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The Great Tempest

*“Behold, there
arose a great
tempest in the sea,
insomuch that the
ship was covered
with the waves:
but he [Jesus] was
asleep.”*

—*Matthew 8:24*

IN THIS SCRIPTURE, MAT-thew has recorded the account of the violent storm that arose when Jesus and his disciples were travelling together in a boat. The Master was asleep and apparently undisturbed by what was taking place around him, but his disciples,

who were experienced seamen, were afraid and very anxious. Concerning them, we read, “His disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!”—Matt. 8:25-27

THE TEMPEST

The word ‘tempest’ in our featured scripture has been translated from the Greek *seismos* which means to shake or agitate. The word has been

translated 'shake' in Paul's letter to the Hebrew brethren. "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." (Heb. 12:26) The apostle was quoting from the prophecy of Haggai.—Hag. 2:6,7

The word *seismos* is also translated 'earthquake' in the book of Revelation. We read, "There were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." (Rev. 16:18) In symbolic language, this is prophetic of the great revolution that occurs at the end of this Gospel Age, that removes all selfishness and pride.

STORMY ENCOUNTERS

The great tempest that Jesus and his disciples experienced aptly illustrates the stormy encounters that Jesus' faithful followers would experience during the long centuries of this age. Jesus questioned his companions' faith by asking, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' The disciples should have realized that there was nothing to fear when Jesus was with them in the ship. This serves to illustrate the fact that Jesus has promised to be with all of his faithful followers throughout the present Gospel Age. (Matt. 28:20) He thus emphasized the importance of faith as a necessary prerequisite to the safe arrival of the Christ at their ultimate destination.

More specifically the tempest represents the foretold time of trouble that is to occur during the closing years of this present Gospel Age. The severity

of the storm required our Lord Jesus to take miraculous action against the power of the wind and the sea. It was only after he had taken control that a great calm came over the troubled waters. This could very well suggest the manner in which the great time of trouble will end. We also learn from the scriptural account (Matt. 8:28), that the time was near at hand when Jesus and his disciples would reach their ultimate destination.

SUMMER 2010: WIND, FIRE, WATER

We are also witnesses to storms that have brought fear and devastation to earth's inhabitants. Unpredictable and severe weather has occurred in many parts of the world during the summer of 2010. People all over the world have been affected by some of the most destructive storms in decades, and in some cases these storms have broken long-established weather records. For example, there has been intense heat, major drought, and devastating fires. In other places, there have been floods and mudslides that have engulfed homes, businesses, and even whole communities. Throughout the summer valuable cropland has been severely affected or destroyed. Hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes have also uprooted the lives of many innocent people.

This calamity was addressed by Charles Hanley of the *Associated Press*. We quote in part a news report entitled "Wacky Weather no Global Warning—Change is here." published by the *Los Angeles Daily News* (August 13, 2010). He said, "Floods, fires, melting ice and feverish heat: From smoke-choked Moscow to water-soaked Iowa and the High

Arctic, the planet seems to be having a mid-summer breakdown. It's not just a portent of things to come, scientists say, but a sign of troubling climate change already under way.

“The weather-related cataclysms fit patterns predicted by climate scientists, Geneva-based World Meteorological Organization says—although those scientists always shy from tying individual disasters directly to global warming. The experts now see an urgent need for better ways to forecast extreme events like Russia's heat wave and wild fires, and the record deluge devastating Pakistan.

“There is no time to waste, because societies must be equipped to deal with global warming,” says British government climatologist Peter Stott. The United Nation's network of climate science—the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—has long predicted that rising global temperatures would produce more frequent and intense heat waves, and more intense rainfalls. In its latest assessment, in 2007, the Nobel Prize-winning panel went beyond that. It said these trends ‘have already been observed,’ in an increase in heat waves since 1950.”

TORNADOS IN THE UNITED STATES

The *Associated Press* (April 26, 2010) published a news item entitled, “Enormous Tornado, Violent Storms Kill Dozen.” Quoting in part from the article, we read, “Hundreds of homes were damaged in the tornado, which carved a path of devastation from the Louisiana state line to east-central Mississippi. At least three dozen people were injured. National Weather Service meteorologist Marc

McAlister said the tornado had winds of 160 miles (260 km.) an hour and left a path of destruction at least 50 miles long.

“‘This tornado was enormous,’ said Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour, who grew up in Yazoo County, a county of about 28,000 people. He said the twister wreaked utter obliteration among the picturesque hills rising from the flat Mississippi Delta. He estimated at least 100 houses in Yazoo County alone had severe damage, but said his estimate could rise. Hundreds were without electricity while others were left homeless, sifting through what little remained of their homes and bulldozing the rest. Volunteers poured into the hardest-hit areas with four-wheelers, chain saws, and heavy equipment to chop up downed trees and haul away the wreckage as the cleanup began. Mississippi’s Choctaw County had the most confirmed deaths: five, including a baby and two other children. One woman lay dying in a ditch along a dirt road beside the body of her husband. No one could get to her because of the fallen trees blocking the road.

“Tornadoes also were reported in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Alabama. The storm system tracked northeastward, downing trees in northwest Georgia and later damaging an elementary school roof in Darlington, South Carolina. All that remained of Sullivan’s Crossroads Grocery in Choctaw County was a pile of cinderblocks. Owner Ron Sullivan, his wife, and four other people rode out the storm, coming away with only some cuts and bruises. Sullivan had been on the phone, describing the weather conditions to a meteorologist, when the line went dead and the twister hit, tearing the wooden roof

off the store and hurling Sullivan into a cinder-block wall.”

Another weather news article, “Tornado Storms tear through Plains States” reported (May 10, 2010) on the violent storms. In part, we read, “More than 40 tornadoes touched down across Kansas and Oklahoma with hail stones four inches in diameter. Five people were killed and dozens injured as hailstones nearing baseball size fell from the sky. Thousands are left without power across Kansas and Oklahoma.

“Large storm systems that unleash what are called ‘tornado families’ can cause catastrophic damage. Large storm fronts move into Oklahoma and Kansas and in the Great Plains area. There is always the risk of a tornado with any large storm front. Each region comes with unique weather patterns, affected by the regional geography. The Great Plains area is commonly referred to as Tornado Alley, because the region’s unique susceptibility to form tornado-producing storms.”

FIRES IN RUSSIA

Intense heat and numerous fires created havoc in Russia during the summer of 2010. Under the title “Russia Burns in Hottest Summer on Record,” we quote in part from the news report that was submitted by *News Watch* editor David Braun (July 28, 2010). He wrote, “It’s not only North America that is suffering one of the hottest summers on record (*National Geographic News: 2010 to Be One of Hottest Years on Record*). Russia has been enduring weeks of oppressive heat, now worsened by spontaneous peat and forest fires that are pumping

smoke into the air. While millions are gasping, hundreds of people trying to cool off have drowned, and Russia's crops are shriveling.

