

## ABRAHAM'S AGE ON ENTERING CANAAN

We are in receipt of a number of letters, calling attention to what seems to the writers an error in the Chronology given in *MILLENNIAL DAWN*, VOL. II., relative to the date of Abraham's birth, his entrance into Canaan, etc. For the sake of these, as well as others who may have the same difficulty, we here enlarge upon what is stated in VOL. II., pages 44-47.

Gen. 11:32 says that at his death Terah's age was two hundred and five years; Acts 7:4 says that *then* Abraham removed into Canaan; and Gen. 12:4 states that Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Hence Terah's age at Abraham's birth *must have been* one hundred and thirty years.

But is not this out of harmony with Gen. 11:26, which says: "And Terah lived *seventy years*, and begat Abram, Nahor and Haran"? We answer, No. The point of confusion is in the fact that Haran, the eldest, is mentioned last, while Abram, the youngest, is mentioned first—possibly because of his greater prominence in the narrative, or, possibly, as a

little stumbling-block to hinder us from seeing the facts except as guided by the Lord, in his due time.

That Haran was the eldest of the sons of Terah is quite evident from the recorded facts. His son Lot was old enough to be the companion of his uncle Abraham. Lot and Abraham were probably nearly of the same age, as each had his own flocks and herds and herdsmen. When Sodom was destroyed Lot had two daughters of marriageable age and others already married. This was before Isaac was born, Abraham being then ninety-nine years old.—Gen. 17:24; 18:1, 16; 19:8, 14.

Again, notice the likelihood of Haran's being much the eldest of Terah's sons, and Nahor the second, thus,—Nahor married one of his brother Haran's daughters (Milcah—See Gen. 24:15), whose *grand-daughter*, Rebecca, became the wife of Abraham's son, Isaac.—Gen. 24:67.

Our reckoning as given in the *DAWN* is therefore sustained by all the known facts and exact statements of Scripture.

## THE APOSTLE PETER'S EXHORTATION

[Reprinted in issue of February 15, 1903, which please see.]

## DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

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## A GLIMPSE OF CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN

FROM TWO JAPANESE CHRISTIANS AT THE LATE WORLD'S PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

Mr. Nobuta Kishimoto, in his interesting address on "The Future of Religion in Japan," expressed his hope for the ultimate triumph of Christianity, although he showed that the religious impulses of the people are divided between Shintoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. He said:—

"The prevailing attitude of the educated classes toward any religion is one of cold indifference, if not strong antagonism. Among them the agnosticism of Spencer, the materialism of Comte and the pessimism of Schopenhauer and Hartmann are most influential. To them, God is either the product of our own imagination or, at most, unknowable. To them, religion is nothing but superstition; to them, the universe is a chance-work and has no end or meaning. Again, to them, men are nothing but lower animals in disguise, without the image of God in them and without a bright future before them."

He reports a Christian population of 100,000, of which the Roman Catholic is the strongest in membership; then the Protestant, which is represented by thirty-one different denominations; and, finally, the Greek Catholic. But which is to triumph? That is the question, to which he replies:—

"We do not want Catholic Christianity, nor do we want Protestant Christianity. We want the Christianity of the Bible. . . . We do not want the Christianity of England, nor the Christianity of America: we want the Christianity of Japan. . . . We Japanese want the Chris-

tianity of the Christ. We want the truth of Christianity, nay, we want the truth, pure and simple. We want the spirit of the Bible. . . . We hope for the union of all Christians, at least in spirit, if not in form. But we Japanese Christians are hoping more: we are ambitious to present to the world one new and unique interpretation of Christianity as it is in our Bible, which knows no sectarian controversy and which knows no heresy hunting. Indeed, the time is coming, and ought to come, when God shall be worshiped, not by rites and ceremonies, but in spirit and in truth."

