



"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.

W.T.B.&T.S.

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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GOD'S GREAT GIFT

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

THE present state of man is far removed from the perfection enjoyed by Adam in Eden. The perfect man necessarily was beautiful, because all the works of Jehovah are perfect, and it is written that man was made in the image of God. He was endowed with the faculties of justice, wisdom, love, and power, which attributes were in harmony. He was the crowning part of God's earthly creation.

²Today man is broken in body, in mind, and in heart. Physically he is weak, emaciated, and unsightly. Mentally he is unsound. Morally man has reached a low ebb.

³Man's sense of justice is warped all out of proper shape. His reduced power is directed in the wrong way. His love is for self, and his wisdom is foolishness in the sight of God. Truly the world of mankind is undone.

⁴This deplorable condition has existed for many centuries, with no known remedy for it. Yea, after 6,000 years the world knows nothing about the remedy. The fact is slowly dawning upon those who think that not even the strongest men of the world are capable of producing a satisfactory or desirable government. The world has reached its extremity; and now it is God's opportunity to bring the people out of a condition of lethargy.

THE GREATEST DESIRE

⁵That which man desires above all things else is life in happiness. The wisdom and power of man are wholly inadequate to provide a way that leads to life or to happiness. All that man can do is to fight for a bare existence; the greater portion of his time is spent in sorrow and distress.

⁶God's plan leads man to both life and happiness. Yea, it makes it possible for every man to attain unto his fondest desire. Why, then, do so many human beings pass unnoticed the provisions made for man and for attaining his greatest desire? The answer is: They are blind and can not see. Their blindness has been caused by Satan and his various agencies which he uses to keep them blinded.—2 Corinthians 4:3, 4.

⁷But it is the will of God that all men shall be brought to a knowledge of the truth; and thanks be

unto God, the peoples of earth are now entering upon a time when they shall have an opportunity to know the Lord, from the least to the greatest of them.

WHO IS GOD?

⁸But who is God, the One who planned and provided the way that leads to life and endless happiness for man? God hath revealed himself to man through his works and his Word. (1 Corinthians 2:10) His name is Jehovah, which signifies Self-existing One. He is "from everlasting to everlasting". (Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 26:4) He is almighty, and there is none beside him; and his glory he will not divide nor give to another. (Isaiah 42:8) His eternal attributes are justice, power, love, and wisdom. These attributes always work in exact harmony. His works bespeak his majesty, and magnify his wisdom and justice, love and power. The natural man can see some evidence of the wisdom and power of God. The spiritually-minded man can appreciate God's justice and rejoice in his love.

HIS GREATNESS

⁹The scope and magnitude of God's power and wisdom are appalling to the finite, imperfect mind of man. Jehovah made the sun to give light by day for man, and to give life and beauty to the unintelligent creation of earth. With the natural eye we behold one sun, the center of our solar system. With the use of instruments astronomers declare they have counted more than 125 million suns, each one of which is the center of a different solar system. It is estimated that light travels 186,000 miles per second; and that the Pleiades are 120 light years of 365 days each from the earth. It is understood that the Pleiades mark the throne of Jehovah, from which he rules his universe. Doubtless there are planets the light from which can reach the earth only after many centuries, so vast is the domain of God. It is not unreasonable to conclude that if a man could stand on the very outer line of the known boundaries of creation, by the aid of powerful instruments he could discover millions of planets beyond his present vision. The Prophet was modest in his speech when he said: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and

the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun; which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."—Psalm 19:1-7.

¹⁰Again David stood upon the crest of the hills of Judea, and in his mind communed with the all-wise Creator. On the east he saw the lofty mountains lifting their hoary heads heavenward and, like silent sentinels standing on watch, guarding the entrance to the Promised Land. He observed that the high and rugged hills made a refuge for the wild animals. He saw the flocks and herds peacefully feeding in the sheltered spots.

¹¹He looked to the north, and beheld the evergreen cedars of Lebanon full of sap, emblems of everlasting life, waving their mighty arms harmoniously to the winds that God caused to blow through them. He saw the water streams spring out from the hillsides and hurry on to refresh the broad plain on the west, which spread itself out to be kissed by the waves of the great and beautiful blue sea. Moved with awe and admiration for the Mighty One who made them all, he exclaimed: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts."—Psalm 104:24, 25.

¹²And then extolling Jehovah and worshiping him, he exclaimed: Thou "who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; who maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind; who maketh his angels spirits: his ministers a flaming fire."—Psalm 104:2-4.

COMPARISON

¹³There are men on earth who possess much gold, who are looked upon as great, yet who can not make even a blade of grass grow nor a leaf that rustles in the wind. They are capable of giving aid and do give a few million dollars to make themselves a name among men; and others stand in awe of their power and greatness. Comparing the insignificance of these with the great God the Prophet asks: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?"—Isaiah 40:12.

¹⁴Some who call themselves great hasten to take counsel together, and many who look upon them as great seek counsel with the great ones, believing that they can accomplish much. Their wisdom in God's sight is as nothing; and comparing them with the Lord, the Prophet says: "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?"—Isaiah 40:13, 14.

¹⁵These great men of earth are the ones who build and rule the nations with selfishness, and who boast of the power and of the greatness of the nations and of themselves. Compared with the Lord the prophet says of them: "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing." "All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them as a tent to dwell in."—Isaiah 40:15, 17, 18, 22.

¹⁶Thus from his Word and his works we have a glimpse of the great and mighty One who is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. He it is who has taken cognizance of the poor imperfect people of earth and provided for them the most marvelous of all gifts.

BEGINNING OF CREATION

¹⁷The things visible to man are not the greatest of God's creation. The greatest of all of his creation was his first and only direct creation. There was a time when Jehovah was alone. Then he must have communed with himself and meditated upon his great plan. In the course of time it pleased him to begin his creation; and he did so by giving life to the Logos, his beloved Son. Concerning this the inspired writer says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with [the] God, and the Word was a God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men."—John 1:1-4.

¹⁸The Logos was the beginning of the creation of God. (Revelation 3:14) The Prophet represents Jesus speaking of himself: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the

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

¹⁹Then the Lord gives instructions to those who may read his Word, telling them how they may be blessed: "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor at the Lord."—Proverbs 8: 33-35.

THE MORNING STAR

²⁰When the foundation of the earth was laid preparatory as a place for the habitation of man "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."—Job 38: 6, 7.

²¹There were then two bright Morning Stars; namely Lucifer and the Logos. Lucifer fell. Now the bright Morning Star is the Logos, Jesus of Nazareth. Concerning this Jesus said: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."—Revelation 22: 16.

²²He was from the beginning, the fairest of ten thousand and altogether lovely, the dearly beloved and only begotten of God.