“According to *Earth Times*, the month of July has been Russia's hottest since records started 130 years ago, with temperatures in the range of 102 F (39 C). The heat has led to devastating fires across the country. An estimated 20,000 blazes have burned down some 400,000 hectares of forest in the last few weeks—the equivalent of more than half a million football fields. Crews across the Moscow region have had to deal with around 60 fire outbreaks. The conditions they are working in are intense, the earth literally smoulders, and the heat of the sun combined with the fires is almost unbearable.

“‘The worst smog to hit Moscow in almost a decade has sent pollution soaring ten times above safe levels,’ the English-language *Moscow Times* reported. Moscow hit an absolute temperature record recently with 37.4 C and was headed for yet another high. The Times said high temperatures had damaged a third of the land under cultivation, and forced Russia to declare a state of emergency in 23 regions. Grain prices may double this year because of the drought.

“Russia's worst drought in 13 decades became a political issue last week as the Kremlin held an emergency meeting to combat the impacts of a month-long heat wave that is shriveling crops, forcing up food prices, and causing hundreds of drownings as Russians jump into rivers to escape heat funneled up from North Africa. In St. Petersburg, almost on the same latitude as Anchorage, Alaska, residents are cooling off by jumping into

normally icy canals. Across Russia, almost 2,000 people have drowned since June, well higher than normal.”

On August 9th, David Braun again reported the worsening conditions under the caption “Russia Chokes as Fires Rage in Worst Summer Anyone Can Remember.” He said, “Deaths in Moscow have doubled to an average of 700 people a day as the Russian capital is engulfed by poisonous smog from wildfires and a sweltering heat wave, a top health official said. The Russian newspaper Pravda reported: Moscow is suffocating. Thick toxic smog has been covering the sky above the city for days. The sun in Moscow looks like the moon during the day: it’s not that bright and yellow, but pale and orange with misty outlines against the smoky sky. Muscovites have to experience both the smog and sweltering heat at the same time.

“Russia has recently seen the longest unprecedented heat wave for at least one thousand years, the head of the Russian Meteorological Center reported. Various news sites report that foreign embassies have reduced activities, or shut down, with many staff leaving Moscow to escape the toxic atmosphere.

“In the summer of 2010, the Russian Federation had to contend with multiple natural hazards: drought in the southern part of the country, and raging fires in western Russia and eastern Siberia. The events all occurred against the backdrop of unusual warmth. Bloomberg reported that temperatures in parts of the country soared to 108 F (42 C). The *Wall Street Journal* reported that fire and drought-inducing heat was expected to continue until at least mid August.

“Not all parts of the Russian Federation experienced unusual warmth on July 20-27, 2010. A large expanse of northern central Russia, for instance, exhibits below-average temperatures. Areas of atypical warmth, however, predominate in the east and west. Some areas extend from eastern Siberia toward the southwest, but the most obvious area of unusual warmth occurs north and northwest of the Caspian Sea. These warm areas in eastern and western Russia continue a pattern noticeable earlier in July, and correspond to areas of intense drought and wildfire activity. It was reported that 558 active fires covering nearly 700 square miles were burning across the Russian Federation in early August. Voice of America reported that smoke from forest fires around the Russian capital forced flight restrictions at Moscow airports in August, and health officials warned Moscow residents to take precautions against the smoke inhalation.”

FLOODS IN PAKISTAN

Beginning in late July, Pakistan experienced devastating flooding which began in the northern part of the country. One flood data report indicated that a two-day rainfall reached at least 16 inches in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A spokesman for the United Nations said that the Pakistan flooding was one of the world's worst natural disasters. He reported that the number of people affected was greater than the combined totals of the 2004 tsunami, the 2005 Pakistan earthquake and this year's Haiti earthquake.

Flow of the main flood crest has proven to be substantially higher than what had earlier been

forecast. The extreme high flow of water sent the river over its banks and onto rich croplands of the Indus River flood plain with severe consequences to the food and water supply for its citizens. It also affected the dwelling places and transportation that is vital to millions of people.

Officials explained that the water runoff from most of the north and northwest of Pakistan goes directly into the upper Indus River. This particular area is rimmed by very high mountains which shed vast loads of sediment, and all of this finds its way downhill to the streams and rivers on its way to the sea. When the tributaries reach flatlands the load of sediment chokes the stream beds thus distributing sand, silt and mud in a broad sheet. Crops and human habitation are in harm's way which accounts for the tragic loss of life, the numbers of people affected, and the inundated land along the Indus River basin.

The monsoon rainy season typically begins during July and lasts into late August or early September. This time period is when most of the annual rainfall occurs across the majority of Pakistan, as well as in neighboring India. Residents living in these areas rely on the seasonal rainfall to sustain their crops and livestock, as well as to replenish the water reservoirs. The river is a vital water and food source for most of the population.

At the time of this writing, United Nation officials have stated that more than 1,400 lives have already been lost, with the toll climbing every day. They also said that the flooding has devastated the daily lives of more than 14 million people. The United Nations also indicated that the death toll

from the flooding is less so far in comparison to other tragedies, but that the scope of the number of people affected is much greater.

The geography of the Indus, Pakistan's largest river, is surrounded by some of the most rugged mountains in the world, and steep slopes up thrust along the upper Indus. Its tributaries are thus quickly affected by summer cloudbursts and winter storms. River diking to control flooding is difficult and much too costly for the Pakistan economy, and no protection exists along many miles of the river's plain. Flood control dams are therefore limited to the upper reaches of the country. According to the *Associated Press*, the United Nations estimates that more than 500,000 people in the area have been displaced and that 1.4 million agricultural acres have been destroyed by the raging flood waters.

Parts of Pakistan that had previously been spared from the country's catastrophic floods are now being threatened. Floodwaters have also put cities and towns in southern Pakistan at risk. Heavy monsoon rains have triggered extreme floods in other parts of the country. The situation has caused the worst flooding in 80 years, and has been described as the country's worst natural disaster in generations, and possibly the worst one in its history. Help from the international community cannot keep up with the need as food and water shortages worsen.

CNN World Wire Staff News (August 15, 2010) reported that United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon met Sunday with Pakistan's president. Both men urged the international community to increase their efforts to help the millions of people

that are being affected by flooding in Pakistan. Ban, who arrived in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, and President Asif Ali Zardari held talks before visiting some of the areas affected by floodwaters responsible for 1,400 deaths and widespread devastation. Ban said he has visited scenes of natural disasters worldwide, but has never seen anything as bad. He said, the scale of the disaster is so large, and so many people are affected in so many places with so much need.

One in 10 Pakistanis—up to 20 million people—has been directly or indirectly affected by the floodwaters. Thousands of towns and villages have simply been washed away. Roads, buildings, bridges, crops—millions of livelihoods have been lost. People are marooned on tiny islands with the floodwaters all around them. They are drinking dirty water, and they are living in the mud and ruins of their lives. Many have lost family and friends. Many more are afraid their children and loved ones will not survive in these conditions.