Mr. Haruchi Kozaki, president of Doshisha University, Japan, presented a paper on "Christianity in Japan: Its Present Condition and Future Prospects," in which he said:—

"The progress of Christianity in Japan is quite remarkable. It is only thirty-four years since the first Protestant missionary put his foot on its shore. And it is scarcely twenty years since the first Protestant church was organized in Japan. Yet now there are more Christians there than in Turkey, where missionaries have been working more than seventy years; and there are more self-supporting churches there than in China, where a double or triple number of missionaries have been working nearly a century. In Japan, Christian papers and magazines are all edited by the natives, not only in name but in reality. Christian books, which have been most influential, have nearly all been written or trans-

lated by them, while in other countries it is very rare to find the native Christians writing Christian books or editing papers. Only recently *The Christian*, the most influential Christian paper in Japan, had a Symposium to name fifteen books which are most useful in leading men to Christianity, instructing Christians and giving good counsel to young people; and it is interesting to see that most of the books named are those written or translated by Japanese Christians.

"Christianity in Japan has already reached a stage that no other missionary fields have ever attained. Their native Christians not only take part in all discussions, but they are in fact leading all kinds of discussion, theological as well as practical. They are leading, not only all kinds of Christian work, literary and evangelistic, educational and charitable, but they are also leading Christian thought in Japan. Let me relate one or two instances:

"Some six or seven years ago, when we were contemplating the union of the Itochi and Kumiai denominations, the two most powerful Christian bodies in Japan, among twenty members of a joint committee appointed by the Synod of one and the General Council of the other, there were only four missionaries. When, a few years ago, the Kumiai denomination adopted a new confession of faith, the missionaries took almost no part. This confession was drawn up by a committee, consisting entirely of Japanese, and adopted in the General Council, in which missionaries took very little or no part. In Japan, missionaries are really 'helpers,' and I should say to their credit they, in most cases, willingly take secondary positions in all Christian works. All this, I say, is not to disparage the work of missionaries, but only to show the progress of Christianity among the natives of Japan.

"There are many peculiar features in Japanese Christianity which are seldom seen in other countries. . . . For instance, while in most of the churches in this country female members are almost two to one in proportion to male members, it is quite otherwise in Japan. There female members in relation to male members are nearly three to four. This is almost in inverse ratio to their proportions in the United States. Another is the predominance of young people in our churches. You may step into any of our churches in any city or village and you will be struck by the great preponderance of young faces. We have not yet taken statistics of members as to their age, but any one who has experience in Christian work there notes this peculiarity. . . .

"One more point is the predominance of the Shizoku or military class. They have been and still are the very brains of the Japanese people. Though they are not usually well off in material wealth, they are superior intellectually and morally. Christians in other missionary fields are usually from the lower classes. In India the Brahmins rarely become Christians, neither do the literary class in China. But in Japan the Shizoku class take a lead.

"These peculiarities in the constituency of the membership of Christian churches in Japan may be accounted for by the simple fact that the males, the young and the Shizoku classes are most accessible. The Shizoku class, as a body, has had hitherto almost no religion, and they have been mostly Confucianists. By the last revolution they lost their profession as well as their means of support, and thus they are all unsettled in life, and so accessible to every kind of new influence and truth. Young people have also no settled opinions and are open to new influences and thus accessible to new truth. And so it is with men as compared with women. They are generally more progressive, and hence more accessible. . . .

"As the Japanese Christian population is of such a constituency, the native Christians are more progressive, more active, more able to stand on their own feet, and more capable of establishing self-supporting churches. But this strength is also their weakness. They are more liable to be drifted, more apt to be changed and more disposed to be flippant.

"The next peculiar feature of Japanese Christianity is lack of sectarian or denominational spirit. About thirty different denominations of Protestant churches, represented by about an equal number of missionary boards, are on the field, each teaching its own peculiar tenets. But they are making very little impression on our Christians. . . . We have been having, at first annually, but lately once in three years, what was called "Dai Shin Baku Kwai," which was afterward changed into the Evangelical Alliance, the meeting of all Christians in Japan, irrespective of denominations or churches—the most popular and interesting we have. Again, Japanese Christians did not know any distinction of denominations or churches. But when they found out that there are many different folds, and that one belongs to his denomination, not by his own choice, but simply by chance or circumstance which could in no way be controlled, there is no

wonder that these Christians begin to ask: Why should not we, all Christians, unite in one church?

