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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

"There Shall Be No More Death"

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“There Shall Be No More Death”

Is This an Impossible Dream?

“I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”
—*Revelation 21:3,4*

NEWS HEADLINES ACROSS the country in recent months have included a wide variety of saddening and sobering events. The case of the death of Terri Schaivo in Florida, and its surrounding controversy concerning a person’s right to live or die; the death of Pope John Paul II after more than twenty-six years as the leader of the Roman Catholic Church; the abduction and killings of children in Florida; the continuing war in Iraq and Afghanistan with its resulting death to both American soldiers, as well as innocent civilians, at the hands of terrorists’ bombs;

the recent murder of two young playmates in a small Illinois town; and the apparent murder-suicide of a family of six in southern California, have all made their grim appearance on the front pages of our newspapers and in the top news stories of radio and television. While these, and other events like them, are seemingly unrelated on the surface, and have taken place in different parts of this country and the world, yet there is one common thread to each—the theme of death. Death preys upon everyone—young and old, rich and poor, healthy and diseased, doers of good and evil—it makes no distinction. Sooner or later, we each must face its reality, in our families and in ourselves. We cannot escape its clutches.

Perhaps the most all-encompassing example of this theme of death is that which is associated with war. In war, death is pervasive and indiscriminate. Those who fight on all sides of war—along with innocent men, women, and children—see death every day, and many experience it themselves. No one knows how many people have had their lives ‘snuffed out’ by war during the course of human history. Conservative estimates put the number in the hundreds of millions. Others estimate that over a billion people have lost their lives as the result of war down through the ages. Whatever the number, it is staggering to the human mind. Yet, one of the most disturbing things about man’s reaction to war is that most people seem to be resigned to the belief that wars will always exist. Notice these quotes from a recent newspaper survey:

“There have always been fistfights, and there will always be wars.”

“The only way there will be permanent peace on earth is if no one survives.”

“I don’t think I’ll ever live to see peace in the world.”

“War is inevitable; world peace is a delusion.”

What do we make of this? If we believe in God, we must ask: Is he powerless? Does he care? Are we doomed, as so many people think, to a continued endless cycle of war, to say nothing of all the other causes of death which surround us? Can, and will, God do something about this?

The Bible gives us the assurance that God indeed does care, that he not only can, but will do something about man’s seemingly unending experience with death. The Word of God, as stated in the title of this article, speaks of a time when, ‘There shall be no more death.’ When is this time? How will it come about? Who will bring it to pass? To know the answers to these questions requires an understanding of God’s plan for man’s salvation as taught in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. It is that plan, which, among other things, will end all wars, killing, disease, and death.

MAN’S DESIRE TO LIVE

Man desires to live as long as possible, not to have life cut off by disease, accident, war, murder, age, or in any other way. Medical science tells us that the average life span in the United States is now nearly 80 years, up substantially from the average of just a few decades ago. Scientists tell us further that medical breakthroughs in coming decades may make it possible for man to live as long as 150 years. As promising as it may sound, however, all of

this pales in comparison to what the Bible teaches was God's intent for man. God's purpose concerning man was for him to live forever. It is true that Christians have hoped for everlasting life in heaven for centuries, and certainly the Bible contains many promises to that end—the Christian's hope. However, the Bible also holds out a hope of life—perfect and everlasting—right here on earth. This was God's design and purpose in the creation of our first parents, Adam and Eve.

In the book of Genesis, after the creation of Adam and Eve, God told them to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [fill] the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Gen. 1:28) The Bible account further states, "The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food." (chap. 2:8,9) Eden was to be a model for the whole earth, a dominion for its king, man. God's intent was not for life to be cut short, nor for man to live merely three-score and ten, eighty, or even one-hundred and fifty years, but for life to continue forever.

DEATH THE RESULT OF DISOBEDIENCE

The only reason God's purpose of giving everlasting life was not realized, is that our first parents transgressed God's law. The promise of everlasting life depended on obedience. This was an absolute requirement from God, and is evidenced by his command concerning the tree of the knowledge of

good and evil, that the fruit of it not be eaten, else "thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:17) When man disobeyed this command, the sentence was pronounced and began to be carried out. God said, "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."—Gen. 3:19

When God drove man out of the Garden of Eden, he made special provision so that he could not return. This provision proves that in the garden the sustenance was there to continue life everlastingly. The Bible says this provision was specifically to keep man out of the garden; but why? "Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." (Gen. 3:22) That was God's purpose for man—to live forever. The only reason this purpose was not attained was that man sinned. Having sinned, man was taken out of the garden condition which would have otherwise continued his life everlastingly.

Man fights the idea of death. He wants to live, still having this inborn desire with which he was created by God. In spite of illness, injury, and disease, man's determination to live is indomitable. The case is told of an elderly lady, racked with disease and pain, and sure to die soon, who received new medicine from her doctor and regained a measure of health. Although not permanently cured, her life was extended for a period of time. She was so happy to still be living that when she went back to the doctor in a few months, she thanked him profusely saying, "If not for you, I'd be in heaven now." Yes, man wants to continue life on this earth. Even among Christians, heaven is many times thought of as merely an alternative place to go when they

cannot live here on earth any longer. God created this desire in man to live here on earth.

SATAN'S LIE

For this reason—this desire to live—man has fallen easy prey to Satan's deceptions. Satan asked Eve about God's command that they would die if they ate of the forbidden fruit. She said that was true, confirming what God said. Satan, though, said through the serpent, "Ye shall not surely die." (Gen. 3:4) I Timothy 2:14 states that Eve was deceived, and so also has much of the human race succumbed to the same deception. Eve wanted to believe she wouldn't die. She wanted to live so much that she believed Satan's lie, 'Ye shall not surely die,' rather than God's command.

As the reality of death eventually made itself evident to our first parents, and as death actually began to take place among man, Satan expanded upon his lie. He thrust upon man the idea that what he was seeing and experiencing was only the appearance of death. He put forth the notion that man does not really die at all, that death is not what it seems to be, that, in reality, it is just a door into another part of an immortal existence. This erroneous thought is the basis of most religions of the world. It is the basis for the teaching of reincarnation, and many other 'no death' theories and religious doctrines. Even many professed Christians believe, and teach, that there is a part of you that does not die—an immortal soul—when by all other appearances death has claimed another victim. The bottom line is that, even here in the twenty-first century, the majority of people of all religious

faiths claim that really there is no death, unwittingly giving silent consent to the statement made so long ago by Satan, 'Thou shalt not surely die.' And the reason? Because, simply stated, no one wants to die!

The Bible, though, says death is a reality. In Romans 6:23, the Apostle Paul states, "The wages of sin is death." The prophet, in Ezekiel 18:4, says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Notice that this verse makes no reference to the soul being immortal at all, but that it is subject to death if found guilty of sin. The condition of death can simply be described as the absence of life, that is, complete nonexistence, or oblivion. Ecclesiastes 9:5 states, "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing." Here no distinction is made between the wicked dead and righteous dead, just that the dead, all of them, know not anything.

A HOPE FOR LIFE

Man's hope for everlasting life, based on God's promises, lies in a restoring of life by God through the resurrection of the dead. In I Corinthians 15:13-18, the Apostle Paul states, "If there be no resurrection of the dead, . . . your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." Paul is talking about Christians here. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then even Christians 'are perished' when they die, to say nothing of the remainder of mankind. Paul, however, assures us in this same chapter that there is to be a resurrection. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in

Christ shall all be made alive.” (vss. 21,22) This resurrection for all, is based on the redemptive work of Jesus, which will make this hope a reality. Serious students of the Bible believe and claim this as the basis of their hope.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

Notice what Paul says in II Timothy 1:10, speaking of Jesus as our Saviour, “[Jesus] brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” Why does Paul use the two words ‘life’ and ‘immortality?’ He does so because there is a difference. Adam and his race were given life, and every provision for its continuance, if obedient, forever. Adam, though, did not have, nor was ever promised immortality.

What then is meant by the statement that Jesus ‘brought life and immortality to light through the gospel?’ To answer this, we must first know what the gospel is that is mentioned in this verse. This seems like a simple question, but it is surprising how few really know what the term gospel means. Briefly stated, gospel means good news, or glad tidings. The Greek word translated gospel in this scripture is the same as is used in the familiar words recorded in Luke 2:10,11, “The angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings [gospel] of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Those were indeed glad tidings—good news. However, this was not the first time the gospel had been preached. The Apostle Paul states in Galatians 3:8, “The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify

the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” What Paul refers to here took place over 2,000 years prior to the proclamation made by the angels to the shepherds. What was the gospel preached to Abraham? In this verse, Paul quotes the words spoken to Abraham by God as recorded in Genesis 28:14, “In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” We notice God did not say, ‘In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be taken to heaven.’ No, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. This, so many centuries before the angels’ announcement, was the original full statement of the gospel of Christ.

