



A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother—Pr. 18:24.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.—Jo. 15:13.

EXHORTATION TO PRAISE GOD FOR HIS MERCY

By Andrew Dotterer

As we have reached the end of another year and have begun a New Year, we can truly agree with David the psalmist, who found reasons to say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name." (Psalm 103:1) He repeated, "Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all His benefits . . . Who redeemeth thy life from destruction." (Psalm 103:2, 4.)

Yes, we can truly say that our land has been blessed in the past year. We can also say as one of the apostles said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35.) When we consider the many unfortunate people, who are in great need, in foreign lands and are wandering homeless from place to place, then we are reminded of what Jesus said, "The Son of man has not where to lay his head." (Matt. 8:20.) If we consider who has redeemed us from destruction, and has crowned us with his loving kindness and tender mercies, we cannot thank God enough that our land has been spared from that dreadful terror of war.

We may believe that it greatly humbled the people in those war stricken lands when they also must have felt as Jesus did in His last hour when He prayed to the Heavenly Father, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34.) We possibly do not sufficiently appreciate

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The First and the Last

By Adam Gutwein

What is your and my attitude towards the writing in Revelation when it sets an individual blessing before him who readeth and they that hear the words and also keep the writings?

What are some of the writings that mean so much in the individual person if he readeth and keeps them? Let us look and read in St. John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,

among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." At this time of the year hardly anyone is able to escape the proclamation that Christ was born of a woman over nineteen hundred years ago, in fulfilment of the promise given to the first mother—that Satan's head was to be bruised. But the blessedness for men grew as the suffering of Jesus Christ rose to the height at the cross where He paid the price with His precious blood for the sins of the world. Again he became the first when he arose the third day according to the writings. The blessedness for him who readeth and him who heareth the words is reaffirmed when we are willing to consider the statement made by this lamb of God who bore the sins of the world, shed His blood on Calvary's cross, and was raised up the third day for our justification. St. John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Since all men are dead in sin according to the writings, yet so to the point, and so assuring are the words of the risen Lord as we find in Romans 10:9-10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the

Great Commandments

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself . . . Matt. 22:37-39.

and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men." Now according to this writing, and in Revelation, it made him first by whom all things were created. But the blessedness comes in when we read a little farther in St. John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt

dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

It is God's will that all men should believe and live, and for all of those who by faith in Jesus Christ can claim him as their personal Savior, who again and again makes the statement that He is the first and the last, there is great hope to the events that are to take place in the last times. There is great comfort for all saints in the words in Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power."

Now all men are beloved in Jesus Christ, and how blessed is everyone that readeth and keepeth His word, who is first in all things and pronounces a blessing on all them that are to have a part in the first resurrection.

How about the last? Now Jesus Christ is the first and the last. He as the first reveals blessings beyond the grasp of the human mind. Let us read prayerfully and carefully The Revelation as given of St. John The Divine, for we read that all scripture is given for our learning, and while we live in the time of shuffling, it is possible according to the writings that the last may be first. Where do you and I come in?

At the beginning of another New Year, we thank God for all past blessings, and ask for strength to continue in His service. We wish all a very blessed and prosperous New Year and thank every one for all past favors. **The Silver Lining Staff.**

SALVATION

You have nothing to do for salvation,
For all the work has been done.
The Savior said, "It is finished"
Ere He died on the cross where He hung.

Oh, if you but knew your danger
As under God's wrath you abide,
How quickly you'd flee to the Saviour,
The only real place you can hide.

Submitted by Herman and Katie Farney, Croghan, N. Y.

EXHORTATION TO PRAISE GOD

(Continued from page 1)

our privileges and freedom to assemble, free and unhindered, around the Word of God. Let us not become weary in encouraging one another even more as we see the Day of the Lord approaching that we would not forsake the assembling around God's word and with God's help and strength be a shining light in this world.

Oh, if only many more would accept this precious invitation of our Lord and Saviour who is still willing to give rest to all who are weary and heavy laden. The Lord's mercy is great toward them that fear Him. This world has so much to offer trying to give satisfaction and contentment with those things which are passing and carnal; but the Apostle Paul writes, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus . . . forgetting those things which are behind." (Ph. 3:13, 14.)

Hymn for the Month Battle And Victory

Steep and thorny is the way
Leading us to full perfection;
Blessed they who there-in stay
Battling under Christ's direction;
Blest is he who runs the race
On the way not falls from grace.

Their reward is truly great
Who, unto the end enduring,
All to Christ do consecrate;
Flee the worldly lust alluring.
They who hope unfailingly
For the crown of victory.

Draw, O Lord, us near to Thee,
Draw to Thee each valiant fighter.
Storm and night surround us here,
But above 'tis calm and brighter.
There, beyond death and the tomb
Radiant morn dispels the gloom.

