



ROCK OF AGES
Other foundation can
no man lay
A RANSOM FOR ALL

"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 Minister* (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 28:14; 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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Terms to the Lord's Poor: All Bible students who, by reason of old age or other infirmity or adversity, are unable to pay for this journal, will be supplied free if they send a postal card each May stating their case and requesting such provision. We are not only willing, but anxious, that all such be on our list continually and in touch with the Berean studies.

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THE LITHUANIAN WATCH TOWER

We wish to inform the friends that the May and June issues of the Lithuanian WATCH TOWER will contain a series of treatises on man, especially adapted for the public and very suitable for sample copies. Price 5¢ a copy. Colporteurs and class workers now have their opportunity to introduce this WATCH TOWER to the Lithuanian people.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AT COLUMBUS

BIBLE STUDENTS all over the earth have been looking forward to 1924 with great expectancy. It seemed fitting that we should have a large convention this year. In casting about for a place Columbus, Ohio, offers the best advantages.

THE WATCH TOWER takes pleasure in announcing, therefore, that the convention of Bible Students this year will be an international convention held at Columbus, Ohio, July 20 to 27, inclusive. It will be international in two senses: First, in that it will be a convention of brethren who speak various languages; and secondly, brethren will be expected to attend from various countries throughout the earth.

Columbus, Ohio, is located in the center of a very populous district, including Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Tennessee, Kentucky, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York and Ontario. It has the best interurban railway system of any city in the country, and is easy of access. The highways leading into it are of the very best, and great numbers of friends will be expected to come by automobile.

Within five blocks of the meeting place there are rooming accommodations for 60,000 people. There are thirty large hotels and a large number of dormitories.

We are giving this early notice in order to enable the friends throughout the land to arrange their vacations during this period. We confidently expect that this will be the largest convention of Bible Students ever held on earth. The Society expects to open an office at Columbus for the purpose of handling all the convention correspondence so as not to interfere with the regular work at Brooklyn. Announcement of the address will be made later.

We suggest that the friends throughout the earth daily present the matter of the convention to the throne of heavenly grace, that the Lord may be pleased to bless it and the witness to be given from there, in a marked degree and to his glory.

In subsequent issues of THE WATCH TOWER a detailed statement of the arrangements will be published.

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AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

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CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

"Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—Jude 3.

THE importance of faith is magnified by the apostle Paul. He says: "Without faith it is impossible to please him [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6) Thus we observe that Jehovah has put a premium upon faith. No one could come into harmony with him without faith.

²At the first advent of the Master a class of ultra-religionists, led by the Pharisees, placed great value upon piety. At the second coming of the Lord we find their counterpart, clergymen and their close supporters, who likewise lay great stress upon piety. To them piety means an outward sanctimonious appearance; whereas the word as used by the Apostle (1 Timothy 5:4) means a respect toward parents, a worshipful adoration toward Jehovah. Our King James Version mistranslates the Greek word rendered piety. The *Diaglott* gives the proper rendering. It is entirely proper to have respect for parents and worship of Jehovah; but this is not counted as the most essential thing by the Lord. When he mentions the weightier matters which have first consideration with our Father in heaven he does not mention piety, but does mention faith. Justice, mercy and faith must be integral parts of every character that would have the approval of Jehovah.

³St. Paul enumerated the pieces of the armor needed for the Christian's warfare. He emphasizes one piece as of greatest importance: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked [one]." (Ephesians 6:16) There was a reason for his use of the words "above all." God identifies himself with that shield of faith. Long before, Jehovah had said to Abraham: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." (Genesis 15:1) Jehovah was the great shield of Abraham because of Abraham's faith. Abraham is known as the father of the faithful. (Romans 4:16) He is placed on the honor roll by the Apostle. We may be certain that if we have the shield of faith nothing will ever penetrate it. If one lays aside that shield, his injury is certain. God is always faithful; and if we continue our faith in him our safety is assured.

⁴There could be no real love unless there is faith, and the loss of one would be the loss of both. The importance of understanding the meaning of faith and of exercising that faith cannot be overstated. There never was a time in the history of the Church when a strong faith was needed more than now. Jesus said: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) During the presence of the Lord there has been a great falling away from the faith once delivered to the saints; and while there are millions who claim to be Christians, a very small percentage of these possess real faith.

⁵The faith of the saints was delivered to them by Jehovah through the Lord Jesus and the prophets. The Lord further amplified these great truths through the teachings of the inspired apostles. These great fundamental doctrines delivered to the saints may be summed up under ten heads, as follows: Creation, justice manifested, the Abrahamic promise, the birth of Jesus, the ransom, the resurrection, the mystery, our Lord's return, the glorification of the Church, and the restoration.

⁶Modernists, claiming to be Christians, contend that man is a creature of evolution. This is contrary to the faith delivered to the saints. "I have made the earth, and created man upon it." (Isaiah 45:12; Genesis 2:7) The very center or pivotal point of the faith of the Christian is the ransom sacrifice; in fact, it is the keystone of the entire structure of faith. It is the measuring rod by which all of the doctrines may be determined. That which is out of harmony with the ransom may be certainly considered as a false doctrine, and should be cast away.

⁷There are those who have been enlightened upon God's Word who have fallen away from the faith in this, that they hold that God will save everybody, including all the wicked, in due time. This is out of harmony with the faith delivered to the saints and is a denial of the philosophy of the ransom sacrifice. "Without shedding of blood is no remission [of sin]." (Hebrews 9:22) Those who sin wilfully after having received a knowledge of the truth—for such there is no more sacrifice for sins. (Hebrews 10:26) "All the

wicked will be [God] destroy." (Psalm 145:20) The great ransom sacrifice was provided in order that every one may have an opportunity to know of God and to avail himself of the gracious provisions of salvation. A universal salvation, therefore, would be a denial of the ransom sacrifice.

⁸Adam was sentenced to death. All of his offspring were born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Therefore all are sinners (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12); and there is no name given under heaven whereby man can be relieved of this disability except through the merit of Christ's sacrifice. The promise made to Abraham was that in his seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Genesis 22:18) This seed is defined by the Scriptures as the Christ, the anointed one. (Galatians 3:16) Hence without the Christ there could be no blessing of the families of the earth.

⁹Since a perfect man had sinned, nothing short of a perfect man could be the redeemer of mankind. Hence it was necessary for Jesus to be born free from any of the contamination of sin; and the Scriptures declare that he was born holy, harmless, and without sin.—Hebrews 7:26.

¹⁰Jesus declared that he came to give his life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28) and that those who believed on him should not perish but have life. (John 3:16; 10:10) The irresistible conclusion is that without the ransom no one could have life. Jesus gave his life a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:5, 6), which means that all must come to a knowledge of that fact and have a chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice.

¹¹Jesus as a human being died in order that he might provide the ransom price for Adam and all of his offspring. It was necessary for Jehovah to resurrect our Lord in order that he might carry out Jehovah's purposes. He was resurrected to the divine nature, and his resurrection is a guarantee that all men shall have an opportunity for life. (Acts 17:31) Without the death and resurrection of our Lord there could be no hope for either the dead or the living.

¹²The mystery of God is Christ, the anointed, Head and body. In God's due time he revealed this fact to the saints. None other can understand this except those who are of the saintly class. Though they hear of it, to appreciate it is impossible.—Colossians 1:26, 27.

¹³One of the all-important doctrines upon which our faith rests is the second coming of our Lord. He promised that he would return and receive his bride to himself. (John 14:1-4) The purpose of his return is to gather the saints to himself, to take charge of earth's affairs, set up his kingdom, and with the members of his body rule the affairs of earth according to Jehovah's great provision.

¹⁴The royal family of heaven consists of Jesus and his body members, the bride of Christ, the Church. That these body members must be glorified with the Head the Scriptures clearly teach; and this constitutes one

of the doctrines delivered to the saints.—1 Corinthians 15:41-44; Revelation 20:6; Colossians 3:3, 4.

¹⁵The great work of the Christ following the setting up of his kingdom is the restoration of all mankind who will obey the laws of that government.—Acts 3:19-24.

¹⁶The word which is translated in our text "earnestly contend" is the equivalent of the ordinary word *contend* with a prefix indicating the seriousness of the conduct. The prefix emphasizes the importance of taking an immovable stand for the faith once delivered to the saints. Without this prefix it is the same word used by our Lord when he said: "If my kingdom were of this world my officers would fight for it." (John 18:36, *Diaglott*) The words "earnestly contend," therefore, mean a fight to death, a fight in which there is no quarter asked or expected, given or received. Our unseen foes will strive to dislodge us from this faith. Defeat is easy if we give over to them. This is a serious matter. It is a time, therefore, in which every Christian needs the armor of God, and in order to gain the victory he must keep that armor on and use it faithfully unto the very end.

FAITH DEFINED

¹⁷In Hebrews 11:1 St. Paul defines faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This translation, as it appears in our common version, poorly expresses the thought. The *Diaglott* renders it in better form: "Faith is the basis of things hoped for, a conviction of things unseen." The thing hoped for is life in a state of happiness. The basis for this is God's Word of truth. The thing for which we now hope is not seen. Hope means to expect that thing, however; and there must be a reason for that hope. Hence faith may be defined as an intellectual understanding and appreciation of God's Word and a confident reliance upon that Word.