All the families of the earth are to be blessed through a promised ‘seed’—that seed being Christ. This theme is developed throughout the Old Testament by the prophets, and is associated with the thought of a kingdom. Speaking of a future kingdom through the seed—Christ—which would bless all mankind, Isaiah 9:7 states, “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” We notice the phrase, ‘Of the increase,’ thus indicating that this kingdom will expand, or increase, to include all nations—all the families of the earth. This progression of thought and prophecy continues until the birth of Jesus, culminating in the words stated earlier as recorded in Luke 2:10. In short, the Old Testament promised that the seed would come. The angels said the seed is born! Truly this was glad tidings to all people—all the families of the earth—spoken of throughout the Old and New Testaments. ■

Two Salvations—One Savior

ALTHOUGH THE RACE was one, and although all shared the same sentence of death, nevertheless it has pleased God to provide two different salvations from this curse of death. Both salvations are based upon the great sacrifice which Jesus accomplished at Calvary. The first of these salvations is for the church class, called out of the world during this Gospel Age, called to a change of nature—from human to spiritual nature. Even this first salvation is not yet complete, and will not be until the whole company of the church shall have been selected from the world, and, by the first resurrection, shall have been glorified with Christ. These will be joint-heirs with Christ in his kingdom; and that kingdom will soon begin its work on behalf of the world.

The second salvation belongs to the Millennial Age, during which Messiah's kingdom will control the affairs of earth, and Satan will be bound. Then the knowledge of the LORD shall fill the whole earth. Then all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears be unstopped; and at that time the second salvation will be effective to all mankind. That will not be a spiritual salvation—to the new nature, like unto angels. It will be a salvation to human perfection, and uplift man out of sin and death to the image of God, as at first experienced by father Adam.

Both salvations will be grand and glorious, though that of the church will be the more glorious. This salvation alone is open now; and the pathway to it is by the low gate and narrow way of consecration and self-sacrifice. ■

Experiencing True Happiness

Key Verse: *“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”*
—Matthew 5:6

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 5:1-16

THE SERMON ON THE

mount opens with a series of beatitudes, or blessings, promised to Gospel Age believers whose lives exemplify the acquisition of various Christian graces.

While others might have extolled individuals who were rich, prominent, or exalted in the eyes of the world, the Master regarded those who manifested humility, “the poor in spirit” (vs. 3), as having a virtue essential towards receiving a heavenly reward.

Those who mourn (vs. 4) are commended by Jesus because of their sympathetic attitude and pity for the poor, groaning creation of mankind, who continue under the death sentence passed in Eden. How privileged are these mourners now to proclaim to others that in the glorious, soon-to-be established kingdom “all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”—Luke 3:6

The blessed meek (vs. 5) have gentle dispositions. This trait requires submission to the Divine will by all who would emulate Jesus, who described himself as “meek and lowly in heart.” (Matt. 11:29) By nature, Christians might have a combative attitude, but under the influence of the Holy Spirit they learn such is not God’s way. In acquiescing to the will of the LORD, these

meekest ones also will patiently endure persecution and false accusations, realizing, in so doing, they will receive a great “reward in heaven.”—vss. 10-12

Our Key Verse states that those who would be Jesus’ disciples must love truth and righteousness. They must have a deeply seated hunger and thirst for these principles. Not only will Jesus’ footstep followers be filled now as a result of godly living, but they will ultimately experience the greatest satisfaction imaginable by their abundant entrance “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:11

To be merciful is to demonstrate compassion, and to manifest the greatest degree of leniency towards others, as circumstances permit. To exact the fullest measure of judgment against an erring one, without seeking some means to recover that individual, would be rather unbecoming on the part of any who profess to have the spirit of Christ. All true followers of Jesus should be sensitive to their daily imperfections. As such, they are exhorted to ask forgiveness from God for their transgressions. The Lord declares further, however, “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”—Matt. 6:15

Special blessings accrue to Christ’s followers who develop pure hearts and are also peacemakers. (Matt. 5:8-10) As they take to heart the spirit of Truth by diligently applying its principles in their lives, their ultimate association in glory with the Heavenly Father and Christ Jesus is assured, as they “follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”—Heb. 12:14

Our lesson concludes with the exhortation for Christians to fulfill their commission of being the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world.” (Matt. 5:13-16) May the influence of each believer’s life prove to be a glorious foretaste of the blessings offered to mankind when Christ’s righteous kingdom is established in the earth. ■

Practicing Genuine Piety

Key Verse: *“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.”*
—*Matthew 6:1*

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 6:1-14

THE GREAT TEACHER

thoroughly denounced the sin of hypocrisy, which in practice is an attempt to deceive others.

In our Key Verse, the Master warns against feigning piety by performing charitable acts to gain approval from fellow men. The Heavenly Father who is able to read the heart will not bless almsgiving, nor other good deeds, unless they are motivated by sincerity.

Jesus indicates hypocrites might noisily attract attention to themselves when giving offerings. Nevertheless, he dismisses such conduct, stating, “They have their reward,” implying that whatever earthly reputation they obtain in the form of human praise, it will not be of benefit to them from God’s standpoint.—vs. 2

Obedient Christians will heed his admonition to do their charitable acts in secret, thereby avoiding outward notoriety. They should “do all to the glory of God.”—I Cor. 10:31

Sincerity in prayer also is emphasized by Jesus. Petitions to God should not purposely be done in public locations so that others may be impressed by the offerer’s piety. Instead, believers should engage in personal,

private communication with the Father. (Matt. 6:5,6) The use of prayer in the church, however, is a proper form of worship among fellow believers.

It should proceed from the heart and not consist of stock phrases, or “vain repetitions.” (vs. 7) Since selfish prayers are likely to be unanswered, instruction in presenting appropriate petitions to the throne of heavenly grace is necessary. “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”—James 4:3

‘The Lord’s Prayer,’ as it is sometimes styled (Matt. 6:9-13), is an appropriate, orderly expression to God, offered in simplicity, that reflects reverence and acknowledges the sovereignty of the Creator. It voices a desire and confidence that Divine authority will bring to pass the establishment of a righteous kingdom where conditions on earth will be in harmony with the perfection and bliss that exist in the heavenly domain. In contrast to the many problems in the world that mankind presently is unable to solve, that future age of blessing is described as a time when “the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.”—Hag. 2:7

Following recognition of the Creator and his promises, dependence upon him for daily sustenance, both of a temporal and spiritual nature, is acknowledged. In view of personal weaknesses and failures, believers may request forgiveness from the Supreme Ruler of the universe in proportion as they extend mercy to others who need their forgiveness. After acknowledging trials and dependency upon Divine grace, a plea for deliverance from the powers of evil is in order.

The fulfillment of this prayer will not only bring blessings to mankind but incomparable joy to faithful followers of Christ because “we, according to his promise, look for new heavens [spiritual rulership] and a new earth [social order], wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—II Pet. 3:13 ■

Learning to Listen

Key Verse: “*Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*”
—*Matthew 13:9*

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 13:9-17
“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”—Matt. 6:10

JESUS USED SEVEN PARABLES in Matthew 13 to describe events that would occur during the Gospel Age, prior to the inauguration of a righteous government on earth for which he taught his disciples to pray—

Our Key Verse follows the parable of the sower. (Matt. 13:3-8) Jesus then stated, “Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (vs. 9) Since the Master was addressing “great multitudes” (vs. 2), it is evident not everyone would be able to receive and understand these teachings. Therefore, his disciples subsequently posed an important question, “Why speakest thou unto them in parables?”—vs. 10

Jesus distinguished his true followers from the unbelieving masses. He said, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” (vs. 11) He then elaborated upon the need for his hearers to have an appreciative heart attitude in order to grasp the intent of his message. “Whoever has [spiritual knowledge], to him will more be given and he will be furnished richly, so that he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”—Matt. 13:12, *Amplified Version*

Thus in our Lord’s day, and since that time, many have lacked spiritual insight because they have been indifferent respecting the import of the Gospel Age

message. (vs. 13) In Old Testament times, Isaiah predicted that most of the people to whom Messiah preached would be insensitive to the voice of God.—vs. 14

