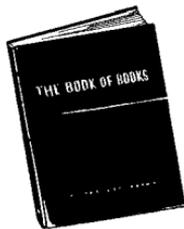


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The Dawn

VOLUME XLII

NUMBER 3

MARCH 1974

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Highlights of **Dawn**

"Cheap Oil Is Finished"

IT IS probably true that the average man in this great country of ours is roused these cold, dark winter mornings by an electric alarm clock, which perhaps also delivers soft music and the latest news and weather. He flicks on the electric light, and finds his way to the living room to adjust the thermostat to activate the oil burner or gas furnace to warm up the house.

He removes the twenty-four hour accumulation of beard with an electric razor, and then enjoys a brisk shower, the water for which was probably heated electrically or by gas. He may even clean his teeth with an electrically operated tooth brush, and stimulate the circulation of blood in his scalp with an electric massager; and his children, going through somewhat the same routine, may tidy up their own hair with a "hot" comb—electrically heated, of course.

By this time, the wife-mother (and jill-of-all-trades) has prepared breakfast for the family by squeezing fresh oranges by means of an electric juicer, fried the bacon and eggs on an electric or gas stove, elicited that delicious aroma from the coffee in an electric percolator, and further roused the appetite by popping two to four slices of fragrant bread into the electric toaster.

If our hypothetical man is an office worker dwelling in

the suburbs, he now pulls on his jacket as he races to his car, drives downtown to the office, parks his car, and takes the automatic electrically operated elevator to his office in the skies. There he is surrounded by a multitude of gadgets, all essential, or seemingly so, to the efficient performance of his job—telephones, typewriters, accounting and calculating machines, office copiers, pencil sharpeners, massive computers—all electrically powered. Or if he works in a shop, his lathe or drill press, his spray gun, his sewing machine or offset press, is operated by electricity.

This vignette of one facet of American life may appear somewhat overdrawn, but in fact it does not even begin to picture modern man's nearly total dependence, in the industrialized nations of the world, on labor-saving, life-and-luxury-providing appliances and machinery, all necessarily powered by energy in one form or another.

Three Thousand Miles of Oil

Visualize, if you will, a solid, double row of 42-gallon oil drums standing upright and touching shoulder to shoulder, and stretching clear across this nation on Interstate Highway I-80 from the Atlantic to the Pacific—that is how much crude oil is gulped down every single day in the year by the insatiable American economic machine. Eighteen million barrels per day, six billion barrels per year!

The energy thus represented drives our farm plows, seeders and harvesters; it powers our factories in the production of everything from buttons and ball-point pens, from clothing and pots and pans, to automobiles, trucks, building materials, and giant electric generators. It moves our railroad locomotives, our river and ocean shipping, our giant airplanes and our tractor-trailers as our whole complicated transportation system struggles to bring all these essentials of life to our local stores and shopping centers, and thus to our home and tables.

What a dramatic change has been wrought in the life-style

of so many people, not only in this nation, but all over the world, largely through the medium of cheap oil and gas, and the production and distribution of electricity! While all this has indeed greatly benefited mankind materially, it has at the same time robbed him of much of his independence and sense of security.

The Good Old Days?

And all this has occurred substantially in the lifetime of many now living. Many who are now in their seventies or thereabouts have been through much of the entire remarkable transition from the days of the jolting horse and buggy and rutted roads, the kerosene oil lamps, the butter in the well-spring, the hand-powered tools and coal furnaces, to the era of sleek motor cars and giant world-girdling luxury aircraft, refrigerators and air conditioners, and vast computer-run factories. Truly, in the last several decades great numbers of the populace have been living like lords, and taking it all for granted. Middle class millions have been enjoying conveniences, comforts and luxuries that kings of earlier days could not so much as imagine.

So it has come as no small shock to the people suddenly to be told that our on-tap supply of cheap and abundant oil, which is a principal element in the present energy supply, and therefore of our economic abundance and well-being, is being diminished, and that there has to be a change. And in the light of present-day life-styles, the sense of shock is understandable. Life in America has come to a great extent to be centered around the use of the automobile, which is not regarded as a luxury, but as a necessity. Great numbers have located their homes and chosen their jobs on the unquestioned assumption that their private automobiles would provide the required transportation. That the supply of fuel might ever be withdrawn was a thought that never entered one's head!

"Coming Events . . .

Now, out of the blue, a heretofore complacent people are confronted with the prospect of serious gasoline shortages and cold homes. More discouraging, many are losing their jobs, hundreds of thousands having already been discharged, while our leading economists are discussing, not whether there will be a recession, but whether it will be a slight one, or more serious. People who never before gave a thought to the matter are now painfully learning the simple fact that in highly industrialized economies it is energy, in one form or another, that makes the economic world go round; and the repercussions of its curtailment extend in greater or lesser degree to virtually every farthest nook and cranny and to every individual in the world.

There are some who believe the present difficulty is being blown up out of all proportion to the facts. The situation, they suggest, is not nearly as bad as it is being painted. The shortage, some of these contend, is artificial, having been created by those who would reap a harvest in higher prices. Furthermore, they say, the Arab nations will shortly lift the embargo and resume the shipment of oil to the excluded nations. Then everything will be fine again, the world will breathe a deep sigh of relief, and we will all resume our former carefree, careless ways.

... Cast Their Shadows Before"

But such thinking seems unrealistic, in view of what is known. The present energy crisis did not come upon the scene without having cast its shadow before. There are those who have been sounding the alarm for many years, but whose warnings of the approaching problems have gone unheeded. And early evidence of the reality of the situation was not wanting. Will any of those who were trapped for hours between floors in darkened elevators, or imprisoned in subway cars or railroad tunnels without lights, ever forget these and the many other harrowing experiences that attended the 1966 "blackout" in the Northeast? And every

year since that time there have been "brownouts" of one sort or another as a result of the growing power shortage.

One incontrovertible fact is that the world population is growing by leaps and bounds, and these increasing masses demand ever larger amounts of food and shelter, the production of which depends increasingly on the use of energy to fuel more farm machinery, to turn more factory wheels, and to move the expanding transportation system so that all these vital necessities may be provided to more people, wherever they are. This one fact alone plainly indicates the need for an immediate multiplication of our supply of energy.

A second and equally obvious truth is that at the very time when the population is growing and the world needs more, not less energy, we have finally awakened to the fact that the world's sources of energy are diminishing. Thus we see that the world is relentlessly caught, as in a steel vise, between the growing numbers of its inhabitants on the one hand, and the diminishing supply of the sources of energy to satisfy their wants on the other hand.

"Let the Weak Say, I Am Strong"

It was against this already bleak background that the Arab nations, who produce roughly one-half of the world's oil supply, chose to use their oil resources as a political weapon against the Western nations in the hope of forcing them to bring pressure against Israel in their long-standing strife with that nation. This was a development that caught the powerful, highly industrialized nations of the West off guard, and which they surely did not anticipate; for who could ever suppose that these small, weak nations, who happened merely by the accident of geography to be blessed with vast reserves of oil, would ever presume to assert themselves against the all-powerful West?

That this is just what did happen is just another indication of the time in which we are now living; for the Prophet

Joel tells us that in the last days (of this present evil social order), "the weak [shall] say, I am strong." (Joel 3:1, 2, 10, 11) And it is truly ironic that a small handful of Arab chieftains, by the simple act of closing the valves on the flow of oil, can turn the economy of a large part of the world upside down, bringing inconvenience and suffering, and indeed even the threat of world-wide economic and financial distress.

A Preview?

Thus, perhaps as a faint preview of the terrible trouble with which this present evil world will eventually pass away, we find people all over the world shivering in cold homes; adoption of the three-day work week in some areas; hundreds of thousands of working people off the payroll, and everyone concerned and confused as to the future.

Also, as a further part of this dim preview of the time of trouble, we are shown how quickly adversity strips off the veneer of refinement to reveal the innate selfishness of fallen man, as was evidenced by the savage scrambles of holiday motorists to get a share of the diminished supply of gasoline, and in the gluttonous price-gouging by the operators of gasoline stations, suppliers of fireplace wood, and many other commodities. One shudders to contemplate the situation that would develop if the shortages consisted not merely of gasoline, but of food!

The industrial revolution has benefited man materially through the specialization of tasks, wherein each member of society is dependent on every other member to perform his own part, and to do so well and honestly. This is at once the strength and the weakness of the system. It is its strength because each can thus concentrate his efforts on that which he does best. It is its weakness, because any one segment of specialists, in the pursuit of their own selfish ends, can bring the entire operation to a halt. This latter is what the Arab oil producers are attempting to do.

Fuel vs. Mules

That the Arab nations have a potent weapon with which to wage their economic war with the Western powers, and their military war with Israel, cannot be denied. For, as was earlier remarked, it is oil that largely lubricates the economic wheels of the world at the present time. As a small indication of the magnitude of the problem, someone has estimated that without the use of fuel-powered machinery, thirty million horses and mules would be required to bring in the harvest in the United States. It was noted, incidentally, that there are but six million such animals in the nation.

