

The DAWN

VOLUME NO. IXXII, Number 7
(USPS 149-380), July 2004

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Second-class postage paid at Rutherford, NJ. Published monthly by The Dawn Bible Students Association, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. \$3.00 a year; Great Britain £2. Write to foreign addresses for other prices.

ARGENTINA: El Alba, Calle Almirante Brown 674, Monte Grande 1842, Buenos Aires

AUSTRALIA: Berean Bible Institute, P.O. Box 402, Rosanna, Victoria 3084

BRITISH ISLES: Associated Bible Students, P.O. Box 136, Chesham, Bucks HP5 3EB

CANADA: P.O. Box 175, Elmwood Postal Outlet, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2L 1M0

FRANCE: Aurore, B. Boulier, 8 rue du Docteur Laennec, 95520, Osny

GERMANY: Tagesanbruch Bibelstudien-Vereinigung, Alzeyer Str. 8 (Postfach 252), D 67253 Freinsheim

GREECE: He Haravgi (The Dawn), 33-33 149th Street, Flushing, NY 11354 USA

ITALY: Aurora, Via S. Leonardo 21, Ottaviano 80044, Napoli

SOUTH AMERICA: El Alba, Apartado 1390, Trujillo, Peru

SPAIN: El Alba, Via S. Leonardo 21, Ottaviano 80044 Napoli, Italy

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Water of Life

“He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

—*Revelation 22:1*

IN THE LAST SEVERAL years, several articles have appeared in the news media about the serious problem facing people in the world concerning water availability. The first of these was a report that was issued by the United Nations-sponsored World Water Forum held in Stockholm during the summer of 2001. The August 14, 2001 Los Angeles Times said:

UNITED NATIONS WORLD WATER FORUM

“A report issued Monday at the U.N.-sponsored World Water Forum in Stockholm says that one in three people will not have access to enough water by 2025 and that it is unlikely that traditional agriculture could feed the world’s population by then. Already, bottled drinking water costs more per gallon than gas around the world, and it is bound to become even more precious.

“Water shortages affect about 450 million people in 29 countries, and tensions over water rights in Asia and Africa could erupt into serious clashes if governments don’t find new ways to use existing supplies more efficiently, the report warns.

“Water could become the new oil as a major source of conflict,’ Dutch Crown Prince Willem-Alexander, chairman of the 2000 World Water Forum, said after opening the Stockholm conference Monday.

“Increasing scarcity, competition and arguments over water in the first quarter of the 21st century will dramatically change the way we value and use water and the way we mobilize and manage water resources,’ he said.

“From clashes over the use of local watering holes, to disagreements between countries over the right to dam a shared river, to corporations’ desire to privatize distribution, water has already become a major source of strife. While few wars have been fought over water outright, political disagreements are intensified when such essential resources become scarce.

“Californians are familiar with the challenges of making a city grow from a desert. Just as Los Angeles had to siphon water from rivers and watersheds hundreds of miles away as its population exploded, rapidly expanding cities in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are thirsting for adequate supplies for drinking and sanitation.

“Despite innovations that have lowered costs of water treatment, more than a billion people still lack safe drinking water,’ said Sandra Postel, director of the Global Water Policy Project based in Amherst, Massachusetts. ‘We’re running as fast as we can just to stay in one place,’ she said.”

The more serious aspect of the report was that rural, agricultural areas are threatened the most. The concern is that there won’t be enough water available to grow enough food.

EXPORTING WATER

At the time that this report was issued, an article appeared in the August 2001 *Time* magazine entitled "Exporting Fresh Water." Canada, which has much water, was suggested as an exporting source of water to countries needing it. President George W. Bush was reported as saying "Water will forever be an issue in the United States, particularly the western part" and that he expected to discuss the exporting of Canadian water to the United States with Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. This drew an immediate response from Canada's Environment Minister, David Anderson, who said, "The Prime Minister will tell the President that we have a policy of not exporting water."

Nevertheless, some Canadian entrepreneurs believe it will happen and have been making plans to ship 132 million gallons of pristine lake water every week in specially lined oil tankers to prospective buyers. A number of schemes were discussed in the article, such as towing icebergs to places in Mexico and building pipelines to transport water. The article concluded by quoting Mr. Coy of Schwab and a Canadian entrepreneur, Gerry White. It said:

"Experts say public-subsidy schemes often give water to farms and industries for as little as \$16 an acre-foot when it's worth as much as \$400 to municipal water systems. That encourages uneconomic uses of the precious resource. Water consumption in the United States averages 100 gallons a day per person, nearly three times the European average. Coy predicts that once private buyers and sellers are allowed to determine a market price for water, international trade in the commodity will boom.

“Gerry White of McCurdy Enterprises is preparing for that day and thinks it’s not far off. He’s planning to build a five-mile pipeline to carry water from Gisborne Lake to Newfoundland’s southern coast, then pump it into tanker ships. White estimates it will cost less than a penny a gallon to get water from the lake to his potential buyers. Bulk water now sells for about 2 cents per gallon in the United States. At 66 million gallons a shipload, twice a week, that’s a lot of pennies.”

CHINA’S WATER PROBLEM

A third article was published on March 9, 2003 in the *Los Angeles Times*, telling of a 60-billion-dollar project in China to divert water from South China to the parched north. A Chinese staff writer for the *Los Angeles Times* wrote from the village of Luizhuangbeiling in northern China:

“Water is so scarce in this drought-stricken patch of countryside that precipitation is treated like jewels from the sky.

“‘When it rains, we throw plastic sheets on the ground to catch it as it falls—we won’t let a single drop go to waste,’ said Lian Jixiang, head of this village in Shandong province in northeastern China.

“So little rain has fallen so far this year that authorities are calling it the driest season in five decades. Large stretches of northern China have seen riverbeds turned into grazing grounds and fertile fields reduced to dust bowls.

“Not to worry. The Chinese government has a grand plan to change all that, on the scale of the Great Wall, in the spirit of the Great Leap Forward

and even more expensive than the Three Gorges Dam.

“Officials call it the South to North Water Diversion Project. It would pump water from the plentiful south to the parched north by redirecting streams from the swollen Yangtze to the shrinking Yellow River. Three canals, two of them about 1,000 miles long each, would cross some of the Earth’s highest plains and displace hundreds of thousands of residents in order to deliver water to at least 39 major cities and about 50 million people.

“Supporters say the mega-project’s benefits would far surpass its projected cost of about 60 billion dollars, more than double the initial price tag for the colossal Three Gorges Dam under construction along the Yangtze in south-central China.

“‘China needs to feed 20% of the world’s population on 7% of its arable land. Much of that land lies in the northern part of the country, and it is running dry,’ said Zhang Ren, a retired Qinghua University engineering professor with a lifelong involvement in the country’s water projects. ‘We have to do this now. We have no other choice.’”

The rest of the article told of the limited publicity given to the project and the problems that may be created. It is considered to be a way to insulate the government against protests by farmers for water scarcity. The project was first envisioned by Mao Tse-tung during the early 1950’s shortly after the Communist revolution. But prohibitive costs and political turmoil stymied the project.

In China the water available for each person is about one quarter of the global average. Northern China dips into one-fifth of the nation’s total supply,

yet it is home to one-half of China's 1.3 billion people. It is expected that by 2030 the water supply per person will be one-fifth of what is now available to the average American. There is much concern about the impact that the project will have on the environment. Water conservation is needed. Also the rapid industrialization of China and growth of its cities may make more of this water available for urban development and industry. The nation's 900 million farmers can only hope to be secondary beneficiaries of this expensive new enterprise expected to take fifty years for its completion.

