

The
PRESENT TRUTH
 and
Herald of Christ's Epiphany

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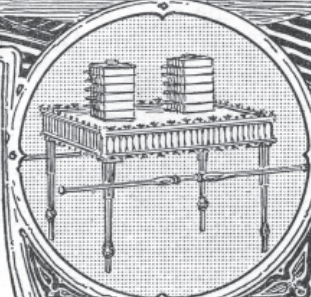
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"The Lamb opened the seventh seal." "Ye have approached Mount Zion, and the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem. . . See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh . . . saying . . . 'Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven' . . . Wherefore, receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear." "Christ being come an High Priest . . . by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle . . . obtained eternal deliverance."—Rev. 8: 1; Heb. 12: 22, 25, 26, 28; 9: 11, 12.



DESCRIPTION OF CONSTRUCTIVE ADVANCING TRUTH

Constructive advancing Truth refers to a teaching, based on long established Truth that is being brought forward and applied in detail for God's consecrated children, a principled fact which moves forward in a process of development, having a special value to those living today, being constructive, helpful, and encouraging. In other words, it is "Truth as due" given for the needful purpose of building up and developing the Consecrated Epiphany Campers.

HOLDING STRONG TO OUR PRINCIPLED FOUNDATION TRUTHS

The Psalmist says, "Light [truth] is sown for the righteous" (Psa. 97:11). For the child of God, a lamp is provided whose light dispels from his pathway much of the darkness. "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105). But it is only "the path of the just" that "*is* as the shining light, that shineth

more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). Actually, there is none just, "none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10); but the class referred to is "justified by faith."

Pastor Russell's thought from the beginning to the end of his ministry, as can be seen, e.g., from the explanation that he gives Prov. 4:18 in P-1, pp. 20-28, our Pastor emphasizes the greater Truth, saying, "While it is true that the path of each individual believer is a shining one, yet the special application of this statement is to the just (justified) as a class" (P-1, p. 20, par. 2). That our Pastor held to this greater Truth as the special sense of Pro. 4:18 throughout life is shown in the six Parousia volumes as the motto passage of the series, on their title pages. By his using Pro. 4:18 as the motto of the entire series, he thus indicated that it gave the advancing Truth as due. This principle was continued in the seventeen volumes!

While there is great perplexity among Truth people for many years, Bible Standard Ministries [LHMM] has held strong to the Truth message given by Pastor Russell beginning 141 years ago. The principled foundation teachings with the necessary advancing Truth ["But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," Pro. 4:18] continue with us to this day.

Most other Truth groups have set Pastor Russell's teachings aside because these teachings get in the way of their ideas! This would include the Dawn, PBI, Jehovah Witness groups. Consequently, there are some in the Dawn group (as well as in other groups) who are perplexed as to the lack of advancing Truth. They ask, if the general call ceased in 1881, as Bro. Russell taught, why are we being taught that the entrance into the high calling is still open. We, Bible Standard Ministries, are glad to report that some of these perplexed ones, hungry for the advancing Truth, have been reached during the past few years with the Epiphany Truth and are rejoicing in it. They are coming to see that the Dawn leaders have not given them any advancing Truth since Bro. Russell's death, but additionally that they have suppressed much Truth he had already given to them.

In harmony with Pro. 4:18, Bible Standard Ministries progresses forward: Constructive Advancing Truth refers to a teaching, based on long established Truth that is being brought forward and applied in detail for God's consecrated children. A principled fact which moves



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Free from all sects, parties, organizations, and creeds of men, but bound to God as it understands His Word, this magazine stands for —

- The defense of the Parousia Truth, given by the Lord through "that Servant," as basic for all further development of the Truth;
- The defense of the arrangements, charter and will given by the Lord through "that Servant," as binding on controlling corporations and associations among Truth people; and for
- The exposition and defense of the unfolding Epiphany-Basileia Truth, as meat in due season for the Lord's people, as He is pleased to provide it.

forward in a process of development, having a special value to those living today, being constructive, helpful, and encouraging. In other words, it is “Truth as due” given for the needful purpose of building up and developing the Consecrated Epiphany Campers.

R23: “One personal struggle and conquest over self will be of more benefit than listening to a hundred sermons or singing a hundred hymns. It is not so much what we learn as what we practice that benefits us.”

R24: We are not more intelligent or pious than our fathers, even if it be true as we claim that we have advanced Truths. Let all bear in mind that “to whom much is given much is required.” If we are advanced in Truth, we should also be advanced in holiness, and obedience to God’s will is an important aid in knowing the Truth, John 7:17.

R647: Some will say John, I think you are too severe; I know many very good Christians who say they are entirely consecrated to God, and only want to know and do his will, and truly they do many wonderful works, and yet they walk in darkness, knowing nothing of the blessed Truths now made so plain to us. They don’t want to know it because they don’t want to do it! And not only so, but they refuse to hear it and do not want it. Yet they claim to have fellowship with God; how is it? John’s answer is very plain and may seem to many, severe, yet we apprehend it is the severity of Truth. He says, (1 John 1:6) “If we say that we [They] have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we [They] lie, and do not the truth” (Based on 2 Cor. 6:14, 15). They suppose that no more can be known of God’s plans now than was known by the Reformers. This mistake has been an expensive one; for, aside from the fact that but few great principles of Truth were then recovered from the rubbish of error, there are special features of Truth constantly becoming due, and of these Christians have been deprived by their creed fences. To illustrate: it was a Truth in Noah’s day, and one which required the faith of all who would walk in the light then, that a flood was coming, while Adam and others had known nothing of it. It would not be preaching Truth now to preach a coming flood, but there are other dispensational Truths constantly becoming due, of which, if walking in the light of the lamp, we shall know; so, if we have all the light which was due several hundred years ago, and that only, we are measurably in darkness. [Pro. 4:18, “But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” The Bible was not written for one man, or for one age, but is adapted to the circumstances as “meat in due season.” Thus the “word is a lamp to our

feet,” giving light for present need. We must then ask the question: have we reached the perfect day? If our answer is no, then we must expect more Present Truth to come forward!]

P-1, pp. 20-28: Those who will turn away from the mere speculations of men, and devote time to searching the Scriptures, not excluding reason, which God invites us to use (Isa. 1:18), will find that a blessed bow of promise spans the heavens. It is a mistake to suppose that those without faith, and consequent justification, should be able to clearly apprehend the Truth: it is only for the faith justified. While it is true that the path of each individual believer is a shining one, yet the special application of this statement is to the just (justified) as a class. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and saints of the past and present have walked in its increasing light; and the light will continue to increase beyond the present—“unto the perfect day.” It is one continuous path, and the one continuous and increasing light is the Divine Record, illuminating as it becomes due. While it is still true that “darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people,” the world is not always to remain in this condition. We are assured that “the morning cometh” (Isa. 21:12). As now God causes the natural sun to shine upon the just and the unjust, so the Sun of Righteousness will, in the Millennial day, shine for the benefit of all the world, and “bring to light the hidden things of darkness” (1 Cor. 4:5). It will dispel the noxious vapors of evil, and bring life, health, peace, and joy. God’s Word is a great storehouse of food for hungry pilgrims on the shining pathway. There is milk for babes, and strong meat for those more developed (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:14); and not only so, but it contains food adapted to the different seasons and conditions, and Jesus said the faithful servant should bring forth meat *in due season* for the household of faith—“*things* new and old,” from the storehouse (Luke 12:42; Matt. 13:52). God gradually opens up his Truth and reveals the exceeding riches of his grace; and consequently, much more light is due now than at any previous time in the Church’s history.

P-2, pp. 27-29: The proud and self-satisfied, and all who followed them, stumbled (Matt. 15:14), while the humble and truth-hungry inquired earnestly for the Truth (Matt. 13:36; Mark 4:10). And the Lord expounded the dark sayings to such, and said, “Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God”, but to them that are without [not Israelites indeed], all these things are done in parables, “that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand” (Luke 8:10).

