

G O D ' S P L A N
WITH
M A N

HAROLD WRIGHT

GOD'S PLAN WITH MAN

BY

HAROLD WRIGHT

PUBLISHED BY THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTADELPHIAN
CENTRAL STANDING COMMITTEE, 1964

A Summary
In Simple Terms
of the
FIRST PRINCIPLES
of
TRUTH REVEALED IN
THE BIBLE

Scriptural quotations are from the Authorised Version

GOD'S PLAN WITH MAN

All things about us and above us say,

THERE IS A GOD.

In earth and sea and sky we see His great works. In them is law, and plan, and power. Now every law has its maker; every plan has its author; all power comes from some centre. The orbs that shine in our skies by day and night speak to us of Him Who made them. Sun, moon, and stars talk to the men and women of all lands, and tell them of God's great might, of His wisdom and His love. Read what has been said about these things by men who lived long before our time. Psalm 8:3, 4; Psalm 19:1-6; Job 38:31-33; Isaiah 40:26.

Now, if there is a God, we may be sure that

There Is Only One True God.

In days gone by, men bowed down to many gods. They set up idols of their own, made of wood and stone. These gods were false. They could not see or hear; nor could they think, or talk, or feel. (Psalm 115:4-8.) THE BIBLE makes known to us the LIVING and TRUE God. Here are some of the things the Bible tells us about Him:

GOD is ONE. He has no equal. He is high above all. Now read: Deut. 6:4; Isaiah 45:5, 22; 1 Corinth. 8:6; Ephes. 4:6.

GOD did not begin. He has been from all time, and will be for ever. Psalm 90:1, 2; Isaiah 40:28; 1 Timothy 1:17.

GOD dwells in heaven. Yet by His Spirit (or power) He fills all space. In that way He is in all places, to see, and hear, and do. Psalm 139:1-12; Matt. 6:9.

God Has a Plan.

GOD made the heavens and the earth, and the nations upon earth. He fixes their bounds and rules their affairs. Gen. 1:1; Nehemiah 9:6; Daniel 4:17; Acts 17:24-28.

GOD did not create the earth in vain. He formed it to be filled with people who would bring glory to His Name. The present evil state of the world is because of the sins of men. But God's plan—which He stated long, long ago—is that at last

The Earth Shall Be Filled With His Glory.

See Numbers 14:21; Isaiah 11:9; Isaiah 45:18; Hab. 2:14.

GOD is a God of LOVE. In fact, "God IS Love" (1 John 4:8). He is just, and true, and holy; full of grace and mercy. He asks men to be like Himself. He

has told us that those who obey Him in that way will at last be made to partake of His nature—that is, to live *for ever* in glory and power. Exodus 34:6, 7; Deut. 32:4; Matthew 5:48; 2 Peter 1:4.

GOD has made known His plan and His way in THE BIBLE. It is a Book all men should read, for

The Bible Is God's Word.

It came from Him. So it is *true* in all its parts. It is sure; it cannot fail. God put into the minds of the men who wrote it those things He wants us to know about Himself, and about His plan with this earth and with man upon it. The Bible tells us what God has done in the past, and what He will yet do in days to come, in working out this plan.

The Bible gives to man God's law to guide him in this life, so that in the age to come he may gain that Life which is for ever (2 Tim. 3:15-17). If a man does not read the Bible, he walks in darkness. King David said of old: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105), whilst the apostle Peter wrote of it as "a light that shineth in a dark place, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed" (2 Peter 1:19).

As we write now of God's plan with man, we shall turn again and again to this great Word of God. We ask you to study with us those parts of it that we quote.

Now let us look at what the Bible says as it tells us the story of man. In its first Book (the Bible is made up of 66 Books in all) we are told that

God Formed Man from the Dust.

Man was made "a living soul"—that is, a living being—when God breathed into him "the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7). Adam (the first man) and Eve, his wife (who had been formed from one of Adam's ribs) were placed under law. In this way God put them to the test. He placed them in the Garden of Eden to tend it, and told them that they could eat of the fruit of every tree but one. If they ate of the fruit of *that* tree, they would surely die. (Gen. 2:17).

Death Came By Sin.

It is a sad story. They were tempted, and they fell. That is, they sinned—first the woman, then the man (Gen. 3:6; 1 Tim. 2:14). God kept His word. He said they now must die (Gen. 3:19), and— they DIED (Gen. 5:5).

After Adam's sin God said to him—that is, to the real man, Adam—"Dust *thou* art, and unto dust shalt *thou* return." But they did not die at once. God drove them out of the garden, to get their living by toil and in sorrow, "*till*" they returned to the dust.

Children were born to them. They, too, would die, and so it has gone on. *Death reigns over all*. A long time after Adam's day, Paul the apostle wrote:

"By one man sin entered into the world, and *death by sin*; and so death passed upon

all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

Let us now ask: What IS death? What men may think about this does not help us at all. It is to THE BIBLE we must turn. When we know what death really is, then we are able to see how great is man’s need. But we also are able to see how great is God’s *love* to man, in meeting man’s need with His grace.

Now the Bible (in Eccles. 9:5) tells us this: “The living know that they shall die; but

The Dead Know Not Anything.

When a man is born he starts to live; when he dies he *stops living*. That is the plain and simple truth of the Bible. The body goes back to the dust, as God said it would; and the spirit, or breath of life, goes back to God Who gave it (Eccles. 12:7). The living man, who was formed of these two, no longer is. Our lot would be dark indeed unless God gave us hope beyond the grave.