A fourth article appeared in the 2003 fall issue of the *World Ark*, a magazine by Heifer International, a charitable organization that has helped 4.5 million impoverished families through gifts of livestock and training in their care. They asked Sandra Postel, Director of the Global Water Policy Project for the organization Worldwatch Institute in Amherst, Massachusetts to write an article for them entitled, "Trouble Waters". She is a recognized top authority on freshwater issues. She has written for *Scientific American* and is the author of a recently published book *Rivers For Life*. She said:

THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER

"We see it everywhere. It's the rain and the rivers and the lakes. In rich nations, we turn the tap and out it pours. Some of us spend thousands of dollars installing automatic systems in our lawns so that it will keep the grass green all summer long.

"It's in everything we eat and it's used to make almost everything we buy. Yet we think about it hardly more than the air we breathe.

“It’s water. It’s the basis of life. It comprises more than 70 percent of the human body.

“And it, like so much of the planet, is taken for granted and endangered.

“How can this be when Earth’s surface is covered with it? The oceans are vast, but salty. Less than 3 percent of Earth’s water is fresh, and two-thirds of that is locked up in glaciers and ice caps. Only a tiny share—less than one-hundredth of one percent of the planet’s water—is both fresh and renewed each year by the sun-powered hydrologic cycle. That finite supply hasn’t increased over the millennia, but our demands on it have. In many places, water use now exceeds the sustainable supply, causing rivers to run dry and underground water tables to drop. And unchecked pollution makes the available supply less usable.

“The United Nations has designated 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater in an attempt to focus attention on what is clearly one of society’s biggest challenges: how to meet human needs for water without destroying the ecosystems that support life itself.

“Water is not a commodity like copper or oil. It’s a fundamental life support. Rivers, lakes, wetlands and other freshwater ecosystems are not just sources of water; they are habitats for a wide variety of plant and animal species.

“These ecosystems provide essential services for human societies—moderating floods and droughts, purifying water and sustaining fisheries.

“Freshwater has no substitutes for most of its uses. It’s essential for growing crops, for

manufacturing and for drinking, cooking and other household functions.

“The world’s water problems have surged during the last ten years, and awareness of them has grown, but the problems are far outpacing the implementation of solutions.

“The world is entering an unprecedented period of risks to food security, the environment, the world economy and social and political stability as water grows scarcer in all parts of the planet. The wild card of global climate change exacerbates these dangers.”

FACTORS AFFECTING WATER SUPPLY

After establishing the importance of water to life for mankind, the author listed several concerns.

1. Population growth is fastest in some of the world’s driest regions.
2. Per capita, water demands are rising.
3. As supplies tighten, farmers in particular, will feel the squeeze.
4. Many poor farmers lack access to irrigation water.
5. More than one billion people lack even the most rudimentary delivery systems for clean water. This is responsible for the death of three million people every year in developing countries, mostly children.
6. Fresh water is being used up. (Rivers feeding the Aral sea drying up are cited as an example) and water tables are falling.
7. Competition for freshwater increasingly is leading to social instability.

Encompassing all these difficulties is the

necessity of protecting Earth's overloaded ecosystem. This is a matter often ignored by most people. Yet a healthy ecosystem is important to maintaining freshwater supplies, food for humans and wildlife, and providing wetlands to filter and break down pollutants. Also they provide homes and breeding sites for wildlife.

WHAT TO DO

Then she answered the question of what to do, and writes:

“The situation is not hopeless. Solutions do exist to the problems posed by the depletion of freshwater supplies.

1. “It is important that people grow to understand and value the work that rivers, floodplains, wetlands and other ecosystems do. Freshwater ecosystem services are worth hundreds of billions of dollars yearly. They particularly benefit the poor, who often depend directly on nature's services for their livelihoods. Some places are taking steps to preserve these services.”

After citing examples of work being done she cites point 2:

2. “Achieving universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation would save millions of lives yearly and prevent debilitating illness. Such action would have huge economic benefits, as well, by reducing the high costs resulting from that loss of life and loss of productivity due to poor health.”

She mentions the goals set by the United Nations to achieve this access which is to reduce to half by 2015 those lacking safe drinking water.

Even this goal will require effective leadership. Continuing she says:

3. "Provide access to irrigation water to reduce rural poverty. Access to a minimum amount of water for the production of crops is essential to helping millions escape poverty. About 2.8 billion people live on less than two dollars a day, and 800 million of these face chronic hunger.
4. "Double water productivity. Projected rates of population and economic growth during the next few decades, along with the deterioration of many freshwater ecosystems, mean people will have to do more with less water.
5. "Achieve good governance over water."

After listing these major steps to be taken, with many comments explaining their necessity she concluded her article by saying:

"Implementing the measures above would take enormous political and social will. It would revolutionize water use and management.

"Refusing or neglecting to take steps to protect the world's supply of freshwater, however, poses far greater risk than trying to reform water policies.

"Only fundamental change will solve the world's growing water problems. These changes require that scientists, engineers, conservationists, policy-makers and citizens work together. They require leadership from many quarters.

"And they require action now, because it may turn out that time to reverse the threatening trends underway is even more limited than water itself."

THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

We note that one of the requirements to implement this program so necessary to the world's welfare requires leadership from many quarters. This leadership will come in time to save the world from further disaster when Christ's kingdom is set up and appointments are made of earthly representatives by Jesus and his church in that kingdom. (Ps. 45:16) That, with the pouring out of God's Holy Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28), will make possible the understanding and necessity of the measures taken to save earth's society.

There is an abundance of water upon planet Earth, for so it was designed to support billions of people and other living creatures. At present, with sin and selfishness, water goes to waste. There are numerous examples throughout the Scriptures that demonstrate how God can control the weather. One of these evidences is foretold concerning God's kingdom. Those refusing to worship him, "upon them shall be no rain."—Zech. 14:17

GOD SUPPLIES FRESH WATER

It is God who can set in motion a cycle of distilling water from the oceans with solar energy and causing it to come down as rain in the proper places. This is why in telling of the kingdom blessings, Isaiah says "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." (Isa. 35:1) Instead of rain falling on the oceans, it will fall on the land that needs that water. It is a simple matter for God to control the hydrologic cycle that brings mankind freshwater daily.

We do not think often of the necessity of certain steps taken by God in preparing the Earth for

human habitation. In the first creative epoch he created the vast amount of water Earth needs to sustain life. In the second creative epoch God separated the waters, “God said, Let there be a firmament [atmosphere] in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” (Gen. 1:6) This made possible the evaporation of water into the atmosphere above it and in the form of vapor it could be carried towards land. This careful planning by God in which he made replenishment of freshwater a simple task is the basis for sustained life upon Earth.

Further, as rain falls it runs off into rivers to carry it into the sea and the process is repeated. Rivers supply freshwater as they flow, whether above ground or underground. This naturally occurring event has been used by God to illustrate how he will give life to everyone on Earth. As our theme text says, flowing from ‘the throne of God and of the Lamb’ was ‘a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal.’ What a joy it will be for mankind to have natural water as clear as crystal to drink to sustain life, and especially to have this spiritual water of life to enable them to live forever. It will be a glorious day indeed when this promise is fulfilled in its entirety. All will rejoice and be glad. Praise be to his Holy Name. ■

“With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.”

—Isaiah 12:3-5

A Call to Higher Faith

Key Verse: *“Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God.”*

—*Hebrews 6:1, New International Version*

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 5:11-6:12

God’s arrangements. He said, “It is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”—vss. 11-14, *New International Version*

Milk is a wonderful food containing all the necessary nutrition for infants, being diluted with water. Adults,

THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS telling his Hebrew brethren that there were many valuable lessons to be learned from their lives as Hebrews. They had a priesthood which performed certain functions involving gifts and sacrifices for sins. These were a blessing to them. All of these rituals were a picture of better things to come. God had in mind making Jesus our High Priest. He was to be made “a priest age-abidingly, According to the rank of Melchisedek.” (Heb. 5:6, *Rotherham*) Paul had much more to tell them about

on the other hand, can handle solid food. The apostle likens this spiritually to the nutrition of the Christian. The elementary principles of Truth are necessary, and an important part of the diet, for the babe in Christ. When he matures he becomes able to use the more concentrated form of Truth.