"The union movement in Japan rose at first in some such way. Though we have now lost much of this simple spirit, still, Japanese Christians are essentially undenominational. You may see that the church which adopted Presbyterian forms of government refused to be called 'Presbyterians' or 'Reformed,' and adopted the broad name 'Itschi,' the 'United;' but, not content even with this broad name, it has recently changed it to a still broader name, 'Nippon Kinisuto Kio Kwai.'—'The Church of Christ in Japan.'

"The church which has adopted an Episcopal form of government lately dropped the name Episcopacy and adopted instead the name of 'The Holy Church of Japan.' Kumiai churches for a long time had no name except this: 'A Church of Christ.' When it was found out that it was necessary to adopt some name to distinguish itself from other churches, its Christians reluctantly adopted the name of 'Kumiai,' which means 'associated;' for at that time they happened to form an association of churches which were until then independent of each other. They always refused to be called the 'Congregational churches,' although they have adopted mostly Congregational policy of church government.

"The third distinctive feature of Japanese Christianity is the prevalence of a liberal spirit in doctrinal matters. While missionaries are both preaching and teaching the orthodox doctrines, Japanese Christians are eagerly studying the most liberal theology. Not only are they studying, but they are diffusing these liberal thoughts with zeal and diligence, and so I believe that, with a small exception, most of Japanese pastors and evangelists are more or less liberal in their theology. . . .

"While the American Board of Foreign Missions is strenuously on the watch to send no missionary who has any inclination toward the Andover Theology, the pastors and evangelists of the Kumiai churches, which are in close connection with the same board, are advocating and preaching theology perhaps more liberal than the Andover Theology. Just to illustrate: Some years ago, in one of our councils, when we were going to install a pastor, he expressed the orthodox belief on future life, which was a great surprise to all. Then members of the council pressed hard questions to him so as to force him to adopt the doctrine of future probation, as though it were the only doctrine which is tenable.

"Only recently, when a bishop of a certain church was visiting Japan, he was surprised to find that a young Japanese professor in the seminary connected with his own church was teaching quite a liberal theology, and he gave him a strong warning.

"As to the creeds: when 'The Church of Christ in Japan' was organized, it adopted the Presbyterian and the Reformed standards: namely, the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the Canon of Dort and the Heidelberg Confession of Faith. But Christians of the same church found them too stiff, one-sided and conservative, and thus they have lately dropped these standards as their creed altogether. They have now the 'Apostles' Creed' with a short preface attached to it.

"When the Kumiai church was first organized, it adopted the Nine Articles of the Basis of the Evangelical Alliance as its creed. But Christians of the same denomination became soon dissatisfied with its narrowness, and so in 1890 they made their own creed, which is far simpler and broader. But even this creed is not understood as binding to all, but only as a common expression of religious belief prevailing among them in general.

"Though Japanese Christians are largely on the side of liberal theology, they are not in any way in favor of Unitarianism or even Universalism. . . . The most of our educated classes have no religion. Though they favor certain kinds of Christian ethical teachings, they have no faith in any religion or supernatural truth. . . . But Christians are, as a whole, loyal to Christ, and are all to be characterized as evangelical. . . .

"There was a time when Christianity was making such a stride in its progress that, in one year, it gained 40 or 50 per cent increase. This was between 1882 and 1888. These years may be regarded as a flowery era in the annals of Japan. It was in 1883 that, when we were having the 'Dai Shin Boku Kwai' in Tokyo, perhaps the most interesting meeting in its history, one of the delegates expressed his firm belief that in ten years Japan would become a Christian country. This excited quite an applause; and no one felt it as too extravagant to cherish such a hope, for such was the firm belief at that time. Since then, progress in our churches has not been such as was expected. Not only have members not increased in such a proportion as in years before, but in some cases there

can be seen a decline of religious zeal and of the self-sacrificing spirit. And so in these last few years the cry heard most frequently among our churches has been 'Awake, awake as in the days past!'