²³This is the great One whom Jehovah gave as a gift for the world, that men of the world might not perish but have everlasting life.

²⁴Within the meaning of John 3: 16 the world consists of the people who reside on the earth. These have neither life nor the right to live, but are the recipients of God's great gift. Those who comply with the terms and accept the gift will receive both life and the right to live.

PREPARING THE GIFT

²⁵Long centuries ago God began to prepare his great gift for mankind. The preparation covered a long period of time, thus emphasizing the importance of the gift. It was the purpose of Jehovah from the beginning that the provision should be made for man's salvation and endless happiness. This was made necessary because of the deflection of Satan, the entering of sin into the world, and the fall of man by reason of sin. All of Adam's offspring, being born imperfect, came under the condemnation of God by virtue of their imperfection. No imperfect thing can have the approval of Jehovah. Without the preparation for the gift by Jehovah no man could have everlasting life.

²⁶God promised that he would redeem man from death and deliver him from the power of the grave. (Hosea

13: 14) God's promises are sure and certain of fulfillment. His justice had been outraged by Adam's disobedience. His law demanded the life of Adam, and took it. His law also provided that Adam and his offspring might be redeemed and delivered by another perfect human life, with the right to live, given as a substitute for that which Adam had forfeited. All peoples of earth being the offspring of Adam, none could meet the requirements of the divine law. (Psalm 49: 7) The human race completely undone, with no right to live and no way of providing life, reached the great extremity.

²⁷Then it was that God sent his beloved and only begotten Son, the dearest treasure of his heart, from the courts of heaven, that he might become the Redeemer and in time the Deliverer of mankind. For this purpose he was made flesh and dwelt among us.—John 1: 14.

HEAVEN'S CEREMONY

²⁸It should be expected that Jehovah would arrange a fitting ceremony for the great event of the birth of the world's Redeemer. The hosts of heaven had doubtless watched with keen interest the transfer of the life of the Logos from the spirit to the human nature. They must have understood that such was a progressive step in the great divine drama, even though they were not permitted to understand the real import thereof. It was enough for them to know that God would have it thus. It pleased God to have Jesus conceived in the womb of Mary by virtue of his invisible power. For this reason none of the contaminated blood of Adam coursed Jesus' perfect veins. The place for the birth of the babe had been selected long centuries before.—Micah 5: 2.

²⁹The earthly witnesses of this great event were selected not from amongst men of great world renown; but men of low estate were selected, those who guarded the sheep against the wild beasts. Even so those who bear witness to the second presence of the Lord are not men of world renown, but those who guard the interest of the Lord's sheep and who manifest a meek and lowly spirit.

³⁰The stage was set; the hour had come for the happening of the greatest event of time. The angel of heaven, the special messenger of Jehovah, took his position above the little city of Bethlehem. As the shepherds guarded their flocks and probably discussed the strange events transpiring in Palestine, the glory of the Lord shone about them, causing them to tremble and fear. The heavenly messenger spoke words of peace and comfort to them, saying, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2: 10, 11.

³¹Then as though expressing their joyful acquiescence the angelic host of heaven sang together: "Glory to God

in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—Luke 2:14.

³²Today that message is reverberating through the mountains, announcing to the world that the time for deliverance has come.

³³The child was born, and thus was the birth announced. Why was he born a human child? Because God was preparing a human being to give for the salvation of the world. He was preparing the greatest of all gifts that ever was or ever will be given for mankind.

³⁴"Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure: Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God."—Hebrews 10:5-7.

³⁵In corroboration of this Jesus afterwards stated that he had come down from heaven that the people might have life. "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."—John 6:48-51.

³⁶The manner of carrying out the will of God and fully complying with the fixed plan by the gift of his beloved Son, is by St. Paul stated thus: "Who, though being in God's form, yet did not meditate a usurpation to be like God, but divested himself, taking a bondman's form, having been made in the likeness of men; and being in condition as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And therefore God supremely exalted him, and freely granted to him that name which is above every name; in order that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those beneath; and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God the Father."—Philippians 2:6-11, *Diaglott*.

³⁷Thus did Jehovah at the greatest sacrifice give for man the greatest of all gifts. Saul of Tarsus persecuted Christ Jesus because of his own ignorance; and when the eyes of his understanding were open and he saw what God had done he exclaimed: "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"—2 Corinthians 9:15.

THE MOTIVE

³⁸What was the motive that led to this unspeakable gift? Was it justice? It was not; because Jehovah owed man nothing. Equal and exact justice required the perfect life of Adam, and took it accordingly. All of Adam's offspring were born imperfect, and justly must die. Was it that God might exhibit to his creatures his great power? Surely not; because already his

power had been exhibited in another manner. Was it for the purpose of making manifest his wisdom? Surely not; because that alone would bring no profit to man. It is written: "God is love." Love is the complete and perfect expression of unselfishness. Here is the most complete expression of unselfishness that could possibly be given. Therefore truly it is said: "God is love." In him is the very embodiment of love. It was love for the human race that moved Jehovah to sacrifice the dearest treasure of his heart, to give up the One in whom he delighted and whose companionship he loved and enjoyed, in order to provide and make the great gift for man. Just as is expressed in our first text: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

³⁹From the very beginning of the preparation for this great gift every act of Jehovah is marked by unselfishness. He might have selected an angel, and made of him a man to redeem mankind; but that would not have been such a great sacrifice to himself. His only direct creation, his only begotten Son, his dearly beloved Son, very precious to his heart, he would give to be put to an ignominious death that man might have an opportunity of attaining to the thing that he desired; namely, everlasting life. This proves that there can be no true and perfect expression of love without a sacrifice. It proves that perfect love is the complete expression of unselfishness. He who is selfish does not love perfectly.

⁴⁰Jesus said to his followers: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) The perfection he was referring to meant perfection of love. This is plainly shown by his words in the context. (Matthew 5:43-47) The Master was not here referring to perfection of organism, nor perfection of character. The Christian can become perfect in neither one on this side the veil, but he can become perfect in his unselfish devotion to the Lord and to his cause. This also will lead to his complete unselfishness toward his brethren. Since he can not be perfect even in his expression, God counts him perfect because of the heart attitude, his real sincere intent and desire, and the putting of this desire into operation insofar as it is possible for him to do.

⁴¹When Jesus was on earth he was not only the legal representative of his Father, but completely represented him in the expression of love. His unselfish devotion to the Lord Jehovah, and to the carrying out of his Father's plan to the end that mankind might benefit therefrom, led him to voluntarily lay down his life. When we view our Master upon the cross we can say: Truly love placed him there, his own unselfish devotion. To be copies of God's dear Son means to grow in a like devotion to our Father, to our Lord Jesus Christ, to his cause of righteousness, and to the doing of his will.