The doctrines mentioned by Paul in Hebrews 6:1,2 are repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection and judgment as being basic. These are not simple but necessary to our understanding as Christians. We are not to attain maturity in one teaching or another but must be able to see how each assists us to develop in the work God is preparing for us to do. We are to grow in grace and knowledge. He uses an illustration later which helps us to understand what he has in mind about Christian growth. He says, "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."—vss. 7,8

The water, in the form of rain, is like the Truth from God's Word that comes from heaven, and the earth receiving it represents the heart of the believer. It is supposed to bring forth useful vegetation as we grow. But if it should produce useless vegetation, fit only to be burned, it fails to give us the growth necessary.

The apostle mentions a more disastrous failure of someone receiving the message of Truth and being fully enlightened. (vss. 4-6) This is a person who completely rejects the ransom and is pictured as crucifying afresh the Son of God. Such go into second death. The apostle says to his Hebrew brethren (and to us) "Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." (vs. 9) May we appreciate our call to a higher faith and be faithful, growing in grace and knowledge. ■

Call to Perfection

Key Verse: Now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.”
—***Hebrews 8:6***

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 8:6-12

IN WRITING TO HIS HE-
brew brethren, the Apostle Paul focused their attention on the significance of their Tabernacle rituals. Referring to Jesus as fulfilling the type of the high priest, he says, “We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (Heb. 8:1,2) He calls attention to the use of the

earthly Tabernacle as a picture of heavenly things and of better promises and blessings. Our theme text explains that Jesus has obtained a better ministry, and has become the mediator of a ‘better covenant, . . . established upon better promises.’

Moses was the mediator of the old Law Covenant. Both he and the covenant were limited in what they could do for the people. Also, as Jeremiah so clearly explained, they broke the covenant. (Jer. 31:32) Being imperfect men they couldn’t keep that covenant. As Jeremiah also explains, “The days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.” (vs. 31) This ‘new [law] covenant’ would do for them

what the old Law Covenant could not do, that is, give them life.

This prophecy from Jeremiah is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 8:8-12. In chapter nine of Hebrews, Paul explains how the old Law Covenant had ordinances and rituals as performed in the services of the Tabernacle. The Atonement Day sacrifices were pointing to the better sacrifice of Jesus which would redeem not only Israelites, but all of mankind. He says, that if the blood of bulls and goats had a sanctifying affect in purifying the flesh, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”—vss. 13,14

It is by means of the sacrifice of Jesus that a New Covenant is made possible. It will be part of the ‘more excellent ministry’ that Jesus obtained. He has delayed starting that ministry until he first redeems, trains, and develops those who will assist him in this ministry of reconciliation of mankind with God. The Apostle Paul alludes to this task when he says, “He [God] has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant.” (II Cor. 3:6, *New International Version*) When the selection of this class is complete, the New Covenant will go into effect, and be made first with Israel and Judah.—Jer. 31:31

Then, as the covenant is made with all mankind, the prophecy of Jeremiah will be fulfilled. God will write his law upon the hearts of all men, and none will have to say to another, “Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” (Heb. 8:11; Jer. 31:34) Through the benefits of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus it will be possible for God to say, “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” (vs. 12) This is why Paul was able to say that God “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”—1 Tim. 2:4 ■

Living Faith

Key Verse: *“Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”*
—*Hebrews 11:6*

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 11:1-13

OUR LESSON ON A LIVING faith begins by defining faith. The Apostle says, “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” He also adds, “Indeed by faith our ancestors received approval.” (Heb. 11:1,2, *New Revised Standard Version*) God has made many wonderful promises of blessings for mankind. He is pleased when we can reason on the evidences we have received of his power, wisdom, justice, and love to know that he exists, and that he will

make these promises a reality. This is why faith is a very important element in our Christian lives. As the apostle reminds us in the Key Verse, ‘without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.’

This faith was possessed by many faithful people of old times, and chapter eleven of Hebrews calls attention to many examples of these and the manifestation of their faith. The apostle begins with Abel and Enoch, both who did not live the fullness of lifetimes of the people of their day, but both sought God and his righteousness. The outstanding example of faith is Abraham,

and much of the lesson on faith is devoted to him. Likewise, the promise given to Abraham is outstanding for it was to Abraham that God said, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3) Later, that promise was further defined by God when he told Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 22:18) It is through Christ, Abraham's seed, that the blessings are to come. (Gal. 3:16) Those who manifest the proper faith, and accept Christ to the extent of becoming faithful followers, will be able to fulfill the words of the Apostle Paul when he said, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—vs. 29

The way this group of living faithful ones becomes associated with Jesus is beautifully foretold in Psalm 45. This psalm begins by telling of Jesus being selected and exalted by God, his Father. It then tells about the King's daughter being selected for our Lord as his bride. The psalm ends by telling how the fathers, or ancestors, of the king's daughter will become her children, who will be appointed to be "princes in all the earth."—vs. 16

The men and women of faith in ancient times, listed in these passages of chapter eleven of Hebrews, are the "fathers" of Psalm 45 who are to be 'princes in all the earth.' In God's kingdom they will constitute the earthly ruling phase of that kingdom, whereas Jesus and the Church will be the spiritual rulers. A term often applied to these people of faith is Ancient Worthies. This is a good title.

The apostle says of these, "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: . . . they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."—Heb. 11:37-40

Maturing in Faith Through Discipline

Key Verse: “*Endure trials for the sake of discipline.*”
—**Hebrews 12:7**,
New Revised
Standard Version

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 12:1-13

AFTER SEEING A LIST OF faithful people who lived before the time of our Lord’s first advent in Hebrews 11, the Apostle Paul presents a picture of an arena such as was used in his day for various games. The on-lookers—“a cloud of witnesses”—are portrayed as being comprised of these ancient faithful people of God. We are performers in these games running a race, and being encouraged to put forth our best efforts. The race course is the pathway of the Christian walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We, therefore, are to fix our eyes on Jesus and note his endurance and faithfulness in the way of sacrifice—in particular how he endured the hostility of sinful men lest we become weary and lose heart.—Heb. 12:1-3

As the Christian way becomes harder to traverse, we are reminded that in our struggle against sin we haven’t had to resist to the point of shedding our blood. We especially are to remember, and not forget, Paul’s exhortation that addresses us as children. He said, “My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or lose heart when you are punished by him; for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every

child whom he accepts.” (vss. 5,6, *NRSV*) As our Key Verse says, ‘Endure trials for the sake of discipline.’

The need for discipline should be recognized by all, whether our experience has been merely that of a child in a natural family, or both that of the child and also of a parent who had to discipline a child. The Apostle Paul uses our natural family experiences to remind us that we are in the family of God and need discipline. He says, “God is treating you as children; for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline: If you do not have that discipline in which all children share, then you are illegitimate and not his children. Moreover, we had human parents to discipline us, and we respected them. Should we not be even more willing to be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share his holiness.”—vss. 7-10, *NRSV*

It is true that the time of discipline is not pleasant. Trials and persecutions, pain and affliction, are not pleasant experiences, but, as the apostle reminds us, “Discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” (vs. 11, *NRSV*) Hence, we are admonished to put forth every effort to learn from our experiences. We are especially told to “follow peace with all men,” and to seek that “holiness” which, if we fail to develop, we shall not “see the Lord.” (vss. 12-14) Furthermore, we are to be on the alert not to let a bitter spirit develop in us whereby “many [can] be defiled.” (vs. 15) If we succeed we will mature in faith through discipline, and be a son in whom God is well pleased.