"To show the decline of that religious enthusiasm, I may take an illustration from statistics of the Kumiai churches as to its amount of contribution. In 1882 this amount was \$6.72 per Christian; in 1888 this amount ran down to \$2.15, and in the last year there has been still more decline, coming down to \$1.95. In amount of increase of membership there has been a proportional decline. Why there was such a decline is not hard to see. Among various causes I may mention three principal ones.

"Public sentiment in Japan has been always fluctuating from one side to another. It is like a pendulum, now going to one extreme and then to another. This movement of public sentiment, within the last fifteen or twenty years, can easily be pointed out. From 1877 to 1882 I may regard as a period of reaction that of revival of the antiforeign spirit. During this period the cry, 'Repel foreigners,' which was on the lips of every Japanese at the time of the revolution, and since then unheard, was again heard. It was at this time that Confucial teaching was revived in all the public schools; and the Emperor issued a proclamation that the western ethical principles were not suitable to the Japanese, and were not to be taught in our public schools.

"Then the pendulum went to the other side. And now another era came in. This was a period of western ideas, which covers the years between 1882 and 1888. This was the age of great interest in everything that came from abroad. Not only was English eagerly taught, but all sorts of foreign manners and customs were busily introduced. Foreign costumes, not only of gentlemen but of ladies, foreign diet, as well as foreign liquors, became most popular among all classes. Every newspaper, almost without exception, advocated the adoption of everything foreign, so that Japan seemed as if it would be no longer an oriental nation, but would become occidentalized. It was at this time that such a paper as *Jiji Shimpo* advocated adoption of Christianity as the national religion of Japan. It was no wonder that people poured into Christian churches, and that the latter made unprecedented strides in progress.

"But the pendulum swung to its extreme, and now another movement came in. The sign of reactionary and antiforeign spirit might be seen in everything—in costumes, in sentiments, as well as in opinions. Then the cry 'Japan for the Japanese' became heard in all corners of the empire. Everything that has flavor of foreign countries has been stigmatized as unworthy of adoption by the Japanese, and, instead of it, everything native is praised as superior or worthy of preservation. Buddhism, which has been regarded for years as a religion of the ignorant and inferior classes, is now praised as a superior religion, much superior to Christianity; and many who once favored adoption of Christianity as the national religion are seen publicly in Buddhistic ceremonies. Christianity is denounced as antagonistic to the growth of our national spirit, in conflict with our best morality, and also as against the intent of the imperial edict which was issued two years ago as the code of morals in all our schools. Conflict between Christianity and national education has become the most popular theme among certain classes of the people. Strong sense of national feeling has been aroused among all classes of people, and now it is not strange that Christians also feel its influence.

"And thus the doors to Christianity seem to have been closed, and we have a great decline in its growth. But now, again, the pendulum has reached another end, and there are signs that another era is ushering in. 'Every movement has

rhythm,' says Herbert Spencer, and this is true in the progress of Christianity in Japan.

"One word as to the prospect in the future. That Japan will not become a Christian nation in a few years is a plain fact. But that it will become one in the course of time is almost above doubt, and it is only a question of time. Still, 'Rome was not built in a day,' and so it will take time to Christianize Japan. That there are strong obstacles and great hindrances can easily be seen. It may be easy to show the reasonableness of Christianity, but to instil true Christian spirit into the heart of the people is not an easy task. We can show them more easily the folly of other religions, but to build up a true Christian church requires a long time. . . . I am not at all anxious about the future of Christianity in Japan, as far as its final victory is concerned. But there are many difficult problems pressing us hard for their solution. I shall here state these problems in a few words.

