

STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES

"The Path of the Just is as the Shining Light,
Which Shineth More and More
Unto the Perfect Day."

SERIES I

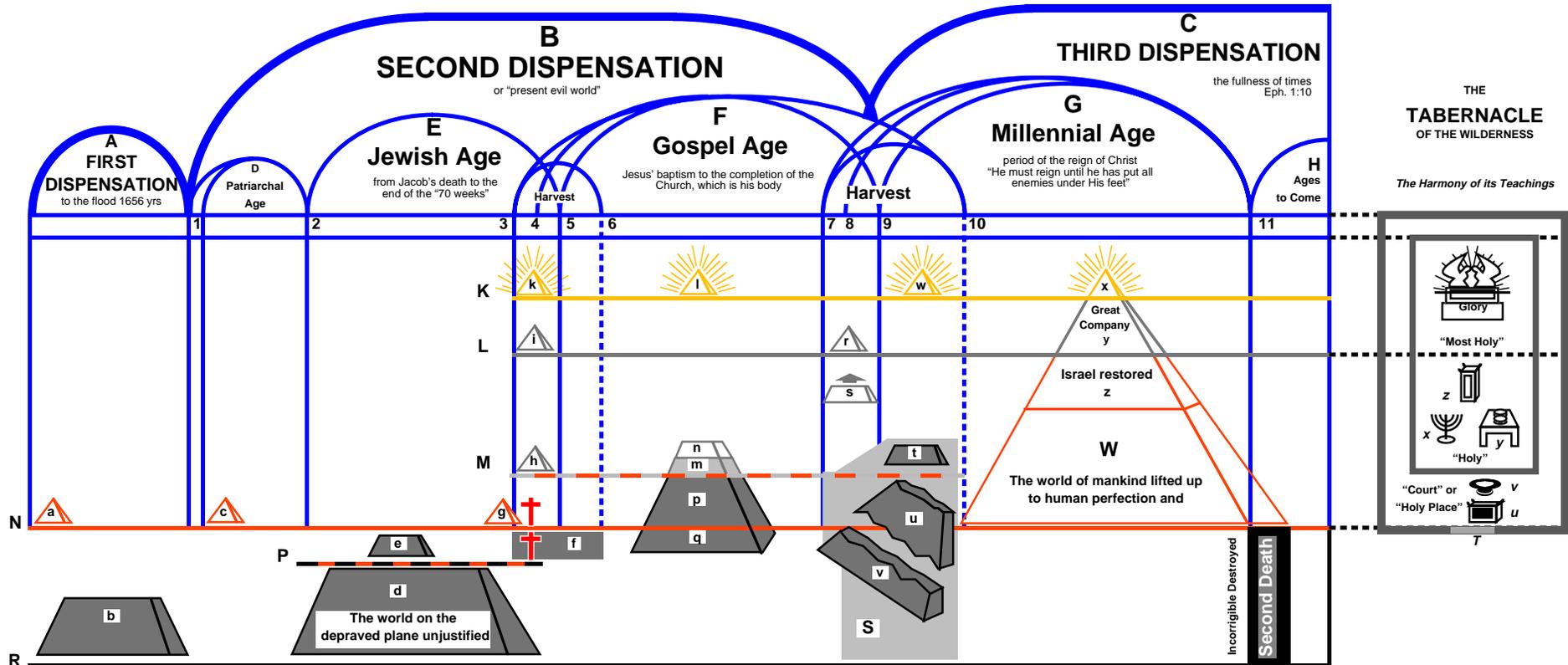
The Plan of the Ages

A Vindication of the Divine Character and Government:
Showing, by a Recognition and Harmonizing
of all the Scriptures, that the Permission of
Evil, Past and Present, is Educational and Preparatory
to the Ushering of Mankind Into
THE GOLDEN AGE OF PROPHECY
In Which All the Families of the Earth Will
Be Blessed with a Full Knowledge of God and a
Full Opportunity for Attaining Everlasting Life
Through the Redeemer, Who Then Will Be the
Great Restorer and Life-Giver. *Acts 3:19-21*

CHART OF THE AGES

Illustrating the plan of God for bringing many sons to glory, and his purpose —

“...In regard to the administration of the fullness of the appointed times, to re-unite all things under one head, even under the anointed one: the things in heaven and the things on earth — under Him.” Eph. 1:10 (Diaglott)



"Write Down the Vision and Make it Plain Upon Tables, That Everyone May Read it Fluently." — HABAKKUK 2:2

STUDY XII

EXPLANATION OF CHART

REPRESENTING THE PLAN OF THE AGES

The Ages--The Harvests--Planes of Actual and Reckoned Standing--The Course of our Lord Jesus--The Course of His Followers--Three Classes in the Nominal Church--Separation in the Harvest--The Anointed Class Glorified--The Great Tribulation Class--The Tares Burned--The World Blessed--The Outcome Glorious.

IN THE back of this volume is attached a chart representing the plan of God for the world's salvation. By it we have sought to aid the mind, through the eye, in understanding something of the progressive character of God's plan, and the progressive steps which must be taken by all who ever attain the complete "change" from the human to the divine nature.