One-fifth of Pakistan—or an area about the size of Florida—has been flooded in relentless monsoon rains, according to the United Nations. Millions of people are still at peril as the bloated Indus River is cresting in parts of Sindh province. In some areas, the Indus has expanded from its usual width of one mile to as much as twelve miles. Many areas have been transformed into vast lakes, forcing thousands of flood victims to huddle in sludgy camps or in jam-packed public buildings. Others are sleeping under the stars next to the cows, sheep and goats they rescued from rising waters. When they might be able to return home remains a big question.

As the flooding continues to disrupt the lives of millions of people, the threat of cholera and water-borne diseases is now becoming a serious concern. The World Health Organization said in a bulletin that rumors of confirmed cholera cases are pouring in. The threat from cholera in the flood-affected communities remains high. In order to avoid excess mortality, it is important that all acute cases with severe dehydration have ready and rapid access to standardized treatment covering waterborne diseases, including cholera.

HOPE UNDER CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Amid the turmoil and distress of our changing environment let us turn to the Word of God for understanding and comfort. The Scriptures reveal that our Heavenly Father has not forgotten his human creation, but has a plan for their recovery from the sentence of death as a result of sin. Under the administration of Christ's future kingdom, all will be given an opportunity to obey the divine Law and receive life.

At that time, which is near at hand, earth's environment and weather patterns will be equalized and made subject to the mighty hand of God. The earth also will be restored to perfection as promised by our loving Creator. He will provide showers of blessing to water the land; fruit producing trees will bring forth their abundance; and it will surely come to pass that the earth will yield her increase.

The Prophet Ezekiel has recorded God's wonderful promises for mankind. The whole human family will be given every opportunity to attain the

blessings of life under the administration of Christ's future kingdom of peace and righteousness to live on a restored earth.

A COVENANT OF PEACE

The psalmist speaks of the time when our loving Heavenly Father will say, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."—Ps. 46:10

The Prophet Ezekiel has written concerning the wonderful promises of God. "I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them."—Ezek. 34:25-27

PEACE BE STILL

In Mark's account of the tempest that bore down on Jesus and his little group of disciples who were travelling with him, he includes the additional words which the Master spoke to calm the stormy sea. "He [Jesus] arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."—Mark 4:39 ■

God's Majesty and Human Dignity

*Key Verse: "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."
—Psalm 8:6*

*Selected Scripture:
Psalm 8*

THE FIRST AND LAST VERSES of this Psalm (vss. 1,9) use identical language to frame the wonderful message of God's majesty, "How excellent is thy name in all the earth!" Although the psalmist states that God's glory is "above the heavens" (verse 1), it is the earth and its inhabitants—man—that are of special interest to him. "Heaven

is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." "I will make the place of my feet [earth] glorious."—Isa. 66:1; 60:13

One aspect of God's human creation which is of special significance is the babe, or little child. Verse 2 states, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength." Jesus quoted this part of the psalm when he rode into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:16), because, while the children cried in the Temple, "Hosanna to the son of David" (Matt. 21:15), the chief priests and scribes were displeased. Earlier in his ministry, he had asserted, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."—Mark 10:15

As the Psalmist David looked upward into the heavens, he wondered why God would give consideration to this speck of earth and its inhabitants. He says, "When

I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou has ordained; What is man, that thou are mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (Ps. 8:3,4) Yet, the psalmist continues by praising God's creation of man, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." (vs. 5) Our Key Verse says God also gave to man dominion over the earth, and the verses following (vss. 7,8) state that this dominion included all the lower animals.

Through man's fall into sin and death, he lost the dominion described above, both as relates to the earth itself, as well as over the lower animals. Even man's life on earth became only a few short years, when compared to eternal life which God originally intended. From this limited viewpoint, it would seem that God's purpose in the earth had failed miserably; however, this is not the case. We turn to the New Testament to see God's purpose in all this.

Apostle Paul quotes the words of this psalm in Hebrews 2:6-7, but after doing so he explains God's long term plan for dealing with the fact that man's dominion over earth, although now not in effect, will one day be restored. He says, "Now we see not yet all things put under him [under man's dominion]. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb. 2:8,9) Through the ransom provided by the death of Jesus as a corresponding price for Adam, all mankind will have the opportunity in Christ's coming kingdom to learn righteousness, to fully leave their former sinful ways, and to regain the dominion they lost. As Jesus said at his first advent, "The Son of man [Jesus, an earthly son of Adam] is come to seek and to save [through the ransom and his future kingdom] that which was lost [man and his former dominion].—Luke 19:10 ■

God's Law Sustains

Key Verse: *“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.”*
—Psalm 19:7,8

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 19

THE WORDS OF OUR KEY Verse, ‘law,’ ‘testimony,’ ‘statutes,’ and ‘commandment,’ all have to do with God’s righteous ways, which he desires that we follow to the best of our ability. In this text, the psalmist describes God’s law in four ways, and then tells what the resulting effect should be on the life of the child of God.

First, the psalmist says that God’s law is ‘perfect, converting the soul.’ The word perfect has the thought of being truthful and complete. That is a fitting description of God’s law. It is truthful; therefore, it is always reliable. In God’s law, righteous-

ness is always righteousness, and sin is always sin. God’s law is also complete—he has not left out any provision. If we follow his law, we will have a guideline to every issue of life. This perfect law converts the soul. That is, because it is perfect, truthful, and complete, it can convert the soul that has fallen into sin, and bring those who are willing and obedient back into covenant relationship with God. This is true of the church, the prospective bride of Christ, now, and it will also be true of mankind in Christ’s coming kingdom, as they also are

converted to righteousness.

The second statement concerning God's law in our Key Verse is that it is 'sure, making wise the simple.' If one is absolutely sure of something, then to them it is a simple matter, and they have gained the wisdom associated with that surety. We have the assurance in another scripture that God's word "shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55:11) Since we can take God at his word, then we—simple human beings—can gain the wisdom needed to follow his law by looking no further than the Scriptures themselves, having complete faith in them, and then applying their principles to our daily lives.

The third element of God's law in our lesson concerns righteousness. The psalmist says God's law is 'right, rejoicing the heart.' The word right means straight, equitable, upright. In other words, God's law is always just, never unjust. This truth rejoices the heart of those striving to serve God, because in the fallen world in which we live, there is much injustice, inequity, and crookedness. The true child of God must avoid these tendencies and not join with the world in pursuing and promoting them, but rather rejoice in God's righteous law. Such look forward to the time when the world will also experience the righteousness of God's law. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he [God, through the Christ head and body] will judge the world in righteousness."—Acts 17:31

The final aspect of God's law contained in our Key Verses states that it is 'pure, enlightening the eyes.' One of the synonyms given for the word pure is empty. The thought is that which is pure is empty of all contaminants. This is particularly true with eyesight. Only those who have the contaminants of sin, superstition, pride, and evil cleaned from their spiritual vision will be enabled to be truly enlightened and see and appreciate the law of God in all its glory and beauty. ■

God Provides Refuge

Key Verse: “*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*”
—*Psalm 46:1*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 46

THIS PSALM SHOULD BE A special comfort to all the Lord’s people. In it we find both the personal comfort needed to endure the difficult trials of life, and also the comforting assurance that God’s plan is for the ultimate end of this present evil order, to be replaced by Christ’s

righteous kingdom of peace and justice.