So, too, it is at the end of this age. Truth here, as there,

separates the earnest and humble, and leads them forward into the knowledge now due to such, and strengthens and enlightens them, that they may not stumble with the mass of nominal Christians; while the lukewarm and self-satisfied reject the Truths here due, because blinded by their own improper condition of heart. Hence, they will be rejected by the Lord as unworthy of becoming his bride [a completed work] (Eph. 4:1; 1 Cor. 9:27).

It is a grave error into which many fall, to suppose a knowledge of God's doings and plans is of little importance, the graces of Christian character are all God requires, and that these are better conserved by ignorance. How differently the Scriptures present the matter! They counsel not only to cultivate the graces of the Christian character, but to preserve constantly the condition of heart that will enable us to discern the Truth, especially the Truth of the Lord's presence when due, and when dispensational changes take place. A knowledge of dispensational Truth is as important in the end of this age as in the end of the Jewish age. Those who did not discern the Truth then due did not receive the favors then due. So, in the end of this age: Those who cannot discern the Truth now due, blinded by unbelief and worldliness, cannot receive special favors now due. They are not overcomers, and hence not fit to be the bride of Christ, and to enter into the glorious inheritance of the saints as joint-heirs with him. Truth, in this age, under adverse conditions for its reception, becomes a test of our faithfulness to God, and hence as a sickle separates the fit from the unfit, the wheat from the tares.

P-6, pp. 326-327: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5). All logical minds delight in reaching a *decision*, if possible, respecting every item of Truth; and this the Apostle declares should be striven for by each member of the Church for himself—"in his own mind." It is a common mistake, however, to attempt to apply this personally good rule to a Church or to a class in Bible-study—to attempt to force all to *decide* on exactly the same conclusion respecting the meaning of the Lord's Word. Having used his opportunity, each is to trust to the Lord to guide and teach and show the Truth and should not insist that all must be *made to see* every item as he sees it, nor even as the majority view it. "On essentials, unity; on non-essentials, charity," is the proper *rule* to be followed.

FURTHER TESTFUL THINGS

PT '30, p. 194: To others the analytical, logical, and detailed reassertion of the Parousia Truth is sorely trying because, lacking industry and perseverance, they are unwilling to study hard enough and long enough to gain a proper insight into it, even being

too lazy to look up the copious Scriptures quoted in proof. Some are sorely tried by this reasserted Parousia Truth, simply because their leaders deny it, and they trust their leaders. Some are sorely tried by the wealth of types and prophecies expounded in further proof of the Parousia Truth. Some are stumbled at the length of the pertinent articles, because they fail to recognize the many details that the Bible gives on such Truths, which details God desires His faithful people to know (Rom. 15:4) as they become due. Many are sorely tried by the unpopularity of THE PRESENT TRUTH, in which mainly such reassertion of the Parousia Truth takes place. The sight of this magazine, as a red object to a bull, is enough to arouse resentment in some. Some are stumbled because the defenders of the Parousia Truth are not "witnessing the Kingdom message to the world," thinking that that is a sure evidence of God's exclusive use of its doers, failing to see that since 1917 this has become the Great Company's work and that since that time God has given the priests the work of dealing with Azazel's Goat. Others are greatly tested, because there are so few who stand four-square for the Parousia Truth, while the bulk of the Lord's people are not so standing. Others are tested by this downpour of the Parousia Truth, because they love and seek to retain the fellowship of many who reject more or less of such Truth. Then this downpour of the Parousia Truth tests all as to whether they received it in the love of it or for some other reason. Thus, we see that the reasserted Parousia Truth as a part of the descending rain tests all who built on the Rock or Sand.

PT '42, p. 75, 76: The Truth in its dueness has been and will continue throughout this Age to be the food of God's people until they come to the Kingdom. Our Lord charged that no assembly or individual leave any of the Truth due in an epoch unused unto the following epoch; but that all the Truth due in any epoch be appropriated as Spiritual food during its proper epoch.

PT '54, p. 52: We have in these columns (see, e.g., PT '53, p. 76) already called attention to various references (E-11, p. 493; PT '39, p. 99, par. 1; PT '41, p. 82, etc.) from Bro. Johnson's later writings in which he indicated that the Great Company would be in the flesh for "an uncertain number of years after 1956." In his earlier writings he did not allow for this possibility. *E.g.*, in H '24, p. 38, col. 1, he wrote, "After their faithful cleansing of themselves and their faithful service of God's Plan *toward* [italics ours] the end of the Epiphany, the time of trouble (Rev. 7:14), they as a class will experience their change of nature." But when reprinting this same article later (H '47, p. 27, par. 4)

he changed the word *toward* to *after* in the above-quoted sentence. Thus, with the passing of time his understanding on the subject became clearer. The fact that the Great Company will be here on earth for an indefinite time after 1956, coupled with the fact that it seems apparent that the Time of Trouble, the special time for the Great Company's development (Rev. 7:14), will not be over by then, argues very strongly in favor of the Epiphany period continuing after 1956.

PT '55, pp. 72, 84, 86: One is not being able to overthrow the clear teachings as a whole on "The Great Company's Attestatorial Service" as presented in PT '54, pp. 54-59, much of which is "constructive advancing Truth," thoroughly established on Bro. Johnson's teachings. Bro. Johnson was the *constructive executive expounder* (E-10, p. 667; E-11, p. 611); and antitypical Hiram, his *special helper* (see PT '42, p. 14, col. 2, bottom; PT '43, p. 79, col. 2, top; E-10, p. 449, line 18 assisted him in that constructive expounding work. Since antitypical Solomon's demise antitypical Hiram has been bringing forth *constructive* advancing Truth, as Bro. Johnson indicated (PT '44, p. 29, col. 2; comp. PT '54, pp. 24-26) the Great Company would do. J. Krewson fights our PT '52, pp. 83-91 article, for it leaves no room for him, a Youthful Worthy candidate, to act as the Lord's pastor and teacher over the Great Company, even as the "constructive advancing Truth" on "Truths Hidden in the Years of Noah's Age" (PT '54, pp. 24-26) is another presentation that he has little use for, as here again the clear Truth based upon the teachings of the Scriptures and the Epiphany Messenger leaves no room for him, a prospective Youthful Worthy, to gain the leadership in the teaching office over the Great Company.

PT '56, p. 12: While J.K. [a sifter] has insisted all along that we do not have the privilege of giving constructive advancing Truth (thus contradicting, *e.g.*, the antitypical Hiram picture—see PT '55, p. 84), he has admitted that we have the privilege of giving *controversial* advancing Truth. While there has been much constructive advancing Truth in the P.T. since 1950 apart from that which J.K. and others presented to us, and also controversial advancing Truth even since Jan. 1955, as our sober-minded readers abundantly testify, we do not take any honor for it to ourself, for we realize that of ourself we can do nothing, and that without the Lord's guidance and special help we would not be able to meet the attacks of the Adversary and his cunning errors, nor to present anything of advancing Truth. Advancing Truth usually unfolds and becomes clearer in controversy, even

as Bro. Johnson shows (E-8, pp. 668-670): "We do not recall a single controversy into which we have become involved, amid which our need of further light set in, that some advancing light did not come. This has been the experience of God's people all through the Age. Yea, God made the Bible so that it would shed its advancing light through our Lord's ministry as the circumstances, needs and experiences of God's people required."