OPPORTUNITY FOR LIFE

⁴²What, then, is the gift offered to man? An opportunity for everlasting life. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23) "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10) None of these texts show that any man is compelled to accept the gift.

⁴³A gift is a contract which requires two parties thereto. The requisites to make a gift effective are these: The doner and the donee, an intelligent offering by the doner, and knowledge on the part of the donee, and assent of the donee, therefore a meeting of the minds, and faith exercised on behalf of the donee. The following scriptures show that these are essentials: 1 Timothy 2:3, 4 is to the effect that all men must be brought to a knowledge of the truth; John 3:16 is to the effect that the mind of the donee must assent to the gift; John 14:6 and Matthew 16:24 are to the effect that man must exercise faith by complete surrender of himself to do God's holy will.

⁴⁴There is no scripture to support the theory of universal salvation. The scriptures are all to the effect that an opportunity for life shall be granted to all, but that only those who accept the provisions made and comply with the terms will receive the gift. It is written that Jesus, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. (Hebrews 2:9) But this does not mean that every man will accept the terms of the gift.

⁴⁵If a man is blind and deaf and there is no other means of giving him knowledge, an earthly gift is ineffective, as we know from experience. The "god of this world" hath blinded mankind during this age; and for that reason they have not understood and could not accept the gift. During Christ's reign the blinding influence of Satan will be removed, that all may come to a knowledge; and then the free gift will come to them.

⁴⁶The Apostle says: "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."—Romans 5:18, 19.

⁴⁷Mark that this text says: "The free gift came upon *all men unto justification of life.*" Justification means made right with God; but if a man refuses to be made right, he is not justified. It will require the entire thousand years to justify the world under the terms of the New Covenant; and the prophet Isaiah (65:20) tells us that a sinner will die at one hundred years. In other words, he will not be granted any further opportunity if he refuses to accept the gift of life. Be it noted again that the apostle Paul in the above text says: "By the obedience of one shall many be made right-

eous." It does not say all shall be made righteous, but only those who accept the gracious gift and comply with the terms. Again we read concerning Christ that those who refuse to accept him and obey him shall be destroyed. (Acts 3:23) Second death means a death from which there is no resurrection, the final execution of divine justice against the sinner who refuses God's gracious gift or obedience to the divine law. Justification therefore is not necessary to be had by one before he can go into the second death. Those who during the Millennial reign of Christ die for their own iniquity will be those who have had an opportunity for life and have refused to obey.

⁴⁸The same rule must obtain in the Gospel Age in this, that if one comes to a knowledge of the great ransom sacrifice and then wilfully and deliberately repudiates it and counts it as a common thing and dies in this condition, it could not be said that there is a hope of resurrection for such an one. The Apostle describes such a class when he says: "Them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9) Surely this must mean those who refuse to accept and comply with the provisions divinely made for them.

GRATITUDE FIRST

⁴⁹The first effect of a gift upon one in a right condition of heart is to produce gratitude in that heart toward the giver. Gratitude means a warm and friendly feeling toward a benefactor or doner, and kindness awakened by a favor received. If a person gives to you a desirable thing and you have a right condition of heart, you feel kindly toward such an one. When a person of high estate or rank, at a sacrifice to himself, presents a gift to another, the one receiving it is usually delighted and proud and hastens to tell others about it.

⁵⁰When we learn that the great God of the universe, besides whom there is none other, at the greatest sacrifice to himself provided and offers to us a gift, surely everyone in a right condition of heart, coming to this knowledge, should be delighted, happy and anxious to hasten and tell others about it.

⁵¹Almost every one desires to have some money. This desire is proper when the money is used for a good purpose. A hypothetical case is stated. Mr. Cræsus has gold mines, oil fields, banks, factories, railroads, and much other wealth. You are in dire need. Furthermore, you are in prison and have no means of providing for your loved ones. Mr. Cræsus provides for your release from prison, gives to you a gold mine, an oil well, a bank, a railroad, and many other things of value. As surely as your heart is in proper condition, you would say to Mr. Cræsus: I am very grateful for what you have done. What can I do for you to show my gratitude? Henceforth and forever I will be your supporter and defender.

⁵²Under the Mosaic law, if a Hebrew had purchased

another Hebrew as his slave and that slave should serve his master six years, on the seventh year he must go free. He might, however, choose to remain with his master; and if he did so then this provision was made: "If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever."—Exodus 21: 5, 6.

⁵³This strikingly shows how that when the Lord, our great Benefactor, having given his life for us, the Father having given him that we might live, and we receive our release from sin and death through justification, then it is our privilege, as it will be the privilege of all men, to devote ourselves to the Lord. The boring of the ear with the awl seems to say: Henceforth I shall hear thy commandments and delight to do them.

⁵⁴Real gratitude and appreciation lead to love. Of necessity consecration to the Lord will follow. This means a full surrender of oneself to God to do his will. Is it essential therefore that one who has become a recipient of the great gift should devote himself to the Lord? Gratitude alone would say yes; and added to that love would say: This is your reasonable service. Hence the Apostle urges upon all Christians to present themselves a living sacrifice unto the Lord, and declares it to be the reasonable service of the Christian.—Romans 12: 1.

⁵⁵There is, therefore, no just cause or excuse for anyone who claims to be consecrated to the Lord to fail or refuse to avail himself of opportunities for service when these opportunities come. If we have accepted the goodness of our Lord in order merely that we may receive some reward, then we are prompted by selfishness and not by love. If we have accepted the Lord and his truth in the love of it, then we are sure to desire to seek opportunities to tell others concerning his love for us.

⁵⁶All the sacrificing we can do brings no profit to the Lord; but when our sacrificing is prompted by unselfishness, it brings to us the greatest possible reward. For this reason the apostle Peter urges those who profess consecration unto the Lord to "feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." When thus doing, the promise is given: "And when the Chief Shep-

herd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."—1 Peter 5: 2-4.

"Built upon the sure foundation,
Zion shall in glory rise;
Men shall call thy walls Salvation,
And thy gates shall be named praise."