Many Christians today believe the mission of Christ and his church is to convert the world. How can that thought be reconciled with the following words of our Lord? “This people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”—Matt. 13:15

Those who have hearkened to the Master’s teachings understand that his purpose is not world conversion during this present Gospel Age; but the message of discipleship is an invitation to self-denial and crossbearing in this life which, if faithfully performed, will result in the attainment of a heavenly reward and joint-heirship with Christ. The Apostle Paul said, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”—Rom. 8:16,17

Large numbers of the human family are blinded by Satan, “the god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4), and are unable to receive the special offer of discipleship to live and reign with Christ in heaven.—II Tim. 2:11,12

Nevertheless, it is the Father’s will to “have all men to be saved [from death], and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (I Tim. 2:4) Thus, in “the times of restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21), mankind will have an opportunity to learn righteousness and live in a perfect earth, and there shall be no more death after Satan and all evil are destroyed.—Rev. 21:3,4

If we are among those whose minds have been enlightened to appreciate these matters and to devote our lives in obedience to the teachings of Christ, we are indeed most blessed.—Matt. 13:16,17 ■

Free to Forgive

Key Verse: “*Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.*”
—**Matthew 18:27**

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 18:21-35

PETER INQUIRED OF THE

Lord how often he should forgive a brother who had sinned against him. He probably felt he was being very generous when he suggested seven times as a maximum figure. Jesus’ answer, “Until seventy times seven,” was a symbolic way of emphasizing there should be no limit in extending this grace.—vss. 21,22

Believers who have been wronged should have an attitude of heart and mind to promptly extend forgiveness, even though a loving rebuke may sometimes be necessary before confession of the misdeed is made and a genuine expression of repentance is voiced.—Eph. 4:32; Luke 17:3,4

To illustrate this concept, Jesus spoke a parable about the kingdom of heaven, which is the church in its present embryonic state. “Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.”—Matt. 18:23-26

Although this servant was derelict in his duty, he acknowledged his wrongdoing and requested leniency. It is well to note the king in this illustration represents

the Heavenly Father, and the servant represents Christians who are following in the footsteps of the Master.

In our Key Verse, which follows, we see Divine mercy extended towards the errant believer who repented. “Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.”—Matt. 18:27

After receiving such benevolence and favor, this servant failed to exercise similar mercy towards another servant who owed him far less than his own debt. This was reported to the master by other servants and he was remanded to his previous condition until full payment of his debt was made. (vss. 28-34) The parable concludes with Jesus’ admonition, “Likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”—Matt. 18:35

The object of this lesson is not to teach a retaliatory spirit on God’s part towards his children who have erred in their treatment of others. Although justice is a very pronounced aspect of the Divine character, and believers should strive to emulate God’s attributes, we read, “Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.” (James 2:13) The Heavenly Father desires his children to grow into his character likeness so they can more freely be used in his service during Christ’s thousand-year kingdom, which will bring blessings to all the human family.

Believers who take this lesson to heart, while following Christ’s example when he sojourned among mankind, will be prepared to assist the world of humanity back to the full fellowship and perfection that was lost when the first pair—Adam and Eve—disobeyed God and plunged the entire race into sin and death.

All who love righteousness and mercy should look forward to the time of future blessings for obedient mankind. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”—Rev. 22:17



Meeting Human Needs

Key Verse: *“The King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”*
—Matt. 25:40

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 25:31-46

The details involving the separation and judgment of the sheep and the goats imply it will require the entire period of Christ’s one-thousand-year reign with his church. During that time, each individual will receive a knowledge as to God’s will.

By the time the end of that period arrives, all the world of mankind will have symbolically arranged themselves either as sheep or goats, depending upon whether or not they have learned the spirit of righteous obedience.

The sheep of this parable have identified themselves with righteousness and will receive a blessed everlasting reward of earthly life. (Matt. 25:33,34) They are the “other sheep” who will not be part of the heavenly fold that is now being developed and who obey Jesus

OUR LESSON CONSIDERS

the parable of the sheep and the goats. It describes a future time of judgment for the world of mankind after the church receives its heavenly reward. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.”—Matt. 25:31,32; II Tim. 4:7,8

in this life.—John 10:16

These ‘other sheep’ will be rewarded because they will demonstrate a helpful attitude towards those who were hungry, strangers, naked, sick, or in prison. Since those literal conditions will not exist during Christ’s kingdom of righteousness and blessing, the foregoing terms appear to be symbolic. As individuals are raised from the tomb (John 5:28,29, *New Revised Standard Version*), the sheeplike members of mankind will then lovingly assist fellow members of humanity to obtain the spiritual food of God’s Truth. This will aid in the removal of sin-sickness as members of the human race are released from the prison house of death. The sheep class will do all that they can to promote reconciliation of sinners back to God.—Matt. 25:35-39

Our Key Verse indicates that Christ will consider all the positive assistance given by mankind to aid their fellow members of humanity in learning righteousness and prospering during the thousand years of his kingdom rule, as though it was literally rendered unto the Master himself.—Matt. 25:40

Unlike the sheep of the parable, the goats will think only of themselves during the time mankind will be returning from the tomb and will not assist them in the process of regaining God’s favor (vss. 41-45) Fire is frequently used in Scripture as a symbol for destruction as opposed to the dying process, and hell (the grave) ultimately will cease to exist as they are cast into the “lake of fire.” (Rev. 20:14) This is defined as the “second death”—a death from which there will be no resurrection.

The parable concludes by asserting the wicked will experience “everlasting punishment,” while the righteous will be granted “life eternal.” (Matt. 25:46; Acts 3:23) What a marvelous plan the Heavenly Father has developed to render appropriate judgment to all members of the human family, after permitting them to use their free moral agency to choose either right or wrong. ■

Born of the Spirit

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

—*John 3:3*

THE WORDS OF OUR TEXT were addressed by Jesus to Nicodemus, a Pharisee who came to the Master by night for the purpose of learning more about him and his

teachings. The text calls our attention to another feature of the Divine plan, which is accomplished by the Holy Spirit, or power, of God—namely, that those who are to live and reign with Christ in the kingdom which is to bless all the families of the earth, must first of all be ‘born’ (Greek, begotten) into a new life. Jesus used the invisible power of the wind as an illustration of one of the characteristics of that new life—“So is every one that is born of the Spirit.”—John 3:8

Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus meant by being ‘born of the Spirit.’ He asked, “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” (vs. 4) Jesus explained, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (vs. 6) It is doubtful if Nicodemus understood this explanation. It conveys to us the fact

that the thought of birth in connection with the new life that Jesus is discussing is used in a symbolic sense. It is not, as Nicodemus suggested, a case of entering again into a mother's womb to be literally born the second time.

Here, as the case so frequently is in the Bible, a figure of speech is used to help us understand a great truth. The word born, or birth, instantly conjures up in our minds the idea of a new life. So Jesus is saying that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, some were to experience a new birth, meaning simply that they were to attain to a new life—a life so unlike the one that is 'born of the flesh' that those who are born into it will be both invisible and powerful. Since these are born by the Holy Spirit, or power of God, they become spiritual "sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, . . . we shall be like him [Jesus]; for we shall see him as he is."—I John 3:2

While the birth of the Spirit does not involve the necessity of entering literally into a mother's womb to be born again, the metaphor is carried out with considerable detail by the various writers of the New Testament, as they refer to this aspect of the Holy Spirit's work in the hearts and lives of the LORD's consecrated believers. Unfortunately, our English translations of the Bible, in most instances, fail to present clearly what the writers had in mind. This has led to the erroneous view that one can be born of the Spirit while still in the flesh. Out of this error has come the expression, 'born-again Christians.'

Sometimes, in discussions, when a person is at a loss to think of a word that expresses exactly what he wishes to say, the remark is made, "The Greeks

have a word for it.” But this is far from being true with respect to classical, or New Testament, Greek. A case in point is in connection with the matter of being born again. In the English language, we have two words that describe the coming into being of a new life—‘begettal’ and ‘birth.’ But in the Greek language there is only one word to describe both the begettal or birth. That word is *gennao*. When used by Jesus and the apostles, one has to determine by the context whether begettal or birth is referred to, or whether or not what is meant is the complete process of bringing into existence a new life.

It is the Greek word *gennao* that is used in Matthew 1:1-16 where the genealogy of Jesus is given. “Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren,” the record states. The word ‘begat’ is used in this account in all thirty-nine times, and in every instance it is properly translated by our English word begat. Obviously in this instance begat is the correct translation. How odd it would sound, and how untrue, to say that “Abraham born Isaac”!