PT '56, p. 90: Similarly, as an activity in harmony with an item of constructive advancing Truth, we have seen that, as forecast by the Epiphany Messenger (E-4, p. 100; see also PT '54, pp. 56, 57), the antitypical mother of the antitypical daughter, in the sense of the servants of the Great-Company-developing Truth, is bringing, in attestation of her purification, the antitype of the mother-of-a-daughter's burnt offering and sin offering (Lev. 12: 5-8), and that this set in immediately after the completion of the antitypical 80 days, *i.e.*, on Sept. 20, 1954, exactly 40 years to the day after Sept. 20, 1914 (PT '55, p. 91, par. 4). It was on Sept. 20, 1954, that the special service began toward the Jews, as a distinct feature of our attestatorial service, which in its two phases (toward the Jews and toward the Gentiles) the Great Company was to "do after its cleansing from Azazelian defilements" (PT '30, p. 15, par. 3; PT '54, p. 56, par. 5).

PT '58, p. 11: The character of the articles in The Present Truth during the past year, much of which was constructive, advancing Truth, also required much additional study and research, as we know that advancing Truth must always agree with, and usually be a further unfolding of, past Truth (E-5, p. 32).

PT '60, p. 62: That the special teaching function since the last Little Flock member went beyond the veil has been lodged with the Great Company in the leader of the Good Levites, is attested by the fact that the Lord has since then been setting forth constructive advancing Truth through antitypical Hiram individually (as distinct from his former service as the special helper to antitypical Solomon and his service to antitypical David). This began in Oct. 1950 with the declaration of the first of such Truths to be given after Bro. Johnson went beyond the veil (*viz.*, that now at last the Christ was complete in glory, "as this the last member of Christ's Bride was welcomed home!"—PT '50, pp. 176, 181; comp. PT '58, p. 62); it has continued since then to the present time and will, *D.v.*, continue in the future. [In harmony with the previous thoughts and Bro. Jolly's statement that God would not leave His people without a leader, we recognize that constructive advancing Truth will continue to come to His people].

BS '71, p. 35-36: "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). On some occasions multitudes received His testimony, but later deserted Him, walking no more with Him as He continued to set forth forcefully the lessons of Divine Truth (Luke 4:14-29). Sometimes the multitudes hung upon His teachings and "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth"; yet again and again many forsook Him, only the merest handful remaining (John 6:60-69). They are quite willing to pay their money for what they want, but they do not want the Truth.

Those who followed the Lord only for a little season and then forsook Him, of course then ceased to be His disciples and were no longer recognized by Him as such. A disciple is a pupil, a learner; and when a man ceases to be a student and follower of Christ, the great Teacher, he is no longer His disciple.

PT '77, pp. 92-93: Thus, the fuller answer to the pertinent inquiries and petitions began to be given, showing that the Consecrated Epiphany Campers will have a special eternal inheritance in the earthly phase of the Kingdom (Num. 27:7). It continued to be given in such articles as *The Quasi-elect* (including the antitype of the half-tribe of Manasseh with its inheritance *west* of the Jordan; PT '55, pp. 20-23; comp. PT '57, 20-27), *Questions on the Consecrated Epiphany Campers* (PT '55, pp. 41-44), *Antitypical Keturah's Descendants* (PT '58, pp. 3-8), *Psalm 121* (including the hill Ophel; PT '70, pp. 87-91), *The Nethinim* (PT '71, pp. 37-41), *etc.*; and it will continue to be given, *e.g.*, in this article, and also, *D.v.*, in future writings [progression]. The more prominent leaders who are Consecrated Epiphany Campers, especially those who are Epiphany enlightened, and who are in the Epiphany Truth, call attention before Jesus as God's Executive and before the other leaders of God's nominal and real people, to Jehovah by His Word enjoining our Lord Jesus to give the promised special inheritance as a part of the pre-Millennial seed to antitypical Zelophehad's daughters (Num. 36:1, 2). The good leaders of the Consecrated Epiphany Campers as undershepherds are properly, in Christian love, very much concerned about these sheep of the Lord and their Christian welfare and promised inheritance, lest these brethren by entering into symbolic marriage, oneness, with the unconsecrated tentatively justified or the unjustified, especially in their selfish and worldly aims, ambitions, teachings and practices, would lose their right to their promised special inheritance as Consecrated Epiphany Campers and fall back into the restitution class in general

(vs. 3, 4). Like Esau, they would be selling their precious birthright for a mess of pottage (Gen. 25:31-34; Heb. 12:16, 17; PT '61, pp. 40, 41).

BS '06, p. 52: Let us return to the subject of our guardian angels. The question arises, why should not the angels have charge over all good people, so that they would not stumble? Is not this the promise? We answer that the promise is made to all who are of the consecrated classes. But in order to remain faithful within their calling, they must all stand various testings and trials. Are they willing to surmount these difficulties and to remain in the way? Some will be in a condition to receive the trials and develop and progress in their Christian course despite obstacles, while others will do it only partially, and still others will lose heart and let go of the plow and turn back into the world altogether receiving the Father's displeasure (Luke 9:62). There are many who leave off the serving of the Lord and the Truth because they do not approve of the message or the messengers that God uses to dispense the Truth as now due.

PT '16, p. 57: This privilege of service to Jehovah and those He has called, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4) continues to this very day. Oh, my dear brethren, with this privilege to write on constructive advancing Truth, let us ever be cautious that we not become Speculators! When we consider the emphatic teachings against speculation, let us recognize Jehovah's reasoning.

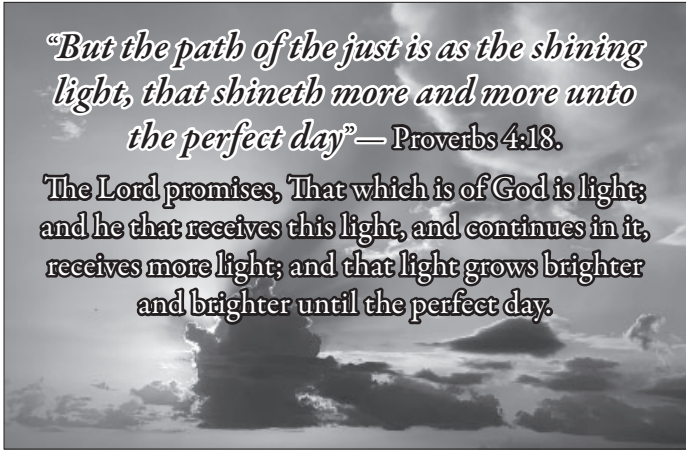
We close this presentation with pertinent thoughts from Bro. Bernard W. Hedman who was used by the Lord in a special way as a part of antitypical Habakkuk which consists of true "watchers" in the Time of the End—see PT '57, pp. 36, for he more than anyone else assisted Bro. Raymond Jolly and Bro. August Gohlke in watching and setting forth truly the signs of the times and the advancing Truth as due.

From whence came all these beautiful and advanced Truths to young Bro. Russell and others of the flock? Surely not from Bro. Barbour, nor, we may add, from any man. These precious Truths are given freely to all in Christ by the Lord, the Holy Spirit being our teacher and the only one, for "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth" (1 John 2:27).

Truth and knowledge are the food upon which God's children feed, and He himself has made perfect arrangements for their supply, as it is written, "Light is sown for the righteous" (Psa. 97:11).

He supplies the light to the “Pathway of the just that shines more and more unto the perfect day,” and as the Master promised so we have had *the spirit of truth* to guide us into all truth, and *He* has shown us things to come (John 16:13).

But while the spirit guides, human instrumentality is often employed by the spirit. *Men* are only the “earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Cor. 4:7). The vessel is nothing, the treasure has the value. All God’s children are to some extent vessels, some with greater capacity than others. Oh, that we might all be very humble as treasure bearers.



“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” — Proverbs 4:18.

The Lord promises, That which is of God is light; and he that receives this light, and continues in it, receives more light; and that light grows brighter and brighter until the perfect day.

HEAVENLY VERSUS EARTHLY RICHES

“The blessing of Jehovah, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it” — (Prov. 10:22).