God Sent His Son to Save Men

out of death, and to give them that Life which is for ever (John 3:16; John 10:10). That is, of course, if men will accept HIS WAY. He asks men to repent and return to Him. He offers to forgive their sins if they do (Isaiah 55:7; Acts. 2:38).

In this way God shows His love for a lost world. He sent His Son to lead men back to Him, as a shepherd brings back sheep that have gone astray (1 Peter 2:25). Jesus said he was the Good Shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep (John 10:11).

Jesus is the Son of God.

Back in Eden God had said—after our first parents sinned against Him—that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15). The serpent was the tempter of the woman, and the cause of sin. Eve had acted on the serpent’s lie: “Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 3:4). And so the serpent came to stand for SIN. To bruise the serpent’s head, then, meant to put an end to sin, and to all the evil that sin had brought upon men.

But who is the woman’s seed, whom God said would bring this about? It is the man Jesus (Acts. 2:22), of whom God said: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). God was well pleased in him because, as Jesus said himself, he did “*always* those things which pleased his Father” (John 8:29).

In Galatians 4:4 we read “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth *His Son, made of a woman.*” Jesus was

The Seed of the Woman

because man was *not* his father, though woman *was* his mother. His Father was GOD HIMSELF. The Bible tells us that God chose the Jewish virgin, Mary, to be the mother of His Son. To be so, she was touched with the great power of God. God’s angel said to her: “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee ... therefore also that holy

thing that shall be born of thee shall be called *the Son of God*" (Luke 1:35).

The Holy Spirit

is the Spirit of God set apart for some special work. "Holy" means separate, or set apart. By that Power God begat Jesus, and later in Jesus' life—when he had been baptized by John in the River Jordan— God gave him the Holy Spirit. By this means God dwelt in His Son, spoke to Israel through him, and did the mighty works (miracles) which we read of in the life of Jesus (Matt. 3:16; John 3:34; John 5:19; John 8:28; John 14:10; Acts 10:38).

"That holy thing" which was born of Mary was named before he was born. It was the angel of God again who said: "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for *he shall save* his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

The name "Jesus" means "God (Yah) shall save". Now, in what way does Jesus save from sin? The Bible says: "Through FAITH in his blood" (Rom. 3:25). The same Book also says:

"The Just Shall Live by Faith."

(Hab. 2:4; Heb. 10:38). Let us look into these things. Faith is an act of the mind by which we believe in things we cannot see with our eyes. The Bible makes it clear that without faith no man can please God (Heb. 11:1, 6).

God asks men to *believe* in His Son—in what *has* been done through him, and in what *will* yet be done through him (John 3:16; Rom. 10:9-11). What has been done through Jesus in the past? Sin has been defeated; death has been robbed of its power; Life Eternal has been brought to light (2 Tim. 1:10). Jesus is now *a saved one*. He is "the first fruits" of God's saving work (1 Cor. 15:23). He now "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God *by him*" (Heb. 7:25). And man can come unto God in *no other way*. God's Son said of himself: "I am

The Way, the Truth, and the Life:

no man cometh unto the Father, but *by me*" (John 14:6). It was this same Jesus who uttered the gracious call: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and *ye shall find rest* unto your souls" (Matt. 11: 28-29).

Jesus Was of Our Nature.

Though Son of God from birth Jesus was "in all things ... made like unto his brethren" (Heb. 2:17). "He also himself likewise took part" of the same "flesh and blood" nature as those he came to save (Heb. 2:14). Paul tells us also in Romans 8:3 that God sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." In 1 Corinth. 15:45 we read of Jesus as "the last Adam". We saw that the first Adam sinned, and, because he sinned, he died. The last Adam, though sorely tempted, never once did sin. He never gave way to

The Devil.

The devil is the Bible name for sin in its many forms. God tells us that “every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of *his own lust*, and enticed” (James 1:14). We know that is so, from what we feel within us.

Now Jesus, we are told, “was *in all points tempted like as we are*, yet WITHOUT SIN” (Heb. 4:15). Yet the seed of the serpent (Jews and Gentiles joined in sin) nailed him to a tree. It was the will of God that His beloved Son should die in this way (Acts. 2:23).

Jesus obeyed the will of His Father, even to that cruel death of the cross. (Luke 22:42; Phil. 2:8). In the pouring out of his blood, his life was offered for the sins of others (Isaiah 53:5, 6; Heb. 9:22; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). He gave his precious life that sinful men might *live* through him. In this was LOVE—love in its greatest and deepest form. Jesus himself said: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his LIFE for his friends” (John 15:13). Not only the love of the Son, but also the love of the Father, was shown, in that He spared not His only Son, but offered him up for us all (Rom. 8:32). Paul says in Romans 5:8: “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners,

Christ Died for Us.”

But this does *not* mean that God punished His Son for the sins of others. God FORGIVES men if they unite themselves with the death of Jesus in God’s own way—that is, by baptism (Rom. 3:25; Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 1:14). We shall look more closely at that matter later.

Though he died, and was buried, Jesus did *not*—as did the first Adam—return to the dust. God’s sentence upon the first sinners— “Unto dust shalt thou return”—was NOT fulfilled in Jesus, the sinless one. A just God would not allow it. Because he had been “without sin”

God Raised Jesus from the Dead

and gave him glory (Acts. 2:32, 33). Long before he was born, it was written of Jesus: “Thou wilt not leave my soul in *hell*” (that is, *the grave*); neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy one to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10, Acts. 2:27). The Father gave His righteous Son LIFE for evermore, and raised him to His own right hand in heaven (Psalm 110:1). There Jesus now is, acting as the Great High Priest over his own house. His house is made up of those who bear his name in faith and truth (Heb. 3:6). Soon we shall see HOW we may bear his name, and so be made ONE with him, in order to take part in his victory.

