

The Bible Standard

"Send out your light and truth! Let them lead me;..."

Psalm 43:3

"LIFT UP A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE"

Isaiah 62:10

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Joy To The World



*“O give thanks to the
LORD*

for His mercy endures forever.”

Psalm 136: 1

In accordance with the statements of the leaders of our country—the President of the United States and the governors of the States, the majority of the people have celebrated with more or less sincerity a day of thanksgiving to God for the blessings of temporal prosperity. A precious sentiment is associated with this custom, inaugurated by the Pilgrim Fathers more than two centuries ago. The influence of the arrangement is certainly in many respects beneficial, drawing the minds of the people toward God as the giver of every good and perfect gift. It is painfully evident that to the great majority, this annual observance is but a form, because, explain the matter as we will, only a small proportion are sufficiently well acquainted with the great Creator and His wonderful plan, and the laws which govern His dealings with the children of men, to be able to logically reason out and comprehend their causes of thanksgiving. We will enumerate some of the matters which hinder an appreciation of the Lord's providences, and which correspondingly choke and restrain true gratitude to God. If we, under the Lord's blessing, succeed in removing from the minds of some these obstacles to faith and gratitude, we feel sure that a blessing upon such will follow, for gratitude and thankfulness to the Creator imply appreciation, and the appreciation of that which is good surely tends to the building up of righteousness of character and fuller obedience to the Divine standards.

Approximately 150,000 deaths occur in the world every day. The families and friends of these represent a much larger number, many of whom are ignorant of why they were permitted, as well as grief-stricken. Others living under the favors and blessings in this day are, nevertheless, physically and mentally ill to such a degree that they cannot and do not feel thankful. Many are in considerable poverty, through no fault of their own. Is it any wonder, that these appreciate only in part the spirit of Thanksgiving day?

There is another class of unthankful people who enjoy the privileges and blessings of life to a considerable degree, yet are unthankful to God. They have been awakened from the superstitions of the past, when they were taught that there was a reason for thankfulness to God in that they were not consigned to burn in eternal torment. Convinced of the unreasonableness, the absurdity of such a teaching, these have become skeptical in respect to all matters religious. They are thankful to their own energy, the kindness of friends or luck for whatever prosperity they have had; they render no thanks to the Almighty. They know Him not. The eyes of their understanding are still closed to the actualities of the Divine character and plan.

HELP FOR THE UNTHANKFUL

Let us briefly investigate the true situation from the standpoint of the Divine Word, the Bible, for the assistance of all to a position where thankfulness will be possible, more genuine and spontaneous. Let us divest our minds of everything that would prejudice our judgment of its teachings; for instance, the various creeds and theories which have been handed down from the Dark Ages. Let us set these aside temporarily to examine the Word of God. When once its statements are clearly seen, we will be the better prepared to compare them with the various statements of the various creeds. The result, we are sure, will be to our benefit, to an increase of our appreciation of the Divine character and plan, and to the increase of our thankfulness correspondingly.

We are to remember, however, that full, clear views on these matters, the Scriptures explain, can be had only by consecrated believers, whose appreciation of Divine things will be assisted by the Holy Spirit. While others cannot see, in the sense of appreciating the deep things of God fully and distinctly, they can see in a general way the outward form at least. We trust that our remarks on this subject will be applicable not only to the sanctified in Christ Jesus but also to some who have not yet come into this position, but who may be enabled to see more

clearly than in the past, and then be led to sanctification and ultimately to still fuller appreciation from that standpoint, under the guidance of the spirit.

To suppose the whole world of mankind to be children of God, recognized by Him as such and treated from that point of view, leads to skepticism. Who can contemplate the calamities of even this year by fire, flood, and storms and not feel that if God considers mankind His children, He certainly deals with them as no kind earthly parent would treat his posterity? The same reasoning would hold true as applied to sickness, sorrow, pain and death. The unscriptural claim held by some respecting the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man evidently disproves itself, for we see no evidence of the Fatherhood of God as respects our race, nor that He is exercising a parental care for the world's welfare. Not only so, but such experiences have been the lot of humanity for over six thousand years. The Apostle, in speaking of the matter, declares to Christians, "You were once children of wrath even as others," *still are* (Eph. 2: 3); and again he declares to these that they have "escaped the condemnation which is on the world," implying that the condemnation still rests upon the world as a whole (1 Cor. 11: 32).

What is this condemnation upon the world? Why are humans under the curse or sentence, and called "children of wrath"? The answer is that all God's work is perfect; that when He had created man in His own image and likeness in Eden, man was perfect and in full harmony with God. Adam, at that time, was recognized as a son of God. The explanation, as found in the Word is, that he fell from this relationship, from this fellowship with God. He gave heed to the voice of disobedience and came under the sentence, the curse which made him an alien, which deprived him of this fellowship. It was expressed in its ultimate force in the words, "Dying you shall die" (so the Hebrew, Gen. 2: 17). "Thorns and thistles shall the earth bring forth for you; and you shall eat the herb of the field; in toil you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for dust you are and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3: 18, 19). The Apostle Paul sums up the matter in few words: "As through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

A RACE OF CONVICTS

From this standpoint we perceive that Adam and his race are a convict race serving out a death sentence. This accounts to us for the Lord's permission of conditions unfavorable to life; droughts, floods, storms, cyclones, plagues, pestilences, etc. We would not be understood to mean that all these calamities are directly the Lord's work, but rather that the present unsettled and unsatisfactory

conditions of nature are permitted of the Lord to be man's experience because of sin and because of the lessons necessary to be learned during this penal period. From this standpoint, in view of the fact that all human right to life was long since forfeited, we get a new view of the blessings and favors of even the imperfect conditions under which we live.

