

Witness Letter 4

Dear Christian Friend:

How many times have you heard it said, “If I had my life to live over again” ... This thought was expressed in a poignant article in a local newspaper several months ago about the ill, the lonely, the old, the poor and forgotten. One elderly man, who carried his possessions in a borrowed shopping cart and lived in an abandoned warehouse, said, “I feel like Robert Frost felt in one of his poems: ‘I’d like to get away from earth awhile and then come back to it and begin over.’” And he added, “That’s what I’d like to do. I’d sure do better next time.”

Few can read the following without feeling it strike a responsive chord:

“I wish that there were some wonderful place
Called the Land of Beginning Again;
Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches
And all our poor selfish grief
Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door
And never put on again.”

At the beginning of this new year we would like to briefly consider with you what God’s word has to say about “the land of beginning again.”

The trial of father Adam in Eden ended in disaster for himself and all his descendants. Unless God had made an arrangement for a second trial, none of the human family would ever gain eternal life or escape the sentence that came on them there. The death of Christ was for the purpose of giving a second trial to Adam and all his race. 1 Cor. 15:21-23; Romans 5:17, 18.

During the Gospel age, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” To these “old things have passed away, all things are become new.” 2 Cor. 5:17 The Christian life is a process of transformation by the “renewing of your mind.” (Rom. 12:2) These have “tasted the powers of the age to come.” (Heb. 6:5) Through Christ, this is their “land of beginning again.”

The remainder of the world are still under condemnation in Adam. They have not “escaped the condemnation that is on the world.” There is only one way to escape now—through accepting Christ on His terms of discipleship. However, God has made provision for a new trial for the remainder of mankind during the Millennial age. This will be their first individual trial (not a second chance). This will be their “land of beginning again.”

Then “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Isa. 11:9) Then “all shall know Him from the least to the greatest.” (Jer. 31:34) They will not have the opposition of Satan because he will be bound. They will have the assistance of Christ and the glorified church, the sympathetic royal priesthood.

As Jesus gives to all who come to Him the opportunity to “try, try again” and gradually demonstrate and cultivate their loyalty to God, so the world will be given their opportunity of trying, trying again so they may learn righteousness and come into the full harmony with Christ the King and His glorious Golden Rule. The scriptures assure us regarding the Millennium: “When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” Isaiah 26:9.

The object of that Millennial kingdom will be to rehabilitate the world—to bring all the willing and obedient back to human perfection and everlasting life. “And a new heart also will I give you; and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and give you an heart of flesh.” Ezekiel 36:26.

The majority of people who have ever lived are asleep in death. Therefore, for these “the land of beginning again” will mean an awakening from the dead. As Jesus said, “All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.” The world will come forth in practically the same mental, moral and physical condition in which they entered the tomb. The threads of existence will be taken up just where they were dropped in death. The individual will retain his identity and be restored to his family circle.

Past experience with sin and selfishness will be a valuable asset of knowledge and will be helpful in appreciating the advantages of the reign of righteousness and life in contrast with the previous reign of sin and death. The scriptures speak of this as “a resurrection of judgment” (John 5:29 RSV)—through a process of instruction, discipline and correction. Even under these most favorable conditions some will refuse to obey and will be destroyed as incorrigible in the second death. (See Acts 3:23, Jer. 31:29, 30)

No doubt the question comes to mind—Will there be no punishments for the sins of the present life? The Bible makes it very clear that everyone is accountable before God according to the measure of his enlightenment and ability. (See Luke 12:47, 48) Every step downward, every known opposition to righteousness, every stifling of conscience works injury to character and will require proportionate effort to retrace the steps and rebuild the character that was destroyed.

It is a fixed principle of life, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Galatians 6:7) “Sow an act, and you reap a habit, sow a habit, and you reap a character, sow a character, and you reap a destiny.” Let us resolve to sow that which will bring forth a harvest of righteousness, justice, truth and love. As we continue to pray, “Thy

kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” may God’s will be done more fully in our hearts and homes.

The true Christian who has already risen to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4) will rejoice that God’s plan includes a “land of beginning again” for the sin-sick world now blinded by Satan. 2 Cor. 4:4.

For a topical Bible study of many subjects vital to Christian living, we invite you to send for THE NEW CREATION. For further consideration of “The Land of Beginning Again,” we invite you to study the following chapters in THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES: “The Lord’s Return” (Hope for the unsaved dead); “The Three Ways” (The Highway of Holiness—Isa. 35:8); “The Kingdom of God” (How it will be established and how it will operate). A coupon is enclosed for your convenience in requesting these Bible study helps.