¹⁸Faith rests not upon sentimentality or feeling. It rests upon facts. Those facts are recorded in the Scriptures; and these facts are the great fundamental doctrines above mentioned, over and above all of which is the existence of the great Jehovah God, the all-wise, all-powerful, loving One, the Creator of all things and the Giver of every good and perfect gift, the Rewarder of all who diligently seek him. He is just such a God as the honest heart craves. In order to have faith we must know of him; and the more we know him the greater our faith and the greater our love. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."—Romans 10:17.

¹⁹The mere hearing of the Word of God of itself will not constitute faith. There must be a yielding to that Word, a confidence in it, an honest desire to know what is right, and a confident reliance upon his Word as the right thing and the proper guide. Many hear the gospel in their ears, but it profits them not. As St. Paul states: "But the word preached did not profit them,

not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."—Hebrews 4:2.

²⁰From Abel to John a few men have exercised faith. These are known as the heroes of faith. They are specially mentioned by St. Paul in Hebrews 11. Jehovah's dealings with them and others about them inspired them to endure hardships of indescribable character, looking for a better day; and because of their devotion to the Lord and the principles of righteousness they "obtained a good report through faith." (Hebrews 11:39) Nevertheless, the faith did not come in the proper and true sense of that word until Christ came. St. Paul clarifies this when he says: "The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise [of the Father] by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."—Galatians 3:22-26.

²¹After the first coming of our Lord the Scriptures recognize that there is but one faith, one true and correct statement of the divine plan; and that was the one delivered to the saints. (Ephesians 4:5) St. Peter refers to this as our "precious faith." (2 Peter 1:1) St. Paul, writing to the Philippian brethren, said: "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel." (Philippians 1:27) It seems quite clear that this one true faith of the gospel is what the Lord had in mind when he intimated that it would be very rare at his second coming. Even so we find it. Few there be that hold to these great fundamental doctrines. It is the part of the adversary to dislodge all from these doctrines, if possible. Hence it is a fight; not in strife, but a steadfast holding to these great doctrines that are so necessary for the Christian.

²²St. Paul refers to the doctrines as "the faith of God" (Romans 3:3); and the faith that we have as "the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8); thus showing that the system of belief which we accept as Christians comes to us from God as a result of his interest in our welfare. He has provided for us in his Word and sets forth his and the only way that leads to everlasting life.

²³Again the Scriptures speak of "the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:12; James 2:1) All things are from the Father, and all things are by the Son. (1 Corinthians 8:6) Hence these Scripture texts in connection with the ones previously cited show that the great fundamental doctrines came from Jehovah by and through his beloved Son Christ Jesus. For this reason the apostle Paul speaks of Jesus as "the author and finisher of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2) God having planned it, the plan having been given to us from him by Christ Jesus must stand forever. There is neither change nor deviation.

LIFE BY FAITH

²⁴The Scriptures plainly state: "The just shall live by faith." (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38) Primarily this refers to the Lord Jesus. He was always just, because always right with the Father. By his steadfast belief in and devotion to the heavenly Father in the doing of the Father's will even unto death he was granted the great reward of inherent life, immortality, and exalted to a position above all others. Then it was that a way was opened to others to follow in his footsteps, that these through the merit of his sacrifice might be justified, made right with God, and then become members of his body.

²⁵There is life for those who walk in his footsteps. The Apostle says that by faith are we justified. (Romans 5:1) Again he speaks of the "obedience of faith." (Romans 1:5; 16:26) It may be set down as a certainty that there is no justification by faith unless there is an obedience of faith. One begins to exercise faith when he learns of the great ransom sacrifice. He turns away from sin and the world and seeks the Lord, and in obedience to the Lord's admonition surrenders himself in full consecration. Upon the basis of his faith manifested by obedience in consecration, and upon the basis of the imputed merit of Christ Jesus, God judicially determines that he is right; hence justified.

²⁶Therefore the Apostle says that by faith are we justified, by the blood of Jesus are we justified, and "It is God that justifieth." (Romans 5:1, 9; 8:33) He would be a strange child who would claim adoption into the family of God and at the same time have no intention of abiding by the rules of that family. None could consistently be admitted, and hence we conclude that none are admitted, into the household of sons, except those who have that condition of heart which is obedient to the divinely provided Head. This obedience must first be manifested by a submissive attitude of heart, consecration. Hence consecration must precede and does precede justification.

²⁷It is true, the Apostle says, that a man is justified by faith without deeds. (Romans 3:28) This is entirely consistent with what is above said. It is not his deeds that constitute the basis of justification, but his faith and the merit of Christ Jesus; and upon this Jehovah acts judicially, and he is the one that justifies.

²⁸It is the exercise of our faith that makes reconciliation with God possible. It is not the performance of deeds of piety that will justify. For more than sixteen centuries the Jews tried to keep the Law that they might have peace with God, but they failed because of their inability. It is only those who exercise confidence in the Lord and in his provisions, and who demonstrate that confidence by a consecration, namely, a submission of themselves unto the Lord, relying upon the merit of Christ's sacrifice, that Jehovah justifies. This is the rule during the Gospel Age. Hence we read: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1) And this justi-

fication is through the blood of Christ. (Romans 3:25) During the Millennial Age all must exercise faith in Christ as the great Redeemer and Mediator in order to be led over the highway of holiness.

²⁹As showing conclusively that it is our faith and not our deeds that is the reason for our being justified, the Apostle says: "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith [system of belief] of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Galatians 2:15,16) If this rule is true with the Jew, for a stronger reason it is true with the Gentile. The Gentile did not have the benefit of the Law.

³⁰That faith will be necessary in the Millennial Age is conclusively shown by the words of the Apostle when he says: "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen [nations] through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."—Galatians 3:8.

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

³¹There is a slight difference between justification and righteousness. Justification is that condition of perfection (real or counted thus) into which man comes by reason of a judicial decree pronounced by Jehovah after the conditions leading thereto have been met; namely, belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and a full consecration. Righteousness literally means a course of right doing; that is to say, the active application of the principles of goodness. There is no ground in the Scriptures for the belief that one can retain his justification who does not embark upon and continue in a course of right doing. It is true he may halt, he may lapse, he may stumble and fall; but a deliberate turning back from right doing and a right course would mean a loss of justification; hence the second death. (Hebrews 10:26) The Jews tried to do right, but they failed. The Gentiles during the Jewish Age were not invited to make the attempt. When Jesus came he was able to make the efforts of the Jews of avail. He alone could provide for them the blessings they desired. But they rejected him.

³²Some of the Jews individually accepted Christ, and were transferred from the house of servants to the house of sons. In due time this opportunity was offered to the Gentiles, and some of these have accepted and consecrated themselves. The justification of both Jew and Gentile was by reason of faith in the blood of Jesus. Now, by his grace, they could from that time forward pursue a course of right-doing, or righteousness, that would be pleasing to the Father. Hence the argument of the Apostle: "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."—Romans 9:30-32.

³³Even at this time the saints are not actually righteous. They are pursuing a righteous course, striving to live up to the perfect standard; and the Lord judges them according to their heart's sincere desire and honest endeavor. The Apostle's argument establishes this fact: "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them out dung, that I might win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith [the system of belief] of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Philippians 3:8,9) The Apostle emphasizes the fact that we have not now the ability to be actually righteous. We are hoping for actual righteousness and striving for it now, our imperfections being covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness. "We through the spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." (Galatians 5:5) We are hoping for it, hoping and longing for the time when we shall have perfect organizations and be able to serve God perfectly.

ESTABLISHED IN FAITH

³⁴When St. Paul revisited the churches in Asia Minor which he had originally founded on his first trip to that vicinity, it is recorded that the churches were "established in the faith, and increased in numbers daily." (Acts 16:5) The word "established" means solidified; that is to say, the doctrines were by now so clearly understood by these saintly ones that they may be said to have been solid in the truth. It follows that before one can be established in the faith he must be first established in the teachings of God's Word; hence the necessity for keeping these great truths clearly in mind, and not deviating from the doctrines given to us by the Father through Christ.

³⁵It seems that some after having been long in the truth are not established in the faith, because being uncertain they grope about, feeding upon things which are of doubtful origin and which have not the tendency to build up in Christ Jesus. Such a condition is almost certain to result where one fails to contend earnestly for the faith delivered to the saints, or fails to fight the good fight of faith, or fails to stand fast in the faith of Christ Jesus, the great system of doctrine, or the divine plan as revealed in the Scriptures.

³⁶One of the particular parts of the doctrine now so important is the second presence of the Lord and the things particularly appertaining to his second presence. Where one having been enlightened concerning our Lord's presence turns away therefrom, necessarily he loses the light concerning the harvest, the Lord's faithful and wise servant, and the particular work that the Church is to do in the proclamation of the message of

the kingdom. Hence the adversary, taking advantage of his weakness of faith, has greater opportunity to turn such a one completely away from the Lord and from his work.

³⁷To be established in the faith is not an instantaneous matter. It is the result of acquiring knowledge of the divine plan and a confident reliance upon that plan. In St. Paul's day there were some in the truth who were not yet established. They evidently were progressing, however. He had not seen the saints at Colosse. He wrote them encouragingly, saying, "Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith."—Colossians 2:5-7.

³⁸It would seem, therefore, that the Apostle's argument was this: The saints at Colosse were pursuing an orderly course, steadfastly continuing in the doctrines of the divine plan; and his sincere desire for them was that they might be builded up and become solidified, immovable in that faith. The word "established" here used has the thought of stabilize, meaning a person who has taken a final and definite stand for something. This was the desire of the Apostle for the saints above addressed; that is, that they should continue to be grounded and settled and not moved away from the gospel by any influence.—Colossians 1:23.

