisedec, who was a priest upon his throne.—1 Peter 2:9.

¹⁰ This high calling is something over and above anything that the Bible intimates would ever be offered to the human family at large. The salvation of men consists in deliverance from the thralldom of evil, and in the sentence of death being annulled through the ransom provided, and to man's return to everlasting joy and happiness on earth. But that which is offered to these who are the salt of the earth, and whose light is to shine before men, is a share in his own glory in heaven.

¹¹ The Apostle Peter throws much light upon these words of Jesus. With the same thought in mind, namely, that the Lord's people were to live amongst the Gentiles (meaning thereby those who were not Jews nor of the church of God), he says: "Whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2:12) It is evident that Peter had not understood Jesus to mean that the good works and the righteous living of the disciples of Jesus would cause men to glorify God. Like his Master he knew that the good works which the disciples of Christ would do as they lived out their life, serving the Lord amongst those who hated righteousness, would not be lost, but would ultimately be to the glory of God, in the day of visitation.

¹² Paul also gives further light on Jesus' words. Writing to the Philippians, and speaking of the disciples of Christ, he says: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." (Philippians 2:14-16) But Paul did not expect that the word of life which he held up would serve to guide the world. He well understood that the light would become dimmed, and that a wicked rule would obtain among men. He knew that the hope for the world was the return of the Lord.

¹³ We may then ask, What advantage has there been in God's sending the light of truth so long a time before the climax of the ages should come, and when God intended that all should then come to the light? Two features of the plan of God here come to mind. It is evident that God had determined that a long period must elapse during which spiritual Israel would be gathered, even as he had dealt with natural Israel over a long period; indeed there is a corresponding length of time in the two ages during which each of these Israels has been the recipient of God's favor.

¹⁴ Well-nigh 1900 years have gone to the development of spiritual Israel, even as to natural Israel before they were banished for a time. Also, from the time of Jesus' first advent there were many chapters of human history to be written. The fruitage of the earth must come to the full. Thus while the church has been slowly developing, the same may be said of the nations of earth; and it so happens that at the time when God has gathered his

appointed number of spiritual Israel, the nations of earth have also come to full development of their policies.

¹⁵ It is apparent that the corruption of the world so rampant in Paul's day was checked by the fact of the coming of Jesus and by the teaching of the apostles and the spread of the truth; and though a great evil system of organized religion has arisen which has perverted the truth, yet the light of truth which has shone, and the power of the truth as "salt" to preserve the race from destruction, have had their effect.

¹⁶ Our passage for today's study takes us from Jesus' words to the life of the early church. When after Pentecost the brethren realized themselves, the circumstances of their separateness from their fellows began to be forced upon them. Realizing that they were called to be apart from the world they concluded that they were called to live together; and an attempt was made to do this. They did not then see that what God intended was a unity of spirit and of faith and hope. Apparently many left their regular occupations and spent time meeting together, rejoicing with each other in their new life.

¹⁷ But the hard practical facts of life were soon forced upon them. Then those who had possessions sold them, and the money was put into a common fund for the sustenance of all; and they had all things in common. But this is not practical Christianity and was never so intended by the Lord. It speedily brought its natural consequences—dissention and misunderstanding. Later, by means of persecution, the community was broken up and scattered abroad; and the communal plan was dropped.

¹⁸ God did not intend that his church should be one great light, but that each true disciple should be a light-bearer who should carry the message of truth and live it out amongst its fellows. Each was to be an example of how the grace of God can keep a man even in the midst of evil surroundings; and each was to realize as he kept in touch with his living Head that the holy spirit of God would keep him as a well ever supplied with water and as a lamp whose source of oil failed not and whose flame never dimmed.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

Can we be fellow-workers with God if we do not know what his work consists of? How are our golden text and today's

Scripture reading usually explained in Christendom? ¶ 14. How shall we explain Matthew 5:13-16, particularly the latter verse? ¶ 5-8.

Did the disciples understand the real purpose of Jesus' preaching during his ministry? When and by whom did the church have this purpose revealed to them? Explain fully. ¶ 9-11.

Why did St. Paul admonish the church to hold forth the word of life (Philippians 2:14-16) prior to the coming of the millennial day? ¶ 12-15.

Why did the early Christians enter into a communal arrangement, and did it have the Lord's blessing? Has the church collectively or individually borne light to the world throughout the age? ¶ 16-18.

MAKING THE COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN

(TEMPERANCE LESSON)

—FEBRUARY 27—GALATIANS 5:13-25—

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them." — Ephesians 5:11.