Upon then, comrades, wend your way
Through the wilderness with courage;
Look to Jesus, watch and pray!
God prepares you for the conflict;
In the weak He shows His might,
And through Christ we'll win the fight.

—Zion's Harp, Hymn 99

If we survey the past year, there are many who have passed into the Great Beyond. What a blessing is awaiting such who have endured faithfully to the end!

"AS UNTO HIM"

Whatever you think, both in joy and in woe,

Think nothing you would not like Jesus to know.

Whatever you say, in a whisper or clear,

Say nothing you would not like Jesus to hear.

Whatever you read, though the page may allure,

Read nothing unless you are perfectly sure

Consternation would not be seen in your look

If God should say solemnly, "Show me that book!

Whatever you write with haste or with heed,

Write nothing you would not like Jesus to read;

What ever you sing, in the midst of your glees,

Sing nothing that God's listening ear could displease;

Wherever you go, never go where you'd fear

God's question being asked you "What doest thou here?"

From D. L. VAN AUKEN, Lansing, Mich.

LETTERS

May the love of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit ever abide with you, especially in this great work that is being carried on by the Silver Lining staff. We prize it as though a visitor came to our house when the Silver Lining appears at our home.

Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Virkler,
Lowville, New York

* * *

We wish to express our sincere thanks to the Silver Lining staff. We enjoy the nice reading . . . and the news, as we know quite a few of the people. May God bless you all for all the good you have done.

Herman and Katie Farney,
Croghan, New York

SALVATION (Cont. 11)**By Philip Gutwein, Jr.**

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law." (Rom. 3:19).

The Apostle refers here to the Mosaic Law, which is an integral part of the Sinai Covenant placed Israel UNDER that Law. The blessings, prosperity, and security promised under this Covenant were to be realized IN THE PROMISED LAND and upon the condition that Israel on her part will "observe to do all these commandments." (Deut. 6:25)

But Israel persistently failed to keep that Law and thus broke the Covenant, made void its blessings and invoked its curses; as we read: "because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." (Heb. 8:9). The outworking of these curses of the broken covenant the Lord Jesus foresaw when He wept over Jerusalem, whose children He would, but because of their blindness, could not gather under His wings. (Matt. 23:37). He would protect them from the pitiless fury of the CURSE of the BROKEN LAW-COVENANT, which was about to be uncovered to national Israel, without the ark of the Covenant (containing the Law) being SPRINKLED WITH THE ATONING BLOOD of the Sacrifice for sin. (Over 50,000 who looked into the ark were symbolically smitten. (Sam. 6:19).

Again the Lord Jesus points to the curse of the broken covenant, when He prophetically foretells of the unsparing destruction of the temple leaving not one stone upon the other, that shall not be thrown down. (Luke 21:6) Likewise in verse 24, the Lord speaks of the final destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of Israel among all nations (Deut. 28:64) with a trembling heart, and no rest for the sole of their foot; all of which is pitifully evident till this day.

The first part of the Book of Acts, in which Peter is prominent, is largely a gracious call to national Israel to repentance by the GOSPEL OF CIRCUMCISION, committed to Peter, at first directed to JEWS ONLY and later to the JEW FIRST. (Today, under the Gospel of Grace, there is NO difference.) But Israel did not

repent, but killed and stoned the messengers of the Lord and so the year of 70 A. D. brought the actual destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and God's dealing with Israel as a nation under the Old Law Covenant. It brought a CURSE and NOT A BLESSING to Israel and it will never be renewed. The CURSE upon the fig tree, having leaves but no fruit, is symbolic of this covenant. It withered and dried to the root and Jesus said unto it: "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." (Mark 11:14)

Israel as the natural seed of Abraham, however, is not cast away for ever. When the "times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," and surely we are near that time, then Israel will be called under a NEW COVENANT, one of GRACE and not of LAW and which provided the Law of the Spirit to be written in the heart and not on engraven stones; the knowledge of the Lord from the least to the greatest and the forgiveness of their sins in mercy, to be remembered no more. The NEW COVENANT makes the first OLD, ready to VANISH AWAY. (Hebrews 8)

Christ, being circumcised and "made UNDER the law" duly recognized the Law-made Levitical Priesthood and their Law-appointed position, and as evidence of this He sent the cleansed leper in Matthew 8:4 to show himself to the priest and offer his gift as a testimony unto them. He was not a priest while on earth (Hebrews 8:4) and while under the Law, but when He had died unto the Law and had entered into the heavenly and true tabernacle, He was made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec and not Levi, who is set on the right hand of throne of the Majesty in the heavens. This positively and FOR EVER changed the priesthood, and "the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a CHANGE ALSO OF THE LAW." (Hebrews 7:12)

