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Atonement: What is It?

***“If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”
—Romans 5:10,11***

THE PROCESS OF BRING-ing the alienated human race back into accord with God is called the doctrine of Atonement. The necessity for atonement, or reconciliation, between God and his human creation is one of the most fundamental teachings of the Bible. Throughout its pages is repeated the theme of man’s fall, his need of a Redeemer, the sacrificial work of Christ, and finally the coming kingdom as the agency to accomplish the needed reconciliation. Our opening text is just one such example of the Scriptural narrative on this vitally important subject.

In many circles today, however, the plain teachings of the Bible regarding the fall of man and his present state of separation from God are made light of, and discounted as too primitive a belief to be

retained in modern theology. The authenticity of the Genesis account of the entrance of sin into the world is often rejected by labeling the book as mythology, noteworthy only for its literary style. Instead, man is pictured as making steady progress toward the sublime state as a result of his own exalted efforts. How differently, though, do the Scriptures view the matter!

THE GENESIS RECORD

The opening two chapters of the book of Genesis show that Adam was originally created in the mental and moral image of God. He was placed in a garden-like environment in Eden which flourished with vegetation that would sustain his life. He was given dominion over all the lower animals, whether creatures of the air, land, or sea. In effect, Adam was king of an earthly domain which had been established for him by God. He enjoyed fellowship and communion with the Heavenly Father as one of his sons on the human plane of existence. Here was a picture of tranquility and harmony existing between man and his Creator in the earthly kingdom of God.

How quickly this scene was changed, however, when Adam transgressed the law of God. He lost the right to reside in the earthly paradise which had been his. Thorns and thistles, and the sweat of his brow as he labored for a living, became his lot. Under the sentence of death, physical, mental, and moral decay began to set in, each day carrying him farther away from his original state of perfection.—Gen. 3:17-24

Under these circumstances of condemnation and imperfection, Adam also lost the right of direct

fellowship and communion with his Creator. Thus was forfeited his place in the earthly paradise, the original kingdom of God. This would have been a permanent loss, were it not for a plan of salvation designed by a loving God.

This is the Genesis account of the creation and fall of man. If it is mere mythology and cannot be depended upon as the inspired Word of God, then the foremost personalities of the Christian church have been deceived. Jesus frequently cited incidents mentioned in the book of Genesis in his own personal ministry among the Jews, making reference to individuals such as Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.—Matt. 8:11; 23:35; 24:37

The great Apostle Paul confirmed the creation account of Genesis when he wrote, "The first man Adam was made a living soul." (I Cor. 15:45; Gen. 2:7) Who, then, are we to believe? We prefer to side with Jesus and Paul, accept the book of Genesis as authentic, and observe that those who try to discredit it are not benefiting by the blessed enlightenment which it provides.

Another objection has been advanced by those who deny man's need for atonement. Their argument is that God should simply forgive man for a disobedient act, especially for a first offense. If the account of man's fall in the Garden of Eden be true, they reason that God should have immediately reinstated him to favor. This objection seems somewhat plausible on the surface. The basic question to be resolved is, could God have forgiven his wayward human creation without requiring an atoning sacrifice?

GOD'S CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES

Before the foregoing question can be answered, it is necessary to provide a background sketch of the character of the Creator and of the setting of man's creation. The Bible describes God as an invisible spirit being, possessing grand attributes of character which are in perfect balance with each other. Briefly, the chief characteristics of God are wisdom, justice, love, and power. All these attributes are constantly working together harmoniously in every act in which God is engaged. As the great Sovereign of the universe, God conducts all his affairs in perfect accord with each of these four fundamental qualities of character.

Consider, now, how God's attributes would have reacted to the impulse of simply forgiving the transgression of man. Divine wisdom at once would have foreseen the dangers of such a course. God had originally declared that the penalty for disobedience would be death. If he now altered the consequences, others of God's intelligent creatures, as well as man, would conclude that God was changeable and his word not trustworthy. The Scriptures expressly declare that in God there "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."—James 1:17; Mal. 3:6

Further, divine justice pointed to God's position as the lawgiver of the universe. He is the great King of many creations on various planes of existence in addition to that of man. Man's disobedience to the just laws of his Creator represented a rebellion in one small part of the vast universe. It had to be dealt with fairly and strictly in accordance with those laws. One measure of justice could not be meted out to man and another to the remainder of creation.

Divine justice demanded the same standard, which was an exacting one, of full obedience to the divine will. Justice, then, required that the death penalty be carried out as originally imposed.

Divine love desired that man should be fully forgiven. Thus, in a further demonstration of infinite wisdom, God's mercy and compassion had already provided a way by which this would be accomplished, without violating the strict requirements of his justice. The solution was a plan of salvation, conceived before the creation of man, centered on a redemptive sacrifice to purchase back the forfeited life of Adam. The Son of God would be commissioned to perform this task, to which he willingly consented.

He would undergo a change of nature from the spiritual to the human state. He would become a ransom, an exact equivalent to Adam in his perfection, and then voluntarily offer his life as an atoning sacrifice. Concerning this, the Apostle Peter states that we have been redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." (I Pet. 1:18-20) Hence, in this way divine justice would be fully satisfied, since a perfect human life was to be offered for the transgression of Adam.

By this atonement arrangement, the life of Adam would not be forfeited forever, but would be restored in the resurrection on the basis of the merit of the Redeemer. Furthermore, not only Adam, but the entire human race condemned in him, would benefit from such a plan.—John 1:29; II Cor. 5:18,19; Heb. 2:9; I John 2:2

This, then, is the method which God adopted to accomplish the work of atonement. It carries a logic which at once satisfies the reasoning of the inquirer for truth, and it counters all objections that are raised against it. It is a plan to which God's character attributes of wisdom, justice and love can give wholehearted consent, and the great power of the Almighty is pledged to carry it out. Indeed, man will ultimately be forgiven, but through a course which provides him with a valuable lesson in the results of disobedience to the divine will. God's plan provides a pathway which leads from condemnation in Adam to righteousness in Christ.

FURTHER PROOF

If the Atonement doctrine is fundamental, then it should be possible to produce additional scriptural support for it throughout the Bible. Evidence should be available showing the present fallen state of man, the method God has devised to redeem and restore him, and the final outcome of the application and execution of such a plan. Consider first the following texts to determine whether man is described as being in a condition out of harmony with God:

"We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ... They are all gone out of the way." "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; ... by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." "Know ye not that the friendship

of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” —Rom. 3:9-12; 5:8,9,18,19; James 4:4

The conclusion is self-evident. All mankind is described as sinful, unrighteous, at enmity with God, and under his condemnation and wrath. Fallen mankind stands separate from the righteousness and perfection of God, condemned before the divine bar of justice. Originally, the only separating influence between God and man was the sentence of death for disobedience. Now, however, as a result of the accumulated effect of many years of alienation and sin, degradation and depravity have set in, removing man still farther away from the divine image.

As a result of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, all men are guaranteed an awakening from the sleep of death. (Isa. 26:19; Hos. 13:14; John 5:28,29) However, all will return from the tomb with the same character which had been developed in this life. Even the noblest individuals will have some measure of imperfection, and the average lot of man, no doubt, will display considerable vestiges of sin.

Unless, therefore, God were to provide some means of assistance subsequent to their rising from the dead, all men would no doubt immediately be sentenced once again to death. The lingering effects of imperfection would prevent them from rendering full obedience to the divine will and would only lead to a renewed condemnation. Thankfully, provision has already been made in God's plan to provide the temporary shielding of all humanity during the thousand-year Messianic kingdom, while the great work of man's restoration proceeds.

Christ Jesus will act in the capacity of “mediator [Greek: a go-between, a reconciler] between God and men.” (I Tim. 2:5) With Jesus will be the faithful church class of the present age. These dedicated believers, on the basis of their faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on their behalf, are justified, or reckoned righteous in God’s sight ahead of the world. Having proved their faithfulness and loyalty to God under present conditions of trouble, trial and tribulation, these will be qualified to be sympathetic “priests of God.” (Rev. 20:6) They, with Christ as their Head, will thus go about the great work of bringing man back into harmony with his Creator during the coming thousand-year kingdom.