First, we have an outline of the three great dispensations, *A, B, C*--the first of these, *A*, lasting from man's creation to the flood; the second, *B*, from the flood to the commencement of the Millennial reign of Christ, at his second advent; and the third, or "Dispensation of the Fulness of Times," *C*, lasting from the beginning of Christ's reign for "ages to come." (*Eph. 1:10; 2:7*) These three great dispensations are frequently referred to in the Scriptures: *A* is called "the world that was"; *B* by our Lord Jesus is called "this world," by Paul "the present evil world," by Peter "the world that now is." *C* is called "the world to come, wherein dwelleth righteousness," in contrast with the present evil world. Now evil rules and the righteous suffer, while in the world to come this order is to be reversed: righteousness will rule and evil-doers will suffer, and finally all evil will be destroyed.

A220

In each of these three great dispensations, epochs or "worlds" God's plan with reference to men has a distinct and separate outline; yet each is but a part of the one great plan which, when complete, will exhibit the divine wisdom --though these parts considered separately fail to show their deep design. Since the first "world" ("heavens and earth," or that order of things) passed away at the time of the flood, it follows that it must have been a different order from "this present evil world," of which our Lord said Satan is the prince; hence the prince of this present evil world was not the prince of the world that was before the flood, although he was not without influence then. Several scriptures throw light on God's dealings during that time, and thus give a clear insight into his plan as a whole. The thought suggested by these is that the first "world," or the dispensation before the flood, was under the supervision and special ministration of angels, who were permitted to try what they could do to recover the fallen and degenerate race. Doubtless, with God's permission, they were anxious to try it; for their interest was manifested in the singing and shouting for joy over the works of creation. (*Job 38:7*) That angels were the permitted, though unsuccessful rulers of that first epoch is not only indicated by all references to that period, but it may reasonably be inferred from the Apostle's remark when, contrasting the present dispensation with the past and the future, he says (*Heb. 2:5*), "Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come." No; that world is to be under the control of the Lord Jesus and his joint-heirs; and hence it will not only be a more righteous administration than that of "the present evil world," but it will also be more successful than that of the first world or dispensation under the "ministration of angels," whose inability to reclaim the race is manifest from

A221

the fact that man's wickedness became so great that God in his wrath and righteous indignation destroyed with a flood the whole of the race then living with the exception of eight persons. *Gen. 7:13*

During the "present evil world," man is permitted to try governing himself; but by reason of the fall he is under the control of Satan, the "prince of this world," against whose secret machinations and intrigues he has vainly striven in his efforts at self-government during the long period from

the flood to the present time. This attempted reign of man under Satan is to end in the greatest time of trouble the world has ever known. And thus will have been proven the futility, not only of angelic power to save the race, but also of man's own efforts to reach satisfactory conditions.

The second of these great dispensations, *B*, is composed of three distinct ages, each of which, as a progressive step, leads upward and onward in God's plan.

Age *D* was the one during which God's special dealings were with such patriarchs as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Age *E* is the Jewish Age, or the period following the death of Jacob, during which all of his posterity were treated by God as his special charge--"his people." To these he showed special favors, and declared, "*You only* have I known (recognized with favor) of all the families of the earth." (*Amos 3:2*) These, as a nation, were typical of the Christian Church, the "holy nation, the peculiar people." The promises made to them were typical of the "better promises" made to us. Their journey through the wilderness to the land of promise was typical of our journey through the wilderness of sin to the heavenly Canaan. Their sacrifices justified them typically, not really; for the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sin. (*Heb. 10:4*) But in the Gospel Age, *F*, we have the "better sacrifices,"

A222

which do make atonement for the sins of the whole world. We have the "royal priesthood," composed of all those who offer themselves to God "living sacrifices," holy and acceptable, through Jesus Christ, who is the Chief or "High Priest of our profession." (*Heb. 3:1*) In the Gospel age we find the realities of which the Jewish age and its services and ordinances were shadows. *Heb. 10:1*

The Gospel age, *F*, is the period during which the body of Christ is called out of the world, and shown by faith the crown of life, and the exceeding great and precious promises whereby (by obedience to the call and its requirements) they may become partakers of the divine nature. (*2 Pet. 1:4*) Evil is still permitted to reign over or rule the world, in order that by contact with it these may be tried to see whether they are willing to give up the human nature with its privileges and blessings, a living sacrifice, being made conformable to Jesus' death, that they may be accounted worthy to be in his likeness in the resurrection. *Psa. 17:15*

The third great dispensation, *C*, is to be composed of many ages--"The Ages to Come." The first of these, the

Millennial age, *G*, is the only one concerning which we have any definite information. It is the thousand years during which Christ will reign over and thereby bless all the families of the earth, accomplishing the "restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets." (*Acts 3:19-21*) During that age, sin and death shall be forever blotted out; for "Christ must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet....The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"--Adamic death. (*1 Cor. 15:25,26*) That will be the great reconstruction period. Associated with Christ Jesus in that reign will be the Church, his bride, his body, even as he promised, saying, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I

A223

also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." *Rev. 3:21*

The "Ages to Come," *H*, following the great reconstruction period, are to be ages of perfection, blessedness and happiness, regarding the work of which, the Scriptures are silent. It is enough to know, at this distance, that they will be ages of glory and blessing under divine favor.

Each of these dispensations has its distinct seasons for the beginning and development of its work, and each ends with a harvest manifesting its fruits. The harvest at the close of the Jewish age was a period of forty years, lasting from the beginning of Jesus' ministry, when he was *anointed* of God by the Spirit (*Acts 10:37,38*), A.D. 29, until the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. In this harvest the Jewish age ended and the Gospel age began. There was a lapping of these dispensations, as represented in the diagram.