As we keep looking to Jesus, our elder brother, and note how he, as a Son, learned “obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8), we should strive to do likewise and receive the same approval of the Father. ■

The Great Deception

*“The serpent said
unto the woman,
Ye shall not
surely die.”*

—*Genesis 3:4*

THE EXPRESSION, “THAT old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan” (Rev. 20:2), is obviously a reference to the ‘serpent’ which appeared to, and deceived, mother Eve. The general consensus of opinion among Bible scholars is that Satan, who is a powerful, although invisible, spirit being, spoke through the serpent. Just how he conveyed his message to Eve is not important. For our present purpose we will consider that it was the Devil who deceived Eve, ignoring whatever part the serpent may have played in it.

FATHER OF LIES

Concerning the Devil, Jesus said, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” (John 8:44) Here Jesus takes us back to what occurred in Eden. He states that Satan was actually a ‘murderer,’ for it was

under his influence that our first parents transgressed God's law, which resulted in their death. Our Lord further identifies Satan's treachery in Eden by saying that he was a 'liar, and the father of it.'

It was Satan who fathered the sin of lying, his first lie occurring when he said to mother Eve, "Ye shall not surely die." (Gen. 3:4) God had made it plain to Adam, who communicated the information to his wife, that death would result from their disobedience. But Satan denied this; and not only was he successful in deceiving Eve, but he has successfully carried on his campaign of deception ever since, with the result that only a few have continued to believe God on the subject of death, the vast majority unwittingly believing Satan, insisting that there is no death. This work of deception will be allowed to continue until the due time in God's plan of the ages when Satan will be bound, "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season," and then destroyed.—Rev. 20:3; 12-15; Heb. 2:14

It was not difficult for Eve to believe that she would not die as a result of disobedience. She had had no experience with death, and had seen no one die. Doubtless she took Satan's denial of the Lord's statement literally, believing that despite her disobedience she would continue to live and enjoy all the blessings of Eden, and have the added advantage, as she thought, of being much wiser. How bitterly disappointed she must have been when, debarred from the trees of life in Eden, she realized from year to year that the seeds of death were

working in her and that she would eventually become feeble and die. Adam had no illusions on the matter, for he “was not deceived.” (I Tim. 2:14) He knew that eventually he would die.

YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE

The fact that the human race began to die despite his assertion, ‘Ye shall not surely die,’ proved that Satan was a liar, just as Jesus later said. But having foisted this deception upon Eve he did not propose to allow subsequent circumstances to prove him wrong, so his next great deception was that death is not what it seems to be, that in reality those whom we call dead are more alive than ever. It is held by Satan, and those who unwittingly espouse his great deception, that only the body dies. The claim is that there is a separate entity within humans which cannot die, and that at death this escapes from the body, and lives on in another realm.

The great power of this deception is in the fact that no one wants to die, therefore it is pleasant to believe that there is no death. In continuing to foster his great deception, Satan introduced into the minds of men many theories as to what happens to the ‘never-dying’ part of man when the body dies. There are the theories of reincarnation and the transmigration of souls.

Reincarnationists believe that every time a child is begotten, or born—they are not sure which—a departed spirit enters into it, there finding a home until this newest body dies, when the disembodied spirit again is homeless until it has an opportunity to find refuge in another human infant. The theory

is that most of us have made many of these excursions, and will probably keep on doing so indefinitely. How the reincarnationists explain the constantly increasing population of the earth we have not yet learned. According to this no-death theory there are more spirits reaching earth each year than are departing. Where do the extra ones come from?

The transmigration of souls is somewhat different, and not quite so pleasing. This theory also calls for continuous cycles of the soul, but it does not always succeed in finding refuge in a human body. While, according to this theory, during our present visit to earth we may be human beings, the last time we were here we may have been a dog, or a cat, or an elephant, or a spider. The next time we come we may find our soul is being flitted through the air in the body of a bird, or hopping around in the slimy body of a croaking frog. It all depends upon how well we do with ourselves on each visit, as to what particular form we will have the next time we come. There is an end to this, for finally the soul departs for the last time, and after that, in due course, finds rest in a mythical Nirvana, meaning 'extinction of the flame of life,' or 'loss of all personal consciousness by absorption into the divine.'

This satanic method of endeavoring to prove true the lie, ye shall not surely die, has been adopted into most heathen religions in one form or another. This is why a Hindu tries to avoid stepping on an insect, or killing a fly, lest he injure the feelings of an ancestor. To many it may seem difficult to understand how anyone could believe such apparent nonsense, but it is really no more unreasonable than the no-death theories which

have found their way into the professed Christian religions.

DEALING WITH SIN

All the religions of the world attempt, each in its own way, to deal with the problem of sin. Rewards are held out to the righteous, and punishments for the wicked. A faithful Hindu might not have to come back to earth as a dog, and he will reach Nirvana with fewer earth cycles than those less faithful. Also, in the creed of the churches, account is taken of the fact that there are saints and sinners, believers and unbelievers, faithful and unfaithful, and attempts are made to explain how the good will be rewarded and the wicked punished.

In all this theorizing, the simple fact of the Bible that the “wages of sin is death” is ignored. How could one believe that the ‘wages of sin is death’ and at the same time insist that there is no death? When God’s penalty for sin is denied, his reward for righteousness cannot be appreciated. Paul wrote, “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—Rom. 6:23

Hell, it is alleged, is only for the out-and-out sinners, those who maliciously and willfully defy the church, and turn their backs upon all its rules and regulations. Many heretics, it is claimed, fall into this category, and therefore are doomed to spend the endless ages of eternity in hell. Doomed is the appropriate word to use here, for in this hell the wicked are said to be tortured in burning flames many times hotter than any fire ever produced by man.

From the humane standpoint, the teachings of the heathen seem better than the hell dogma. But then, there is an alternative! If one wishes, he can avoid being wicked enough to go to hell, and after death find himself in purgatory. Purgatory, it is explained, is just what its name implies, a place of purgation, of cleansing from sin and defilement, so that one is eventually made pure enough to enter into the bliss of heaven. The purging methods in purgatory are very strenuous. There is fire there also, and very hot. In this respect probably the chief difference between hell and purgatory is that the tortures of the latter are not eternal in duration. There is an eventual escape, the time spent in the flames being determined by a number of circumstances, one being how well the sufferer responds to the refining process.

NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR HEAVEN

In the Middle Ages various reformers began to question such teachings of the established church. They discovered that the doctrine of purgatory is not taught in the Bible, that not even the word purgatory appears in the sacred Word, so they protested against this teaching. It was not a pleasant thing to do, for it left them with a problem. By doing away with purgatory, there was no place for the partially wicked souls to go except to hell.

From the standpoint of mercy, some Christians worsened the outlook for sinners, particularly the partially willful among them. Throughout the ages there have been millions who, according to the standards of the church, and the Bible also, have not been good enough to go to heaven. Many Christians

agree that there are many good people in the world who are not good enough for heaven because not devoted to the cause of Christ. Yet, these must spend eternity in a hell of torment. It is a repelling thought, and one of the many God-dishonoring teachings which have followed in the wake of Satan's lie, Ye shall not surely die. ■

“Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.—Acts 13:38

The apostle does not refer to something that was done by our Lord as the Archangel before “he was made flesh,” nor does he refer to any work to be done by him in his new, highly exalted condition, “set down with his Father in his throne” and partaker of his divine nature; but he here refers to the work done by “the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.” . . . Yes, this is the center of the Gospel proclamation that the failure of the first perfect man was fully offset by the sacrifice of the Man Christ Jesus, and that it was to this end that it was needful for our Lord to leave the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, to become poor; . . . and yielding up this human nature a ransom price or corresponding price for the life forfeited by father Adam for himself and his race. This is the basis upon which every offer to grace is presented by the Scriptures. And now, he who was the Father's agent in the redemptive work is to be the Father's agent also in the work of “blessing” all the redeemed with ample opportunities for return to divine favor—the first step of which is the forgiveness of sins.

—Songs in the Night, July 15

The Glory of God

“God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

—II Corinthians 4:6,7

WE HAVE CHOSEN FOR

our consideration one of the main subjects of Divine revelation—the glory of God. We shall touch only the fringe of two of its features in this treatise, namely, God’s works and ways as manifested in Jesus Christ. None but God’s Son, Jesus Christ, can reveal the glory of the Father, ‘the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.’