THIS study, as its title indicates, is set in its series as a temperance lesson, and in support of the prohibition of strong drink by legislation. We have to express our dissent from this use of these verses from the Epistle to the Galatians, because they were not written with the purpose of supporting any movement for the betterment of the general community. The New Testament never contemplates the Christian's taking part in any attempt to enforce righteousness, or the forceful repression of evil by any government, save that of the kingdom of heaven when it should be established.

² The golden text, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them," expresses the Christian's personal attitude—the prohibition must be put on himself by himself. These unfruitful works of darkness are those things which have sprung from the causes of evil in the world, and from the evil rule of the course of this world, and from the depraved minds of men.

³ The follower of Jesus must seek to keep himself from all evil things, certainly from those things most frequently seen in association with indulgence in alcoholic liquor. But the Christian is to be as separate from the course or governance of the world, which in his epistle Paul calls "the present evil world", as from the things of the world. (See Galatians 1:4.) The church was not left in the world by Jesus to alter its course and to set it right, but to witness to it of righteousness and of judgment and to the truth of the kingdom of heaven which God will establish through him, and which will enforce a righteous government in the earth. Jesus made no attempt to amend the social state of the people amongst whom he lived; he gave advice neither to the people at large nor to their rulers, though none was so well qualified to do so as he.

⁴ The church of Christ, that is, the company of true believers in whom resides his spirit, were to be as salt in the earth, preserving mankind from further evil. Paul in his letter to the Roman church does not hesitate to tell of the degradation into which the world had fallen, and which was seen in the depths of its ugliness in Rome, the world's greatest city. The corruption of the world was then so deep-seated that unless an arresting element had been introduced it could hardly have lasted the 1900 years which God intended should pass before the kingdom of heaven should be set up. Hence Jesus said to the church, "Ye are the salt of the earth." But there was never any question of using the "salt" as a remedial measure to restore the earth from corruption.

⁵ In his epistles Paul had a community in mind, but it was the Christian community, those who, in any

place, in the faith of Jesus Christ would meet together and form an ecclesia or church, and who, if true, were of one heart and mind. Each company, large or small, was as a miniature Israel, a people separated to God. As our studies have already shown, the believers at the first thought that it was God's purpose that they should live together, sharing their property with each other; but God never intended that, and he soon scattered them.

⁶ It is a common but really serious mistake to consider the epistles as being written for the guidance of a general community, or even for those who form the nominal Christian congregations. Neither the epistles nor Jesus' Sermon on the Mount were for or are applicable to such; both the words of Jesus and those of his apostles are intended only for his footstep followers.

⁷ It was to the Galatian believers that Paul's words were addressed. The Galatian people had no part nor lot in them; and for "Christian" people, whether of one country or another, to consider the epistle as addressed to the peoples of the country at large is to show a misconception of the apostle's purpose. These Galatian brethren were not living right. They had received the truth of the gospel very gladly, but had allowed themselves to be misled by some Jewish teachers who were opposed to Paul's doctrine. They let themselves believe that faith in Christ was not sufficient, but that they must also reverence the law and accept literal circumcision as a necessity to salvation and to pleasing God. They were flattered by being told that they had something to do for their own salvation.

⁸ They disagreed over matters of doctrine and dropped into much argument and consequent dissention, which in turn brought bitterness of spirit. It is a common observation that family quarrels are ever sharper than those between mere acquaintances; and Christians living as a brotherhood find that differences allowed to enter in become as sharp as family quarrels.

⁹ First Paul set the doctrinal matters in order, then he gave the brethren needed advice in respect to their conduct toward each other, toward righteousness and toward God. Paul was not tolerant toward those who had caused this trouble in the church, saying, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you."—Gal. 5:12.

¹⁰ The danger of liberty to a mind not disciplined is that it may become an occasion to indulge the flesh. The Christian should have for his law, "By love serve one another." (Galatians 5:13) Those to whom Paul wrote knew the law of Sinai. That law though it had no power to help yet embodied the principle of true relationship between man and man and between man and God. "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart." (1 Timothy 1:5) It commanded, "Thou

shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—Leviticus 19: 18.

