

The Latter Rain—No. 1

By MEADE MacGUIRE

BEFORE departing from this world, Jesus promised definitely that He would return to take His people to the heavenly mansions He had prepared for them. (John 14:1-3.) On one occasion the disciples came to Him with the pointed question, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" In reply He foretold many events which would precede His coming, and He declared that the generation witnessing these events would not pass till all these things were fulfilled. (Matt. 24:3, 34.)

Later, through the apostle John, the Lord revealed that a mighty message would be carried to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, announcing that the hour of God's judgment had come. (Rev. 14:6, 7.) This was to be God's final appeal to a doomed world. Those who accept it will be prepared to meet the coming King of kings.

All through the ages God has done all that infinite love and mercy could do to lead men to

accept the plan of salvation. Now the world enters its final crisis. God purposes to manifest His divine love and power once more through His people, in order to attract and win all who will accept the Saviour.

Ninety-eight years ago this judgment-hour message was proclaimed with mighty power all around the world. Thousands were awakened and convinced of the truth, and they immediately prepared for the coming of the Lord. For years the message was preached and men were urged to prepare quickly, for there was no time to lose. Decade after decade passed. Our organization has reached out all over the earth. Our institutions are numerous and our plans many.

Today we are faced with the solemn and imperative question, which should grip the heart of every advent believer, Why has the Saviour not come? Was it the purpose of God when this message was first given that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed? Can we know the answer to these questions?

We believe that a careful study of God's word and the testimony of His messenger, makes it very plain that while God foreknew the delay, it was not His purpose or desire. We can find a clear explanation of what has caused the delay and what God urges His people to do immediately, that there may be delay no longer, but that the way may be prepared for His coming.

We need to understand that God does not work arbitrarily through His children, but that as they accept His word and co-operate with the divine agencies at work in the world, He uses them to carry out His plans. This great second advent movement which has been carried forward by the people of God, is represented as a mighty angel flying "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth." Rev. 14:6.

Divine power has attended the giving of this message from the beginning, but greater power is promised before the work is finished.

"After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice." Rev. 18:1, 2.

We understand this to mean that God's people will be clothed with great power by the Holy Spirit, as at Pentecost, which will result in the "loud cry"



Christ Reveals to His Disciples Some of the Events Preceding His Return to This Earth

and will lighten the earth with the glory of God.

"It is true that in the time of the end, when God's work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor. Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God's church. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time, the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.

"But near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest 'in the time of the latter rain.' In response, 'the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.' 'He will cause to come down . . . the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.'"—*Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55.

For years we have preached to the world that the hour of God's judgment is come, and that the Saviour is coming in this generation. We expected Him to come many years ago, and we urged people to prepare at once to meet Him. Some may think that we were mistaken in this positive

announcement, but those whose faith is firmly founded on God's word have no such misgivings.

Others seem to think that the Lord has a certain date determined for the coming of Christ, and when that time arrives, He will appear. They do not believe that anything which occurs in this world affects God's plans. We believe that God foreknows the end from the beginning, but we have many positive statements telling us that it is not God's will that the coming of the Lord should be so long delayed.

"If those who claimed to have a living experience in the things of God had done their appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would have been warned ere this, and the Lord Jesus would have come in power and great glory."—*Review and Herald*, Oct. 6, 1896.

"Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God."—*Testimonies*, Vol. VI, p. 450. (Published 1900.)

These unequivocal statements show not only that the Saviour desired to come and could have come many years ago, but that those who professed to be His people and were giving His message are primarily responsible for the delay. Surely it is time for us to face this matter earnestly and learn what God would have us do.

The Golden Clasp—A Divine Signet

By ROY F. COTTRELL

THE Sabbath is a golden clasp that unites God and His people." "To us as to Israel the Sabbath is given for a perpetual covenant." To those who reverence His holy day the Sabbath is a sign that God recognizes them as His chosen people. It is a pledge that He will fulfill to them His covenant. Every soul who accepts the sign of God's government places himself under the divine, everlasting covenant. He fastens himself to the golden chain of obedience, every link of which is a promise."—*Testimonies*, Vol. VI, pp. 351, 350.

From the dawn of history kings and rulers have employed a distinguishing sign, seal, or signet as an emblem of authority. In some countries each family or clan has its monogram; and in certain Oriental lands the ring, instead of having an inset of precious stone, is utilized to carry an official stamp or seal.

When Joseph was elevated to the prime ministership of Egypt, "Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand." When Mordecai the Jew was advanced to the premier-ship of ancient Persia, the monarch gave him the royal ring and said, "Write ye also . . . as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring."

When the long-lost son returned to his own home, the overjoyed father exclaimed, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand." From a penniless outcast, the

young man was suddenly restored to his sonship as a prince of the household; and according to Oriental custom, the ring placed upon his finger invested him with authority to buy, sell, and transact business in his father's name.

A government seal employed to authenticate legal documents contains three essentials: (1) The name of the lawgiver; (2) his position, or title; (3) and the territory over which he rules. Were we to examine a treasured document to which was affixed a seal of gold containing the imprint "GEORGE WASHINGTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA," we would unquestionably accept it as genuine.

In His messages and contacts with mankind, our heavenly Parent employs means that may be understood and appreciated; and He warns us to beware of all that does not bear the divine credentials. We approach the wonderful law spoken from Sinai's heights. Rebellious mankind has broken those precepts and sought to efface the royal signet; yet careful examination discloses "the great seal of Jehovah" stamped upon it. For such a time as this the message comes, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples." Then follows the significant statement, "I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him." Isa. 8:16, 17.