(1) "The first problem that comes under our notice is that of relation between Christianity and our nationality, namely, our national habit and spirit. Professor Inonge and others have been raising their voices against Christianity, claiming it is in conflict with our national spirit. And this cry against Christianity has become so popular among Buddhists, Shintoists and Reactionists that they make it the only weapon of their attack against Christianity. But in my belief this problem is not so hard as it looks. What outsiders think to be the real conflict seems to us only shadow and vapor.

(2) "Relation between missionaries and native Christians is another problem. How must they be related? In other countries, such as India or China, such a question, perhaps, may never arise; but in Japan it is entirely different. Japanese Christians will never be satisfied under missionary auspices. To be useful to our country the missionaries must either co-operate with or join native churches and become like one of the native workers.

(3) "Problem of denominations and church government is another difficulty. Of course we shall not entirely dispense with denominations and sects. But it seems rather foolish to have all denominations, which are peculiar to some countries and which have certain peculiar histories attached to them, introduced into Japan where no such history exists and where circumstances are entirely different. And so we think we can reduce the number of denominations. But how to begin is a hard problem.

"So also with the form of church government. It is needless to say that we need not, or ought not, to copy in any way the exact forms of church governments which are in vogue in the United States or in any other countries. But to formulate a form of government that suits our country the best, and at the same time works well elsewhere, is quite a difficult task.

(4) "Whether we need any written creed, and, if so, what kind of creed is best to have, is also a question. In all teachings of missionaries and others there is always more or less of husks mixed with genuine truth. And at the same time every form of Christianity has some excellent truth in it. And it is hard to make distinction between essentials and non-essentials, between creed and husks. This is a hard problem for Japanese theologians to solve. [DAWN will solve it for you as it has for others!]

"Japanese Christians must solve all these problems by themselves. I believe there is a grand mission for Japanese Christians. I believe that it is our mission to solve all these problems which have been, and are still, stumbling blocks in all lands; and it is also our mission to give to all the oriental nations and the rest of the world a guide to true progress and a realization of the glorious Gospel which is in Jesus Christ. . . . Our prayer is and always must be: 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.'

## TRUE CHRISTIAN LIBERALITY

Liberality, generosity, is essentially a Christian grace. God is love, and all who partake of his spirit must be proportionately loving and generous. But as we are instructed not to be wise in our own conceits, nor to be wise above what is written in God's Word, so likewise it is well for all true children of God to beware of assuming to have a greater, wider or deeper love than that clearly set forth in God's Word as the only real and true standard. God's people are to set up a standard neither for God nor for themselves; but as obedient children they should not fashion their minds and faith after their own defective conceptions, but according as the Lord has revealed.

Some err on one side of this question and some on the

other, but the remedy for both errors is the same—submit your heads and your hearts unto the direction of the Lord through his inspired Word.

That Word nowhere teaches that everlasting torment is the wages of sin, but that the wages of sin is death. Every plain (non-symbolic) statement of the Scriptures agrees that the soul that sinneth, it shall die. Surely, then, no one is justified in maligning, yea, blaspheming God's character and plan by teaching directly or indirectly the contrary—that he will keep the sinner's soul alive to all eternity in order to torment it. There would be neither love nor justice in such a course.

On the other hand the Word nowhere teaches Universalism

—that the entire human family will be everlastingly saved to divine favor and blessing. And those who rush from the one extreme of faith in an almost universal torment, to the other extreme of belief in Universalism are carried from one human error to another human error. However, the finding of the one error to have been the result of a too careless handling of God's Word and a leaning to perverted human reason and judgment should put all upon their guard thereafter: but frequently it does not, as we see; and, getting filled with the thought of God's love, they seem to forget that God has more than one attribute of character and that these must all be co-ordinated in any plan that is his—that his wisdom and his justice each join with his love in his plan for man's salvation from sin and its penalty, death.

The Scriptures do, indeed, teach that the great ransom-sacrifice given by our Redeemer will sooner or later bring to every member of the human family fullest opportunity for the recovery of all that he lost in Adam. But they forget that although Adam had life, its everlasting continuance was not assured for this he was on trial when he wilfully sinned and thus cut short his trial and brought upon himself, and upon us in his loins, the sentence of death.