A COVENANT ARRANGEMENT

When the old Law Covenant was originally instituted with the nation of Israel, Moses was selected by God to come up on the mount of Sinai and obtain directly from him the tables of the Law. After setting forth all of its precepts to the people, Moses sprinkled the tables of the Law with the blood of sacrificed animals. (Heb. 9:19) If the Israelites had been able to live up to the requirements of this covenant in obedience to the will of God, they would be blessed above all the nations of the earth.—Deut. 28:1-13

This entire proceeding foreshadowed a much greater and more beneficial arrangement. The Prophet Jeremiah wrote: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.” “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”—Jer. 31:31,33

God will establish a New Covenant with man, starting with Israel and finally encompassing all the families of the earth. Instead of Moses, there will be Christ to act as the mediator of this covenant. Paul identifies Jesus as the “mediator of the new covenant,” stating additionally that “he hath obtained a more excellent ministry [than Moses], by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.”—Heb. 12:24; 8:6

Jesus and the church, the Christ, will be in “mount Sion,” a symbol of the spiritual “heavenly Jerusalem,” administering the affairs and laws of the Messianic kingdom. (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1) Instead of the blood of animals, there will be the merit of the blood of Jesus, which will make the New Covenant possible and take away the sin of the world. The Christ will set forth the laws and regulations of the kingdom and assist all those who are willing to come to a full knowledge of the Truth. All will be informed of their privilege to return to harmony with God and gain everlasting life.

Jeremiah’s prophecy continues: “They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”—Jer. 31:34

THE TABERNACLE PICTURE

There is yet another beautiful picture of the great work of sin removal in the kingdom period found in the experiences of the Israelites under the old Law Covenant. To compensate for the inability of

the people to live up to the requirements of the Law, God instituted Tabernacle sacrifices, which he counted as cleansing the people of their sins in a “typical” sense. The High Priest sacrificed specified animals, which were accepted by God as an atonement for sin. When the sacrifices were completed, the children of Israel could receive the blessings of God through the priesthood for another covenant year.

Jesus is referred to in Scripture as the “great high priest, that is passed into the heavens.” (Heb. 4:14) His footstep followers are spoken of as his “royal priesthood.” (I Pet. 2:9) The sacrifices and service of the church during this life, carried out faithfully unto death, qualify them to become part of the royal priesthood in the Messianic Age. As priests of God, they will reign together with Jesus for the express purpose of blessing the masses of humanity returning from the grave.

As a result of receiving instruction in the ways of righteousness and acting in harmony with it, the world will gradually be restored to the original state of perfection represented in Adam. At the end of the thousand-year kingdom they will be fully cleansed of all imperfection and enabled to stand in the presence of God without the need of a mediator.

RESTITUTION THROUGH A PROMISED SEED

There is an interesting text of Scripture bearing on the restoration of man’s lost dominion which has generally been overlooked by most Christians. It is found in Acts 3:20,21: “He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive [retain] until the times of

restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Here is a clear statement which connects the Second Coming, or presence, of Christ in the affairs of earth with “restitution”—that is, the restoration of all that was lost in the fall of man.

Notice that this text cannot apply to the church, which is promised a new heavenly reward, not restoration to a former condition. It does apply, however, to the remainder of mankind, who will be blessed by a restoration of “that which was lost”—perfect human life in abundance. (Luke 19:10) As a result of the restitution process, man will regain his original state of perfection, the mental and moral likeness of God, the dominion of earth, and harmony with his Creator. Not only was this statement made by the Apostle Peter, but, as he points out, it has been “spoken by the mouth of all [God’s] holy prophets since the world began.” How strange, then, that more Christians have not understood that the kingdom era is designed to be one of blessing and benefit for man.

Other scriptures elaborate further on how the church will be used in helping to accomplish man’s restoration. The call of the church was not intended to result in the selfish enjoyment of heavenly bliss. Rather, this special class was designed by God to act as his instrument in blessing all the families of the earth. One of the earliest evidences of this is found in God’s promised blessing to Abraham. God said to him: “I will bless thee, and ... I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore. ... And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen.

22:17,18) The Apostle Paul later explained that the “seed” mentioned in this promise is, in reality, Christ, with his church. He wrote: “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”—Gal. 3:16,29

The essential features of the work Christ and the church will accomplish during the Messianic kingdom have already been touched upon. The beauties of this arrangement can perhaps be summed up in these words of the prophet: “Thus saith the LORD ... I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.”—Isa. 49:8-10

Hidden within the wording of this text are rich gems of truth. The broad outlines of the entire work of atonement to be carried on by the Christ class are found therein. God’s purpose is shown in its position as mediator of a “covenant of the people.” The people to be blessed by this New Covenant are not just those who happen to be living at the time, but it will include all that are in the grave.

To these “prisoners,” bound by the shackles of sin, ignorance, superstition, and death, it will be the privilege of the Christ class to say: “Go forth, ... Shew yourselves.” This is another way of expressing the resurrection of the dead and the enlightenment which will accompany it and be available to all during

the kingdom. The inhabitants at that time “shall not hunger nor thirst,” not only because of the abundance of natural food, but also because they will be nourished and sustained by the truth of God’s Word. Through processes of instruction and judgment, all the willing and obedient of mankind will be led back to the ways of God and to harmony with him.

ATONEMENT’S GLORIOUS CLIMAX

“Then cometh the end, when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” (I Cor. 15:24-26) The “end” mentioned here is not the “end of time,” nor the “end of the earth.” It is the grand finale of the thousand-year reign of Christ and the church. It represents the climax of God’s great plan of salvation, marking the moment when the earthly creation will have been fully purified and brought back to the perfection lost in the fall.

Christ’s mediatorial reign will then have accomplished its objective, and thus the need for the mediator will have ceased. When Christ shall “deliver up” the kingdom to the Father, man will again stand directly before his Creator to enjoy all the benefits of human sonship. Reconciliation between God and man will be complete, and all will jubilantly shout forth the words of our opening text: “We ... joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement!” ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

AUGUST 1—"Death and life are in the power of the tongue."—Proverbs 18:21 (Z. '99-75 Hymn 247A)

AUGUST 8—"Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again."—Luke 10:5,6 (Z. '04-108 Hymn 338)

AUGUST 15—"Now we exhort you, brethren, . . . be patient toward all."—I Thessalonians 5:14 (Z. '03-24 Hymn 154)

AUGUST 22—"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"—Luke 2:49 (Z. '03-53 Hymn 261)

AUGUST 29—"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss."—James 4:3 (Z. '03-204 Hymn 114)

"We are ambassadors for Christ."—II Corinthians 5:20

If we as Christians could keep this thought always prominent before our minds what a dignity it would add to our character! what a transforming power it would be! what an assistance to the new nature in its battle with the low and groveling tendencies of the old nature now disowned by us and reckoned dead! "Our citizenship is in heaven," says the apostle....While still living in the world we are not of it, but have transferred our allegiance and citizenship to the heavenly Kingdom....And now, as appointees of our Kingdom, while still living in the world amongst aliens and strangers, we as representatives and ambassadors should feel both the dignity and the honor of the position and the weighty responsibilities, and ever keep in memory the apostle's words, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."—Daily Heavenly Manna, August 13

A Covenant Between Friends

Key Verse: “As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.”
—*I Samuel 18:1, English Standard Version*

Selected Scripture:
I Samuel 18:1-5

THIS CONVERSATION

between David and Saul came on the heels of David’s stunning defeat of Goliath. The man who would be Israel’s champion and kill the Philistine giant had been promised freedom from taxes, great riches, and the hand of Saul’s daughter in marriage. (I Sam. 17:25) However, David’s motivation was the glory of God.

When the Philistine mocked David and cursed him by his gods, David said to him, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hand.”—vss. 45-47, *ESV*

It is not unreasonable to assume that Saul's son, Jonathan, heard David's response to Goliath. He was a commander in Israel's army and likely stood by Saul's side as David returned from the battle. While Saul's interest in David might be characterized as exploitive, Jonathan's was altruistic. He saw in David the same noble ideals which he himself endeavored to live by, and one of the tenderest friendships recorded in the Bible blossomed between them. "Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt."—I Sam. 18:3,4, *ESV*

Even when it had become apparent that Saul's reign was doomed to end and he sought David's life, Jonathan went to David and assured him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this. And the two of them made a covenant before the LORD."—I Sam. 23:17,18, *ESV*

While we don't know the particulars of that covenant, we certainly may take a lesson from it. Those who serve the Heavenly Father faithfully become our dearest and truest friends, and we may rightly pledge fidelity and friendship to those with whom we walk in the Christian way. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. ... I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you."—John 15:12-15, *ESV*

"A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." (Prov. 18:24, *ESV*) With our brethren in Christ, let us stick closer than a brother and offer our love and loyalty as a covenant between friends. ■

A Mother-Daughter Covenant

Key Verse: “*Ruth said, Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.*”

—**Ruth 1:16,**
English Standard Version

Selected Scripture:
Ruth 1:1-18

ALTHOUGH RUTH IS ONE

of the great women of the Bible, she was not an Israelite by birth, but a Moabitess. During a time of famine in Judah, a Bethlehemite named Elimelech took his wife Naomi and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, to Moab to live. However, the move did not produce the prosperity for which he had hoped. Not very long after their move, Elimelech died leaving Naomi and her two sons. In the course of time, the sons married Moabite women—Orpah and Ruth. The family lived in Moab about ten years until both

young men also perished.