True, there are other forms of energy, but each of these poses its own special problem. It requires, for instance, many years to build an atomic power plant; and after it is built there is the continuing difficulty as to the disposal of the resultant nuclear waste. Moreover, of the atomic power plants already constructed and put into operation, many are either partially or completely now out of production because of minor accidents or technical difficulties.

The world supply of oil, gas, and shale oil is variously estimated at thirty to one-hundred years. Only coal seems to be in abundant supply, the United States alone having reserves estimated to have a life of some 3,000 years at the present rate of consumption; but coal has come into decreased usage because of its pollutive qualities. Possibly, the ultimate sources of clean and abundant power will be the ocean tides, and the sun, which the Scriptures tell us abideth forever. But sun power, too, is still well down the road.

The plain fact is that however large the world's supplies of fossil fuels may be, there must eventually come a time when the world cupboard finally becomes bare of the energy supply as we now know it. Man cannot replace it. Untold ages were required to create the world's fossil fuels,

although it took prodigal man but a few short centuries to consume so much of it.

As various elements of the supply run out or run low or are denied, suffering ensues. Under such circumstances, one wonders how long the powerful nations of the West, which may be the have-not nations so far as energy is concerned, will bow to what some consider to be international blackmail by a few, small militarily weak nations. Indeed, at least one television commentator has publicly stated it as his opinion that the use of force would be justified to break the oil embargo.

Meantime, many people in many parts of the world will suffer hardship or deprivation in one degree or another. Life-styles will be altered, work and school hours may be changed. Some luxuries, and even some necessities, will disappear. When that happens, as we have seen, unbridled selfishness, individual and national, comes to the top.

The great time of trouble with which this present evil world will be brought to an end will, no doubt, be composed of many diverse elements. One of the factors effecting the dissolution of the present world social order could be related to the energy problem. We shall have to wait, and watch.

Just how long the Lord will permit this present evil world to continue, we do not know. But we believe there are visible indications that the elements that make up this imperfect social order even now are melting, and that the world is in the early stages of that great time of trouble spoken of by Daniel the Prophet and by our Lord Jesus. But the world is unaware of what is happening.—Dan. 12:1 Matt. 24:21

“What Will Replace It?”

One of the powerful figures in the Arab oil world, and reputedly one of the more moderate, is the Shah of Iran.

On behalf of all the Mid-east oil-producing nations he recently announced the latest large increase in oil prices, a rise, incidentally, that could work havoc with the economies and finances of a nation such as Japan, which imports almost all of its oil, and certain other of the European nations whose industrial complexes are geared to oil. At that time the Shah also stated, "The industrial world will have to realize that the era of their terrific progress and even more terrific income and wealth based on cheap oil is finished." And then he protested, rather unconvincingly it would seem, that the Arab nations have no desire to harm the industrial nations. He stated, "We don't want to hurt at all the industrialized world. . . . What good will it do if the present industrialized world is crushed and terminated? What will replace it?"

Every good student of God's Word can answer the Shah's question with joyous assurance. Peter tells us, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. . . . Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—Pet. 3:10, 13

It is the glorious kingdom of God, the new heaven and the new earth, that will ere long replace this present evil world—it is that kingdom in which there will be no shortages of any kind, neither of energy, or food, or warmth, or of love. There will be no more selfishness, no more death, no more tears. And all nations and all peoples, whether peasants or shahs, shall love and worship their Heavenly Father, the Giver of every good gift and every perfect gift, and his loving, obedient Son, the greatest of all gifts. For

"In this mountain [kingdom of God] 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.

“And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it.

“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. 25:6-9

GENERAL CONVENTION BULLETIN

THE 1974 General Convention to be held at Albion College August 3 through 8 offers much in physical comfort, convenience, and beauty.

The living quarters are adjacent to the air-conditioned modern cafeteria. The food is supplied by the same caterer that was at Calvin College during the General Convention last year.

The auditorium is air-conditioned and the seats are comfortable. One of the nice features of the dormitory arrangement is that there is a bathroom and shower between the bedrooms. For those who desire, a number of modern motels are nearby.

All of these features are in the beautiful setting of a small college campus. But more important than any of these things is the fact that many brethren from all parts of the country will be there to provide spiritual refreshment and fellowship.

Plan to attend!

The BIBLE ANSWERS

ALABAMA

Birmingham WBRC-TV Channel 6
 Dothan WDHN-TV
 Florence WOWL-TV Channel 15
 Geneva CATV

Mon.—Fri.

Selma WSLA

ARKANSAS

Little Rock KARK

CALIFORNIA

El Centro KECC-TV Channel 9

Fresno KMJ-TV Channel 24

Sundays, 7:30 a.m.

Los Angeles KTTV Channel 11

Sundays, 6:30 a.m.

Sacramento KTXL Channel 40

7:00 a.m.

COLORADO

Pueblo CATV

5:00 p.m.

FLORIDA

Gainesville WCJB

9:00 a.m.

Key West CATV

Mon.—Fri.

Miami Beach WCKT

Panama City WDTB

Pensacola CATV

GEORGIA

Columbus CATV

Macon WCWB

11:30 a.m.

West Point CATV

HAWAII

Hilo KPUA-TV Channel 9

3:07 a.m.

Honolulu KGMB-TV Channel 9

4:08 a.m.

ILLINOIS

Danville CATV

12:30 p.m.

Kankakee CATV

Thursdays, 3:30 p.m.

INDIANA

South Bend WNDU-TV

Terre Haute WTHI-TV Channel 10

Sundays, 11:00 a.m.

IOWA

Urbandale CATV

LOUISIANA

Selma WSLA

MARYLAND

Salisbury WBOC

MASSACHUSETTS

Needham-Boston WCVB

7:00 a.m.

MICHIGAN

Detroit CKLW

Sundays, 11:30 a.m.

Grand Rapids WUHQ

10:00 a.m.

Southfield WXYZ

MISSISSIPPI

Greenwood WABG

Biloxi CATV

12:30 p.m.

Columbus WCBI-TV Channel 4

Sundays, 7:30 a.m.

MISSOURI

Columbia KOMU

MONTANA

Kalispell KCFW-TV Channel 9

7:00 a.m.

NEBRASKA

Lincoln CATV

North Platte KNOP

NEW YORK

Central Islip WSNL

Horseheads CATV

8:00 p.m.

Levittown CATV

Brooklyn WNYE

NORTH CAROLINA

Asheville WANC-TV Channel 62

7:00 p.m.

Television Schedule

Charlotte	WCCB-TV Channel 18	Knoxville	WTVK
9:30 a.m.		9:00 a.m.	
OHIO		TEXAS	
Ashland	A.C.TV—CATV	Lufkin	KTRE
Cambridge	WHIZ-TV Channel 80	Pampa	CATV
Sundays, 8:30 a.m.		Pharr	CATV
Cincinnati	WCPO-TV Channel 9	UTAH	
Thursdays, 1:58 a.m.		Salt Lake City	KUTV
Coshacton	WHIZ-TV Channel 71	VIRGINIA	
Sundays, 8:30 a.m.		Fredricksburg	WHFV
Dayton	WLWD Channel 2	Roanoke	WBRA
Every fourth Sunday, 1:30 a.m.		WASHINGTON	
Louisville	WJAN	Seattle	KTVW-TV Channel 13
Marietta	WCMO-TV	9:30 a.m.	
Zanesville	WHIZ-TV Channel 18	Tacoma	CATV
Steubenville	WSTV	8:30 a.m.	
Sundays, 8:30 a.m.		WEST VIRGINIA	
OKLAHOMA		Bridgeport	WDTV
Muskogee	CATV	Charleston	WCHS-TV Channel 8
Mandays, 8:00 p.m.		Mon.-Fri., 6:30 a.m.	
Oklahoma City	KETA	Huntington	WMUL
Tulsa	KOED	Oak Hill	WOAY-TV Channel 4
PENNSYLVANIA		Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m.	
Du Bois	CATV	Wheeling	WSTV
Huntingdon	CATV	8:30 a.m.	
Levittown	CATV	WISCONSIN	
Philadelphia	WPVI	Eau Claire	WEAU-TV Channel 13
SOUTH CAROLINA		Fridays, 6:30 a.m.	
Anderson	WAIM-TV Channel 40	Rhinelander	WAEO
Mondays, (Time to be announced.)		CANADA	
Ashville	WANC	Kitchener, Ont.	CATV
7:00 a.m.		WEST INDIES	
TENNESSEE		St. Kitts	ZIZ-TV Channel 5
Johnson City	CATV		

SPANISH RADIO BROADCASTS

SUNDAYS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

ARIZONA		TEXAS	
Tucson	KXEW 1600 kc. 8:30 a.m.	San Antonio	KUKA 1250
		8:30 a.m.	
MEXICO		URUGUAY	
Mexico City	XEX	Montevideo	Radio El Espectador
(Tues.) 11:20 p.m.		810 kc.	Saturdays, 1:30 p.m.