³⁹St. Paul also admonished the church at Corinth to stand fast in the faith. (1 Corinthians 16:13) It is not the proper thought that they should become idlers and do nothing; but that they should be immovable in their determination to hold fast that which the Lord had delivered to them. That he expected them to do something, to be active and energetic in the service of the Lord, is indicated by his statement in this same Epistle: "Quit you like men, be strong." In other words, labor manfully to win the Lord's approval by deportment and by service.

SELF-EXAMINATION

⁴⁰It is a good thing for the Lord's children to examine themselves, especially when sin has been working in their midst, to see whether or not they are still in the faith. St. Paul says: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13:5) Because of physical weaknesses, because of persecution or trials, one may become discouraged and doubtful as to whether or not he belongs to the Lord. We should remember that we cannot judge ourselves by feelings. We, as new creatures, are not creatures of feelings, but creatures of faith. One therefore should examine himself to see whether or not he is in the faith, because if not in the faith he is not in the truth.

⁴¹If upon examination he finds himself clear on the

fundamental doctrines given by the Lord Jesus to the Church; that he has not repudiated his consecration to the Lord; that he has full confidence in the Lord and his Word and in the Lord's methods of dealing with the Church; that he is submissive to the divine will; and that he is doing what he finds to do to glorify the Lord, and is loyal to the Lord, the truth and his brethren, then he has no cause for discouragement, even though he is receiving discipline through trials. If he finds that his love for the brethren is strong, that his love for the Lord is supreme, and that he has a great desire to glorify God, then he may be sure that he still has the witness of the spirit, that the Father continues to own him as his son. It will not do to rely upon knowledge alone, nor upon the wisdom of men. "Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men." (1 Corinthians 2:5) Our examination should be frequent in order that we may be thoroughly convinced that our faith is standing upon the wisdom of God, that we know his doctrines and rely upon them.

⁴²While it is very desirable for each member of an ecclesia to be in harmony with all the ecclesia; yet this of itself is not sufficient. If one should find that the majority of the ecclesia was deviating from the faith, then he could not be in harmony with that position. In the early Church it was necessary to exhort some to continue in the faith; and this seems to be still proper. (Acts 14:22) It may become necessary at times for those of the ecclesia upon whom the responsibility rests to rebuke sharply those who are stepping aside, in order that they may be sound in the faith.—Titus 1:13, 14.

FAITH IN THE CHRISTIAN

⁴³The Scriptures seem to hold forth the thought that the heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus exercise faith toward those who have faith in them. The Apostle says: "But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 1:13, 14) The Apostle here was bemoaning the fact that at one time he had been a persecutor of the saints and had caused injury to the Church. This text would seem to indicate, then, that the Lord, knowing his honest heart and his desire to do right, maintained a confidence in him and in due season brought him to a full realization of his own position. It suggests the thought further, that when the Church is glorified its members will look with kindly eyes upon those of the world who are stumbling along, beset with weaknesses and many difficulties, yet honestly and earnestly trying to get over the highway of holiness.

⁴⁴In his epistle to the Ephesians St. Paul concludes with these words: "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 6:23) This suggests the thought that Jehovah himself has confidence in the Christian. One may stumble badly, lose confidence in himself, and

become discouraged; but the Father of mercies, knowing his heart, maintains a confidence in him, and in due time lifts him out of his difficulty. The Christian may even come to the point that he fears he has committed the sin unto death; but the heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus, knowing his heart, maintain their faith and confidence in him and, being able to judge perfectly, relieve the Christian of this difficulty by showing him that he is still in their favor.

⁴⁵We may settle it in our minds once for all that there is but one true religion and that is the religion of Jesus Christ; that the plan of God changes not; that his method of operation with reference to the new creation changes not. His laws are fixed. He is faithful to his side of the covenant. If we have made a covenant with him by sacrifice and have been begotten of the holy spirit; if we steadfastly hold to the doctrines that we received and earnestly and honestly contend for the faith, fighting the good fight of faith to the end, we are certain to be approved by him. The apostle Peter emphasizes this fact. Addressing himself to those who are in Christ Jesus, he states in substance that God has given to us his exceeding great and precious promises; and these promises are that we shall be partakers of the divine nature.

⁴⁶What, then, we must do is to give all diligence and add to faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love. "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:5-8) If we are not barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, then we shall be holding fast to the faith or doctrines delivered to us and earnestly contending for them. The Apostle then says: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye 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.

⁴⁷Briefly summed up, then, the Christian has been properly instructed in the divine plan. These great doctrines contain the commandments of the Lord concerning him. If he loves the Lord he will keep these commandments to the very best of his ability. This will mean a loyal devotion to the Lord and his cause, and a diligence in conforming his own life to those principles and commandments, and a like diligence in witnessing to others concerning the goodness of the Lord in providing for the salvation of mankind.

⁴⁸There is but a small company of people on earth

who even pretend to be Christians. There is a still smaller number that are earnestly contending for this faith once delivered to the saints. Those who will ultimately enjoy the complete victory through faith will be the ones who are called and maintain that calling, who are chosen and keep themselves in a proper relationship with the Lord, and who continue faithful, loyal even unto the end, never deviating from the course marked out by the Lord.—Revelation 17:14.

⁴⁹The victory cannot be won of ourselves, but it must be gained through Christ; in fact, the victory will be that of Jehovah, because his great doctrine will triumph; and the saints when completed will be a monument of his grace.

⁵⁰The Christian has no need to fear at this time if he follows this admonition of St. Jude, and contends for the great fundamental doctrines and conforms his life thereto. We are at that time in the Church's history when the last members may soon be able to say with St. Paul: "I have fought a good fight, . . . I have kept the faith." And all who thus do shall receive the crown of life which God has in reservation for those that love him supremely.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

Has God put a premium on faith? What is the meaning of piety? How do these characteristics compare? What are the integral parts of approved characters? ¶ 1, 2.
What is the importance of faith? How is God our shield? ¶ 3.
How are faith and love associated? How does the faith become ours? ¶ 4, 5.
What is the hub of the Christian's creed? How may the ransom sacrifice be denied? ¶ 6, 7.
What is the philosophy of the ransom sacrifice? ¶ 8-11.
Who understands the mystery of God? What is the purpose of the Lord's second advent? ¶ 12-15.
What is embodied in the phrase "earnestly contend"? ¶ 16.
How may faith be defined? Is faith based upon sentimentality? What does it mean to exercise faith? ¶ 17-19.
Who are the heroes of faith? Why could they endure hardships with great fortitude? When did faith first come in its fulness? ¶ 20.
How many faiths are there? Why is faith such a scarce thing in our day? What kind of fight are we engaged in? ¶ 21.
How does God show his interest in our welfare? ¶ 22, 23.
How did Jesus live by faith? How do we live by faith? ¶ 24, 25.
Who is the justifier? Does consecration precede justification? Are we justified by our deeds? Will faith be required in the next age? ¶ 26-28.
Was any Jew justified by the works of the Law? If not, is there any excuse for thinking that a Gentile can be justified by his deeds? ¶ 29, 30.
Differentiate between justification and righteousness. How may justification be lost? What is the basis for justification? ¶ 31, 32.
Are the saints actually righteous? Why not? When is it possible to be actually righteous? ¶ 33.
What is necessary first before one can be established in the truth? What seems to be necessary for one to be established in the truth? ¶ 34, 35.
When is it possible for the adversary to turn one completely away from the Lord and his work? How did the Apostle show his solicitude for the saints at Colosse? At Corinth? ¶ 36-39.
Is it profitable for the Christian to walk circumspectly, and yet occasionally to make introspection of his heart's condition? What is the encouragement we may draw therefrom? ¶ 40, 41.
Is harmony in a class always an indication that all is well? ¶ 42.
Do the Scriptures teach that the heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus exercise faith toward the saints? What does this fact indicate? ¶ 43.
What further proof do we have that the Father trusts his children, and thereby shows himself to be the Father of Mercies? ¶ 44.
What is the true religion? How may we prove ourselves members in particular of the body of Christ? ¶ 45, 46.
If we sincerely love the Lord we shall be diligent in following what course? Are there many following that course? ¶ 47, 48.
Is it possible for each of us to win the victory alone? Who is the real victor? Where are we on the stream of time? ¶ 49, 50.

"For I must fight if I would conquer;
'Tis not by flight that fields are won;

And I must conquer if I would inherit
The victor's joy and crown and throne."

PRAYER-MEETING TEXT COMMENTS

TEXT FOR JUNE 18

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached."—Matthew 24:14.

BEFORE the foundation of the world God determined that he would have a kingdom in which his will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven. He had this in mind when he said to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed."

For this reason God caused all his holy prophets to testify concerning the kingdom. It was for this purpose that the sweet singers of Israel sang of the coming glory and blessings to man. To this end God's beloved Son left the courts of heaven and came to earth; and when he was on this earth the chief message of Jesus was concerning the kingdom of God.

In order that it might be emblazoned upon the minds and hearts of his followers he bade them pray: "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done." Christians throughout the entire age have daily offered this prayer.