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

- Why was man the crowning part of God's earthly creation? What is man's condition today? Has man found the remedy? ¶ 1-4.
- What is man's greatest desire? Why do not men see God's plan for bringing about that desire? ¶ 5-7.
- Who is the God of the Bible? How great are his attributes? Where is understood to be the throne of Jehovah? ¶ 8, 9.
- What was David's perspective when he exclaimed: "How manifold are thy works"? ¶ 10-12.
- How puny is man as compared with God? In God's providing life for his earthly creatures, does it not manifest marvelous love? ¶ 13-16.
- What was the first and mightiest creation of Jehovah? How did St. John speak of him? How did Solomon represent him? What are the blessings of those who read the Word of God? ¶ 17-19.
- How many morning stars have there been? How many are there now? Who are the recipients of God's great gift? Complying with the terms of the gift they will receive what? ¶ 20-24.
- Has there been preparation for the bestowing of the great gift? Why was it made necessary? Whose gift is it? What did God's law demand? Why was it necessary for God to send his only begotten Son? ¶ 25-27.
- Was there doubtless keen interest in heaven when the Logos was transferred to the human plane? Does the transfer explain why Jesus was not contaminated with imperfection? ¶ 28.
- Who were selected for the earthly witnesses of the birth of Jesus? How were they informed? What is the message of the hour? ¶ 29-32.
- Why must Jesus be born flesh? What was necessary for Jesus to do in order to become a human being? How great was the change of mind of Saul? ¶ 33-37.
- What was the motive that prompted God in such a wonderful gift? ¶ 38.
- Would the gift of an angel have been of such sacrifice on the part of God? How did God reward his obedient and loving Son? ¶ 39, 36.
- What perfection is it that we should have? Was Jesus the complete expression of Jehovah? ¶ 40, 41.
- What is the gift offered to man through Jesus? Is a person compelled to accept a gift? ¶ 42, 43.
- Why is the theory of universal salvation untenable? Give a reason outside of the Scriptures. Give Bible reasons. What will be the destiny of those who refuse to accept the gift when it is offered to them? ¶ 44-48.
- What is gratitude? How is it manifested? Will one in a right condition of heart respond to the truth? Give an illustration. ¶ 49-51.
- What was the law of the slave under the Mosaic law? This shows what? ¶ 52, 53.
- Gratitude and appreciation lead to what? Then what will follow? ¶ 54.
- Is there excuse for one who fails to avail himself of opportunities to serve his great Benefactor? What should prompt any sacrifice we may make? ¶ 55, 56.

Oh, be glad and rejoice;
And proclaim without fear
That Jesus is present,
And his kingdom is here!

Oh, be glad and rejoice!
We have nothing to fear.
Let us shout "Alleluia!"
For the kingdom is here.

PRAYER-MEETING TEXT COMMENTS

TEXT FOR MAY 20

"Let the high praises of God be in their mouth."—Psalm 149:6.

EVERY good gift proceeds from God. His mercy endureth forever. He is the source of all comfort. God is long-suffering. He abides his own good time to accomplish his purposes. For centuries Satan and his emissaries have without hindrance defamed the great name of Jehovah, reproaching him and his great work. During all this time the people have suffered great discomfort of mind and bodily pain. The time has come when God is sending forth his witnesses to bring comfort to the people. He would inform the people of his intention and purpose.

These faithful witnesses received great comfort from Jehovah, and are anxious and ready to do his will. Addressing himself to them through his prophet he says: "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand."—Psalm 149:6.

The sword of the spirit is the Word of God. Our text is a command that the faithful ones wield the sword of the spirit, the sword of truth, as his witnesses; and they are doing so with joy while singing the praises of Jehovah.

They occupy positions of great honor at the hand of the Lord and, proving faithful, have been invited to enter into the joy of the Lord. Their confidence rests in the Lord. All who have received the spirit of the Master, and who appreciate the loving-kindness of our God and Redeemer, as opportunity is afforded are participating in joyfully binding the rulers and nobles of earth by the message of truth. While they are doing this, they are bringing comfort to the people by pointing them to the fact that deliverance is at hand and that the better day is dawning.

TEXT FOR MAY 27

"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice."—Psa. 97:1.

SINCE the days of Eden there has been no real joy on earth aside from those that have obtained that joy from Christ Jesus. Century after century the woes upon the peoples of earth have increased. Now the world is in the greatest crisis of all time, rapidly approaching a complete collapse. The contending forces are threatening the total destruction of each other. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

What, then, shall the Christian do? What is his plain duty? The Scriptures answer: "Comfort all that mourn." (Isaiah 61:2) There are millions of people now who are in great distress, and who with dread behold the approach of the death-dealing storm of poison gas and the pestilence that will follow. Never before has such a time of trouble threatened the world.

This trouble comes in fulfilment of divine prophecy. It is the time mentioned by the Lord as a time of tribulation such as the world has never known, and will never know again. It is the time mentioned by the prophet Daniel as the greatest time of trouble, at which time Michael, the great Prince that standeth for the people, shall stand up.

Then let the Christian point the people to the fact that Michael, the great Prince of Peace, is standing up; that the Lord of righteousness has taken unto himself his great power to reign; and that this trouble will soon pass away and then he will bring to the people the desire of their hearts.

It is the Christian's duty now to hold up a standard of righteousness to the people, to comfort them with the knowledge of the divine provisions for their blessings. Say to the people: "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice" because the time of deliverance is nigh.

AN INTERESTING LETTER

LABORING FOR THE LORD'S KINGDOM

DEAR BROTHER RUTHERFORD:

Greetings in the name of the beloved King!

I am impelled to write you a word of heart-felt appreciation for the blessings which come to us through your service. I am persuaded that the devil puts it in the minds of many to wonder about or to complain about the good things which we so much enjoy: The program for activity, the Radio work, and the *Broadcaster*, but above all the general privilege which every one of us has to go directly to the people with this grand gospel! How wonderful is our privilege at this great hour! And how deeply we love you and your associates for the work which you do for the King and for us who desire to serve him!

I believe it to be the sad fact that no enterprise is ever undertaken by you for the good of the service but that some

fail to appreciate or understand the matter. To the extent that you serve God the darts of the adversary are attracted to you. Therefore I wish to send in this simple word of sincere appreciation and very deep and earnest love for you. My thought, the thought of many whose voices you never hear and whose faces you never see, is We wish you to know that we know that you are laboring and suffering for the sake of the Lord's kingdom and its righteousness, and that our own smaller experiences as we seek to be faithful enable us to imagine something of what you have to endure. Our testimony is that the truth is grander than ever before, and the blessing which we receive through the SOCIETY is even greater than ever before. May God, our Father, and his Son, the King of Glory, prosper and bless you and your associates forever!

Yours in the Hope,

C. E. CROOK, *Chas.*

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN TREASURER

—MAY 10—ACTS 8:26-39—

MIRACLES WROUGHT IN SAMARIA—PHILIP PREACHES CHRIST FROM PROPHECY—GOD'S CARE FOR HONEST HEARTS.

"The opening of thy words giveth light."—Psalm 119:130, A. S. V.

THE murder of Stephen appeared to create a lust for blood in the members of the Sanhedrin and bigoted supporters. A fierce persecution broke out against the Church in Jerusalem, so bitter that very many fled from the city and scattered abroad throughout Judea and Samaria. The apostles however remained in Jerusalem. One of the leaders of the persecution, perhaps the foremost, was a young man named Saul. When Stephen was stoned he had helped by taking care of the clothes of those who stoned him. Now as one enraged he made havoc of the Church, entering into every house and carrying off both men and women to prison.