"FRANK and ERNEST"

SUNDAYS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

ALABAMA

Sheffield WSHF 1290 1:30 p.m.

CALIFORNIA

El Centro KICO 1490 10:30 a.m.

Los Angeles KBIG 740 9:00 a.m.

Redding KVCV 600 7:45 a.m.

Sacramento KGMS 1380 8:30 a.m.

San Francisco KNEW 910 8:15 a.m.

COLORADO

Montrose KUBC 580 8:15 a.m.

DELAWARE

Wilmington WTUX 1290 10:15 a.m.

FLORIDA

Tampa WFLA 970 9:30 a.m.

IDAHO

Coeur d'Arlene KVNI 1240 9:15 a.m.

Lewiston KRLC 1350 9:35 a.m.

Sandpoint KSPT 1400 10:15 a.m.

ILLINOIS

Granite City WGNU 920 9:45 a.m.

La Salle WLPO 1220 9:45 a.m.

Rockford WRRR 1330 8:30 a.m.

West Frankfort WFRX 1300 9:15 a.m.

INDIANA

Indianapolis WIBC 1070 8:00 a.m.

Muncie WLBC 1340 8:45 a.m.

Gary-Hammond
WJOB 1230 8:30 a.m.

KANSAS

Goodland KLOE 730 7:45 a.m.

KENTUCKY

Bowling Green WLBJ 1410 8:00 a.m.

Louisville WAVE 970 8:15 a.m.

Winchester WWKY 1380 10:30 a.m.

MICHIGAN

Detroit WQTE 560 9:30 a.m.

Grand Rapids WMAX 1480 8:45 a.m.

Saginaw WSGW 790 10:15 a.m.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis KQRS 1440 10:15 a.m.

MISSOURI

Formington KREI 800 9:00 a.m.

MONTANA

Baker KFLN 960 8:00 p.m.

Great Falls KEIN 1310 8:06 a.m.

Missoula KATL 1340 10:15 a.m.

NEW YORK

Buffalo-Niagara Falls

WHLA 1270 12:00 noon

Kingston WKOT 1550 9:45 a.m.

New York WNCN 104.3 FM 7:45 a.m.

Patchogue WSUF 1580 9:45 a.m.

Rochester WBBF 950 9:00 a.m.

Mineola WTHE Sat.

NORTH CAROLINA

Beaufort 1400 9:00 a.m.

OHIO

Zonesville WHIZ 1240 6:40 a.m.

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma City WNAD 640 10:06 a.m.

Bible Study

LESSON FOR MARCH 3

Power for Growth

MEMORY VERSE: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you."—Acts 1:8

ACTS 2:1-4, 16, 17, 36-42

THE Book of Acts tells of the beginning of the Christian church. To start with, the apostles Peter and John were the outstanding leaders, and later Paul became prominent in the affairs of the church. There were, of course, many other leaders of lesser stature and authority. However, the power and growth of the church was due not to the power of good leadership, but to the power of the Holy Spirit. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost constitutes the main part of the present lesson.

In chapter one of the Book of Acts we find the question of the disciples recorded, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus' reply was, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy

Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—vss. 6-8

Jesus then ascended to heaven, and his disciples received instructions to tarry at Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit did come upon them in keeping with what their Master had said. It was in fulfilment of this promise by Jesus a short time later, on the day of Pentecost when they were all of one accord in one place, that the Holy Spirit actually was poured out upon them.

It was a dramatic event. We read that "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began

to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."—Acts 2:2-4

The speaking in tongues with which the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples on the day of Pentecost was a far cry from the efforts that are made today to speak with tongues. On the day of Pentecost there were Jews gathered at Jerusalem from many parts of the known world, and they spoke the language of their country of adoption. The Lord desired that these people be given a witness concerning the Gospel of Christ, so by the power of the Holy Spirit he enabled his servants to speak in these various foreign tongues.

But they were real languages, and through this use of miracle-working power the thousands gathered in Jerusalem on that day of Pentecost did receive a good witness for the truth.

As has always been the case, Satan has used his cohorts to stir up opposition against the followers of the Master, and he did so on this occasion. The charge was made that they were intoxicated, hence not responsible for what they were saying or doing. But Peter denied this charge and said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see

visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

As the account indicates, Peter quoted much more of this prophecy of Joel than appears in today's lesson. He did not imply that the entire prophecy was fulfilled on that one 24-hour day, but he did identify the pouring out of the Holy Spirit as a beginning of a new experience and a new age for the people of God.

In his pentecostal sermon Peter reminded his hearers that they had been responsible for the death of Jesus, but that God had raised him from the dead and made him "both Lord and Christ." This was a hard lesson for them to receive. The account reads that "when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" While Peter had presented a difficult thought to accept, many of his hearers reacted to it humbly and properly, with the question, "What shall we do?"

Peter's reply to this question was forthright and direct. He said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

When the Spirit Fills a Life

MEMORY VERSE: "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."—Acts 4:33

ACTS 3:1-6

THIS first section of today's lesson concerns an outstanding miracle recorded in the New Testament. It was shortly after Pentecost that the miracle was performed by Peter and John, who visited the temple about three o'clock in the afternoon and found a man, who had been lame from birth, lying at the gate of the temple called Beautiful. He was there to ask alms of those who entered into the temple. Peter and John observed this man and were asked by him to give him financial aid. Peter explained, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."—vs. 6

While this lame man was doubtless momentarily disappointed when Peter explained that they had no money they could give him, how great his rejoicing was when he realized the blessing they had bestowed upon him, for he was healed

of his life-long lameness. In verse 8 we read concerning him, "He leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God." Verse 11 reads, "And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering."

Peter noticed this "wondering" and proceeded to give them an explanation of what had taken place. His explanation was that this man had been healed, actually, through the resurrected Jesus whom they had crucified. Verse 16 reads, "And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

In verses 19-21 Peter draws a wonderful lesson from the display of divine power in the healing of the lame man. He explains

that at the second coming of Christ there will be times of restitution, or restoration, of all things, meaning that then all the ill will be restored to health and even all the dead raised to life. Peter explained further that this great time of restoration had been fore-told by the mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began. What a wonderful hope is thus held out for the suffering world of mankind!

ACTS 4:31-37

Converts to the Gospel of Christ continued to increase. Not only were the apostles themselves filled with the Holy Spirit and actuated by it in their zeal for proclaiming the message, but those who heard and genuinely believed were also whole-hearted in their devotion to the truth and to one another.

Verse 32 relates that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." Verse 33 reads, "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."

The giving up of all their material holdings was a wonderful display of zeal for the Lord and for his cause, and, no doubt, those who participated in this experiment were richly blessed.

However, the Book of Acts does not indicate that this communal arrangement continued for any great length of time. The fallen human heart is selfish and oft-times suspicious. Luke informs us of some of the difficulties involved. Not all were satisfied with the manner in which the temporal blessings were dispensed. There were those who professed to turn in all that they had to the common treasury, but held back some for their private use.

However, efforts were made to correct these difficulties. Deacons were appointed to assist in the distribution, and, especially to serve at tables in order to relieve the apostles of this work, that they might have more time to preach the Gospel. Peter summarily punished two who were dishonest concerning their claim of giving all. Nevertheless, as we have noted, this arrangement was not continued. We do not get too far into the Book of Acts when we notice that no further mention is made of it. Perhaps one reason for its discontinuance is that as the disciples increased in number the administration of such an arrangement would become too difficult.

Overcoming Hindrances to Church Growth

MEMORY VERSE: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

—James 1:27

Acts 5:1-4

WHILE the dedicated people of God have a responsibility in connection with their activity in preaching the Gospel and in building one another up in the most holy faith, we are not to suppose that the growth of the church in numbers is particularly our responsibility. It is an erroneous viewpoint that the Lord expects the church to continue growing and expanding until the peoples of the whole earth are brought into it.

This is not the age in the divine plan for the conversion of the world, but rather the period when God is calling out from the world those whom he will honor in the resurrection with the great privilege of living and reigning with Christ a thousand years. It will be then that the world as a whole will really learn of the true God, and when all shall know him from the least unto the greatest.

As we noted in the lesson for last week, everything did not go smoothly in connection with

the communal arrangement of the brethren in the days of the Early Church. One of the regrettable episodes was in connection with a man named Ananias and whose wife was Sapphira. This couple sold a possession and kept back part of the price, bringing only a portion of the proceeds to the apostles.

Peter, by the power of the Holy Spirit, discerned this act of deception and said to Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

It would seem from the full account that Ananias and Sapphira would have been quite within their rights not to sell their property at all. The record is not definite, but it might be that those participating in the

communal arrangement did not necessarily include their property. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira seemed to be in the fact that they were professing to be more faithful to the Lord and the Gospel than they really were, and as Peter explained, this constituted lying to God. Naturally the apostles could not condone a deception of this kind, for doing so would have brought disrepute upon the entire group.