How reasonable it seems that those who become God’s friends, and especially those who have come into His family as children, should be blessed by Him in multitudinous ways, in which others of mankind (who are aliens, strangers, and foreigners to Him through wicked works, Col. 1:21) should not be blessed! We look into the past and see Father Adam, very rich while in Divine favor, the possessor of the whole world, filled with bounties. We read of Father Abraham, “the friend of God,” that he was very rich in cattle and money (Gen. 13:2), and that Jacob, although he lost all inheritance in his father’s estate, was blessed by God, so that he also became very rich in flocks and in herds (Gen. 31:30, 43). So Israel as a nation (*e.g.*, in Lev. 26) was promised that if they would obey God, they would be blessed in all of their temporal affairs: their land would bring forth bountifully; they would not be afflicted with drought or pests; their flocks and herds would prosper and multiply exceedingly, and even their physical health would be provided for—Jehovah guaranteed that by abiding in His favor as a people they would not be subject to pestilences, diseases, *etc.*; for He, Himself, would be their physician, to preserve their health and give them every physical prosperity.

However, with the introduction of the Gospel Age came a great change—not in the Divine plan, but in the Divine dealings; and thenceforth the favored of the Lord were not promised earthly prosperity, nor immunity from sickness, pain, and persecution; but on the contrary, they were assured that whoever would be received into God’s family as prospective heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus, would, more than others, be required to pass through experiences of suffering and through trials of faith, patience, and character. They were instructed that these adversities should be accepted by them as marks of Divine favor, as evidence that God was *dealing* with

them as with sons, and was by these experiences fitting and preparing them for positions of honor and untold blessings in the future (Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12; Heb. 12:6-8). “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:9, 10). The Manna text for April 28 encourages the consecrated child of God: We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us, (Rom. 5:3-5).

In harmony with this change of dispensation, the New Testament declares that those accepted to this high honor of sonship (John 1:12) should not expect earthly riches or other temporal blessings as marks of Divine favor. Quite to the contrary, the Apostle says, “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God [as a rule] chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” (James 2:5). Riches, while generally applied to money, physical comforts, and opulence, may properly enough be applied to any valuable possession: as, for instance, one might be rich in talents of music or oratory or art; or he might be rich in mental endowment which would carry with it a weight of influence among men. And St. Paul also assures us that not many great, not many noble, not many mighty, not many wise, according to the course of this world, are to be found among the called and sanctified sons of God (1 Cor. 1:26-29).

From the foregoing Scriptures and many others, we see not only that those who become God’s sons are rarely blessed with temporal riches, but also that the principle

extends still further, that few who possess earthly riches in advance of hearing of the Truth are likely to consecrate their lives to God and be faithful in this Age. This is not because God is opposed to riches, for He Himself is rich above all others. It is rather the outworking of the natural law or principle that mankind by reason of the fall are selfish. The possession of wealth in combination with selfishness leads to a measure of satisfaction with present circumstances and conditions that are unfavorable to faith in God's promises. The wealthy, selfish, satisfied soul says to himself, eat, drink and be merry; enjoy your advantages; take your pleasure out of these, rather than speculate respecting future advantages and future riches, which are intangible, and which must be accepted by faith. In harmony with this, our Lord declared, "How hardly [with what difficulty] shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23).

By this term, the Kingdom of God, our Lord evidently did not refer to the earthly, nominal church; for we are all aware that the rich find little difficulty in getting into it. Evidently, He referred to the real Kingdom, the glorified Kingdom, which shall be established in the end of the Gospel Age—the heavenly Kingdom. He meant that it would be difficult for a rich man to obtain membership in the glorified Body of Christ, to which the Kingdom work will be entrusted. This begs the question, why is this so?

We understand the reason to be that God desiring to select in this Gospel Age a peculiar people to be the kings, priests, and judges of the world in the next Age, desired to select for the rulers and teachers only such as would come up to certain requirements of character and obedience. One of these requirements is sacrifice—self-sacrifice. Accordingly, all of this class are Scripturally designated "a royal priesthood," because royalty is a quality of their office, partly as a reward for their faithfulness as priests in sacrificing their earthly life, and partly to enable them as priests in the future the better to serve and bless all the families of the earth.

Time is not standing still: the expanded work of the Gospel Age Harvest moves forward with the inviting, since 1954, of a fifth pre-restitution, consecrated class. In E-12, pp. 187, bottom, 188, Bro. Johnson refers to the *quasi*-elect as "the fifth elect class," so close do they in many cases come to being of the elect. This is particularly true of the Consecrated Epiphany Campers. Those that have answered this call have many wonderful blessings now and will have them Millennially. The Consecrated Epiphany Campers will have a resurrection of the just: Luke 14: 14, "And thou shalt be blessed; . . . for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." They

also are now tentatively justified by faith in Christ and are accepted by God in consecration (Prov. 23:26) as of the pre-Millennial seed of Abraham under the earthly features of the Oath-bound Covenant, and they also have the privilege of prayer to God and fellowship with Him. When on trial for life under the New Covenant, they will not lose this Oath-bound Covenant relationship and these privileges (PT '72, p. 74).

God will highly honor them, for they are proving themselves faithful under greater trial than restitutionists in general will have. They will be privileged to be the special assistants of the Worthies and will be very able helpers to the world of mankind as they with them come up the Highway of Holiness. The CEC's being prepared prior to the opening of the Highway of Holiness must consecrate unto death; the facts of the case prove that all who consecrate before the Highway of Holiness is opened consecrate unto death, but also the necessities of the case require it; for as long as Satan retains some control, so long will it be impossible to carry out one's consecration fully without dying daily, for the conditions of the present evil world are conducive to sin and inconducive to righteousness; and whoever would amid these conditions be faithful to the Lord must be so at the expense of his human rights, *i.e.*, he must consecrate unto death. What a wonderful Heavenly Father we have! How gracious He is to us all!

JESUS' WONDERFUL EXAMPLE

The beginning of requiring the terms or conditions of this Age was with the great Head of the One true Church, our Lord Jesus; He was to sacrifice before He could be made the King and have the power and authority to bless. His sacrifice, as is well known, was a comprehensive one; it began with the sacrifice of His riches and ended with the sacrifice of His life. He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might (eventually, in the Millennial Kingdom) be made rich (2 Cor. 8:9). His wealth, consisting of heavenly glory and, subsequently, of human talents and every kind of good earthly possessions, was all sacrificed, including even His reputation, so that the Apostle declares, "He made himself of no reputation." His will also was sacrificed—the strongest individual thing that any being has. He Himself declared that He sought not His own will, but the will of the Father, who sent Him. His life (the most precious thing to any intelligent creature) was freely laid down on our behalf, as a sacrifice, a sin-offering, in harmony with the Divine plan (Phil. 2:5 Diaglott).

However, all these sacrifices led, under Divine providence and promise, to still greater riches, honors, and powers. The

Apostle, after reciting how our Lord humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, declares: “Wherefore [as a reward for this sacrifice] God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.” He has been exalted far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named. He has been given a name more excellent than all others, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father (Phil. 2:9-11; Eph. 1:21). It is by virtue of His sacrifice of His riches, honors, will and life itself that our dear Redeemer is now the great and glorious Royal High Priest, with all power in heaven and in earth, which in the end of the Age He fully takes to Himself (Matt. 28:18; Rev. 11:17). He will exercise it in accomplishing the wonderful work which He already has begun, and which it is the Father’s good pleasure that He shall complete—*viz.*, subduing all things, putting down all sin and rebellion against Divine authority, rescuing as many as return to harmony with their Creator and His laws, and destroying with an everlasting destruction all who persistently love and practice sin knowingly and willfully.

Our dear Redeemer’s experiences are set before believers as an example; and as many as desire during this Gospel Age are permitted to become His followers and to walk in His footsteps (1 Pet. 2:21), that ultimately, they may be sharers with Him in the glorious rewards. As a matter of fact, none of these followers have anything of value to sacrifice. It cannot be said of them, as of their Redeemer, that they were rich and became poor; on the contrary, they were all poor as respects everything that could be considered true riches. Even their own righteousness was as filthy rags, (Isa. 64:6), which needed to be covered with the imputed robe of the Savior’s righteousness (justification), before they could be invited to be His followers.