It is *what* was lost, and all that was lost that our Lord

came to save. The salvation made possible by his ransom-sacrifice is a new trial for life everlasting, the results of which are expressed in John 3:36; Rev. 21:7, 8.

It is sufficient that God should grant a universal, impartial trial to all; that those who, under the favorable conditions of the New Covenant, will fully submit themselves to God may have life, and that others may be manifested and, as cumberers of the ground, may be destroyed in the second death. Love, wisdom and justice could never agree to let a wilful sinner live to mar the peace of the holy; nor could they consent that such should be deprived of their own wills in order to their everlasting existence, for their companionship is not sufficiently desirable; nor could they consent that they should be kept alive, and that their wills should be kept under divine restraints to all eternity. Such lives and such companionship are undesirable: the remainder of God's universe would be blessed by their destruction in the second death. Let us not be more wise, more loving, or more just than the only living and true God who dwells in a light which no man can approach unto, and whose mind is communicated to us through his Word.—1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 5:9, 10.

Let us practice the grace of liberality according to, and not outside of, the boundaries laid down in the Lord's Word.

## THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE

IV. QUAR., LESSON XI., DEC. 10, 1 PET. 1:1-12.

*Golden Text*—"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."—Col. 1:12.

Out of a heart inspired with the glorious hope set before the consecrated saints of the Gospel dispensation flows the impassioned and eloquent greeting of the Apostle Peter to others of like precious faith. To "the elect according to the foreknowledge of God, . . . grace unto you and peace be multiplied." And every line of his epistle, even the words of greeting, are full of instruction.

VERSE 2 shows that the election referred to was not an arbitrary election, but that it was conditioned upon three things—(1) the sanctification or full consecration of the believer; (2) his implicit obedience to the divine discipline and teaching; and (3) his full reliance upon the precious blood of Christ for cleansing and salvation from sin and death.

VERSE 3 gratefully and joyfully points to the resurrection of Christ as the assurance of our final triumph through him.

VERSES 4, 5 declare that the glorious inheritance of the saints was not for immediate possession at the instant of death, but that it was reserved, and that it would be revealed in the *last time*—at the second advent of the Lord. So the Apostle Paul also taught, saying, when he was about to die, "Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing."—2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

VERSES 6-9 are precious reminders of the joys of faith, to attain the full fruition of which, the endurance of present afflictions are causes for thanksgiving, because their discipline is necessary to prepare us for the glorious inheritance of the saints in light.

VERSES 10-12 declare that the revelations of divine truth

concerning the glorious inheritance of the saints of the Gospel age were never made known in former ages, even to the faithful prophets, nor to the angels who earnestly desired to know, and who diligently searched and sought to discover the deep significance of the prophecies of these things, which are now made known to us by the holy Spirit which inspired the apostles and through them instructs the church.

And this high calling of "the elect" "church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven," is still a blessed secret among the saints, which "none of the princes of this world [the great ones of the world—"the princes," either ecclesiastical or civil] knew." (1 Cor. 2:6-10) Nor do they yet know of the glory to be revealed in the saints. The religious princes of all the religions of the world, which from the four corners of the earth recently assembled in Chicago, only verified and emphasized this fact, and proved their utter ignorance of this secret of the Lord, in which his humble, faithful ones are rejoicing today with joy unspeakable and full of glory. "Howbeit, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect [that are of a perfect heart, disposition or intention, the humble and obedient, the truly wise—Dan. 12:10]; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world for our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew. . . . Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit"—through his holy apostles and prophets in whose divine inspiration we have the fullest confidence, notwithstanding the efforts of the princes of this world to shake it. God be praised for the abundant testimony of his inspired, holy Word!

## THE GLORIFIED SAVIOR

IV. QUAR., LESSON XII., DEC. 17, REV. 1:9-20.

*Golden Text*—"Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."—Phil. 2:9.