²It was a hard time for the Church. Yet it served a salutary purpose; for the Church of God was not intended to be merely a company of believers. It was to be God's instrument for carrying on the witness which Jesus had begun. The immediate effect of this persecution, the scattering abroad of the disciples, was the break-up of that communal arrangement into which the Church had entered, but which evidently was not part of God's purpose for it.

MIRACLES WROUGHT IN SAMARIA

³Apparently but for this the brethren, enjoying their fellowship and worship, would have lost sight of the fact that they were to be witnesses for the Lord; a tendency to which even the Church of this day has been tempted. But faithful to the Word which they believed, they preached Jesus wherever they went, and thus became his witnesses in all the places round about Judea and Samaria. The district near the city of Samaria had been favored in the time of Jesus by a visit from him (John 4:5); and at that time a considerable number had believed on him; now there were many there who gave a ready ear to the disciples.

⁴Philip the deacon, who was next to Stephen in ability to set forth the truth of the gospel, went down from Jerusalem to help them; and as his preaching was accompanied by miracles, numbers believed on the Lord through his word. So many miracles were wrought, and so wonderful, that the city was filled with joy.

⁵When the apostles at Jerusalem heard of this they commissioned Peter and John to go down, who, when they arrived, prayed for the believers who had been baptized that they might receive the holy spirit. In those earliest days of the Church it was the privilege of all baptized believers to receive an outward manifestation of the holy spirit, partly as a witness that they were the Lord's, and partly for the general edification of the Church. (1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:26) It was impossible for the apostles to give the holy spirit to

beget to newness of life in Christ Jesus. God only could do that.

⁶One Simon Magus, requested from them the power to confer these gifts, and offered money for it. Peter spoke sharply to him saying, "Thy money perish with thee." (Acts 8:20) It was evident that Simon Magus had not learned what he had professed to believe, and that in his heart he was one of those who would have the richest gifts of God at his disposal for his own glory. Soon Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching and teaching the gospel in the villages of the Samaritans as they went.

⁷At that same time an angel bade Philip go down to the desert road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza, probably a three to four days' journey. He went, not knowing for what purpose he was sent. It might appear strange to him that he must leave Samaria with all the new interest which was centering there to go into a desert country; but Philip was one of those who do not question when an order is given.

⁸When there he saw a chariot on the road; evidently the traveler was a man of some circumstance. He was an Ethiopian returning from Jerusalem, and probably had a small retinue of servants with him. The spirit of the Lord bade Philip join himself to the chariot. Philip ran; and as he approached he heard the man reading aloud, from the prophet Isaiah. Philip, with what would seem to a Westerner the rather bold question, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" easily opened a conversation. Without pride the man said; "How can I, except some man should guide me?" And he invited Philip, who seemed to be going the same way, to ride and sit with him. (All roads are the right roads to the servant of the Lord who has a privilege of service.)

PHILIP PREACHES CHRIST FROM PROPHECY

⁹The Ethiopian was reading Isaiah's prophecy about one who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, suffering for others. He enquired: "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus."—Acts 8:34, 35.

¹⁰Philip covered the whole ground of the Prophet's word concerning Jesus' life; of his death and resurrection, and of life through him; of the baptism which had been instituted, and how the disciples were united to the Lord. He preached so effectively that when they came to a place where there was water the eunuch said: "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36) Though the words of verse 37 are not included in the most ancient manuscripts, we

may be certain that they are true to fact. Philip would not immerse the eunuch unless he was satisfied of the propriety. The chariot was stopped; they both went into the water; and Philip baptized him. But as soon as they had come up out of the water the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip (possibly directed him what next to do); and the eunuch saw him no more. But with rejoicing in his heart, he went on his way.

¹¹It seems probable that the eunuch was a Jew by birth who was in the service of Queen Candace; though, as he is spoken of as "a man of Ethiopia" (v. 27), he may have been a proselyte. He must have been either one or the other; else he would not have been up to Jerusalem to worship, nor would he have been reading the Jewish Scriptures.

¹²There is a difference to be noted in the Lord's dealings with the Samaritans and the eunuch. The Samaritans received each a gift of the spirit, but the eunuch did not. He went on, rejoicing in his new-found light, but without that equipment for witness which the churches in Palestine received. The Lord was not as yet calling Ethiopia to himself.

¹³The incident tells us of the watchful care God has over those who seek him. The eunuch had probably been in Jerusalem at least a week; but either he had not heard of the disciples, or had not been quickened in interest by what he had heard; and yet it must be that he was both of honest heart and enquiring mind. But the Lord had watched him and knew his heart, and would not let him go back to Ethiopia just as he came. He was permitted to get far enough away from the contaminating influence of the rulers of Jerusalem before Philip was to join him and teach him the way of the Lord.

¹⁴Faithful to his privilege of service, and knowing why he was sent the long journey, Philip went directly to the point; an example which those who are privileged to act as evangelists, whether addressing brethren or the interested public, should follow. Seven times in the chapter is the preaching of the early Church referred to; and though each time the description of the preaching is varied, it is always the one thing—the fulfilment of the Word of God in the coming of Jesus.

GOD'S CARE FOR HONEST HEARTS

¹⁵It is comforting to think of the heavenly Father watching this man of honest heart going up to Jerusalem, watching him preparing for leaving, and arranging for a disciple to start off from where he is in time to meet him at a certain point on the road. Nor need we think other than that it was according to the Lord's providence that the eunuch was reading a portion of Isaiah's prophecy so directly concerning the coming of Jesus and his death and consequent exaltation.—Isa. 53.

¹⁶In coming to God there are certain things necessary on the part of the believer, and some which God alone can do. There must always be a preparation of the

heart, and a readiness to follow the truth whenever it is presented. Here is an illustration of the fact stated by Hanani the prophet to King Asa: "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."—2 Chronicles 16:9.

¹⁷In the difference between the Lord's way with the Samaritans and the eunuch after their baptism, we may see an illustration of the true evangelism of today. There are some who hear the truth who are like the Samaritans, eager to make use of it to serve the Lord; and who go on to full consecration to him, and are blessed with privileges of service. There are others who are like the eunuch: They go on to their people, rejoicing in the truth, but do not seek communion with the Church. We may not think of adverse comment in respect to the eunuch, but we are at liberty to think that had he returned he also might have gotten the same blessing the others had from the laying on of the apostles' hands. In any case we must conclude that those who hear the truth, and get as far as the eunuch got, have the privilege of serving the Lord with full equipment.