The three widows, Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth had a very important decision to make. Receiving news that food was again available in Israel, Naomi determined to go home. However, she encouraged her daughters-in-law to return to their people. Despite much hugging and weeping, Orpah took Naomi’s advice, but Ruth clung to her.

Turning to Ruth, Naomi said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after

your sister-in-law.” (Ruth 1:15, *ESV*) Ruth answered with the beautiful words of our Key Verse, then added, “Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.”—vs. 17, *ESV*

Ruth’s loving declaration has echoed in the hearts of God’s people throughout the ages. It is a poignant covenant of personal obligation and serves as a model of commitment. “I will go where you go. I will live where you live.” We see a parallel in the Gospel after Jesus’ shocking statements to the multitudes that, in order to have life, they must eat his flesh and drink his blood. Many of his disciples ceased from following the Master, so Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”—John 6:53-68, *ESV*

These expressions of loyalty from Ruth and Peter resonate deeply with us. Would we consider for a moment going back to the pursuit of other gods such as riches, comforts, fame, or pleasure? Certainly not! We will stay with the Master all the days of our lives. Where else would we go? He has the words of eternal life. He is the bread from heaven that satisfies us as nothing else can. We would starve spiritually if we parted from him. Perhaps the same recognition filled Ruth’s heart. From Naomi she learned about the God of Israel, “The LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” (Exod. 34:6, *ESV*) This knowledge created a bond that was more precious to Ruth than anything this world had to offer. How fitting this was, for the name Naomi means “my delight.”

The psalmist encapsulated the spirit of Ruth’s loyalty to God, “Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.”—Ps. 37:4-6, *ESV*

A Covenant to Marry

Key Verse: *“He said, May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.”*
—**Ruth 3:10,**
English Standard Version

Selected Scripture:
Ruth 3:1-18

it about time I arranged a good home for you so you can have a happy life? And isn't Boaz our close relative, the one with whose young women you've been working? ... Tonight is the night of Boaz's barley harvest at the threshing floor. Take a bath. Put on some perfume. Get all dressed up and go to the threshing floor. ... When you see him slipping off to sleep, watch where he lies down and then go there. Lie at his feet to let him know that you are available to him for marriage. Then wait and see what he says. He'll tell you what to do.”—Ruth 3:1-4, *The Message Bible*

IN OUR KEY VERSE, BOAZ

commends the virtues of the young maid Ruth. She had gone to him at the advice of her mother-in-law, Naomi. Being a close relative, Boaz was eligible to assume the right of redemption of Elimelech's estate and that of his son Mahlon. Under such rights Boaz could both purchase Elimelech's property and beget children to Mahlon's posterity by taking the widow Ruth as his wife. This was Naomi's motive and hope.

The account reads, “One day her mother-in-law Naomi said to Ruth, My dear daughter, isn't

To support Naomi and herself, Ruth had gone into the barley fields of Boaz to glean. She was noticed by Boaz. Perhaps he found her outer beauty appealing but it was her inner beauty that truly attracted him. Boaz showed her special favor and gave her reassuring protections. These were a great comfort to her, a stranger in a strange land. However, she was surprised by these and asked, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner? But Boaz answered her, All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. The LORD repay you for what you have done, a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!”—Ruth 2:10-12, *ESV*

It seemed a disaster that Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion died, but God overruled these experiences to bring Ruth, a Moabite, into Israel to meet and marry Boaz. The genealogy in Matthew’s Gospel makes God’s purpose clear. Ruth is part of the lineage of Jesus Christ our Lord—“Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king,” of whom Jesus was descended.—Matt. 1:5,6, *ESV*

Boaz loved Ruth for her kindness to Naomi and her devout adoption of Israel’s God as her God. May we be as faithful as Ruth to our values, in the kindness we show others, and by our love for the Heavenly Father. In so doing we may prove ourselves faithful and be blessed as the Bride of the Lamb whom we have covenanted to marry. “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”—II Cor. 11:2 ■

A Covenant of Love

Key Verse: “*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*”

—**Ephesians 5:21,**
New International Version

Selected Scripture:
Ephesians 5:21-33

In short, it requires selflessness instead of selfishness. That is something that runs counter to the mind of the flesh.

Submission is greatly aided by continually acknowledging Christ as our Head. This is the practical application of the operative phrase in our Key Verse—“out of reverence for Christ.” The headship of Christ must ever be at the forefront of our thinking. “He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.” (Col. 1:18, *English Standard Version*) Submission to one another consists of the ability to listen to others’ views without feeling that we must always have a comeback. Love for our brethren behooves us to try to understand their thoughts so that dialogue is possible.

While there are some features of God’s plan that are fundamental, some may think that their viewpoint is of absolute importance, and will argue it to the extreme, even to the point of division. In the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul speaks of those who were attempting to subjugate

IF WE DESIRE TO BE FAITH-
ful to our covenant with the Lord, our Key Verse gives us a much-needed element for success—submission. The development of submission is one of the greatest challenges in our Christian walk, because it requires the suppression of our will, our preferences, our human or earthly values. In

the church in his day: “Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.”—Col. 2:18,19, *ESV*

Out of reverence for the headship of Christ we should remain loyal to his great mission statement regarding our faith. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”—John 13:34,35, *ESV*

Christ’s headship is his caring and guiding influence in our lives. “Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.” “Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” “No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.”—Eph. 5:23,25,29,30, *ESV*

We note these further words from the Apostle Paul: “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 2:1-5, *ESV*

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.” “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves his fellow-man has fulfilled the law.” (Rom. 12:10; 13:8, *NIV*) Thus, by exercising the proper reverence for Christ, we will bear the fruitage of our covenant of love. ■

The Holy Scriptures

“All Scripture, divinely inspired, is indeed profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for that discipline which is in righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted for every good work.”

—II Timothy 3:16,17, Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott

JESUS WAS VERY OUT-spoken in condemning the “tradition of the elders” as set forth by the scribes and the Pharisees of his day. He was asked by them why his disciples transgressed these traditions, and his reply was, in part, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” (Matt. 15:2,3) Thus Jesus indicates that the traditions of men are often contrary to the commandments of God

found in the Holy Scriptures.

Webster’s Dictionary gives as one definition of tradition: “The delivery of opinions, doctrines, practices, rites, and customs from ancestors to posterity; the transmission of any opinions or practice from forefathers to descendants by oral communication.” This thought is in sharp contrast to the Bible, in

which it is made clear that religious doctrines, practices, and rites come only by the direct instruction of God, or through his specially chosen instruments. In the New Testament, the Greek word translated “tradition”—the practice Jesus condemned—according to *Strong’s Greek Definitions*, specifically has reference to “the Jewish traditionary law.”

“Jewish traditionary law” was that mass of interpretations and adjustments which began to be formulated by the elders of Israel at an early date, transmitted orally and added to from generation to generation. So far as we know there were no written versions of these traditions in Jesus’ day. It was in the second century that these oral traditions began to be put into written form. Out of these written versions of tradition there finally developed the Jewish Talmud.

Not all Israelites, however, shared the views of the scribes and Pharisees with respect to tradition. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote: “What I would now explain is this, that the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the laws of Moses; and for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them, and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers.”

CONTROVERSY CONTINUES

The controversy as to the relative value of the written Word of God and the tradition of men, which began in ancient times and was highlighted by Jesus’ firm stand against tradition, has continued to our

day. One of the crucial issues today confronting many of the large denominations of Christendom is whether their traditions should be given equal authority with the Scriptures. Church leaders are faced with the problem that the necessity often arises of setting aside the Word of God because it conflicts with their long-held traditions.

The Apostle Paul, in the days of the Early Church, found it necessary to counsel the brethren to resist the influence of tradition. He wrote, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col. 2:8) The traditions Paul spoke of that were "not after Christ" and which wrought the greatest harm during that time were likely those related to false notions concerning the place the Jewish Law should occupy in the beliefs and practices of Christians.

The Apostle Peter wrote, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers." (I Pet. 1:18) Here, Peter emphasizes that neither the world's wealth nor the foolish conduct enjoined upon them by the traditions received from their fathers had purchased their redemption, but they were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ."—vs. 19

In Galatians 1:14, Paul speaks of his former zeal for the traditions of his fathers. We quote: "[I] profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." Now, however, Paul was zealous only for the Gospel of Christ, and this

zeal was even greater than it had previously been for tradition.