VERSE 9. John, who received this vision, and was commissioned to convey it to the Church, so far from being puffed up by this privilege, humbly reminds us that the vision was from God, and that he who received it made no claims of superior sanctity or worthiness, and that he was simply their brother and companion in tribulation, a member with them of the embryo kingdom of heaven, which now suffers violence (Matt. 11:12), but nevertheless in patient waiting for its glorious triumph at the second advent of Jesus Christ.

Because of his faithfulness in believing and teaching the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, John had been banished to the lonely and sterile isle of Patmos; but the place of his exile was made glorious with the presence of the Lord and the manifestations of his grace, not only to his faithful Apostle, but also to all of the church through him.

VERSE 10. The expression, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day," we understand to mean that on that day (the first day of the week) John was specially filled with the holy Spirit of love and adoration and joy in God as to be mentally lifted above his surroundings and out of the thoughts and feelings of the old nature; so that, forgetting for the time

the things of time and sense, there came to his soul an overwhelming sense of the divine presence and favor. To such a condition his circumstances were peculiarly favorable, isolated as he was from all human intercourse, and alone with God. His was not a sickly sentimentalism causing him to shirk the duties and responsibilities of active life and impelling him to that of a recluse. No; far from it. He had been active, faithful and loyal to God and zealous for his cause; and when the enforced seclusion came as a penalty for such faithfulness, he rejoiced also in this "tribulation,"—this privilege of enduring hardness as a good soldier; and from his sense of the divine approval, both of his faithfulness in activity and of his patience in this enforced inactivity and seclusion, sprang the joy which only those know who have endured something for Christ's sake and experienced the fellowship of his sufferings.

In such times of tribulation the Lord's presence and comfort are most precious to his saints, and they begin to learn what it means to live "in the spirit"—above the world, and hence to a great extent unaffected by its conditions.

Thus, as the Apostle drew near to the Lord, the Lord drew

near to him; and on this occasion, as there was a special message to be conveyed to the church, this beloved and faithful disciple, being in the proper attitude of mind and heart—"a broken and emptied vessel," fit for the Master's use—was the chosen and honored instrument. And, therefore, he was permitted to see and hear, in symbolic visions, the wonderful things which God had to reveal to his church.

He heard "behind" him [from some unseen source] "a great voice as of a trumpet"—indicative of an important proclamation.

VERSE 11. The first announcement identifies the speaker as our Lord and Redeemer, the beginning and the ending of Jehovah's direct creation—"the only begotten Son of God"—the alpha and the omega, the first and the last. See verses 8, 17, 18; John 1:2, 3; Col. 1:15-17; Rev. 3:14; also WATCH TOWER, April 15, '93.

Then followed the instructions to write what he was about to see, and to send the book to the seven churches mentioned. The number seven, being a symbol of completeness, meant here not merely the churches named, but the complete nominal Gospel church of the entire age;—the special addresses to each of these being specially applicable to the several stages of the Gospel church which they represent: Ephesus representing the church in apostolic times, Laodicea representing the church of the present time.

VERSES 12, 13. When the Apostle turned to see the speaker, he saw an appearance like unto a son of man—representing our Lord Jesus (not really the Lord, but a vision, an appearance)—standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, which represented the above seven phases of the church.

Gold being a symbol of the divine nature, the seven golden candlesticks indicate that the divine institution of the church is for the enlightening of the world, the same symbol used in the Jewish Tabernacle and later in the Temple, indicating the same thing.

VERSES 13-16. The Son of man is seen "clothed in a garment down to the foot"—a long, full flowing robe such as was

worn by kings and priests; not the dress of the common people. And he was girded about the paps (not about the loins as one about to toil or run, but about the paps as of one in the repose and dignity of sovereignty) with a golden girdle.