Therefore, if we go back to the Mosaic Law in the keeping of the Sabbath, which it commanded, we are in effect denying that we are dead to the Law and we must of necessity CHANGE ALSO BACK TO THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD, whose

offerings of animal sacrifices and sprinkling of their blood served but the SHADOW of the true and heavenly things, which are fulfilled in Christ, our Advocate with the Father, our Great High Priest, who now is entered with His OWN BLOOD into the heavenly tabernacle, which God pitched and not man. (Hebrews 8 and Hebrews 9:23-26)

That the "Covenants, and the giving of the law," pertaineth to ISRAEL only (Romans 9:4) and that the uncircumcised GENTILE was a stranger and foreigner from the Covenants of promise, including the Sinai Law Covenant (Ephesians 2:11-12), and that the Gentiles "HAVE NOT THE LAW" and "sinned WITHOUT LAW" (Romans 2:12, 14), is readily evident from the Scriptures, but that the ISRAELITE HIMSELF, in this present "times of the Gentiles" is not only without his homeland, without Jerusalem and the Temple, and without the Levitic Priesthood, but also without the Mosaic Law and the old vanished-away Sinai Covenant, — for ALL go together or fall together, — may be somewhat of a surprise.

With the old Sinai Covenant now inoperative and as a BROKEN Covenant set aside, what the most orthodox Jew NOW observes in the way of dietary and ceremonial Laws and ordinances, of holy days and Sabbaths, of Sacrifices and even the rite of Circumcision itself, are now meaningless before God and avail NOTHING. (Galatians 6:15) If then even the Jew Himself, in this present dispensation of the GRACE of God and "according to the truth of the Gospel" is not HIMSELF UNDER the LAW to seek its blessings but "livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal. 2:14-16) In other words, if the Jew HIMSELF, to whom once the Law was given, is not blessed nor justified by keeping the Sabbath, why should the Gentile, who never was under the Law, observe the Sabbath, as though there was a blessing in so doing. To Israel it brought a CURSE; will it bring a blessing to the Gentile? "Ye observe days . . . I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." (Galatians 4:10-11).

NEWS

LEO, INDIANA

MarCeil Klopfenstein, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Klopfenstein, and Donald Zeltwanger, son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Zeltwanger, of Bremen, Indiana, were united in marriage on December 14, at the bride's home. Miss Velma Norr was maid of honor and Bud Klopfenstein, brother of the bride, was best man. The wedding dinner was served at 4 o'clock and the reception was held in the evening with approximately 200 guests attending. The couple left on a trip to Florida. They will make their home at Bremen.

Gaylord Widner, Richard Lantz, Donald Schlatter, and Harry Schwartz are spending their vacations at home.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Frey of Remington, Indiana called on the Elias Souders on Tuesday, December 17.

George Getz of Morton, Illinois called on his uncle, Edward D. Getz.

The Christmas program for the Sunday School was held at the church on December 22. The meeting was well attended and enjoyed by everyone.

Rev. John Troxel, Mr. and Mrs. John Schmitt, and Mr. and Mrs. Edward Leman of Wolcott, Indiana spent Sunday December 8 at the Leo church. They were dinner guests at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Troxel.

The Rev. Victor Stavenik Family, children and grandchildren spent Christmas Day at the Roy Wysong home of Mansfield, Ohio.

Chrisann, Mary Bertha, and Otto John Wuethrich of Francesville accompanied their grandparents, Rev. and Mrs. Otto Norr, home on December 22. They are spending several days with them.

The Albert Frautschi Family spent Christmas Day with the Jacob Frautschi Family of Toledo, Ohio.

Rev. and Mrs. Joel Souder and Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Schwietzer spent Christmas Day with relatives at Latty, Ohio.

The Silver Lining Staff wishes to

express sympathy to Mrs. Sam Gerber and family at this their time of sorrow. Sam will be greatly missed in his home church for his untiring efforts in church work. The unlimited cooperation and help extended our paper will always be remembered.

Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Frank spent several days with relatives at Cissna Park, Illinois.

BLUFFTON, INDIANA

On November 24, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Gerber announced the engagement of their daughter, Marie, to Joe Kipfer, son of Mrs. Mary Kipfer. The wedding date has been set for January 19, 1947.

Orel Gilliom, aged 76, passed away December 2 after a year's illness. Rev. Theo Beer conducted the funeral services Thursday morning, December 5. Many attended the funeral from Milford, Indiana, Elgin, Roanoke, and Morton, Illinois, Latty, Mansfield, and Paulding, Ohio.