As we have noted, the word “tradition” simply implies the passing along of ideas to others by word of mouth. Thus, the word itself does not suggest anything necessarily evil. Paul, in fact, uses it in reference to his own teachings of the Gospel. He says, “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”—II Thess. 2:15; 3:6

In these verses, Paul uses the Greek word translated “traditions” as applying to his own inspired teachings which he had passed on to the brethren by word of mouth and by letter. However, since Paul spoke and wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, his teachings were a part of God’s message to his people, and not the opinions of men. The Apostle Peter noted this divine source of Paul’s teachings, saying, “Our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters.”—II Pet. 3:15,16, *English Standard Version*

HUMAN TRADITIONS

The traditions condemned by Jesus and the apostles are those of purely human origin. The specific traditions with which they dealt at that time pertained to the Law. Today there are many additional philosophies pertaining to the Gospel of Christ which have developed throughout the centuries, and which

eventually have become accepted by many as of equal importance to the Scriptures. As the definition of the word implies, these traditions started as opinions which were passed along to others orally, sometimes over many generations. Finally, they achieved dignity and a semblance of authority by being published in written form.

However, human tradition, unsupported by the teachings of the Bible, no matter how old, how venerable, or how seemingly reasonable, should be given no authority by the dedicated child of God and sincere student of the Bible. The Lord's true people will only give heed to the instructions of his Word, which states, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."—Isa. 8:20

THOROUGHLY FURNISHED

In our opening text, the Apostle Paul clearly emphasizes that the Lord's people need not look outside the Holy Scriptures for authoritative instructions in order to be acceptable servants to the Heavenly Father. Paul also wrote to Timothy, "Be diligent to present thyself to God, an approved workman, irreproachable, rightly treating the Word of Truth." (II Tim. 2:15, *Diaglott*) To be workmen approved by God, it is essential only that we rightly understand and treat the Word of truth, applying its precepts in our lives as we daily walk in the narrow way of sacrifice. It is not necessary to harmonize the Bible with traditions. Some traditions may be quite in harmony with the Word of God, but most traditions are not, and these should not have part in our "rightly treating the Word of Truth."

SMALL BEGINNINGS

Traditions usually have small beginnings. For example, the doctrine of the trinity is a humanly conceived tradition. There is no authority for this teaching in the Scriptures. To the one who first gave thought to this erroneous doctrine it probably seemed to be a reasonable conclusion. Certainly, the Bible speaks of God the Father, and it also speaks of Jesus, his beloved Son. The Bible also speaks much about the Holy Spirit of God.

Could it be, someone may have inquired, that these three are in some way the same? This seed of philosophy was possibly passed on to others, and then to still others. Finally, it was debated in church councils and accepted by the majority as fact. This tradition has become so deeply rooted in the minds of millions that to question it makes one disobedient, in their minds, to the Word of God. Yet, it is not taught in the Bible at all. Rather, this tradition makes void the teaching of the Scriptures that “there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, ... and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.” (I Cor. 8:6) It also makes the Holy Spirit a “ghost” instead of the holy power or influence of God, as the Bible teaches.—Acts 1:8, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*

Many other traditions developed during the Dark Ages. Among them is the teaching that the end of the world means the destruction of the earth by literal fire. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that the end of the world is the end of an age. (Matt. 24:3, *ESV*) It is the end of Satan’s kingdom, the “present evil world,” and is brought about to prepare for the establishment of Messiah’s kingdom, called by Peter

a “new heavens and new earth.” (Gal. 1:4; II Pet. 3:13) Recognizing this enables us to have a much clearer understanding of the end of the world prophecies than otherwise would be possible. God assures us in his Word, “Thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.” “The earth abideth for ever.”—Isa. 45:18; Eccles. 1:4

There is also the “immortal soul” tradition. This false idea began very early in man’s experience, when Satan said to mother Eve, “Ye shall not surely die.” (Gen. 3:4) As this tradition developed it took the form that “there is no death.” Then the “reasonable conclusion” was reached that since actual death is not the punishment for sin, some form of conscious punishment must await those who only “seem” to die. This idea, thought by many to be so reasonable, soon developed into the God-dishonoring doctrine of eternal torment in a fiery hell. This tradition has indeed made void the Word of God with respect to its simple statements that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die,” that “the wages of sin is death,” and that God has a loving provision for everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord!—Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23; John 3:16

INFALLIBILITY

As the great falling away from the faith foretold by the Apostle Paul developed, the tendency grew to impart authority to certain outstanding leaders in the church. The bishop of Rome received the largest share of this authority. In due course, it seemed reasonable to his supporters to confer infallibility

upon him and to regard him as the vicegerent of Christ—that is, in place of Christ. This tradition soon became a church-approved doctrine, but it has no support whatever in the Bible.

The only truly infallible teachings, so far as the humble Christian is concerned, are those contained in the written Word of God. God has so overruled the matter that, as Paul declared, the Scriptures given by inspiration are sufficient to make one “wise unto salvation.” (II Tim. 3:15) We know that it is in the providence of God that he has seen to it that his Word of truth has come down to us in written form. It does not depend upon oral transmission, as is true with the beginning of traditions. Oral testimony can be forgotten, distorted, or wrested, but not the written Word of God.

It is true that we do not have the original manuscripts of the Bible, as written by those who were inspired by God. We have to depend upon translations, which at times are less than perfect. Today, however, in the Lord’s providence, we have Greek and Hebrew concordances and lexicons which enable us to check the accuracy of translations. These helps are available in printed form as well as in computer software applications. This has proven to be a great blessing to the sincere student of the Bible, affording a clearer and more blessed understanding of God’s great plan of salvation.

Revelation 22:18,19 contains a warning against adding to or taking away from the Scriptures. While this warning applies particularly to the Book of Revelation, without doubt God is equally concerned with respect to his entire written Word. He wants his people to be meek and humble in their approach

to his Word. When he speaks, he rejoices to have his people take heed to what he says and to order their lives accordingly. This is one of the vital tests the Heavenly Father imposes upon all his consecrated people. They have dedicated themselves to do his will, and his will is expressed through his written Word. Are we truly following the divinely inspired Scriptures, or are we in part giving heed to the precepts and traditions of men?

THE NOBLE BEREANS

The Apostle Paul was one of the inspired servants of God who was used greatly in helping to provide his written Word to those in the Early Church. Paul rejoiced when he met those who insisted that even his teachings be tested as to their harmony with the inspired Scriptures already written. He indicates this in telling of his experiences with a group in a synagogue in Berea to whom he presented the Gospel. He said of these that they “were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”—Acts 17:11

In addition to searching the Scriptures for proof of what Paul preached to them, these Bereans were noble also in the fact that they received the Word of God “with all readiness of mind.” This is an important quality for all those who would be pleasing to the Heavenly Father. The disposition to turn a deaf ear to clear statements of the Scriptures, and to be guided instead by human philosophy and tradition, cannot be pleasing to the Lord. Let us endeavor to be among those who “tremble” reverently at his Word.—Isa. 66:5

HELPERS

The Lord, in his providence, has provided that his people should assist one another in the understanding of the sacred Word of truth. We all have opportunities and responsibilities along this line. The Apostle Paul states that some of the brethren may serve as teachers, some as evangelists, and some as pastors. (Eph. 4:11) In this regard, the Lord in his love provided a special servant for his people in this Harvest period of the Gospel Age, for which we are duly grateful.—Matt. 24:45,46

Throughout the Gospel Age, the oral and written assistance to the church provided by these helpers occupies a different position than do the writings contained directly in the inspired Scriptures. These helpers, often referred to as messengers, have never claimed to be the sources of truth with respect to God's plan. Rather, they have served to call attention to the glorious teachings of God as they are set forth in his inspired Word. If Paul, although an inspired apostle, considered the Bereans to be noble because they made sure that what he taught them was supported by the infallible Scriptures, how much more important it is for us to make sure that what we are taught by those not inspired, such as teachers, evangelists or pastors, is indeed supported by the Bible.

THE FUNDAMENTALS

All the fundamental teachings of God's plan are clearly established in the Bible by direct statements of Scripture. If we diligently study the Word of truth, we will discover the firm foundation upon which a clear understanding of these doctrines is established.