We must acknowledge that as a race we are not worthy to be called sons of God, nor to be treated as sons. We must acknowledge that the race as a whole is in rebellion against God, unworthy of His blessing or any favor from His bounty. Every temporary blessing should be esteemed a mercy, an extension of our privileges and prolongation of our condemned lives. It is from this standpoint that we read that the Lord causes His sun to shine upon the evil and the good and His rain to fall upon the just and the unjust (Matt. 5: 45). The great majority of mankind are still alienated, not sons but sinners, rebels, "not subject to the law of God," not even desiring fellowship nor seeking to please Him.

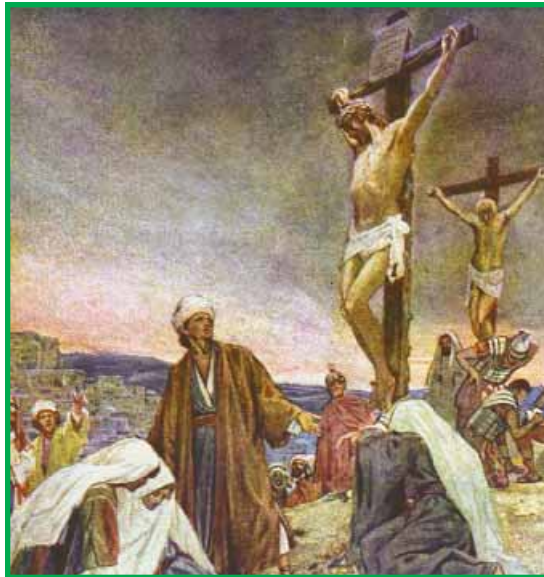
Let us glance very briefly at God's provision for the world of mankind. It is revealed in His word, for the benefit of those who receive the spirit of adoption through faith and obedience, that they may know how to sympathize with the world from the Divine standpoint, that they may know how to appreciate the Divine dealings with the world, and that they may sorrow not, even as others who have no hope in respect to dear ones of earthly relationship, whose eyes are still blinded by the god of this world, and who as yet have never seen with the eyes of appreciation and understanding the need of a Savior whom God has provided. Indeed, the majority of them are so blinded that they cannot appreciate the testimony of God's Word respecting their need of a Savior and so great a salvation as is in Him.

ERROR OF THE DARK AGES

The people of God, under the blinding influences of the Adversary during the Dark Ages, fell into the delusion that all the "children of wrath" were on their way to an eternity of torture, and in proportion as they possessed sympathy and love they were tortured with this thought in mind. We thank God that in the light which is now shining upon His Word, we can view the Scriptures in a more reasonable light. We can see, as the prophet declares, that "their fear of Me is taught by the precepts of man" (Isa. 29: 13); that under the delusion of the Adversary, the simplest words were twisted into the story of this awful theory which burdens so many hearts, and which to so large a degree hinders true love toward God. We see the simple words "die," "perish," "destruction," wrested from their true literal meaning

and interpreted to mean the very reverse, in support of error, to the further blinding of the Lord's people, and to the destruction of their own rest and comfort and peace and thankfulness in the Lord.

We rejoice now that in the light of God's Word we can see that He justly sentenced our race to death and justly treats them as convicts; nevertheless, God, full of mercy and compassion, provided a great redemption price paid by our Lord Jesus at Calvary. We can see that the mercy of God is applicable only to believers, so that there is no other



name given under heaven or among men whereby we must be saved but by the name of Jesus. We see further that, instead of God's mercy ending with those who now are granted the blessing of the opening of the eyes of their understanding and the ears of their appreciation, instead of Divine favor ceasing in the selection of the Church of the Gospel Age, it is really only beginning with these, and that, ultimately, the same grace of God which has now brought salvation to the elect, will bring the opportunity of salvation also to every member of our race. We are not claiming universal salvation, but we are claiming that the Divine program is to give a universal opportunity for salvation to every person. It was to this end that Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man, and that He is the propitiation for our sins (the Church); and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (Heb. 2: 9, 1 John 2: 2).

What a revolution of sentiment toward the Lord comes over our hearts when we get a convincing glance of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God which passes all human understanding. Even a glance moves us to appreciation, to gratitude, to thankfulness; and day by day, as we go onward growing in grace and knowledge and love toward God, our appreciation of His wonderful love and wonderful plan increases until it fills more and more every crevice of our hearts, driving out more and more everything contrary to the Divine standards.

Some will ask, if God designed ultimately to grant knowledge of Himself and His plan to every creature, why did He not do this from the first? Why did He allow 4,000 years to elapse before He even sent His Son to be a ransom price for our sins? And why has He allowed nearly 2,000 years to pass without making known to any but a mere fragment of our

race His loving kindness, His tender mercy, His real character, His wonderful plan? Why should we hope that the Lord in the coming age would reveal Himself to all mankind, since He has not done so in the present age or in the previous ages?

We reply that our confidence in the full revelation of God's love and mercy to every creature in the coming age is based not upon speculation but upon the positive statements of the Divine Word. Space will not permit us to here discuss these momentous subjects

in their details. Indeed we cannot hope on such occasions as this to do more than merely attract the attention of those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Such as are of this class will hunger and thirst, seek and knock, for further instruction respecting God's plan, and we will be more than pleased to hear from such and to put within their reach full and clear testimonies answering every question and clearing every doubt, which will cause their ears to ring anew with joy and praise and thankfulness to God. Limited in time, we can here throw out only the barest suggestions respecting the magnificence of our heavenly Father's plan as it shall ultimately reach the whole human race, and give to every individual of our race a full opportunity for returning to fellowship with God as their Father in spirit and in truth.

"FOR HIS MERCY ENDURES FOREVER"

The wisdom of this world, unwilling to submit itself fully to Divine direction, errs sometimes on one side of the question and sometimes on the other. Few seem willing to take the Lord's own word respecting His purposes at face value. The usual disposition for each one is to measure Divine mercy by human standards instead of by the Word. They think of God as cruel and merciless, and have little difficulty with the teachings of the Dark Ages, that all not favored with knowledge of the Lord and ability to appreciate righteousness are thereby marked as subjects for eternal torture. Some have even argued that a person who has lived in a civilized community, and has heard church bells ring and seen a Bible, has, because of this contact, become so responsible that any deviation on his part from saintliness would promptly and justly merit suffering. Others go to the reverse extreme and contend that all must be saved; that God could not rest satisfied with His own work until every human being shall finally attain to glory, honor

and immortality. How much better the Scriptural proposition than either of these.

