

December 25

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:10,11

ALTHOUGH we cannot agree that this is the proper day for celebrating the birth of our dear Redeemer, but must insist that it

was about October first-- (Volume 2, p.54) nevertheless, since He did not intimate His desire that we should celebrate His birthday, it is quite immaterial upon what day that event, of so great importance to all, is celebrated. Upon this day, so generally celebrated, we may properly enough join with all whose hearts are in the attitude of love and appreciation toward God and toward the

Savior. The habit of giving little remembrances one to another at this time of year seems to us specially appropriate. God is the giver of every good and perfect gift. He is continually giving and we are continually receiving from Him; but amongst all His gifts the one of greatest importance to us is the gift of His Son to be our Redeemer. Z. '03-457 R3290:4

R3700 (From Harvest Truth Database V5 2008)

THE GLORIOUS PROCLAMATION

--LUKE 2:1-20--JANUARY 7--

Golden Text:--"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord."

THE message of the angels to the shepherds on Bethlehem's plains sounds more and more precious to each child of God in proportion as he grows in grace and knowledge. As his eyes and ears of understanding open more widely to the lengths and breadths of God's great plan of the ages, that prophetic message is the more highly esteemed as an epitome of the entire Gospel. Nor can our attention be too frequently called to the great event which lies at the foundation of that message--our Savior's birth.

It matters not that December 25th is not the real anniversary of the Savior's birth, but probably the anniversary of the annunciation by the angel Gabriel, the anniversary of the Virgin Mary's conception, our Lord being born nine months later on the calendar, or about October 1. One so great, whose birth, death and resurrection from the dead means so much to the human family, may be remembered and celebrated any day, every day, by all who appreciate what he has done for our race. Since, then, the majority of Christian people have become habituated to the celebration of December 25th as our Lord's birthday, we need make no protest, but join with all in celebrating that day with rejoicing of heart, giving gifts and remembrances one to another, thus copying divine favor, which gave to mankind the Son of God as a gift of mercy and love for our redemption.

For four thousand years and more the promises of God, clothed in more or less of obscurity, had been given to mankind, intimating that ultimately the great curse of sin and death which had come upon the world through father Adam's disobedience in Eden would be rolled away, and instead of a curse, a blight, would come a blessing of the Lord with life-giving refreshment. In various types, figures and shadowy promises this lesson had come down through the ages to the time of our Lord's birth, especially amongst the Jews, who were the divinely favored and covenanted people. And since the Jews were of a commercial spirit, many of them were to be found in all parts of the civilized world; and thus amongst every people the faith in the one God and the hope of Israel through a Messiah were more or less made known, so that at the time of our Lord's birth we read, "All men were in expectation" of a soon-coming Messiah. Doubtless this expectation was built upon the interpretation of Daniel's prophecy, which we now see clearly marked the year of our Lord's majority, when he was thirty years of age and made his consecration to his work and received the begetting of the holy Spirit, his anointing as the great antitypical High Priest and as the great antitypical King over Israel and the world.

FROM BETHLEHEM TO NAZARETH

In olden times there were honorable cities and mean cities. Nazareth was generally recognized as one of the latter, while Bethlehem was distinctly one of the former--the City of David, Israel's beloved king. The Scriptures explain to us that Mary, our Lord's mother, and Joseph, her husband, were both of the lineage of David, and that in a seemingly accidental manner the prophecy was fulfilled which foretold that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.--Micah 5:2.

The Roman empire at that time bore rule over the whole world, the Jews being subject to it, but waiting expectantly, restlessly, for the coming Messiah, who would deliver them from being subject people and make of them the ruling caste in his Kingdom, the dominion of the world. Rome's great emperor, Caesar Augustus, was in power at this time, and had sent forth his decree for a polling or census of the whole world for purposes of taxation, etc. Luke informs us that it was in response to this royal decree that Joseph and Mary went up to their native city to be enrolled, and that thus it was that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and on account of the great course of people at the same time and for the same purpose, accommodations being scarce, the stable of the inn, or khan, was used by some as a lodging. Joseph and Mary, being of the late comers, were

forced to occupy these humble quarters, and thus it was that the King of glory, whose Kingdom is by and by to rule the world, was in the time of his flesh born in a stable and cradled in a manger.

THE ANGELS AND THE SHEPHERDS

Noble shepherds those must have been to whom the Almighty sent the angelic message respecting the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, which has rung down the ages and reached our ears--the message which thrills us the more in proportion as we are able to grasp its meaning. First a single angel appeared to the shepherds and allayed their fears, saying, "Fear not; behold I bring you good tidings."



