

The Great Invitation.

DECEMBER 19:

REVELATION XXII: 8-21

Golden Text, Rev. 22: 21.

IT is fitting that the last page of the Bible, and the last lesson of our seven years' course, should fix our attention upon the great invitation which in some form or other is embodied in every book of the Bible. This is Christ's farewell to His Church, coupled with the promise of his speedy return. Vs. 8, 9. This is the second time John was about to commit the mistake of worshipping the creature rather than the Creator, ch. 19: 10. *Worship God*—not angels, nor saints, nor images, Exo. 20: 3, John 4: 23, 24. V. 10. *Seal not*—The prophets were commanded to seal up their prophecies, Isa. 8: 16; Dan. 12: 4, 9. But this is to be left open, for the comfort and edification of the church. *The time is at hand*—Our proper attitude, therefore, is continual watching for Christ's coming, Matt. 25: 6-13. V. 11. Two pairs are selected as representatives of the good and the bad. The leading idea is one that cannot be too seriously considered—as we sow here we shall reap hereafter. Character in this world fixes our destiny in the next. Punishment is, in the nature of things, the consequence of a life of sin. The worst punishment God lays on wicked men is to give them up to themselves, to deaden the conscience, Hos. 4: 17; Rom. 1: 28. Vs. 12, 13. *I come quickly*—It is Christ who speaks. Whatever may be the exact import of the words, to each of us, He comes at death, sometimes very suddenly, in each case soon, and *certainly*. Let those words, then, be ever sounding in our ears. *As his work*: according to his creed or profession, Matt. 7: 21-23. We shall be judged by our lives. Vs. 14, 15. *That do his commandments*—Obedience is the test of faith and fitness for eternal life; yet our "right" to the tree of life, is due, not to our doings, but to what He has done for us. *Dogs &c*—the sensual, corrupt, depraved. V. 16. Jesus is Lord of the angels, Heb. 1: 6. *Unto you*—primarily to the seven churches, but equally to Christians of all times and places. *The root of David*—the Messiah of promise. *The morning star*—see Num. 24: 17—the star that ushered in the day of grace, and shall usher in the Day of Glory. V. 17. God, by his Holy Spirit, and the church by her ministers, and believers by their consistent lives, *say come*—"Come to Jesus to be saved by him." The first impulse of a converted soul is to bring others to the knowledge of the truth. *Whosoever will*—The invitation is to all who will accept it, Isa. 55: 1; Acts 10: 35; Rom. 1: 16. V. 19. If any man attempts to explain away the meaning of any portion of the scriptures, to suit his caprice, he thereby deprives himself of the privileges and promises contained therein. Have we accepted this great invitation for ourselves?

The Beginning.

JANUARY 2. B. C. 4004. GENESIS 1: 26-31; 2: 1-3.

Golden Text, Gen. 1: 1.

THE book of Genesis was written by Moses about 1500 years B. C. It is a brief history of events which happened during 2369 years from the creation of man to the death of Joseph, B. C. 1635. Genesis means origin or birth, and the first chapters of that book tell us of the birth of this world with all that is in it. The Creator is God, the Eternal Father, who alone had no beginning, and who can have no end. At first, the earth was "without form and void," v. 2, rolling through the darkness of space. In six periods of time, called here days, God gradually made it what it is now, a fit habitation for man, His last work. On the seventh day, God rested from all His work which He had made. Ch. 2: 2, and He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, that is, He set it apart as holy. Exod. 16: 23; 20: 11. The first man, Adam, was created in Eden. The exact location of the garden of Eden cannot now be ascertained. It was in the Eastern land, and probably in the valley of the Euphrates. Ch. 2: 14. V. 26. *God said*—He willed. This expression is repeated ten times in the history of the creation. V. 3, 9, 11, &c. Compare John 1: 3; Heb. 1: 2. 2 Pet. 3: 5. God has only to speak, and the thing is done. Psalms 33: 6, 9; Isa. 40: 26; Rom. 4: 17; Col. 1: 16. *Let us make*—Notice the plural form here, thought to refer to the doctrine of the Trinity and to confirm it. Compare, Ch. 3: 22: 11; 7; Isa. 6: 8. *In our image*—These words do not refer to bodily shape or appearance, (Is. 40: 18, 25,) but to spiritual attributes such as: knowledge, Col. 3: 10; righteousness, Eph. 4: 24; holiness, Eccles. 7: 29. See Sh. Cat. Quest. 10. *Let them*—Adam and his descendants, *have dominion*—rule over the brute creation, as God rules over men, kindly not cruelly, Prov. 12: 10. V. 27. *Created He them*—The creation of woman recorded in the 2d chap. 21-23, was the last act of God's creative power. There is no record of the creation of any other man and woman. All mankind is descended from this first pair. V. 28. *Subdue it*—Cultivate it, change its wastes to fruitful fields by your labor. God worked, Jesus worked, and man in Eden had also to work. Ch. 2: 15. John 5: 17. V. 29. *Shall be for meat*—for food; from this it has been thought that flesh was not allowed to be eaten, until after the flood. Gen. 9: 3. V. 31. *Evening and the morning*—The Hebrews reckoned the day from sunset. The morning that follows stands for the second half of the day proper. Ch. 2: v. 2. *He rested*—not that God was weary, Is. 40: 28. He stopped creating on this earth on the sixth day. V. 3. *He sanctified it*—Institution of the Sabbath, not Jewish, as is sometimes asserted, but dating from the very birth of humanity.