ACTS 6:1-7

Another disrupting influence in those early days of the church was brought about by the "murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." If the church was to maintain a growth in numbers and to be spiritually vigorous, this situation would need to be rectified.

So the apostles took immediate action. They seemed to sense that there was some merit to the murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations, and that probably one reason for this was that not a sufficient number was participating in this daily ministrations. It would seem that up until this time the apostles themselves were taking care of essentially all the work that was involved in the distribution of the common funds. So the apostles "called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should

leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

This suggestion pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch. It is interesting to note the confidence the Hebrews had in their other brethren for none of these names are Hebrew. Among these brethren, two later are brought to our attention in the Book of Acts: Stephen became the first Christian martyr, and Philip was the one whom the Lord used to explain the Gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch. As a result of this new arrangement "the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."—vs. 7

We are not to suppose, from our memory verse, that pure religion consists merely of visiting orphans and widows. The thought here seems to be, rather, that this work is emblematic of an unselfish desire to be a blessing to those in need.—James 1:27

Are You Willing to Take a Risk?

MEMORY VERSE: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."—Heb. 12:1, 2

ACTS 6:8-11

OUR lesson today is concerned with Stephen, the first Christian martyr. It will be recalled that in a former lesson Stephen was one of several who had been chosen to be a deacon and to assist in the serving of tables. No doubt Stephen was faithful in these duties, and now, upon the basis of faith, had expanded his service into other fields. Verse 8 tells us that he was "full of faith and power" and "did great miracles and wonders among the people."

It is not surprising to find that Stephen soon incurred the opposition of certain prominent Jews "of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen." But Stephen, filled with faith in the power of the Lord and guided by the Holy Spirit, was too much for these who would oppose him. The record states that "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which

he spake."

Not being able to refute the teachings of Stephen, these enemies of the cross resorted to the same method that was used in connection with Jesus; that is, they sought those who would bear false witness against him, and in such cases there are always those who are willing to oblige. We read of some who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God." Blasphemy in Jewish circles at the time was the misuse of the name of God, and naturally anything that was said concerning him or his promises could easily be construed as a misuse of his name.

ACTS 7:54-60

Ultimately Stephen was called before the council (probably the Sanhedrin) and formally charged with blasphemy. False witnesses were provided to make sure that a good case was established against this noble soldier of the cross.

Speaking to the Sanhedrin, Stephen related much of God's

dealings with the descendants of Abraham, and as a result of this they should have realized that he held very nearly to the faith of their fathers. He recalled to them the fact that their fathers had persecuted one after another of their prophets, and then referred to his listeners as being stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth."—vs. 54

But Stephen was not looking to the hypocrites of the council for his source of strength. We read that he "being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."—vss. 55, 56

This his audience construed to be a further evidence of his blasphemy. "Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." This particular witness later became the apostle Paul, who confessed that he was the least of all the apostles because he had participated in the murder of his brethren.—vss. 50-58

And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And he knelt

down, and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."—vss. 59, 60, R.S.V.

How wonderful that the Heavenly Father should give Stephen this faith-strengthening vision at this time of his great need! However, it does not imply that Stephen went immediately to heaven when he died. The record states that he "fell asleep." He fell asleep in Christ, as did all the faithful ones in the Early Church and throughout the age, and Paul explains that their hope is the hope of the resurrection. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then those who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

Our memory verse is a very meaningful one. It reminds us that as followers of Jesus we should all expect to have severe trails in the way of persecution and otherwise. This reminds us that one of our great sources of strength is to look unto Jesus, to note how he suffered and how he endured. Our memory verse tells us that it was for the joy that was set before Jesus that he "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:1, 2) In the prophecy concerning Jesus we read, "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—Ps. 16-11

Overcoming Human Barriers

MEMORY VERSE: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."—Gal. 3:28

ACTS 8:18-31

THE use of the power of the Holy Spirit in the days of the Early Church was a very sacred thing. This gift of the Holy Spirit; that is, the impartation of the power of God, was not given to all who professed belief in Christ, but only to those being fully dedicated and worthy of it. By the use of this gift of the spirit, miracles were performed. The apostles possessed the gift and had the power to pass it on to other faithful believers.

This was apparently being done, as indicated in the opening verse of our lesson, and one named Simon, a sorcerer, offered Peter money to bestow this gift upon him. "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit."

But the discerning Peter knew that Simon was not a proper one to receive such a sacred gift, and he said to him, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy

heart is not right in the sight of God." To this Peter added, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."—vss. 20-23

While Peter was very outspoken in his refusal to bestow the gift of the Spirit upon Simon, he nevertheless left the way open for Simon to repent of his wrongdoing. Peter apparently realized that here was a man unacquainted with the Gospel of Christ, unenlightened concerning its standards of righteousness, and that his sin would not, therefore, be as culpable as it would have been in the case of one who had made some progress in the knowledge of the Lord.

It would appear that there was a "company" working with Peter on this occasion, and that shortly after the encounter with Simon they returned to Jerusalem and preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. Philip, another of those

who had been appointed a deacon to serve tables, was apparently with this group, seeking to enlarge his opportunities to serve the Lord and the truth. The Lord honored this desire.

We read, "Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert." It was in obedience to this directive that Philip came into contact with the Ethiopian, "an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship." This steward under Candace was returning to Ethiopia riding in a chariot, and when Philip first saw him he was reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

"Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." Philip did this, and when he asked the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading, his reply was, "How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." Philip gladly accommodated the Ethiopian and explained the Gospel to him—the Gospel of Christ, which is the power unto salvation. This Ethiopian was apparently by nature a Gentile, and probably a proselyte to the Jewish faith. He had taken his adopted religion

seriously, and a good heart, and wanted right away to do what he could to seal this new-found relationship with God. Philip must have explained many points to him, because the Ethiopian asked to be baptized. He saw a pond of water near, and he and Philip agreed that there was no time like the present thus to symbolize his consecration to do God's will.

Our memory verse suggests that in some way the controversy in the Early Church concerning Jew and Gentile converts enters into this lesson. Actually, as the verse states, God does not consider that there should be any division between Jew and Gentile, and no difference between bond and free. Even male and female are equally acceptable to God, for as Paul declares, "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." —Gal. 3:28

In this third chapter of Galatians Paul reminds us of the promise God made to Abraham that through his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. (vs. 8) Verse 16 points out that Jesus is this Seed, and verses 29-31 reveal that those who are in Christ Jesus are also a part of this seed of promise that will later be used by God to bless all the families of the earth, and this larger seed will be made up of both Jews and Gentiles.



Christian Life and Doctrine

The Labor of Love

“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

—Hebrews 6:10

MINISTERING to the saints is one of the Christian's most blessed privileges, and in our text the apostle described this as a “labor of love.” In I Thessalonians 1:3 the Apostle Paul writes of the “work of faith,” the “labor of love,” and “patience of hope.” The work of faith seems to refer to those activities of the Christian life which require faith to meet challenges, such as preaching the Gospel, and standing loyal for God, the truth, and the brethren in the face of opposition and persecution.

The expression “labor of love” seems to be descriptive of those kindnesses which we extend to our brethren because they are our brethren, and because we esteem it a great privilege to serve them—even to lay down our lives for them in rendering services which may tend to lighten their burden. All of the Lord's people enjoy such opportunities—some more, and some less. Many of us have had labors of love extended to us, and how much we have appreciated these, and how much our own love for the brethren has thereby been increased!

Nor have these labors of love on behalf of the people of God been limited to the present Gospel Age. In the Jewish Age we have in mind the Prophet Elisha as being the

recipient of the labor of love from a man and woman of God totally unknown to him until he became the benefactor of their love. The account of this is found in II Kings 4:8-18.

It is the story of a Shunammite woman, otherwise not identified, except that she is referred to as "a great woman." It seems that at the time the Prophet Elisha, in his rounds of service, often passed through the town of Shunem. He apparently, in passing through, followed a road that was not far from the home of the "great woman" of the account. After noticing this, the woman used the first opportunity she had to assist, and "constrained him to eat bread. And so it was that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread."—vs. 8

After this occurred a number of times the Shunammite woman said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there."—vss.9-11

How much this "great woman's" labor of love must have meant to the Prophet Elisha! And it was a simple act of kindness, beginning with taking him into her home for lunch, and then, with the consent and co-operation of her husband, building an extra room on the home so this man of God might have a place to rest when he needed it, and perchance to stay overnight. The kindness to this man of God was not without expense, because the building of an extra room on one's home often is quite costly, but this woman's love was great, and her spirit of sacrifice abounded toward God's people, and we are sure the Lord was pleased.