The plan of God set forth in the Scriptures proposes that none shall be saved in ignorance but that eventually all shall be brought to a knowledge of the truth—“in due time” (1 Tim. 2: 4-6). It proposes that each individual’s responsibility shall be only in proportion to his knowledge, and that until he knows clearly and distinctly, his responsibility is only partial. It proposes that all shall come to full responsibility each for his own acts; that to the world, eventually, shall be granted the necessary assistance, that good intentions may be carried forward to a full development of character in accord with the Divine standards, and that the reward for such shall be everlasting life and blessedness; but that, on the contrary, all who are brought to a clear appreciation and fully assisted in every necessary way shall be responsible, and if they love sin and follow it willingly they shall die the second death—everlasting destruction.

The mercy of the Lord, which is now extended to those who, exercising faith, lay hold upon the Lord Jesus as their redeemer, will by and by through the ministry of the Church, have salvation extended to every human being, and to be exercised until every member of the human family shall have had the full, necessary, proper, reasonable knowledge and opportunity for attaining the gift of God—eternal life (John 3: 16).

Many attack this position and declare that there is no mercy for any beyond the tomb. We are urging that our God, in His mercy and love, has provided a redemption for every member of the human family, and that those who do not have the opportunity for learning of the grace of God in this life will have this opportunity during the Millennial Age, after being awakened from the tomb. As our Lord declared, “All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and shall come forth. They who have done good (who have passed the Divine inspection along the lines of faith in the present life,) will come forth unto a resurrection of life” perfected, glorified; while they that have done evil, (those who have not come up to the standard of faith and obedience) will come forth by an awakening and eventually to a resurrection by judgment (John 5: 28, 29 *Revised Version*).

MILLENNIAL JUDGMENTS PROMPT

The entire Millennial Age is set apart for this resurrection by correctional judgments. The judgments of the Lord will be abroad in the earth then and the inhabitants will

learn righteousness, as the prophet declares in Isa. 26: 9. Every sin will receive its just recompense of reward, and every effort toward righteousness shall receive a blessing, and the effect of such a prompt dispensing of rewards and punishments for all the acts of life will cultivate obedience and be helpful to the whole world. The obedient shall rise up, up, up out of sin-and-death conditions until, by the end of the Millennial Age, they shall have attained to full perfection of being, their raising up and resurrection being completely accomplished through the judgments and disciplines of that 1,000 year period. On the other hand, those who will refuse to make progress in that time, as the Scriptures expressly declare, will be cut off from among the people in the Second Death (Acts 3: 23).

To many it seems beyond belief that God should be merciful to the race, and grant to each member of it, a full opportunity to benefit from present experiences

with sin and death. Such should notice our text, and the entire psalm of which it forms a part. It declares that God’s mercy endures forever, and this is 26 times repeated in this psalm. What an assurance God has given us, that His mercy is not limited to the present life or to present opportunities and privileges! What an assurance we have of His goodness! He is not only able to save to the uttermost but willing to do so. In due

time all shall receive a knowledge of the Truth, every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, and each and all shall have full opportunity of tasting of the mercy of God under the new arrangement of the Kingdom.

As we glance down through the different items enumerated by the prophet in this psalm, we find food for thought. We read in the Bible, that God smote the Egyptian firstborn; and the Amorites, the Amalekites, the Perizzites, etc., slain before Israel, is unexplainable from any other standpoint than the one we are considering, namely, that God’s mercy is not limited to the present life, but endures forever. In God’s due time His mercy through Christ shall bring all these from the tomb, and shall enlighten them by the true Light that lights every man that comes into the world (John 1: 9). The mercy, still continuing, will make it possible for every member of the race to come back into harmony with the Lord, and to gain eternal life lost in Eden; if they work toward that end.

GOD’S LOVE CONSTRAINS US

“For His mercy endures forever,” is, we say, the key explaining all the difficulties and trials of this present life, and assuring us that the lessons learned here shall

*“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life”
John 3: 16.*

not be without their meaning in due time. The entire world is now learning of God's inflexible justice under His sentence of over 6,000 years ago, "You shall surely die." Only the Church heard the message of salvation and reconciliation through the precious blood, but eventually everyone shall know, from the least even unto the greatest (Heb. 8: 11). The mercy of God in Christ Jesus, the great High Priest, who has already purchased our race, shall bless and heal and uplift all who have the desire to come unto the Father through Him. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; His mercy endures forever!"

Nothing in this can be understood as sanctioning sin. On the contrary, those who hear the voice and obey receive a great blessing. This view of God's mercy, extends into the future to reach every member of the race. This shows Divine love co-operating with God's justice for the eradication of evil and sin in the human race on earth. It maintains the standard of righteousness and holiness as the only grounds for eternal life; it puts to shame the various theories that half-converted, unconverted, ignorant, superstitious and savage peoples are to be taken to glory in the present life. This Bible teaching also puts to shame the prevalent purgatorial and eternal torment theories that most of the world's population have for centuries believed. On the contrary, the Scriptural view shows the mercy of God operating along the lines of reason, justice, and love, bringing every member of the race to a mental and moral responsibility and to a full and complete deliverance, if they will, into the blessings, privileges and liberties of God's people Millennially.

On the other hand, this mercy is not without its limitations, though the common version seems to so imply. The Hebrew word which in our text is rendered forever is "*olam*," and signifies, not forever, as without end, but more literally to a stopping point. In this proper rendering our text declares, "His mercy endures to a completion." How grand! How sublime! The Scriptures tell us that it will be at the conclusion of the thousand years, when Christ shall have put down all insubordination, all sin, and shall have lifted up all willing and desirous of being restored to the Divine character and likeness. After stating this, the Apostle adds, then comes the end, the completion (1 Cor. 15: 24). Mercy shall have its full opportunity in the thousand years of the Millennium, even as injustice has had its long reign over the world during the 6,000 years of the past.