If, however, we try to harmonize these truths with opinions and traditions which are based merely on human philosophy, we will sooner or later experience disappointment, no matter how appealing the philosophy may be.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)" (Heb. 10:23) God is always faithful to his promises, but he takes no responsibility for the theories we may attach to his promises. We will never be disappointed when putting our faith in the promises of God, but could well be disappointed if we fail to see the difference between the promises of God and those human philosophies and traditions which we may unwittingly associate with his promises. May the Holy Scriptures, and all the blessed features of God's plan which are clearly revealed therein, become more and more precious to us as the days and years go by! ■

*"Blessed are they
that hear the word of God,
and keep it."
—Luke 11:28*

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Alfreda Gaidelis, Chicago, IL—June 30. Age, 88

Sister Viola Sigelko, Bay City, MI—July 1. Age, 109

Brother Timothy Thomassen, Albuquerque, NM—
July 15. Age, 76

Beacons of Light in a World of Darkness

*“Let your light so
shine before men,
that they may see
your good works,
and glorify your
Father which is
in heaven.”*
—*Matthew 5:16*

THE SENSE OF ENCROACH-
ing darkness in our modern
world is growing at a steady
pace. Fueled by the clamor and
rivalries between religious
sects, business interests, polit-
ical and national bodies, and
countless ideologies, conflicts

fill the headlines daily. Men’s hearts fail them for
fear of what the future may bring. Darkness is fall-
ing upon mankind, and light is needed. The light the
world needs is Jesus. He said, “I am the light of the
world. Whoever follows me will not walk in dark-
ness, but will have the light of life.”—John 8:12,
English Standard Version

Darkness is used in the Bible as a symbol of sep-
aration from God and a lack of knowledge concerning
his plans and purposes for mankind. The Apostle
John states, “God is light, and in him is no darkness

at all.” (I John 1:5) Those who know God as he reveals himself through his Word, and who are endeavoring to do his will, are represented by the apostle as walking “in the light.” All others are said to be walking “in darkness.”—vss. 6,7

This symbolic darkness settled down upon mankind as a result of sin, our first parents being the original sinners. They disobeyed God’s law, and so brought death upon themselves and upon all their progeny. Paul wrote, “By one man’s disobedience many [that is, the whole human race] were made sinners.” (Rom. 5:19) Thus “darkness” has covered the earth since the days of Eden. Indeed, the Prophet David referred to it as a nighttime experience: “Weeping may endure for a night,” and then adding the reassuring promise, “but joy cometh in the morning.”—Ps. 30:5

During this long and dreary night, when people have been mostly without either God or hope, he has had his witnesses in the earth. These, either by God’s hand upon them, or by their own faithful testimony concerning him, have been lights in a dark place. “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.” (Heb. 1:1, *ESV*) At no time have these witnesses convinced any considerable number of people of the truth pertaining to God, but they frequently served as guides to those who sought after righteousness in an earnest endeavor to find and serve him.—Acts 17:27

OLD TESTAMENT “LIGHTS”

Let us consider some powerful examples of godly ones that Jehovah has used as beacons of light to the human family. During the centuries prior to the

First Advent of Christ, God demonstrated his miraculous keeping power in the lives of his witnesses, to increase the effectiveness of their testimony. The Lord promised, “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper,” and this was ultimately true in connection with all his faithful witnesses during those ancient times.—Isa. 54:17

Going back to the time of the flood, we find that Noah was a witness for God, the Creator. The Apostle Peter informs us that Noah was a “preacher of righteousness.” (II Pet. 2:5) He did not reform the world of his day, but he was a light in that world because he bore witness concerning God and his purpose in sending the coming flood. Noah’s testimony for the Heavenly Father and for righteousness was vindicated by the outpouring of the deluge.

Joseph’s brothers sold him as a slave into Egypt. However, through the wonderful providences of God, he became the ruler of Egypt and the savior of his people. These experiences, recorded in Genesis chapters 37-50, wonderfully demonstrate the power and the glory of the Almighty! There is no record that Joseph ever preached a long sermon about God. His life of faith, and the occasional “word in season” by which he made his faith known, were more eloquent than any sermon he could have given.—Isa. 50:4

As time passed, a Pharaoh came to power in Egypt “who knew not Joseph.” The Israelites, then living in the land and greatly increased in number, were made slaves. God raised up Moses to deliver them. The name and glory of Jehovah were at stake as Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh. While Moses himself was powerless to accomplish God’s design for his people, he stood loyally on the side of

the Lord, and in the name of “the God of the Hebrews” demanded deliverance for the Israelites. We know the result. Plague after plague fell upon the Egyptians, concluding with the death of their firstborn.—Exod. chapters 1-12

Pharaoh then demanded that the Hebrews leave the country, which they did. However, he soon changed his mind and sent his army to recapture them. Again, the Lord intervened, opening a passageway through the Red Sea for his people, and allowing the waters to close over Egypt’s army as they tried to follow. Then was heard the majestic song of deliverance, “I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation.”—Exod. 15:1,2

Forty years later, upon entering Canaan, the Israelites were immediately confronted with the fortified and walled city of Jericho. No progress could be made in possessing the land until this city was conquered, but they were incapable of doing this by their own wisdom and in their own strength. The account states as “Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand.” Joshua challenged him, asking, “Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?”—Josh. 5:13

The man with the drawn sword identified himself as the “captain of the host of the LORD,” God’s angelic host. (vs. 14) This messenger of God outlined to Joshua the strategy to be employed in capturing Jericho. Joshua followed these instructions, and the walls of the city crumbled before them. (Josh. 6:1-20)

“So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country.”—vs. 27

Another outstanding victory which brought glory to God was Gideon’s defeat of the Midianites by his little band of three hundred. (Judg. 7:1-19) Again, it was the Lord who gained the victory. Gideon’s small group of three hundred broke their earthen vessels, letting the light of their torches shine out in the darkness, and blew their trumpets and shouted, “The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.” Then “the LORD set every man’s sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host [of Midianites]: and the host fled.”—vss. 20-22

The Prophet Elijah was a beacon of light during a dark period in Israel’s history. Through the influence of Jezebel, King Ahab’s wife, Israel had been led into the idolatrous worship of Baal. In the account recorded in I Kings 18:17-40, Elijah arranged, by the Lord’s direction, for a test to be made on Mt. Carmel to demonstrate which was the true and living God, Jehovah or Baal. It was agreed that the one who would cause fire to come down from heaven and consume a sacrifice offered to him would be the true God.

There was a tremendous gathering on and around Mt. Carmel that day. Elijah insisted that the priests of Baal give their demonstration first, which they did, but to no avail. All day they agonized and cried unto Baal, but he did not respond. Elijah taunted them saying, “Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened.”—vs. 27

The priests of Baal continued their agonizing cries to their god until the time of the evening sacrifice.

Then Elijah invited the people to draw near to watch the test he would make. He prepared an altar and placed a sacrifice upon it. Then, in order to demonstrate that no trickery was being practiced, he dug a trench around the altar and filled it with water, drenching the altar and the sacrifice.

Then Elijah prayed: "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again."—vss. 36,37

In response to this eloquent prayer, in which Elijah asked that God vindicate his own name before his people, fire came down and consumed the burnt sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, "Jehovah, He is the God; Jehovah, He is the God!"—vs. 39, *Green's Literal Translation*

We could go on recalling more thrilling incidents in which God glorified himself in the eyes of Israel, and frequently to the surrounding nations also, by the wonderful manner in which he fought for his people and delivered his faithful servants. They were all witnesses of the great Almighty Creator, not necessarily understanding his glorious character, but by the fact that they observed his divine favor and unwavering faithfulness to his chosen people.

WITNESSES OF JESUS

Beginning with Jesus' First Advent, the light of God's glory has been manifested in quite a different

manner. Jesus declared to his disciples, “Ye are the light of the world.” (Matt. 5:14) The era during which God miraculously manifested his hand in the affairs of his people Israel, and in the punishment of their enemies, was now drawing to a close. In a few short years Israel was to hear those fateful words, “Your house is left unto you desolate.” (Matt. 23:38) It was time for the light of God to shine out through other means.

In this new arrangement Jesus was the Leader, the Captain, the Forerunner. He declared of himself, “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12) Jesus knew that he could not personally remain in the world. The work of God entrusted to him would be continued by his apostles and those faithful Christians who would follow after. In Revelation 20:4 they are referred to as those who were “beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.” Although this language, taken literally, describes martyrdom, the greater meaning has to do with the giving up of life—sacrificing time, talent, energy and fleshly gain—in the service of the Lord. Literal death, of course, will come in some form to all of God’s chosen people. In this, however, we are encouraged by the promise, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10

In the beginning of the Christian era, continuing through the lifetime of the apostles, miracles were employed to demonstrate the power of God. Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead. After his death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the waiting disciples at Pentecost. They also performed miracles as a testimony to God.

Soon after the apostles fell asleep in death, however, miraculous demonstrations of divine power ceased. The Lord's people since then, throughout the age, have been called upon to walk by faith. They have been witnesses of Jesus, faithfully proclaiming the "gospel of Christ," which, as Paul asserts, is "the power of God unto salvation."—Rom. 1:16

The commission given to these by Jesus was that they should be his witnesses in all the world by preaching the Gospel. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19; Acts 1:8) In ages past, when the Lord's people were called his witnesses, it was because God revealed his glory by the miraculous manner in which he dealt with them. In the Christian era, those who testify of Jesus do so by proclaiming God's marvelous plan for human salvation which his Son was sent into the world to execute. In proclaiming this Gospel, they tell not only of the glorious truths of Jesus' death and resurrection, but also of the call to become joint heirs with him in the heavenly kingdom.