Though he has now been so long absent from the earth,

Jesus Will Come Again

just as really as he went away. As Jesus went up to heaven (about six weeks after he rose from the dead) those who were with him were told by angels: “THIS SAME

JESUS ... shall so *come in like manner*, as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts. 1:11). From that time his apostles preached that he would return to the earth to fulfil God’s plan (Acts. 3:20, 21; 1 Cor. 15:23, 25; 1 Thess. 1:10).

The Dead Shall Be Raised.

The first work of the Lord Jesus when he comes again will be to raise the dead from their sleep (Dan. 12:1, 2; John 6:40; Acts. 24:15, 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16). But *not all* men will be raised. The Bible teaches that those who have known nothing of God and His plan will stay in the grave (Psalm 49:14, 20; Prov. 21:16). On the other hand, if a man *knows* God’s will and refuses to obey, he must answer for his sin (James 4:17).

The dead will be raised in order to be judged and rewarded according to their works. Paul says: “We must all appear” (he was writing to people who *knew* God’s will) “before

The Judgment Seat of Christ;

that every one may receive the things in body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). God has made Jesus the Judge of both the dead and the living (Acts. 10:42; Acts. 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1).

Judgment will sort men out into two classes—the wicked and the righteous.

The Wicked Shall Perish.

The Bible shows us that the wicked will *not* live for ever. They will be cut off from life—that is, *destroyed*, after being punished as the Judge shall decide (Psalm 37:9, 10, 20; Mal. 4:1; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9).

But while “the wages of sin is *death*”, it is also true that

The Gift of God is Eternal Life

through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). This is surely the most joyous truth set forth in the Bible. Life for evermore is not a thing we can earn as wages due. Death is the wages due to sinners, but Eternal Life can come to us only by *the grace of God*. Jesus will bestow this precious gift on all whom he accepts when he comes again (John 10:28; Romans 2:6, 7; 1 Corinth. 15:53, 54; 1 John 2:25).

Belief and Baptism Are Both Necessary

if we would gain that great prize of Life Eternal. Jesus himself said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). The things we must believe are those things which Jesus preached, and which he told his apostles to preach after he left the earth. Those things are THE GOSPEL (or glad tidings) of THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Read what the Bible tells us of the theme of Jesus’ preaching in Matt. 4:23, Mark

1:14, and Luke 8:1. It was *the Kingdom of God*. Now read what his apostles spoke about as they carried out their Master's order to "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Acts. 8:12; Acts. 28:31). Notice that in Acts. 8:12 we are told that when the people of Samaria "*believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*"

Baptism was never carried out except with those who *knew* and *believed*, the truth of the Gospel. Indeed, there is no true baptism apart from belief of THE TRUTH. Jesus said: "Ye shall know THE TRUTH, and THE TRUTH shall make you free" (John 8:32), while Paul tells us in Ephes. 4:4-6: "There is ONE body, and ONE Spirit, even as ye are called in ONE hope of your calling: ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all." We must know that "one God" and "one Lord" (John 17:3), we must believe in that "one faith" and "one hope", if we would take part in that "one baptism".

We shall return later to this subject of baptism and ask the question: What does it do for us?

Having looked at the things which concern the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us now ask:

What is the Kingdom of God?

As we read the Bible, we find that very much is said about it. Not only was it preached by Jesus and his apostles, but we also read of it in the Old Testament. For example, in the Book of Daniel (Ch. 2, verse 44) we are told it is a Kingdom which God will set up on this earth. It will bring to an end all human rule. It will be world-wide, and it will last for ever. In Chapter 7 of the same Book (verse 18) we find that "the saints" are those who will "possess the Kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever". Those who put on the name of Christ in baptism (Gal. 3:27) are those "called to be saints" (Rom. 1:7). If they prove faithful to that high calling, they will—as said before—receive at Christ's coming that great reward of Life for evermore; but not only so, for they will be given a place of honour and power and glory and joy in that everlasting Kingdom of God. That is part of *God's plan with man*.

Now, a kingdom is made up of many parts. It must have a King, co-rulers, a capital city, subjects, laws, and territory (or lands). The Bible informs us on all these things. It tells us that

Jesus Will Be King

in that coming world-wide Kingdom. When he stood before Pilate as a prisoner, the Roman governor asked him: "Art thou a king, then?" Jesus replied: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37). It is a vital part of the truth about Jesus that he was *born to be a King*. The angel Gabriel said to Mary, the mother of Jesus, before her son was born: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and *he shall reign* over the house of Jacob (Israel) for ever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32). Now

in those words of the angel of God these very important facts are brought before us:

- (1) Jesus is both Son of God and son of David. (He was born in the line of descent from David, Mary his mother being of David's lineage);
- (2) He is yet to reign upon the throne of David over the Kingdom of Israel for evermore.

These things lead us back in history to

God's Covenant with David

made when David was reigning as King of Israel in Jerusalem about 3000 years ago. We have a record of it in 2 Sam. 7:12-16. There we learn that God promised His royal servant that He would give him a son who would reign on his throne for ever.

The words of the angel to Mary a thousand years later (already quoted from Luke 1:32) show clearly *who* the promised son is. Now Jesus has never reigned on David's throne as King of Israel. He was cast out by that nation and "brought as a lamb to the slaughter" (Isaiah 53:7). Over his cross was the writing in which the leaders of that nation mocked his claim: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." That statement will yet prove to be true.