In the meantime we wait now for the institution of the earthly phase of God's Kingdom and are seeing the death throes of Satan's evil empire as it struggles for existence in the midst of the Lord's great army attacking it from every

direction. Every vestige of his control is being assailed, from the injustices of government throughout the world, the corruption and errors within the religious spheres, to the latest upheavals of the world's financial system, requiring the patching of the old wineskins with trillions of dollars (Luke 5: 37 NIV). This destructive initiative will continue into every facet of Satan's domain until it is destroyed. "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven. Now this, yet once more, indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain." Only the purity of the Truth founded on the principles of righteousness will remain after the Lord's shakings will have done their work (Heb. 12: 26, 27). The shaking of the earth has application to the social order of human society; the heavens are the powers of spiritual control, the reigning religious systems of earth.

Returning now to the close of the Millennial Kingdom, Paul continues "Then comes the end," when all insubordination having been brought under control, the Kingdom, the dominion of the world, "shall be delivered up to God, the Father" (1 Cor. 15: 24). The work of grace begun at Calvary in the great atonement sacrifice will have then been completed by the reign of the Redeemer, for the binding of Satan and the overthrow of evil, and the uplifting of whosoever wills to accept Divine favor under the knowledge and opportunities then afforded. Surely, in proportion as we come to know our Heavenly Father's character and plan, in that same proportion can we appreciate all the precious promises of His Word. To the consecrated our text has its deepest meaning, "O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His mercy endures forever."

* * *

GOD'S BOUNDLESS LOVE

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
Were every blade of grass a quill,
Were all the world of parchment made
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

MESSIAH—A WILLING SACRIFICE

“And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand”

Isa. 53: 10

Messiah—God's Servant

Continued from the July-August issue

God said of Cyrus, a type of His Messiah, His greater Servant, “He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be built,’ and to the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’ “Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held [strengthened], to subdue nations before him; . . . I will go before you, and make the crooked places straight (Isa. 40: 4): “I will break in pieces the gates of bronze, and cut the bars of iron: And I will give you the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places. . . .” (Isa. 44: 28—45: 3). While this prophecy was fulfilled limitedly in Cyrus of Persia, it has, as seen above, a much greater fulfilment in the antitypical Cyrus, God’s Anointed, His Shepherd, and His Servant.

What is God’s good pleasure that shall prosper in Messiah’s hand? It is indicated briefly in Isa. 42: 1, 6, 7, 16; in words somewhat similar to those spoken of Cyrus: “Behold! My Servant, whom I uphold; My elect One [My chosen One], in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him: He will bring forth justice [truth] to the Gentiles. I the LORD have called You in righteousness, and will hold [strengthen] Your hand; I will keep You, and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house [comp. 49: 9, 10; God’s Servant will awaken those who are imprisoned in the tomb and bless them with the light of Truth—Dan. 12: 2; Hosea 13: 14; Isa. 11: 9; 30: 26; 61: 1-3]. I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in [restitution] paths they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight [their errors will be supplanted by Truth and their sins by righteousness, as they come up the Highway of Holiness—Isa. 35: 8—to human perfection as Adam had it before he fell].”

God’s good pleasure is indicated also in Ezek. 34: 23, 24, 31; 37: 24, 25, 27, 28 and Isa. 40: 11: “I will establish one shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, My servant David [God’s *Beloved*, His Messiah]; He shall

feed them, and He shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken. And David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children for ever; and My servant David shall be their prince for ever. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

ISRAEL FREED

This prophecy, written long after David was dead, obviously refers to God’s great Beloved, His Servant, His Anointed—the Messiah, who will reign on earth when God makes His everlasting “covenant of peace” with Israel and breaks “the bands of their yoke.” “My tabernacle also shall be with them; I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.” “You are My flock, the flock of my pasture; you are men, and I am your God, says the Lord God” (Ezek. 34: 31).

MESSIAH EXALTED

Ever since His First Advent, when God’s Servant was crucified for our sins, He as “the Arm of the LORD” has been shepherding His sheep in a special way, feeding and leading them with special care (Micah 5: 4; Joel 2: 24-27), that they may join Him as Abraham’s heavenly seed—as the “stars of heaven” (Gen. 15: 5; 22: 17; 26: 4; Ex. 32: 13). The highly exalted, heavenly Messiah, God’s only begotten Son, as pictured in Isaac, Abraham’s son, is to have a Bride (Isa. 61: 10; pictured in Rebecca, the bride brought to Isaac), a Little Flock, as His joint-heirs (though not as His equals, nor as supplying any part of the ransom merit) in the Kingdom, as the Priesthood and as “saviors” and teachers (Dan. 7: 27; Zech. 3; Psa. 132: 8-18; Obad. 21;

Psa. 22: 30, 31). There will be also the Bridesmaids, His Bride's companions (Gen. 24: 61-67; Psa. 45: 9-15), "virgins without number" (Song of Solomon 6: 8), who as antitypical Levites (Mal. 3: 1-3) have no inheritance in the land (Num. 18: 20-24), and are numbered among the "stars of heaven."

The Messiah has other sheep, who are not of the heavenly fold, whom also He must bring. They are pictured in Abraham's earthly seed—as "the dust of the earth," as "the sand which is upon the sea shore" (Gen. 13: 15, 16; 22: 17; 28: 14; 32: 12; Jer. 33: 22). These, in the larger sense, include the entire saved world of mankind. They will have their everlasting life, not in heaven, but on this earth—the "new earth," or social order among men, wherein dwells righteousness and which shall endure forever (Isa. 60: 21; 65: 16-19, 25; 66: 22, 23; Psa. 37: 9-11, 22, 29, 34, 38). "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination [stubbornness] of their evil heart" (Jer. 3: 17).