Further, we anticipate the coming miracle of the earthly resurrection. The full Gospel message declares the great future work which will bear witness to God's power—the awakening from death of all who have ever lived. "An hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth." (John 5:28,29, *New American Standard Bible*) All those who are raised from death, and choose to obey the Lord, will enjoy the blessings of life everlasting on earth.

In proclaiming the facts concerning these miracles, the witnesses of Jesus' gain strength from their knowledge of the faithful ones who preceded them. They know that the same God who sustained Noah

in his preaching, saved Joseph out of his brothers' treachery, delivered Israel from Egypt, and led them through the Red Sea and across Jordan to victory in Canaan, is abundantly able to fulfill all his good promises, including the deliverance of all mankind from sin and death.

Only a handful of these who give testimony for Jesus ever actually saw him, but they believe the corroborative words of those who affirmed the fact that he was raised from the dead. (I Cor. 15:3-8) These beacons of light also believe and proclaim Paul's declaration that when Jesus was resurrected, he was highly exalted above angels, principalities, and powers, and above every name that is named, to the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Eph. 1:18-23; Heb. 1:1-3) They accept and preach the further testimony of Paul that ultimately "every knee should bow, ... and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—Phil. 2:9-11

The witnesses of Jesus are glad to occupy this place, as his ambassadors, in the arrangements of God. They delight to obey the divine command to honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. Indeed, they realize that they cannot honor the Father at all, except as they do so through the Son. (John 5:23) They know that to revere the resurrected and glorified Jesus, and to testify of him, does not detract from the glory of God, for they realize that it was the Father's power that exalted his Son to this high position at his own right hand.

These "lights," living in a dark world, go forth with a song of praise upon their lips to God for his love in sending Jesus to be the Redeemer and Savior of mankind. They praise the divine wisdom which

designed such a loving plan of salvation, as well as God's justice which, while it could not clear the guilty, made provision to wash away their sins by the blood of the Redeemer. Finally, they praise the power of God by which every feature of his glorious purpose is implemented and made sure. As the "light of the world," they proclaim the glorious hope of "restitution" for all mankind during the thousand years of Christ's reign. (Acts 3:20,21) They are "blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom [they] shine as lights in the world."—Phil. 2:15, *ESV*

"AS THE SUN"

Through Jesus' light-bearing witnesses, the Gospel is preached until the end of the present age. The parable of the wheat and the tares pertains to the close of the Christian era. The witnesses of Jesus are called "children of the kingdom," in this parable. When the work of harvest is fully consummated these faithful followers of the Master are said to "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—Matt. 13:24-30,36-43

This shining forth as the sun will be in association with Jesus, the foretold "Sun of righteousness." He will "arise with healing in his wings," to enlighten and bless the whole world. (Mal. 4:2) The witnesses of Jesus will, as the Church triumphant, assist the Sun of righteousness in causing the knowledge of the glory of God to fill the whole earth, "as the waters cover the sea."—Isa. 11:9; 40:5

When Jesus said to his handful of disciples in the sermon on the mount, "Ye are the light of the world,"

he meant that ultimately they would be much more than merely a light “in” the world of today. It is in the latter, limited manner that they have thus far let their light shine. This has not been due to lack of zeal or enthusiasm on their part, but because of human limitations.

Just as Jesus explained, most have “loved darkness rather than light.” (John 3:19) Therefore those who dwell in darkness usually turn away from the light when they see it. Satan is largely responsible for this. As the “god of this world,” he has blinded the minds of those who believe not, “lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”—II Cor. 4:4

However, when the Sun of righteousness arises, and the “children of the kingdom” shine forth with him, Satan will be bound, that he may “deceive the nations no more.” (Rev. 20:1-3) Thus the “power of darkness” will be prevented from interfering with the shining forth of light from the glorious “Sun.” (Col. 1:13) All the world will have a full opportunity to become acquainted with Jehovah, the one true God, and with his beloved Son who died for them that they might live. Then will be testified to all that great truth that Jesus gave himself “a ransom for all.”—I Tim. 2:4-6

A THOUSAND YEARS

The work of enlightening mankind will require the thousand years of Christ’s kingdom. (Rev. 20:6) First, the living generation will receive the “pure language” mentioned by the Prophet Zephaniah. This will be immediately after the “fire” of God’s jealousy has purified the earth in the great “time of

trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.”
—Zeph. 3:8,9; Dan. 12:1

Many who pass through that trouble will be quite ignorant of the true God. This will necessitate giving them the pure message of truth, that they might have an opportunity to know and serve God properly, “with one consent.” This will be only the beginning. Then will come the awakening of all who have died. As each one hears the voice of the “Son of man” calling them forth from the tomb, they will also need to be enlightened. For this cause, the Sun of righteousness will shine throughout the thousand years. By its light, the long night of sin and death will be fully banished from the minds of all people.

The Prophet Zechariah gives us a beautiful illustration of this. He speaks of the thousand years of Christ’s reign as a “day” during which the Sun of Righteousness will be shining. “It shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem.”—Zech. 14:7,8

These “living waters” are pictured in Revelation 22:1,2 as a “river” flowing from the “throne of God and of the Lamb.” On either side of the river are trees of life, bearing life-giving fruit. We are told that the leaves of the trees are “for the healing of the nations.” Then, “The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let the one who hears say, Come. And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.” “And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light.”—vss. 17,5, *ESV* ■

Australia Pilgrim Trip Report

THE FOLLOWING REPORT highlights a Dawn sponsored pilgrim trip taken by Bro. Byron Keith from Seattle, and Bro. Michael Balko from Orlando to visit and to serve brethren in Australia. Sr. Margie Keith and Sr. Vickie Balko were able to accompany their husbands on the trip, which was much appreciated. Together, the four of us had the wonderful privilege of traveling for a month, from January 6th to February 5th, 2019, receiving countless blessings along the way.

Upon arriving in Sydney on January 7th we were met at the airport by Bro. Ray and Sr. Sue Charlton, who had traveled down from their home in Casino. The Charltons had rented a van and volunteered to drive us around to serve the various ecclesias that had been contacted for us to visit. Bro. Ray was the sole driver on our trip to meet with the brethren. This was a true demonstration of sacrifice and of putting brotherly love into practice. We recall the words, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,” and “Let brotherly love continue.”—John 15:13; Heb. 13:1



Ruth Laria, Ray and Sue Charlton

We left the airport for Parramatta, a western suburb of Sydney, and stopped for the night at a hotel. We had lost a day during our trip, crossing the International Dateline and traveling for over thirty hours, and it was now 16 hours later than it would have been for us in the United States. The next morning, we met the Charltons' daughter, Sr. Ruth Laria, for breakfast and fellowship. Then we departed for our drive to Tamworth, which was 300 miles away. Bro. Ray took the scenic drive through the mountains on a windy road. At one point we took a ferry across a river. The landscape there changes very quickly. We soon discovered that Australia is not all arid and desolate, but consists of mountains, vast forested areas, large ranches, and fertile farmland including orchards, vineyards, and groves. We saw our first kangaroos under a tree, and signs were everywhere warning of kangaroos and wombats.

Our day of travel always started with Sr. Sue reading the Manna. She would also read *Dawn* magazine articles as we drove along. Time passed quickly as

we had ongoing discussions and answered questions about the articles and scriptures cited, along with joyful singing.

After driving all day, we arrived in Tamworth to spend the night. The next morning, we left early to head for Bro. Darryn and Sr. Melinda Greenhalgh's farm near Gimpy. They have two sons, Zolton and Daniel. We arrived in the afternoon, fellowshipped and had tea. We were able to contact Sr. Rowena Liebeck, Bro. Darryn's sister, via Skype. She lives near Perth in the western part of the country. We spent nearly two hours discussing God's plan, and the topics of our discourses which would be given at the upcoming convention in Anglesea. That evening Bro. Darryn's mother, Sr. Margaret Greenhalgh, joined us for a lovely dinner and fellowship. We discussed the Truth late into the evening. They took us



The Greenhalgh Family

outside before bed in the pitch dark to show us the beautiful stars and God's handiwork. "The works of the LORD are great." "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." (Ps. 111:2; 147:4) It was a wonderful day!

We enjoyed Zolton and Daniel, and helped them collect eggs from the chicken coop the next morning. After a delicious country breakfast, Bro. Darryn took

us in the truck around his large farm that he shares with his brother. We helped move cattle from one pasture to graze in another and in the process saw two kangaroos go by very quickly. Then we left the farm, along with the Greenhalgh family, and traveled to the coastline to see the ocean. The sights and the fellowship were all very beautiful and a great blessing.