The Jewish age ended in a measure when, at the end of his three and one-half years' ministry, the Lord rejected that nation, saying, "Your house is left unto you desolate." (*Matt. 23:38*) Yet there was favor shown them for three and one-half years after this, by the confining to them of the Gospel call, in harmony with the prophet's declaration (*Dan. 9:24-27*) regarding seventy weeks (of years) of favor toward them, in the midst of the last of which, Messiah should be cut off (die), but not for himself. "Christ died [not for himself, but] for our sins," and thus caused the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, in the midst of the week--three and one-half years before the expiration of the seventy covenant weeks of Jewish favor. When the true sacrifice had been made, of course the typical ones could no longer be recognized by Jehovah.

There was, then, a fuller sense in which that Jewish age closed with the end of the seventieth week, or three and one-half

A224

years after the cross--after which the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles also, beginning with Cornelius. (*Acts 10:45*) This ended their age so far as God's favor toward and recognition of the Jewish church was concerned; their national existence terminated in the great time of trouble which followed.

In that period of the Jewish harvest the Gospel age had its beginning. The design of this age is the call, development and trial of "the Christ of God"--Head and body. This is the Spirit dispensation; hence, it is proper to say that the Gospel age began with the anointing of Jesus "with the Holy Spirit and with power" (*Acts 10:38; Luke 3:22; 4:1,18*) at the time of his baptism. In relation to the Church, his body, it commenced three and a half years later.

A "harvest" constitutes the closing period of the Gospel age also, during which there is again a lapping of two ages--the Gospel age ending, and the Restitution or Millennial age beginning. The Gospel age closes by stages, as did its pattern or "shadow," the Jewish age. As there the first seven years of the harvest were devoted in a special sense to a work in and for Israel after the flesh, and were years of favor, so here we find a similar seven years indicated as having the same bearing upon the Gospel Church, to be followed by a period of trouble ("fire") upon the world, as a punishment for wickedness, and as a preparation for the reign of righteousness--of which more again.

The Path to Glory

K, L, M, N, P, R, each represents a different plane. *N* is the plane of *perfect human* nature. Adam was on this plane before he sinned; but from the moment of disobedience he fell to the depraved or sinful plane, *R*, on which all his posterity are born. This corresponds to the "Broad Way" which leads

A225

to destruction. *P* represents the plane of typical justification, reckoned as effected by the sacrifices of the Law. It was not actual perfection, for "the Law made nothing perfect."

--**Heb. 7:19**

N represents not only the plane of human perfection, as once occupied by the perfect man, Adam, but also the standing of all justified persons. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures," and in consequence all believers in Christ--all who accept of his perfect and finished work as their justifier--are, through faith, reckoned of God as justified, as though perfect men, as though they had never been sinners. In God's sight, then, all who accept of Christ as their Redeemer are reckonedly on the plane of human perfection, *N*. This is the only standpoint from which man may approach God, or have any communion with him. All on this plane God calls sons--human sons. Adam was thus a son (**Luke 3:38**), and had communion before he became disobedient. All who accept of our Lord Jesus' finished ransom work are counted or *reckoned* as restored to primitive purity; and in consequence they have fellowship or communion with God.

During the Gospel age God has made a special offer to justified human beings, telling them that on certain conditions they may experience a change of nature, that they may cease to be earthly, human beings, and become heavenly, spiritual beings, like Christ, their Redeemer. Some believers--justified persons--are satisfied with what joy and peace they have through believing in the forgiveness of their sins, and so do not heed the voice which calls them to come up higher. Others, moved by the love of God as shown in their ransom from sin, and feeling that they are not their own, having been bought with a price, say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Such have the Lord's answer through Paul, who says, "I beseech you, *brethren*, by the mercies

A226

of God, that ye present your bodies a living *sacrifice*, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service." (**Rom. 12:1**) What does the Apostle mean by thus urging the presentation of ourselves as living sacrifices? He means that we should consecrate to God's service every power and talent we possess, that henceforth we may live not for self, nor for friends, nor for family, nor for the world, nor for anything else but for, and in the obedient service of, him who bought us with his own precious blood.

But since God would not accept of blemished or imperfect typical sacrifices, and since we all became sinners through Adam, can we be acceptable sacrifices? Paul shows that it is only because we are holy that we are acceptable

sacrifices. We are not holy like Jesus, who knew no sin, for we are of the condemned race; nor yet because we have entirely succeeded in reaching perfection of conduct, for we reckon not to have attained that perfection to which we are called; but we have this treasure in (fragile and leaky) earthen vessels, that the glory of our ultimate perfection may be seen to be of God's favor, and not of our own ability. But our holiness, and our acceptableness to God as sacrifices, come from the fact that God has justified us freely from all sin, through our faith in Christ's sacrifice on our behalf.