What marvelous blessings God has arranged for the human race! It is a wonderful message of salvation, to be accomplished by Israel's Messiah, which will be declared as they come to see that His "pleasure shall prosper in His hand"! For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and by Him, having made peace through the blood of the cross, to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven.

THE RANSOM

Messiah's sacrificed human life laid down as a ransom-price for father Adam and the race that was in his procreative capability when he sinned, is all that is required for the satisfaction of justice on their behalf: first, for the heavenly seed, His "servants" (His joint-heirs) and His "handmaids" ("virgins without number") *in those days* (Joel 2: 29) of the heavenly calling and salvation (Lev. 16: 11); and, second, for the earthly seed of Abraham and the human race in general ("the people"—Lev. 16: 15) *afterward* (Joel 2: 28), during Messiah's Thousand-year Reign of blessing and peace. Eventually, God's good pleasure will be fully accomplished—that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in the Messiah, both of things in the heavens and things on the earth.

ISRAEL'S MESSAGE

As in the introduction (Isa. 52: 13-15) God gave a summary of the whole prophecy, mentioning Messiah's rejection and suffering, His high exaltation and His blessing of the nations, so here, at the end of repentant and believing Israel's confession and testimony (53: 1-10), God gives a brief statement in summary (53: 11, 12), as an endorsement and a confirmation of Israel's message. Delitzsch comments that in these last two verses "the prophecy leaves the standpoint of Israel's retrospective acknowledgment of the long-rejected

Servant of God, and becomes once more the prophetic organ of God Himself, who acknowledges the Servant as His own."

In this glorious climax God again sets forth His Servant's vicarious suffering and death for the many, His taking upon Himself their iniquities, His resultant exaltation and satisfaction with the results, His intercession for the transgressors and His justification of many.

MESSIAH "SATISFIED"

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied"; or, more literally, "Because of [as a result of] the travail of His soul, He shall see and be satisfied." The travail of God's Servant, including His being put to death in the flesh, when He was cut off out of the land of the living, on Nisan 14, A.D. 33—in the midst of Israel's 70th week of favor, as noted in Dan. 9: 23-27—accomplished, among other things, "reconciliation for iniquity," the bringing in of "everlasting righteousness" (everlasting justification from sin instead of the typical yearly justification accomplished by the sacrifices for the typical people, Israel) and the anointing of "the most holy" (the holy remnant, the purest and fittest ones, of the Jewish nation for enrollment into the privileges of the High Calling—The Apostle Peter's first key (Isa. 10: 22, 23).

As a result of Messiah's great ransom-sacrifice, His offering of His soul—His perfect human life—for sin, He, God's Servant, shall see and be satisfied (the Hebrew verb *sabea*, used here, implies not merely a contentment, but the fullest realization, or gratification, of that which is desired). As already noted, He shall see a seed (Psa. 22: 30). He shall see "length of days for ever and ever" (Psa. 21: 4), for He who died for us in His flesh was raised a life-giving Divine, spirit being, highly exalted at God's right hand, where He shall be satisfied with life eternal (Psa. 110: 1; 91: 14-16). He shall see also and be satisfied with



“...I will multiply thy seed ... as the sand which is upon the sea shore...”
Gen. 22: 17,18

the full and final accomplishment of all “the pleasure of the LORD,” which “shall prosper in his hand.”

This, as already seen, includes the salvation of His Bride (144,000 in number, made up of the best of the Jews and the best of the Gentiles—antitypical Priests), also His Bridesmaids (a great multitude of subordinate faithful followers—antitypical Levites Rev. 7: 9-17), and the Worthies of old, the “Ancients” (Isa. 24: 23), together with their associates the Youthful Worthies (who are being gathered here in the end of the present Age; Joel 2: 28), He will “make princes in all the earth” (Psa. 45: 16).

Then He will bring salvation to His regathered and believing Israel; and they shall sing: “He hath remembered His mercy and His truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.” “Break forth into joy, sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted His

people, He has redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD has made bare His holy arm [His Messiah] in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” “Therefore the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness; sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Psa. 98: 3; Isa. 52: 9, 10; 11: 9; Hab. 2: 14; Num. 14: 21; Isa. 51: 11).

This in brief is what God’s faithful and exalted Servant will see with great delight and be abundantly satisfied therein—it is the glorious outcome of the travail of His soul!

* * *

SINS AND THEIR PUNISHMENTS

THE QUESTION IS OFTEN ASKED, “Is there any special punishment for thieves, murderers and other criminals, or will they, if repentant, be received into the Kingdom along with those who have tried to do right throughout their lives?” This question can be viewed from two standpoints. God Himself is the great Determiner of right and wrong. Everything that is right God approves; everything that is wrong God disapproves. The things that God approves are those things that are good, helpful and favorable for everybody. The things that God disapproves are the things that are evil, unjust, and injurious to everyone. God has condemned certain things as sin, because He would have us free from those things that are unjust or injurious to ourselves or to others. Whoever commits sin violates, first of all, a Divine command, and to that extent has a certain penalty attached to him for wrong doing. We speak of some people as “sowing their wild oats.” What does this expression signify? It means that they are now performing moral habits that are injurious, not only to their own health and to happiness, but almost certainly to that of others. Because of practicing sin, they are sure to bring upon themselves a degradation of both mind and body. Accordingly, sin brings its own reward in a natural way. Whoever sins will suffer, is the general Law. However, aside from that Law, there is a God, who has

given certain commands and certain penalties that go with those commands.