All devout Jews looked for the coming of the kingdom. The faithful disciples of the Lord were devout Jews. They could not understand how it would be established and what it would mean; yet the greatest thing to them was that coming kingdom. For this reason the apostles diligently inquired of the Lord what should be the evidence of its approach. He gave answer to them, but they understood not. Afterwards, when begotten of the holy spirit, they had some conception of the coming and the work of the kingdom. The testimony of Jesus, in answering their question, was given chiefly for the benefit of his followers who should be upon the earth at the time of his coming and the beginning of his reign.

The world has been groaning and waiting for deliverance, not knowing just how and when it would come. But now it is here. Now it can be truly said: The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

There is now laid upon every Christians an obligation, yea, a command; and to be pleasing to the Lord he must respond gladly to the commandment given in this text. This commandment is not to sit idly by and revel in the beauties of the truth, but to herald from the housetops by word of mouth, by printed page, by radio, by every means within our power, the good news of the kingdom. There comes ringing out the command, as clear as clarion notes upon the morning air, from the Captain of our salvation, directed to every one of his faithful soldiers, saying, This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached throughout the world as a witness to all nations, and this must be done before the final end.

Let each one, then, who has put on the armor of the Lord and acknowledged his allegiance to the King of glory, ask himself this question: Am I doing my part to make known this good news of the kingdom to the people? Am I telling them that deliverance is here?

TEXT FOR JUNE 25

"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom."—Acts 14:22.

TRIBULATION means affliction from pressure or persecution. The truly consecrated Christian must at once become a soldier. As such he has great pressure upon him, pressure from without and from within. From without there is the seductive influence of the world, the tendency of which is to crowd the Christian out of the narrow way. From within is the pressure of the downward tendency of the flesh. Satan takes advantage of all this, and increases the afflictions upon the child of God insofar as he can. This pressure from without and from within requires constant, diligent and vigorous warfare. The afflictions therefrom often become very burdensome.

The course of the true Christian is a rebuke to the world and to those who love and manifest the worldly spirit. This rebuke causes the evil-minded to develop ill will, hatred and malice, resulting in persecution of the one who is striving to follow in the Master's footsteps. Such persecution often comes from members of one's own family. It often breaks all human ties that were once dear. Sometimes a Christian is persecuted by members of the church denomination where once he found some fellowship. All these tend to make his burdens grievous and heavy. It is only by the grace of the Lord that the Christian can bear up under such pressure.

Many, observing the way of the Christian, have remarked: I prefer to have nothing to do with Christianity; it makes the way harder than that of the world. But why, we ask, should the Christian suffer more than they of the world? Is there a good reason for it?

Knowing that tribulations were necessary St. Paul exultantly wrote: "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." (Romans 5:3,4) While the trials bore heavily upon him he appreciated why they had to come, and hence he said: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—2 Corinthians 4:17.

St. Paul appreciated the way that leads to glory, and the fact that, regardless of how many years of a man's life it should last, it would be but a moment compared to eternity wherein the overcoming Christian would enjoy an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. That glory is the holding of a place in the kingdom of our Lord. Hence, for the encouragement of all the followers of Jesus he wrote that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom."

The prize is worth all it costs, yea, far more than it costs. Be of good courage, therefore, beloved of the Lord. In due time ye shall reap the eternal blessings of the kingdom if you battle faithfully to the end.

THE RETURN AND THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

—JUNE 15—EZRA, CHAPTERS 1, 3, 4, 5, 6—

OBJECT OF RETURN THE WORSHIP OF GOD—KING DARIUS SUPPORTS EDICT OF CYRUS—RESTORATION OF DIVINE WORSHIP SEEN IN LESSON.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God."—Isaiah 40:1.

THE long period of seventy years of captivity weakened the desire of many Israelites for a return to the land which God had given to their fathers, and which God had said he would give to them for an everlasting inheritance. (Psalm 105:10,11) Babylon gave opportunity for riches and gain not possible in Judea; and to the new generation born in captivity, life there was natural. But the hope of Israel was kept alive by those who had been helped by Ezekiel and Jeremiah, and these in turn would keep before the minds of their children the hope which God had set in Israel.

²It was these of whom the Psalmist wrote: "They . . . required of us a song; . . . and mirth," and who replied: "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Psalm 137:3,4) Loyal at heart to God, they would wish to lose the use of their right hand that they might never again play the harp, or that their tongue might cleave to their mouth that they might never sing again, if in Babylon they should act as if they had lost the hope of Israel, or try to amuse the Babylonians by singing to them the sacred songs of Zion. In God's due time Babylon was captured, and Cyrus the Persian issued a proclamation that the Jews might go back to their own land; and it was these who were ready to follow the lead of Zerubbabel.

³The decree of Cyrus, giving liberty to the thousands of Israel to leave Babylon and without special military control, is unique in human history. No doubt Cyrus hated Babylon's methods even as he hated its idolatry; but it is almost certain that Daniel had told him of the prophecy of Isaiah which named him as the liberator of God's chosen people (Isaiah 45:1), and also had pointed out that he had conquered Babylon at the time foretold by Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 29:10) Cyrus saw himself as the agent of the God of heaven.

⁴Over 42,000 Jews responded; and as they were accompanied by more than 7,000 servants and maids and others, altogether about 50,000 left Babylon for Jerusalem. It is easy to imagine their joy when in freedom their faces and their steps were turned toward the land of their fathers and of their hope. It was a repetition of the Exodus, but on a far smaller scale. Many of Israel preferred to remain behind rather than take the journey with its discomforts and then begin life afresh; and doubtless many had lost the hope of Israel. Some of these were kindly disposed towards those returning, but all were expected to contribute towards the cost of the temple. The journey was a long one. In time the mountains of Lebanon were seen on the horizon, and snow-capped, towering Hermon appeared. It was their first sight of the promised land.

⁵When at last they arrived in sight of Jerusalem it was a pitiable scene which there met their eyes; for the beloved city had been a desolation for seventy years, and Zion, the city of David's glory, was covered with heaps of rubbish. (Micah 3:12) Some settled in Jerusalem; but many went to the other cities and villages, seeking their former homes or the homes of their fathers. The object of their return was understood to be to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and to reestablish the worship of Jehovah. Their own return was a second consideration. (Ezra 1:2-4) In the seventh month they gathered as one man to Jerusalem and built an altar, probably in the place where the altar had stood in the temple court. They offered sacrifices, and henceforth continued the daily sacrifices. (Ezra 3:3,4)

Some of the chief of the fathers gave money according to their ability, and Zerubbabel donated heavily.—Ezra 2:68, 69; Nehemiah 7:70.

⁶Zerubbabel has been compared to a second Moses. He was, of course, of the line of David, being grandson of Jehoiakim, and evidently a man of ability. He arranged to have timber cut from Lebanon and transported by sea from Tyre or Sidon via Joppa, a work at any time of much difficulty, but all the more so because of the poverty of their appliances and the fewness of their numbers. The actual building did not commence until the second month of the second year of the return. The people worked with a good heart, and the foundations of the temple were laid with much rejoicing.

⁷The people of the land, commonly known as Samaritans, came offering to help; but their help was declined. They were told that they had nothing to do with the work of the Lord; that neither their money nor their help was desired nor could be accepted. (Ezra 4:1-3) This made them open enemies to the Jews and opponents of the work of rebuilding the temple. Zerubbabel has been blamed for exclusiveness, and his action has been criticized. He was no bigot, but a man of right views. The Samaritans quickly showed that they had no love for Jehovah, nor any desire for the rebuilding of the temple; for the moment they did not get what they wanted, they hindered the work which they had professed to be desirous to see quickly carried out. They delayed it all the days of Cyrus, and later wrote to the Persian king; and as events in Persia were disturbed at that time, and the decree of Cyrus was not known by the then king, the work was stopped. The letter of these enemies, which the Lord has seen good to have placed on record (Ezra 4:11-16), is a clever piece of special pleading. Apparently it has since been used by many where charges have been made against the Lord's people. The king's answer was just what they desired; and on its receipt they immediately went to Jerusalem, and by force and power caused the work of building the house of God to cease.—Ezra 4:23,24.

⁸Here was a sore trial for those whose hearts were set for Jehovah's honor. Everything had seemed to indicate that the good hand of the Lord was upon them; but now, altogether unexpectedly, when the work was begun they could not continue. We may not say that Zerubbabel and his collaborators were intimidated and lacked faith, but rather that for the time being they were overpowered, and could not proceed. Nor may we say that they could have made an appeal to the king; for the kings of Persia were autocrats, and apart from the favor of God such a course might cause additional hardships. It seemed to be a case where God's overruling providence must be manifested, and whether or not he would allow the Samaritans to interfere with his plans.

⁹About sixteen years had elapsed from the time when the foundations of the house were laid until the Lord raised up Haggai and Zechariah to stir up the people and to strengthen the hands of Zerubbabel. Haggai began his prophecy six months before Zechariah. His word was direct; it came with a rebuke: "Is it time for you . . . to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" (Haggai 1:4) Evidently the people had thought that as the Lord had permitted the work of rebuilding the temple to be stopped, they need not specially consider it; and they were very calmly waiting the time when he would indicate that the

time for rebuilding had come. They were planting and sowing, and saying, "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." Haggai reminded them that they were sowing much but reaping little, and were not being satisfied with either food or clothing, while the laboring man was no better off than if he put his wages into a bag with holes. The reason was declared to be that they had neglected their responsibility to the Lord; they had not considered the Lord nor his honor, nor the real reason of their return.—Haggai 1:1-11.