The word ‘refuge’ in our Key Verse has the meaning of a shelter, or protection, from harm. We note in this verse that God has not promised us freedom from trouble, but in that trouble he will be a shelter to protect us from any lasting harm that Satan might wish to have come upon us. The verse also says that God is our strength. This seems to imply that if we abide under him as a sheltering refuge, not only do we receive his protection from harm, but we also gain the benefit of being recipients of his strength in helping us fight the battles against the world, the flesh, and the Adversary. Alone, we cannot win any of these battles, but with God as a ‘refuge and strength,’ we are guaranteed to come off victorious. “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory.”—I Cor. 15:57

Because God is our refuge and strength, the psalmist gives us these assuring promises, “Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the

mountains shake with the swelling thereof. . . . God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her.” (Ps. 46:2,3,5) The use of the feminine pronoun ‘her’ is a reference to the church—the bride of Christ—who is to be symbolically wedded to her Lord following the end of this present Gospel Age. This is spoken of by John the Revelator, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”—Rev. 19:7

This psalm tells us that while the final members of the bride of Christ are making themselves ready during the harvest period of this Gospel Age, the kingdoms of this world are in turmoil. Notice this highly symbolic language: “The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. . . . Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.” (Ps. 46:6,8) God is also our refuge in this, because we understand that the destruction of this present order of things does not mean the literal destruction of earth, or of its people, but it is the prerequisite to the establishment of Christ’s kingdom of peace and righteousness for all mankind.

Following the trouble, which will bring an end to this old order of things, God will become a refuge and strength to all people. Concerning the doing away with the old order and ushering in of the new, the psalmist says, “He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot [symbolic of man’s instruments of war and destruction] in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” (Ps. 46:9,10) Here we have the assurance that both the earth, and the heathen—mankind in general—which dwell here, will not be destroyed, because the psalmist says that God will be exalted in them both. What a joy to know that God will be the refuge of all! ■

God is in Charge

Key Verse: “*Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.*”
—*Psalm 47:6,7*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 47

beg the question, “Who is in charge?”

In one sense, it is correct to say that Satan, the great Adversary, is the ruler of this “present evil world.” (Gal. 1:4) Jesus himself spoke of Satan as “the prince of this world” (John 12:31), and the Apostle Paul spoke of him as “the prince of the power of the air.” (Eph. 2:2) Certainly it is true that all the evil, suffering, and dying in this world, both now and in the past, is the result of Satan’s work, not God’s. It was he, not God, whose deceit and corruption of mind influenced our first parents to sin, thus plunging them and their posterity into an ongoing cycle of sin, suffering, trial, and death. It might seem from all this that it is Satan who is ‘in charge’ of this earth rather than God. However, such is not the case.

God, in his great wisdom, has allowed Satan to have a measure of power since Adam’s fall, this for the purpose

THIS PSALM, IN MOSTLY symbolic language, serves as a reminder to all who reverence God that he is in charge of the entire earth. This is comforting to know, especially in the times of uncertainty in which we live today. The troubles of the world, be they political instability, economic uncertainty, threats of war and terrorism, social upheavals, religious intolerance, the global environment, or seemingly endless natural disasters,

of teaching man, through his experience with sin, that sin “might become exceeding sinful.” (Rom. 7:13) God purposes that man, through this long experience with sin, will learn fully and completely of its awful results. Having done this, God further purposes that all mankind will be raised from the dead, and given another opportunity for life, this time without the influence of Satan, for he will be bound and powerless. (Rev. 20:2) This will be the time of Christ’s thousand-year kingdom (vs. 6). God will be in charge through the auspices of his son, Christ Jesus, and his bride, the church. They will be the great mediator and high priest of that kingdom, teaching and uplifting the rest of mankind back to the former state of holiness and perfection which Adam enjoyed in the Garden of Eden before he sinned.

The Key Verses of our lesson encourage us to sing praises to God, our king, and to do so ‘with understanding.’ It is the understanding of God’s great plan of salvation for all mankind, as described above, which causes such praise to be rendered. Verse 8 states that “God reigneth over the heathen.” Truly God must have, as his purpose, to uplift, help, and educate even the heathen in this coming kingdom, else there would be no reason for him to reign over them. In fact, it is the very purpose of his reign over them to bring them into covenant relationship with him. God “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”—I Tim. 2:4

The last verse of this psalm indicates that in this coming kingdom of Christ, which God is in charge of, there will be “princes of the people . . . gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham.” (vs. 9) These will be the faithful ones of old—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others—who were full of faith as Abraham was. They will be the earthly representatives of Christ, and will teach and assist mankind as they learn righteousness. They also will serve under the direction of God. Thus, in all things “he [God] is greatly exalted.”—Ps. 47:9 ■

God's Presence Comforts and Assures

Key Verse: *“O God,
thou art my God;
early will I seek
thee: my soul
thirsteth for thee,
my flesh longeth
for thee in a dry
and thirsty land,
where no water
is.”*

—*Psalm 63:1*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 63

wilderness of this world—dry, and void of the water of truth—in which the Lord’s consecrated people are now dwelling. Just as David’s soul thirsted for God, so ours should long for the water of life, the Truth. Although this world is a ‘dry and thirsty land,’ yet the Heavenly Father has seen fit to provide us this living water through his Word, the Scriptures. It is only this water which quenches our thirst for God’s great plan of salvation. Only this living water harmonizes all God’s attributes—his justice, power, wisdom and love—to the intent that all the features of his plan conform harmoniously to each of these cardinal characteristics.

In verse 2 of this psalm, David recounts that he had

THIS PSALM SPEAKS OF God’s comfort and assurance to those of his people who are traveling in the wilderness of this world. It was this very comfort which David felt as he wandered in the wilderness of Judah, and which inspired him to put down these words for our special benefit.

The wilderness of Judah, as suggested in our Key Verse, was a dry land with little, if any, water. It is illustrative of the

seen God's power as it was manifest in the "sanctuary," but he also recognized that God's power was just as evident in the wilderness experiences. This is an important lesson to us. God's power is not just manifest in the easier 'sanctuary' experiences of life, but also when we walk through the more difficult and challenging wilderness experiences. Knowing this, David continued, "Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name."—vss. 3,4

In verse 6 of this psalm, David makes particular note of his habit of drawing his mind back to God, in particular, at the close of each day, "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches." Just as the Key Verse states that we should seek God early each day, as we rise from the night's rest, so also at the end of the day we should draw our attention back to our Heavenly Father, remembering him and meditating upon him in the night watches. Ending our day in meditation upon the Lord, regardless of our earlier hours' experiences, serves to provide us needed comfort and assurance as we retire from the cares of the day.

