

**December 30**

*Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness. Psalm 65:11*

AS we review the leadings of divine providence during the year that is past, let God's goodness and mercy stimulate our

faith and confidence in Him as respects the New incoming Year. A proper retrospect on the part of a proper child of God will enable him not only to render thanks for the past, but to look up and lift up his head, realizing that our deliverance is nearer than when we

first believed; and that He that began a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it, if we will but continue to submit our wills, our lives, our all, to His wisdom and loving care. Z. '00-365 R2738:1

R2737 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

## "THOU CROWNEST THE YEAR WITH THY GOODNESS"

--PSALM 65:11--DEC. 30--

WHAT MORE appropriate lesson could have been chosen for the close of the year! It is fitting that the Lord's people should continually keep trace of the mercies and blessings they enjoy--otherwise the pressure of the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches would so crowd in upon our minds and hearts as to cover from our observation and ultimately choke up completely the springs of divine grace, which, kept open, minister continually to our joy and refreshment in the holy spirit.

To this end it is appropriate that we have a daily review of the blessings we enjoy--that every evening we call to mind the privileges enjoyed, the providences which have guided our way, and the blessings, both temporal and spiritual, which have come to us; some of them in common with the world in general and others of a special kind, known too and appreciated by those only who know the Shepherd and are known of him; --who hear his voice and to whom the rod and staff, his chastenings and guidance, are continually a comfort and a joy.

It is appropriate, too, that we take weekly reviews, looking at the same mercies and blessings from a still broader standpoint of observation, reminding us of the rest into which we have entered through faith in the precious blood, and also of the rest that remains for the people of God, whereof God has given us assurance in that on the first day of the week he raised up Jesus from the dead.--Heb. 4:3,9.

But it is with special appropriateness that at the close of the still larger cycle of a year we should take a still broader and more comprehensive view of our experiences, looking circumspectly at the way we have traveled and considering well which have been the steps which hindered progress, and which have been proper steps in the footprints of Jesus, bringing us nearer to the goal--the "mark" which we must surely attain if we would be accounted worthy of a share in the promised Kingdom.

A year may seem a longer or a shorter period, according to the circumstances. To the mind of childhood it is a very long period, while to more developed minds, filled with the activities of life, it seems much shorter-- speeding all too rapidly to permit the accomplishment of all the things desired to be achieved. Then again, the year will seem proportionately long as it has contained draughts of bitter experience or sufferings, mental or physical;--proportionately short, as it has contained joys and pleasures which seem to slip away all too quickly. To a certain extent such experiences are common to all mankind; yet the Christian, especially if he have been for some time in the school of Christ and is somewhat developed both in knowledge and in grace, has a larger capacity than others for grasping and appreciating life; because, no matter how unsound his natural mind may have been, he has now "the mind of Christ," "the spirit of a sound mind," which is far better able than the natural mind to estimate matters at their true worth.

Such an advanced Christian looks back through the year and recalls life's storms as well as its sunshine, its sorrows as well as its joys, its tears as well as its smiles, and sorrows not as others who have no hope (but who, instead, have more or less of vague fear and dread of the future, both of present life and that which is to come). His troubles have been divested of their hobgoblin features, and minimized by the spirit of a sound mind, and the instructions of God's Word, which assures all such that the trials, difficulties and adversities of life, rightly accepted as lessons, are blessings in disguise,--which will work out "a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory" in the life to come.--2 Cor. 4:16,17.

He will perceive too, that his joys have been of a purer and a more solid kind than any he ever knew before he was begotten of the

holy spirit. They have not had commingled with them the bitterness of envy, malice and hatred, but have been unalloyed; because they have not been rejoicings in iniquity, but rejoicings in the truth. Moreover, they have been much more numerous than ever before; because he not only is able to joy in the Lord, joy in his Word, joy in the holy spirit, joy in fellowship with brethren of like precious faith, but by the grace of God he has been enabled additionally to joy in tribulation also;--not because he loved tribulation, but because he loved the patience, the experience, the character, which God assures us are a fruitage which all tribulations must yield us under his providence, if we are rightly exercised thereby.-- James 1:3,4; Rom. 5:3.