We left the Greenhalgh family later in the day and drove along the Pacific Coast Highway toward Brisbane and the home of Bro. Matthew and Sr. Monica Christopher, who are relatively new brethren, but very dedicated to the Lord and his service. Although we arrived late in the evening, we spent several hours getting to know each other and sharing thoughts about the Scriptures and the history of the Truth movement before retiring for the night. We had great fellowship with them, and thoroughly enjoyed their little girl, Charlie.

The next morning, which was Saturday, we were awakened by the song of a bird called a butcherbird. At 8:00 am we took part in a Bible study from the Book of Judges by conference call with brethren from various parts of Australia, the Philippines, and England. Later that day, Bro. Matthew took us to



One Day Convention at the Christophers' Home

see the beautiful city of Brisbane and for a walk along the banks of the Brisbane River. Our fellowship and discussion again centered on the Scriptures, the importance of developing the “fruits of the spirit,” and “building up yourselves on your most holy faith.”—Gal. 5:22,23; Jude 1:20

On Sunday, a one-day convention was held in the Christophers’ home. Including the four of us, 13 brethren and 3 children attended. In addition, 21 brethren joined us online. Bro. Michael gave the first discourse, titled “Devoted to Good Works,” and after lunch Bro. Byron served the convention with a discourse on the subject, “Lessons from the Abrahamic Covenant.” At the close of the day’s services the brethren lingered, singing hymns together for about an hour. Our day of sweet fellowship ended with Hymn 64, “God Be with You.” We all felt closely bound together as yokefellows with one another. After the brethren departed, we went to the beach area and walked along the shore. Sr. Monica guided us around, and after dark drove us to the top of a mountain which overlooked the city. The view was gorgeous, and we were delighted to see a shooting star!

We left our new brethren on Monday morning and headed toward Byron Bay, which is along the Gold Coast in Queensland. We drove along the seashore with its beautiful beaches and scenic vistas. Bro. Ray took us up the mountain to a beautiful lighthouse called Byron Bay Lighthouse. The scenery there was breathtaking, and we were reminded of the verse, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” (Ps. 119:105) Leaving there we traveled to Bro. Ray and Sr. Sue’s home to spend the night and catch up on some personal matters.

They live in an RV Resort in Casino Village which lies in a very lovely and peaceful setting. We shared many memories of our journey to that point, and the joy of having a part in spreading the Gospel message through the various means of witnessing available at this end of the age.

Wednesday we were back on the road, traveling the entire day until we arrived at Taree, New South Wales, for our night's stay at a hotel. We passed thousands of sheep, cattle, and horses along the way, and through several very old towns, some from the 1800's. These cozy, welcoming towns are very self-sufficient with butcher shops, bakeries, and the like, but with no big box stores. We noted that every town we traveled through had a monument erected to honor those soldiers who had served in various wars, many of whom gave their lives. We were again drawn to the Scriptures, and remembered the promise, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, ... nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isa. 2:4) We spent that evening at a hotel and met up with Bro. Richard and Sr. Kay Tazzyman, who had traveled from their home in Lara to meet us and accompany us to our next stop.

The next day we traveled to meet with the brethren in Corbath at the home of Bro. Robert Busuttill. Bro. Robert is very active in the witness work, giving out many tracts, booklets and 1st Volumes. That evening 12 brethren attended a meeting in his home, during which Bro. Michael had been asked to give a discourse. In addition to Bro. Robert, those in attendance included the Charltons, Keiths, Balkos, Tazzymans, Errol Higgin, Liliam Rodriguez, and

Noel Richards. The next day we went to Morisset and met in a community hall that Bro. Robert had rented. Bro. Byron served the brethren with a discourse, and 11 were in attendance, plus at least 3 more who joined us online.

On Saturday, we went to Parramatta, near the city of Sydney, to the home of Bro. Ray and Sr. Sue's daughter, Sr. Ruth, and her husband, Roy Laria. Meetings are held on Saturday in Sydney because that is the only day that they can all meet together. Sr. Ruth was away in Melbourne with her two children attending a Bible camp which is sponsored by the Polish class there. At the meeting in Parramatta, Bro. Michael gave a discourse which was followed by a planned question meeting on the discourse. The discussion was very stimulating, and as always, we had wonderful fellowship. Eleven brethren attended including the Charltons, Keiths, Balkos, Jolly Ebing, Renato and Ailin Piccini, Peter Hills, and Roy Laria.



Meeting in the Home of Ruth and Roy Laria

Following a look around the modern and scenic city of Sydney on Sunday, including seeing where Bro. Ray worked in the Fire Brigade, we left our hotel on Monday. Traveling now toward Melbourne on two lane roads through the countryside and climbing windy roads up through the Blue Mountains, we stopped to see the Three Sisters and Australia's version of the Grand Canyon. Later, while on an isolated road we spotted a group of about 30 kangaroos. Bro. Ray said he had never seen so many at one time. Continuing toward Melbourne, on Tuesday we drove through the town of Auchuca, which is one of the oldest river ports in Australia. It was also quite hot, as our phone recorded the temperature at 111 degrees Fahrenheit.



Kay and Richard Tazzyman

The next day, Wednesday, we arrived at the Tazzyman's home in Lara near Melbourne, just in time for afternoon tea. We had a lovely visit at their home, especially enjoying our discussions of God's Word.

On Thursday, we picked up Bro. Adam Kopczyk and went to visit an isolated brother, Jack Van de Plume. Bro. Jack has cancer and had cancelled his treatment for that day just to have us in his home near Pakenham. This was indeed a great sacrifice for him. He is another newly interested individual, and is very desirous to study the Bible, the Volumes, and to have fellowship with the brethren. His sister and cousin prepared a wonderful meal, and the

visit was a very blessed and uplifting experience for all of us.

On Friday we joined the Tazzymans, Christophers, and Charltons for lunch and fellowship. We then continued our travel to Camp Wilkin to attend the 4-day convention in Anglesea, Victoria, located about 50 miles southwest of Melbourne. Upon arrival we were greeted by several more of the brethren with whom we had visited earlier in our trip. We were delighted to see them again! Australia is a very large country, and the brethren are very spread out. Many have to travel great distances to get to conventions. Yet, they are happy to have the opportunity to meet with their brethren, and they view these occasions as blessings from the Heavenly Father. “Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.”—Ps. 50:5

The Anglesea convention is held at a religious conference center, and during their stay the brethren reside in group cabins that have four bedrooms each. We (Balkos and Keiths) had the privilege to stay in one of the cabins with the Charltons and Greenhalghs. We got settled in our cabin, and although it was about 105 degrees when we arrived, we had a very comfortable stay with many opportunities for fellowship.



Anglesea Convention

The convention began on Friday afternoon and continued through Monday afternoon. Following lunch in the dining hall, the convention started with a welcome from the conference director and a safety briefing regarding the facility, including special rules with regard to the wildlife that was on the premises. A Testimony Meeting on the topic “Hymns We Love and Why?” was then led by Bro. Richard Tazzyman. Supper followed, which provided more opportunity for fellowship before returning to our cabin. We were especially blessed by the custom that, prior to each meal, the brethren all gather around and face each other offering a prayer of thanksgiving by singing in unison.

The convention theme text was, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:16, *New American Standard Bible*) The first full day of the convention was on Saturday and started with a welcome address by Bro. Adam Kopczyk. Discourses, which are called “addresses” in Australia, were also given on Saturday by Bro. Colin Giles, Bro. Michael Balko, Bro. Matthew Christopher, and Bro. Byron Keith. Following afternoon tea, there was a Bible study on Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 13:46,47.

On Sunday we were all awakened by the butcherbirds, cockatoos, and kookaburra birds all coming together in unison around 6:00 am. It was something that we had not been accustomed to, but was, at the same time, an enjoyable way to start the day. The Sunday addresses were given by Bro. Tazzyman, Bro. Keith, Bro. Balko, and Bro. Adam Olszewski, who had traveled from Poland to

attend the convention. For those who needed it, headsets were provided to listen to Bro. Adam's address, which was translated from Polish to English as he spoke by Bro. David Walczak. During the afternoon, a children's musical presentation was given that was beautiful. Then followed a Bible study on I John 4:5-12.

After dinner, a full report on Dawn Activities was planned as part of the convention program. Bro. Byron and Bro. Michael gave a 45-minute presentation on the history of the Dawn, and information concerning the current methods being used to spread the Gospel message, including the publishing and printing of tracts, booklets, the Volumes, and *The Dawn* magazine. It was explained that, in addition, the Dawn utilizes many types of media to proclaim the Truth—television, radio, commercial spots, audio and video recording, the Internet, digital electronic media, YouTube, and a variety of magazine and almanac advertising.