GOD’S GLORY DEFINED

Modern uses of the term glory have withheld some of its true value, as it pertains to our mighty Creator and to our beloved Redeemer, the “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” (Rev. 19:16) It is something more than that which gives splendor, or a symbolic mantle as an insignia of high office. It may include these, as with the robes of glory and beauty of the high priest of Israel. The shekinah light signified the

appearance of God with Israel in a restricted sense.

The glory of God must be explained as the majestic contents of his own nature, embracing the aggregate of all his attributes, according to their undivided, yet revealed, fullness. It is not merely an attribute of God, or one feature of his revelation, but the goodness of all, and every feature, of his fullness and perfection. It is the fullness of God, promised, and in store, for those who turn to him, as John's gospel records, "We beheld his glory" (Jesus), which reflected the glory of the Father, "full of grace and truth. . . . And of his fulness have all we received." By what means, we may ask? In the face of Jesus Christ.—John 1:14,16

GOD'S GLORY IN CREATION

Sometimes in referring to the glory of God we think of the great works of Creation. At other times, of God's ways with man; his character or personality of splendor, magnificent as expressed in his mercy, graciousness and love, his compassion and faithfulness. "Yahweh, Yahweh, A God of compassion and favour—Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and faithfulness: Keeping lovingkindness to a thousand generations. Forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." (Exod. 34:6,7, *Rotherham*) "His way is perfect."—Ps. 18:30

There are these two great aspects of the glory of God as revealed in the Scriptures. His works of Creation disclose to men and angels his wisdom and power. But God's ways are held secret except as he is pleased to reveal them to others. Jesus said, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father;

neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”—Matt. 11:27

The words of the apostle, for ‘God, who commanded the light to shine,’ takes our thoughts back to Genesis, chapter one. “God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” (Gen. 1:3) God’s Spirit “moved upon the face of the waters” (vs. 2); that is, God’s attention and interest operated to create the planet as a home for man, who was yet to be created.

“God divided the light from the darkness” (vs. 4), and subsequently the remainder of Creation was brought into existence. We are aware of the order of Creation, of God’s day-to-day performance—the light, the firmament, the bringing forth of grass, herbs, trees, the sun, moon, and stars; creatures that hath life; fish, fowl, beast. Finally, God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”—vs. 26

In all God’s Creation, whether in the heavens or on the earth, his works are manifest. All men everywhere can behold those creations, and by such observation should be drawn in adoration and worship to their Creator, to whom worship and praise are due. Moses was clear on this, “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” (Ps. 90:2) David said, “Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, . . . thou art clothed with honour and majesty.”—Ps. 104:1

That which may be readily known of God’s works is open to the eyes of all everywhere. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. (*Continued on page 38*)

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(Continued from page 31) Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.”—Ps. 19:1-4

GOD’S GLORY REVEALED TO HIS PEOPLE

The character and the ways of God are withheld from man until he is pleased to reveal them. Paul wrote, “How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33) In speaking through Isaiah, God says, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”—Isa. 55:8,9

It was at Pentecost, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples gathered in the upper room, that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shone in the face, or person, of Jesus Christ. Because of this, God’s ways were then more readily comprehended and to a remarkable degree. “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.”—Eph. 1:17,18

There are three great and important aspects of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. These virtues are found in God’s beloved Son, and should

be reflected in all who follow him, and claim God as their Heavenly Father. They are: light, life, and love. God is the source of all light. "God is light." (I John 1:5) He formed the light in the natural world and he gives spiritual light and Truth to those seeking to understand his Word and way. He that willeth to do his will shall know of the teaching.—John 7:17

Light is everywhere in the Scriptures an emblem of knowledge, purity, truth; as darkness is the emblem of ignorance, sin, and death. Habakkuk, speaking of God, says, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil." (Hab. 1:13) Men love "darkness rather than light," because their deeds are evil. (John 3:19) John tells us that Jesus "was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:9) Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—John 8:12

GOD'S GLORY IN THE FACE OF JESUS

The Pharisees, in their prejudice, said, Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, his brethren James, Joses, Judah, and Simon? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto him?—Mark 6:2,3

Jesus read in the synagogue on the Sabbath, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering

of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. . . . And the eyes of all . . . were fastened on him. . . . And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.” “And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.” (Luke 4:18-22,32) Here again was manifested the glory of God, in the person of Jesus Christ.

While the face of Jesus, the perfect man, must have been radiant with beauty, and an inspiration to behold, Paul probably had more than this in mind when he spoke of God’s glory being revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. After all, only the first disciples had the privilege of seeing Jesus’ face; and even of these Paul wrote, “Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.” (II Cor. 5:16) Jesus came to reveal God’s grace and glory—as symbolized by the face in contrast with the back. Thus through his teachings and his sacrifice for the sin of the world, God’s glory has shined into our hearts.

GOD’S GLORY IS HIS GOODNESS

Moses earnestly desired to see the glory of God in all its perfection. He said, “If I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, . . . and consider that this nation is thy people.” The LORD replied, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” Moses said, “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. . . . I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.” The Lord answered, “I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and

I know thee by name.” “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. . . . I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. . . . I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.” (Exod. 33:13-23) We notice in this conversation with Moses that God is equating his glory to his goodness.

Let us pause and meditate and praise God, for the fullness of good in all his Divine perfection as expressed to Moses in these gracious terms! The glory of God should induce every beholder to stand and recognize and acknowledge the wonders and virtues of the Creator. The question forces itself on one’s mind, What constitutes the glory of God? It embraces everything to be known of him. None but his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, can reveal the glory of the Father, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

It is a very great honor to have the illumination of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Grace with us has preceded glory and God hath bestowed upon us the sacred secrets of himself, before giving these to the world of mankind. How wonderful to realize, however, the promise, “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”—Hab. 2:14

What a privilege it is to realize this graciousness! How so many of God’s children, by faith, have reveled in his promises and been delighted with the fulfillment of many of them in their daily lives! We

have eaten his words and have been sustained these many years in hope, faith, and confidence.

GOD'S GLORY BRINGS LIFE

Another great virtue and power of God is life. It is also by and through Jesus Christ that life may be obtained. The prerogative of God is to give life, to raise the dead, and he endowed Jesus with power to give life and to raise the dead—"As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." (John 5:21) Jesus told the people, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (chap. 10:10) "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."—chap. 6:33

Jesus is now the fountain of life for man—natural, spiritual, and eternal life. He purchased life by his redeeming sacrifice, and prepared it by entering triumphantly into "the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9:24) He promised it to his followers during the Gospel Age (John 17:2,3), and will presently, as the "everlasting Father" (Isa. 9:6) of the human race in the age to come, bestow it upon all the willing and obedient. (John 5:28,29) Jesus also explained to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—chap. 11:25

GOD'S GLORY BRINGS LOVE

Love is also a predominating virtue of God. God is love—Divine and inexpressible. God's love for believers in the sacrifice of his beloved Son, and in his loving sacrifice for all mankind, is of the highest and broadest, and surpasses knowledge.

(Eph. 3:19) “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8) God’s love is everlasting—“I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”—Jer. 31:3

God’s love is boundless, sovereign, free, and all these virtues of love are manifested to us in the face of Jesus Christ. “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (I John 4:9,10) Jesus, “being the brightness [the effulgence] of his [God’s] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, . . . sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”—Heb. 1:3

Whatever the height of God’s glory, as seen in all his attributes and perfections, the same glory is manifested in Jesus. There is not one of the Divine perfections that has not its counterpart in him. If the Divine character is to be seen at all, it is to be seen in, and through, Jesus Christ our Lord.