The Greek word *gennao* is used twice, and is translated both ‘born’ and ‘begotten.’ The text reads, “We know that whosoever is born of God [that is, by his Holy Spirit] sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” (I John 5:18) To be consistent the translators should have used the word begotten in both these instances. The only apparent reason for not doing so seems to have been a desire to make the phraseology of the translation less repetitious.

BEGOTTEN NOW—BORN IN THE RESURRECTION

If we consider the full value of the birth metaphor we are bound to reach the conclusion that in order to be born one must first be begotten. In other words, when a new life is to be brought into existence there must first be the begetting, then a period of gestation during which the embryo is nourished and developed, and thus prepared for birth in the 'due time.' So is the work of the Holy Spirit presented to us in the Scriptures. When Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again," he was speaking of the completed work of the Holy Spirit in giving a new, and higher, life to those who would devote themselves wholly to the doing of God's will. In the brief lesson to Nicodemus, Jesus did not go into detail to show that before one is born of the Spirit he must first be begotten of the Spirit. However, elsewhere in the New Testament these details are clearly set forth.

We read, "Of his [the Heavenly Father's] own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." (James 1:18) This is an important text, for not only does it show that a begetting takes place in the heart and mind of a Christian, but also that it is accomplished by God's 'will . . . with the word of truth.' In I Peter 1:23, we are given this same information. Here we read, "Being born [*gennao*, which should here be translated 'begotten'] again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

How clearly this sets forth the thought of begetting, for reference is made to the 'seed.' In the natural process of procreation, it is the begetting that is

accomplished by the seed, not the birth; so Peter here refers to the beginning of the new life, not to its completion in birth. The seed of begettal, he says, is 'the word of God.' Here again we have a most revealing statement.

We have learned that every word of God in the Scriptures is Spirit-inspired. The Old Testament prophecies were written by holy men of old as they were "moved by the Holy Spirit." (II Pet. 1:21) All of Jesus' teachings are the direct result of the illumination of his mind and heart by the Holy Spirit. The same is true of the apostolic writings. When Jesus referred to the coming of the Holy Spirit he described it as "the Spirit of truth." (John 15:26; 16:13) It is clear, then, that to be begotten by the Word of Truth means that one is begotten by the Holy Spirit.

This is an important fact, and to grasp it clearly will help to guard us against the notion entertained by many Christians who believe the Holy Spirit enters directly into the life of the believer, cleanses him from all sin, and makes it impossible that he should ever fall from grace. It is this erroneous view that leads to the mistaken suggestion, 'Once in grace, always in grace.'

James and Peter give us the true thought. It is that through the Word of Truth the beginning of a new life takes place in the mind and heart of a believer. But would not this mean that all who read the Word of God are begotten by the Holy Spirit? Not at all. Let us further consider the metaphor. All conditions must be right for the reception of the seed in order for begettal to take place. So it is in the case of Spirit begettal. Many read the Word

of God whose minds and hearts are not receptive to its life-giving truths; and while they may receive some comfort from its pages, and some instruction to help guide them in their daily tasks, they are not begotten to a new life.

FULL SURRENDER

Full surrender to the Divine will and to the holy impulses of God's Word is the condition necessary in order to be truly receptive to the begetting power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of Truth. God's part in this wonderful arrangement whereby a few are to attain immortal life on the Divine plane, was the supplying of his Spirit-inspired Word—the seed. Unlike any previous exercise of his power, this aspect of his plan is accomplished by the power of his thoughts over the thoughts of the believer. Even with unlimited power at his command, the Creator will not invade the mind of another, and begin the development of a new mind, without the consent and invitation of the one involved.

Here is reflected one of the most wonderful characteristics of our Heavenly Father. When the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters in connection with the original creation and preparation of the earth for human habitation, it was an arbitrary exercise of his power, but not so in the begetting of those who are to live and reign with Christ. He exercised his power to fill his Word with his thoughts which express his will concerning these, and assures them that all needed guidance and help will be given them in order to know, and to do, his will. Then he has waited for the individual,

whom his providence has brought into contact with his Word, to voluntarily decide whether or not they will yield wholly and completely to his will as the Holy Spirit has expressed it through his Word.

In his precious Word, God has caused his Spirit to record many wonderful promises of “glory and honour and immortality.” (Rom. 2:7) He has revealed that by these “exceeding great and precious promises” we can be made “partakers of the divine nature.” (II Pet. 1:4) The Holy Spirit inspired Jesus to say, “I go to prepare a place for you. . . . And . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”—John 14:2,3

As we study the Word, these promises come to our attention and we realize how wonderful they are. But at first we rejoice even more in the glorious provision God has made for the world of mankind, which Peter describes as “restitution.” We are happy for the realization that all God’s holy prophets since the world began foretold the “times of restitution of all things” (Acts 3:19-21), and we look forward to being a part of the body of Christ.

We do not overlook the heavenly promises of the Bible, but we realize that to attain to the High Calling requires surrender and sacrifice. We come to realize through continued study of the Word that the way that leads to the heavenly Canaan is a “narrow,” difficult one. (Matt. 7:14) We hear Jesus say, “If any man will come after me [be my disciple], let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matt. 16:24) We read Paul’s exhortation to present our bodies a “living sacrifice.” (Rom. 12:1) These conditions of the High Calling seem at

first difficult, so we may think it is better just to keep on enjoying the Truth of the Divine plan, and wait for the Kingdom Age when the “highway” to holiness and life will be opened, and then walk in that “way” to perfect and endless human life.—Isa. 35:8

But can one be entirely content with this condition? The great plan of God as revealed in his Word continues to increase our appreciation of its Divine Architect. His love in giving his Son to be our Redeemer, and the Redeemer and Savior of the whole world, calls forth from us an increasing love for him. The love of Christ, in suffering and dying that we might live, reaches deeper and deeper into our hearts. Like Paul, we begin to reason that since Christ “died for all, then were all dead;” and now that we can have life through his great sacrifice, we really belong to him. This being true, then we “should not henceforth live unto [ourselves]” but unto him, and unto the loving Heavenly Father who sent him to be the Savior of the world.—II Cor. 5:14,15

Jesus said that no one can come unto him unless drawn by his Heavenly Father. (John 6:44) It is largely through his Word that the Father draws us to Christ. His wonderful love revealed through his plan begins to tug at our hearts, but at first perhaps we say, “All of self, and none of thee.” However, this attitude soon gives place to, “Some of self and some of thee.” But this does not allow the begetting power of the Word of Truth to give us a hope of a new life. Nor can we be begotten of the Spirit through the Word when we have reached the measure of surrender in which we say to the Lord,

“Less of self, and more of thee.” Finally, by the power of the Truth reflecting as it does the great love of God, we reach the point of full surrender and, with the poet, pour out our hearts to God saying, “Lord, thy love at last has conquered: None of self, and all of thee.”

We have learned that as members of a sinful and dying race we are not acceptable to God in our own merit, but only through the merit of the atoning blood of Christ. (Eph. 2:13) But with faith in this wonderful provision of Divine grace, we present ourselves to God in full and unreserved consecration. We say to him that no longer do we want to do our will, but his; that henceforth we will endeavor to be fully controlled by the Spirit-inspired directives of his precious Word. Now all resistance to the influence of his thoughts over our lives is gone. His will has become the supreme rule of all our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Then we awaken to a marvelous realization! Having accepted the invitation to take up our cross and follow the Master, we know that all the ‘exceeding great and precious promises’ of God to those who thus become the disciples of his beloved Son now belong to us. Jesus said to the rich young ruler, that if he would give up all and follow him he would have treasure in heaven. (Matt. 19:21) The Master attached no provision to this assurance. He did not say that his Father would take the matter under advisement and possibly decide that the young man should be given treasure in heaven. If you follow me, this will be your reward, is the promise Jesus made to this young man who went to him asking how he might inherit eternal life.

So now with us, having complied with the LORD's invitation to surrender ourselves to him, to be directed by his Spirit-inspired Word, we know that the promises of his Word to those who meet this condition apply to us. Those inspiring promises of a heavenly home and of the Divine nature, instead of being as they were before, something apart from us, viewed merely as an interesting feature of the Divine plan, now become a life-giving influence in our lives. Through surrender to God, the seed begins at once to generate the hope of a new life. We are begotten of God by "the word of truth."—James 1:18

MIRACLE OF THE NEW LIFE

Just as only God can make a tree, so all life is a miracle in that our finite minds cannot comprehend it. We witness the miracle of a newborn infant and we instinctively realize that actually the parents did not give life to that child. They simply complied with the conditions that God designed whereby the earth would eventually be filled with his human creatures. (Gen. 1:28) On a much higher level, this is true with respect to those who are begotten of God by the word of truth. It is among God's greatest miracles, in which it is our blessed privilege to cooperate.