So, in order that God's covenant with David may be fulfilled to the utmost, certain things are yet necessary:

- (1) Jesus himself must return to the earth;
- (2) David himself must be raised from the dead;
- (3) Israel as a nation must humbly own her once rejected King;
- (4) The Kingdom of Israel, under Christ, must be restored in the land where David reigned.

The stirring signs of our times show that these great events are near.

Israel — A Special People

We now must ask: What has become of David's throne and kingdom? They do not exist. The kingdom came to an end because Israel, the nation which God had chosen to be "*a special people unto Himself*" (Deut. 7:6), failed to obey their God. The time came when God could no longer bear with them, and He cast them off. But He did *not* cast them away. That is, He did not cast them off for ever. This is what Paul says in Romans 11:1, 2: "Hath God cast away His people? God forbid ... *God hath not cast away His people* which He foreknew." He says again: "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

But now let us go back to that time when God cast off His people by handing them over to Gentile rule. He sent His prophet (Ezekiel) to say to the last king who sat on David's throne (Zedekiah): "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it (the Kingdom): and it shall be no more UNTIL he come *whose right it is*, and I will give it him" (Ezek. 21:27). So it came about. Babylon, Greece and Rome, at different times in history, took part in the overturning. When Jesus was born (he 'whose right it is') the land was in the hands of the Romans.

Jesus himself foretold that Jerusalem would fall and the Jews would be scattered. He said: "They (the Jews) shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, UNTIL the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). And so it was. In A.D. 70 Jerusalem fell, and ever since that time, until our own days, the Jews have wandered among the nations.

The Jews — God's Witnesses

But it was part of God's great plan that the Jews must return to their homeland after their long scattering. He had said so through His prophets. For instance, through Ezekiel He said (Ch. 37, verses 21 and 22): "I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and *bring them into their own land*: and I will make them *one nation* in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and ONE KING shall be King to them all."

In all their long and bitter history, the things that have happened to the Jews have proved the TRUTH of God's Word. God says of *them*: "*Ye are My witnesses*, that I am God" (Isaiah 43:12).

In Israel today we have one of the greatest

Signs of Our Times.

In our own days we have seen—and are still seeing—the Jews being brought "into their own land". The two great World Wars did much to help that movement forward. In May, 1948, we saw the State of ISRAEL proclaimed before the world. Thus they were made "one nation in the land ... of Israel." But, as yet, that "one King" has not appeared. *How near we* must be to His coming!

Jesus gave us other signs we were to look for just prior to His return. He said there would be "upon the earth *distress of nations*, with *perplexity* ... men's hearts failing them for *fear*, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke 21:25, 26). And is not *that* exactly what we now see? Jesus added: "*When ye see these things* come to pass, know ye that *the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand*" (v. 31). And there are *many other signs* we cannot look at now. But *all* point the same way.

Now let us go back to the Covenant. If Jesus is to reign upon the throne of his father David, then JERUSALEM is yet to become the Queen City of the whole earth, for it was *there* that David reigned. God's prophet says: "At that time they shall call

Jerusalem the Throne of the Lord”

(Jer. 3:17). Jesus himself said that Jerusalem is “the City of the Great King” (Matt. 5:35). See, too, what David himself wrote about it in Psalm 48:2. God says He will set His King upon His “holy hill of Zion” (Psalm 2:6), and declare the decree of world ownership in his favour. To “His Anointed”—the Christ, or Messiah—God says: “I shall give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (v. 8). This shows us that Jerusalem will be the centre of God’s Kingdom, and the whole earth will be its dominions. The King who reigns in Zion will be supreme over all the earth (Zech. 14:9). We read in Psalm 72:11: “Yea, *all kings* shall fall down before him: *all nations* shall serve him.” Now we have already seen that

Christ’s Faithful Saints will be His Co-rulers

in the Kingdom. Jesus himself told Peter that those who have followed him will share his kingly glory in that coming day (Matt. 19:28). Paul says: “If we suffer, we shall also *reign with him*” (2 Tim. 2:12), whilst in his last message to his waiting saints Jesus gives this grand promise: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne” (Rev. 3:21).

See also Rev. 5:9, 10. The accepted and glorified saints sing unto their King, “the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David”: “Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and *we shall reign on the earth.*”

The Earth is the Promised Inheritance of the Righteous.

This is plain from what we have said before about the Kingdom. But it also was clearly stated by Jesus himself: “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit *the earth*” (Matt. 5:5). David said the same thing: “The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the *abundance of peace.*” Also in Prov. 11:31 we have the same truth set out: “The righteous shall be recompensed *in the earth.*”

Christ and his saints will reign over a re-born Israel (their unbelief taken away), and over those among the Gentiles who shall escape the just judgments of God. These will be the

Mortal Subjects of the Kingdom,

who will partake of the great benefits which the righteous rule of Christ will bring. Israel will then be the foremost of the nations. God’s prophet declares: “The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish” (Is. 60:10 to 15).

Those who reign with Christ will be immortal (never-dying), but even among the mortal peoples of the earth the span of life will be much increased. We are told that “the child shall die an hundred years old” (Is. 65:20). It means that one who dies at that age will be looked upon as only a child.