As many as appreciate and obey this call rejoice to be accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Christ, and look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen--at the "crown of life"--"the prize of our high-calling in Christ Jesus" and "the glory that shall be revealed in us." These, from the moment of consecration to God, are no longer reckoned as men, but as having been begotten of God through the word of truth--no longer human, but thenceforth spiritual children. They are now one step nearer the prize than when they first believed. But their spiritual being is yet imperfect: they are only *begotten*, not

A227

yet *born* of the Spirit. They are embryo spiritual children, on plane *M*--the plane of spirit begetting. Because begotten of the Spirit, they are no longer reckoned as human, but as spiritual; for the human nature, once theirs, once justified, they have now given up or reckoned dead--a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to and accepted of God. They are now new creatures in Christ Jesus: old things (human hopes, will and ambitions) have passed away, and all things have become new; for "ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (**2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:9**) If you have been begotten of the Spirit, "ye (as human beings) are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Plane *L* represents the condition of *perfect spiritual* being; but before plane *L* can be reached, the conditions of our covenant must be carried out. It is one thing to covenant with God that we will be dead to all human things, and a further thing to perform that covenant throughout our earthly career--keeping the "body under" (dead), keeping our own will out of sight, and performing only the Lord's will. The entrance upon plane *L* is called birth, or the full entrance into life as a spirit being. The entire Church will

enter on this plane when gathered out (selected) from the world in the "harvest" or end of the Gospel age. The "dead in Christ shall rise first." Then we, who are alive and remain, shall be changed in a moment--made perfect spiritual beings with bodies like unto Christ's glorious body (for "this mortal must put on immortality"). Then, that which is perfect having come, that which is in part (the begotten condition with the various hindrances of the flesh to which we are now subject) shall be done away.

But there is a still further step to be taken beyond a perfection of spiritual being, viz., to "the glory that shall follow"--plane *K*. We do not here refer to a glory of person, but to a glory of power or office. The reaching of plane *L*

A228

brings full personal glory; i.e., glorious being, like unto Christ. But after we are thus perfected, and made entirely like our Lord and Head, we are to be associated with him in the "glory" of power and office--to sit with him in his throne, even as he, after being perfected at his resurrection, was exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high. Thus shall we enter everlasting glory, plane *K*.

Let us now carefully study the chart and note its illustrations of the various features of the plan of God. In these illustrations we use the pyramid figure to represent perfection, because of its fitness and because of evident reference to it in the Scriptures.

Adam was a perfect being, pyramid *a*. Notice its position --on plane *N*, which represents human perfection. On plane *R*, the plane of sin and imperfection or the depraved plane, the topless pyramid, *b*, an imperfect figure, represents fallen Adam and his posterity--depraved, sinful and condemned.

Abraham and others of that day, justified to fellowship with God on account of faith, are represented by a pyramid (*c*) on plane *N*. Abraham was a member of the depraved human family and by nature belonged with the rest on plane *R*; but Paul tells us that Abraham was justified by faith; that is, he was reckoned of God a sinless and perfect man because of his faith. This, in God's estimation, lifted him up above the world of depraved sinful men to plane *N*; and though actually still imperfect, he was received into the favor that Adam had lost, viz., communion with God as a "friend." (**James 2:23**) All on the perfect (sinless) plane *N* are friends of God, and he is a friend of theirs; but sinners (on plane *R*) are at enmity against God--"enemies through

wicked works."

The world of mankind after the flood, represented by figure *d*, was still on plane *R*--still at enmity, where it continues

A229

until the Gospel Church is selected and the Millennial age begins.

"Israel after the flesh," during the Jewish age, when the typical sacrifices of bulls and goats cleansed them (not really, but typically, "for the Law made nothing perfect"-- **Heb. 7:19**), were typically justified, hence they are (*e*) on plane *P*, the plane of typical justification, which lasted from the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai until Jesus made an end of the Law, nailing it to his cross. There the typical justification ended by the institution of the "better sacrifices" than the Jewish types, those which actually "take away the sin of the world" and "make the comers thereunto [actually] perfect." **Heb. 10:1**

The fire of trial and trouble through which fleshly Israel passed, when Jesus was present, sifting them and taking out of their nominal church the wheat, the "Israelites indeed," and especially when, after the separation of the wheat, he "burned up the chaff [the refuse part of that *system*] with unquenchable fire," is illustrated by figure *f*. It was a time of trouble which they were powerless to avert. See **Luke 3:17,21,22; 1 Thess. 2:16**.

Jesus, at the age of thirty years, was a perfect, mature man (*g*), having left the glory of the spiritual condition and become a *man* in order that he (by the grace of God) should taste death for every man. The justice of God's law is absolute: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth and a life for a life. It was necessary that a perfect *man* should die for mankind, because the claims of justice could be met in no other way. The death of an angel could no more pay the penalty and release man than could the death of "bulls and of goats, which can never take away sin." Therefore, he who is termed "the Beginning of the creation of God" became a *man*, was "made flesh," that he might give that ransom (corresponding price) which would redeem mankind. He must

A230

have been a perfect man else he could have done no more than any member of the fallen race to pay the price. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He took the same form or likeness which sinners have--

"the likeness of sinful flesh"--the human likeness. But he took that likeness in its perfection: he did not partake of its sin nor did he share its imperfection, except as he voluntarily shared the sorrows and pains of some during his ministry, taking their pains and infirmities as he imparted to them his vitality and health and strength. It is written that "Himself *took* our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (*Isa. 53:4*), and "virtue [life, vitality, vigor] went out of him and healed them all." *Mark 5:30; Luke 6:19; Matt. 8:16,17*

Being found in fashion as a (perfect) man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death. He presented himself to God, saying, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God"--and symbolized this consecration by a baptism in water. When he thus presented himself, consecrated his being, his offering was holy (pure) and acceptable to God, who showed his acceptance by filling him with his Spirit and power--when the holy Spirit came upon him, thus anointing him.