On December 4, Samuel Gerber, aged 65, passed away suddenly from a heart attack. Funeral services were conducted on Saturday morning, December 7, by Rev. Herman Hueni. Relatives and friends from many distant points attended the services. Samuel Gerber had served as secretary-treasurer of the Brotherhood Aid for many years. Sam Kaehr was chosen as his successor.

On December 22 the Elder David Mangold and Elder Schrock held communion services. Six friends became affiliated with the church. John Yergler was ordained minister.

Mr. and Mrs. Homer Reineck and family from Toledo visited friends and relatives in Bluffton the week-end of December 28.

Rev. Henry Wackerle of Bay City, Michigan, and Rev. Schlatter of Toledo, Ohio, conducted evening services here on Sunday, Dec. 8.

Elder and Mrs. Sam Aeschliman were among the many who visited friends and relatives in Morton and Gridley, Illinois, over the week-end of Nov. 17.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

On December 1, Rev. and Mrs. Theo Beer of Milford, Indiana, Mr. and Mrs. Eli Pfister, of Elkhart, Indiana, and others from Bluffton and LaCrosse, Indiana, visited with us.

Rev. and Mrs. August Bolliger and Mr. and Mrs. George Woerner of Tremont, Illinois, and Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Woerner of Peoria, Illinois spent Sunday, December 15, here.

An interesting Christmas program was given by the Sunday School children Thursday evening, December 19.

CROGHAN, NEW YORK

Elder and Mrs. John Bahler of Rockville, Connecticut spent the week-end of December 1 here.

Ezra Karcher of Castorland who died from a car accident was buried on Sunday, December 1. The services were held at Naumburg.

Mrs. Alvin Farney is spending a few days with her daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Farney, at Syracuse, New York.

Mr. and Mrs. John Mertz have left for Arizona.

Great blessings were bestowed on the congregation when Rev. Philip Gutwein of Francesville, Indiana conducted the service on Sunday, December 8.

Mr. and Mrs. David Shamback are the proud parents of a son born December 9.

ELGIN ILLINOIS

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Hugh are visiting in New York and Rockville, Connecticut for a few weeks.

Helen, Gladys, Raymond, Walter, and Albert Steffen and Wilbur Hoerr enjoyed the week-end of December 22 at Milford, Indiana.

David, Melvin, Elmer Marion, and Ade Mae Steffen, and Marie Hugh attended the wedding of Elizabeth Wiegand and Sam Blunier at Goodfield, Illinois.

Lyla Kellenberger daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Kellenberger and Richard Schock, son of Fredrich Schock, were married December 21. The reception was held at the home of the bride's parents.

FRANCESVILLE, INDIANA

Elder Elias Dotterer held baptismal services November 24, for Mrs. Joseph Steffen. She was formerly from Cleveland, Ohio.

Katherine Von Tobel and Melvin Huber of Fairbury were married December 1 with Bro. Philip Gutwein officiating. Miss Katherine Huber, sister of the groom, was maid of honor and Norman Rocke of Eureka was best man. A wedding dinner was served at the bride's home to many relatives and friends, followed by a reception. The couple left for a trip to Florida for several weeks.

Rev. Egly of Congerville, New York and Rev. Ben Heiniger of Morton, Illinois, held very touching services Sunday evening, December 15.

Rev. Philip Gutwein, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Gutwein and son, Edwin, and Mr. and Mrs. John Gutwein had a very enjoyable visit among the Eastern churches.

On Monday evening the Sunday School went Christmas caroling for the aged, widows, and sick.

FORREST, ILLINOIS

Bros. Dave Mangold and Joe Rocke of Roanoke held services on Thursday evening, December 12.

Bros. Joshua Broquard and Henry Kilgus were ordained as elders of the three Fairbury Apostolic Christian Churches on Monday evening, December 23, with Elders Dave Mangold, Noah Schroch, and Phil Aeschliman officiating.

LATTY, OHIO

Visitors here on Sunday December 1 were; The Misses Lois, Dorothy and June Knochel and Danny Knochel, and Mrs. Amos Steffen, Marcella and Luther Steffen. Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Haab, and the Misses Rose, Mildred, and Lucille Rapp from Milford.

Mr. and Mrs. Willis Wiegand of Goodfield, Illinois spent Sunday night at Jesse Gerbers on their way home from their wedding trip through the southern states.

Joe and Otto Schlatter, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Schlatter were in the hospital but are home again and improving.

Irene Hodel and Catherine Gerber spent a week with relatives and friends at Roanoke and Goodfield, Illinois. They spent Sunday at Princeville.

Our Sunday School held its Christmas Program Monday evening, December 23.

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Stoller and family plan to leave the day after Christmas for a few weeks' vacation in Florida.

Iryin Stoller has been South the past week on a business trip.