THIEVES AND MURDERERS

God’s standard of righteousness is much higher than is man’s present standard. Our Lord gave very fine meanings to the words “thief,” “adulterer,” and “murderer.” He taught that anyone who is angry with his brother without a cause is a murderer; that he who looks upon another’s wife with impure desire has committed adultery (Matt. 5: 22, 28). These are very fine distinctions. Moreover, we must all admit, as Shakespeare has said: “He who steals my purse steals trash; but he that filches from me my good name robs me of that which not enriches him, and makes me poor indeed.” Many people have been guilty of stealing the good name of others; many have been guilty of murder in the sense that they hate others. When it comes to the point of deciding who are the guiltiest; murderers, thieves, or adulterers, we are not competent to judge, for we are not able to know the qualities of mind and the weaknesses with which each person was born. God only can tell the degree of wrong in any of these cases. There are some people who are naturally good; others seem to have been born with less quality of character. Some who, naturally, would not get angry with their brother, or with anyone, as soon

as someone else would, may never be in danger of committing murder, either literally or figuratively; for they are born with the quality of forbearance. As these may not manifest any special character traits more than that with which they were born, so others may manifest special qualities because of the condition in which they were born. The world has learned the necessity of restraining those who are injurious to others. The judgment of the people of the State of New York is, according to the law, that no murderer shall be at large. He is confined; for a murderer is not a safe person to permit in society. He is incarcerated or, depending on the sentence, is executed. This is the general judgment, outside of God's judgment. The best thing for him and the world in general is that he go down to hades, sheol—the great state of death, where he cannot murder anyone else. The Scriptures agree with the laws of the State of New York in this respect, that if a man commits heinous crimes, he should be punished.

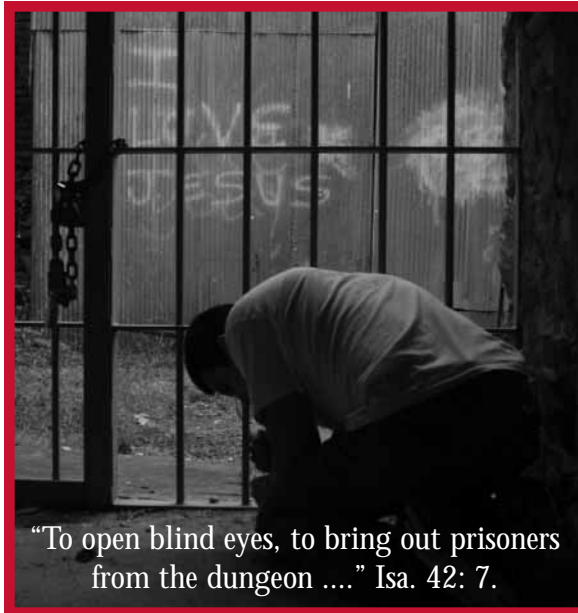
GOD TRAINED THE JUDGES

We are not capable of taking the position of judge. God alone, at the present time, knows how much more worthy of punishment some are who are in prison than some who are not in detention. The offense of the prisoners might outwardly be the greater crime; those who are not confined might be just as guilty, or more so, from the Divine standpoint; for they might be sinning against greater light and ability. No one but God could judge in the matter in the past. God has selected another class to be Judges—a saintly class that will be fully qualified to judge the world in the future Millennial Judgment Day. He says, these are the Judges that I have selected. The Apostle says, "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6: 2). The world's judgment is not now, under present conditions, but it will take place after the great awakening when the race has been brought back from the tomb. Those who are instructed of the Lord are not by nature free from imperfection, but have many of the same weaknesses that others have. Nevertheless, they seek to judge themselves, to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, to have self-control, or as the Scriptures say, to "overcome." All those who are with the Lord in the heavenly Kingdom of glory and power and set for the work of the

Millennial Age are "more than conquerors through Him that loved us" and bought us with His own "precious blood" (Rom. 8: 37; 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19).

Various qualities of murder, lust, covetousness, etc., we see afflict the world in the unbalanced mental and moral conditions resulting from the fall. Some are so mentally unbalanced they are put into institutions. Some are so morally unbalanced they are not permitted to be at large, but must, of necessity, be put into prison. Others are able to be about in the world and have their liberty, but they are not sound of mind. "There is none righteous; no, not one" (Rom. 3: 10), is the Bible declaration. Since we have learned to appreciate the Bible teaching, to recognize that a great fall came upon our race six thousand years ago, and that all are born in sin and "shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51: 5), it gives us a great deal of sympathy for many people; and as we have more strength of character, mentally and morally, than some of them, we thank God and say, "Who makes you differ from another?" (1 Cor. 4: 7). We were, perhaps, born of more noble stock than some; and what we did not get by heredity, we got through grace; so our

strength of character is not of ourselves. It is by God's grace that we may be better than others; and it is not for us to glory, but rather to give thanks. We have sympathy for murderers, thieves and vagabonds in general; and we believe the Lord has also. This does not mean that we have the kind of sympathy, which would say, "Open wide the prison doors and let everyone out!" Some have received the Truth while in prison. In prison there may be less temptation than in the world. Liberty is a good thing; but it brings a responsibility and



"To open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon" Isa. 42: 7.

additional trials as well.

SIN AND DEATH ARE HEREDITARY

As we consider the weakness and sinfulness of humanity, the question naturally arises, "Why is this so?" The Scriptures, not the Evolution theory, give us a satisfactory answer to the question. When God placed our first parents in the Garden of Eden, He made this proposition to them: If you are obedient to My righteous law, you may continue to live; but if you violate its dictates, you shall die. Our first parents disregarded the Divine instruction and were disobedient. God immediately sentenced them to

death. Death was the penalty of disobedience. In other words, God said, If you are a sinner I will not permit you to live. Those to whom I wish to grant eternal life are those who will gladly obey My righteous Law. For, as Jesus said: true worshippers will “worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him” (John 4: 23). In addition to having the death sentence passed upon him, father Adam received other punishment aside from the death penalty. He was ejected from the Garden of Eden and was brought into contact with the imperfect earth, its thorns and thistles; he labored with sweat of face; he had the sorrows and troubles that come with the decaying humanity, mind and body. All these things were the result of sin. Nevertheless, as far as God was concerned, the penalty of sin was merely the death sentence. In effect God said, “You are not fit to live; you are not fit for everlasting life; you shall not have everlasting life.” However, through the sacrifice of His human nature, Jesus, by the grace of God, has tasted death for the whole human race—Adam and all his descendents, all of whom will ultimately be redeemed from the death sentence. They will be redeemed from death in order that Jesus may, during His Messianic reign of one thousand years, lift them up out of sin and degradation.