Some miracles are accomplished almost instantaneously, others over a long period of time. When Jesus called to the dead brother of Martha and Mary, "Lazarus, come forth," and he who was dead "came forth," (John 11:43,44) it was a miracle performed in a short time. But the miracle of the Creation as displayed throughout the universe involved long

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epochs of time for accomplishment. The miracle of Spirit-begetting and birth is also spread out over a long period of time.

Think of the time consumed in preparing the seed of begetting—that is, the Word of God. God's Spirit miraculously guided the writing of the Bible. Thousands of years were involved in thus recording the thoughts of God in a manner in which they could enter the human mind and heart, be pondered over and accepted or rejected at the option of the reader. God could directly fill the mind of a person with his thoughts, but how would anyone know that they came from God? Besides, how disconcerting it would be for one to discover that his mind was being filled with ideas other than in the normal manner. How wise are God's ways! The miracle-working power of God is operative in shaping the circumstances of one's life in preparation for entrance into the mind of the seed of begetting. How many have testified of experiences in life by which they have been prostrated and caused to long for an answer to the many questions that have arisen from their difficult problems of life. No one who is thoroughly satisfied with his lot in life is likely to pay any serious attention to the Word of God, especially those portions of the Word which speak of sacrifice and suffering as the disciples of Christ.

It is only when one realizes his need of help from God that he is likely to give consideration to the Word of God. God, in his infinite wisdom, and in the tenderness of his love, knows exactly the sort of experiences which will most effectively touch the heart of whom he desires to call, that the called one might give heed to his Word. This work of preparing

for Spirit begetting is miraculous, even as the preparation of the seed of begetting was by the Spirit of God. Every aspect of God's part in this feature of his plan was, and is, miraculous.

It remains only for us to yield our minds to the influence of the Spirit, and accept the will of God as revealed through his Word. There can be no Spirit begetting when one does not yield to the will of God. On the other hand, in the case of those who have been made receptive by circumstances of life that have been overruled by God for this purpose and, having studied the Word and voluntarily surrendered to the will of God as expressed therein, Spirit begetting is a certainty. All who are thus dealt with by God may claim the promises of 'glory and honour and immortality,' in the certain knowledge that if they continue faithful to the LORD, they will receive the "crown of life."—Rev. 2:10

In keeping with the figure of begetting and birth, the Scriptures reveal that the embryo new life develops, and that this also is accomplished by the Spirit of God through his Word. Our new spiritual minds feed upon the promises of God. The spiritual growth, if pleasing to God, must be in conformity to the Divine image. Thus the Spirit of God promotes growth of the Christian fruitage of peace, joy, long-suffering, and love. (Gal. 5:22; II Pet. 1:5-7) Paul gives us a beautiful description of this work of the Holy Spirit, saying, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind; . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."—Eph. 4:23,24

When the new life is developed to the point where it is ready for birth, our corruptible bodies go into

death, and the birth of the new life is accomplished by means of the resurrection. Here the Spirit, or power, of God is further exercised. Paul speaks of this mighty power that was used to raise Jesus from the dead. Or, to use the symbol we are discussing, to bring about his birth of the Spirit. He speaks of “the exceeding greatness of his [God’s] power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.”—Eph. 1:19,20

In speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus used the wind to help illustrate some of the characteristics of those who are born of the Spirit. The wind is both invisible and powerful. So will all those be who, having first of all been begotten by the Spirit through the Word of Truth, and who, by feeding upon the Word, continue to develop until they are made “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” (Col. 1:12) Divine power will exalt these to heavenly life. They will be given celestial, or heavenly, bodies; and if they have been more than conquerors they will live and reign “with Christ a thousand years.”—Rev. 5:10; 20:4

Not all of the Adamic race who will be saved through the blood of Christ will thus be born again. Jesus did not say to Nicodemus that it is necessary to be born again in order to be saved. What he said was that one had to be born again in order to see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3) The reference is, therefore, to those who will be associated with Jesus as rulers in the long-promised kingdom. In any kingdom, or government, there are the rulers and

the subjects. Jesus and his true disciples of the present age will be the rulers in the kingdom of God. These will then be born again. Jesus was the first to experience this great change of life from human to spirit. His disciples—his true church—experience this new birth in the “first resurrection” at the end of the age. (Rev. 20:5) Then God’s promises of restitution life, which is restored human life, will flow out to all the families of the earth.—John 3:14-16 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JULY 7—“Behold the Lamb of God!”—John 1:36 (Z. ’99-14,15 Hymn 177)

JULY 14—“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, . . . and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.”—Ephesians 4:31 (Z. ’99-71 Hymn 256)

JULY 21—“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.”—John 18:37 (Z. ’99-123 Hymn 259)

JULY 28—“If ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye.”—I Peter 3:14 (Z. ’99-166,167 Hymn 307)

Maintaining a Healthy Spiritual Heart

CONSIDER FOR A moment the creations of God. They are literally all around us, all the time. In Psalm 19:1,2, David states that “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” The creations of God are evident day and night for always!

In the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Job, God declared how great his creative powers are when he asked Job for answers to these questions: Where are the foundations of the earth fastened? How are the seas kept in place? Why do the four seasons remain constant? Who brings the rain? The snow? The hail? Who provides the food for both the lion and the raven? How are the mountains and the wilderness made a fit home for all God’s creatures?

We have no idea how God created all these things. How did God create a human being? Even in man’s

fallen, imperfect condition, there is no disputing the fact that the human body is a miracle that science could never reproduce. No combination of geneticists, engineers, and computer scientists could create a living being from the dust of the earth! Computers continue to become smaller and more powerful, but they cannot compare with the human brain. What engineer could ever hope to produce a more durable and dependable pump than the human heart?

Consider for a moment the workings of the heart. The heart is nothing more than a pump (about the size of a fist), whose purpose is to deliver blood to the body. The heart is composed of two pumps operating parallel to one another. The right collecting chamber collects used blood from the veins from all over the body (except the lungs) and empties into the right ventricle, a pumping chamber that propels the blood through the pulmonary arteries in the lungs where it absorbs oxygen. The blood reaches the lungs carrying only about seventy percent of the oxygen that it can hold, and leaves the lungs via the pulmonary veins about ninety-eight percent oxygenated. The pulmonary veins bring the oxygenated blood to the left collecting chamber, which in turn empties into the left ventricle. This chamber is nearly ten times thicker than the right ventricle because the force of its contraction must propel the blood a great deal further than that of the right ventricle. The blood gushes out into the aorta (the body's main artery) and through its many branches to the head, the limbs, and the internal organs. The sequence of the beating in the four chambers of the heart allows

the collecting chambers to empty their blood into the ventricles first, then fill while the ventricles pump. In both the collecting and pumping chambers, the right chambers contract a fraction of a second ahead of the left ones. All beats are controlled by the heart's pacemaker and its accessory branches.

Consider how hard this little pump works over a lifetime. At an average rate of seventy beats per minute, the heart pumps four thousand times per hour, one hundred thousand times per day, and thirty-seven million times per year. Over a lifespan of eighty years, the heart will beat some three billion times! Considering the amount of work this little pump does, it's not surprising that in man's imperfect, fallen condition many hearts become damaged or diseased. Coronary heart disease has become the #1 killer in the United States. More than five million people are being treated for it, and some seven hundred thousand people per year die from it.

As long as the heart beats, the body lives. If it stops for more than three minutes, vital functions in the brain will be irreparably damaged. Heart disease does not always give fair warning of onset, and is not always treatable even when it does. But there are things we know about the heart that affect its health, both good and bad. For example:

(1) There are many known heart risks: smoking, high blood pressure, high amounts of stress, high blood cholesterol levels, diabetes, obesity, and genetics.

(2) There are also things that are known to be beneficial to the heart: regular exercise and

improved diet are effective ways of strengthening and maintaining a healthy heart.

SPIRITUAL APPLICATIONS

But what about a spiritual heart? What constitutes a healthy spiritual heart? How do we develop and maintain a healthy spiritual heart? We would do well to start by identifying six characteristics of a healthy spiritual heart.