The psalm continues, "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me." (vss. 7,8) The 'right hand' spoken of which upholds us is our Lord Jesus, who the Apostle Paul says "is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2) He is our advocate (I John 2:1)—the one through whom we have access to the presence of God. It is through him that the comfort and assurances of God become real to us. It is our Lord Jesus who upholds us, as a merciful and faithful high priest, one who was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." (Heb. 4:15) What a further comfort and assurance it is to know that Jesus went through the same types of experiences that we do and, thus, is sympathetic with us in all the trials and difficulties of life. ■

Our Heavenly Shepherd

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

Psalms 23:1

OUR ALL-WISE AND LOVING Heavenly Father is the author of salvation and is the great Heavenly Shepherd over his sheep. “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32) During this present Gospel Age, our Lord Jesus is the shepherd to the little flock of his faithful followers. The significance of the special relationship between the Father and his Son is addressed by the Prophet Micah. He wrote, “He shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.”—Mic. 5:4

A SHEPHERD’S WORK

Shepherds were known to tend their flocks of both sheep and goats since the early days of human creation. For example, we learn from the scriptural account that Adam’s son, Abel, was a shepherd. (Gen. 4:2) Oftentimes, several shepherds would pen their animals together in one sheepfold to give

them protection for the night, while a doorkeeper watched over them. When morning came, the shepherds would call to their flocks, and only their own sheep would respond to them. The shepherd would then lead his particular flock to pasture. He not only pointed the way for his sheep to follow him, but also to make sure that it was practicable and safe. He thus taught them not to stray away. Occasionally, however, it was necessary to remind them of his presence with them.

DAVID IS ANOINTED

The name David means ‘beloved’ and occurs hundreds of times in the Scriptures. In each case, the reference points to but one individual, the second king of Israel. We are first introduced to him while he was tending his father’s sheep in a field near Bethlehem. Samuel had been sent by God to the home of Jesse to anoint one of his sons to be the future king.

From the scriptural record, we read, “Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.”—I Sam. 16:10-13

THE ANTITYPICAL DAVID

Many centuries later our attention is again drawn to a field near Bethlehem and the events surrounding the birth of our Lord Jesus—the antitypical David. “There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings 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. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”—Luke 2:8-14

David thus serves as a type, or illustration, of our Lord Jesus, the son of David. (Matt. 1:1) The shepherd boy was also a musician, poet, prophet, and king. As a soldier he was known for his great courage and endurance, and yet was humble enough to acknowledge his mistakes and repent of his sins. He was a man capable of tender compassion and mercy, and a lover of truth and righteousness. He had great trust, confidence, and love for the Heavenly Father.

DAVID'S PSALM

The psalmist spent his early years as a shepherd, and this had prepared him for the great tasks that

lay ahead as he endeavored to know and serve God. He would be forced to deal with the terrible wrath of King Saul, and to bring an end to the reproaches of Goliath whom he slew with a pebble thrown by his sling shot.

As the author of this beautiful psalm, we are provided with much evidence that he was truly a devout man of God, and was assured of the Heavenly Father's loving care on his behalf, even as a shepherd. He used various symbols to illustrate his thoughts, and the words of this inspiring psalm have been a source of blessing to many of the Lord's faithful people throughout the ages. We will consider some of the highlights of the psalm.

He wrote, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."—Ps. 23:2-6

I SHALL NOT WANT

In our featured text (Ps. 23:1), David said 'I shall not want.' In his own experience as a servant of God, and in his observation of the manner in which divine care had been manifested toward others, he realized that God has never failed to carry out that which he had promised.

What was true in the life of David is equally true in our experience today. The symbols and lessons of this psalm aptly apply to the Heavenly Father's 'little flock' during this present Gospel Age. God's goodness in providing all the needs of his people during this time is manifest more particularly along spiritual lines, and to those who are living by faith. They have set their affections on things above rather than on the things of the earth, and can verify God's care as a shepherd. Having thus affirmed God's goodness and mercy, David then begins to point out some of the many and various ways in which the Lord's care is manifest.

THE REST OF FAITH

In this psalm (vs. 2), David says that God has invited him to 'lie down in green pastures.' This suggests a special rest of faith that the Lord's consecrated people during this present Gospel Age enjoy. Our attention is thus drawn to the spiritual food and refreshment which they receive from our Lord's abundant providence. We have been bountifully blessed with the 'still waters [waters of quietness, *Marginal Translation*].' These 'waters of quietness' flow in a deep and inexhaustible stream of refreshment, and provide water we can drink with ease and without measure. They are readily available for all who have ears to hear and recognize the shepherd's voice calling them to follow him.

This represents the deep Truths that have been made available to us by our returned Lord and Savior during the closing decades of this age of sacrifice. These waters have been cleared of the muddy traditions and ignorance of the past. The pastures of

Truth are lush and green for all those who are faithful in following the shepherd whithersoever he leads.

One of the special blessings of the Truth that we share is the knowledge that the present time of trouble and distress of nations is under control of the mighty hand of our Heavenly Father. We can trust his wisdom and truly ‘lie down’ in these green pastures with peace of heart and mind. We thus rest as we partake of the nourishing spiritual food which our heavenly shepherd has provided for us.

OUR SOUL IS RESTORED

The psalmist’s expression (vs. 3)—‘he restoreth my soul’—points to the saving provisions of God’s marvelous grace on our behalf. The robe of righteousness now covers our sins, and we have been justified. We are led in the paths of righteousness because we are the Lord’s people and we abide in the merit of Jesus’ blood.

Because of our inherited imperfections of the flesh, we may fail at times to give proper attention to the shepherd’s voice and therefore expose ourselves to danger. However, we are promised that divine mercy will restore us to safety if we listen for his voice and follow him. We need divine wisdom in order to walk in the right way. James explains, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”—James 1:5-7

We must be willing to obtain divine wisdom through our Heavenly Father's appointed method which is his inspired Word. It is through the Word of Truth that the great shepherd leads us, and it is through the Word that we hear his voice calling us to follow him.

PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The heavenly shepherd leads his people 'in the paths of righteousness.' However, the path of the righteous is often rugged and very difficult. It is the narrow way of sacrifice. If we faithfully walk in this narrow way to the end of our consecrated life in Christ Jesus, we will receive the promised great reward. The revelator recorded our Lord's wonderful promise. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2:10

The faithful will have the privilege of living and reigning as 'The Christ' in his glorious future heavenly kingdom. We are strengthened by the Apostle Paul, who wrote, "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. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."—Rom. 8:16-18

IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH

When David spoke of walking 'through the valley of the shadow of death' (vs. 4), we are reminded of the valley of sin and death and the reality of our journey through life as members of the fallen and sin-sick human family. The psalmist also said that

he would fear no evil because our heavenly shepherd is always with us.

He cites an extreme condition of danger and hardship through which a shepherd sometimes finds it necessary to lead his sheep. This illustrates similar difficulties in the lives of the consecrated people of God. However, they need not fear evil because the good shepherd has promised to be with them.