Mrs. William Hartzler and Miss Catherine Zollinger from Wayne County were visitors Sunday, December 22.

Many friends attended a bridal shower given in honor of Miss Esther Buehlar at the home of Mildred Wenninger.

MORTON, ILLINOIS

Funeral services for Mrs. Fannie Huette on Sunday were conducted by Reverend David Mangold. Her age was 85 years. She was a resident of Morton all her life. The past ten years she was confined to her home most of the time.

Wilma Zimmerman was suddenly taken to the hospital Monday, December 16 for an appendectomy. At this time, she is getting along nicely and expects to return home in several days.

Our last Young Folks Sunday School Meeting was held at Roanoke, Illinois, with a very large attendance. The Sunday Schools participating were Morton, Roanoke, Peoria, Princeville, and Tremont. A joyous evening included singing Christmas carols.

PRINCEVILLE, ILLINOIS

Recent visitors in our community were Mr. and Mrs. George Wieland and son, Jerry, and Mr. and Mrs. Alphonie Kaeb, and Samuel Ramseyer and daughter, Miriam, from Bay City, Michigan.

We are happy to welcome home two of our friends, Eugene Herrmann and Lawrence Stahl, who have served in the army. Eugene is returning from Alaska, and Lawrence from the islands in the Pacific.

REMINGTON, INDIANA

The Remington folks accepted the invitation to assemble with the Wolcott Congregation Thanksgiving morning which was enjoyed by all. Rev. Walter Steffen of South Side Fairbury held services.

On Sunday, December 1, we had the following visitors: Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Virkler and son, also Ralph Beyer of Castorland, New York, and Rev. George Gramm and family and several others from Gridley, Illinois, and a few from Elgin, Illinois.

Mr. and Mrs. Eli Schlatter and family of Bay City, Michigan spent Sunday, December 8. They left here the following day to visit several places in Illinois before returning home.

Rev. Adam Gutwein and family of Francesville were here Sunday, December 15. Rev. Gutwein conducted services which was appreciated by all present.

The Christmas program given by the Sunday School Sunday evening, December 22 was well attended. We thank those who attended from nearby congregations.

A number of Wolcott folks assembled with the Remington Congregation on Christmas morning for worship.

The sad news reached this community that Melvin Beckley, son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Beckley, Jr., Goodland, Indiana, passed away. Death was due to a heart ailment. He was in the service of the government stationed in a camp in Colorado. The family has our sympathy.

ROANOKE, ILLINOIS

Sunday, December 22, announcement of the coming marriage of Miss Wilhememia Klaus, and Walter Anlicker was made at the Roanoke Church.

O. William Leman arrived home December 22 after spending ten months in Munich, Germany. He has terminal leave until the first of January when his discharge will be sent to him. He plans to enter Eureka College in February.

The Song Fest of the Bible School classes was held at Roanoke the first

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THE MISSING ONES

One summer evening, for a part of our family worship, I read the fourth chapter of 1st Thess. Before retiring to rest I seated myself on my easy chair, and mused on the last few verses of the chapter, and as I mused, I fell into a deep sleep and had a most wonderful dream. My mind seemed to be clear and distinct, and my intellectual faculties stronger and brighter than in my wakeful condition.

I thought I had awakened in the morning, and was somewhat surprised to find that my wife was not beside me as usual. Supposing, however, that her absence was but temporary, I waited, expecting her speedy return to our chamber; but after the lapse of what I considered a reasonable time, as she did not make her appearance, I arose and dressed.

My wife's apparel was where she had placed it on retiring, and I felt confident she was somewhere about the house. So I went to my daughter Julia's room, thinking she might know the whereabouts of her mother; but after knocking several times without response, I entered and found that she also was missing.

"Strange, passing strange!"

said I to myself; "where can they both be?" Then I went to the room of our son Frank, and found him up and already dressed, which was something quite unusual for him at an hour so early. He said he had passed a very restless night, and that he might better get up. I told him of the absence of his mother and sister from their rooms, and requested him to look around to see if he could not find them. In the meantime I hurriedly completed my toilet, and soon Frank returned and said the missing ones were nowhere to be found, and that every door leading outward was securely locked, as on the preceding evening. We were at our wits' end, and what to make of this strange occurrence we did not know. On again visiting Julia's room we found on a stand her well-marked open Bible. One prominent verse attracted my attention: it read, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not THE SON OF MAN COMETH." This passage, my wife had always declared, referred to the coming of Christ for His saints, the redeemed church, according to 1 Thess. 4:14-17, while I insisted that it meant only the preparation for death. But I am digressing. Frank and I concluded that, without waiting for breakfast, we should each take a different route, and visit some of our most intimate friends, in quest of our dear ones.