This filling with the Spirit was the begetting to a new nature--the divine--which should be fully developed or born when he had fully accomplished the offering--the sacrifice of the human nature. This begetting was a step up from human conditions, and is shown by pyramid *h*, on plane *M*, the plane of spirit begetting. On this plane Jesus spent three and one-half years of his life--until his human existence ended on the cross. Then, after being dead three days, he was raised to life--to the perfection of spirit being (*i*, plane *L*), born of the Spirit--"the first born from the dead." "That which is *born* of the Spirit is *spirit*." Jesus, therefore, at and

A231

after his resurrection, was a spirit--a spirit being, and no longer a human being in any sense.

True, after his resurrection he had power to appear, and did appear, as a man, in order that he might teach his disciples and prove to them that he was no longer dead; but he was not a man, and was no longer controlled by human conditions, but could go and come as the wind (even when the doors were shut), and none could tell whence he came or whither he went. "So is every one that is *born* of the Spirit." (*John 3:8*) *Compare 20:19,26.*

From the moment of his consecration to sacrifice, at the time of his baptism, the human had been reckoned dead--and there the new nature was reckoned begun, which was completed at the resurrection, when he reached the perfect

spirit plane, *L*--was raised a spiritual body.

Forty days after his resurrection, Jesus ascended to the majesty on high--the plane of divine glory, *K* (pyramid *k*). During the Gospel age he has been in glory (*I*), "set down with the Father on his throne," and Head over his Church on earth--her director and guide. During this entire Gospel age the Church has been in process of development, discipline and trial, to the intent that in the end or harvest of the age she may become his bride and joint-heir. Hence she has fellowship in his sufferings, that she may be also glorified together with him (plane *K*), when the proper time comes.

The steps of the Church to glory are the same as those of her Leader and Lord, who "hath set us an example that we should walk in his footsteps"--except that the Church starts from a lower plane. Our Lord, as we have seen, came into the world on the plane of human *perfection*, *N*, while all we of the Adamic race are on a lower plane, *R*--the plane of sin, imperfection and enmity against God. The first thing necessary for us, then, is to be *justified*, and thus to reach plane

A232

N. How is this accomplished? Is it by good works? No; sinners can do no good works. We could not commend ourselves to God, so "God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (**Rom. 5:8**) Then the condition upon which we come to the justified or perfect human plane is that Christ died for our sins, redeemed us and lifted us up, "through faith in his blood," to the perfect plane, from which, in Adam, we fell. "We are justified [lifted to plane *N*] by faith." And "*being justified by faith*, we have peace with God" (**Rom. 5:1**), and are no longer esteemed by God as enemies, but as justified human sons, on the same plane as Adam and our Lord Jesus, except that they were actually perfect, while we are merely reckoned so by God. This reckoned justification we realize through faith in God's Word, which says, Ye are "bought," "redeemed," "justified freely from all things." We stand in God's sight blameless, spotless and holy in the robes of Christ's righteousness imputed to us by faith. Our sins he consented to have *imputed* to him, that he might bear our penalty for us; and he died on our behalf, as though he were the sinner. His righteousness is consequently *imputed* to all who accept of his redemption, and brings with it all the rights and blessings originally possessed before sin entered. It restores us to life and to fellowship with God. This fellowship

we may have at once by the exercise of faith, and the life and fuller fellowship and joy are assured--in God's "due time."

But remember that while justification is a blessed thing, it does not change our nature:* we are still human beings.

*The word *nature* is used in an accommodated sense when it is said of a man that he is *ill-natured*. Strictly speaking, no man is evil by nature. Human nature is "very good," an *earthly image* of the divine nature. So every

A233

We are saved from the wretched state of sin and alienation from God, and instead of being human sinners we are human sons; and now, because we are sons, God speaks to us as such. During the Gospel age he has been calling for the "little flock" of "joint-heirs," saying, "My son, give me thine heart"--that is, give yourself, all your earthly powers, your will, your talents, your all, to me, even as Jesus hath set you an example; and I will make you a son on a higher plane than the human. I will make you a spiritual son, with a spirit body like the risen Jesus--"the express image of the Father's person." If you will give up all of the earthly hopes, ambitions, aims, etc., consecrate the human nature entirely, and use it up in my service, I will give you a higher nature than the rest of your race; I will make you a "partaker of the divine nature"--an "heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ, *if so be that you suffer with him*, that you may be also *glorified* together."

Those who rightly value this prize set before them in the gospel gladly lay aside every weight and run with patience the appointed race, that they may win it. Our works were not called for to secure our justification: our Lord Jesus did all the work that could be done to that end, and when, by faith, we accepted of his finished work, we were justified, lifted to plane *N*. But now, if we would go further, we cannot go without works. True, we must not lose our faith, else we will thereby lose our justification; but being justified, and continuing in faith, we are able (through the grace given unto us by our begetting of the Spirit) to do works, to bring forth fruit acceptable to God. And God requires this;

man is of a good nature, the difficulty being that this good nature has become depraved. It is then unnatural for a man to be evil, brutal, etc., and natural for him to be God-like. It is in this, its primary sense, that we use the word *nature*, above. We are justified by Christ to a full return to all

the privileges and blessings of our human nature--the *earthly* image of God.

A234

for it is the sacrifice we covenanted to make. God requires that we show our appreciation of the great prize by giving all that we have and are for it; not to men, but to God--a sacrifice holy and, through Christ, acceptable to him--our reasonable service.