¹⁰Encouraged by the words of the Lord, Zerubbabel and the people did not wait for the Persian monarch's authority, but began the rebuilding of the temple. Immediately they began to rebuild, the Syrian governor asked their authority. Doubting their word he wrote the Persian government respecting the professed edict of Cyrus which the Jews claimed had been promulgated on their behalf. This information gave the clue to the records, and it was found that the Jews were correct. Then came the letter of King Darius to these men, with instruction to the governors in all that part to aid the Jews in every way in the furtherance of their work. Material was to be supplied, and even money out of the taxes; and strict penalties and punishments were laid upon all who would in any way hinder. (Ezra 6:1-18) Thus in the Lord's hand silver and gold and material were supplied for the building of the temple.

¹¹Here are lessons for the Lord's people, lessons which seem specially written for our day, when the temple of truth is being reërected and the worship of Jehovah reëstablished. One object of the manifestation of the present time is: "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth." (Psalm 83:18) At the present the Christian world is determined that it will not worship Jehovah, "the tribal God of the Hebrews," whose ordinances and sacrifices they despise. They have yet to learn, to their vexation, that Jehovah is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose worship they profess to maintain.

¹²The experiences of Israel under Zerubbabel may be taken as examples for our instruction, both for the Church as a whole and for the individual. It may be that through force of circumstances the work of the Lord is hindered for a time, or even stopped. In such a case those who have been awakened to the facts of God's will, and who have had his work in their hands, should not leave that work as if it must now wait until the Lord indicated a change in his purpose. It must be a charge upon their heart, and earnest prayer be made, and there be a watching in prayer for every indication of his will. No doubt the Church has sometimes suffered loss because it has not charged itself as fully as it ought to have done with the care of the Lord's interests. That which has seemed to be an overruling providence has probably been, as in Israel's case, only a time of testing, permitted to disclose the lack of proper appreciation and responsibility.

¹³Another important lesson is that if there is spiritual poverty, either personally felt, or realized in a church, it is a wise thing to ask oneself whether or not the Lord's interests are being neglected. It is not God's way to give spiritual blessings to those who neglect divine interests, even as he withheld his more temporal blessings and favors from natural Israel when they neglected these in favor of their own. Also the individual member of the Church who is hindered from doing some work for the Lord should not take it that henceforth he is not to expect to resume his work until the Lord changes his circumstances, but rather he should pray to the Lord, seeking that if possible those circumstances could be changed for him.

¹⁴Probably the outstanding lesson is that which is the burden of Haggai's message. These returned captives forgot

that freedom was given to them that they might build the house of the Lord. (Ezra 1:2-4) Instead of continuing to do so, they proceeded to build houses for themselves and to settle down to ease. One of the great dangers which has assailed those who have in these days been freed from Great Babylon's errors has been that of forgetfulness of the reason why God gave them the truth which freed them. They have been content to enjoy it, and to settle down comfortably in the meeting rooms. They have allowed untoward circumstances to prevent them from carrying out the plainly indicated will of the Lord; and sometimes, like Israel, they have said: "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built."

¹⁵In their early rejoicing in their return Israel gave gladly of their money. Afterwards, when much of the money was used up, and apparently partially wasted, and as in later years they had not prospered, it may be supposed that they hesitated to begin again because of the expense. It was under these circumstances that Haggai bade them be strong; for the Lord was with them as when he had brought them out of Egypt. He declared that God would shake heaven and earth and all nations, that the desire of all nations should come.—Haggai 2:4-9.

¹⁶Zechariah's message came by visions. By these God showed that he had forces at work which, unseen by human eyes, were bringing his purposes to a completion. (Zechariah 1:1-17) The Prophet was permitted to hear the angel of the Lord pleading for Israel. He was shown that the work to be done by Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest, was also necessary. (Zechariah 4:1-14) These things are still true; and the Lord's people of this day, who have the work and privilege of building the temple of God and of establishing truth in the earth, and the honor of Jehovah, need have no fear that the Lord's work will stop for lack of means. There is great work to be done, but the material wealth of the nations is the Lord's; for it has been taken out of the earth by means of the labor of men; and it is still true that the silver and the gold belong to God. Zerubbabel was assured that as he had begun the work so he should finish it; that the mountain of difficulty should become a plain. (Zechariah 4:7-9) Zerubbabel and Joshua represent the Church in this day; and the prophets represent the Word of the Lord, which comes to them to encourage them against the difficulties of the work, to allay their fears, and to assure them that they who have begun the work will finish it, bringing forth the headstone, crying, "Grace, grace unto it." The work is not done by might, nor by power, but by the spirit of the Lord. Let everyone take courage and carry out his own responsibility.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

- What two things weakened the faith of the Israelites in captivity? ¶1.
 What kept the hope of Israel from dying out? ¶1.
 What was the sentiment of those who were loyal to God and who responded when Cyrus issued his proclamation? ¶2.
 What unique place does Cyrus occupy among heathen kings? ¶3.
 How many Jews returned to Jerusalem? Of what was this a reminder? ¶4.
 What was the first consideration for the returning? How is it shown? ¶5.
 What did Zerubbabel do? Who was he? ¶6.
 Who were "the people of the land"? Why was their proffered assistance refused? Was the refusal wise or unwise? What was their letter to the king of Persia? ¶7.
 Why did the Israelites then cease their labor of rebuilding the temple? Why was it unwise to appeal their case to Artaxerxes? ¶8.
 How did God again stir up his chosen people? When was this? ¶9.
 What was the response to Haggai's message? How were the Jews' enemies defeated in their purpose? ¶10.
 What lesson is there for spiritual Israel? ¶11, 12.
 Spiritual poverty either in the individual or in the congregation is an indication of what? When the cause is discerned, what is the remedy? ¶13.
 What is the outstanding lesson for us today? What is the tendency when freed from mystic Babylon's captivity? ¶14.
 What were the visible circumstances of Israel when Haggai delivered his message? ¶15.
 What were the invisible circumstances as seen in Zechariah's visions? What are our lessons in these matters? ¶16.

REFORMS UNDER EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

—JUNE 22—EZRA, CHAPTERS 7 TO 10; NEHEMIAH, CHAPTERS 5, 8, 13—

EZRA EXERCISES FAITH IN JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM—NEHEMIAH, VALIANT LEADER, BUILDS JERUSALEM WALL—THREE PHASES OF HARVEST WORK.

"Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts."—Malachi 3:7.

AFTER the events of our last lesson there is no Scriptural record of the life of Israel for the next fifty years or more. Then suddenly Ezra is introduced. Ezra was a priest of the line of Eleazar (Ezra 7:1-5), but he is best known as Ezra the scribe. He is not the first so named in Scripture, but is the first who bears the title "scribe" in the law of Moses. The mention of Ezra in the book of his name is in order to tell of his leaving Babylon with a company of faithful Israelites who took the opportunity of returning to the land of their fathers. What preparation there had been with the authorities we are not told; but it is said that "Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." (Ezra 7:10) The preparation was good; he had taught himself in the law of his God, and had also prepared his heart. It seems certain that he had thought about his people in Palestine, and had heard of them and of their lack of teachers, and had prepared himself for service if so be that God should choose to use him; an example good to follow, and a course always blessed of God. Apparently he stood well with the king; and when he thought that the time had come that he could be of service, he made his desire known to the king, and at once found acceptance. Without any explanation Ezra tells us (Ezra 7:11-26) of the favor he received from the Persian monarch. It was a very generous provision the king made for him, and a very favorable charter he gave him to take to Jerusalem.

²Ezra was sent by the king as a commissioner to go to Jerusalem to inquire after its welfare, and to carry there silver and gold which the king and his council freely offered; also to take up moneys from his compatriots, and the king's command to the treasurers on the Syrian side of the Euphrates to provide what was necessary for the carrying out of his commission. Further, it was commanded that the priests and the Levites and those ministering in the temple were not to be taxed. Besides this, Ezra was given magisterial powers with authority to punish offenders against the law of his God (Ezra 7:25, 26); *i. e.*, that Ezra should act not only with priestly authority but also as a deputy of the king of Persia, a gratuitous authority which proved to be of much service to him.

³A proclamation was made amongst Ezra's people, and about 7,000 persons gathered together for the journey to Jerusalem. They started from Babylon on New Year's day, but stayed at Ahava for three days. There Ezra reviewed the people, and found that while there were priests amongst the number, there were "none of the sons of Levi." (Ezra 8:15) He sent messengers to certain of the chief men of the Levites, inviting them to share with their brethren on the journey to Jerusalem. Thirty-eight Levites responded, with 220 Nethinims, or servants, all of whom were expressed by name. It is apparent that then, as seventy years before, the Levites were amongst the least willing to return to Jerusalem and Palestine. They appear to have been like the clergy, their antitypes of today, more willing to stay in Babylon than to serve the Lord in the truth. The tribe of Levi had lost its early love and devotion.

⁴At Ahava they fasted, and prayed that the Lord would guide their way; for Ezra naively says: "I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him: but his power and his

wrath is against all them that forsake him." (Ezra 8:22) On the twelfth day, in full confidence, they started on their long journey. They took the longer route and were thus saved from many enemy marauders who infested the less frequented ways. (Ezra 8:31) On arrival at Jerusalem they rested three days. Then Ezra met the princes of the people, and at once he was thrown into great disappointment and sorrow. They told him of a sad state of affairs. There had been much marrying with the women of all the surrounding nations; and the people, the priests, and the Levites were doing according to the abominations of the nations; indeed, the princes and rulers had been chief in the trespass.—Ezra 9:1, 2.