Certainly Elisha was pleased. He instructed his servant to learn from the woman what they could do for her in

return for all her kindness. She wished for nothing in return, but the servant learned from her that she was childless and that her husband was old, and that the probability of ever having a child was very slight. Elisha prayed to the Lord about this, and this prayer, coming from a righteous man, availed much. In due course the woman gave birth to a son.—vss. 11-17

But later, while the lad was still young, he suffered a sunstroke and died. Naturally Elisha was sent for, and he returned to the home, and restored the boy's life. (vss. 18-37) Thus, while this "great woman" had not desired any favor from Elisha or from the Lord for her labor of love, she did receive a highly appreciated blessing, as is so often the case with those who unselfishly and wholeheartedly minister to the people of God.

Mary's Labor of Love

Martha and Mary are two women of God who stand out prominently in the life of Jesus. Jesus loved them because of their devotion to God and to his Word, and they loved him for the same reason. Their brother Lazarus died, and Jesus returned from Galilee to Bethany, the home of these two devout women, and awakened him from the sleep of death. This was a genuine labor of love by Jesus, and they showed their appreciation in part by arranging for a special supper the next day, at which Lazarus and Jesus were present.

What a setting this was for a meal! Lazarus, who had been dead four days, had been awakened, and was with the others to enjoy the meal and the fellowship. Martha served at this supper. While it was in progress, Mary arose from the table, and using "a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, . . . anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment."—John 12:3

This was a labor of love which was really very costly, and by it Mary, as best she could, showed her appreciation to Jesus for the great kindness he had bestowed upon their family by awakening her brother from the sleep of death. She had doubtless expressed her thanks to the Master before this, but in many cases words do not suffice, and this was so in the case of Mary: she wanted to back up her words with a pound of spikenard ointment with which she bathed the Master's feet; and she wanted to use her own hair to wipe his feet.

As is usually the case, there was one at the supper who criticized this labor of love. It was Judas, but the record reveals that he was not sincere in his criticism. The lesson is that Jesus appreciated what had been done for him. Replying to Judas, Jesus said, "Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this." Jesus recognized Mary's labor of love as a real service that had been rendered to him. How wonderful that the Lord should cause the record of this to come down to us!

In another account Jesus said of Mary, "She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." (Mark 14:8, 9) What a wonderful example this truly is—"She hath done what she could!" We today do not have the opportunity of anointing the feet of our Lord, but we do have the privilege, in various ways, of rendering service to the members of his body still in the flesh. Are we doing what we can to render this "labor of love" on their behalf?

Dorcas

A member of the Early Church who was active in performing loving service for the brethren was Dorcas. Of her we read, "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this

woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did." (Acts 9:36) Dorcas became ill, and died, and "they laid her in the upper chamber."

The disciples in the area heard that Peter was in the vicinity, so they sent for him. "Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them." Then, putting them all from the room Peter through prayer restored Dorcas to life. This miracle soon became known throughout the area, and as a result of it many believed.

We have only this short account of the zeal of Dorcas in serving the widows by her sewing. But, like Mary, she did what she could, and as a result of her labor she brought blessings to many, and also—through God's grace in awakening her from the sleep of death—many became believers. Thus through her labor of love the Gospel effectively reached others. How encouraging this must have been to Dorcas!

Lydia

Another of those whose labor of love is noted in scripture is Lydia, the seller of purple, who maintained a home at Philippi. It was in Philippi that the first European church was established, and Lydia had an important part in connection with this, the first meetings of the brethren being held in her home. Paul and his companions were the first to take the Gospel to Philippi, going there in response to the call which he heard in a vision, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us."—Acts 16:9

Arriving in Philippi, Luke writes that "on the sabbath we went out of the city by a riverside, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named

Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.”—Acts 16:15

Here was “labor of love” operating in the form of hospitality to the brethren. Evidently Lydia was not a poor woman. Although she is said to be of Thyatira, evidently she did business in Philippi and maintained a home there for convenience, and she invited Paul and his companions to be guests in her home.

The record states that God had opened Lydia’s heart, and now we see that opened heart reaching out to serve the brethren—to serve them in the best way she was capable of doing. She was not long enough in the truth, perhaps, to give a clear witness to the message, but she could care for the material needs of those faithful servants who were able to do this. Throughout the age the entertainment of the brethren active in the service of the truth has been a very important part of the total efforts of making known the glad tidings of the kingdom, and Lydia is in the forefront of this little band of servants whose labors of love have meant so much to the brethren.

Epaphroditus

Epaphroditus was a member of the church at Philippi, which was the first church to be established in Europe, and it was organized by the Apostle Paul. Paul was now in prison in Rome, and the brethren in Philippi decided to send him a gift to help supply some of his needs, and to comfort him. Epaphroditus was the brother chosen to take this gift to Rome, and to deliver it to Paul. This was evidently during the two years in which Paul was privileged

(Continued on page 34)

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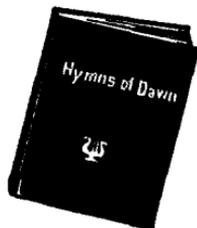
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to live in his own hired house, although in the custody of Roman guards.

It would seem that in addition to delivering this gift to Paul from the brethren at Philippi, Epaphroditus remained with Paul to serve him in whatever way he could.

Paul decided to let him remain for awhile—at least until he found out how things would go with him when his case came up for trial. He was hoping that then he would be set free and could visit the brethren at Philippi himself. Then he adds, “Yet I suppose it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.”—Phil. 2:25, 26

It is evident that Epaphroditus had endeared himself to Paul by his faithful labor of love. The record shows also that this service had been rendered at great cost. Through his faithfulness Epaphroditus had become ill. Paul wrote that “he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not only him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I send him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.”—Phil. 2:27, 28

We can understand Paul’s feelings in this matter. He was being held as prisoner, and while it was for the cause of Christ, it is not an easy matter to be a prisoner, for whatever reason. This dear brother from Philippi had come with a gift from the church, and was serving him and became ill—seriously ill. Had he died, it would have indeed been a crushing blow to Paul—sorrow upon sorrow. But the Lord spared him. Epaphroditus had recovered and was now returning to his brethren in Philippi, and Paul wrote, “Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such

in reputation: because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.”—Phil. 2:29, 30

Notice Paul’s exhortation—“hold such in reputation.” Paul believed in giving honor where honor is due, and he was sure that honor was due to Epaphroditus, for he had gladly risked his life to serve this beloved apostle—a service which Paul describes as “the work of the Lord.” We cannot visualize all the details involved in this service, but we can enter into the spirit which prompted it, and we can understand to some small degree how it must have brought comfort and joy into those weary days which Paul spent in the custody of Roman guards.

Throughout the Ages

Beginning in ancient times, and continuing even to our day, there have been faithful souls who have seen and used their opportunities to “minister to the saints,” and thereby have helped to lighten the burden of many of the Lord’s people. The Lord has promised to give his people the necessary strength for their every time of need; but often he uses his own people to render this assistance.

We have noted a few of the instances of this labor of love mentioned in the Bible, but we are sure that there were many other faithful souls who served in Bible times whose services are not recorded in the sacred Word. In many of our church gatherings today we have our “comfort” committees to serve and encourage those who are ill, or for other reasons need our help. Every brother and sister in Christ should think of himself or herself as a member of a universal comfort committee made up of all the Lord’s people this side the veil, and be on the alert to render help as opportunity and ability affords.

It is not in the big things, as a rule, that we are able to serve, but a cordial greeting at the meeting, a message of love and encouragement to a distant brother or brethren

which may be dispatched by the congregation, and for which we have the privilege of voting. But these privileges may come in more definite form. We may learn of a brother or sister who is in need of much help, and help which will be costly to us. Let us not hold back in such cases either.

The Shunammite woman saw her privilege of building an extra room onto her home so that a prophet of God might enjoy periods of refreshment and rest. Dorcas sewed clothing for the widows in the church at Joppa. Not every woman is able to sew, but Dorcas was, and she used her ability to render a labor of love where it was needed. Epaphroditus did not hesitate to hazard his life in order to minister to the needs of the Apostle Paul.

All of us should emulate these faithful servants of the Lord and of his people to the extent possible, and by all means possess their spirit of sacrifice and devotion to the common cause of God in the earth. This is the true spirit of the Lord, the spirit with which we should seek to be filled as we lay down our lives in his service, following in the footsteps of Jesus, who gave his all.



Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

MARCH 7—"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us."
—I John 4:12 (Z. '03-56, 57 Hymn 68)

MARCH 14—"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."
—Proverbs 16:32 (Z. '96-279 Hymn 267)

MARCH 21—"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute you."
—Matthew 5:44 (Z. '91-141 Hymn 44)

MARCH 28—"Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."
—II Timothy 2:3 (Z. '03-84 Hymn 266)

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Our Living Hope

“BLESSED be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope.” (I Pet. 1:3) “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” (Rom. 15:4) “Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you.” (Eph. 1:18 R.S.V.) “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.” (Col.1:5) “And rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. 5:2) “Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.” (Rom. 12:12) “That blessed hope.” “The hope set before us.” “Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.”—II Cor. 3:12

Thank God for a hope like this! Every one of us is glad that we have such a hope; that we have been called out of darkness into his marvelous light, and called out of the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of his dear Son; that we are rejoicing in hope—a hope that has given direction to our life. Our hope is not narrow. For ourselves it is, of course, the hope of the glory of God. But we also have a wonderful hope for all of Adam’s race. One reason the truth means so much to us is that through the truth we have learned of God’s love for all the families of the earth.