When we present all these things, we say: Lord, how wouldst thou have me deliver this, my sacrifice, my time, talent, influence, etc., to thee? Then, examining God's Word for an answer, we hear his voice instructing us to deliver our *all* to him as our Lord Jesus did, by doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith--serving them with spiritual or with natural food, clothing them in Christ's righteousness or with the earthly raiment, as we may have ability, or as they may need. Having consecrated *all*, we are begotten of the Spirit, we have reached plane *M*; and now, through the power given unto us, if we use it, we will be able to perform all of our covenant, and to come off conquerors, and more than conquerors, through (the power or Spirit of) him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood. But, thus walking in the footsteps of Jesus,

"Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor once at ease sit down.
Thine arduous work will not be done
Till thou hast gained thy crown."

The crown will be won when we, like our faithful Brother Paul, have fought a good fight and finished the course, but not sooner. Until then, the flame and incense of our sacrifice of labor and service must ascend daily--a sacrifice of sweet odor unto God, acceptable through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Those of this overcoming class who "sleep" will be raised spirit beings, plane *L*, and those of the same class who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord will be

A235

"changed" to the same plane of spirit being, and will not "sleep" for a moment, though the "change" will necessitate the dissolution of the earthen vessel. No longer weak, earthly, mortal, corruptible beings, these will then be fully

born of the Spirit--heavenly, spiritual, incorruptible, immortal beings. *1 Cor. 15:44,52*

We know not how long it will be after their "change," or perfecting as spirit beings (plane *L*), before they, as a full and complete company, will be glorified (plane *K*) with the Lord, united with him in power and great glory. This unifying and full glorification of the entire body of Christ with the Head we understand to be the "marriage of the Lamb" to his Bride, when she shall fully enter into the joys of her Lord.

Look again at the chart--*n, m, p, q* are four distinct classes which unitedly represent the nominal Gospel Church as a whole, claiming to be the body of Christ. Both the *n* and *m* classes are on the spirit-begotten plane, *M*. These two classes have existed together throughout the Gospel age; both covenanted with God to become living sacrifices; both were "accepted in the beloved" and begotten by the Spirit as "*new creatures*." The difference between them is this: *n* represents those who are fulfilling their covenant and are dead with Christ to earthly will, aims and ambitions, while *m* represents the larger company of the spirit-begotten children who have covenanted, but who, alas! shrink back from the performance of their covenant. The *n* class consists of the overcomers who will be the Bride of Christ, who will sit with the Lord in his throne in glory--plane *K*. This is the "little flock" to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom. (*Luke 12:32*) Those of the *m* class shrink from the death of the human will, but God still loves them, and therefore will bring them by the way of adversity and trouble to plane *L*, the perfect spiritual plane. But they will

A236

have lost the right to plane *K*, the throne of glory, because they were not overcomers. If we prize our Father's love, if we desire our Lord's approval, if we aspire to be members of his body, his Bride, and to sit in his throne, we must fulfil our covenant of sacrifice faithfully and willingly.

The majority of the *nominal* Church is represented by section *p*. Notice that they are not on plane *M*, but on plane *N*. They are justified but not sanctified. They are not fully consecrated to God, and not begotten, therefore, as spirit beings. They are higher than the world, however, because they accept of Jesus as their ransom from sin; but they have not accepted the high-calling of this age to become part of the spiritual family of God. If they continue in faith and fully submit to the righteous laws of Christ's Kingdom, in

the Times of Restitution, they will finally attain the likeness of the perfect earthly man, Adam. They will completely recover all that was lost through him. They will attain the same human perfection, mental, moral and physical, and will again be in the image of God, as Adam was; for to all this they were redeemed. And their position of justification, plane *N*, as those who have heard and believed in the salvation through Christ, is a special blessing which they by faith enjoy sooner than the general world (for all shall be brought to an accurate knowledge of the Truth, in the Millennial age). These, however, will have had the advantage of an earlier start and some progress in the right direction. But class *p* fails to improve the real benefit of this faith justification in the present time. It is granted now for the special purpose of enabling some to make the acceptable sacrifice, and to become the *n* class as members of "the body of Christ." Those of class *p* receive the favor of God [justification] "in vain" (2 *Cor. 6:1*): they fail to use it to go on and present themselves acceptable sacrifices, during this time in

A237

which sacrifices are acceptable to God. Those of this class, though not "saints," not members of the consecrated "body," are called "brethren" by the Apostle. (*Rom. 12:1*) In the same sense the entire race, when restored, will forever be brethren of the Christ, and the children of God, though of a different nature. God is the Father of *all* in harmony with him, on every plane and of every nature.