⁵Ezra was struck dumb at the seriousness of this thing, and in Eastern fashion he tore his hair and rent his garments and sat in grief and concern. (Ezra 9:3) It was not only the sin and the moral injury which presented themselves to him, but the dire consequence which must soon result. The holy seed was corrupted; and, were the evil not stopped at once, there would soon be no separated people. Without doubt this intermarrying of the returned people was the devil's attempt to mix up the chosen people with the peoples of earth in order that God would have no people separated unto himself. Ezra sat before the house of the Lord till the time of evening sacrifice. Then he prayed, confessing the sin and their inability to stand before God. His distress affected the people, and they too saw the seriousness of the case. A decision was made and a covenant entered into that they would cleanse themselves from this sin.—Ezra 10:5.

⁶A proclamation was sent out through Judah, bidding all "the children of the captivity," that is, all Israel, to appear at Jerusalem within three days under penalty of confiscation of their goods and excommunication from fellowship. Ezra would now understand why, in the providence of God, magisterial power had been given him. God saw that he would have need of it, and had moved the mind of the king accordingly. The people assembled on the twentieth day of the ninth month, the early part of our December. It was a day of much rain; and as the work was great, a commission was appointed. The cleansing work went on, and by the first day of the first month all the mixed marriages were disannulled. Israel was again a separated people.

⁷The book of Ezra closes abruptly after the account of this reform, and we are not told what his work was after those first months. He is not again mentioned till the time of Nehemiah, thirteen to fourteen years afterwards. Some think that he returned to Babylon; but in the absence of any statement it seems proper to assume that he stayed in Jerusalem and attended to the duties of the king's commission. With his heart set upon the work which he expected to do, and which he would surely believe was the purpose of God for him, he could hardly fail to feel a measure of disappointment as he found himself involved in the matter of the mixed marriages, and that afterwards the Lord had apparently no other special work for him. But, as he himself had discerned, the work he had done was the most important; for reform and cleansing must precede particular instruction. It was hopeless to expect those who were so contaminated to care for the instruction of the Lord.

⁸Thirteen years after Artaxerxes had commissioned Ezra, Nehemiah, the cupbearer, with a sad countenance ministered to the king. He had heard of the desolations of Jerusalem. The walls were still broken down, and the gates burned with

fire (Nehemiah 1:3); and he had prayed that God would give him favor in the sight of the king that he might go to restore the beloved city, and comfort the desolate people, who were in great affliction and reproach. The king was gracious to him, gave him his desire, and letters to call upon the governors of Syria for anything he required, and also an escort of soldiers to see him safely to Jerusalem. On arrival he at once perceived that there were enemies about: Sanballat, a Moabite; Tobiah, an Ammonite; and later, Geshem, an Arabian—all men of position and power, who were exceedingly grieved that a man had come to seek the welfare of Israel. Because of this, and because his judgment as to conditions saw that it was the better way, Nehemiah told no one of his immediate purpose, but went round the city walls by night. Then he called the rulers and told them of his desire. He said: "Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach."—Nehemiah 2:17.

⁹Nehemiah told them of the good hand of the Lord upon himself, and of the king's commission; and they said: "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for this good work (Nehemiah 2:18); and the work was begun and proceeded apace. In fifty-two days after they had started, the wall was built up despite sneers, and threats, and the hardship of having to watch their enemies and be ready to fight even as they built. Though the work was done with good will, there was some trouble besides that from their enemies; for the profiteer was abroad. The poorer ones were held in debt by the richer, who not only held them as slaves, but exacted heavy interest on money lent. Then the enemies raised a charge of insurrection and rebellion against Nehemiah. But, unlike Zerubbabel, Nehemiah would not be hindered by the enemies without, nor by the more treacherous ones within. He was a man of much decision and energy, and one whose enthusiasm was catching.

¹⁰It was then, when the city wall was built, and the reproach of Jerusalem and of Israel was taken away, that Ezra again comes into view. The Lord could now use him in the special service for which he was prepared; for the people were now desirous of hearing him, and they asked him to bring the book of the law of Moses. (Nehemiah 8:1) It was a great day in Israel. From early light until midday the people stood listening to the reading. The Law was read and explained, so that the people understood, and wept when they realized how far they were astray from that Law. But Nehemiah and Ezra and the Levites bade them rejoice; for the day was holy to the Lord. Nehemiah said: "Neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10) That was the beginning of a great revival in Israel. They learned anew about the feast of tabernacles, and they kept it two weeks afterwards with great rejoicing. They reviewed the history of Israel before the Lord, and entered into a covenant to keep the law of the Lord. They vowed that they would observe the sabbath years, and the sabbath day, the sign of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel. (Nehemiah 9:14; Exodus 31:13) It was the most complete observance of the law of Moses undertaken by Israel, and is a very good type of that restoration of truth and a vow to live in harmony with the will of God which has been and is the experience of the true followers of the Lord in present truth.

THREE PHASES OF HARVEST WORK FORESHADOWED

¹¹Viewed in the light of these developments it seems easy to see why Ezra could not enter into the work on which he had set his heart. The simple fact is that the people were unprepared. Two reasons are apparent: One, already mentioned, is that the people had transgressed so heavily in the matter of marriage with the people of the land; the other, their lack of care for Jerusalem and the honor of God.

Their cleansing from defilement was not sufficient. They failed to realize that they had a responsibility towards God; also they had forgotten the message of Haggai spoken to their forefathers. This lack must be removed if they were to have the blessings of God. Hence God raised up Nehemiah to remind them of their neglect, and to bring about a reformation. Then when they were cleansed from defilement and also alive towards God they were in a condition for instruction. And then, as was natural, they asked for it, and Ezra's time had come.—Ezra 8:1.

¹²Ezra was neither the first nor the last of God's servants who have found that they were called to wait when ready for service. The Lord has often tried his faithful ones thus; but it is probably true that all who in sincerity have prepared themselves for him have found their service used in God's time and way. The work which the people did in Nehemiah's day could not have been done by them thirteen years before; and therefore Nehemiah could not have done his work unless Ezra had preceded him. And during the time of waiting the Lord was preparing his servant Nehemiah for the special work which needed a man of certain temperament and fitness.

¹³The three phases of the return and the reestablishment under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, represent three phases of the harvest work. The first represents the reestablishment of the truth respecting the character and the plan of God. The second is that which shows the necessity of a complete separation of the Lord's people from all other work, however plausibly it may present itself as a power of God. It is as harmful for the Lord's people of today to associate with the world's institutions as for Israel in Ezra's day. The third or Nehemiah phase is the latest, and is, of course, that which corresponds to the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

¹⁴The Lord's people are now called upon to build up the truth as a city, a place of refuge for the many who will yet find it so. This is the work of witnessing for God and of making his name known in the earth. The thousands of those who will yet seek God in the time of trouble must know to whom they can go for truth; and those who have been privileged to come to a knowledge of the truth must realize that if the full blessings of joy in the Lord are to be received and maintained, they must enter into the service for his name's sake. No one may expect to continue to receive instruction in the way of the Lord who does not maintain interest in the Lord's work. But he who is stimulated by love for the Lord and serves according to the revealed will can expect to keep up with the onward progress of the blessings.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

- What time has elapsed since our last lesson? Who was Ezra? What was his ambition? What distinction has he as a scribe? ¶ 1.
How did the king of Persia favor Ezra? ¶ 2.
How many made the journey with Ezra? How many Levites responded to a special invitation? What was the matter with the Levites? ¶ 3.
Why was Ezra justified in not asking for a band of soldiers? Why was Ezra's heart saddened because of the mixed marriages? ¶ 4.
Why was the devil interested in mixed marriages? What did the Israelites do to cleanse themselves? ¶ 5.
How was God's overruling providence shown in the matter? ¶ 6.
What was the probable duty of Ezra for the next fourteen years? ¶ 7.
What turn had the Lord now taken in behalf of Israel? ¶ 8.
How many days was the wall in building? Were those days in some respects like our days? ¶ 9.
What were the circumstances that brought Ezra to the front again? What was the feast of tabernacles? What may be said of that revival of the Law of the Lord? ¶ 10.
What before this time had hindered Ezra from serving the people in teaching and instructing them in the ways of the Lord? ¶ 11.
How does God sometimes try his servants? What advanced Nehemiah's work? ¶ 12.
What are the three phases of the harvest work? Which are we in? ¶ 13.
What is the wonderful inheritance of the saints this side the veil now? How may we expect to keep abreast of the blessings? ¶ 14.

REHOBOAM TO NEHEMIAH

—JUNE 29—QUARTERLY REVIEW—

HISTORY OF NATURAL ISRAEL FORESHADOWS CHURCHIANITY—CHURCHIANITY WAS TYPIFIED IN BABYLON—JEREMIAH AND EZEKIEL ARE UP-TO-DATE.

"Righteousness. exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."—Proverbs 14:34.

THE scriptures set for our studies during the past three months have been found to be full of instruction. As the Church continues on her way, she finds that her path is truly "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Proverbs 4:18) Our Lord's return was the time of sunrise. Since then the light grows in strength, and will grow until at its high noon it will be merged into the light of the glory of God.