But how can imperfect creatures such as we have such a wonderful, such a living hope? It is only because of the exceeding great and precious promises of God’s Word. We have faith in these promises—and faith is the basis of

things hoped for. Ours, then, is a well-grounded hope. Its foundation is the Word of God; its assurance, the promises of that Word. II Corinthians 4:18 reads, "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."

What is Hope?

Thank God our hope is for the eternal things! Of all the forces that make for rejoicing Christians, none is more powerful than a living hope. But what is hope? How can we define it? Let us try. In the New Testament the word "hope" always refers to something good. Hope has an elastic step and a radiant countenance. Hope is a gladsome thing based upon our faith. Hope is a keen desire for a good thing, and earnest expectation of receiving it. We hope for that which we desire. We have a desire for everlasting life. We have a desire to see Him as he is. We have a desire to be faithful unto death, that we may receive the happy end of our hope.

In the Greek, hope is described as "expectation," and it might be pictured as with uplifted head and outstretched neck while standing on tiptoe. Try it sometime! And again, hope is like the sun which, as we travel toward it, casts the shadow of our burdens behind us. We need hope for living far more than for dying. Dying is easy compared to living. Dying requires a relatively short time; living takes a lifetime. It is the length of the rope that puts the sag in it. Let us strive for and earnestly pray for a clearer vision of the great object of our hope; because it matters very little how a man dies, but what really matters is how he lives.

Hope may be based upon credulity; or hope may be based upon faith. Credulity may rest upon words and opinions of men, but true faith and hope must be based

upon the words and promises of God.

Our Hope Is Progressive

First comes the desire to serve God. And then, through the drawings of the Father, the compulsions of God, we hear Jesus say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) And then comes the realization of the great truth, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."—John 17:3

Faith, however, must precede all this, and there is no better text to show how our faith and hope develop and mature than Romans 5:1-5. Verses 1 and 2 read, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Faith; justification; peace with God; standing in grace—and these lead to "rejoicing in hope" of glory.

But we must read on through verses 3, 4, and 5. These verses show how our hope matures. We already have hope of the glory of God as in verse 3. Now comes tribulation. Tribulation develops patience; and through the experiences directed by his providences we acquire a mature hope—a hope that maketh not ashamed. An empty hope may be put to shame, but not our hope, for it is developed by the tribulations and experience of the narrow way. It is proved by the Holy Spirit given unto us. We know that we can depend on His love and His promises because we have a living hope.

Ours is a wonderful hope, but it will be tested. Our love, our faith, our loyalty are tested; and so our hope will also be tested. We may be tempted to become discouraged because we do not see God's plan develop as quickly as we think it should. We have need of patience, brethren, as we await the fulfilment of our hopes. The way is rough—

rougher than many of us expected.

We may have thought that our tests would come from the world—hardly from other members of the body—but it is often from our brethren that our hardest trials come. The way is long—longer than many of us had expected. To us He may seem to tarry, but according to His due time, He will not tarry. So again, “patiently waiting” is our attitude.

The Anchor of Hope

The Bible likens our hope to an anchor. A ship in a storm may drop its anchor for safety, but the anchor needs two others things: first, a strong line; second, a firm tie to the ship. The anchor represents our hope. The cable represents our faith. The firm tie is our consecration to know and do His will. Hebrews 6:19 says it well: “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.” If we should let go of our hope, it would be like a ship cutting loose from its anchor to drift upon a shoreless sea. But our hope is the anchor to our spiritual life. If our love is strong, if our faith is strong, our hope will hold behind the veil. We all know that before long we will be on the other side. The Church will be complete. But we cannot tell how soon it will be.

Let us hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end. In Hebrews 6:11 we read, “It is my heart’s desire that each of you will continue to manifest the same earnestness to attain the fulness of your hope even to the end.” (Moff.) Regardless of when the end shall be, we know that his time schedule will not fail. “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”—(Isa. 40:31)

In I Thessalonians 1:3 we read, “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and your labor of love, and

patience of hope.” and again in Colossians 1:45, 5 we have these three—faith and love and hope—united as three principle graces of our Christian life. These graces are inseparably related, for there can be no hope without faith and love. But combined, these three can make a noble edifice! Here the apostle speaks of “the work of faith” as expressed in activity of service.

While the “labor of love” was manifested in the attitude of the Thessalonians toward their brethren in expressions of love, their faith had caused them to go beyond their own borders in their extension work. The apostle commends them, saying, “For from you sounded out (the word means ‘clear as a bell’).” The word was proclaimed clear as a bell not only in Macedonia and Achaëa, but also in every place their faith in God had reached men’s ears.—I Thess. 1:8

“Work of faith”—that sounds like the co-operative work of all the Lord’s people today, doesn’t it? And Timothy’s report to the Apostle Paul showed that the Thessalonians were actuated by love one toward the other. They had learned it is more blessed to give than to receive. The brethren then and now, everywhere, need to be comforted and encouraged.

Love for the Brethren

Besides the love that we owe to all men, there is a particular love due to the saints. We must love all the saints— notwithstanding smaller points of difference, and many real weaknesses which we all unfortunately possess. We all need sympathy and understanding, and now, as then, we need warnings to resist the Devil and his encroachments.

In I Thessalonians 5:11-14 we have a good lesson: Comfort one another; build one another up. Verse 14 says that some may become unruly. They may “get out of line.” They also need our love, as well as a warning exhortation. “Com-

fort the feebleminded." A better translation is "Comfort the faint-hearted"—those who are timid. They too need our love. For we are all faint-hearted at times. "Support the weak" to keep them from falling. Have you ever taken a feeble person by the arm to help him over a rough place in the road? Well, when your brother wavers, help him too. Thus love labors, it exhorts, it warns, it comforts, it encourages. "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech," says the Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 3:12.

Besides this, let us remember the text that calls attention to "the patience of hope." And Hebrews 10:36 reads, "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." May we recall the admonition of I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

We all at times may become impatient in awaiting the fulfilment of our hopes. And because of our impatience, even though we may not have analyzed the cause, we may indulge in speculations concerning many things—even to the date for the glorification of the church and the date for the establishment of the kingdom. Certain things we know, but some things we do not know.

We know we are living in the days of His presence. We know that we are of those who are alive and remain. We know we are living in the harvest, the end of the age. But we still need the patience of hope. Our hopes are not yet realized. Some of us expected to be glorified before now, but we know that we are not yet glorified.

Speculation Not Good

But we are still achieving, still pursuing; we must learn to labor and to wait. Our times are in his hands. Therefore, let us not run ahead of the Lord. Let us not be impatient in hope.

Let us, rather, be watchful, Let us be alert. Let us earnestly desire the speedy fulfilment of our hope. Let us be wholly involved in making our calling and election sure, and in assisting our brethren to do the same. II Thessalonians 3:13 tells us, "Be not weary in well-doing."

James 5:7, 8 reads, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient." This is not philosophic patience based on fate. This is humble acquiescence to the will of God. The farmer waits patiently for the time of harvest. Let us do the same. If a farmer can wait for a crop of corn, surely we can wait for a crown of life.

It will surely come; it will not tarry! Let us maintain our living hope! Let us wait the Lord's time for its consummation. For if we do, in the not-too-distant-future we will reap if we faint not. The rest of the way can be the best of the way. "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say on the Lord."—Ps 27:14

The Memorial on Tape

For isolated brethren and small groups without leaders, we can supply a tape recording of a complete Memorial Service, including a discourse on its significance. If you have a tape recorder, either cassette or reel-to-reel type, and would like one of these recordings, there is no charge. Address your request to The Dawn Recorded Lecture Service, East Rutherford, New Jersey, 07073. Please state whether you have a cassette or reel-to-reel recorder.

The Memorial Date is Friday April 5, after 6. p.m.

The Righteousness of Believers

THE Apostle Paul testified that “without faith it is impossible to please him [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb. 11:6) According to the 11th chapter of Hebrews, the faith life of the people of God began with righteous Abel, who “offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous.” —vs. 4

Among the outstanding examples of faith in the old Testament galaxy of faithful ones is Abraham. Concerning him James wrote, “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.” (Jas. 2:23) This is a very simple way of stating a fundamental fact, which is that in order to be considered the friend of another one must believe and have confidence in him. How could two people be friends if they did not believe each other? Although the human race was comparatively young in Abraham’s day, already the quality of faith in God was possessed by very few, and how pleasing it must have been to God to have Abraham believe him!