The whiteness of the hair indicate both age and purity; the brightness of the eyes symbolizes acute discernment; the polished and glowing feet indicate power; the voice as the sound of many waters indicates the universality of his authority and power; and the shining countenance—as the brightness of the sun in his strength—marks the glory and power and blessing of his presence and Kingdom. The seven stars—the angels or ministers of the church, those whom the Lord recognizes as teachers in the church (verse 20)—are held in his right hand, showing that the teaching, power and authority are vested in Christ, the head of the church, and that the human teachers are only instruments in his hands, and accountable to him. And the two-edged sword out of his mouth symbolizes the mission of his truth and its final victory. The sword of the spirit—the Word of God.

VERSE 17. The vision had an overpowering effect upon the Apostle's physical frame; and from excitement and fear, like Saul of Tarsus and like Daniel, the Prophet, he fell as one dead, until a kindly hand imparted new strength, and an assuring voice said, "Fear not; I am the first and the last [the only begotten Son of God]: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen: and have the keys of hell [*hades*, the grave] and of death"—the power to open the graves and to loose the bands of death and set the captives free.

VERSE 19 commands the writing of the vision of the things past, present and future that the Church to whom the message is sent may ponder its deeply significant symbolism.

The *Golden Text* is aptly chosen, pointing as it does, to the humiliation and vicarious sacrifice of Christ as the cause of his present exaltation and glory and power—"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."—Phil. 2:8, 9.

## ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—I have not for some time tried to sell or to distribute any DAWNS, as I was in doubt about some of their teachings. I have since, however, by a great deal of study, found that I was in error. This is indeed an evil day, full of snares and pitfalls, and none shall be able to stand, who do not humbly accept God's Word as their only and all-sufficient ground of faith and practice, in opposition to all church-creeds and church-authority; for even those churches, which claim to have no creed, claim to have, by divine right, the power to make teachers, and if they fail to teach according to their liking, they have the same divine authority to unmake them.

Respectfully yours,

J. L. KING.

REPLY. Your letter is at hand, and I am glad it reveals you as again rejoicing in the truth, and, I trust, this time more firmly established therein. Severe tests come to all, in proportion to the measure of light possessed; and having, by the Lord's grace, overcome in this one instance, I trust you will be on the lookout when future trials come, and better ready to resist the temptations of the Adversary. But, be assured, you will not entirely escape temptation in future; yet if you make the Lord your refuge, you will not be overcome, but find in him constant strength and protection. See Psalm 91.

I do not quite coincide with you in the opinion that the

nominal churches have no right to unmake teachers. True, they have no authority to make representatives of the Lord, and each follower of the Lord should recognize no other commission than that given in God's Word; yet so far as the systems are concerned, they have as much right to authorize individuals to teach their doctrines as an individual has to appoint another as his representative, or as any secular institution has to control its representatives. The ability to use and make a representative implies the ability to withdraw consent at pleasure, unless bound by contract. And any one preaching by the authority of any part of Babylon, and supposed to teach its particular theories, should first dissolve his contract with such system before preaching or teaching contrary to its standards; and if he does not voluntarily do so, it is certainly the privilege of the institution to withdraw its sanction and support, and to give them to other individuals who will abide by their contracts.

It is a blessed thing, however, to be free in Christ from bondage to earthly, ecclesiastical rule and human creeds, and subject only to the one Lord and Head of the church, and to the one infallible guide of faith. We are admonished to maintain a clear conscience, and to labor diligently to learn and to teach all that he is pleased to reveal through it—his Word.

May you, as free, become more and more the bond-servant of Christ.—EDITOR.

## MILLENNIAL DAWN IN SWEDISH

The Swedish translation of the first volume of MILLENNIAL DAWN is now ready, and waiting orders have been filled. It can be supplied in both cloth and paper bindings, at same prices as the English edition.

Friends of the truth who have knowledge of the subject, are requested to let us know of Swedish settlements—giving

some idea of the population of such colonies; also of colonies of Danes and of Norwegians; for we hope to have the Danish-Norwegian translation ready about March next. We shall soon have some tracts in these languages, and shall be pleased to send freely whatever quantity you may desire and can use judiciously.