¹⁸Although we hear nothing more of the eunuch, nor of any result of his rejoicing in the way of the Lord, we know that Ethiopia will yet stretch out her hands to the Lord.—Psalm 68:31.

"And love's fair banner greet the eye,
Proclaiming victory!
O hail, happy day!"

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

- What influence did the murder of Stephen have amongst bigoted religionists? Who was probably one of the leaders of the persecution of Christians? ¶ 1.
- Why was the persecution permitted of God? Is there a natural tendency to seek ways of ease instead of hardship? Is this attitude conducive to witnessing for Jesus and his kingdom? ¶ 2, 3.
- Why was Philip sent to Samaria? Why was Philip the one who should be sent? ¶ 3, 4.
- What did Peter and John do at Samaria? The manifestation of the holy spirit at this time was in respect to what? ¶ 5.
- Are any of God's gifts purchasable with money? Why did Peter rebuke Simon Magus? ¶ 6.
- Why did Philip leave the scene of so much activity to go into a desert country? Whom did Philip see? How was God's providence indicated? ¶ 7-9.
- How did Philip's sermon to an audience of one result? ¶ 10, 18.
- What indicates that the eunuch was either a Jew or a convert to Judaism? ¶ 11.
- Do God's dealings with individuals sometimes vary? What did the eunuch possess that caused God to condescend in his behalf? ¶ 12, 13, 16.
- Was Philip alert to carry out the leadings of the holy spirit with the greatest dispatch and without cumbersome formality? ¶ 14.
- Is there comfort for us in noting God's care for the eunuch? ¶ 15.
- How do God's dealings with the Samaritans and the eunuch apply to those who come to a knowledge of the truth today? ¶ 17.

SAUL BECOMES A CHRISTIAN

—MAY 17—ACTS 9:1-19—

SAUL SEES THE LORD—PAUL AN AMBASSADOR TO GENTILES—PAUL MADE TO SUFFER MUCH.

"If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature."—2 Corinthians 5:17, A. S. V.

WHEN Jesus was leaving his disciples he said: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) The record of the first phase of this ministry in Jerusalem ends with the account of the death of Stephen, and that of the second phase to Samaria and round about with the account of the ministry in Samaria, and Philip's to the Ethiopian eunuch. The account now prepares to tell of the wider ministry to the Gentiles.

²It begins with the conversion of the one who was specially chosen of God for that wider field; it is as if there was a new phase of the ministry of Christ beginning. Unlikeliest of all, the one chosen for this service was the young man Saul, who had busied himself in the stoning of Stephen, and who afterwards was the leading spirit in the persecution which followed, and which scattered so many brethren abroad.

³While Samaria and other regions round about were getting the blessings of the truth through the dispersed believers, Saul was making havoc of the Church in Jerusalem. When he had done all the damage he could to these, he went to the high priest for authority to carry on his fierce work in Damascus, where, apparently, a number of brethren had gone. His purpose was to seize all who professed loyalty to Jesus of Nazareth and bring them bound to Jerusalem. Charged with the authority of the high priest to the leaders of the synagogues in Damascus, and accompanied by a number of men under his command, he set forth on the six days' journey to Damascus.

SAUL SEES THE LORD

⁴As Saul approached the city at noon, still hot in spirit and urging himself forward, not stopping even for the heat of the day, and feeling his victims almost within his grasp, he himself was arrested. Suddenly, with a light that paled the noonday blaze of the sun, he and his company were struck; and all fell to the earth. But Saul saw what the others did not see; he saw a glorious being. (Acts 26:14) As he lay he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4) "Who art thou, Lord?" he cried. He did not understand that this was Jesus, nor to whom he spoke; but he realized that a superior being spoke to him, and very properly he addressed Him as Lord.

⁵Then came the unexpected reply: "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." It was sufficient: without any need to reason out the matter Saul saw the facts. All he could say was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" This should not be understood as if Saul had said: 'I am here at thy service, Lord, to carry out thy wishes.'

One so condemned in spirit as he was could only place himself at the mercy and disposal of the Lord of Glory, who spoke to him.

⁶For three days Saul was blind, and neither ate nor drank. The blindness would be a test to him. Convinced that he had seen the Lord Jesus, who had specially concerned Himself on his behalf, Saul must have wondered why he was left in darkness physically as well as to his future. In response to his prayer the Lord again appeared to him, not now as before, but in a vision, and told him that a disciple named Ananias would come to him and give him sight. Then in a vision the Lord told Ananias, a humble disciple of Damascus, to go to Saul; "for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight."—Acts 9:11, 12.

⁷Ananias replied that he had heard much of this man, and of the evil he had done to the saints of the Lord, and why he had come to Damascus. The Lord, dealing gently with him in his rather fearful surprise, told him to go his way and fulfil his mission. But he also told Ananias how he had stopped Saul outside Damascus, and added that Saul was a chosen vessel to him. (Acts 9:12-15) The commission of Ananias was first to restore Saul's sight; then to give him opportunity of baptism, a symbol in this case of the washing away of his sins as well as of consecration; and to lay hands upon him as a sign that the Lord gave him the holy spirit.

⁸Ananias' salutation—"Brother Saul," he said, as he approached Saul—must have sounded very sweet to the stricken man. The vision had assured him of his forgiveness and his acceptance by the Lord, and this welcome salutation was his acceptance by the Lord's people. It was, then, in this quiet and altogether unostentatious manner, that the great Apostle to the Gentiles joined the Church; and through this humble and otherwise unknown disciple he who was to be the greatest of all the apostles received his first blessing and instruction.

PAUL AN AMBASSADOR TO GENTILES

⁹There are many reasons why God chose Paul for the high purpose of being His ambassador to the Gentiles, and for taking this means of bringing him to himself. Paul's education, coupled with the fact that he had been brought up, at least to youthhood, away from Jerusalem in the freer atmosphere of the Gentile world, made him better fitted than the Galilean apostles for the wider service amongst the Gentiles.

¹⁰The Lord's answer to Ananias when he reminded the Lord of what Paul had done was merely that the

matter was the Lord's: "He is a chosen vessel unto me," he said. No man, certainly not any of the apostles, would have made Paul a chief instrument in the service of the Lord; that would be beyond the bounds of thought. But the eyes of the Lord had been upon Paul; and those characteristics, and the ability which later was so clearly seen by all, were already known. One reason Paul himself reveals; it was that God might by him give a pattern of His long-suffering, making Paul a representative of those who should receive mercy. Writing to Timothy, he says that he was the chiefest of sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15) There is no good reason for thinking that Paul was using an extravagant term about himself. He was not accustomed to do that; nor are the Lord's servants accustomed so to speak. He must be understood to mean what he says.