²The lessons carried us rapidly through the history of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, too quickly to allow detailed study, but sufficiently speedy to enable us to view them in true perspective, and to note the things which are of particular importance to the Bible Student of today; for while the Bible has a message for the people of God at any time, it speaks specially to his servants now.

³The northern kingdom took the name Israel as if it continued the kingdom. Evidently this was of the Lord; for it was said to Jeroboam: "I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee." One tribe only was reserved to David's line.—1 Kings 11:31, 32.

⁴That kingdom lasted 259 years, from B. C. 999 to B. C. 740, in the fifth year of Hezekiah of Judah. It was destroyed by Sargon, king of Assyria; for he carried its people to the far-off parts of his empire, and repopled the land with a mixed crowd from places near and far. (2 Kings 17:24) These, still having Samaria for their chief city, were the progenitors of "the people of the land," who were so much trouble to the returned exiles, and who were the progenitors of the Samaritans of our Lord's day. Thus the ten tribes, having broken the covenant of Israel (Jeremiah 31:32), were carried back to the land from which God had called their fathers, and there they were scattered abroad amongst the nations as unworthy of his covenant. Whatever claim that kingdom had to the title of Kingdom of Israel then lapsed.

⁵The southern kingdom, Judah, was of course the smaller. But it had the importance and dignity of being David's tribe, out of whose seed the hope of Israel was to come. (Genesis 49:10) It also had the city of Jerusalem as its center, and the temple which Jehovah acknowledged as his. The southern kingdom lasted 393 years. It ended by the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of its people by Nebuchadnezzar. The people of the southern kingdom did not repudiate their covenant in the same way as the northern kingdom, but they also fell into idolatry, and their sin was aggravated by much hypocrisy and persistent refusals to hear the word of the Lord by his prophets. Judah's pride and self-will and hypocrisy led it as surely away from God as the open idolatry and indifference of the northern tribes had led them away.—Jeremiah 7:15.

⁶The fall of Jerusalem was the end of God's typical kingdom; for with its destruction and the desolation of the land, God had neither temple, nor city, nor people in the land. Outwardly there was then nothing to be seen of all the greatness he had claimed for himself: his house was burned and his people were proved unfaithful. To the on-looking nations it appeared as if he and they had suffered eclipse. (Isaiah 52:5; Romans 2:24) It was a picture in miniature of the apparent failure of God's work in the earth at the return of our Lord.—Luke 18:8.

⁷The histories of the two kingdoms foreshadowed the two chief phases of organized Christianity during the Gospel Age: The one, the systems like the Church of England and

Catholicism; and the other, that which is represented by the Free Churches of England and America. The passing of the northern kingdom into oblivion portrays political Christianity sinking into oblivion; and that of Judah with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, represents the destruction of a hypocritical Christianity which at heart hates the way of the Lord, and is ready to destroy his faithful servants who tell of the coming disaster and point out the only way to make it easier to bear. In their witness the faithful people of God find it as impossible to persuade those who by service and money support the systems that disaster is coming to organized religion as Jeremiah found it impossible to persuade the Jews of the disaster about to fall on Jerusalem.

⁸There are now more forewarning evidences than there were then. Christendom has exalted itself as the kingdom of heaven on earth; but its history is written as with a pen of iron dipped in blood, for it has been and is yet responsible for most of the great conflicts which have torn humanity. Thus its history has been written twice. It is written in the chronicles of its historians, but was also written beforehand in those of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. It is a history of quarrels and wars, of defection from covenants, of an unfaithful and hypocritical people, in heart far from wanting to do the will of God, whom they professed to serve.

⁹The mercy of God is abundantly shown in the histories of both Israel and Judah. It was only after he had borne their ways till they had demonstrated their utter unworthiness to represent him that he caused them to be removed out of the land. He had not withdrawn from his purposes; and the crown or the right of the kingdom was not taken away from Judah, but was transferred to the Gentiles to be held by them "until he come whose right is." (Ezekiel 21:27) Also his covenant with David remained (Psalm 89:3); and by Jeremiah he had told of a new covenant he would make with them, a covenant of grace which would bring them forever into those blessings which he had spoken to their fathers.—Jeremiah 31:31.

¹⁰Exactly according to the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, Babylon the great destroyer was itself taken captive. The Medes and Persians took it, altogether unexpectedly, while it was boasting secure in its strength. (Daniel 5:30) The exiles were then given liberty to return; and more than 42,000, mainly of Judah, returned accompanied by nearly 8,000 servants and others, under the guidance and care of Zerubbabel, the prince of Judah, and Joshua the priest. But these were not merely captives set free and allowed to return home; they were set at liberty in order that they might build the temple of Jehovah, and reestablish his worship. (Ezra 1:3) That work was begun as soon as materials could be obtained. But from the beginning it was hindered by the people of the land. These professed a desire to aid the new work; but Zerubbabel treated them as insincere and as adversaries, and his judgment was justified, for they immediately proved themselves to be such. (Ezra 4:4, 5) These are types of those Christians who have known present truth and have professed their desire to help in the work of the Lord, but who, when they have not been pleased in some matter, have left the work and become its enemy.

¹¹The restoration of Israel must not be taken as typical of the restoration of Christianity as we know it; for Christendom has deliberately passed its last chance and is now

the great Babylon which was to be destroyed, and whose destruction is likened to that of a millstone lifted up and cast into the sea.—Revelation 18:21.

¹²Babylon is both the destroyer of a hypocritical Christianity, and itself specially the representative of the great world system which has incorporated a spurious Christianity. Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar, the overflowing scourge which darkened the world in the days of the fall of Jerusalem, was also a figure of the great darkness of Bolshevism and anarchy, now creeping up from the east. But Babylon the great world-power, religious and political, holding sway over the earth, and the stronghold of the world's powers, is the cage of every evil bird (doctrine or philosophy), is the world's organization called Christendom which is being broken down by the great Cyrus, the Prince, the Righteous One from the east, the Prince of Peace, who will give liberty to all the captives of this world's darkness.

¹³These scriptures are the treasure store out of which meat in due season is provided. The records of the faithfulness of Elijah, and the alert, active service of Elisha, are now daily proving a stimulus to the servants of God; while the incidents of their typical service are a guide to them to know what is to be done and when it is to be done in their service for God. The service of the Church, the antitypical Elijah and Elisha, must continue until the worship of human philosophy and power is destroyed. The proclamation of the Lord's presence and of the establishment of the kingdom, with that of Christ Jesus as a ransom for all, is the only power which will break down present-day Baalism.

JEREMIAH AND EZEKIEL ARE UP-TO-DATE

¹⁴The lessons of God's protection of his people in the days of Jehoshaphat, when they were saved from almost certain destruction at the hands of combined Moab, Ammon, and Edom, and a mixed multitude, and again when they were saved in the days of Ezekiel from the mighty power of Assyria, tell of another phase in the life of the Church. The servants of the Lord now under his banner and care need have no fear of there being any failure of God's protection while they are faithful to him. They may be threatened with what seems to be overpowering force; but no weapon that is formed against the servant of the Lord shall prosper—a special promise for a special time.—Isaiah 54:17.

¹⁵The courage and fidelity of Jeremiah and Ezekiel are set as examples for all those who are now called upon to witness for Jehovah, and their messages are as appropriate to present conditions as they were then. The clearer the servant of the Lord sees the things written, the better he will understand and do his work. These studies not only have

revealed the readiness of God to forgive whenever there are signs of repentance, but also show his forbearance under provocation. And just as clearly they indicate that there comes a time when presumption on his grace has an end. Also his care over his own, and his particularity in the carrying out of his plans, are disclosed. The Babylonian empire under Nebuchadnezzar seemed strong enough to last more than seventy years. It reared its proud buildings to the skies. But God had started forces which brought Babylon to captivity, and its empire to disruption exactly at an appointed time which had already been stated. (Jeremiah 25:11) The seventy years of Judah's captivity in Babylon were the fixed number of Israel's jubilee sabbath years, all of them unkept by them. (2 Chronicles 36:21) The fact that they were kept (though by means of the captivity) indicates that Israel's covenant is to be continued. The actual end of the jubilees brought the destruction of literal Babylon; and the end of the seventy cycles (as indicated by seventy jubilees), in the fall of 1925, will surely bring the deathblow to symbolic Babylon.

¹⁶The lessons of the returning exiles should remain as exhortations. They forgot why their freedom was given to them; and it was only when God stirred up Haggai and Zechariah to remind them of their obligation that they returned to the neglected foundations of the temple and again took up the work which they had dropped. Let us all remember that the present-day favors, so richly given to us, are not for our own sakes, but are that we may serve those interests which the Lord has given into our hands.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

When is the time of "sunrise" and of "high noon"? ¶ 1.
Give a brief history of the two kingdoms. What is the significance of the fact that the northern kingdom took the name of Israel? Who were the Samaritans? What advantage had the southern kingdom? ¶ 2-5.
When God's typical kingdom ceased, did it appear to the Gentile nations that God and his people had been eclipsed? ¶ 6.
Did God permit that condition of affairs in order to foreshadow a picture for the benefit of his faithful children now? ¶ 7.
Are there more forewarning evidences now than then? ¶ 8.
Does God's dealings with natural Israel give us confidence in the future? Has God withdrawn his purpose to bless all the families of the earth? ¶ 9.
What does the unexpected taking of typical Babylon teach? Are the materials about ready for the antitypical temple? ¶ 10.
Does the restoration of Israel mean the restoration of churchianity? Whom did Cyrus represent? The deliverance of Israel then represents what? ¶ 11, 12.
Why are these scriptures a storehouse of information to true Christians? ¶ 13.
How has God manifested his protecting care in the past? What is our assurance? ¶ 14.
What may be said of the messages of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, which the priests of Babel do not see, neither can they comprehend? When was the appointed time for typical Babylon to fall? What is the date in antitype? ¶ 15.
Why has deliverance from Babylonish bondage come to us? ¶ 16.