THE ROD AND STAFF

In the psalmist's day, a rod oftentimes represented a mark of prestige and authority. A rod, or staff, was used for many purposes including security, protection, support, or punishment. In the shepherd's case, the 'rod and staff' served an important function in his everyday life and role as a shepherd to the little flock. They were very useful to him as he led and directed his sheep on their way to pasture. They could be used for protection, and if one of his little ones fell into a hole or crevice he could use the crook of his staff to pull it to safety. Later, when they were grazing, he no doubt found comfort when leaning on his staff to watch over them.

In this psalm, David said he feared no evil, and spoke specifically of the rod and staff. He said they were a special comfort to him as he walked through the valley of the shadow of death. The rod and staff are also significant of our Heavenly Father's care and divine providence in caring for the little flock of his people during this present Gospel Age. The rod suggests his loving discipline and correction to keep us in the right path so that we do not stray. This is necessary for our development as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. The staff represents his

providential care and consolation. He promises to continually guide, protect, and comfort us during our walk in newness of life.

SPIRITUAL FOOD

The 'table' to which the psalmist refers (vs.5), points to spiritual food. The bountiful meat in due season has especially blessed the Lord's people who have lived during the closing years of this present Gospel Age. This special nourishment coincides with our Lord's promised Second Presence. He said, "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." (Luke 12:37) The revelator also recorded the Master's promise, in which he said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."—Rev. 3:20

This table of spiritual food has been set before the Lord's people 'in the presence of his enemies'—Satan the devil, the great enemy of the Christ. Yet, we continue to receive the Holy Spirit of Truth. The psalmist said, Thou anointest my head with oil, and my 'cup runneth over.'

GOODNESS AND MERCY

David reminds us (vs.6) that God has promised his little flock that his 'goodness and mercy' would follow them throughout their consecrated walk. These two principles of our loving Father's grace are closely related although their operation may be carried out along different lines. In the use of these

two expressions in the last verse of the psalm, he has successfully summed up all of the many ways that our Heavenly Shepherd has manifested his goodness and mercy to his little flock of sheep that are portrayed throughout this inspiring psalm.

Our greatest desire and hope is to be faithful to our heavenly calling. In doing so, we may dwell in the heavenly house of the Lord forever. He has promised to be our shepherd until the end of our consecrated walk. David also wrote, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”—Ps. 37:23-25

THE SHEPHERD COMES TO EARTH

When our Lord came to earth to save mankind he knew the sheep were scattered. “Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”—Matt. 9:35,36

During his ministry, he taught special lessons in connection with the shepherd and his sheep. In one of his parables, he addressed this relationship, and said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd

of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”—John 10:1-5

The Master then proceeded to explain the deeper meaning and significance of his lesson. From the scriptural record, we again read, “This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”—vss. 6-11

ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE

In his letter to the brethren at Rome, the Apostle Paul also gives assurance of divine care in the lives of the consecrated people of God. He said, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn

among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”—Rom. 8:28-31

THE ALL THINGS

No one who has responded to the heavenly calling in Christ Jesus has been more faithful in following the heavenly shepherd than was the Apostle Paul. He acknowledges, “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”—Phil. 4:12,13

This reference indicates that the apostle did not always have sufficient food and raiment, and in some cases he did not always have a proper place to lay his head. From this standpoint Paul’s experiences were more like those of Jesus, but as a New Creature in Christ Jesus he could affirm that all of his spiritual needs were supplied. The apostle believed this was consistent with the terms of his consecration, and could say, “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”—II Cor. 4:16-18

THE OUTWARD AND INNER MAN

The outward man of flesh is destined to perish and end in the grave. However, Paul was glad to share in the suffering of the Christ. He understood that the inward man was a New Creature and was begotten in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit and through the Word of God. This inward man was being renewed, nourished, and built up by the spiritual food that was always abundantly supplied to him by the Heavenly Shepherd. “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.”—Col. 1:23,24

THE SHEPHERD GATHERS THE SHEEP

During his earthly ministry, Jesus taught his faithful followers the mystery of the church’s heavenly calling and prepared them for the long centuries that would intervene before he would return to gather them together at the end of this present Gospel Age.

The Apostle Paul concludes by saying, “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”—Heb. 13:20,21 ■

The Last Enemy

*“The last enemy
that shall be
destroyed is
death.”*
—*I Corinthians*
15:26

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF man’s history on the earth, death has preyed upon everyone—young and old, rich and poor, healthy and diseased, doers of good and doers of

evil—it has made no distinction. Sooner or later, all have faced its reality. None of us have been able to escape its clutches.

One of the most all-encompassing examples 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, but the number is likely hundreds of millions, and perhaps a billion or more. Whatever the number, it is staggering to the human mind. Yet, one of the most disturbing things about man’s reaction to wars is that most people seem to be resigned to the belief that they 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.”

Are we doomed, as so many people think, to a continued endless cycle of wars, to say nothing of all the other causes of death which surround us?

The Bible gives us the assurance that God indeed not only can, but he will do something about man’s seemingly unending experience with death. Our opening scripture speaks of a time when the great enemy, death, will itself be destroyed. It is God’s great plan of the ages which will bring an end to all wars, killing, disease, and this enemy—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 about 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, in fact, 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 that “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.” (Gen. 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 his life on earth to continue forever.

DEATH THE RESULT OF DISOBEDIENCE

The 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.” (vs. 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.”—chap. 3:19

When God drove man out of the Garden of Eden, he made special provision so that he could not return, indicating that in the garden the sustenance was there to continue life everlastingly, symbolized by the tree of life. Genesis 3:22 says, “Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.” That was God’s purpose for man—to live forever. The only reason this purpose was not attained was that man sinned. Having sinned, he was taken out of the garden condition which would have otherwise continued his life.

SATAN’S LIE

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. For this reason, 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. Thus 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.’ This, all for the underlying reason that no one wants to die.

The Bible, however, says death is a reality. The Apostle Paul states, “The wages of sin is death.” (Rom. 6:23) The prophet in Ezekiel says, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” (Ezek. 18:4) 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 says, “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, 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." (I Cor. 15:13,17,18) 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." (I Cor. 15:21,22) This resurrection, for all, is based on the redemptive work of Jesus, which will make this hope a reality.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

Paul says in II Timothy 1:10, speaking of Jesus as our Saviour, "[Jesus] brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 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. 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. He 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 gospel of Christ preached to Abraham.

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 also associated with the thought of a future earthly kingdom which will bless all mankind. Speaking of this, Isaiah states, “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” (Isa. 9:7) 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 continued until the birth of Jesus, culminating in the words stated earlier as recorded in Luke 2:10. 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.