GOD’S GLORY REFLECTED IN JESUS

All spiritual thought and saving light to man has come through the revealed Truth of God. “Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD.” (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4) “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”—John 6:63

Jesus explained to his disciples, as he was about to leave them, “I am the way, the truth, and the

life. . . . If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him.” Philip said, “Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” Jesus replied, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?”—chap. 14:6-9

How thrilled both Thomas and Philip must have been when, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon them and brought to their remembrance all things that Jesus had said. The full beams of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shone out in splendor and magnificence before their vision of the One they had followed and whose teachings they had embraced! So completely was the glory of God manifested in Jesus that despite all the criticism of Pharisee and Jew, he was able to pray, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. . . . O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”—John 17:4,5

All these perfections, these virtues or attributes of light, life, and love, we, as followers of Jesus, are admonished to attain by his grace. We are the receivers of the gift of light of the knowledge of the glory of God that Moses saw in a limited way. Let us, then, seek earnestly to become more completely copies at heart of God’s dear Son, and make our theme and quest in this life the quest and theme of the Apostle Paul, Jesus Christ “whose I am, and whom I serve.” (Acts 27:23) May we, with him, in the spirit of love and service for each other, be “determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”—I Cor. 2:2

The spiritual understanding disclosed and imparted to the disciples, all of whom manifest in a remarkable way the light of the glory of God, reveals so marvelously the emotions and character of God. As we have looked into the face, or person, of Jesus we have seen God. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," said Jesus. (John 14:9) It is all revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, "shed abroad in our hearts," and in this way we have come to know God personally, and Jesus Christ our Lord.—Rom. 5:5

To some, Christ is a creed and a pattern, not a personal friend. There are so many who know the historic Christ, to whom he is a person who lived two thousand years ago. They read of him as they read a book. But all such miss the blessedness, the sweetness, of really knowing him, which inner conviction is attained, as the Apostle Paul suggests, by the grace and vision of God's glory in Jesus Christ. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."—II Cor. 3:18

Let us, then, keep in mind the importance of our theme, "The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Let us copy Paul in his confession, Jesus Christ 'whose I am, and whom I serve.' We have received of his grace, let us attain to his glory, "The glory as of the only begotten of the Father."—John 1:14 ■



An Habitation of God

*“In whom ye also
are builded
together for an
habitation of God
through the
Spirit.”
—Ephesians 2:22*

THE IDEA OF THE CREATOR’S interest in a house to be provided by his human creatures may have been first suggested in the instructions to Moses for the building of the Tabernacle

in the wilderness. (Exod. 29:43-46) Still earlier, Jacob, fleeing from Esau and in a dream seeing Jehovah looking down from heaven and assuring him of the blessing for which he had risked so much, declared, “Surely the LORD is in this place; . . . this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”—Gen. 28:16,17

THE TEMPLE, A HOUSE OF THE LORD

Later this idea of the house of God was embodied in the Temple built by Solomon in accord with Divine instructions. Both of these buildings, the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the magnificent Temple in the promised land, were recognized as inadequate to furnish a real home, or abiding place,

for Jehovah; and, of the Temple, Solomon declares, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (I Kings 8:27) We see then, that God did not dwell there as his home, but it was, as he declares, a place where he would place his "name," a miraculous representation of himself, and which he designates an acceptable "house of sacrifice" wherein prayers might be offered and, if in accord with his instructions and in proper spirit, forgiveness for sins and God's blessings be obtained.—II Chron. 7:12-16

In the New Testament we have a clearer idea of God's thoughts with respect to his house. Certain statements of the Old Testament had given an intimation that the Tabernacle and Temple arrangements were merely typical, and their true significance quite unrelated to a material building. Illustrations are found in Isaiah 57 and Psalm 132. We could know nothing of the physical requirements, if any, of a spirit or Divine being's home. It is remarkable and inspiring to know where our Creator places the emphasis for his comfort, joy, happiness and what it is that he will call his home. Thus, we can understand his specifications and this would be quite natural with respect to human habitations. We can appraise and appreciate the utility, convenience, and beauty of a fellow man's home because we are of the same race, needs, and grade of intelligence. If the wisdom and power represented in the universe were necessary for our understanding of the home God has designed for himself, it would be impossible for us to comprehend or even to reason about it.

HUMAN HABITATION

An essential quality for an earthly dwelling to become a home is that it must have harmony, sympathy, understanding and companionship. So also with our Creator, he that lives in the “high and holy place.” (Isa. 57:15) His family have devoted their lives to acquiring, developing, and practicing all the elements of his own glorious character.

The Prophet Jeremiah says, “I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.” (Jer. 9:24) Therefore, it must, and will, be with all who are being ‘buiilded together for an habitation of God.’ In ‘these [same] things’ will be their delight also; not only to know about them as the character of God, and to proclaim them to others as illustrated in the Divine plan of the ages, but also to delight in the application of them in all their relations, thus gaining a counterpart of the Divine character for their very own, for eternity.

DEVELOPING IN GOD’S LIKENESS

This superlative degree of development in God’s likeness is possible only under sin and death conditions, where the most extreme tests are possible. Thus, even of Jesus, we read that “it became him [God], . . . in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings,” and that he was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (Heb. 2:10; Rev. 13:8) His body members, too, chosen “in him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4), must share his experience of suffering for righteousness’ sake—

even unto death—presenting their bodies, including their human hopes and restitution prospects, “a living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1); and thereafter setting their minds and affections upon “those things which are above” (Col. 3:1,2)—appropriate to their new spirit-begotten condition.

Thus by infinite wisdom, through experience, we have been learning the elements of God’s character. We are learning right, by experience with wrong; justice, by suffering injustice and inequity; humility, by experience with pride and vanity; pity and tenderness, by contact with hardness and cruelty. We learn sympathy for others’ infirmities, because conscious of our own; and generous self-sacrificing love, in contrast to prevalent selfishness, ambition, and greed.

THE TRUE TEMPLE OF GOD

In contrast to the holy places of natural Israel where our Creator placed his name, we find in the New Testament the detailed description of a home in which he can walk and dwell in spirit—a living home. We read, “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” II Cor. 6:16

The full significance of this and similar statements of Jesus and the apostles would be not only difficult, but impossible for us to comprehend without Divine assistance, and with this realization the Apostle Paul prays for the brethren at Ephesus that “the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his invitation, what the glorious wealth of his

inheritance among the saints.”—Eph. 1:18, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*

We, too, who entertain the same hope, long for a clear view of our calling, and the inspiration it will furnish, “forgetting those things which are behind,” and concentrate thought and effort in reaching “forth unto those things which are before.” (Phil. 3:13) While setting our minds upon these things ‘above,’ as have all our brethren down through the age, many of us today share the conviction that now the completed members of this special class, God’s inheritance in the saints, are gathering with our Lord, and when joined by the last members, yet in the flesh, will be introduced to the Father, and become members of his household for eternity.

THE HABITATION OF GOD

To the woman of Samaria, Jesus said, “The hour . . . now is, when . . . they that worship him [God] must worship him in spirit and in truth. . . . for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” (John 4:23,24) The thought is that God seeks intelligent worship, not based upon misconceptions of his character, but upon an accurate knowledge of it. Later, Jesus said to his disciples, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, . . . and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”—chap. 14:21,23

This figurative language implies that even here in our trial state, if we meet the conditions, we can enjoy a definite oneness with our Lord and the

Father. As their life is richer, fuller, capable of higher emotions and joys, so will ours be; and our joy in this intimate relationship will be “full of glory,” or “unspeakable” joy in human terms.—I Pet. 1:8

God’s habitation is a being in whose heart-character there is room for full fellowship, in whom God can manifest his principles, disposition, and power. Grateful indeed should we be that he has arranged matters so that we can share this course of study and development, and that he seeketh such earnest disciples. In I Peter 2:4-6, Jesus is compared to a “living stone.” Further, he has ability and willingness to shape and prepare other living stones, his disciples, to be the material or units of which the temple of God is to be built. The typical Temple, built by Solomon, illustrated in its construction the development of the members of the spiritual temple during the Gospel Age, and their assembly in glory. We recall that the stones of which Solomon’s Temple was constructed were all shaped and prepared for their respective positions while in the quarry, and were all ready when placed in the Temple walls.