It is not hard for us to see how much better life will be when all mankind is governed by

One Wise, Just, and Perfect Law

which will bring joy and peace to all men, and *glory to God*. How much evil and misery in our world today comes from bad rulers and bad laws! But THEN—how very different it will be! The Bible tells us: “Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Is. 2:3). So good will be that law, and so joyous its effects, that men will wish to know more about it, that they may keep it. They will say (see same verse): “Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and He will teach us of *His ways*, and we will walk in *His paths*.”

And now we must say a little more about

The Blessings of This Coming Age

which will result from the righteous reign of Israel’s King, and the going forth of that perfect law from Zion to the ends of the earth. The prophet tells us in the same Scripture (verse 4) that wars will cease, and weapons of strife will be made into tools for the peaceful tilling of the soil. All nations will disarm. “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, *neither shall they learn war any more*.” What a *grand thing* this will be!

In the coming of Christ lies *the only remedy* for our war-torn and war-weary world. He is “*the Prince of Peace*” and it is of HIM the prophet says: “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be *no end*, upon *the throne of David*, and upon his kingdom” (Is. 9:6, 7) For this blessed time Jesus taught his disciples to pray: “*Thy Kingdom come*. Thy will be done in *earth*, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10).

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the angels sang their lovely anthem: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). But only when Jesus *reigns as King*, will those words be fulfilled. “Glory to God” is man’s first duty. When that is given, peace will follow. Meanwhile, it is God’s rule, in all His dealings with men, that “there is no peace to the wicked (Is. 57:21).

To get a full picture of the joys and blessings of Christ’s reign, read Psalm 72. It brings before our minds a lovely picture—a King reigning in *righteousness*; his power extends world-wide; there is “abundance of peace” (v. 7); no more violence or brutality; no more oppression, or want, or misery; the poor and needy ones cared for as never before.

What good news it is when we read (in verse 17): “His name shall endure *for ever* ... and

Men Shall Be Blessed in Him:

all nations shall call him blessed.” David finishes his psalm with gladsome words of praise to the great Author of this glorious plan: “*Blessed be the Lord God*, the God of Israel, Who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed *be His glorious name for ever*: and

Let the Whole Earth be Filled with His Glory:

Amen, and Amen.” And *that*, as we said at the first, is *God’s plan with man*.

In other parts of the Scriptures (Isaiah 35, for instance) these same *glad tidings* are set forth, and many other things are told us about the Kingdom of God. Even the very earth will be set free from the curse that lies upon it (Gen. 3:17, 18). We said before that it is Christ’s work to take away the effects of Adam’s sin. When he reigns, the earth will bring forth so plentifully (Ps. 67:6; Ps. 72:16) that “the plowman shall overtake the reaper” (Amos. 9:13). That is to say, the harvests of the fields will be so great that the crops will scarcely be gathered in before sowing time comes round again. (From the context—verses 11 to 15—notice *when* this is.)

Christ will “make all things new”. He is the great HEALER of our race, in the physical sense, as well as in the spiritual sense. Disease and illness will vanish away (Is. 33:24), and even death itself at last shall be no more.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinth. 15:25 that Christ “must reign till he hath put *all* enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is *death*.” The first thousand years of the Kingdom of God—often spoken of as

The Millennium—

will be the last phase of Christ’s great work in bringing all things into line with the will of God. At the end of that time certain changes will take place. Those who have died during that thousand years will be raised and judged (Rev. 20:12-14). As with those judged at Christ’s return, the wicked shall perish and the righteous shall be made to live eternally.

Death then will have *gone for ever* from the earth. None will remain but a race of redeemed, immortal ones—all partaking of God’s own nature—who will fill the entire earth with His glory and His praise. Christ’s redeeming work will be complete, all things now being “subdued unto him”.

God Will Be All In All

(1 Cor. 15:28) and will at last be revealed to men. In Rev. 21:3, 4 we are given a glorious glimpse of God’s perfected plan: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and *God Himself* shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and

There Shall Be No More Death,

neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

In the very last chapter of the Bible we read more about the “healing” of our sick world, and there (Rev. 22:3) we meet the joyous, thrilling news:

“There Shall Be No More Curse.”

And so is brought to its grand finale *God’s plan with man*.

As we look out on the present evil state of this godless world, we may not see much in the shape of a *plan*. But it is the *end* we must look to. You do not see the noble lines of a stately building while it is in course of being erected. But the man who designed it—the architect—and those who have looked upon his plan can see, with the eye of faith, the finished work. They know that when all the waste and worthless and unwanted materials are cleared away after the task of building is complete, the edifice will be plainly seen by all in its full grandeur and beauty.

God is the Supreme Architect, the Designer of the great plan of the ages. In His written Word He graciously permits us to view the splendid blue-print of His grand redemptive scheme. Let not the deeds of men hide from your mental view this wondrous plan of God. The works of men will pass away; God’s purpose will stand. Nothing that men may do can cause that plan to fail. As the poet has so well put it:

What though none on earth assist Him!
God requires not help from man;
What though all the earth resist Him!
God will realise His plan.

Now we cannot close without bringing before you a most important matter. Having shown the graceful building, we must show now the steps that lead into it. How shall we enter this beautiful palace, and live with THE KING in his glory?

We must first of all COME OUT from the world.

The foundations of this coming New World Order were laid in

God’s Covenant with Abraham.

This man, whose name at first was Abram, was *called out* by God from the place in which he lived (Ur of the Chaldees) to go into a land which God promised to give him for ever (the land of Canaan). See the terms of this covenant in Genesis, Chapter 12, verses 1 to 3. Read also Gen. 13, vv. 14 to 17.