PAUL'S CONTACT WITH CHRISTIANS

¹¹Nor is it difficult to follow him. Although the words of verse 5 of our lesson (Acts 9), "It is hard for thee to kick against the goads," are not authentic in this passage, yet Paul himself says when giving his own account (Acts 26:14) that the Lord said this to him. The evidence of Stephen's faithful witness, his dying vision of God and his asking forgiveness for those who were his murderers; and also the fact that in every house into which he himself had entered, seizing both men and women and carrying them to prison, had been sufficient for him to see that he was dealing with those who had something which he had not, and for which there was only one explanation.

¹²Coupled with this was the fact that although Paul had been carried away by his hatred of this teaching which destroyed all he held sacred and believed to be of God, he had nevertheless always sought to do God service. Paul was a Pharisee (Philippians 3:5), but he was not a hypocrite. He had found his attitude continually challenged as the disciples under the hard persecution preserved both their faith and grace of life, and he had done much of his work with a growing uneasiness.

¹³As far as we know, Paul was the only one out of all the members of the Sanhedrin who saved himself by accepting Jesus; though tradition gives honorable mention that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus became followers of Jesus. God knew Paul's heart and knew how to deal with him to bring him swiftly into the way of truth and to convince his mind.

PAUL MADE TO SUFFER MUCH

¹⁴It can hardly be other than that The Twelve in Jerusalem wondered why the Lord should choose this persecutor for so high a position as to be the apostle to the Gentiles. The Lord's words to Ananias give us one clue. When Ananias reminded the Lord how much evil Saul had done to His saints, the Lord said that He would show Saul how much he must suffer for Him. (Acts 9:16) In the Lord's providences there are bal-

ances of accounts as well as compensations. Saul had caused much suffering, and he should suffer in his new-found life. But happy punishment!—he should suffer much for his Master's name's sake, and by his suffering on behalf of the Church should be counted as filling up that which was behind of the sufferings of Christ. (Colossians 1:24) Also the hard sufferings which he was called upon to bear all through the course of his ministry, from misunderstandings and doubts about him in the Church in Jerusalem, even to some extent in the apostles themselves, and also from the many perils through false brethren, and the hardships of his continuous journeys (see the enumeration in 2 Corinthians 11), were probably more than any of The Twelve could have borne. Even he was pressed almost beyond measure.—2 Corinthians 1:8.

¹⁵The two faithful servants of the Lord, Stephen and Paul, closely associated in and by the death of the one, seem to be used as illustrations of the unity of the Lord and his Church. Stephen illustrates the *fact* of the suffering of the disciples with the Lord, and Paul the *kind* of suffering. Stephen's life, like a flare of light, shone brilliantly and was quenched. Paul continued long in service, suffered much, but always gladly knowing that he was filling up a measure. He died a martyr, but without any record of his end.

¹⁶While Paul is the example of the wideness of God's mercy, he seems also to be the illustration of how in their day of favor God will deal with Israel after the flesh, those for whom Paul was willing to die. (Romans 9:3) Some day Israel will see the truth of Jesus as Paul saw it. They will see him whom they pierced; and the knowledge of the truth will bring them to God quickly, as it brought Saul of Tarsus.

"Zion stands with hills surrounded—
Zion kept by power divine.
All her foes shall be confounded,
Though the world in arms combine."

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

What was the order of witnessing in the early Church?

What was the purpose of Saul's journey to Damascus? ¶ 1-3.

How was Saul arrested, and by whom? What conversation followed? ¶ 4, 5.

What was the procedure by which Saul received sight? ¶ 6-8.

What are some of the reasons why St. Paul was chosen to represent the Lord? Would the apostles have chosen him? ¶ 9, 10.

Did Paul use extravagant language in saying that he was the chiefest of sinners? What had Paul's experience with Stephen and with other men and women brought to him? ¶ 11, 12.

How many were probably saved out of the Sanhedrin? Did the apostles wonder at the Lord making choice of a persecutor to carry the message to the Gentiles? Does the Lord balance accounts? ¶ 13, 14.

How may Stephen and Paul be used as illustrations of the unity of the Lord and his Church? ¶ 15, 16.

SAUL BEGINS HIS CAREER

—MAY 24—ACTS 9: 20-31—

PAUL GOES TO HISTORIC ARABIA—PAUL TASTES SEVERITY OF PERSECUTION—PAUL MUST PROVE HIS APOSTLESHIP.

"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."—1 Corinthians 2: 2.

AFTER receiving his sight Saul spent some days with the disciples in Damascus. Now of a humble and contrite heart he gladly learned from these, whose faith he had sought to destroy, the wonders of the purposes of God as they were revealed in Christ. Luke says: "Straightway [Greek, *eutheos*] he preached Christ in the synagogues that he is the Son of God." (Acts 9: 20) But Paul's own account in Galatians (chapter 1: 16, 17) says: "Immediately [Greek, *eutheos*] I conferred not with flesh and blood: . . . but I went into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus." It can not be definitely determined whether or not this preaching immediately followed his conversion. That Paul had a good knowledge of the Scriptures we know; and that he had courage we know; and he would surely witness amongst the disciples to his faith. But it is reasonable to think he would want to get the Scriptures adjusted to the fact of Jesus as the Son of God before he would begin a public witness to demonstrate to the Jews that Jesus of Nazareth was the one spoken of by the prophets.

²From the first he appears to have understood that his call was apart from The Twelve. Surely guided by the holy spirit which he now had, he seems to have reasoned that he was to be specially taught of the Lord; that if the Lord had purposed that he should be instructed by the apostles, He could have dealt with him at Jerusalem instead of Damascus.

PAUL GOES TO HISTORIC ARABIA

³Paul determined to go into Arabia, but to what part he went we are not told. As, however, in the same epistle he speaks of Mt. Horeb, it may very well be that his journey was south from Damascus, and that at least some time was spent in the neighborhood of Horeb. It was there that Moses had met with God. (Exodus 3: 1, 2) There Elijah had had the visions of God (1 Kings 19: 8, 9); and there Paul, contrite in spirit, with the word of the Lord Jesus himself that he was to be His messenger abroad in the earth, would hope for communion with God. Moses had fled from Egypt; and there, after forty years God met him. Elijah had left his work, fleeing from it in fear of Jezebel; and there God had met him. Paul did not flee from work or danger, but seems to have gone seeking the blessings of God.

⁴Wherever Paul was, that he was richly rewarded is clear. He tells of having many visions and revelations; probably he had more than all the apostles. Without doubt those days spent in earnest quest were blessed to him. The Old Testament, the Law and the Prophets, represented in Moses and by Elijah the Prophet, yielded their treasures to him.