¹¹ The Galatians allowed their *fleshly mind*, that is, their old nature, to overcome them; and, says Paul, they were ready to "bite and devour" each other. He showed the way to overcome the power of the fleshly mind which, if yielded to, leads to shameful conduct toward one another and to the defilement of both body and mind. A clear understanding of doctrine alone does not prevent this; for even those in Galatia who had the right understanding of the doctrines were not free from the chastisement of Paul's words; nor does earnestness in telling others of the truth concerning Jesus Christ deliver any from this bondage. These things are insufficient in themselves to enable one to overcome the pull of the old nature. The way of escape and of conquest is by walking in the spirit. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."—Gal. 5: 16.

¹² Inasmuch as Paul immediately goes on to say, "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5: 17), he is understood by many to mean that it is impossible for the disciple to overcome all the time; that the flesh must sometimes be too strong for the spirit; and many who have held this interpretation have thereby excused themselves for their failing to overcome when tempted. But the evident intention of the passage is to state that if the disciple walks according to the spirit the flesh will be unable to assert itself to stop him.

¹³ Paul's words, "Ye cannot do the things that ye would," may be understood as meaning that the necessity of having to undergo the experience of the conflict is in itself apparently loss of time and energy; the servant of God would prefer to be free to serve without these hindrances. But the fight is a necessary part of his training for the development of his life, and in order that he may become strong in the service of the Lord.

¹⁴ That the disciple will repeatedly blunder is certain, but a loving and gracious provision is made for him. The throne of grace is ever open to him, where he may find help for every need; and God has provided an Advocate for him, that he may always find acceptance and assurance and cleansing from any guilt which may be upon him. (See Hebrews 4: 16; 1 John 2: 1.) That God has made sufficient provision in the grace which is in Christ Jesus whereby the disciple may continue to walk in the spirit and thus maintain constant victory over the will of the old nature is certain. But there must be purpose and endeavor. The disciple not only must live in the spirit, but must walk in the spirit; that is, he must put forth effort to live according to the spirit.

¹⁵ It is evident that some Christians do not walk after the spirit. Writing to the Corinthians Paul says of some there whom he called saints because they had given themselves to God, "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal." (1 Corinthians 3: 1) He said this because they divided themselves into

parties and disputed amongst themselves. They forgot their spiritual calling, and the way to the degradation of the flesh was open; they walked and talked according to human passion. Naturally enough they in turn charged Paul with doing this very thing.—2 Cor. 1: 17.

¹⁶ When Paul says, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts," he does not mean that the flesh, that is, the fleshly mind, dies at the time of consecration; that would be to contradict himself. Crucifixion was not always so quick a death as it was in the case of Jesus, as is shown by the fact that the thieves crucified with him were killed in order that they might be removed that day. Frequently the crucified were tied to the cross, the agony lasting for days.

¹⁷ This in some measure illustrates the crucifixion of the fleshly mind of those who come to God through Christ; according to the will or intention the old nature is put to death—in intent. It cannot be slain outright; for that would be to destroy the body in which it yet dwells. But it can be crucified in the sense of counting it dead, and doing nothing to keep it alive. It really lives as long as the Christian lives, and it will assert itself, but it never need have the victory. The overcomer is conqueror over the world, the flesh and the Devil.

¹⁸ This study provides special warnings. It is clear that the believer who does not walk after the spirit is in danger of letting himself down to the power of the will of the flesh, and to doing those things which Paul here calls the works of the flesh. He becomes subject to those things which lower a man, and also to the spirit of evil which will allow even followers of Jesus to bite and devour one another.

¹⁹ The prohibition which the Christian must strive for is that of the suppression of the evil which is in him by nature. Here he has plenty of exercise, and as much scope for his energies as he needs to develop his life. He may help his neighbor to a better manner of life by example and precept, but he may not join any organizations for the suppression of the rampant evils of the world. He must keep himself "unspotted" from the world. In due time the kingdom of God will prohibit everything that is an injury to mankind, and there will be no dubiety as to the results; for then the work of restoration of the human family must go on apace, without let or hindrance.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

Does today's Scripture reading support legislative prohibition against intoxicating drink? What attitude must Christians take relative thereto? ¶ 1-3.

Did St. Paul take cognizance of the world's degradation? How was the church to be "the salt of the earth"? Were they to establish Christian communism? ¶ 4-6.

What was the purpose of Paul's admonition to the Galatians? Is "Christian liberty" ever baneful? ¶ 7-10. How may fleshly-mindedness be overcome? Explain Galatians 5: 17. ¶ 11-13.

What provision is made for the Christian who blunders? Do all Christians walk after the spirit? What is meant by crucifying the flesh? ¶ 14-17.

What special warnings does this study provide? ¶ 18, 19.

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