SELF-DEGRADATION

Do you ever think to what extent we degrade ourselves? When the time comes for our uplifting, the lower our characters are, the more difficulty there will be in getting up to perfection. God’s arrangement for lifting humanity out of the death condition is for each to strive for improvement and to assist each other; everyone must labor to rise from their degraded condition, beginning from whatever depth they have fallen and must persevere in this grand work to obtain everlasting life. It is by our own effort and the Lord’s help that we must get out of the difficulty. No one will get out by merely saying, “I would rather be out of this and have life.” The way back to perfection will be an up-hill journey. It will not be the narrow way that our Lord and the spirit-begotten walked—darkness on every hand, a strait gate, etc.—but it will be “a highway,” an upward way, nevertheless, favorable to the person’s progress (Matt. 7: 13, 14; Isa. 35: 8, 9). It is not so much a physical exercise but one that requires intellectual and religious perseverance in developing a Christ-like character. He cannot just occupy space, but will be required to make the necessary advancement to obtain Divine approval at each stage during the thousand years of Christ’s reign. By so doing the person will gradually rise up out of imperfection.

On the other hand, the Elect have been required to turn from sin to righteousness in a period of trial; and we have the assurance that there is a higher reward than that obtained by the world in the next Age. The Elect who have come off victorious in this battle against self and sin have been rewarded in their resurrection. In a word then, when God’s people die, their course is over and they wait in the tomb for God’s due time to place them in the Kingdom when they come forth. When we die we come under the full sentence of Adam’s transgression—God’s Law; for the Law said, “You shall surely die.”

RESURRECTION—THE WORLD’S HOPE

The human race is in a deplorable condition after 6,000 years of sin. They are fallen in physical, mental, moral and religious ways. The Christ, head and body, and the other elect classes, are dedicated to assist the non-elect of humanity back to the perfection that father Adam enjoyed before his fall. When Christ’s Kingdom is set up, Jesus and the Church will take charge over the world of mankind—approximately 40 billions of humanity—Adam and his descendents, all in their broken, fallen condition; and then the great work of refreshing and restoring will begin. The corrective process will continue during the whole one-thousand years of the Millennial reign (Rev. 20: 4). You can understand that the increased ruination into which people are involved in now, has a great deal to do with their overcoming in the future. Many will have so increased their involvement in sin that when they come forth from the tomb they will have a very difficult time overcoming their degradation. Some of these are mentioned in the Scriptures. We are told that some will come forth to shame and lasting contempt. There are many people who will come forth to shame. After they had died, many people have been found to have indulged in criminal acts. Whatever it is will surely be made manifest, is the Lord’s declaration. When the world’s history shall all be known, some that we have thought to be very respectable people, we may find to have been just the reverse; and others who may have been thought to be dishonorable may be found to have been decent and upright.

The judgment of the world is not always right. This is one reason why the Lord warns His people not to judge before the time. That time has arrived now during the Epiphany, by the Lord’s manifestation it is possible to make certain decisions as He reveals the matter. When the Restitution process begins the whole world of mankind will be brought forth to have their trial before the symbolic “Great White Throne,” the judgment seat of Jehovah. Then the books will be opened which are the

Old and New Testament Scriptures. Those coming forth from the tomb will be imperfect but those who are rightly exercised will start up the symbolic “highway” toward life (Isa. 35: 8, 9), while those who have sinned against much light as the unrighteous Pharisees and the perpetrators of the Inquisition etc., will have considerable shame and sin to overcome. If they will obey the terms and regulations of the Messianic Kingdom, they will make progress daily toward perfection of life. As the human race move out of their fallen condition, so this black scourge will be eradicated and pass away. All will rejoice to see the change, not only in others, but also in themselves. By the end of the 1,000 years, one who was in shame and contempt at the beginning, will, if walking in the right course, gain everlasting life. We see the principle illustrated in the Scriptures. Saul of Tarsus was the opponent of God and His people, for he persecuted the Saints. St. Peter denied the Lord but he corrected his wrong course and was faithful as an Apostle. When the world shall have been brought to the knowledge of God and His righteousness under the favorable conditions of the earthly Kingdom, Restitution will take out of them all imperfection and give them the good qualities that God originally gave to the perfect man Adam, when God said that he was “very good.”

WHO MAY ENTER THE KINGDOM

Do not the Scriptures say that no murderer shall enter the Kingdom of God? The Scriptures state that murderers will not be in the Kingdom, that they will be outside—have no part in it—“without are murderers,” etc. (Rev. 22: 14, 15.) This statement does not signify that a person who has once been a murderer might not reform and become renewed and an heir of the Kingdom. We have already referred to one murderer mentioned in the Bible, guilty of the murder of St. Stephen, Saul of Tarsus, who afterward became the most notable of the Apostles. He was somewhat responsible for Stephen’s death. He was a member of the Sanhedrin and approved of the stoning of Stephen, without which approval the latter could not have been stoned. So when we read that no drunkard, murderer or robber shall enter the Kingdom,

the New Jerusalem, how shall we understand it? In this way—when during the Kingdom, all mankind shall have the opportunity of coming into harmony with God, those who maintain a sympathy or love for unrighteousness of any kind will not have Divine approval. They will not be permitted to enter within the gate of the City, which symbolically represents the Kingdom and Divine favor.