(1) A healthy spiritual heart delivers life-giving blood.

This is the most important characteristic of a healthy spiritual heart. While giving special instructions to Israel regarding the eating of blood in Leviticus 17:10-14, God shows how sacred blood is by saying that “the life of the flesh is in the blood.” The Apostle Paul, speaking in Hebrews 9:16,17 and 22, says that the shedding of blood is required in covenants made with God. Paul also reminds us, in Hebrews 10:19-23, that Jesus’ sacrifice gives us access to eternal life through his blood. A healthy spiritual heart recognizes that its importance is to pump the life-giving blood of our Redeemer. Therefore, it is imperative that we develop and maintain a proper heart attitude that recognizes our Master Jesus Christ’s redemption.

(2) A healthy spiritual heart represents all that God wants from us.

In Proverbs 23:26, we read, “My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.” As long as our heart is loyal to God, we will see his will more clearly.

(3) A healthy spiritual heart makes us want to be acceptable to God.

Psalm 139:23 reads, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts." What a great scripture! Not many people like to be analyzed, but the sons of God are to ask to be watched, and to be tried, so they can become more pleasing to God.

(4) A healthy spiritual heart trusts God implicitly for strength and understanding. Speaking of this strength, the psalmist tells us, "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart." (Ps. 27:14) Again, in Psalm 28:7, we read, "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him." Trusting in God also gives us understanding, as we read in Proverbs 3:5,6, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

(5) A healthy spiritual heart brings joy to our lives.

Our Heavenly Father wants us to be filled with joy, and he gives evidence of this fact in Proverbs 15:13-15. "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken. The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness. All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast."

(6) A healthy spiritual heart makes us truly love our brethren.

MAINTAINING A HEALTHY HEART

Just as a human heart can be cared for to keep it in a healthy condition, so too the spiritual heart.

(1) Eliminate risks—The Scriptures are clear that we are to stop smoking, or spiritual pollution that comes from the false religious systems. Revelation 18:1-5, and 8-10 tells the church to come out from the pollution of Babylon to avoid its sins and plagues.

We are told to reduce high blood pressure by putting all our trust in the blood of Christ. I Peter 1:18-21 tells us that we were redeemed not by silver or gold, but by “the precious blood of Christ.” Matthew 11:28-30 describes how this trust reduces our blood pressure: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

We are to reduce high amounts of stress by getting along with all those around us, especially our brethren. I Corinthians 1:10 states it clearly. “I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

We are not to allow sects (or disunions) into our fellowship. God has dealt with us with truth and love, and he expects nothing less among his children. I John 3:14-16 says that our final test will be how we treat our brethren. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in Him. Hereby perceive we the love of God,

because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

(2) Make use of genetics—Family history can lead to additional risk to the body’s heart, but our heritage is a positive on the spiritual heart. Paul mentions the faith heroes of the Old Testament, in Hebrews 12:1, when he says, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” We all have our favorite examples of faith, mentors in our spiritual growth. Remembering those special brethren who have been influential in our lives is an important way of taking advantage of our genetics in the faith.

(3) Improved diet—Like those who search for a healthy diet for their best chance of reducing heart risk, we need to know what spiritual food is best for our spiritual health and which to avoid. Daniel and his three friends rejected the king’s meat and drink in favor of pulse (peas and beans) because they knew the simple food of their God was the healthiest for their spiritual well-being. Paul made the argument that we cannot mix the good spiritual food with the bad and maintain a healthy spiritual heart, when he said in I Corinthians 10:21, “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils.” A good spiritual diet begins with the milk of the word (I Pet. 2:1-3), and progresses to strong meat as Paul stated in Hebrews 5:12-14. “When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which

be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." We must adhere to a healthy diet to maintain a healthy spiritual heart.

(4) Regular exercise—Doctors are unanimous in their belief that no diet is totally effective if not combined with a regular exercise routine. The same is true in maintaining a healthy spiritual heart. The Bereans were commended for their daily searching of the Scriptures in Acts 17:10,11, and were said to be more noble than those in Thessalonica as a result. There is a reason to study, to exercise our spiritual minds, as stated in II Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." There's a reason to study! It is equivalent to exercise, which strengthens our heart and draws us closer to our Heavenly Father.

Sometimes even a strong heart can suffer a heart attack. If this should happen to any of us, our loving God would have us benefit from it rather than to suffer needlessly. One who suffered just such an attack noticed many blessings from the experience.

The power of prayer during the attack and the prayers of the brethren afterward were found to be powerful beyond belief. It made certain the words of James, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—chap. 5:16

The experience also demonstrated how the LORD tailors each of our lessons just for us for our spiritual well-being. The LORD knows what each needs to grow spiritually, and will craft our experiences for our eternal welfare.

The experience also confirmed Paul's statement that our experiences will never crush us. I Corinthians 10:13 assures us that we will never be given more than we can bear, and living through a heart attack with the LORD's help is a strong proof of that promise. Such an experience gives a greater awareness of God's power and love. The world believes that it is the highs and lows that bring out the best of life. Such, also, are God's dealings with our spiritual hearts. To feel his power and love through a crushing experience can only build us up in our spiritual walk.

Finally, such an appreciation gives us a greater appreciation of God's coming kingdom when there will be a release of all suffering within the human race. The day is soon coming when, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."—Rev. 21:4

May we strive daily to maintain a healthy heart, ever mindful that we have given it to God. ■

A Reasonable Service

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”
—Romans 12:1

THE INTRODUCTION TO this epistle states that it was written to those “that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints.” (Rom. 1:7) These primarily would be the ‘brethren’ mentioned in our text; those whom the apostle is exhorting to present their bodies ‘a living sacrifice.’

It is evident, in many congregations, that there were some in Rome connected with the church who had not yet made a full consecration to the LORD. They had come to a certain knowledge of the LORD, and had counted the cost of self-sacrifice, but had not given themselves fully to the LORD. These would consider the exhortation of our text as encouraging them to yield their all to the LORD in sacrifice, with the assurance that, if they did, the merit of Christ would be applied to make their sacrifice acceptable.

Paul’s expression, ‘I beseech you,’ is significant. The Heavenly Father does not coerce his people to sacrifice, but he invites them to do so, with the assurance

that now is the “accepted time.” (II Cor. 6:2) God does not command one to make a consecration. To do so would be to change the matter from willing sacrifice to obligation. Paul writes, I beseech you. Enter into a covenant with God, to follow Jesus. Give up your human will, and remember that this includes your mortal body. Continue the work of presenting your body, of dying daily. Remember that the mere promise to fulfill a covenant is not fulfilling it.

The Heavenly Father begets us by the Holy Spirit through the Word of Truth, and gives us many privileges that belong to those who have become New Creatures in Christ Jesus. It is for us to go forward day by day laying down our lives in his service. How appropriate it was for the apostle to encourage us to lay down our lives daily. It is our mortal bodies that are being sacrificed in his service. Ours is a living sacrifice. This body, reckonedly freed from condemnation, is being continually sacrificed. It is our covenant, and privilege, to accomplish the sacrifice of our flesh in accordance with our Father’s will.

To the unconsecrated, but prospective brethren, the principle of Paul’s exhortation would be, You are desirous of serving God. This is indicated by your attending the meetings of the church. The fact that you assemble with the saints signifies that you love holy things, and desire to know the will of God. The will of God is that you present yourselves in full consecration, and consider that your body is to be a living sacrifice, day by day using your strength and your life in the LORD’s service.

CONSECRATION REASONABLE

Everyone who recognizes God’s mercies and blessings finds it a ‘reasonable service’ to sacrifice earthly

things. It is a precious privilege thus to serve the LORD. If it was a reasonable service for Jesus to leave the heavenly glory, become a man, and as a man to sacrifice himself unto death, then surely our little sacrifice is indeed most reasonable. We have very little to give, and when there is an opportunity for showing our appreciation to the Heavenly Father for his great love toward us, we should make haste to use it.

The Heavenly Father set before the Redeemer a great joy as a recompense for his obedience. The LORD does not invite us to sacrifice ourselves without any reward from him. He has promised that if we do this he will make us joint-heirs with his beloved Son and partakers of the Divine nature—participators with Jesus in all the joys of the kingdom.