BUILDING THE TEMPLE—HARD STONES

Considering the preparation of the stones for that Temple, we can imagine that some stones taken from the quarry were found not of the right type, or consistency, and defects came to light that resulted in their being set aside. Some of these stones may have proved too hard and brittle to take the shaping required. We so find it in our consideration of the development of the living stones for the true temple.

Many living stones have been rejected because, unresponsive to the Lord's instructions and discipline, the rough parts of their character could not be trimmed off in time. Pride, the great hardener, is warned against as a dangerous snare in many portions of the Word, "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord"; "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"; "If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself," etc.—Heb. 12:5; I Cor. 10:12; Gal. 6:3

In contrast, Jesus gave us the perfect illustration both in his words and his life, and could say, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29); and his apostle, having learned wisdom from personal contact involving reproof as well as instruction from the Master, exhorts, "All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."—I Pet. 5:5

In this and other expressions of the Apostle Peter, we have the blessed assurance that he was of the right texture as a living stone, and had taken to heart the humbling experiences that God had sent into his life. May it be so with us too. Let us not fail to throttle pride in ourselves; and if we have taken a wrong course, confess it; if we have been too hard, or stern, or opinionated, in our relations with members of our family, in the church, or elsewhere, let us hasten to repent, and reform, and undo the damage our human mind and conduct have caused. Paul, too, deeply impressed with the importance of meekness and gentleness, was following the example of his Master in his humble course among the brethren at Corinth, and besought them to recall

and consider attentively the “meekness and gentleness of Christ.” (II Cor. 10:1) No qualities are more unnatural to fallen human nature, and hence need the most careful and persistent cultivation.

SOFT STONES

Stones for a permanent structure may also be too soft; and so, too, living stones may be too soft, and rejected on that account. Softness of will, or character, may be manifested in the fear of loss or suffering, restraining from faithful obedience to the Lord’s instructions. Softness may result in being “conformed to this world” instead of the reverse (Rom 12:2); it may be revealed in our judging self too tenderly or carelessly; or in not taking a firm stand in opposition to wrong conduct in the affairs of the church. Many exhortations are given us along this line.

We are urged to “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” (Eph. 6:10) We are to “stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” (Gal. 5:1) Furthermore, we are to “be no more children,” but to “grow up into him in all things” (Eph. 4:14,15); we are not to faint when we are “rebuked of him” (Heb. 12:5); to “fight the good fight of faith.” (I Tim. 6:12) Paul gives us an inspiring illustration of determination to be faithful to God at all costs, saying, “None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.”—Acts 20:24

In considering this subject, we are again impressed with the apostle’s observation to his son

Timothy, “Great is the mystery of godliness” (I Tim. 3:16)—not impossible for us to comprehend, but requiring “all diligence” both in our study of the perfect pattern, and in our efforts to follow his steps.—II Pet. 1:5

HIDDEN FAULTS

In the selection of building materials, still other defects may be discovered. Someone has used as an illustration destructive carpenter ants, and termites, which attack timbers in a building, eat out the center, and weaken them so that the structure becomes unusable or collapses. These termites, secretly working unobserved, well illustrate the damage to character resulting from secret faults permitted, or condoned, not dealt with sincerely, honestly, and which in time may eat the heart out of our consecrated relationship to God. The danger would be in practicing a little injustice, trying to hide it, and saying to ourself, “No one knows about it.”

These little deflections would doubtless be accompanied by neglect of the Word of God, and of that, too, perhaps no one but ourself would know. But the effect of these unrestrained and unrepented secret faults would be to leave us unprepared for tests and opportunities. It would make us the reverse of what is said of the Lord in Isaiah 11:1-3, that he would be “of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD.”

How we admire one who is prepared! Jesus was prepared for every test and opportunity, whether it called for him to be gentle, tender, meek; or bold, strong, uncompromising. So may it be with us, his followers and disciples; it is indeed possible for us

to reach that degree of development, “conformed to the image of his [God’s] Son” (Rom. 8:29); but only possible if we are saturated with the Word of God, the “word of Christ” dwelling in us richly and “teaching and admonishing” us.—Col. 3:16

OTHER TESTS OF THE STONES

The living stones of which the “holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:21) is to be constructed have still further tests. Even as some materials for earthly structures, these must be tested as to their tensile and also their crushing strength. Tensile strength would correspond to longsuffering and patience. In that wonderful description of the Divine character, we are told by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians, chapter thirteen, that love “suffereth long, and is kind” (vs. 4); again, in writing to the church at Rome, he assures them that “tribulation worketh patience” (Rom. 5:3); and with the same thought, James exhorts us to “let patience have her perfect [ing] work.” (James 1:4) How reasonable that the God of nature—which takes six months to produce an apple fully developed and mellowed by sun and rain, cold and warmth and wind—would also require time for the development and ripening of the fruit of the spirit in every one of his children! And thus the apostle again urges, “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”—Gal. 6:9

Crushing strength—or, rather, unbreakable strength—is also a requisite in these living stones. This does not mean that any of them could bear all the extreme tests which might be applied, for we are assured by the apostle that “God . . . will not

suffer you to be tempted [or tried] above that ye are able [to bear]; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13), or that God will "direct the issue, that you may be able to bear it." (*Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) This was his own experience Paul assures us, saying that in his experiences in Asia he was "pressed out of measure, above strength," but that God delivered him though he had "despaired even of life." (II Cor. 1:8) He also says that he and his companions in service and affliction "had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." (vs. 9) What an inspiring testimony to the unbreakable determination of Paul and his associates to trust fully in God and his providences for them, inasmuch as they had made a consecration even unto death; and hence having the sentence of death in themselves, we, too, look beyond this human life and trust in him that 'raiseth the dead.' In Hebrews, chapter twelve, we are told that God's purpose is to shake all things in order that the things that can be shaken may be removed. (vs. 27) The clear intimation is that not only is the kingdom we seek one which cannot be shaken, but also that it is to be composed of those living stones which cannot be shaken, because they have sought and received the strength sufficient for their every need and test which, in his wisdom, the Lord has subjected them in order to bring them to completion.

ADVANCED TESTS OF STONES TOGETHER

"That thou mayest know how to conduct thyself in God's house, which is a congregation of the living

God,” writes Paul to Timothy. (I Tim. 3:15, *WED*) Individual Christians are God’s habitation through the Spirit, but he is to have, even in the present time, a more comprehensive representation and means of expression in and through the ecclesia. How important, therefore, is our association with the brethren in the church, and each member we contact: each one another building, another stone; or, to use Paul’s illustration of a human body in I Corinthians, chapter twelve, an “eye,” an “ear,” a “foot”—each furnishing another and different opportunity to provide collectively an atmosphere pleasing to the Father and our Lord. And how much profit we may gain from this association! Through God’s habitation in those other brethren, we may see a demonstration of his Spirit, in some respects better than our own, in many or all of them. Let us note their courage, meekness, patience, zeal, humility, and love; and remember that it is by “that which every joint supplieth” that the body is being built up in our Master’s likeness. (Eph. 4:16) Let us take a builder’s interest in the brethren, exhorting one another, provoking one another to love and good works. Undoubtedly the value of the ecclesia to each of us will depend upon experiences in it with each other.

Not all the value of the ecclesia will be found in the happy, congenial association it affords. In every gathering of the Lord’s people we find occasion for the exercise of godly character, sharing in the joint endeavors of the brethren to maintain “the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free”; and, at the same time, “with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Gal. 5:1; Eph. 4:2,3) Without doubt, in obeying the exhortation to forget not the assembling of ourselves together we shall find many of our greatest helps and blessings in the narrow way; and at the same time in that blessed fellowship with others of like precious faith, shall experience some of our most searching tests as to our knowledge of, and obedience to, the instructions of the Lord’s Word.