SHEPHERD TENDING SHEEP

It would appear that fear is one of the dominating impulses of the human mind, especially in conjunction with any revelations from the Lord. Men realize--even the best of the race-- that they are imperfect and that the Almighty and his laws are perfect. Instinctively the world seems to realize that a curse or condemnation of the Almighty rests upon it, and instinctively it fears a further curse and further condemnation, realizing its continual and increasing sinfulness. The same is true today with all except the comparatively few who are well informed respecting the divine character and plan. Thus the subject of religion is generally obnoxious to the world in general--a subject which they prefer to avoid, because of a feeling of guilt and a dread of further knowledge and condemnation.

It is for the true children of God today, as it was for the angels at that time, to assure the world that God is better than all their fears--that God so loved the world as to redeem them from the just sentence of death, the curse that came upon all as inheritors of Adam's imperfection and sentence.

"Good tidings" is another translation of our word "gospel." How beautiful the thought that the gospel is really and truly good tidings. Alas, for the misrepresentations of God's plan, under which so many of his professed people misrepresent his character and his Word, and apply the term "gospel" to their various messages from the dark ages, teaching purgatory and eternal torment as the portion of the race. Let us get away from this false thought and get the truth that the gospel is good tidings. The angel elaborated, saying that his

message was good tidings of great joy, which should be unto all people. Ah, thank God, his plan is wider and deeper and higher and grander than anything we had ever conceived. The gospel message is not merely to be good tidings to the comparatively few that now have ears to hear and eyes to see its beauties, but in God's due time it is to be good tidings of great joy to all people.

As every member of Adam's race shared in his fall and in the curse of death which came upon him as a result, so every member of the race was included in the great redemptive sacrifice which our Lord Jesus offered and which was finished at Calvary. God's plan in Christ, as it is being worked out and shall ultimately be accomplished, will mean great joy for all people, and the tidings of this were given at the very moment of our Lord's birth, because he was the one through whom all the glorious things of the divine purpose and plan shall ultimately be accomplished.

THE CAUSE, THE LOGIC, OF THE MESSAGE

The message took cognizance of the fact that it was to reasonable people, who would want to know why the unchangeable God, who had once pronounced a curse, should at any time so amend and alter matters as to supplant the curse with a blessing. The messenger states the philosophy of the divine plan, "Unto you is born this day a Savior, which is Christ [Messiah] the Lord." There we have the key to the entire Gospel statement of how God could be just and yet be the justifier of sinners who accept Jesus. The word "Savior" here signifies life-giver, and how beautiful is the thought that as death is the wage of sin, the curse upon the race, this Messiah who was born is to be the one who will rescue the race from the sentence by giving them life again. The explanation of how he would give life was not given, nor was it necessary at that time; but now, in the light of developments, and with the explanations furnished through the Spirit in the New Testament, we see how that our Lord's voluntary sacrifice of his life, dying the just for the unjust, settled the claims of divine justice against Adam and thus incidentally against all who shared his sentence.

Truly the more we see of the divine plan for our salvation, which began to take shape in the birth of Jesus, the more we feel like shouting with the angelic choir praises to the God of heaven, thankfulness for his mercy to the children of men. It mattered not that the babe born in Bethlehem was the Savior only in prospect, that he could not even be anointed to do his work until he reached manhood's estate thirty years later; it mattered not that even then it would be necessary for him to lay down his life gradually through three and a half years of his earthly ministry, to be finished at Calvary; it mattered not either that the resurrection was still three days after that, and his ascension forty days later, and that the blessing in general would be deferred for nearly nineteen centuries thereafter. As the angels could sing and rejoice at the first budding of the divine plan of salvation, so also can all who have faith in the ultimate outcome rejoice with joy unspeakable and give praise to God in the highest and to his Son our Lord.

"SAVED BY HOPE"

Although nearly nineteen centuries have rolled away since that angelic message was delivered, it has not yet been fulfilled except in a limited measure by faith to those who have the eye of faith and the ears of faith, in all a "little flock." But the tidings of great misery for nearly all people has been spread abroad in the name of Christ, much to the discredit of the divine plan and to the dishonor of the divine character. Instead of carrying joy the message has very generally carried grief and sorrow, especially to the kind hearted and more generously disposed. Indeed we may say that no message of the Lord Jesus, either true or false, has ever reached all people. Even today, after nineteen centuries of propaganda, only a comparatively small portion of the human family have ever heard of the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved -- "nor is there salvation in any other."--Acts 4:12.