But while none called to be Jesus’ disciples possess any real riches, each one possesses something of some value in his own estimation; some possess a little honor among men; some possess a little of this world’s goods, bringing measurable comforts; some possess talents capable of exercise and development; each one possesses a will, more or less weak and imperfect; and each one possesses a little fragment of life which has not yet flickered out. The invitation to each one who would be a disciple of Jesus and share in His Kingdom is that being justified by faith through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, he should deny himself, take up his cross and follow Jesus as his Master (Matt. 16:24). He must give up self-will and accept and follow the Lord’s will in all things. He must renounce sin, error, selfishness, and worldliness and live only for the Lord. If he is faithful in this, until death, he

will be given an abundant entrance into the Kingdom and the privilege as a part of Abraham’s seed of sharing in the blessing of all the families of the earth (Gal. 3:7-9).

THE PROPER VIEW OF EARTHLY RICHES

From this point of view, earthly riches of every kind—opulence of money, influence, talent, *etc.* should not be despised by the Lord’s people. On the contrary, they should be appreciated—not after the worldly manner of appreciation, for selfish interests and purposes, but because those who possess riches of any kind have that much more than they otherwise would have to offer to the Lord for use in His service, to glorify His name, to advance His Truth and to bless His people. But the consecrated should ever keep in mind that to them this is the only value of any kind of riches; they are not to seek to keep these riches, but to seek opportunities for using them wisely—spending them as wisely as possible to further the Lord’s interests.

There are some who are rich in talents, and who could, if they would, turn those talents into the service of the Lord and the Truth; and they make a great mistake and lose a precious opportunity if they selfishly hold them for themselves in any manner or degree. Those who have more or less of the money talent, earthly riches, make a great mistake if they hoard these; for their only value as respects the Kingdom, its glories, riches, and honors, is in using them now. If they hoard their earthly riches, they are burying their talent, their opportunity, instead of using it; and such will demonstrate to themselves eventually the meaning of our Lord’s words, “It is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye [a small gate in the walls of ancient cities, for the convenience of belated travelers desiring to enter after sundown, after the main city gates were closed. These needle-eyes were so low that camels could enter them only upon their knees, after being stripped of their burdens], than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:25). He cannot get into the Kingdom at all unless he strips himself of his riches, sacrifices them, devotes them to the Lord.

However, the stripping of oneself of riches, sacrificing them, does not signify the reckless and wasteful disposition of them. Rather, all riches of every kind should be considered as consecrated to the Lord at the time their possessor consecrates himself and his all to God’s service; and thereafter these riches should be used, not as his own, but as the Lord’s riches, the Lord’s talents. They are to be used according to the steward’s understanding of the Divine will. But certainly, no steward is faithful who accumulates and hoards possessions to hand down selfishly to his own posterity.

We are not opposing the making of a reasonable provision for the steward's household, as the Apostle enjoins (1 Tim. 5:8; Rom. 12:7), but we do oppose the thought that God has ever authorized His stewards to avoid exercising their stewardship or to attempt to pass at their death that stewardship on to others. This is one of the fallacies with which many deceive themselves; for as the Scriptures declare, the natural mind (heart) is exceedingly deceitful and at times misleads the new heart, mind, and will (Jer. 17:9). For this reason, God in His Word gives us instructions in so many ways, line upon line, precept upon precept, that we may know the terms of our calling—terms of *self-denial* and not of one who in wealth makes himself miserable by the fear of poverty as respects earthly things. Knowing this, we may make our calling and our election sure by conformity thereto—by becoming copies of God's dear Son, who "was rich" in every sense of the word, far beyond our comprehension, but for our sakes "became poor," sacrificing it all.

THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES

Our Lord speaks of the deceitfulness of riches (Matt. 13:22); and on every hand, we witness this deception. We often see how earthly wealth deceives, misleads, and corrupts the reasoning powers, and how it turns aside the force of God's Word from those who possess such wealth. We frequently see the same in respect to wealth of influence—how those who possess it deceive themselves and hoard it, refusing to sacrifice it for the Lord, the Truth, and His cause. We often see the same deception operating powerfully in those who possess wealth of talent in any direction. They are tempted to keep all of it for self, or if not all, the larger and choicer parts; they are deceived into thinking this is the right course, notwithstanding that the Scriptures so plainly declare that our privilege in connection with these is that of sacrifice.

As a whole, then, we daily witness, as the Scriptures declare, that those who possess any kind of riches, wealth, talent, or influence, are rarely among the sacrificers. We might almost say, blessed are those who are poor in this world's goods, in talents, and in influence; for they, having practically nothing to sacrifice to the Lord but their wills, find it easier to comply with the conditions. We therefore presume that the larger proportion of those who will through faith inherit the Kingdom will consequently be of this poor class, rich in faith only (James 2:5).

When we see a noble example, like that of our Lord, who was rich in everything and gave all, we rejoice in it and realize that as His sacrifice was so great His reward also is proportionately great. We see also the noble example of the Apostle Paul. He possessed considerable wealth of ability,

talent, and influence, and possibly of financial means also; but he laid these all, a willing sacrifice, at the feet of the Lord, for joyful use in the service of God, the Truth, and the brethren. It causes our hearts to rejoice, and we feel sure that one so rich, who spent his riches so faithfully, will be one to shine very brightly in the Kingdom when it is set up and manifested. And so, undoubtedly, it will be with all God's dear people—in proportion as they have sacrificed their possessions. Those who, for the sake of the Lord and the Truth, joyfully endure the greatest shame, the greatest ignominy, the greatest trials, the greatest persecutions in this present life, and have experiences most like those of the Master and Pattern, we may be sure will, in proportion to their faithfulness manifested in such sacrifices, have a future great reward—as the Apostle has declared, "star differeth from *another* star in glory" (1 Cor. 15:41).

RICHES IN THE KINGDOM

The fullness of the heavenly riches will be attained in the resurrection, when the Millennial Kingdom will be inaugurated and the faithful overcomers will by their resurrection be richly endowed with all the good things which God has in reservation for them that love Him and prove their love by present-time devotions, sacrifices, *etc.* But we should notice that there is a foretaste of these Kingdom blessings granted to the faithful in this present life; these the Apostle speaks of as "riches of his [God's] grace" (Eph. 1:7, 18). They include faith, hope, love, peace, and joy in the holy Spirit, and the ability to see and appreciate with the eye of faith things not seen with physical eyes. The Apostle declares that these treasures of wisdom and grace, respectively, the knowledge of Divine good things in reservation and the fellowship with God which permits us to anticipate and enjoy those blessings in a measure now, are all *hidden in Christ*, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). We must be fully consecrated to God and accept Christ as our Head before we can have the opportunity of searching for these hidden treasures and finding any of them. And then, as we progress faithfully as His sheep, walking in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd (John 10:11), we find more and more of these true "riches of his grace" day by day and year by year.

There are special riches that come to us in proportion as we are faithful in performing our self-denials: These are riches of the holy Spirit. As we give up selfish interests, earthly aims, projects, *etc.*, in the interests of serving the Lord, the Truth, and the brethren, we grow more and more in likeness to our Heavenly Father and to our Lord; and the fruits of the holy Spirit [meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love, *etc.*] develop and

abound in God's consecrated children more and more.

Furthermore, we find in ourselves a peace and joy to which formerly we were strangers, and which the world can neither give nor take away. This peace and joy comes to us through our realization that, having given our all to the Lord, all of His exceeding great and precious promises that pertain to us are *really ours*. Now our faith can firmly grasp these promises as our own. We can realize that as our justification and call were not of ourselves, but of the Lord, so all our course of sacrifice, in harmony with that call, is under Divine supervision and care and sure to work out blessings for us; we can realize also that to whatever extent our course will cause earthly hardships, trials, and sufferings, God will proportionately make them to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the Kingdom (2 Cor. 4:17).