AN INTERESTING LETTER

RECOGNIZES THE SPIRIT OF GOD

DEAR BRETHREN:

In acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 31st, ultimo, you will allow me to say that no other than God's servant could have spoken the words of encouragement contained in your letter. They were words which at once revealed grace, loving and tender mercies. I was touched, touched to the heart. I have always found this same mysterious spirit in reading the four Gospels of Christ. His teachings and words were infused with great love and tender mercies.

After thoroughly comparing the seven volumes of Pastor Russell with the Word of God I was touched with this same spirit of grace, love and tender mercies in his teachings and explanations, accompanied with firmness of pur-

pose. This was the spirit of Christ. The writings of the apostles show that this was also their spirit. The writings of Pastor Russell show this same spirit; your letter referred to shows forth this same spirit; and, thank God, his Word promises me this same spirit. The Lord who now wounds to heal will make a chain of this spirit around the world. Then shall the end come. Yes, I am satisfied; my joy is complete.

The doctrine of the Atonement as presented in Volume 5, STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, completely established my faith in the divine plan of salvation. Not only so, but it cleansed me of the ridiculous doctrines of the trinity, incarnation, human immortality, and the God-dishonoring doctrine of eternal torment in hell.

Thanking you, by the grace of God,

MEMO. A. DZINGEWA (*Native of Africa*)

International Bible Students Association Classes

Lectures and Studies by Traveling Brethren

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Buffalo, N. Y.	" 4	Paris, Ill.	" 11
Cleveland, O.	" 5	Marshall, Ill.	" 12
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Lynchburg, Va.	" 4	Danville, Va.	" 12
Republican Grove, Va.	" 5	Leakesville, N. C.	" 13
Lynchburg, Va.	" 6, 8	Winston Salem, N. C.	" 15
Hurt, Va.	" 9	State Road, N. C.	" 16
Gretna, Va.	" 10	Siloam, N. C.	" 17, 18

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Fitchburg, Mass.	" 3	East Woburn, N. H.	" 10
Pittsfield, N. H.	" 4	Springvale, Me.	" 11, 12
Manchester, N. H.	" 5	South Windham, Me.	" 13
Milford, N. H.	" 6	Portland, Me.	" 15

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Walls, Okla.	" 26	Peggs, Okla.	" 3
Quinton, Okla.	" 27	Cardin, Okla.	" 4
Muskogee, Okla.	" 28	Baxter Springs, Kan.	" 5
Tanahla, Okla.	" 29, 30	Wichita, Kan.	" 6
Stigler, Okla.	June 1	Denver, Colo.	" 15

BROTHER V. C. RICE

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Easthampton, Mass.	" 3	Woonsocket, R. I.	" 9
Holyoke, Mass.	" 4	Milford, Mass.	" 10
Springfield, Mass.	" 5	Franklin, Mass.	" 11
Worcester, Mass.	" 6	Brockton, Mass.	" 12
Providence, R. I.	" 8	Stoughton, Mass.	" 13

BROTHER C. W. CUTFORTH

Bradner, B. C.	May 26	Nelson, B. C.	June 5
Matsqui, B. C.	" 27	Balfour, B. C.	" 6
Cawston, B. C.	" 29, 30	Cranbrook, B. C.	" 8, 9
Penticton, B. C.	June 1	MacLeod, Alta.	" 11
Rock Creek, B. C.	" 2	Medicine Hat, Alta.	" 13
Trail, B. C.	" 4	Maple Creek, Sask.	" 15

BROTHER C. ROBERTS

Nanaimo, B. C.	May 26	Edmonton, Alta.	June 12, 13
Malabar, B. C.	" 27	Saskatoon, Sask.	" 15
Victoria, B. C.	June 1	Bredenbury, Sask.	" 17, 18
Ocean Falls, B. C.	" 3, 4	Willowbrook, Sask.	" 20
Prince Rupert, B. C.	" 6, 8	Yorkton, Sask.	" 22
Prince George, B. C.	" 10, 11	Millwood, Man.	" 24

BROTHER H. H. DINGUS

Bristol, Tenn.	June 1	East Radford, Va.	June 16
Wytheville, Va.	" 5	Ashland, Ky.	" 17
East Radford, Va.	" 6	Paintsville, Ky.	" 18
Roanoke, Va.	" 8	McRoberts, Ky.	" 19, 20
Honaker, Va.	" 9	Lexington, Ky.	" 22
Coeburn, Va.	" 10, 15	Frankfort, Ky.	" 23

BROTHER R. L. ROBIE

Bellingham, Wash.	June 1	Mount Vernon, Wash.	June 10
Oak Harbor, Wash.	" 2, 3	Stanwood, Wash.	" 11
Anacortes, Wa.	" 4	Bremerton, Wash.	" 12
Friday Harbor,	" 5, 6	Alderwood Manor, Wash.	" 13
Burlington, Wash.	" 8	Everett, Wash.	" 15
Sedro Woolley, Wash.	" 9	Wenatchee, Wash.	" 17, 18

BROTHER A. J. ESHLEMAN

Tabian, N. Mex.	June 1	Grand Jet., Colo.	June 15, 16
Albuquerque, N. Mex.	" 2, 3	Basalt, Colo.	" 17
Farlington, N. Mex.	" 6	Lourence, Colo.	" 19, 20
Aztec, N. Mex.	" 8, 10	Pueblo, Colo.	" 22
Farlington Glade, N. M.	" 9	Trinidad, Colo.	" 23, 24
Durango, Colo.	" 11	Walsenburg, Colo.	" 25

BROTHER O. L. SULLIVAN

Empire, Mich.	June 1	Saginaw, Mich.	June 10
Lake Ann, Mich.	" 2	Wheeler, Mich.	" 11
Traverse City, Mich.	" 3, 5	Alma, Mich.	" 12
Kewadin, Mich.	" 4	Durand, Mich.	" 13
Midland, Mich.	" 6, 8	Fenton, Mich.	" 15
Bay City, Mich.	" 9	Burt, Mich.	" 16

BROTHER M. L. HERR

Cincinnati, O.	June 1	Muncie, Ind.	June 8
Action, Ind.	" 2	Alexandria, Ind.	" 9
Richmond, Ind.	" 3	Elwood, Ind.	" 10
New Castle, Ind.	" 4	Tipton, Ind.	" 11
Anderson, Ind.	" 5	Frankfort, Ind.	" 12, 15
Farmland, Ind.	" 6	New Richmond, Ind.	" 13

BROTHER W. J. THORN

St. Louis, Mo.	June 1	Warren, Pa.	June 9
Indianapolis, Ind.	" 2	Onoville, N. Y.	" 10
Shelby, O.	" 3, 4	Salamanca, N. Y.	" 11
Westfield, N. Y.	" 5	Rew City, Pa.	" 12
Clymer, N. Y.	" 6	Bradford, Pa.	" 13
Jamestown, N. Y.	" 8	Shinglehouse, Pa.	" 15

BROTHER W. M. HERSEE

Woodstock, Ont.	June 1	Elora, Ont.	June 16
Brantford, Ont.	" 6, 8	Palmerston, Ont.	" 17, 18
Galt, Ont.	" 9, 10	Mount Forest, Ont.	" 19
Preston, Ont.	" 11	Orangeville, Ont.	" 20, 22
Kitchener, Ont.	" 12	Singhampton, Ont.	" 24
Guelph, Ont.	" 13, 15	Collingwood, Ont.	" 25

BROTHER T. H. THORNTON

Denver, Colo.	June 1	Casper, Wyo.	June 10
Boulder, Colo.	" 2	Lander, Wyo.	" 11, 12
Berthoud, Colo.	" 3, 4	Casper, Wyo.	" 13
Loveland, Colo.	" 5	Cheyenne, Wyo.	" 15
Greeley, Colo.	" 6	Laramie, Wyo.	" 16, 17
Cheyenne, Wyo.	" 8	Sidney, Nebr.	" 18

BROTHER H. HOWLETT

Vancouver, B. C.	May 23, 25	Nelson, B. C.	June 7, 8
Victoria, B. C.	" 27, 28	Fernie, B. C.	" 9, 10
Chilliwack, B. C.	" 30	Lethbridge, Alta.	" 11
Kamloops, B. C.	June 1	Calgary, Alta.	" 12
Vernon, B. C.	" 2, 3	Lacombe, Alta.	" 13
Penticton, B. C.	" 4, 5	Edmonton, Alta.	" 15, 16

BROTHER S. H. TOUTJIAN

Grand Island, Nebr.	June 11	Morrill, Nebr.	June 3
Ravenna, Nebr.	" 12, 13	Sidney, Nebr.	" 4, 5
Grand Island, Nebr.	" 15	Big Springs, Nebr.	" 6
Hastings, Nebr.	" 16	North Platte, Nebr.	" 8
Bloomington, Nebr.	" 18	Brady, Nebr.	" 9
Wilsonville, Nebr.	" 19	Overton, Nebr.	" 10