What, then, shall we say of the salvation which is come to those who have truly accepted Christ as their Savior, and who are today rejoicing in him as such, and who by faith are seeing the salvation of God begun in their own hearts and yet to be fully accomplished under the whole heavens? This the Apostle calls the salvation by hope. His words are, "We are saved by hope." (Romans 8:24.) We are not saved actually; we are still surrounded by sin, pain, sighing, crying and dying; the curse is not yet rolled away. All that the best of the Lord's people have received is salvation by hope,

by faith. Yet this anticipation of the future salvation, of the resurrection from the dead, of a participation in the glory, honor and immortality of the divine nature promised to the faithful, is so strong, so clear, that those who possess it are enabled to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, even in the midst of trials and difficulties and weaknesses and unfavorable conditions incident to the curse which still rests upon the race.

A PROPHECY OF GOOD THINGS

Yes, the angelic message was a prophecy of good things to be accomplished for the Church and the world during the Millennial age. The Church is to have the first blessing. The first resurrection is to be composed only of the blessed and holy who shall live and reign with Christ during the Millennium, the thousand years in which Satan shall be bound, and when the good influences of truth and righteousness shall enlighten the whole earth. The declaration of the Scriptures is that the deliverance of the Church will come early in the morning of that Millennial day, as the prophet declares, "God will help her early in the morning." --Psalm 46:5.

But much as we rejoice in the glorious hopes of the Gospel set before us who now see, who now believe, who now rejoice with joy unspeakable, we are glad that the divine mercy and love are of such lengths and breadths and heights and depths as to encompass the whole world of mankind, and to provide a blessing for every member of Adam's race through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood.

It will be during the Millennial age that this prophecy of the angel will have its fulfilment, and the great Savior who has already redeemed us by his sacrifice will stand forth as the King, the glorified Messiah, and establish his dominion of righteousness in the world for the blessing and uplifting of every member of the race. In harmony with the words of the Apostle, those will be times of refreshing, "times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21.) If the Lord had based the hope of the world upon some works of merit or righteousness of the world's doing, then indeed we might have feared--indeed the more we know of the world the less hope we would have. But, on the contrary, the Lord has based the entire proposition for the future blessing, not upon our worthiness, but upon the worthiness and sacrifice of his Son--To you is born a Life-giver, which is Messiah the Lord.

How it adds to our enjoyment of the coming age blessings to know that the trials and difficulties of this present Gospel age are subject to the divine supervision in the interest of the little flock that is now being gathered in advance from amongst men--the "elect," the Church. We see how the present trials and difficulties are the chiselings and polishings necessary to our development in the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit in the character-likeness of God's dear Son, our Lord, our Hope, our Bridegroom. How joyful the thought that soon the elect number called from the world to be the Bride, the Lamb's wife, will be completed and enter into her glory. How precious the thought that then they shall be privileged with their Lord and Master to extend the divine favor of blessing and uplift to the world. What higher honor or privilege or blessing could possibly come to any?

THE ANGELS' SONG

It was after the giving of the message of good tidings and great joy by the heavenly one that a host of angels appeared to the shepherds, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." This, too, is a prophecy. It is not yet true, but will be fulfilled in every particular in God's due time, which we believe is now nigh, even at the door. Not yet does God receive glory in the highest, not yet is there peace amongst men. Quite to the contrary. God's name is blasphemed, not only by those who vulgarly and in ribald jest take the divine name in vain, and not merely by the heathen who worship devils and think they are gods, but even by Christian people God's name is blasphemed every day. For be it known that blasphemy is any dishonorable misrepresentation of another. God be merciful to us, for at some time or other every one of us doubtless has blasphemed the holy name in this manner--by misrepresenting the divine character and divine plan, by picturing the God of love and mercy and justice and truth as the originator, the planner, the perpetuator of the eternal torment of the great mass of his creatures, born in sin and shapen in iniquity, born to sin as the sparks to fly upward.

But the Lord had mercy upon us because we did it ignorantly. And we also should have compassion upon others who still ignorantly misrepresent our God, and our energies should be continually bent to their assistance, that the eyes of their understanding might open more widely to perceive the lengths and breadths and heights and depths and know the love of God which passeth understanding.