GOD’S HABITATION COMPLETED

Finally, and we believe very soon, God’s habitation will be complete; and we could well exhaust language in our efforts to describe the grandeur and usefulness of that dwelling place of the Almighty. In Psalm forty-five, the head of the Divine family of sons is pictured, and with him his bride, the church. The bride is said to be “all glorious within”; her “raiment of needlework,” and “her clothing . . . of wrought gold.” (vss. 13,14) In Ephesians (1:23; 4:13; 5:25-27) the church is described as the bride, and also as the body of the Lord Jesus—the “fulness” or completion of the Christ—that grand company who are to be God’s family and enjoy the most intimate communion with him. We are told in the Book of Revelation that their activity for the first thousand years will be as kings, priests, and judges over this world; and that the result will be the reuniting in loyal obedience to God of all his intelligent Creation alienated through sin, except those who, with full light, reject the opportunity. But one thousand years are only the beginning of their eternal association in the plans

of the Creator; and his perfect wisdom, love, and power will have formulated a program, which will be sublime in every respect. The opportunity to become of the immediate family of God is, of course, far beyond our ability to fully appreciate or understand. But as the apostle says, “we hope for [it]”; and, thank God, “the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. . . . And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit [the Holy Spirit within our hearts], because [that, *Marginal Translation*] he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. . . . For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.”—Rom. 8:25-29 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JULY 1—“Walk as children of light . . . proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.”—Ephesians 5:8,10 (Z. '99-4 Hymn 196)

JULY 8—“The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth.”—I Timothy 3:15 (Z. '99-37 Hymn 281)

JULY 15—“Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, . . . and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.”—I Corinthians 13:3 (Z. '99-77 Hymn 198)

JULY 22—“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.”—Psalm 34:18,19 “A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.”—Proverbs 24:16 (Z. '03-217 Hymn 87)

JULY 29—“Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us.”—Daniel 3:17 (Z. '99-171 Hymn 272)

The Fount of Every Blessing

THE BIBLE PRESENTS the great Jehovah God as the fountain of all blessings both to angels and to men—"the Father of mercies," from whom cometh down "every good gift and every perfect gift." (II Cor. 1:3; James 1:17) We properly appreciate our Lord Jesus Christ as the honored channel through which the Divine blessings come to us; but we must look to the Heavenly Father chiefly, as the apostle has directed, saying, All things are of the Father; all things are by the Son.—I Cor. 8:6

Similarly God's people may feel grateful to their worldly friends, but it should never be forgotten that God is the fountain of blessings, and that others communicate these blessings only through Divine grace. We should feel an appreciation of the sunshine and the rain, of the flowers and the birds, remembering always the great source. Out of full hearts God's instructed people sing:

"Come, thou Fount of every blessing!
Tune my heart a song to raise;
Streams of favor, never ceasing,
Call for notes of heartfelt praise!"

The word 'song' is used in another sense in the Bible. The whole Gospel message is styled a song because of its beautiful harmony, richness, sweetness, and cadence. Thus the sons of God are said now to sing "a new song," which none others can learn. (Rev. 14:3) While they sing and make melody in their hearts to the Lord, these melodies permeate their lives and thus sound forth his praises who hath called us "out of darkness into his marvellous light."—I Pet. 2:9

The life of every Christian might bear a harmonious symphony to all his companions! How much this would do toward banishing tears and sorrows, and shedding rays of light on the pathway of those who walk in the valley of the shadow of death! Great blessings go with such heart-singing Christians. Their presence, influence, tone of voice, all show forth the praises of the Fountain of Blessing, directing the attention of the world to this great Fount. ■

Render Thanks to God

O render thanks to God above, the fountain of eternal love,

Whose mercy firm through ages past hath stood, and shall forever last.

Who can his mighty deeds express, not only vast but numberless?

What mortal eloquence can raise his tribute of eternal praise?

Extend to me that favor, Lord, thou to thy chosen shalt afford;

At thy return to set men free, let thy salvation visit me.

—*Hymns of Dawn*

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

J. Freer

Edmonton, Canada July 6
Fox Creek, Canada 7
Okanagan, Canada 9,10,11

B. Keith

Prince Albert, Canada July 2,3,4
Edmonton, Canada 6
Fox Creek, Canada 7
Okanagan, Canada 9,10,11

S. Jones

Okanagan, Canada July 9,10,11

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

C. Chandler

Okanagan, Canada July 9,10,11

R. Goodman

Okanagan, Canada July 9,10,11

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 Genevieve Dargurz, Detroit, MI—April 29. Age, 87

Sister Mary Balko, Ebensburg, PA—May 9. Age, 84

David Thomas, Clarkston, WA—May 17. Age, 50

Brother Dominick Destro, Enfield, CT—May 26. Age, 85

Sister Helen Franklin, San Luis Obispo, CA—May 28.

Age, 93

Sister Tillie Kilback, Vernon, BC—May 31. Age, 91

Brother Peter Tichansky, Detroit, MI—June 2. Age, 85

Sister Gerry Jurd, Los Angeles, CA—June 4. Age, 83

CONVENTIONS

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

PRINCE ALBERT/SASKATOON CONVENTION, July 2,3,4—Siwak Farm. Contact Benjamin Siwak, RR#1, Prince Albert, SK, Can. Phone: (306) 763-3170

OKANAGAN CONVENTION, July 9,10,11—Sandman Inn, 4201-32nd Street, Vernon, BC, Canada. Phone: (250) 542-4325. Contact Bernice Blencowe. Phone: (250) 545-0780

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 17-22—Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA. Contact Michael Nekora (prior to July 14). Phone: (310) 454-5248

WETASKIWIN CONVENTION, August 6,7,8—Way-side Inn. Phone: (877) 358-6177. Mention Bible Students for special rate. Contact Janice Neumeier, Box 428, Fox Creek, AB, Canada. T0H 1P0. Phone: (780) 622-3809

BIBLE STUDENTS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 8-13—Polanica Zdroj, Poland. Contact Tom Machacek, 7222 E. 106th Avenue, Crown Point, IN 46307. Phone: (219) 662-8107

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 4,5—Fa-Ho-Lo Camp & Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Rd., Unit 1, Grass Lake, MI. Contact Mrs. Ray Lumley, 2531 Ashton Rd., Jackson, MI 49203. Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 4,5—Wellesley Inn, Two Bridges Road & Exit 52, Route 80, Fairfield, NJ. Contact Ann Truth Post, 24

Lexington, New City, NY 10956. Phone: (845) 634-5876

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 4,5,6—Bastyr University, 14500 Juanita Drive NE, Bothell, WA. Contact Laurie Flinn, P. O. Box 67, Pacific, WA 98047. Phone: (253) 939-9838

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 10,11,12—Holiday Inn Research Park, 5903 University Drive. Contact Philip Mosley, 1006 Mill Race Circle, Guntersville, AL 35976. Phone: (256) 582-3640

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, September 18,19—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue. For additional information, contact George Kuzmin (414) 425-2268, or Chris Kuenzli (414) 257-2672

CLAY CITY CONVENTION, September 24,25,26—Canyon Inn inside McCormick's Creek State Park. Contact Sondra Clark. Phone: (317) 253-8946

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 9,10—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA. Contact John 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. Contact Joanne Houlmont, 6825 Clubhouse Drive, West, Canadian Lakes, MI 49346. Phone: (231) 972-4259

NEW ENGLAND CONVENTION, October 15, 16, 17—Ramada Inn, Crooked Street, Plainville, CT. Contact Mrs. Richard Suraci, 171 Johnson Road, Hamden, CT 06518. Phone: (203) 248-3793

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 30,31—Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Drive (corner of 17-92), Sanford, FL. Contact Helen Jeuck, 587 Queens Mirror Circle, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 699-8303