With this peace of God and confidence in His leading and care ruling in our hearts and minds, we can apply to ourselves this prophetic statement: "The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he [the righteous man] delighteth in his [God's] way" (Psa. 37:23). We can delight in this way, be it ever so thorny, narrow, and rugged, because of our confidence in God's love and wisdom, and because He who began a good work in us is completing it and blessing us with experiences which Divine wisdom sees will be to our profit eventually. The Lord's blessing is upon us; and we realize indeed that "The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow [no grief, disappointment, bitterness] with it" (Pro. 10:22). How rich it makes our hearts in the present time! We are rich in noble sentiments—faith, love, joy, peace, *etc.*—and in good works to all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith (Gal. 6:10). We are very rich in having God's blessings and providential care, which, if rightly accepted and used, will make us fit for an abundant entrance into a glorious place in the everlasting Kingdom, to which we have been invited (2 Pet. 1:11). "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

LAODICEA'S COUNTERFEIT RICHES

We have been considering the true riches, present and future, provided for God's loyal Gospel-Age people. But the Scriptures draw to our attention the fact that the nominal church of this present time, symbolic Laodicea (Rev. 3:17, 18), claims also to be very rich. "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Alas! this seems to be the prevalent condition of nominal churchianity on every hand. Only the few Israelites indeed in her who have not yet heard and obeyed the voice speaking in this Harvest time, and saying, "Come out of her, my people,

that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4)—only these very few know of the true riches; the remainder are deceiving themselves with counterfeit wealth. They look with pride upon their numbers and count them by millions: they rejoice in this wealth, not realizing that nearly all are "tares," not begotten by the good Word [Truth] of the Kingdom. Indeed, very few of them know anything about the Kingdom at all, being brought up in a world filled with error accepted by the great multitude. However, our Lord said to the church in the Laodicean period, in which we are living, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. 3:19). God loves those that remain honest and at heart loyal to Him; though His words are plain and straight, they are given in love with the purpose [rebuke and chasten] of training and educating the one true Church now. Some of us need more correction than others.

Bro. Russell wrote of the Laodicean Church as including the nominal people of God, *e.g.*, "We are in the time of the last or Laodicean stage of the great nominal gospel church of wheat and tares. (Rev. 3:14-22). She is upbraided for her lukewarmness, pride, spiritual poverty, blindness and nakedness, and counseled to forsake quickly her evil ways before it is too late" (P-4, p. 41); "we have no intimation in the Scripture that she [the Laodicean Church] will give any heed to this counsel; on the contrary, the intimation is that more and more she will become a Babel of confusion, and that she will go down with political and financial systems of this present age, in the great time of trouble with which this age will terminate" (R2763, par. 6).

As to the ending of the Laodicean period, Bro. Johnson indicated "that the Laodicean period was the harvest period from 1874-1954—the first 40 years of which—the Parousia—being for the reaping and the second 40 years of which—the Epiphany—being for the rest of the other harvest processes" (E-6, p. 377; see also p. 383, top). Thus, so far as God's people are concerned, the last part of the Laodicean period and the Epiphany, "the last special period of the Gospel Age" (E-4, p. 65, par. 2), seem to end at the same time. The garnering into the Kingdom of the last Little Flock member on Oct. 22, 1950, several years before 1954, ended the Laodicean stage of the Church for the Body of Christ in the flesh, but not for the other above-mentioned parts of the Laodicean Church. For these, 1954 marks the ending, in the restricted sense, of both the Laodicean epoch and the Epiphany period, for here the Gospel-Age elect as a whole, including the Youthful Worthies, are for the first time complete in their membership, and the first work of the Basileia opens up (PT '54, pp. 41, 42, 51-59).

However, the Epiphany period, while ending in its restricted sense in 1954, continues in other senses beyond 1954 and 1956 (see PT '54, pp. 51-54); hence the Laodicean stage of the Church, of which the Epiphany is the last part, also continues beyond 1954 and 1956. Also, the Great Company (a part of the real Church—E-8, pp. 238, 239) and the Youthful Worthies will be here an uncertain number of years after 1954-56 (E-11, p. 493). Hence for them, the Laodicean period extends for an indefinite time beyond 1954-56 (the Great Company completed Feb. 14, 1979).

The Epiphany period as the Time of Trouble upon the nominal church and the world also seems to be synchronous with the last part of the Laodicean epoch. Bro. Johnson states that “with 1914 began the Epiphaniac features of Laodicea ... with the World War as the first great physical punishment of Christendom for vindication of the people, to be followed by the other features of wrath, which will not end until the Epiphaniac part of Laodicea is ended” (E-6, p. 379; see also E-11, p. 417). From this standpoint also the Laodicean period evidently continues beyond 1954-56, for the Epiphany, its last part, continues beyond 1954-56 (PT '54, p. 79).

Symbolic Laodiceans look upon their material prosperity, and the numbers of wealthy people associated with their confederating denominations, and count their money and their donations by millions, and say, we are rich as never before. Alas! they do not realize that these are earthly riches of the kind which our Lord declares is no evidence of His favor during this Gospel Age, but rather to the contrary. And they see not the true riches, which the Lord admires, which are the foretaste of His favor during the coming Kingdom wealth.

So, the Lord declares to symbolic Laodicea, “Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” She is poor, in that she has so little of the Master’s Spirit, so little of the Truth and the Spirit of the Truth. The only riches which God can recognize in this present time are those which He promised to and bestows upon His people. Laodicea is blind, in that the god of this world has blinded her perceptions of God’s character and plan and is leading her further and further away from confidence in His Word. He is doing this under the guidance of her chosen and well-paid lords and masters, the clergy, Higher Criticism, Evolution, Revolutionism and Socialism which are rapidly taking away from her every good possession which would be estimable in the sight of the Lord. They are denuding her, making her naked, taking from her the robe of Christ’s righteousness, and leading her to trust, not in

the precious blood of the redemption, the death of the Redeemer, but in an evolutionary process which denies the need for a Savior. It denies an atonement for sin; it even denies that there is or has been any sin for which to make atonement. It claims, on the contrary, that humanity has ground for pride in its own progress, which it alleges will be quite sufficient eventually to bring to them every desired blessing, without any Savior and without His Kingdom, which God has promised as the hope of the entire groaning creation (Rom. 8:19-23).

BEING TRUE AND FAITHFUL A NECESSITY

Laodicea is interpreted to mean a tried, or judged people. The description shows us that they were tried and found wanting. If we understand Christ’s meaning in this message, it is sent particularly to those who profess His name but deny the Truth which He Himself here presents. Let those who read this special message do so with special care.

The Message to the Laodicean stage of the Church pictures the nominal Church of today as our Lord sees her. In one sense she is not cold. She has much zeal, but not according to knowledge. She has organized her armies, developed her machinery, and multiplied her stores; but yet the enemy does not fall before her. She claims that her principal object is to convert sinners, to bring forth spiritual children. The Prophet puts these words into the mouth of nominal Christians when they awake to a knowledge of the situation: “We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the earth fallen” (Isa. 26:16-18). This is said after they have realized the presence of the Lord (R5993).

Laodicea is indeed counseled to buy the true gold (the true riches of the Lord), to use eye-salve that she may see, and to put on the garment of Christ’s righteousness, that she may not be put to shame; but we have no intimation in the Scriptures that she will give any heed to this counsel. On the contrary, the intimation is that more and more she will become a Babel of confusion, and that she will go down with the political, financial, and social systems of this present Age, in the great time of trouble with which this Age is terminating. This trouble will fit and prepare mankind for the Kingdom of God’s dear Son, and its reign of righteousness. When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9).