Another class connected with the nominal Church, which never did believe in Jesus as the sacrifice for its sins, and which consequently is not justified--not on plane *N*--is represented below plane *N*, by section *q*. These are "wolves in sheep's clothing"; yet they call themselves Christians, and are recognized as members of the nominal Church. They are not truly believers in Christ as their Redeemer; they belong to plane *R*; they are part of the world, and are out of place in the Church and a great injury to it. In this mixed condition, with these various classes, *n*, *m*, *p*, and *q*, mingling together and all calling themselves Christians, the Church has existed throughout the Gospel age. As our Lord foretold, the nominal kingdom of heaven (the nominal Church) is like a field sown with wheat and tares. And he said he would "let both grow together until the harvest" in the end of the age. In the time of harvest he will say unto the reapers ("the angels"--messengers), Gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather

the wheat into my barn. *Matt. 13:38,41,49*

These words of our Lord show us that while he purposed that both should grow together during the age, and be recognized as members of the nominal Church, he also purposed that there should come a time of separation between these different elements, when those who are truly the Church, his saints (*n*) approved and owned of God, should be made manifest. *Matt. 13:39*

A238

During the Gospel age the good seed has been growing, and tares or counterfeits also. "The good seed are the children of the kingdom," the spiritual children, classes *n* and *m*, while "the tares are the children of the wicked one." All of class *q*, and many of class *p*, are therefore "tares"; for "no man can serve two masters," and "his servants you are to whom you render service." As those in class *p* do not consecrate their service and talents to the Lord that bought them--a reasonable service--doubtless they give much of their time and talent really in opposition to God, and hence in the service of the enemy.

Now notice on the chart the harvest or end of the Gospel age; notice the two parts into which it is divided--seven years and thirty-three years, the exact parallel of the harvest of the Jewish age. This harvest, like the Jewish one, is to be first a time of trial and sifting upon the Church, and afterward a time of wrath or pouring out of the "seven last plagues" upon the world, including the nominal Church. The Jewish Church was the "shadow" or pattern on the fleshly plane of all that the Gospel Church enjoys on the spiritual plane. That which tried fleshly Israel in the harvest of their age was THE TRUTH then presented to them. The truth then due was the sickle, and it separated the "Israelites indeed" from the nominal Jewish Church; and of the true wheat there was but a fragment compared to the professors. So also is the harvest of this age. The harvest of the Gospel age, like that of the Jewish age, is under the supervision of the chief reaper, our Lord Jesus, who must then be present. (*Rev. 14:14*) The first work of our Lord in the harvest of this age will be to separate the true from the false. The nominal Church, because of her mixed condition, the

A239

Lord calls "Babylon"--confusion; and the harvest is the time for separating the different classes in the nominal

Church, and for ripening and perfecting the *n* class. Wheat will be separated from tares, ripe wheat from unripe, etc. Those in class *n* are a "first fruits" of the wheat, and after being separated they will, in due time, become Christ's Bride, and be forever with and like her Lord.

The separation of this little flock from Babylon is shown by figure *s*. She is on the way to become *one* with the Lord, and to bear his name and share his glory. The glorified Christ, Head and body, is shown by figure *w*. Figures *t*, *u*, and *v* represent Babylon--the nominal Church--falling, going to pieces during "the time of trouble" in the "day of our Lord." Though this may seem to be a dreadful thing, yet it will actually be of great advantage to all the true wheat. Babylon falls because she is not what she claims to be. The Church nominal contains many hypocrites, who have associated themselves with her because of her honorable standing in the eyes of the world, and who, by their conduct are making Babylon a stench in the nostrils of the world. The Lord always knew their real character, but, according to his purpose he lets them alone until the harvest, when he will "gather out of [or from] his kingdom [true Church, and bind in bundles] all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire [trouble, *destructive* to their nominal system and false profession]....

Then shall the righteous [the *n* class] shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (*Matt. 13:41-43*) The trouble coming upon the Church will be occasioned in great measure by the growth of Infidelity and Spiritism, of various kinds, which will be severe trials because Babylon holds so many doctrines contrary to God's Word. As in the harvest of the Jewish age the *cross* of Christ was to the Jew, expecting glory and power, a stumbling block, and to the worldly-wise Greek, foolishness, so in the harvest

A240

of the Gospel age it will again be the stone of stumbling and rock of offense.

Every one who has built upon Christ anything else than the gold, silver and precious stones of truth, and a character consistent therewith, will find himself sorely beset during the time of wrath ("fire"); for all the wood, hay and stubble of doctrine and practice will be consumed. Those who have built properly, and who consequently possess the approved character, are represented by figure *s*, while *t* represents the "great company," begotten of the Spirit, but who have built with wood, hay and stubble--wheat, but

not fully ripened at the time of the gathering of the first fruits (*s*). They (*t*) lose the prize of the throne and the divine nature, but will finally reach birth as spirit beings of an order lower than the divine nature. Though these are truly consecrated, they are overcome by the worldly spirit to such an extent that they fail to render their lives in sacrifice. Even in "the harvest," while the living members of the Bride are being separated from others by the *truth*, the ears of others, including class *t*, will be dull of hearing. They will be slow to believe and slow to act in that time of separation. They will, no doubt, be greatly dismayed when they afterward realize that the Bride has been completed and united to the Lord, and that they, because so listless and overcharged, have lost that great prize; but the beauty of God's plan, which they will then begin to discern as one of love, both for them and for all the world of mankind, will quite overcome their grief, and they will shout "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." (**Rev. 19:6,7**) Notice, too, the abundant provision of the Lord: the message is sent to them-- Though you are not the Bride of the Lamb, you may be present at the marriage supper--"Blessed are they which

A241

are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." (**Verse 9**) This company will, in due time, through the Lord's chastisements, come fully into harmony with him and his plan, and will wash their robes, that they may ultimately reach a position next to the Bride--y, on the spiritual plane, *L*.