Notice that God promised three things:

- (1) The everlasting possession of the land into which Abram came;
- (2) A numerous seed, when Abram as yet had no child, and both he and his wife were old in years;
- (3) The blessing of *all nations* in him and his seed.

After Abram had moved into the land of promise (Canaan), God said to him: “Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be ABRAHAM; for a father of MANY NATIONS have I made thee” (Gen. 17:5). Now Abraham’ means

‘father of a great multitude’. This makes the promise

A World Covenant.

It points to the fact (which was later revealed) that one of *any* nation may become, with Abraham, an heir of the promise, *if* he accepts God’s terms. Peter stated a sober but glorious truth when he said—just before he baptized the first Gentile convert—

“God Is No Respector of Persons,

but in *every* nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is *accepted with Him*” (Acts. 10:34). Paul speaks very plainly on this matter in Galatians, chapter 3. He there tells us that “they which are of *faith*, the same are the *children of Abraham*” (verse 7). In the next verse he shows us that THE GOSPEL of the Kingdom preached by Jesus and his apostles has its basis in these Abrahamic promises. He says: “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen” (that is, the Gentile nations) “through *faith*, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, ‘In thee shall *all nations* be blessed.’ So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

Abraham showed his great faith in believing God’s word and acting upon it. We read in Hebrews II, v. 8 and 9: “*By faith* Abraham, when he was *called* to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, *obeyed*; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. *By faith* he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country.”

Through all his life Abraham never lost faith in God’s promise. He did *not* receive the land. “God gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on” (Acts. 7:5). Yet Abraham “*died in faith, not having received the promises*, but having seen them *afar off*”—that is, with the eye of *faith* (Hebrews 11:13).

Such is the kind of faith God asks of *us*. It is not the blood of Abraham in our veins that is needed, but the *faith* of Abraham in our hearts.

Abraham, as

“The Heir of the World”

was “fully persuaded that, what God had promised, He was *able to perform*” (Rom. 4:13 to 25). And God indeed will perform it, when Abraham is raised from the dead, to enter at last upon his promised inheritance in God’s eternal Kingdom (Micah. 7:20; Mark 12:26). All Abraham’s faithful seed will be with him at that day. Jesus himself said that “Many shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom” (Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28, 29).

We now must ask: What steps must *we* take to gain a place among those faithful saints of old? Again we are brought to *belief* and *baptism* as the answer—that is, to faith and humble obedience.

In Gal. 3:16 Paul tells us plainly that

Christ is the Seed of Abraham

through whom the covenanted blessing was to come. His death and resurrection served “to *confirm* the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. 15:8).

Now it has pleased God to appoint BAPTISM as the means whereby men and women—whether Jews or Gentiles by birth—may become *one with Christ*. This is what Paul says in Gal. 3.26 to 29: “For ye are *all* the children of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been *baptized into Christ* have *put on Christ*. There is neither Jew nor Greek” (that is, Gentile), “there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are *ALL ONE in Christ Jesus*. And”—notice this!— “*if ye be Christ’s*, THEN are ye ABRAHAM’S SEED, and

Heirs According to the Promise.”

There is *no hope* for men apart from these “exceeding great and precious promises” (2 Peter 1:4). Even Nicodemus, who was already “a ruler of the Jews”, was told by Jesus that he must be “*born again*” —that is, “born of water and of the Spirit”, before he could have a place in the Kingdom of God (John 3:1 to 7).

Now we must point out that the hope of the early Christians was

The Hope of Israel

based on God’s promises to Abraham and David (Acts. 1:6). Paul, when he appeared as a prisoner before King Agrippa, said: “Now I stand and am judged for *the hope of the promise* made of God unto our fathers” (Acts. 26:6). Later, when in bonds at Rome, he declared: “For *the hope of Israel* I am bound with this chain” (Acts. 28:20).

It is Paul again who says that if we are “*strangers from the covenants of promise*” then we are “*without Christ ... having NO HOPE, and without God in the world*” (Ephes. 2:12). And *that* is truly a sad position to be in.

By baptism into Christ’s death those who were once “far off” are “*made nigh*” (verse 13). And that brings us to the question: “*What is baptism?*”

Baptism is a Burial in Water.

Among the early Christians it always took that form. For example, in chapter 8 of the Acts of the Apostles we are told how a certain man was baptized by Philip. The record says: “They *went down* both into the water ... and he baptized him. And when they were *come up out of the water*,” etc. (vv. 38, 39). Then in Romans 6, verses 3 and 4 we read Paul’s words: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are *buried with him by baptism* into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in *newness of life*.”

A burial is a *complete* covering. Now that brings us to what baptism means, and what

it does for the one who submits to it.

Only *dead* ones are buried. And when a man is dead he *does not sin*. Paul says here in Rom. 6:7: “He that is dead is freed from sin.” Now God tells us that if we would please Him, we must *kill the flesh*; that is to say, we must not let the lusts of the flesh rule us. *We must rule them*. We must cut them off with “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephes. 6:17; Heb.: 4:12).

Here is the battle of the Christian life. This is the devil we must resist and overcome. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye *cannot* do the things that ye would” (Gal. 5:17). Paul goes on to say (v. 24): “They that are Christ’s have *crucified* the flesh with the affections and lusts.” Again he writes: “*Mortify* therefore” (that is, make *dead*) “your members which are upon earth” (Coloss. 3:5).

Baptism is the burial of a man who in his *mind* is ready to *die* unto sin, and to begin a new life in Christ. So Paul says: “Reckon yourselves to be *dead indeed unto sin*, but *alive unto God* through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6-11).

Baptism starts one off, then, on

A New Life.