During the Millennial Age, in Jehovah’s due time, will come a new order of things, and no longer will the blessing of the Lord entail sacrifice and such self-denials as at the present time. Then the blessing of the Lord will come to the non-elect (as it did to the Jews), in earthly

favors and earthly blessings, in proportion as they will be obedient to the laws of the Kingdom and to the spirit of those laws. In that day “the righteous shall flourish” (Psa. 72:7)—in all temporal prosperity, and in mental, physical, moral, and religious growth, upward and still upward in the Highway of Holiness. In that day the evildoer will receive stripes, and be at the disadvantage; and, if he continues in evildoing, ultimately, he will be cut off from among the people—in the Second Death

(Isa. 35:8; Psa. 37:9; 145:20; Acts 3:23; Rev. 21:8).

We conclude this study with the words of 1 Tim. 6:17-19 as given in the Diaglott: “Charge THOSE RICH in the PRESENT Age not to be high-minded, nor to confide in Wealth so uncertain, but in that God who IMPARTS to us ALL things richly for Enjoyment; to do good, to be rich in good Works, to be liberal, willing to bestow; treasuring up for themselves a good Foundation for the FUTURE, that they may lay hold of that which is REALLY Life.”

PERFECT PEACE FOR MINDS STAYED ON GOD

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isa. 26:3).

As the years pass by in this great Time of Trouble, which began in the Fall of 1914 with the outbreak of the great World War, and which is the “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. 24:21), we see on every hand the clouds gathering and darkening as precursors of still greater trouble ahead, which the Scriptures show must come before the promised blessing of all the families of the earth begins.

During the past hundred years God has been showering mankind with marvelous blessings in the way of modern conveniences, scientific discoveries, inventions, etc., many of which were stumbled upon as though by accident; and all within one generation we have passed from the “horse and buggy” days to the steam engine, a most momentous technological leap in the Industrial Revolution, to the atomic power and jet-propulsion days.

In the last decade, the scientific world has given us GPS and social networks, allowing us to communicate with anyone in any part of the world. Laser surgery: we can now operate on a person using a robot, a laser, and even through augmented reality! Artificial Intelligence can be found everywhere! We’re all aware of robots and robotic assistants, but have you thought about your Alexa device or even a Google device as an Artificial Intelligence unit. Self-driving cars are being developed and tested at this present time. To name others: 3-D Printing, Artificial Organs, X-ray, CT, and MRI scans, etc.

Surely, we are in “the time of the end,” concerning which it was prophesied (Dan. 12:4) that “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” This sudden influx of increased knowledge, inventions and discoveries is preliminary to and preparatory for the establishment of Christ’s Millennial reign of peace and prosperity on earth, “the times of restitution of all things,” during which “whosoever will” of mankind will be restored

to Edenic perfection and given everlasting life on earth (Acts 3:19-23; Rev. 22:17; Matt. 25:31-40). Paradise Lost will become Paradise Restored, *i.e.*, the “new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:13).

What is it that has sharpened the wits of humanity to such an extent that so many find it difficult to be honest, exploiting any opportunity for profit through dishonesty? Well, God’s plan of the ages has a planned time of trouble. “There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time . . .” (Dan. 12:1). We cite two more texts to help bring our mind into this thinking: Matt. 10:34, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” Also, Luke 12:51, “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division.” Jehovah has given to us a very informative picture of His Plan in 1 Kings 19:11-12, “Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.” These three natural phenomena picture, we believe, worldwide war, worldwide revolution, and worldwide anarchy respectively (see also Bro. Russell’s comment in R5649).

From a study of the worldwide war in its two phases that occurred during the last century, we have learned of the causes and terrible nature of the symbolic “wind.” We have also seen enough of violent revolution in various nations to get some idea of the truly awful severity of a revolution that is worldwide, as portrayed by the symbolic “earthquake.”

God has a number of purposes in permitting each of these three phases of the Time of Trouble to play a significant part in His Plan. Prominent among these is

His desire to teach mankind in a very practical and lasting way that their confidence in various human schemes for peace and prosperity is misplaced.

The lessons, however, will continue. According to 1 Kings 19:11, 12, after the earthquake came the fire. This is the symbolic fire of anarchy. Not the limited, experimental forms of anarchy that emerged in history; nor the local or incipient anarchy that is with us in the unruly events of today. This particular “fire” refers, rather, to a period of *worldwide* anarchy.

We do know from the Scriptures that at some point the old taskmasters of sin, error, and selfishness — now measurably restrained by national governments — will run riot in a leaderless, lawless world, and the period will quickly deteriorate into the worst kind of anarchy, chaos, and devastation. This is the great “fire” of 1 Kings 19:12, the destroyer that sweeps away into history any vestiges of Satan’s empire that are left unbroken by the worldwide war and revolution. This will be a catastrophe of unimaginable proportions for the peoples of the world.

Peace and unity are greatly to be desired; yet these are not always possible, nor always advantageous. If all were perfect, peace and unity would certainly be the only proper condition, but so long as there are imperfections, errors, *etc.*, there must be differences. In harmony with this our Lord declared that His message would not bring peace, but a sword, under present conditions (Matt. 10:34). He will be the Prince of Peace by and by, but not until peace shall be established upon a righteous basis. Before that time He will be the King who with His Church will reign in righteousness, and dash evil systems and things to pieces as potters’ vessels, with a rod of iron (Heb. 7:2; Psa. 2:9; Rev. 2:26, 27).

There are those who say peace, peace, when there is no peace and when peace is not possible, and the Lord’s people are not to be of these. This does not mean that the Lord’s people are to be breeders of strife. On the contrary, they are exhorted everywhere in the Scriptures to be peaceable and peacemakers; but with all efforts for peace, and their love of peace and their peacemaking qualities continually increasing, the message that our Lord gave them will breed disturbances. Why? Because there is no fellowship between light and darkness, there can be no peace nor truce between the two, in proportion as the one obtains control, the other is excluded (2 Cor. 6:14).

In harmony with this, we find in this lesson that there was a division among the people because of Jesus’ words—some approving and some opposing. It must be with us as we lift up the standard of righteousness: if we

will let the light of Truth shine out, those who love the Truth will be more or less attracted by it in proportion as their hearts are sincere, Truth-loving. Those who love the error will become antagonistic in proportion to their lack of sincerity. If this was the case with our Lord, can we think that it would be possible for His disciples to find it otherwise? Surely not. We must have our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Ours is the Gospel of peace, yet we will find that as we bear it to others our path of progress will be a difficult one and we will need all the protection the Lord has provided in His fore-statement of what we must expect, and His promises of blessing and glory to the overcomers.

PEACE VERSUS THE SWORD

But do the Scriptures contradict themselves? What did the Great Teacher mean when He declared, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matt. 10:34). Ah! He referred prophetically to the *effect* which His gracious message of love and favor would produce *in the world during the reign of sin*. He well knew that Satan, the prince of darkness, would oppose not only Him but also His followers. He foretold that whosoever would live godly would suffer persecution (Matt 24:9, 10; 2 Tim. 3:12)—and so it has been. Nineteen centuries have proven it! He sent forth His followers, like Himself, unarmed, to be peacemakers, to be helpers, to “follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). He counseled His followers, “all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matt. 26:52).

The intimation of the Scriptures is that if these troublous days should not be shortened, no flesh would be delivered. Whether this implies some limited form of nuclear war, we do not know. But for the elect’s sake—by virtue of the Kingdom of God’s Elect being established—the days will be shortened (Matt. 24:22)—that is, curtailed before complete destruction overtakes the human race.

Then will come the reign of the Prince of Peace, and, as the prophets declare, He shall be like unto Solomon, who had no wars, but to whom every knee bowed and every tongue confessed (Isa. 9:6, 7; Luke 11:31). Christ’s Kingdom of righteousness will be a Kingdom of peace, built above the rubble left by the effects of this time of trouble.

But the message of peace and love and the good news of the coming Kingdom—that Kingdom which is to bless the whole world and fulfill the angelic prophecy these things, ironically, seem to anger the world, not merely the unbelievers, the ungodly, but, sad to say, many professing Christians who have schemes and plans and theories of their own to work out—many of which are contrary to

the Gospel message. The darkness, mixed with selfishness, hates the light, the Truth and the love of God. Nor will it come to the light, lest its deeds of darkness, selfishness, ambition, and hypocrisy should be made manifest.

The Master knew what the effects of His Gospel message would be. Only by compromise with the world can His followers live completely at peace with this world. Conversely, all who have been loyal and faithful to Him have been traduced, slandered, and persecuted. His words, therefore, were a prophecy respecting the tribulations which all His footstep followers could expect. But more than this, His words were a prophecy respecting the *nations*. What is it that has brought us to our present degree of “civilized savagery”? What is it, for example, that makes so many multinational corporations “buccaneers,” as it were, aggressively seeking the takeover of their competitors? What is it that has sharpened the wits of humanity to such an extent that so many find it difficult to be honest, exploiting any opportunity for profit through dishonesty? It is impossible for legislators to make new laws of sufficient scope and with sufficient rapidity to keep peace with the intelligent—and innovative—methods of circumvention, especially in this age of the worldwide “internet” and multiple forms of electronic commerce.

ENLIGHTENMENT FOSTERS DISHONESTY

In an odd way, the laws, doctrines of Christ, are in a certain sense responsible for all this. How? The *liberty* wherewith Christ makes free His followers, and the light which He and they let shine upon a darkened world, when received *in part* into unsanctified hearts and minds, can produce a wisdom that, misapplied, becomes *cunning*, a selfish kind of cleverness. In proportion as the nations of Christendom have abandoned what Scriptural Truths they had, in that proportion they have been losing their influence for good. Now we see other, non-Christian, nations, once in the background, emerging as world powers.

The Great Teacher, Jesus, questioned by Pilate, answered that He was born to be a King—the King of the Jews; but He also added, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36)—of this order of affairs. How true! Many of us have received the wrong impression—that our Redeemer, as the Great King of Glory, has been waging an *unsuccessful* warfare against Satan, Sin, and Death for centuries. But here we learn from the Great Teacher’s own lips that His Kingdom belongs to the world to come—a world composed of many glorious ages to come. This understanding bids the question, who then has been ruling this world? We answer Satan!

The answer of the Lord Jesus is that Satan is the prince

of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 2:2). He is also styled, “the god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:3, 4). But he is a usurper. The dominion of earth was originally given to man. But Satan, deceiving our race, by putting darkness for light, became the usurping ruler, using humanity merely as his tools. When we reflect on how many of humanity are disobedient to the Gospel light, we see the vastness of the empire controlled by this prince of darkness. And when we see the comparative few who are soldiers of the Cross and followers of the Lamb, we perceive that, as our Lord Jesus said, His following during the long centuries of the Gospel Age is a “Little Flock” (Luke 12:32).

Everything pertaining to this great Plan of Salvation outlined in the Word of God is reasonable. The crucial testing of the elect Church was necessary in order that as faithful and merciful priests of God and of Christ, associated with Him in His kingly glory, they may be God’s instrumentality in succoring mankind. They will lift man from the fallen conditions which have resulted from six thousand or more years of sin, and from the malignant influence of the prince of darkness. This will be accomplished during the “thousand years” which the Bible sets forth as the period of Messiah’s reign (Rev. 20:1-15)—a period neither too long nor too short in which to accomplish the great work of the world’s salvation.

But someone might ask, If it has required nineteen centuries for the development of the one true Church, a smaller company, how much more time will be necessary for the uplifting of the whole world? We answer: It is not the Divine Purpose to uplift the world to the station of *spirit* nature and glory of the higher exaltation that was offered to the Spirit Begotten that such crucial testing of sacrificial obedience even unto death was required of them. For the restitutionists, God has promised *earthly* restitution blessings and conditions. With the prince of darkness bound and the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in its beams, the darkness of sin and sorrow will in God’s due time flee away. Just *one* century of such blessed influence upon the world would surely work wonders. Who knows what wonderful inventions and blessings await (1 Cor. 2:9)?

Next will come the gradual awakening of all who have fallen asleep in death. They will come forth from the prison-house of death—come forth, as the Scriptures declare, that they may become acquainted with the true God and with His glorious Son, the Redeemer, and with the principles of righteousness *as contrasted* with the principles of sin.

RAPID PROGRESS TOWARD RESTITUTION

We cannot suppose that it will require the majority of men, under those conditions, to sit long counting



HAVE YOU MOVED OR
ARE YOU GOING TO BE MOVING?
RENEW TODAY!

TO:

the value of the blessings of eternal life and restitution proffered them. The *upward* momentum—resurrection, uplifting, regeneration—will be rapid. Yes, generation after generation shall come forth from the tomb and enjoy similar experiences until all the dead in Adam shall have come forth. God provided for this through the death of our Redeemer. Because Jesus delighted to do the Father's will, He was rewarded gloriously with high exaltation to the Divine plane of glory, honor, and immortality.

The attainment of the condition of goodwill among men will mean the attainment of human perfection. God is Love. And when our first parents were created an earthly image of God, love must have been the predominant quality of their characters. What we see of selfishness is largely a matter of heredity, and all of life's customs are in line with it, continually increasing its weight and hold upon us. But with the new King and the new reign of righteousness will come the glorious uplift and transformation. Gradually, during the thousand years of Messiah's domination of the world, the evils of selfishness will be made apparent and the beauties of holiness and love will be shown in contrast.

Restitution rewards will lift all the willing and obedient up out of sin and selfishness to holiness and love. Then, with love the very essence of man's being, goodwill toward men will everywhere prevail, because the Divine law, almost erased during the reign of sin, will have been rewritten in the human constitution (Prov. 3:3; 7:1-4; Jer. 31:33). That law, as we know, is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). How glad we are that these things are true; how glad we are that the terrible falsehoods palmed off on mankind during the Dark Ages respecting a God of cruelty and a hell of everlasting torture are false.

AN ALL-POWERFUL CREATOR

In our present-day world, power is much prized, though feared. Two measures of power by which countries are rated are economic and military. As a general rule, the

chief nation of any era possesses one or (usually) both of these attributes, and through these exercises its influence to shape the world in the way it sees will be to its advantage.

Ascendant power is a prize for any nation, though it often proves to be an unsustainable burden, and empires have come and gone under the resultant weight. During the post-Second World War period, the staring match between the Soviet bloc and the West was dangerous because of the possibility of nuclear war. Power was measured in kilotons and the range of warheads—the power to obliterate entire communities in an instant being the root of the fear and, in an odd way, a guarantee that sensible rulers could not initiate such a monstrous outcome.

At the root of this aspect of man's power lay an element created by God's power. Not that He is to be blamed for man's sinful tendencies. The Scriptures tell us that God created man perfect but that he devised schemes contrary to God's will (and injurious to himself). God is not to blame for mankind's exercise of his free will (Eccl. 7:29). Man frequently abuses the knowledge because of his quest for domination over others. The power of the atom is no exception. Man sought for centuries to understand this force and today nations live in fear of its possibilities. We now face the anxieties of nuclear terrorism and the necessity of safeguarding society from attack with elaborate and expensive anti-missile shields.

The power of the tiny atom is awesome and gives us some idea of the raw power of the Creator. Jesus performed His miracles with the "finger" of God (Luke 11:20). The power which God holds in reserve we can only guess at. As Christians we may take consolation from this: He will never permit mankind to destroy itself, but will restrain its excesses, and will deliver His own (Psa. 76:10; Matt. 24:21, 22).

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