But how did God know that Abraham believed him? This knowledge was based on the fact that Abraham obeyed God. Paul testifies, “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whether he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he

looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:8-10) James testifies also concerning Abraham's faith and how it was demonstrated. We quote: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"—James 2:19-22

Some of the other faithful ones of Old Testament times mentioned by Paul were: Noah, who "being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Heb.11:7) "Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised." (vs.11) "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." (vs.20) "By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." (vs.21) "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." —vs.22

Then it was Moses who by faith, "when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By

faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”—vss.23-27

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.” (vss.30-33) We read of these that they “quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.”

And then the apostle presents his final list, and comments, saying, “And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) 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.”

Faith in the New Testament

These Old Testament worthies all enjoyed the status of friendship with God. They could pray to him, and he guided and strengthened them in their service to him. They

enjoyed also the hope of a better resurrection, or as Paul puts it, the "resurrection of the . . . just." (Acts 24:15) But Paul says that God has provided some better thing for us; that is, for the people of God, beginning with the coming of Jesus as the world's Redeemer and Savior.

Redeemer and Savior

This "better thing" is described in John 1:11,12, where we read concerning Jesus that "he came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on him name." Here the New Testament pattern is set concerning the reward of faith during the present age—those who believe in Jesus, who have faith in him, become, not the friend of God, but the sons of God. A mere glance at a concordance to ascertain what God says about his sons of the present age is sufficient to enhance our appreciation of the fact that there is indeed a "better thing" for us. These sons of God are promised nothing short of glory, and honor, and immortality, and the privilege of living and reigning with Christ a thousand years. This high reward is not given because of their faith in the fact that Noah built an ark, or that Abraham offered up his son in sacrifice, or in any of the Old Testament works which were pleasing to God, but to those who believe on our Lord Jesus Christ, those who have faith in him—a faith which is demonstrated by works.

John explains that those who "receive" Christ are given power to become the sons of God because they believe on his name. As sons of God they are also given life upon the basis of their faith. Jesus said, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." (John 6:47) In explaining this point further, Jesus indicates that this belief must be a whole-hearted appropriation of the very life and teachings of Jesus, which he describes as partaking of his flesh and

blood; "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."—John 6:48-51

When Jesus observed that not only the public but his own disciples were somewhat disturbed by this statement, he explained further. We quote: "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' (John 6:61-63) Jesus knew, even as we would know today, that partaking literally of human flesh and blood would be of no value, even though it should be the flesh and blood of Jesus. So he explained, "It is the spirit that quickeneth [or gives life]; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." In other words, we get life through Jesus by obeying his words, his teachings, which were the teachings of his Father, and by following him. Just as Abraham obeyed God by offering up his son Isaac, and enjoyed being a friend of God, so we, through faith, obey Jesus, and as sons of God enjoy by faith everlasting life. The quality of faith is the same, but the reward of faith is different, in keeping with the dispensational outworkings of the divine plan.

The Apostle Paul had a clear idea of what faith in Christ meant to him. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." To this Paul adds, "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness

come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Gal. 2:20,21) How could a great truth be more plainly stated! Paul was crucified with Christ as a result of his obedience to God; that is, he was dying with Christ. "Nevertheless," he explains, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." He was not dying as a sinner, but as a co-sacrificer with Christ. The righteousness which he had attained to make this possible was due to the death of Jesus. Otherwise, he said, "Christ is dead in vain."

Paul gives us a similar thought in Romans 12:1, which reads, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." We could not present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, because of our own righteousness, because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. This is possible only because of the redemptive work of Christ on our behalf, and our acceptance of the benefits of that work, and our obedience to the terms of that acceptance—those terms being a faithful following in the sacrificial footsteps of Jesus.

A Serious Matter

When Jesus said that those who believe on him have everlasting life, he meant it in a very literal way. Near the beginning of his ministry, when sending his disciples out into the ministry, he warned them of the persecution they would encounter. Then he encouraged them to faithfulness under this attack from the enemies of God and of righteousness, saying, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [gehenna]." (Matt. 10:28) Here, as is usually the case in the Scriptures, the word "soul" signifies the being. The Christian's enemies

might destroy his body, but his being they cannot destroy without God's permission, because even when that being falls asleep in death, from God's standpoint it has not perished.

The implication of this is clearly indicated by Paul when he wrote, "For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." (1 Cor. 15:16-18) So long as there is hope for a resurrection of the dead, no one has perished; and God's promise is that those who are faithful in following in the footsteps of Jesus even unto death will be raised from the dead in the first resurrection to live and reign with Christ a thousand years. The enemies of many of these may have destroyed their bodies, but they could not destroy their beings, for they were sleeping in the hope of the provision made for them through the death of Jesus.

However, Jesus explained that it would not be possible for the enemies of his followers to accomplish this; but if their unfaithfulness through fear of the consequences of faithfulness led them to hold back and to deny him, their souls, or beings, would perish. Jesus also indicated that in this case he would not confess them in the presence of his Father. Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 10:32,33) Confirming this, the Apostle Paul wrote, "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. 2:11,12

Realities of Our Justification

In the Greek text the word "justification" has the general

meaning of being made right or righteous. It describes a righteousness that is acceptable to God, and the Bible clearly shows that such a righteousness or justification during the present age comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom 5:1,2) Yes, the justifying faith of the present age is based upon belief in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This does not mean that the believer is actually made righteous. In the preceding chapter Paul speaks of the justification of Abraham which resulted in his being a friend of God, and explains that righteousness was imputed to him. He then explains further that this is also true with us. The righteousness of Christ is imputed, or reckoned as belonging to us, "if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Paul says that our justification by faith results in our having "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Mankind in general is alienated from God through wicked works and, as aliens, are under condemnation to death; but through our obedient faith in Jesus Christ, his imputed righteousness lifts us up from the status of being aliens to that of being sons of God. And Paul explains, "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) What Paul describes in the foregoing text as "the glory which shall be revealed in us" is what he refers to in chapter 5 where, after explaining that we are justified

by faith and have peace with God in our Lord Jesus Christ, through him also by faith we have access into "this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." This is high glory, indeed, and is not available simply upon ones assertion that he believes in Christ. Sometimes we hear it said, "Only believe." But this is not the end of what it means to be a true Christian! Paul wrote, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Paul added, "Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me." (Phil. 1:29,30) Paul realized that a mere affirmation of faith in Jesus was not enough. He saw his calling clearly to be a life of sacrificial service, involving weariness, hardship, persecution, and all sorts of hazardous situations, and finally death, in order to partake of the glory of God.

This is true to a greater or lesser extent, depending upon the providences of God, with respect to every professed follower of the Master. With some—perhaps with all, at one time or another—there is a tendency to feel that one is not worthy of such a high calling. But this is where the assurance of the merit of Christ gives us comfort and strength to press on. We can each present our body a living sacrifice with the assurance that such a sacrifice will be counted holy, and will be acceptable to God. We can count our trials and persecutions as being crucified with Christ, because his merit has been imputed to us. This is one of the blessed realities of the great doctrine of justification as it is taught in the Word of God. We can all say, as Paul did, "I live, yet not I, but Christ which liveth in me." James says: "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

—James 2:18-20

The British Section

Baptism into Christ

THIS baptism is beautifully described in the following three short verses: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death [in like kind, the sacrificial death] we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."—Rom. 6:3-5

Herein is what can be termed "the true and essential" baptism for each individual Christian to undergo, and this baptism is a most wonderful and joyous experience. What is involved is the full surrender of the human, natural mind and will into the will of Christ, even as Jesus fully and completely submitted his heart, mind, and will—indeed, his

all—to the will of his Heavenly Father. Jesus expressed this well when he exclaimed, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 6:38) The sentiments of his heart were, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart."—Ps. 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:7

Concerning our "true and essential" baptism, with which no one can be considered a member of the body of Christ, or the true church, it should be specially noticed that the Apostle Paul does not make any reference to water baptism. He does not say, So many of us as were sprinkled with water, or were immersed in water; but, so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ.

Water Immersion

To us the Scriptures teach

that neither the sprinkling with water, nor the immersion in water, is the door into the true church; the door of salvation; or the door into the body of Christ now being elected or chosen out of the world; but that the immersion into Christ's death, which begins in full consecration, is the door, or way, to become members of the body of Christ, which is the church. And we would urge that all who would thus aspire to become members of "the church," "whose names are written in heaven," should, as soon as the precept and example of the Lord and the apostles and the appropriateness of the symbol of water immersion are seen, make haste to show or testify their obedience and their full consecration before others, as a witness to that complete consecration which has already taken place.

The Bible presents the main subject of baptism in two different aspects: firstly, a baptism unto repentance; and secondly, a baptism unto entire consecration to the will of God, even unto death. The first was the baptism which John the Baptist preached, and the second was that which our Lord instituted and exemplified.

Both are distinctly referred to in Acts 19:3-5.