When a man is baptized—as we saw—he is “born again” (John 3:3, 5, 7; 1 Peter 1:23)—not in body, but *in mind*. As a “newborn babe” he GROWS by “the sincere milk of the Word” (1 Peter 2:2). Before baptism he was “in Adam”; after baptism he is “*in Christ*”. Paul writes in 2 Corinth. 5:17: “If any man be in Christ, he is

A New Creature:

old things are passed away; behold, all things are become *new*.” The obedient believer is still a mortal man. But he is *now* an *heir of Eternal Life* (Rom. 8:17; Titus 1:2). He is a *son of God* by adoption (John 1:12; Rom. 8:14 to 19; Hebrews 2:10), and a *brother of the Lord Jesus Christ*. He is a member of God’s family. This relationship can be expressed in one word. It is the name

“Christadelphian”

which means *a brother of Christ*. It is the name of Christ and the Greek word for “brother” combined in one term. Jesus said he is not ashamed to call them his brethren who do the will of his Father in heaven. (Heb. 2:11; Matt. 12:50).

One who obeys the call of the Gospel (by baptism) holds a new status in God’s sight. He has new hopes, new ideals, new attitudes, and a new purpose in living. The central aim of his life is that pointed to by his Master, when he said:

“Seek Ye FIRST the Kingdom of God

and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). Every man should have a *purpose* in life. To have no aim is to drift with the stream. Every wise man will make the Kingdom

of God his goal, and will bring his life into line with that great and vital objective.

Now we saw that only “*by faith*” can a sinner join the ranks of those who are “called to be saints” (Rom. 1:7). But “works” also are needed to ensure a saint’s acceptance at the coming of the Lord.

“Faith Without Works Is Dead”

(James 2:20, 26).

The “works” which God requires are the keeping of *the Commandments of Christ*. The daily reading of God’s Word will help us to *know* and to *remember* them. Like “the law and the prophets”, they are summed up in two great basic precepts:

- (1) Thou shalt LOVE the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength;
- (2) Thou shalt LOVE thy neighbour as thyself.

Jesus himself said: “There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30, 31). “*LOVE is the fulfilling of the law*” (Rom. 13:10). It is the “short cut” to the keeping of *all* the precepts which the great Law-Giver has placed before men. Our love toward God and man is the effect of a cause. “We love Him, *because he first loved us*” (1 John 4:19).

Now, *if* we love the Father, we will *not* love the world, that is, in the sense of loving or desiring *its ways*. James asks: “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” And he plainly states: “Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

John puts the matter quite clearly when he writes: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Now notice this: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, *is not of the Father*, but is of the world. And *the world passeth away, and the lust thereof*: but—he that doeth the will of God ABIDETH FOR EVER” (1 John 2: 15-17).

These are sober words. They will be deeply pondered by every man and woman who has an interest in things that will *last*.

Jesus, on his betrayal night, prayed for his brethren in this way. He was soon going to leave them. “I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest *keep them from the evil*. They are

Not of the World,

even as I am not of the world. *Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is TRUTH*” (John 17:15-17).

Therefore, *in* the world but *not of it* is the position of God’s people pending the coming of their King from heaven. Through the preaching of His glorious Word, God

is visiting the Gentiles, “to TAKE OUT of them

A People for His Name”

(Acts. 15:14).

The Gospel is a call to *separateness*. As to Abraham God called “Come out!” so to all who would be His children He still says: “COME OUT from among them, and *be ye separate*, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and *I will receive you*, and will be *a Father unto you*, and ye shall be *My sons and daughters*, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinth. 6:17, 18).

Those who have obeyed God’s call to “come out” *have no part in the military and political affairs of this present evil world* (Gal. 1:4). They daily pray and wait for a Kingdom which will break the existing order of things in pieces.

Having regard to the command: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinth. 6:14), they *marry “only in the Lord”* (1 Corinth. 7:39). They regard the marriage vow as binding until death or the Lord’s coming (Matt. 5:32).

They avoid many of the habits and pleasures of the godless society around them, in the midst of which they are commanded to shine as lights (Matt. 5:14; 1 Peter 2:9).

On the first day of each week they assemble to worship the Father and to remember His Son in the way appointed—that is, by eating the broken bread (the symbol of his body) and drinking the poured out wine (the emblem of his shed blood). This they do as a loving memorial of his sacrifice (Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinth. 11:23-29), and to celebrate his victory over death.

By doing so they follow apostolic custom (Acts. 20:7, 1 Corinth. 16:2). Thus they “continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts. 2:42), rejoicing to see the many signs which feed their faith as the coming of their Lord draws nearer from day to day (Heb. 10:25; James 5:8).

Meanwhile, there is much to be done on their part. It is

The Building of a Character

worthy of that grand Kingdom which the Gospel Hope sets before us. Jesus said: “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). Having begun, we must *never turn back*.

We have a solemn lesson from the history of God’s ancient people, Israel. They were *called out* from the dark bondage of Egypt to march to the land of promise. God led them through the wilderness. This was their testing-time, and many thousands of them failed. When their faith was put to the test, they *turned back* in their hearts to what they had left behind them (Numb. 14:4). And as a result, they did *not* reach their goal.

Now read what Paul says about these things in 1 Corinth. 10, verses 1 to 11. Read also the words of Jude (v. 5), where he reminds us that “the Lord, *having saved the people*

out of the land of Egypt, afterward *destroyed* them that *believed not*.”

Baptism, then, is not *all*. There is a proverb which says: “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” But that first step, important as it is, is *not the completed journey*. Many more steps must be taken.