THE PROMISED SEED

The Apostle Paul, in Galatians 3:16, states, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Later in this same chapter, verse 29, Paul adds, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” In other words, those who belong to Christ—the seed—those who are true Christians, are also counted as additional members of Abraham’s seed and inheritors of the same promise, ‘In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.” (I Cor. 12:12) Here Christ is likened to the human body, with Jesus as its head, and the church—all true Christians—as the other body members. The one body—head and other members—constitutes ‘the Christ.’ This Christ class, head and body together, is the one seed which Paul speaks of and which the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, states will eventually bless all people. These facts help to explain why the blessings of restitution could not start immediately after Jesus’ death and resurrection, and why his kingdom could not then be established. The intervening work of this present age has been to select and develop the body, the seed class, the members of the Christ, as they are to be the ones to share in the future work of blessing

mankind with their head, Jesus. Those prospective members of this special class must be proven, they must take up their cross, they must be baptized into Jesus' death. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3) These must be beheaded, figuratively speaking, having only Jesus as their head, and must follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth. Truly, as Paul said, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."—II Tim. 2:12

THE REWARD OF THE CHURCH – IMMORTALITY

Jesus, the night before his crucifixion, made a wonderful promise to his disciples, those who would be true Christians. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2,3) There are many spheres of life which exist in God's universe: the lower animals, humans, angels, principalities, powers, many different planes of life—many mansions. However, Jesus here is saying that none of these 'mansions' will be the dwelling place of his church, his bride. Notice, he says, 'I go to prepare a place for you,' a new place that never existed before. Apostle John states further, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:2) Jesus, when he was resurrected, was highly exalted. "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." (Phil. 2:9) The church—his body members—will

also receive a similar glorious resurrection, and be with him. They are spoken of by the Apostle Paul as those who “seek for glory and honour and immortality.”—Rom. 2:7

Recalling the verse quoted earlier that Jesus brought ‘life and immortality to light through the gospel,’ we understand that ‘life’ herein mentioned is the future hope of the world here on earth in the times of restitution, whereas ‘immortality’ is the reward of faithfulness for those who truly follow Jesus, even unto death—his faithful body members. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Rev. 2:10, 3:21) The difference between life and immortality in the above verse is that life is dependent on outside sustenance for its continuance, but immortality has no such requirement. Immortality was first possessed only by God. He exalted his son Jesus to this high position upon his faithfulness as man’s Redeemer. The faithful church—Jesus’ body members, the remainder of the seed class—will also be exalted to this same divine, immortal nature possessed by God and Jesus. “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.”—II Pet. 1:4

The purpose of the present Gospel Age has been to search out those truly willing to follow in Jesus’ footsteps, to lay down their lives in sacrifice as he did. Even among professed Christians, relatively few have been willing to live a life of complete consecration to God. “Strait is the gate, and narrow is

the way, which leadeth unto [this immortal] life, and few there be that find it.” (Matt. 7:14) “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32) Nearly twenty centuries have passed and the selection of this faithful class is not yet complete, but ere long it shall be finished. Then the blessings of life and restitution will flow to mankind, blessings to all the families of the earth, through the promised kingdom of the Christ, the promised seed.

DEATH TO BE SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY

The Apostle Paul speaks concerning the coming kingdom that will be established by Christ, the seed, to bless all mankind. He says, “He [Christ] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” (I Cor. 15:25,26) Later in this chapter, a sequential order is given to the entire matter. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” (vs. 49) That is, there is to be a change of nature for the church, from the earthly to the heavenly. In verse 54, Paul continues, “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” This verse reminds us that humans are not immortal, because one cannot have immortality ‘put on’ if they already possess it. The faithful church will have immortality ‘put on’ by the power of God. The phrase in this verse ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’ is speaking of the result of the sequence of events talked about earlier in the verse.

In other words, once the faithful church is complete and receives its reward, the sum total of all the other promises of the Bible concerning the coming earthly kingdom, restitution, and the time of the blessing of all the families of the earth, will be found to be fulfilled in the statement, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'

This statement is a quotation from Isaiah 25. In that prophecy, Christ's coming kingdom is pictured as the mountain of the LORD. "In this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. . . . He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces. . . . And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." (Isa. 25:6,8,9) Once the work of gathering the true church is complete, when they have put on immortality, it will then be time for this prophecy, and so many others like it, to be fulfilled here upon the earth.

CHRIST'S EARTHLY KINGDOM

Christ's kingdom will be a time of peace, not war. "I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely." (Hos. 2:18) "I will cut off the chariot . . . and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." (Zech. 9:10) "The

desire of all nations shall come. . . . And in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Hag. 2:7,9) “My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places” (Isa. 32:18) It was the psalmist who wrote, “He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”—Ps. 46:9,10

Many things will change in Christ’s coming kingdom on earth. Today we often ask others, how are you? The response is many times, I have this or that ache or pain. These are common topics of conversation in today’s world. Notice, though, what the prophet says concerning that kingdom, “The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.” (Isa. 33:24) This is what the times of restitution will bring. Everyone who obeys the righteous laws of the kingdom will be able to live, not having their life cut off by war, disease, killing, or any other malady. Life will not be merely to the age of 70, 80, or 150 years as the scientists predict, but forever to all who obey the kingdom’s righteous laws.

GOD’S WORD IS SURE

The Apostle John gives many beautiful pictures of the coming kingdom. Among these are the following words, “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. And he that sat upon the throne [God himself] said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.” (Rev. 21:3-5) Thus we have the eventual destruction of the last enemy—death—guaranteed by God’s own sure Word. ■

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.

Sister Tish Becker, Fresno, CA—July 1. Age, 91

Brother Francis Earl, Washington, D.C.—July 2.
Age, 85

Sister Patricia E. Allison, Chino Valley, AZ—July
2. Age, 84

Sister Rachel Alexander, Columbus, OH—July 25.

Sister Florida [Flo] Colletti, Orlando, FL—August
7. Age, 76

Sister Esther Balko, Waterbury, CT—September 1.
Age, 79

Sister Lucille Roberts, Merritt Island, FL—Sep-
tember 2. Age, 94

Sister Nadine Strickland, Louisville, AL—Septem-
ber 4. Age, 84

The Reward for Faithfulness

“A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.”
—Luke 19:12

IN THIS PARABLE, OUR

Lord Jesus was the ‘nobleman’ who went to receive a kingdom, and to prepare a home for his faithful followers. He also promised that he would return to receive them and to accompany them to their new home. In his farewell discourse, Jesus further told them, “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”—John 14:2,3

THE NOBLEMAN’S GIFT

Before the nobleman left on his journey, he gave his servants a sum of money that they were commanded to use wisely. From Luke’s account, we read, “Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten pounds, and said to them, ‘Trade with these till I come.’ But his citizens hated him and sent an

embassy after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' When he returned, having received the kingdom, he commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading."—Luke 19:13-15, *Revised Standard Version*

THE SERVANTS' RESPONSIBILITY

Jesus was teaching his disciples that he would be returning to his Heavenly Father when he had finished his earthly ministry and work of redemption on behalf of the human creation. He would present himself to the Father and receive commission from him to establish his kingdom. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."—Heb. 9:24

In the parable, Jesus' followers were the servants who would be entrusted to use the money given them wisely during his absence. Those who were not willing to accept his rule over them represented the careless and indifferent, and those who are in opposition to our Lord's teachings and the ways of Truth and righteousness. His command to them was to make a profit with the money which he had given them, and to give an account of their endeavors when he returned. This illustrates the zeal and attention that the Lord's followers demonstrate in their desire to know and serve the Lord. They use their talents and the tools at hand to study the Scriptures and to give diligence in making their calling and election sure.