The preaching and baptism of John was a special call to God's covenant people, Israel after the flesh, to repent of their sins, and their failure as a nation, and as individuals, to live up to their early covenant with God. (Exod. 19:8) The stirring message of this last and greatest and most honoured prophet was that the long-awaited Messiah, the King, had come; that his kingdom was at hand, and that Israel, the chosen people, whose privilege it was to be heirs of the kingdom, should at once prepare their minds and hearts, repent of their sins, accept and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and his teaching, and be fully consecrated to God. Thus, they might be counted worthy to inherit the kingdom blessings.

Subsequent to his crucifixion, during the forty days before his ascension, our Lord appeared to his disciples and said, "Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples, or Christians, margin] all nations, baptizing them [immersing them, Diaglott; the Greek word "baptizo" meaning "to dip in or under water"] in the name of the Father, and of the Son,

and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19, 20) Here our Lord authorized the order of procedure; teaching first, making disciples; and then, the immersion in water of such as believed in him, and accepted the Gospel call to become his followers.

The Dark Ages

The great falling away from faith alluded to in the New Testament had made such headway by the second century that very superstitious views respecting baptism and other truths had come to be accepted in nominal Christendom. The Adversary had come in and sown the seeds of false doctrines, using human lips and human pens in his service; and the darkness became so great that, looking back today, we speak of that period as "the Dark Ages."

It must be admitted by all thinking Christians that it is a physical impossibility for an infant to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, before baptism, yet the superstitions that have gathered about infant baptism are such that they form one of the saddest chapters in church history. Thousands through the ages have believed

that a child dying without being baptized was eternally lost; a dark, dreary, and gloomy superstition indeed! The idea that God would forever condemn an innocent babe because someone had not put a few drops of water on its head and face is a violation of all sound reason and true scriptural teaching.

The sprinkling of babies is entirely out of harmony with the significance of either John's or Christ's baptism, yet in Christendom what is termed "infant baptism" is generally observed. Quoting from "The Explanatory Catechism of Christian Doctrine," we find the following questions and official answers are given: QUESTION, "What is baptism?" ANSWER, "Baptism is a sacrament which cleanses us from original sin, makes us Christians, children of God, and members of the church." QUESTION, "How is baptism given?" ANSWER, "Baptism is given by pouring water on the head of the child, saying at the same time these words: I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Consecration

The term "consecration" is very closely associated with

the phrase "baptism into Christ." Our complete consecration, surrendering all that we are and have to follow Jesus, even unto death—in other words, our being "set apart" to the divine will,—is indeed the burial or immersion, or baptism, of our will into the will of Christ. This overwhelming, or burial of ourselves, including that natural will of ours, resulted in our being begotten by the Holy Spirit, and by the Word of truth, to a spiritual nature; to a new spiritual life, wherein we are to "walk in newness of life."—Rom. 6:4

In this greatly privileged condition, the Scriptures indicate that our own natural fallen will is reckoned dead, and that our life—the new life, the new creature—is hid with Christ by God. (Col. 3:3, Diaglott.) This is our baptism into Christ, and this is our consecration. Henceforth, from the divine standpoint, we are new creatures in Christ, and the Apostle Paul further explains, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."—Rom. 8:9

If this Holy Spirit, of the Father and by the Son, is really dwelling within us, we

will be energized and motivated by that Spirit. We will be doing those things which will prove us to be truly baptized into Christ. We shall be more and more conformed to the image of God's dear Son (Rom. 8:29), living the Christ life day by day until we finish our earthly pilgrimage.

Other scriptures remind us that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away." We have set our affections on things above. "Our old man [our old, fallen human disposition] is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts."—II Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:24

In all this, the exceeding great and precious promises contained in the Holy Scriptures are ours, to encourage and inspire us, especially in time of trial. We are promised "a crown of life," and if faithful unto death we will be brought forth in the first resurrection, partakers of the divine nature, to live and reign with Christ. (II Pet. 1:4; Rev. 2:10; 20:6) We will be used with him to establish the glorious king-

dom of God in the earth, which kingdom of life, joy, and peace will never pass away.

Our Great Privilege

As faithful followers or disciples of the Lord Jesus, and having the glorious privilege of experiencing the "true and essential" baptism into Christ, we have been spiritually enlightened to an understanding regarding the great importance of our Lord's water immersion as compared with John's baptism. The baptism of John was unto repentance, while the water immersion that Jesus introduced and preached had to do with full consecration.

Regarding the complete obedience of Jesus to the divine will this full consecration was illustrated by water immersion in the river Jordan. This is described in a beautiful word picture recorded in Matthew 3:13-17: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo,

the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

There must have been great joy in our gracious Father's loving heart when his dear Son testified by water immersion that he was fully consecrated to his Heavenly Father. Seeing, as Jesus said during his ministry, that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," (Luke 15:10) surely we can picture a greatly increased joy in heaven when those who are repentant have taken most willingly a further step—that of having fully consecrated themselves to do God's holy will.

This water immersion is a beautiful and divinely instituted symbol of the true baptism which has already taken place in the heart and life. It is a wonderful symbol which our beloved Lord Jesus observed at Jordan. And it is a divine arrangement for all his footsteps followers to comply with; we owe it also to our brethren. It is an outstanding, sacred occasion in the Christian life, in after days to be remembered

with joy and thanksgiving.

Sacred Commission

The words of Jesus to his faithful disciples are, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." (Matt. 24:14) And the Apostle Paul exhorts, "Shine ye as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." (Phil. 2:15, 16) And seeing that we have received the ministry of reconciliation we are to be faithful "ambassadors for Christ," (II Cor. 5:18-20) "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed." (II Cor. 6:3) "A servant of the Lord must not be contentious, but be gentle towards all, fit to teach, patient under evil; in meekness correcting the opposers." —II Tim. 2:24, 25, Diaglott

While still living in the world, we are not of it, but have transferred our allegiance and citizenship to the heavenly kingdom. And now while continuing our consecrated walk among aliens and strangers, we, as representatives and ambassadors, should feel both the dignity and the honour, and also the weighty responsibilities of our representing the heavenly kingdom and its King

of kings and Lord of lords, before the "children of this world."

Baptismal Service

Regular readers of "The Dawn" will be aware that from time to time these services are arranged on behalf of any fully consecrated brethren who express their desire to be immersed, and thus symbolize their consecration to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

As the dear ones follow Jesus in water immersion they testify, by so doing, to the complete immersion of their human will, as Jesus did, into the will of God. They thereby demonstrate the sentiments of their heart, "Not my will, Father, but Thine, be done." And their complete surrender of self, and their being dead with Christ, is fittingly illustrated as each one is lowered beneath the surface of the water. Then their being quickened by the Holy Spirit and by the Word of Truth is beautifully illustrated by their being raised out of the water; thenceforth they walk in newness of life, being risen with Christ. (Col. 3:1)

This is a joyous, blessed experience for each of the faithful candidates, as it is also

for the other consecrated, brethren who witness the baptism. And it is indeed a glorious incentive for all present to re-dedicate themselves to the Lord. In all this they are greatly privileged to be "planted" in the likeness of our Lord's sacrificial death. And if faithful, they will be raised in his resurrection, that glorious first resurrection beyond the veil, to share his eternal heavenly glory.

And it is a very welcome, impressive theme song when the whole assembly reverently sing from the heart Hymns of Dawn, number 160:

"Lord, I am thine, entirely
thine,
Purchased and saved by blood
of thine;
With full consent thine I
would be,
And own thy sovereign right
in me "

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To the left is a suggestion for a small advertisement in your local newspaper. This outline is designed for two inches in one column.

MARCH SPECIAL: On Sunday, March 17, "Frank and Ernest" will discuss a topic of interest to many. Attractive circulars will be available for announcing this program, and you are invited to send for as many as you can use. They are free. Address your request to, THE DAWN, East Rutherford, New Jersey 07073.

1974 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper date for the observance of the annual Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 p.m. on Friday, April 5.

Talking Things Over

The Passover Supper

AS HAS already been announced, Friday evening, April 5, will be the appropriate time this year to commemorate Jesus' death. This will be the beginning of the 14th day of Nisan, Jewish reckoning, which corresponds to the date on which Jesus partook of the Jewish passover supper for the last time with his disciples. This was the night before he was crucified, and it was while Jesus was still with his disciples in the "upper room" that he instituted the memorial of his death.

It was a very simple ceremony as Jesus outlined it to his disciples, a ceremony in which were used unleavened bread and the "fruit of the vine." Paul explained the purpose of this, saying, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." (I Cor. 11:26) The expression, "as often," has been taken to mean that it is appropriate to partake of the Memorial Supper almost any time, and as frequently as decided practical. We doubt, however, if this is what Paul had in mind. The ceremony is in memory of the death of Jesus, and we believe that only the proper time to partake of the "bread" and the "cup" is on the anniversary of his death.

Not a Revised Passover Supper

The fact that Jesus instituted the Memorial Supper while