Rev. 7:14,15

The time of trouble, as it will affect the world, will be after Babylon has begun to fall and disintegrate. It will be an overturning of all human society and governments, preparing the world for the reign of righteousness. During the time of trouble, fleshly Israel (*e*), which was cast off until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, will be restored to God's favor, and the Gospel Church, or spiritual Israel, will be completed and glorified. During the Millennial age Israel will be the chief nation of earth, at the head of all on the earthly plane of being, into oneness and harmony with which all the obedient will be gradually drawn.

Their restoration to perfect human nature, as well as that of the world in general, will be a gradual work, requiring all of the Millennial age for its full accomplishment. During

that thousand years' reign of Christ, the results of Adamic death will be gradually swallowed up or destroyed. Its various stages--sickness, pain and weakness, as well as the tomb--will yield obedience to the Great Restorer's power, until at the end of that age the great pyramid of our chart will be complete. The Christ (x) will be the head of all things--of the great company, of angels, and of men--next to the Father; next in order or rank will be the great company, spirit beings (y), and next, angels; then Israel after the flesh (z), including only Israelites indeed, at the head of earthly nations; then the world of men (W), restored to perfection of being, like the head of the human race, Adam, before he sinned. This restoration will be accomplished gradually during the Millennial age--the "times of restitution." (*Acts 3:21*) Some, however, will be destroyed from

A242

among the people: first, all who, under full light and opportunity, for one hundred years refuse to make progress toward righteousness and perfection (*Isa. 65:20*); and second, those who, having progressed to perfection, in a final testing at the close of the Millennium prove unfaithful. (*Rev. 20:9*) Such die the second death, from which there is no resurrection or restitution promised. But one full individual trial is provided. But one ransom will ever be given. Christ dieth no more.

When we look at our Father's great plan for the exaltation of the Church and the blessing through it of Israel and all the families of the earth by a restitution of all things, it reminds us of the song of the angels: "Glory to God in the highest; on earth, peace, good will toward men!" That will be the consummation of God's plan--"the gathering together of all things in Christ." Who will then say that God's plan has been a failure? Who will then say that he has not overruled evil for good, and made the wrath of both men and devils to praise him?

The figure of a pyramid not only serves well the purpose of illustrating perfect beings, but it continues to answer the purpose of illustration in representing the oneness of the whole creation, as in the fulfilment of God's plan it will be *one* when the harmony and perfection of all things will be attained under the headship of Christ, the Head, not only of the Church which is his body, but also of all things in heaven and in earth. *Eph. 1:10*

Christ Jesus was the "beginning," "the head," "the topstone," the "chief (upper) corner-stone" of this grand structure,

which as yet is only commenced; and into harmony with the lines and angles of the top-stone must every understone be built. No matter how many kinds of stones may be in this structure, no matter how many distinct natures there may be among God's sons, earthly and heavenly, they all,

A243

to be everlastingly acceptable to him, must be conformed to the image of his Son. All who will be of this building must partake of the spirit of obedience to God, and of love toward him and all his creatures (so amply illustrated in Jesus), the fulfilment of the law--Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.

In the process (as God's Word outlines this gathering together in one of all things, both heavenly and earthly, under one head), Christ Jesus, the Head, was first selected; secondly, the Church, which is his body. Angels and other spirit classes will rank next; then the worthies of Israel and the world. Beginning with the highest, the ordering shall proceed until all who *will* shall have been brought into harmony and oneness.

One peculiarity is that this tried, chief, corner top-stone is laid first and called a *foundation* stone. Thus is illustrated the fact that the foundation of all hope toward God and righteousness is laid, not on the earth, but in the heavens. And those built under it and united to this heavenly foundation are held to it by heavenly attractions and laws. And though this order is the very opposite of an earthly building, how appropriate that the stone in whose likeness the entire structure is to be found should be laid first. And how appropriate also to find that our foundation is laid *upward*, not *downward*; and that we, as living stones, are "*built up* into him in all things." Thus the work will progress during the Millennial age, until every creature, of every nature, in heaven and in earth, will be praising and serving God in conformity with the lines of perfect obedience. The universe will then be clean; for in that day "It shall come to pass that the soul that will not hear that Prophet shall be cut off from among the people"--in the second death.

Acts 3:22,23

The Tabernacle of the Wilderness

The same lesson shown in the Chart of the Ages is here taught in this divinely arranged type, the lessons of which will be more fully examined subsequently. We place it alongside, that the different planes or steps to the Holy of Holies may be duly noted or appreciated, as teaching the same steps already examined in detail. Outside the court of the tabernacle lies the whole world in sin, on the depraved plane, *R*. Entering through the "gate" into the "court," we become believers or *justified* persons, on plane *N*. Those who go forward in consecration press to the door of the Tabernacle, and, entering in (plane *M*), become priests. They are strengthened by the "shew bread," enlightened by the "candlestick" and enabled to offer acceptable incense to God by Jesus Christ at the "Golden Altar." Finally, in the first resurrection, they enter the perfect spiritual condition, or "Most Holy" (plane *L*), and are then associated with Jesus in the glory of the Kingdom, plane *K*.

The Blessed Hope

"A little while, earth's fightings will be over;
 A little while, her tears, be wiped away;
 A little while, the power of Jehovah
 Shall turn this darkness to Millennial Day.

"A little while, the ills that now o'erwhelm men
 Shall to the memories of the past belong;
 A little while, the love that once redeemed them
 Shall change their weeping into grateful song.

"A little while! 'Tis ever drawing nearer--
 The brighter dawning of that glorious day.
 Praise God, the light is hourly growing clearer,
 Shining more and more unto the perfect day."