I first called on my wife's sister, Mrs. E., who, with her husband, were good, respectable people, members of a Christian Church, though rather worldly minded. After I had rung the bell several times, and waited somewhat impatiently, she appeared and apologized for her dilatoriness by saying that she was "in a peck of trouble," and had to prepare breakfast herself, for her colored servant girl, whom she had always considered to be a real good Christian, had played her a mean trick. "She had gone off some-

where, without even putting the kettle on the range, or saying a word to any of us."

"But what puzzles us to know is, how she got out of the house, for the doors are all locked and the keys inside, just as we left them last evening on our return from Mrs. B.'s progressive euchre party."

"Indeed," said I, "it is exceedingly strange," and then I explained to her the object of my morning visit. When she heard of

The Mysterious Absence

of my wife and Julia, she became so very nervous that I was glad to change the subject of saying that, as I had not yet breakfasted, I would join them in the morning repast. When her husband heard my story he treated it with a good deal of levity, and declared that my wife was only playing a practical joke, to induce me to rise earlier in the morning. He was sure the missing ones had secreted themselves somewhere about the house, and when I returned home I would find them all right.

As we seated ourselves at the table, Mrs. E. said we would have to take coffee without milk, as her milkman, who had heretofore been very reliable, had failed to make his appearance.

Presently the door bell rang, and Frank entered in a state of great excitement, saying he had been all over inquiring for his mother, and in almost every house he found trouble similar to our own. Almost every family was anxiously

Searching for Missing Ones.

He had just come from our home, where he found the servant girl alone, but much agitated in consequence of the numerous calls she had had to answer about missing friends. He also stated that the streets were thronged with excited people hurrying to and fro, many of them weeping bitterly. At the announcement Mr. E. showed evident signs of alarm, and related a conversation he had held yesterday with a friend, whose religious ideas he looked upon as quite heretical.

His friend insisted that a vast majority of church members, in these days, were but nominal Christians, "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," and that the love of the masses for religious things had reached a very low ebb. "My friend also assured me," said Mr. E., "that the Scriptures clearly taught that, when the elect number of Christ's church would be completed, Christ would come unexpectedly as a thief in the night, and call His saints, both dead and alive, to meet Him in the air. The transformation would be effected in the twinkling of an eye, and although the call would be made with a shout and the sound of a trumpet, yet none would hear it but those for whom it was intended. Then would be realized the import of Christ's words. 'Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. The women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.' (Matt. 24:40-41). I fear that time has now come

and, sad to say, we are among the left ones."

Now as the morning was far advanced, it was suggested that we go down to our business places. Frank had already gone to his office, and I, with a heavy heart, wended my way along the avenue among an unusual throng of men and women, whose faces betokened INTENSE SORROW.

In the business parts of the city I observed that many stores were closed, and those that were open did not appear to be doing any business. Every saloon that I passed was open, as usual, with groups of men inside, apparently engaged in serious discussion. I passed by the City Hall; there was no perceptible diminution of the usual crowd of political "hangers on" around the building.

When I reached my own store, I found that my bookkeeper and the faithful old porter, who had served me so many years, had not yet put in an appearance. My other two clerks were on hand, doing nothing, nor did I feel like asking them to do anything.

Yesterday I agreed to sell a worthy mechanic a small piece of land which I owned in the outskirts of the city and had an appointment to meet him at a lawyer's office to sign the contract, but he failed to come, and I presumed he also joined the absent ones. I then went to the Chamber of Commerce, and found the largest gathering of merchants that I had seen there in many months. Instead of the lively, noisy bustle of buying and selling, and of clerks and messenger boys running to and fro, there was a solemn gloom pervading the whole assembly. By unanimous consent, and in consequence of the great calamity that has overtaken the community, it was voted that "three days grace be allowed on all contracts falling due on this day." I will not attempt to set forth any of the reasons and speculations that were advanced as to the cause of our present troubles, but all agreed that the visitation was a supernatural one, and that in some way we who were left on earth were blamable for it.

In the evening nearly every church in the city was open, with overflowing congregations.

Everybody was anxious to know the cause and

Meaning of the "Great Visitation"

and to learn how lost hopes might be regained.

Many of the pastors had gone with the missing ones, but some were present in their churches. All order of service was dispensed with, and noisy confusion prevailed; crimination and recrimination were bandied to and fro, between the pastors and the people, the latter asserting that, if the **pastors had done their duty, and taught their flocks the plain truths of the Bible**, instead of lulling them to sleep with philosophical and moral essays, they would not now be in their present sad condition. In my own church the pastor was present, with scores of persons whom I had but rarely seen at meetings.

The pastor was speaking when I entered
(Continued on page 8)

THE BIBLE*(Continued from Oct. 15 issue)***Preservation of the Bible**

In reading revised versions of the Bible people have noticed that passages have been changed so as to give an altogether different sense, and that here and there verses have been omitted. They had always regarded these as parts of the inspired Word of God and raise the question, by what right were these inspired revelations altered? They have also wondered how often this same thing may have been done at other times by other translators.

These people have learned that the original Bible is not in our possession, that these original documents have disappeared, are lost, and most likely destroyed centuries ago, and they ask, how do we know that our Bible is the same as that which was originally communicated? In many instances there has arisen an unspoken doubt which is the result of haziness as to how our Bible has come down through the centuries. In their hands they have the English Bible and in it they read that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." But they ask, "Does this Bible in my hands contain the things these holy men of God spake by Divine inspiration? Is it the same Bible? Has it been altered so that it is not the same Bible? If we had the original documents would our Bible be identical with them?"

A long time has elapsed since the days of the apostles when the Old Testament was in their hands as the Word of God, and there was coming forth the Word of God of the New Testament. It is necessary, therefore, that we understand how, during these many centuries, the Scriptures have been preserved, and have come down to us, why alterations have occurred, and what there is to confirm the fact that the Bible we have is the inspired Word of God.

Ancient Versions**1. Preservation of the Hebrew Text.**

That the most scrupulous care was taken by Ezra and those who followed him to safeguard the text of the Old Testament is seen in the manner in

which the discrepancies in the text of parallel passages have been preserved instead of assimilating them. The importance of this fact cannot be over-emphasized in considering the zealous care taken in maintaining the Hebrew text.

Following the Captivity, in the time of Ezra, an Aramaic version followed the reading of the Hebrew original in the synagogues. We are told (Neh. 8:8) "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." This was necessary since the people had come out of an exile that extended over seventy years and had adopted the language of the country. The Aramaic interpretations of the text are called "Targums," ten of which have come down to us, which give a full interpretation of all the books with the exception of Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah, which, in the main, did not require Targums. These furnish valuable proofs of the correctness of versions of ancient manuscripts of the Old Testament.

The Targum of Onkelos on the Pentateuch is a literal translation, word for word, from the Hebrew. He was contemporary with Christ and a pupil of Gamaliel.

Josephus says that the Synagogue Rolls of the Hebrews MSS. were written on fine skins. Some of these were found in the Crimea and are in the Library at St. Petersburg. It is possible they belonged to the Jews of the Dispersion. "The care with which they were transcribed is evident from the rules laid down in the Talmud. One scribe copied the consonants, another inserted the vowel-points and accents in a fainter ink, a third revised the copy, and a fourth wrote in the Masorah. These rolls consisted of, first, the Pentateuch; second, the Hophtarother (dismissals); and third, Megilloth (rolls). It is from these and the Greek translations, made by the Alexandrian Jews, compared together, that a correct copy of the Scriptures must be derived, and the English A. V. was formed from the best recensions then known."

It is necessary that we keep in mind two or three important facts, one of

which has already been noted. The first is, that the Hebrew Bible of the present day is substantially the same as the recension made by Ezra and others and was the received text in the time of our Lord. While there are alterations in the language there are no alterations in the meaning of the original writers. What has already been noted is that we have no autographs of the Hebrew or Greek Scriptures. We have called them the original documents none of which are in our possession. What, in this respect, is true of the Bible is true of Greek and Latin classic authors — there are no autograph copies of these. There is no ancient work of which the text is not somewhat imperfect.

(To be continued)

Reader, have you ever repented like that? Have you confessed your sin and folly, and received the pardoning kiss of love? "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" and "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, Cleanseth us from all sin" (Proverbs 27:13 and I John 1:7b).

I was a wand'ring sheep, I did not love the fold,
I did not love my shepherd's voice, I would not be controlled:
I was a wayward child, I did not love my home,
I did not love my Father's voice, I loved afar to roam.

The Shepherd sought His sheep, the Father sought His child;
He followed me o'er vale and hill, O'er deserts waste and wild:
He found me nigh to death, Famished, and faint, and lone;
He bound me with the bands of love, He saved the wand'ring one.

No more a wand'ring sheep. I love to be controlled.
I love my tender Shepherd's voice, I love the peaceful fold;
No more a wayward child, I seek no more to roam;
I love my heav'nly Father's voice, I love, I love His home!

—M Wingeier,
Lowell, Mich.

THE NEW YEAR'S COMING IN

words by
EUNICE-JANE HALLOWELL
music by
WILLIAM C. STEERE

The Old Year's dying, Let it go!
Weep not! this is no time for woe;
Sing now, O Earth, a hymn of praise,
A joyful song of coming days.

Too late to mourn what might have
been,
Too late, the New Year's coming in!
Be glad, be glad, the hours move fast,
Fill each day well e'er it is past.