⁵On Paul's return to Damascus he abode "many days", preaching in the synagogues, declaring that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, the Christ. His words could not be gainsaid; and he was so powerful in argument by the spirit that the Jews conspired to destroy him. They made a plot, and watched the city gates night and day; but the watchers were not so sharp in wit as they were set in their purpose. He was let down by night in a basket from a house built in the city wall.—Acts 9: 24, 25; 2 Corinthians 11: 32, 33.

⁶Three years had now elapsed since Paul had started out from Jerusalem to accomplish his purpose. He had entered Damascus, led by the hand; he now left it, escaping by night. He had learned that the Lord had not undertaken to preserve his saints from physical danger. Indeed he himself had been the cause of many of them learning that lesson, and now he had experience of it.

⁷Paul went to Jerusalem purposing to see Peter. (Galatians 1: 18) When there he joined himself to the disciples in their meetings in an unostentatious manner. He manifested no desire to put himself forward or be considered as a leader. But the brethren were afraid of him. They had heard that he who persecuted the Church was now a disciple; but they did not believe in him; and apparently even the apostles themselves gave him but a poor welcome.

⁸It was under these chilling circumstances that Barnabas, the comforter, took Paul to the apostles, "and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." (Acts 9: 27) But though henceforward, for the time of his short stay, Paul went in and out amongst the brethren in Jerusalem, he had little fellowship. He says that he abode with Peter for fifteen days, but saw none other of the apostles save James the Lord's brother. (Galatians 1: 18, 19) However, he spent his time in active service for his Master and, like Stephen, disputed against the Grecians, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, until they went about to slay him.—Acts 9: 29.

PAUL TASTES SEVERITY OF PERSECUTION

⁹The brethren, hearing of this, took Paul down to Cæsarea and sent him by ship to Tarsus, his birthplace. He himself says that while praying in the temple he was in a trance and saw the Lord saying unto him. "Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem." He tells how he argued with the Lord; for he thought his testimony would surely be received. But the word was abrupt: "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." (Acts 22: 17-21) Thus Paul had to flee from Jerusalem. He who had kept others on the

run was now to experience something of the same thing, sometimes in direct service for the Lord seeking places to serve, and sometimes seeking places of safety. He was being prepared for the great work that lay before him; and every experience served to enlarge his heart and quicken his spirit.

¹⁰Perhaps in no other incident in Paul's long period of active service for the Lord is his true humility of disposition more intimately disclosed than in his conduct already noted when he first arrived in Jerusalem. He knew that he was singled out by the Lord himself; he knew more of the Lord as revealed in the Scriptures than did anyone. But there was no assumption of authority or of claim to be heard.

¹¹Here is a lesson for all who are privileged to hold ability to speak. Rarely should it be otherwise than that such a one visiting a company of brethren should be other than a worshiper with them. If being present he be asked by general consent to address the brethren, his opportunity is given him. He who seeks to make his own opportunity rarely serves the brethren to their advantage.

PAUL MUST PROVE HIS APOSTLESHIP

¹²The call of Paul to be the Lord's apostle to the nations was given in a way which to human reason would be accounted singular. Undoubtedly his ministry was the greatest in apostolic service. He had the widest field of service, and for his equipment he spoke with many tongues. Also for his ministry he was to receive wonderful visions and revelations. Besides this he was to be the instructor of the Church of God in all things relative to its purpose and place in the divine plan. (2 Corinthians 12:1; Ephesians 3:8) Yet in his call to this great work he had the least show of any apostle. The Twelve received their authority plainly at Pentecost and in their outstanding ministry in Jerusalem, but there was none to share with Paul the knowledge of his call save the humble and otherwise unknown Ananias.—Acts 9:17, 18.

PECULIAR BURDENS TO BEAR

¹³This absence of outward manifestation of authority was one of the burdens this great servant of Jesus Christ was called to bear. Very frequently he had to speak for himself, and to become as a foolish boaster telling of himself, because his standing as an apostle was disputed. (Acts 9:26) In this he was of all the servants of the Lord most like his Master. Jesus himself had no send-off for his ministry; none save John Baptist and himself knew of the manifestation of the holy spirit in the form of a dove. He witnessed to his mission by the miracles, and by these his disciples believed on him.

¹⁴It is so again; the Lord has again followed the same course. Pastor Russell witnessed by the message of truth, which no other man had, that his ordination was of God through the holy spirit; and the Church, which

the Lord has gathered round the truth thereby proclaimed, is asked by men for its authority to teach the Scripture. Like its Master and the foremost Apostle of the Church it must prove itself. Jesus appealed to the works he did: 'Believe me for my works' sake, if ye will not believe my words, if ye will not accept my message.' (John 10:38) Paul appealed to the signs of an apostle which he had shown: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." (2 Corinthians 12:12) The Twelve were never subjected to this hard test—Pentecost and the miracles sufficed; nor were they sent out as pioneers to those who knew nothing of their "authority".

PAUL APART FROM THE TWELVE

¹⁵Darkness as to any divine purpose in the earth or the human race encompasses the earth, but the light of a glory from God is upon a people who speak for him. (Isaiah 60:1) Those who herald the message of the kingdom and faithfully follow the Lord know their calling and their work as surely as Paul knew his. Indeed, they know it more surely than he did at the time in his history with which our lesson deals. Their present experience corresponds more closely to the later days of Paul when he was fully established in his ministry.

¹⁶Paul never claimed to be one of The Twelve. He saw that he was called directly of the Lord and apart from any direct connection with them. He was not directed to go to them for instruction: indeed the Lord began to instruct him by vision and revelation. That he never sought to be counted of The Twelve, nor hinted of such a desire in anything he wrote is clear indication that he knew he was apart from them.

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

Is it probable that St. Paul soon began to witness for Jesus after he had received sight? Why did not he first go to Jerusalem? ¶ 1, 2.

What was Paul's object in going to Arabia? Were visions and revelations a considerable part of his learning? ¶ 3, 4.

Why was there a plot to destroy Paul some time after he returned to Damascus? How did he make his escape? ¶ 5, 6.

How was he received in Jerusalem? How did he deport himself? How was Barnabas a comfort to St. Paul at this time? ¶ 7, 8.

How was Paul notified to flee Jerusalem? How was he being prepared for the great work that lay before him? ¶ 9.

Under what circumstances did Paul's humility of heart make itself known? Is there a lesson in this for us? ¶ 10, 11.

What may be said of Paul's service? What advantage had The Twelve over Paul? Was his authority to preach often disputed? ¶ 12, 13.

How did the Lord Jesus, St. Paul, and Brother Russell manifest their authority to speak in the name of Jehovah? ¶ 14.

Is there any reason why those in "present truth" should not know what message should be given to the people? Did Paul claim to be one of The Twelve? ¶ 15, 16.

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