THE NOBLEMAN'S RETURN

We learn in verse 15 that the time had come for the nobleman's promised return. He had received the Heavenly Father's special commission for him to establish the kingdom, but it was not yet set up. We believe that this marks the time of our Lord's Second Presence at the end of this present Gospel Age.

The journey had been a long one and to a very distant place. Our Lord was teaching his disciples that the kingdom would not be soon established. In his absence, he had entrusted his servants with important responsibilities. They were to make careful use of a sum of money which he had given them, and he expected them to bring an increase. Their faithfulness, zeal, and loyalty as his servants would thus be tested. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."—II Cor. 5:10

THE FAITHFUL SERVANTS

The nobleman asked his servants for an accounting. "The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your pound has made ten pounds more.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your pound has made five pounds.' And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.'" (Luke 19:16-19, *RSV*) Each of the two faithful servants gave their accounting and each was awarded according to their diligence to make a profit. In the

spiritual sense, this points to the growth and development of the New Creature in Christ Jesus.

THE UNFAITHFUL SERVANT

When the third servant came to give his accounting to the nobleman, he revealed that he had not served his Master well. From the scriptural account, we read, “Then another came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your pound, which I kept laid away in a napkin; for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.’ He said to him, ‘I will condemn you out of your own mouth, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow? Why then did you not put my money into the bank, and at my coming I should have collected it with interest?’ And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the pound from him, and give it to him who has the ten pounds.’ (And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten pounds!’)” I tell you, that to every one who has will more be given; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”—vss. 20-26, *RSV*

This servant represents the unfaithful Christians who do not strive diligently and use their talents wisely. They have neglected the principles of God’s Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit to grow in grace and knowledge. He was unwilling to surrender his life to God as an acceptable sacrifice. The Apostle Paul explained, “Deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” (Heb. 2:15) They are unworthy for the high calling in Christ Jesus, and their blessings

concerning the New Creature will be given to someone else. “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”—I Cor. 4:1,2

THE REWARD FOR FAITHFULNESS

Jesus knew that during his earthly ministry it would be necessary for him to suffer for righteousness and he accepted his walk uncomplainingly. After his death, he was raised by his loving Heavenly Father to the divine nature far above every name that is named. “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward 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, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”—Eph. 1:17-23

What has been true of our Lord Jesus will also be true of the faithful members of his body—the Christ. “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the

body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 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. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”—Rom. 8:13-18

FAITHFUL ENDURANCE

In his letter to Timothy, Paul wrote about the principle of suffering and faithful endurance that is acceptable to God. He said, “I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.”—II Tim. 2:10-12

The faithful members of the Christ share joint experiences with our Lord and are thus part of God’s heavenly family. In the apostle’s letter to the Hebrew brethren, he explains, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he

that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.”—Heb. 2:9-12

We have named the name of Christ Jesus and he is not ashamed of us because we are his brethren and share the same Heavenly Father. What a wonderful privilege to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, to experience, first, the suffering, and, afterward, the glory that follows. The disciplines and trials that come to us are part of our training as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. They are for our good that we might eventually share our Lord’s holiness and receive the glorious change that is reserved for his faithful brethren.

Let us keep the prospect of our marvelous inheritance uppermost in our minds. “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.’—II Cor. 4:17,18

OUR LEGACY

The night before Jesus was crucified he addressed his Father concerning his followers. He said, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through

their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.”—John 17:17-22

THE CROWN OF LIFE

Let us strive more diligently to be faithful so that at the end of our course we, like the faithful ones in the parable who used their pounds wisely, might hear the Master say well done my good servant. Let us hold fast our faith until the end of the way. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”—James 1:12 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

OCTOBER 7—“Every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.”—Matthew 7:26 (Z. '04-46 Hymn 178)

OCTOBER 14—“To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.”—Proverbs 21:3 (Z. '04-56,57 Hymn 177)

OCTOBER 21—“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.”—Luke 11:2 (Z. '04-118 Hymn 365)

OCTOBER 28—“The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me, because he hath anointed me,... to comfort all that mourn, ...to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning.”—Isaiah 61:1,2 (Z. '04-295 Hymn 116)

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SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below are invited by individual classes, or their services have been arranged by their home classes:

G. Balko, Jr.

Grand Rapids, MI October 9,10
Orlando, FL 30,31

E. Blicharz

Atlanta, GA October 17

E. Byrd

Pittsburgh, PA October 2,3

R. Carnegie

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 16,17

C. Chandler

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 16,17

O. B. Elbert

Grand Rapids, MI October 9,10

A. Fernets

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 16,17

J. Freer

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 16,17
Orlando, FL 30,31

B. Keith

Orlando, FL October 30,31

M. Nekora

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 16,17

M. Nemesh

Pittsburgh, PA October 2,3

T. Ruggirello

Grand Rapids, MI October 9,10

R. Shahan

Pittsburgh, PA October 2,3

J. Trzeciak

Pittsburgh, PA October 2,3

R. Wilson

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 16,17

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CONVENTIONS

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PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 2,3—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15012. Contact J. Krasonic, Sr., 1106 State Route 136, Belle Vernon, PA 15012. Phone: (724) 872-6215

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 9,10—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact T. Malinowski, 5609 Buttrick Avenue SE, Alto, MI 49302. Phone: (616) 868-0313

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 16,17—Masonic Temple, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. Contact M. Allard. Phone: (805) 773-2962

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 30,31—Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Drive (Corner of Hwy. 17-92), Sanford, FL. Contact J. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 831-2098

NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 7—Westwoods Italian-American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact A. Suraci, 171 Johnson Road, Hamden, CT 06518. Phone: (203) 248-3793

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 5,6,7—Magnuson Grand Hotel (same site as last year, hotel name changed), 230 West State Road 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Room reservations, call (407) 862-4455, and specify “Florida Bible Students” for special rate, until February 20, 2011. Other information, contact, M. Balko. Phone: (407) 339-7580

Send Out Thy Light

*Send out thy light and truth, O Lord;
Let them our leaders be
To guide us to thy holy hill
Where we shall worship thee.
Send out thy light o'er land and sea,
Till ev'ry heart shall bow to thee.*

*Send out thy light and truth, O Lord,
Where sin's dark shadows fall;
Arouse the soldiers of the cross
To heed the trumpet's call;
Send out thy truth where error reigns,
And cleanse away its crimson stains.*

*Send out thy light and truth, O Lord;
The blessed tidings spread
Till, by those sweet evangel tones,
All nations shall be led;
Send out thy light, O Morning Star,
And beam upon the isles afar.*

*Send out thy light and truth, O Lord,
And let the beams of day
Break through the dismal gloom of night
And guide men in thy way.
Send out thy truth, O speed the hour
When all the world shall know its power.*

*Send thy light,
Thy light and truth, O Lord.*

—Hymns of Dawn

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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