With all the true brethren there is a continual—a daily—presentation for sacrifice. Every morning we present ourselves before the LORD and ask his blessing on our efforts to serve him during the day. Ours is a constant surrender of self-will, a daily waving of our offering before the LORD. So it was with our Lord Jesus. He not only made a full consecration of himself at the beginning of his ministry, but day by day he laid down his life until his sacrifice was completely consumed. Only those who are thus faithful will gain the prize.

GOD'S MERCIES

The reason Paul gives for presenting our bodies a living sacrifice is the 'mercies of God'—I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God. As many as hear and understand the true Gospel of the kingdom should indeed be impelled by the mercies of God, not only to make a full consecration, but to present

their bodies in sacrifice. It would be very unreasonable to accept God's marvelous favors and then neglect to live up to the conditions attached to them.

The Heavenly Father has offered his fully consecrated children the opportunity of being joint-heirs with Jesus Christ in an "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." (I Pet. 1:4, *Marginal Translation*) If we believe this, we will earnestly seek to know just what all the conditions are. We will find that the conditions are, in reality, easy when compared with the great reward to which they lead.

If we fail to put forth our greatest effort to win this glorious prize it will demonstrate that we have not fully believed God's message. If we recognize the value of that offer, and believe it fully, we will surely be eager to lay aside every weight and every encumbrance and run patiently to the end of the way in order to obtain the crown.—Heb. 12:1,2

UNTIL DEATH

Our beloved and resurrected Master made a wonderful promise to us—"Be thou faithful till death, and I will give to thee the crown of life." (Rev. 2:10, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) It is a very great opportunity that we have seized, far greater than anything the world can offer. If we have presented our bodies in sacrifice, and are keeping them on the altar of sacrifice, they will be accepted by God as slain with Christ, and we are now walking in newness of life.

Reckonedly we are dead. "You died, and your life has been hidden with the Anointed one by God." (Col. 3:3, *WED*) Our will has been immersed into the will of his Father. We are baptized into Christ,

into his sacrificial death, and throughout our 'living sacrifice' experience we are to walk as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.

Throughout our Lord's earthly ministry, his heartfelt sentiments were, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." (Heb. 10:9) With him it was more than a desire to know his Father's will. Jesus came to do the Father's will, and in the doing of it he was completely faithful. We are to endeavor also to be faithful—even unto death. Thus we will obtain the "crown of life," and live and reign with him.—Rev. 2:10; II Tim. 2:11,12

To present our body a living sacrifice and to continue offering it day by day, until it is wholly consumed, is not only a reasonable service, but an offering far too small. To refuse to accept this opportunity would be an indication of a pitiful lack of appreciation of God's infinite goodness. It would also reveal a serious lack of judgment, our inability to weigh and compare the trifling transitory pleasures of self-will in this brief human life with our present peace and joy in Christ Jesus, and the eternity of joy and glory to follow.

The hope set before us is truly a glorious one. It is to be with Jesus—"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named." (Eph. 1:21) It is to be next to our glorious Lord and Head, who is "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Rev. 19:16) It is to be associated with him in the work of establishing the Divine will throughout the earth, and in blessing all nations. What a powerful incentive to faithfulness! And only the faithful will attain to it, for "they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."—Rev. 17:14

■

Expressing Appreciation

*“It is a good thing
to give thanks
unto the LORD,
and to sing praises
unto thy name,
O most High.”
—Psalm 92:1*

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION to God for all his goodness to us is, as the psalmist suggests, a ‘good thing,’ one that consecrated, Truth-enlightened Christians should be glad to do throughout their walk of life. Indeed, if we are living up to our privileges, we will be giving thanks to the Lord every day. Paul wrote, “In everything give thanks,” and since we know that “all things” are working “together” for our good, thankfulness will be welling up in our hearts and finding expression through our lips for every experience of life.—I Thess. 5:18; Rom. 8:28

All the LORD’s people appreciate the blessings that he continuously showers upon them. Giving thanks is the expressing of this appreciation—first to the LORD, and also as a testimony of the LORD’s goodness to those with whom we come in contact. ‘It is a good thing,’ our text says, ‘to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises’ unto the LORD’s name. Here the thought seems to be that we express our thanks to the LORD, and sing his praises

to others; and certainly our songs of praise are expressions of thanksgiving.

David wrote, "That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works." (Ps. 26:7) This expression is found in a very interesting and revealing context. Opening the psalm, he wrote, "Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide." (vs. 1) Neither David nor any other member of the fallen human race has been capable of living up to God's standard of perfection. As the consecrated people of God it is essential that we maintain our integrity before him in the sense of always being willing to do right. Maintaining such an attitude before the LORD, we will want him to judge us, and to reveal to us those things in which we are not pleasing to him.

He continues, "Examine me, O LORD, and prove me: try my reins and my heart. For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth." (vss. 2,3) The LORD referred to David as a man after his own heart. Here we see why; for the psalmist was so desirous of being right in the LORD's sight that he invited him to 'examine' and 'prove' him. This was asking a lot, for David would have no way of knowing what severe methods the LORD might use to prove him, or what experiences the answer to this prayer might bring. But for two reasons, David was confident: (1) God's loving-kindness was before him as a bulwark of strength; and (2) he was walking in the LORD's Truth and knew that the Truth would be his "shield and buckler."—Ps. 91:4

David then expresses some of the aspects of his integrity. "I have not sat with vain persons," he

wrote, “neither will I go in with dissemblers.” (Ps. 26:4) With David it was not a matter merely of refraining from fellowshiping with ‘dissemblers,’ while at the same time secretly wishing that the Law of his God did not prohibit him from doing so. It was more than this! “I have hated the congregation of evildoers; and will not sit with the wicked.”—vs. 5

Not being acquainted with the circumstances that prompted this expression of hatred for evil, we can only apply it in principle to our own stand for God and righteousness. We can apply this principle to all evil, to everything that is out of harmony with the LORD. We are not to have fellowship with any of Satan’s works of darkness, not merely because we are forbidden to do so, but because, like David, we hate them. This is implied in being conformed to the image of God’s dear son, of whom it is written that he “loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.”—Heb. 1:9

David further wrote, “I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD.” (Ps. 26:6) We find him praying, “Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”—Ps. 19:12-14

David knew that the only way he could be truly ‘innocent’ was to have his God cleanse him from ‘secret faults,’ and keep him from committing

‘presumptuous sins.’ His own part in this was in humbly and sincerely looking to the LORD to examine and prove him. Even then, David could not be innocent in the sense of being free from all sin. But his heart could be pure; and upon the basis of this purity of heart intention, he knew that the LORD would accept his devotions and his sacrifices. It was in such an attitude that he could ‘compass,’ or embrace, the LORD’s altar; that is, offer sacrifice to God.

This, the psalmist indicates, would result in his publishing with “the voice of thanksgiving,” and telling of all the LORD’s “wondrous works.” (Ps. 26:7) Paul expressed a similar thought when he wrote, “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”—Heb. 13:15,16

A FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

As David reveals, his thanksgiving to God was the inevitable result of his longing desire and resolute determination to maintain his integrity before him. This indicates—and we believe that every consecrated child of God will affirm from personal experience—that true and spontaneous thanksgiving can come only from the heart that is in tune with him. We cannot be in rebellion against the LORD’s instructions, resisting his providences, and at the same time have our hearts overflowing with true thanksgiving to him. Thanksgiving is the overflowing of hearts that have been emptied of self, and by the Holy Spirit, through the written Word and the providences with which we are surrounded,

filled with the love of God. If the love of God has thus been “shed abroad in our hearts,” we will find that it is indeed a good thing, a very delightful thing, to give thanks unto the LORD.—Rom. 5:5

Viewed in the proper light, every experience of life is an occasion for thanksgiving. We are thankful for God’s keeping power in our lives, that he has not permitted us to fall. We are thankful for the assurance that he will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5), that having begun a good work in us, he will finish that work in his own due time, and through whatever agencies he may deem wise to choose. (Phil. 1:6) In this, our thanksgiving is both retrospective and prospective. We thank God for past mercies, and for the hope of future blessings, blessings that we know will continue to flow from him to “us-ward” in ever mounting streams of his loving-kindness and grace.—II Pet. 3:9

THANKFUL FOR SPIRITUAL VISION

As our minds turn backward we thank God that he “inclined” unto us, heard our cry for help, lifted us up out of the “horrible pit” and set our feet upon a “rock.” (Ps. 40:1,2) There are millions of sincere people in the world who are seeking after God who do not—and in this age, will not—find him. It will not be until the Millennial Age that he will ‘incline’ toward these. That will be the time of their visitation. It is only a little flock that the LORD is now seeking, and happy are we if the LORD has given us the “new song” to know and to sing.—Ps. 40:3

Think what this means! While in the ‘horrible pit’ and the ‘miry clay’ we were alienated from God through wicked works—originally the wicked works

of Adam through whose sin condemnation came upon all men. But the LORD opened the eyes of our understanding and, thus enlightened through the Truth, extended to us the high and holy calling of this Gospel Age. Through faith in the blood of Christ, which alone could make us acceptable—a faith that was demonstrated by a full consecration to do God’s will—we received the assurance of reconciliation with God, and of no longer being alienated from him. What a continuous cause for thanking this should be!