Baptism is but the *first* step on the journey to the Kingdom of God. The path lies ever onward and upward. After that first act of faith

“There is a battle to be fought,
An onward race to run, A crown of glory to be sought,
A victory to be won.”

In Hebrews 6:1 we read: “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ,

Let Us Go On Unto Perfection.”

That is a high mark indeed. But it is what we are called upon to aim at in our life in Christ. Christ himself is our pattern. Not only did he “suffer for us, *leaving us an example*, that we should follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21), but he daily helps us to walk in that path of obedience he trod. And the Father himself helps us through the Son.

Paul says that in this work of building, “we are *labourers together with God*” (1 Cor. 3:9). What a partnership this is! How can it fail, unless *we ourselves* fail?

This great work of building a character well pleasing in God’s sight entails both subtraction and addition. We must subtract—that is, take away, put off, lay aside—the works of “the old man” of the flesh (Ephes. 4:22, 25 to 31; Coloss. 3:8, 9; Heb. 12:1). We must add, or put on, the qualities of “the new man” of the Spirit; in other words, the attributes of Christ (Ephes. 4:24; Coloss. 3:10, 12 to 14; Gal. 5:22, 23; 2 Peter 1:5 to 8).

A word of gentle warning here. This work of being made *like Christ* in character now, that we might—when he comes—be made “*like him*” in the glorious nature he now bears (1 John 3:2; Phil. 3:20, 21), is one which may bring us trial and suffering. This should not cause us any wonder. It has pleased God, “in bringing *many* sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation

Perfect Through Sufferings” (Heb. 2:10).

The “many sons” cannot well expect to be “made perfect” (Heb. 11:40) by any other way than that which God appointed for their “Captain”. Gold is purified by fire. Gems are made beautiful by polishing. The living stones which make up God’s spiritual temple must be hewn into shape (1 Peter 2:5, 6). “Jesus Christ himself” is “the chief corner stone” of that magnificent building (Ephes. 2:20, 21). Every other “stone” must be brought into line.

“Beloved, think it not strange”, wrote Peter, “concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but *rejoice*, inasmuch as ye are

partakers of Christ's sufferings', that, *when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy*" (1st Ep. 4:12, 13). We need such a faith as that of Abraham to sustain us through this time of testing. We must, with that eye of faith, always take the long-range view, and never, *never* despair (2 Cor. 4:8). We are assured that "*all things*" (even those things which may seem very hard to bear) "*work together for good* to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

It is wise, then, to

Count the Cost.

The apostle Paul was a son of God who endured much in the way of sore trial. And this is his summing up: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are *not worthy to be compared* with THE GLORY which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). In another place he writes: "Our light affliction, which is *but for a moment*, worketh for us a far more exceeding and *eternal* weight of GLORY; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which *are not seen* are ETERNAL" (2 Cor. 4:17, 18; Heb. 11:1).

Never forget the searching "profit and loss" question which the Saviour himself placed before men: "*What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*" (Matt. 16:26). In other terms: A man, plus the world, minus his life, equals—WHAT? The answer is simple. Work the problem out. In so doing you will find the only true scale of *real values*.

In view of all these things, how important it is that, *after baptism*, we keep the example of Christ ever before our minds. How vital it is that we faithfully remember him in the way he himself commanded. How urgent it is that we make use of those great helps which God has given His people to strengthen and sustain them in their waiting and working for His Kingdom—that is, the daily reading and study of His precious Word (Psalm 1:2; Ps. 119:97, 105; John 5:39, Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17) and constant approach unto His "throne of grace" in prayer, through the great High Priest of His appointing (Heb. 4:14, 15; 1 John 2:1).

It is part of God's plan with man that, in this way, there should be going on continually this great work of making ready "*a people prepared for the Lord*" (Luke 1:17).

Are YOU one of them? You are surely interested in God's plan: otherwise you would not have read to this point. Then *why not* invest your faith in the promises of God? *They cannot fail*. They are as sure as the rising of tomorrow's sun.

One Final Word

The time is short. Our world today stands on the verge of a *mighty change*. Meanwhile, "the longsuffering of our Lord is *salvation*" (2 Peter 3:15). It *could* mean salvation for YOU! This is YOUR OPPORTUNITY! "NOW is the accepted time" (2 Corinth. 6:2).

Only *the present* is ours. The past is not now, and the future is not yet. And “what is your life? It is even *a vapour*, that appeareth for *a little time*, and then *vanisheth away*” (James 4:14).

Then again, “thou *knowest not* what *a day* may bring forth” (Prov. 27:1). We hold our present fleeting life by such a slender thread. Be wise. God gave it to you *for a time*—and *for a purpose*. Make full use of it *while you have it*. Use it as a stepping-stone to greater things. It can lead to LIFE more joyous and more lasting.

Never forget that the sun will go down at last on your day of opportunity.

“**NOW** is *the day* of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).

Then, “TODAY if ye will hear His voice” (Ps. 95:7; Heb. 3:7),

“SEEK YE THE LORD *while He may be found*; Call ye upon HIM *while He is near!*” (Isaiah 55:6).

NOW IS THE TIME!

“Oh! blessed is the man
Who knows the joyful sound—
Salvation’s wondrous plan:
For him all things abound.”

This Booklet and other literature may be obtained from

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN CENTRAL STANDING COMMITTEE
49-51 REGENT STREET, SYDNEY, N.S.W.

A. F. DINHAM PRINT, 27 CLEMENTS AVE., BANKSTOWN - 70-7385