Wipe out all sorrow gone before,
Have faith in God and trust Him
more,
Weep not, there is no time for woe,
The Old Year's dying—Let it go!

From the song, words and music,
"The New Year's Coming In" published
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WOULDN'T IT, NOW!

Wouldn't this old world be better
If the folks we meet would say,
"I know something good about you,"
And then treat us just that way?

Wouldn't it be fine and dandy
If each handclasp warm and true
Carried with it this assurance,
"I know something good above you"?

Wouldn't life be lots more happy
If the good that's in us all
Were the only things about us
That folks bothered to recall?

Wouldn't life be lots more happy
If we praised the good we see?
For there's such a lot of goodness
In the worst of you and me.

Wouldn't it be nice to practice
That fine way of thinking, too?
You know something good about me;
I know something good about you.

—Anonymous.

Contributed by Lillian Isch.

Joy is the by-product of obedience
to God.

NEWS

(Continued from page 5)

Sunday in December. Princeville,
Morton, Tremont, Goodfield, and Peoria
were in attendance.

Funeral services were held for
Miss Persida Schmidt Wednesday,
December 11. She died after an extended
illness at the home of her sister,
Mrs. John Bittner of Peoria.

Miss Laydene Kempf and Thurman
Henrickson were married Sunday,
December 8, at the Roanoke
Church.

TOLEDO, OHIO

Those who attended the wedding
of Esther Buehlar and Loren Stoller
at Latty, Ohio, on December 22 were
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Klopfenstein
and family, Mr. and Mrs. George Ladig
and family, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Price,
and Misses Mary and Emily Frautschi.

Rev. Godfrey Schlatter went to
Bay City, Michigan over the week-end
of December 15 with Elder Noah Hartzler
and others from Wayne County, Ohio.

Rev. and Mrs. Godfrey Schlatter,
Miss Mary Schrenk and Mrs. Jacob
Frautschi spent the week-end of December
8, in Fort Wayne and Bluffton,
Indiana.

Rev. and Mrs. Godfrey Schlatter
and Mrs. Lydia Rehklaue and daughter,
Josephine, visited in Akron, Ohio
the week-end of December 1.

THOUGHT GEMS

Darkness cannot put out the lamp; it
can only make it shine the brighter.

* * *

Do you believe in the sun when it is
hidden behind the cloud? Then doubt
not the goodness of God when He
seems to hide His face.

* * *

The man who harbors ill-will against
another has fast closed the ear of
God against his own cry.

* * *

Throw mud and you will have dirty
hands, whether or not the mud hits
the mark.

* * *

It costs a heap more to revenge injuries
than to bear them.

THE MISSING ONES

(Continued from page 6)

the room, and was entreating the audience
to endeavor to allay their feelings, while he
would attempt to speak to them for a few
minutes.

Quite being somewhat restored, he said:
"This pastor's heart is bleeding at every
pore in sympathy with his sorely-afflicted
people. The anguish which I experienced at
being, in a measure, the cause of our present
unhappy condition, is indescribable.
None of you can realize the

Keen Disappointment

I endure at this result of my labors. I am
accused of having preached too much about
material things and the affairs of this life,
and too little about the heavenly state and
the things to come; and of having kept you
in ignorance of the imminency of the awful
visitation which has manifested itself among
us this day. In reply to all these accusations.
I can only say that I taught you the same
theology that was taught to me in the Seminary,
and which I, in common with the great
majority of our ministerial brethren,
firmly believed to be the teaching of God's
Word.

"But now I have to confess that I was
sadly mistaken, for, after what has occurred,
I cannot help believing that **God's Word**
means just what it says. My pastoral labors,
during all the time I have been with you,
have been excessive and in consequence, I
have not been able to devote to the study of
prophecy the time which a subject so deep
and intricate demanded."

Here the electric light suddenly went out,
and there arose such fearful screams that
I sprang to my feet in terror—and—awoke!

My wife, who was in an adjoining room,
hearing my sudden upspring, hastened in to
see what was the matter. Oh, how glad I was
to see her, and realize my terrible experience
in my easy chair was only a dream. But the
more I thought of it afterwards, the more
solemn seemed the Scripture truths which it
contained, and the more I was impressed
with the importance of having our lamps
trimmed and burning, ready to go out
and meet the Bridegroom.—**John Ward.**

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

EXHORTATION TO PRAISE GOD FOR
HIS MERCY

By Andrew Dotterer, Pastor
Paulding, Ohio

THE FIRST AND THE LAST

By Adam Gutwein, Pastor
Francesville, Ind.

SALVATION (cont. 11)

Philip Gutwein Jr., Pastor
Francesville, Ind.

THE SILVER LINING

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