This “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” opens the way to further blessings that the LORD has provided in his plan. Paul wrote concerning “this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. 5:1,2) Not only do we now have peace with God, and enjoy fellowship with him, but he has established our goings in the narrow way that leads to “glory and honour and immortality.” (Rom. 2:7) We know we shall have tribulation, but this will help to develop patience, and if we continue patiently to endure these experiences they will lead to a hope that maketh not ashamed “because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”—Rom. 5:3-5

Having ‘peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,’ by continued faith in his promises and in their fulfillment, we gradually acquire the peace ‘of’ God. God enjoys peace because he knows that he is in perfect control of every situation in his entire universe. We can have this same peace, this same tranquility of mind, through faith in his promises to love and care for us. We know that he will never

leave us nor forsake us. We know that there is no circumstance in our lives that he is not capable of overruling for our highest good. We know, moreover, that while at times his providences may frown upon us, behind the frown is his smiling face of love that will not permit us to be tested above that which we are able to bear.—I Cor. 10:13

Paul expressed a similar thought when he wrote, “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation [*Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*, “gentleness;” and in the *Revised Standard Version*, “forbearance”] be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 4:4-7

This ‘peace of God’ is a part of our present inheritance. What a glorious portion it is! The world is filled with confusion and fear. The strife of nations, the conflict of arms, real and threatened; economic insecurity; and the uncertainty of the future all contribute to turmoil in the hearts of the unconsecrated. But it is not so with those into whose hearts the LORD has shined with the Gospel, and who have accepted this message and acted upon it. Just as God knows that in due time he will lead the world into its desired haven and that nothing can interfere with the outworking of his plans and purposes, so these know that he is fully capable, and abundantly willing to hedge them about with his love and care, and that day by day he is doing so. Is this not cause for the continual giving of thanks?

FOR EVERY EXPERIENCE

Our thankfulness should not be merely along general lines. Rather, each experience that comes to us affords an opportunity to give thanks. If we have availed ourselves of the provisions the LORD has made through his Word and the help of the brethren to increase our understanding of his plans and purposes, we will want to give thanks to God for the better understanding we have thus acquired of him and of his will, which makes our fellowship with him more intimate and blessed.

If we have been faithful in the use of the various opportunities we have had to show forth the LORD's praises by making known the glad tidings of the kingdom, we will be thankful for the experiences we have enjoyed in thus bearing witness to the Truth. Perhaps the LORD has used us to communicate the Truth to one whom he has called. Truly this would be cause for thanksgiving. On the other hand, it may be that all our efforts to make known the glad tidings to others have failed. Perhaps those to whom we have witnessed have turned away with indifference, or possibly have scorned or even persecuted us. But this also is a cause for thanksgiving, for such experiences are among the witnesses of the Spirit that we are the children of God.—Rom. 8:16,17

Jesus explained that no one could come to him unless drawn by his Heavenly Father. (John 6:44) So, if those to whom we witness do not respond, and show no appreciation of the message, it is because they are not now drawn by God. We can be thankful for the realization that a time is coming in the Divine Plan when they will be enlight-

ened and given an opportunity to walk on the highway of holiness, the return road to human perfection and to reconciliation with God. At the same time, we can also be especially thankful that the LORD has drawn us and that we have been given eyes to see and ears to hear the joyful sound of present Truth.

Not only are we thankful for God's loving-kindness to us as individuals, but we give thanks to him for the wonderful manner in which his favor continues upon his people as a whole. He blesses us in our ecclesias, and in our conventions. We are thankful for the privilege we enjoy of working together in a general ministry of the Truth. We are thankful that in the LORD's providences his people are provided with many methods with which they can spread the message of Truth as opportunity affords.

Truly the LORD is good to all of his people. The psalmist wrote, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." (Ps. 89:15,16) That we have been given to know the 'joyful sound' of present Truth is, in itself, an evidence that we are walking in the light of the LORD's countenance, that his favor is upon us. Therefore we rejoice in the God of our salvation 'all the day.' We know that we are not worthy of such high favor; but, through the righteousness of Christ, our Heavenly Father has made it possible for us to be exalted, in his own due time, to 'glory and honour and immortality.' So, for present blessings and for the hope of future glory, it is a "good thing to give thanks unto the LORD." ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Department, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

K. Fernets

Prince Albert, SK

July 1-3

S. Jones

Yorkton, SK

July 8-10

The speakers listed below, in cooperation with the Dawn, are invited by individual classes, or their services have been arranged by their home classes:

D. Blencowe

Yorkton, SK

July 8-10

B. Keith

Yorkton, SK

July 8-10

C. Chandler

Yorkton, SK

July 8-10

F. Nemesh

Yorkton, SK

July 8-10

B. Clark

Yorkton, SK

July 8-10

B. Siwak

Yorkton, SK

July 8-10

J. Freer

Prince Albert, SK

July 1-3

T. Trzeciak

Yorkton, SK

July 8-10

Yorkton, SK

8-10

OBITUARIES

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to their family and friends in the loss of these dear ones.

Brother Charles Martig, Pittsburgh, PA—April 22.

Age, 67

Sister Erna Elias, Jackson, MI—April 24. Age, 77

CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed by request of classes who sponsor them. So your convention can be placed in these columns in time, make your request in writing three months before the date of the convention to Dawn Magazine, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

PRINCE ALBERT/SASKATOON CONVENTION, July 1,2,3—Siwak Farm, SK, Canada. Contact Ben Siwak. Phone: (306) 763-3170

YORKTON CONVENTION, July 8,9,10—Great Western Parkland Inn, 110 Broadway Street E, Yorkton, SK, Canada. Contact Brad Sweeney, 110 Circlebrook Drive, Yorkton, SK, Canada S3N 2S4. Phone: (306) 782-0436

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 16-21—University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, PA. Contact Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

NIGERIAN GENERAL CONVENTION, August 17-21—Institute of Church and Society, Samonda Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Contact Cajetan Egbu, Chairman, No. 2 Darlington Street, Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Phone: 234-803-333-9949

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3,4—FaHaLo Camp & Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact Mrs. Ray Lumley. Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3,4—Wellesley Inn (formerly Ramada Inn), Two Bridges Road & Exit 52, Route 80, Fairfield, NJ 07006. Contact Debra Szybinski, 250 West 102 Street, 1 A, New York, NY 10025. Phone: (212) 998-2095

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September

ber 3,4,5—Seabeck Christian Conference Center, 15395 Seabeck Highway NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact Laurie Flinn. Phone: (253) 939-9838

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 9,10,11—Holiday Inn Research Park, 5903 University Drive, Huntsville, AL 35815. Contact Phillip Mosley. Phone: (256) 582-3640

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 8,9—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA. Contact George Balko, Jr., 1300 High Street, West Newton, PA 15089. Phone: (724) 872-6418

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

THAT THE CHURCH IS “THE TEMPLE” OF THE LIVING GOD—peculiarly “his workmanship;” that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age—ever since Christ became the world’s Redeemer and the chief “corner stone” of this temple, through which, when finished, God’s blessings shall come “to all people,” and they find access to him.—I Cor. 3:16,17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29

THAT MEANTIME THE CHISELING, SHAPING, AND POLISHING of the consecrated believers in Christ’s atonement for sin progresses, and when the last of these “living stones,” “elect and precious,” shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Rev. 15:5-8

THAT THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD lies in the fact that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God “tasted death for every man,” “a ransom for all,” and will be “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” “in due time.”—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; I Tim. 2:5,6

THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH is that she may be like her Lord, “see him as he is,” be a “partaker of the divine nature,” and share his glory as his joint-heir.—I John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; II Pet. 1:4

THAT THE PRESENT MISSION OF THE CHURCH is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God’s witness to the world; and to prepare to be the kings and priests in the next age.—Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6, 20:6

THAT THE HOPE FOR THE WORLD lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ’s millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35