SAUL AT THE STONING OF STEPHEN
ACTS 7: 58-8: 3

Originally, Jerusalem represented the Church. “I will show you the Bride, the Lamb’s Wife . . . Now the wall of the City had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb” (Rev. 21: 9-14). However, at the end of the thousand years, in the symbolic earthly City, there will be brought the sheep class of Restitutionists (Matt. 25: 31-34). So all the world of humanity who will come into harmony with God will enter into that City, into the New Jerusalem and Kingdom of God, and outside of that City will be found all unreformed characters—goats. We have them pictured in the statement that liars and murderers, etc., shall have their portion in the “lake which burns with fire and brimstone.” This “lake of fire and brimstone” is as symbolical as is the City. As the

City is not a literal city of gold, neither is the lake a literal lake of fire and brimstone. That City was pictured by Jerusalem, and the “fire” by Gehenna. As the trash of the literal city of Jerusalem was put into the Valley of Hinnom for destruction and for the purification of the community, so all the refuse of the Kingdom will be destroyed and not allowed to exist in eternity. That will be a glorious Kingdom, free from anything that would be a stain or blemish or sin; and all who love unrighteousness, in any sense of the word, will be destroyed in “the lake of fire,” which is, we are told by the Revelator, the Second Death (not torment, Rev. 21: 8).

* * *



THE END OF THE AGE

In the Scriptures, the expression “End of the World” is frequently used. St. Peter tells us that the world came to an end in the Deluge. It was not the Earth which came to an end; merely that order or condition of things which prevailed prior to the Deluge ceased there. A new world, a new order of things, was there ushered in. This is in strict accordance with the proper translation of the Greek. The common translation unfortunately has deceived many. We would better read “End of the Age”—not End of the World.

Ages may end and be succeeded by other ages, but the Bible declares that “the Earth abideth forever” (Eccl. 1: 4); that “God formed it not in vain; He formed it to be inhabited” (Isa. 45: 18). It has never been thoroughly habitable, nor has it ever been inhabited, in the proper sense of the term. The work of Messiah’s Kingdom will be to make God’s footstool glorious, and fit for those restored to His favor. His further work will be to uplift man and restore him to all that was lost in Eden and redeemed at Calvary. He will destroy only the incorrigible.

In the new order of things started by Noah and his family, God allowed humanity to have its way and to work out its own schemes without Divine interference, except in extreme cases. He allowed the world to learn lessons, while He carried out His own great Plan, of which Redemption is the center, and Messiah’s Kingdom the circumference, for the recovery of mankind from their fallen estate.—Romans 5:12-14.

The development of God’s Plan has been long, from the human standpoint, but not so from the Divine, for we read: “A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday;” and again, “A day with the Lord is as a thousand years.” During six of these thousand-year Days, in which He rests or desists from interfering with the world’s affairs, God has permitted a reign of Evil, but His arrangements are complete whereby Messiah, the Redeemer, will fully restore all the willing and obedient to all that Adam forfeited.—Acts 3:19-22.

Questions on Lesson 18

1. What is meant by the scriptural expression “End of the World”?
2. Define “World” and “Earth” scripturally.
3. When did the first World start? When did it end? Studies, Vol. 1, page 66.
4. What is a better word to use than “World”? Par. 1
5. Of how many Worlds (epochs) does the Bible speak? Studies, Vol. 1, page 67; 2 Pet. 3: 6, 7, 13
6. Of how many Earths? Isa. 66: 1
7. What is God’s purpose concerning the Earth?
8. When will it be accomplished? Par. 2
9. In what Worlds (epochs) did Noah live? Studies, Vol. 1, pages 70, 71.
10. To what extent did Jehovah deal with humanity during the first and second Worlds (epochs)? Studies, Vol. 1, pages 70, 71.
11. How about the third World (epoch)? Studies, Vol. 1, page 71.
12. What is the center of God’s plan of redemption? Its circumference? Par. 3
13. How long has God’s plan been in development?
14. How does God measure time?
15. Why has God permitted the reign of evil?
16. How long will evil continue?
17. What will follow Satan’s evil reign? Par. 4



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QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q Jer. 10: 2-5 reads: "Thus says the LORD: Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the Gentiles are dismayed at them. For the customs of the peoples are futile; for one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They decorate it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers that it will not topple. They are upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak. They must be carried, because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good." Is this a warning against the putting up of Christmas trees?

A It is evident from these verses and the context that this chapter has reference, not to the putting up of Christmas trees, but to the making of decorated wooden idols, which must be carried around (v. 5) because unable to go of themselves. (Decorated Christmas trees are not generally carried around). The line of thought in vs. 6-16 is the contrast between Jehovah, the living, great, wise, powerful Creator, the only true God, and the lifeless, silver-and gold-decorated idols of wood and metal made and worshiped by the heathen. Some of the Israelites were ensnared into worshipping such idols. Jer. 10: 1-16 is a stern warning by Jehovah to His people against idolatry.

Psa. 115: 1-9 and Hab. 2: 19 make a similar contrast between the great living Jehovah and the insensible idols of the heathen.

Of course, if any of God's people were to worship a Christmas tree or other object in nature, or manufactured object, or to divide worship between Jehovah and a Christmas tree or any other natural or man-made object, the Bible's many stern warnings against and prohibitions of idolatry would apply to them. The spirit of a sound mind in God's consecrated people (2 Tim. 1: 7) will keep them from idolatry of any kind (1 John 5: 21).

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The praises of our King!
Ye winds and floods and thunders loud,
Ye may your tributes bring.*

*Thou shining sun, thou smiling flow'r,
Ye waving fields of grain,
Thou murm'ring zephyr, streamlet's song,
Bring in the minor strain.*

*And Everything in which is breath
May lift a tuneful song;
The woods may clap their giant hands,
And roll his praise along.*

*Thus may the orchestral chorus ring
O'er mountain, hill and plain,
And melodies of earth and heav'n
Join in the glad refrain.*

*Joy to the world! the Lord is come!
Let praise all tongues employ;
In loftiest, sweetest harmony,
Express your heart-felt joy.*