During the convention, we were privileged to attend the annual business meeting of the Berean Bible Institute. The "BBI" publishes a twelve-page periodical entitled, "The Peoples Paper" four times a year and offers booklets from the Dawn. It was a joy to observe their dedication and willingness to sacrifice in proclaiming God's word of truth to those who have a listening ear.—Isa. 61:1-3

The program on Monday, the last day of the convention, included addresses by Bro. David Walczak and Bro. Darryn Greenhalgh. Bro. Ray Charlton closed the convention with a discourse, bringing to a conclusion a blessed four days together at the feet of our Master.

At the conclusion of the convention, and after bidding a tearful good-bye to our dear brethren, Bro. Ray and Sr. Sue gave us a guided tour of the south-eastern part of the country, including Australia's Great Ocean Road. We eventually worked our way back east to Melbourne, and our next scheduled stop. Each day of our travels was filled with admiration for the beauty of God's creation and spiritual discussions on God's Word.

On Friday, February 1st, we arrived at the home of Bro. Joe and Sr. Ewa Czapla and their three sons, Matthew, Mark, and Simon. Sr. Ewa had a wonderful meal waiting for us upon arrival, and we enjoyed their fellowship and the hospitality at their consecrated home very much. Bro. Joe's father also is presently residing with them, and although the elder Bro. Czapla speaks only Polish and we speak only English, we were able to have a nice visit with him. The Czaplas were indeed lovely brethren. That evening we were privileged to serve the young adults of the Melbourne Polish Bible Students with a study on "Laying Up Treasures." This group includes about fifteen individuals in their twenties who hold their



The Czapla Family

own meetings on Thursday and Friday evenings. It was a special blessing to see the interest and love of the Truth displayed by this group of young brethren, many of whom

keep in regular contact with young brethren in the United States.

On Saturday, Bro. Joe Czaplă took us on a drive, along with his sons and Bro. Merski. We were delighted to see the countryside, including



In Front of the Polish Meeting Hall

the abundant wildlife and beautiful ocean scenery on Phillip Island. It was a blessed day of sweet fellowship and discussion of various aspects of God's plan with our brethren. On Sunday we met with the Melbourne Polish ecclesia at their meeting hall, and with additional brethren who were in the area. Bro. Byron and Bro. Michael each had the privilege of serving the brethren with a discourse, and we all were blessed visiting the 60-70 in attendance. After lunch Bro. Adam Olszewski addressed the brethren, which was followed by a song service.



Sunday All Day Meeting at the Polish Hall

The meeting was closed by voting to send Christian love and greetings along with us to all we would come in contact with in our travels and correspondence. It was also then that we had to bid a tearful goodbye to dear Bro. Ray and Sr. Sue, who had sacrificed so much on our behalf. “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience.”—I Thess. 1:3

The four of us, Bro. David and Sr. Mirka Walczak, and Sr. Ewa Czaplă went out to lunch together on Monday. We were met by the Walczak’s daughter, Rebecca Hummel, and her son, Jeremiah. We spent the rest of the day, which was the last before beginning our long journey home, in fellowship together,



David and Mirka Walczak, Rebecca and Jeremiah Hummel, and Eva Czaplă

and viewed some of the beautiful botanical gardens near Melbourne. For a month, we had enjoyed the wonderful privilege of visiting with many brethren and had traveled over 4,000 miles within the country of Australia. Monday evening, we were accompanied to the airport by Bro. Joe and Sr. Ewa Czapla, and Bro. Sam Merski, all of whom stayed with us until it was time to depart. It was very hard to say goodbye to these dear, special brethren.

We left Sydney just after 1:00 am Tuesday morning, and after stops in Hong Kong and then Los Angeles, arrived home in Seattle and Orlando, respectively, just after noon on the same day, having “gained” back a day crossing again over the International Date Line. During our trip home we reflected upon the wonderful experiences that we had with our beloved brethren. “Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian Love.” It was a blessed privilege to have taken this trip to visit and serve the brethren in Australia. We made many new friends in the Truth who we will remember forever. The Australian brethren share the same goal as we do of “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” (Tit. 2:13) They are truly zealous in gathering together as often as possible and in sharing the “blessing of the gospel of Christ.” (Rom. 15:29) Everywhere we traveled, the brethren told us to send their special love to all those of like precious faith in “the States!” ■

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

—I John 3:16

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

N. Austin

Seattle, WA
August 31-September 2

D. Christiansen

Red Deer, AB August 9-11

M. Costelli

Seattle, WA
August 31-September 2

O. B. Elbert

Red Deer, AB August 9-11
New York, NY
August 31-September 1

M. Ensley

Seattle, WA
August 31-September 2

A. Fernets

Red Deer, AB August 9-11
Seattle, WA
August 31-September 2

R. Goodman

Seattle, WA
August 31-September 2

K. Humphreys

Red Deer, AB August 9-11
New York, NY
August 31-September 1

S. Jeuck

Jacksonville, FL August 25

B Keith

Red Deer, AB August 9-11

H. Montague

New York, NY
August 31-September 1

R. Niemczyk

Seattle, WA
August 31-September 2

J. Parkinson

Red Deer, AB August 9-11
Jackson, MI 17,18

D. Rice

Red Deer, AB August 9-11
Jackson, MI 17,18

“Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”
—Hebrews 10:24,25, English Standard Version

CONVENTIONS

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

RED DEER CONVENTION, August 9-11—Golden Circle Senior Centre, 4217 50 Avenue, Red Deer, AB, Canada. Rooms available at Super 8 Hotel, 4217 50 Avenue. Phone: (403) 358-7722. Mention Alberta Bible Students when booking. Other information, contact J. Neumeier. Email: jbnemeier@live.com

JACKSON CONVENTION, August 17,18—**New Location**—Jackson College, Bert Walker Hall, 2111 Emmons Road, Jackson, MI 49201. Contact L. Davis. Phone: (517) 414-5544 or Email: lydadav@gmail.com

NIGERIA GENERAL CONVENTION, August 23-25—Central School Obudi Agwa Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. O. Egbu. Phone: +2348033339949 or Email: egbucaje@gmail.com

NEW YORK CONVENTION, August 31-September 1—Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. For reservations, phone: (201) 529-5880. Deadline for reserving rooms at subsidized rate is August 16. Other information, contact G. Passios. Phone: (201) 939-3196 or Email: gpassios11@verizon.net

SEATTLE CONVENTION, August 31-September 2—Seattle Scottish Rite Center, 1207 N 152nd Street, Shoreline, WA 98133. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (206) 518-2678 or Email: laurie@flinn.us

TENNESSEE VALLEY CONVENTION, September 7,8—Comfort Inn, 4725 University Drive, Huntsville, AL. Contact T. Allen. Email: timallen6768@gmail.com

OGUN CONVENTION, September 14—Grace Estate, zone D, Ota, Nigeria. Contact J. Isife. Phone: +2348035-220141 or Email: johnisife@yahoo.com

WASHINGTON DC CONVENTION, September 14,15
—Hilton Garden Inn BWI Airport, 1516 Aero Drive, Linthicum Heights, MD 21090. Phone: (410) 691-0500. Contact M. Earl. Email: washingtonbiblestudents@gmail.com

COLUMBUS HARVEST CONVENTION, September 21,22—Ledwinka Farm, 10004 E 550 N, Columbus, IN 47203. Contact E. Ledwinka. Email: ledwinka@hughes.net

NAMBOUR CONVENTION, September 27-29—Alexandra Park Conference Centre, 13 Mari Street, Alexandra Headland, QLD, Australia 4572. Contact D. Greenhalgh. Email: darryngreenhalgh@hotmail.com

COLORADO CONVENTION, October 4-6—Holiday Inn Express & Suites, 17140 West Colfax Avenue, Golden, CO 80401. Contact D. Moss. Email: deb.moss@comcast.net

WEST NEWTON CONVENTION, October 5,6—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact L. Mlinek. Email: lmlinek@verizon.net

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 12,13—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact T. Malinowski. Phone: (616) 304-7691 or Email: malinowski.tjm@gmail.com

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 26,27—South Seminole Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Contact C. Goodman. Phone: (407) 695-6815 or Email: clmgoodman@gmail.com

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 26,27—Masonic Hall, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA. Contact M. Allard. Phone: (805) 773-2962 or Email: medlallard@juno.com

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, November 2,3—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact D. Farchione. Phone: (414) 324-9667 or Email: debfarchione@aol.com

NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 3—Italian-American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact A. Suraci. Phone: (203) 248-3793/(203) 430-5770 or Email: annasuraci@comcast.net