Of whom are all these things true? Not of every man, surely, for alas! we know many who have no such experience--the world that lieth in darkness knows not God. Nor are these experiences true of all people of intelligence,--nominally Christians. Surely but comparatively few of those who profess the name of Christ enjoy these precious experiences, or will be able to look back upon the year with satisfaction of this kind, realizing that God has crowned the year with his goodness! Many who cannot rejoice in the goodnesses which we have enumerated foregoing, will nevertheless return thanks for temporal good things and mercies, and strive to peer into the darkness with which an insufficient knowledge and an insufficient faith enshrouds the trials and difficulties of life, which to them are incomprehensible and sources of no joy, and generally of little advantage; because they have not taken the necessary step of full consecration to the Lord, to bring them under his protecting care and under the enlightening influence of his Word through his spirit: or, having taken the step of consecration, they have not been performing their vows, but seeking to serve both God and Mammon, without pleasing either, and without receiving satisfactory blessings from either.

The class which can and does look back through the year from the standpoint that we have described-- the class which looking back can see that God's goodness has crowned every feature of life throughout the year, is the "little flock," the true Church, whose names are written in heaven,--the Body of Christ, the Bride class. They are described by the Prophet in preceding verses of this Psalm. They are the true Zion, which shall shortly be set up, filled with divine glory, the joy of the whole earth, and the divine channel of blessing to all the families of mankind; "For out of Zion shall go the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Hear the Prophet:

"Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion:

And unto thee shall the vow be performed.

O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come!

Iniquities prevail against me: as for my transgressions,  
thou shalt purge them away.

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to  
approach unto thee,

That he may dwell in thy courts.

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house,  
The holy place of thy temple."

Here we have a description of the elect Church, of which Christ is the Head, and all the faithful royal priests who, now fulfilling their vows of sacrifice, are companions in the sufferings of Christ, as by and by they shall be his companions also in the glory that shall be revealed. (Rom. 8:17,18.) They are God's choice, or his "elect," for, as the Apostle informs us, God has predestinated that this class whom he will choose shall all be copies of his Son. (Rom. 8:29.) They shall dwell in his house--they will be members of the great

Temple which the Lord God is building of spiritual stones, in and through which he will bless the world with a knowledge of himself and his grace.-- 1 Pet. 2:4-8.

Is it any wonder that these can rejoice in spirit, saying, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits"? "He hath put a new song into my mouth, even the loving-kindness of our God." Is it any wonder that these looking back can see in the year that is past that that which has blessed and rejoiced them in every sense of the word has been of divine goodness, and that thus God has crowned the whole year with his favor toward them? These can say with faithful Joshua, "Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake."--Joshua 23:14.

These are assured by their Lord that in the Father's house are many mansions, many conditions, suitable to the many kinds of his intelligent creatures; nevertheless there was no mansion for them, because they were to be of a new nature, "partakers of the divine nature," and hence it would be necessary for him to go away and "prepare a place for them"--a heavenly condition. These, knowing that they must be prepared for the place, as well as the place be prepared for them, are enabled to rejoice under every blow of the hammer of discipline, because they realize that it is a part of the Master's work in their preparation to fill the place to which they have been

called in the Father's house --which will be the place of God's Temple, in which they are to be living stones.--Eph. 2:10.

And if the experiences and sentiments of this "little flock" are beyond the ken of the natural man, his neighbors and friends, is it any wonder? Despised and rejected of men, they are nevertheless God's royal priesthood; "as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold they live"-- a life more abundant. In all these things they have cause to rejoice, realizing that the path in which they tread has in it the footprints of him who redeemed them and became the leader and forerunner of this priesthood. The world knows us not, even as it knew him not.

<sup>[1]</sup>As we thus review the leadings of divine providence during the year that is past, let God's goodness and mercy stimulate our faith and confidence in him as respects the New Year coming in. A proper retrospect on the part of a proper child of God will enable him not only to render thanks for the past, but to look up and lift up his head, realizing that our deliverance is nearer than when we first believed; and that he that began a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it, if we will but continue to submit our wills, our lives, our all, to his wisdom and loving care.--Rom. 13:11; Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 5:5,6.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Dec. 30 Manna, Psa. 65:11

### NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS AND METHODS OF READING / STUDYING THE VOLUMES

1) Reading/Studying 12 pages a day: Thus the planned completion is 9 months if it is done consistently -- leaving 3 months for going into more depth in selected areas as suggested in the accompanying quote (or for other studies, or for missed reading, etc.)