Noting that peace on earth and good will to men have not followed the Savior's birth thus far, and discerning that this is a prophecy of what is to be accomplished during the Millennium, many have been inclined to change the translation of this verse so as to have it read, "On earth peace amongst men, in whom he is well pleased." However, by thus changing it the statement would not be true, for even the Lord's people have no peace on earth. Whatever peace they have is in their hearts, and based upon their faith in the Lord and in the glorious things which he has promised. Our Lord himself and the apostles testified to this, assuring us that whosoever in this present time would live godly should suffer persecution, that a man's foes would be they of his own household, etc. (2 Tim. 3:12; Matt. 10:26.) Let us not confuse ourselves nor abridge the testimony of the Word, but with the eye of faith look forward to the day of Christ in which all these glorious things shall have their fulfilment, in which peace shall indeed fill the whole earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, bringing divine favor and rolling away the curse from the entire groaning creation, as pointed out by the Apostle.--Rom. 8:22.

Not even with the inauguration of the Millennium will this prophecy be fulfilled: not until its close, when the human family shall have been lifted by the Kingdom regulations out of sin, sickness, pain, sorrow and death, up, up to all that was lost in Adam--not



BETHLEHEM

until then will there indeed be glory to God in the highest, not until then will there be peace amongst men. Nor are we to understand that the entire race will be appreciative of the divine love and favor even after they have fully seen the righteousness of God in Christ manifested. On the contrary, the Scriptures seem to clearly teach that there will be a class who will then prove unfit for life eternal, unappreciative of the divine favor, and it is with pleasure that we learn that all such shall be utterly destroyed from amongst the people in the Second Death. Thus eventually, by the close of the Millennium,

R2407 "UNTO YOU IS BORN...A SAVIOR" -- DEC. 25 -- HEB. 1:1-9 -- "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."--Luke 2:10,11.

"CHRISTMAS Day," in celebration of our dear Redeemer's birth, has for long centuries been celebrated on December 25th; and altho it is now well known that this date is in error, and that it more properly corresponds with the date of the annunciation to Mary, nine months before our Lord was born, and that he was born about October 1st,--nevertheless, since the Lord has given no instructions whatever upon this subject, and since it is proper to do good deeds and

think good thoughts upon any day, it cannot be improper, in harmony with general usage, for us to remember in a social way our dear Redeemer's birth at this time.

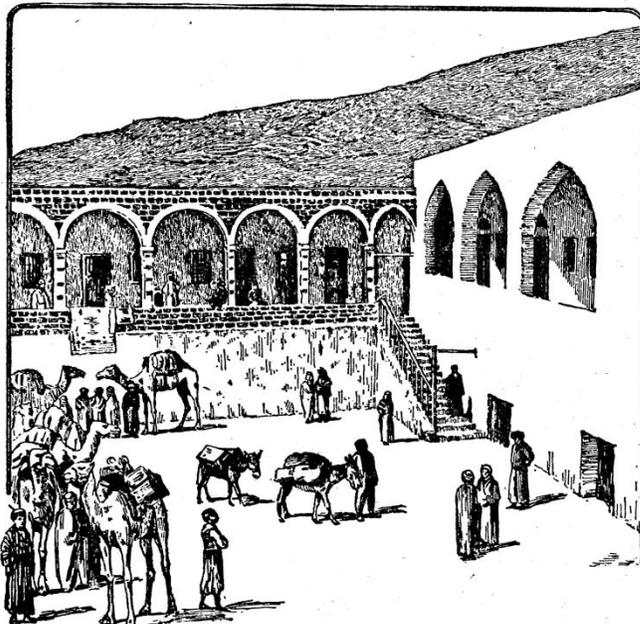
Our Lord Jesus was God's great gift to Israel and to the world, as yet appreciated fully only by the Spiritual Israelite. Through him also all of God's gifts are promised and to be bestowed. (Eph. 4:8.) In view of these things, the custom throughout Christendom of making Christmas Day a joyful one, by the interchange of little tokens of love in the family, and to the poor, seems most appropriate.

The central thought of our Golden Text is that Christ is a *Savior*, provided for the world--for "all people." And while all may

Satan and all wilful wrongdoers having been destroyed, the time will come as declared in the Scriptures when all voices in heaven and in earth and under the earth shall be heard praising God, him that sitteth upon the throne, and the Lamb forever and ever. Hosanna! Glory to God in the highest! Peace and good will to men! will be the final shout of a redeemed race when the great plan of salvation shall have been fully outworked according to the divine plan set forth in the Scriptures.

FROM GLORY TO A MANGER

The time of our Lord's birth is quite clearly fixed. We have gone into the subject in detail in "Dawn" Vol. II., and will not here repeat. The notable census made by order of Caesar Augustus included the civilized world of that day, and according to Jewish custom each family and tribe were enrolled therein. Both Joseph and Mary, being of the Davidic line, went to the city of David--Bethlehem. The city is a small one on a hillside. Nearly all of it appears to good advantage in the cut on preceding page.



INSIDE COURT OF AN ORIENTAL INN

The inns or hotels of that land are very different from ours: they are neither hotels nor drinking saloons, but entered from a court-yard, as in the cut. Various large unfurnished rooms are at the service of the traveller, who carries with him his wraps, in which he sleeps, and his food and utensils for such light housekeeping as he may choose to do. Stalls for horses, camels, etc., are provided on the ground floor, and in the event of a crowd, as on such a census occasion, it is no uncommon thing for people, finding the upper large rooms all crowded full, to make themselves nearly as comfortable in the stabling department. Thus it came that the Lord was ushered into the world, which as the Logos he had made (John 1:2), in a most humble manner.

It was there that the shepherds found the babe, as predicted by the angels, and went forth proclaiming the fact; but Mary made no boasts but waited for God's due time.

gather something of the force and meaning of the word "Savior" as signifying deliverer, its underlying force and significance are not generally recognized. It is supposed that the Lord and his disciples spoke the common language of Palestine, the Syriac, and in that language this word, rendered Savior, signifies "Life-Giver." How much force this adds to the meaning of this beautiful text! Jesus was born to be a Life-Giver, and this joyful news is to all people. He may give *life* to whomsoever he chooses; and he chooses to give it, in harmony with the divine will, only to those who come unto the Father through him, by faith and obedience...

In the present time (sin abounding and Satan deceiving and blinding) not many can

appreciate this great gift of God's love, and not many become his disciples in verity. This is the time, therefore, in which the Lord selects, "elects," from the whole world of the redeemed ones the "little flock," who shall be joint-heirs with Christ in the Kingdom.

But thanks be unto God, we can now see that the plan of salvation does not stop with the gathering of the elect Church, but that in the full sense of the word it is merely beginning there. And the testimony of the angelic choir which sang at our Savior's birth, and of the angel who declared, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," shall yet be completely fulfilled...

The exalted and fully empowered Life-Giver will then stand ready, not only to make known to all mankind the terms of the New Covenant under which all may have eternal life, by obedience to God in him, but as the great Prophet he will stand ready to teach, and as the great Priest he will stand ready to help their infirmities and to direct

their paths in the way of righteousness.
"Hallelujah! What a Savior!"

R3468 "Since the celebration of our Lord's birth is not a matter of divine appointment or injunction, but merely a tribute of respect to him, it is not necessary for us to quibble particularly about the date. We may as well join with the civilized world in celebrating the grand event on the day which the majority celebrate --"Christmas day."

R4298 "Let us, then, rejoice at this joyful season of the year and have our hearts filled with appreciation of the Divine love and generosity, which gave us the great gift of Messiah, and thus indirectly a knowledge of the Kingdom yet to come and of our share in that Kingdom, which shall bless the world. As we have freely received, let us freely give, and thus copy our Lord and the heavenly Father. Some may have the opportunity of giving many gifts of many kinds. All will have the privilege of offering to their fellows, directly or indirectly, gifts of God's love, by

making known to them the riches of his grace, as presented in the "Divine Plan of the Ages."

The message of God's love is the most precious thing we have ever received, and let us have this in mind when offering gifts to others that, whatever else we may or may not be able to give our dear friends and neighbors and loved ones, we may offer them this; and our manner and general deportment should show how we value it above rubies, and thus we may best commend the gift of God to others and help them to appreciate it. In such presentations kind words, kind looks, will proceed from the loving heart, which has itself been saved by the power of the Truth from the domination of the Adversary and sin and selfishness. Let us learn to scatter these gifts of grace and Truth and happy influences to all about us, not merely once a year, but every day and every hour, and not merely upon our friends, but, God-like, upon our enemies also, for "He is kind to the unthankful, and causes his sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good."

R3289 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

CHRISTMAS REVIEW

--READING LESSON, PSALM 103--DECEMBER 27--

THE lessons of the last quarter, dealing with Saul, David and Solomon, are fresh in our memories. Saul's great but wasted opportunities have impressed us with the thought that we also have great opportunities, and need to be on guard lest these should be wasted. Saul's opportunities were of an earthly kind, in connection with an earthly kingdom; ours relate to the everlasting glorious Kingdom. His mistake was in failure to give his heart entirely to the Lord. Instead of doing this he sought to serve the Lord but to maintain a will of his own. Seeing how great was his mistake impresses upon us the importance of making our consecration full, complete, and then seeing to it that, by the Lord's assistance, we faithfully carry out the provisions of that consecration.

In David, Saul's successor, we have a man after God's own heart--not in respect to all the affairs of his life, but in respect to his heart, his intentions, his holiness of will, of purpose. Seeing what God appreciated in David helps us to understand the better what he appreciates in all those who would please him. Not that we could hope to please God of ourselves,--but having accepted his grace in our hearts, having come under the robe of the Redeemer's imputed righteousness, and having realized ourselves accepted in the Beloved, then it must be the desire of our hearts to attain as nearly as possible to the divine standard in thought, word and deed. By so doing we are making our calling and election sure, for the Lord seeks only those to be his servants who worship him in spirit and in truth. He accepts us under Christ's merit because we have declared that we desire to be like Christ and to fulfil the Father's will. Our acceptance is with the view of giving us an opportunity to demonstrate the truthfulness of our assertions--to fulfil the covenant of self-sacrifice in obedience to the principles of righteousness. Failures surely will from time to time mark our very best endeavors, but so surely as we are of the David class, the beloved of the Lord, so surely our failures will cause us regret and pain, and lead us to the Lord to entreat his forgiveness in the name and merit of him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood.

David's warfare with the enemies of the Lord, and with the enemies of the Kingdom and Law which the Lord had established in Israel, were continued through David's career, and these very properly represent the warfare which all the Lord's beloved ones must endure faithfully if they would abide in his favor. Loyalty to the principles of the divine government is of prime importance; the royal banner must be lifted high; our lives must be risked and be given in defence of the divine character and teachings if we would be counted worthy of the Kingdom of glory, if we would belong to the house of David, the beloved, which the Lord has promised shall be established forever--the house of Christ, the house of sons.

We review Solomon's peaceful reign and note how its opening years were typical of the blessings of the noontide of the Millennial Kingdom. The glories and wisdom and wealth of Solomon were but

trifles in comparison to the wisdom, honor and riches which God has promised to those who love him. Respecting the faithful overcomers, we remember it is declared that they shall know even as they are known by God, that they shall share the glory, honor and immortality of their glorious Head and Master.

We remember, too, the typical temple, and its construction from materials previously prepared during the Levitic reign, and how this prefigured our preparation as living stones for the glorious temple of the future, in which God shall make his presence known to all the families of the earth for their blessing and uplifting, and for the joy of all those who shall respond to the blessed influences of the Millennial Kingdom. The thought of the preparation of these stones causes us much comfort and joy respecting the trials and difficulties of this present time, as we realize that they are working out for us and in us preparation for the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which will be ours if we are faithful when we shall be brought together in glory as the spiritual temple of the Lord.

This review is perhaps as appropriate a lesson for the closing Sunday of the year as any, especially when we remember that all of these glories and blessings and privileges are ours because of the great redemptive work accomplished by him whose entrance upon the work is celebrated by Christmas day. ^{1}Although we cannot agree that this is the proper day for celebrating the birth of our dear Redeemer, but must insist that it was about October first, nevertheless since he did not intimate his desire that we should celebrate his birthday it is quite immaterial upon what day that event, of so great importance to all, is celebrated. Upon this day, so generally celebrated, we may properly enough join with all whose hearts are in the attitude of love and appreciation toward God and toward the Savior.

The habit of giving little remembrances one to another at this time of year seems to us specially appropriate. God is the great giver of every good and perfect gift. He is continually giving and we are continually receiving from him; but amongst all his gifts the one of greatest importance to us is the gift of his Son to be our Redeemer. While, therefore, thanking the Lord for this great gift and for the great plan which centered in it, it is appropriate that we cultivate in our hearts the spirit of liberality, generosity, and that we allow this spirit to exercise itself to some extent--according to our conditions and circumstances--toward those with whom we have contact, especially to the members of our own households. We recommend that every little gift on this occasion should, so far as possible, represent or be accompanied by some little remembrancer of the great gift--something to draw the mind of the recipient to the fact that the great gift of God in Christ is and should be in the minds of all who give or who receive the trifling exchanges of the season.

^{1} Dec. 25 Manna, Lu. 2:10-11