2) Reading/Studying one chapter per week: If you count each forward as a chapter (including the 2 fourth volume forwards) and including the tabernacle, the planned completion would be one week less than 23 months. Thus this takes just 5 weeks short of 2 years to complete.

### IMPORTANCE OF FREQUENT AND THOROUGH READING / STUDY OF THE VOLUMES:

R4685.1.4 "Not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the SCRIPTURE STUDIES aside, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years -- if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness..."

R4685.2.5 "We might remark that quite a number of the friends in the Truth are making it a rule to read twelve pages of the SCRIPTURES STUDIES a day, and that we do not know one who has been following this course and making use of the various means of grace the Lord has provided (Dawn and testimony meetings and Sunday meetings and Pilgrim meetings and the Berean lessons, Manna text, etc.), who has gone out of the truth. We know a great many who, on the contrary, have been of the opinion that they knew these things long ago, while in fact they do not know half of what they did know -- they have

forgotten more than half of what they read and they are those who are now stumbling -- going into outer darkness."

R4684-4686 "The plan of reading twelve pages of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES each day, tried by so many, results in more Bible study than any other way that we know of. We believe that it is not so much the time that is given to Bible study, but the amount of study done and the amount of information gained, that counts..."

In reading them the first time, and perhaps the second time, and before we would accept anything as being our own personal faith and conviction, we would say, 'I will not take it because these studies say so; I wish to see what the Bible says.' And so we would study the Scriptures in the light of these SCRIPTURE STUDIES; we would prove every point, or disprove it, as the case might be. We would be satisfied with nothing less than a thorough investigation of the Bible from this standpoint.

If, after doing that, we should find the books to be in accord with the Bible, then we would think we were logical in saying, 'I will not need to go through that process now every time that I read the SCRIPTURE STUDIES, for I have looked up those texts of Scripture and know certainly that the New Testament proves all those points.' If, at the same time, in any future reading, we should come to a place where something did not seem clear to us and we thought of some Scripture which seemed not as harmonious with it as we had previously thought, we would think it our duty to refer at once to the Scriptures, because the Scriptures are the standard, and in that reference to the Scripture it would be with a view to discerning whether or not we had been mistaken in our previous examinations...

We would suggest that merely, reading twelve pages of the SCRIPTURE STUDIES would not be studying in the proper sense of the word --- neither studying the Bible nor studying the SCRIPTURES STUDIES. A proper study would be to think of the meaning of every word and every sentence. The thought is, it is not to see how much one can

read, but to make sure that one goes no further than he comprehends or understands, whether that means one page or twenty pages. We should not consider it a Scripture study in any sense of the word unless our thought has grasped the matter from the standpoint of seeking to know what the Scriptures teach and seeking to call to mind these Scriptures that are being explained and to call to mind other texts perhaps, that are not cited, or of which only a small portion is cited.

If one will do all this it will not be merely a reading but a study; and from this standpoint, whoever reads two pages of SCRIPTURE STUDIES each day with the suggested passages connected with those two pages, would do more Scripture studying in that time than he could do by any other method. Whenever he reads these pages and calls the corresponding or connecting Scriptures to mind he is drawing from the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, with practically every page he reads. Now is it possible to find any other Bible study that would accomplish so much for us in the same time as this would do? If there is we ought to take it. If there is not, then we have our opinion."

R2662.1.1 "I have learned from observation that those who merely read the DAWNS<sup>[2]</sup> without examining the context of Scriptures quoted do not become well established in the truth, so that when the fire that tries every man's faith becomes more intense, they are unable to endure the ordeal. It has further been my experience that those who state that 'they' have the Bible to read, and that it is sufficient for them without reading the DAWNS, never come to a clear knowledge of the truth, because they thereby ignore the instrumentality that God has been pleased to honor in setting forth his truth in these last days..."

Yours in our Redeemer,  
E. J. COWARD, -- Texas."

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<sup>[2]</sup> The DAWNS was merely an early name for the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES