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A Herald of Christ's Presence

June 2010



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Man's Changing Food Culture

*“God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.”
Genesis 1:29*

THE WORLD'S FIRST PAR-ents, Adam and Eve, were created perfect and placed in the garden of Eden which our all-wise and loving Heavenly Father had prepared for them. They were also provided with food to keep their bodies alive, and were thus sustained by the products of the soil, such as vegetables and fruit-bearing trees.

God's design in creating man was that they would enjoy an endless life span, but that wonderful gift was forfeited because of Adam's disobedience to the divine law. Generations of his offspring—closer to the original perfection—enjoyed greater longevity than those who became farther removed from it. The scriptural account records Methuselah living 969 years. (Gen. 5:27) After the flood of Noah's day, the average life span was greatly reduced and a more rapid decline was experienced, ending in the seventy years of which Moses wrote. “The days of our years

are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”—Ps. 90:10

ANIMAL FLESH SANCTIONED

It was not until after the flood that God sanctioned the eating of animal flesh for food. From the scriptural account, we read, “God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.”—Gen. 9:1-4

THE WORDS OF DAVID

David puts this whole matter in perspective. He first speaks of man’s fall into sin and death. “The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful. The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good. He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.”—Ps. 36:1-4

The psalmist then continued by speaking of God’s continuing care and providence over his human creation. “Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy

righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart. Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me. There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.”—Ps. 36:5-12

Throughout many ages, the animal creation has been a source of food for the human family. However, even in our enlightened day with its improved economic, medical, and sanitary conditions in many parts of the world, mankind remains short-lived. In the writings of Job, we read, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.”—Job 14:1-5

FOOD TRANSITIONS

The eating of food is a basic necessity of life, and without it no one could live. What is eaten, however,

and how it is prepared may change from one place to another, or from one time period to another. Traditional food cultures may be replaced with new ones. Changes may occur because of innovations in agriculture or industry, or from publicity. A new food habit will not only introduce new varieties to a particular population's diet, but also may introduce changes in lifestyle. During the twentieth century, transitions have taken place in many parts of the world. What we eat and drink today and how we consume these foods is a reflection of the food transition in a changing modern world.

What we do in our daily lives also helps mold, or shape, our culture. Soft drinks and fast foods are both reflections of our modern lifestyle. These food habits have also contributed to a growing 'pop culture' which defines the popularly accepted trends of belief, pattern, and behavior within our society.

OUR CHANGING CULTURE

Before the nineteenth century, carbonated drinks were usually sold commercially as a tonic or medicine. It was not until fruit syrups, and then later artificial flavorings and other preparations, were added to the soda water that made soft drinks more popular. Soft drinks, as opposed to hard or alcoholic beverages, were sold in soda fountains which became more prevalent during the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This resulted in the rapid rise of neighborhood soda fountains which were located in drugstores all over the country, and became accepted as places for social gatherings.

The popularity of soda fountains coincided with the growing temperance movement which encouraged the use of soft drinks instead of hard drinks. Prohibition laws against alcohol were passed, particularly in the southern states, and women's groups such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union supported the growth of soda fountains. Soon after World War I ended the 18th Amendment to the United States Constitution was passed that prohibited the manufacture and sale of hard liquors throughout the country. The 1920s was known as the prohibition era and, by the time the law was repealed in 1933, soda fountains and the drinking of soft drinks had become a well-established institution in the American way of life.

The relationship between soft drinks, soda fountains, and fast foods began with the rise of the first fast-food stands that began to appear during the 1920s. Its popularity grew until after World War II when the industry experienced explosive growth. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the tremendous growth in the American economy made the ownership of the family car possible for most middle class families. A major factor during this time was America's love affair with the automobile, and with the construction of an entire new highway system these factors encouraged the development of new and ever more distant suburban communities. Middle class families began to move away from congested cities in search of a freer lifestyle in the country. This also encouraged the fast-food industry to help feed those who lived there, and drive-in, fast-food restaurants were able to meet the new demand.

FAST FOODS

Initially, fast-food chains catered to automobile owners in suburbia. The concept of a readily available food outlet reflected the American culture which was now centered in speed and efficiency. More and more people prized the quality of the food and its unique preparation. Fast food and soft drinks not only reflected America's values, but also helped shape a new lifestyle.

However, quenching one's thirst by drinking a Coke or Pepsi was not the only matter of consideration. Advertisements associated soft drinks with new tastes and status symbols. Drinking a certain beverage would make you feel young, athletic, and fun-loving, and manufacturers of these products spent large sums of money on advertising to help fashion these images.

The fast-food industry also targeted consumers who came to appreciate the whole new experience that included drive-thru facilities along with toys and movies that were available at the checkout counter. Advertisements often portrayed popular sports figures to encourage potential customers to take advantage of their services. The experience of eating at one of these facilities was a whole new way of life which was based on an intrusive and subtle ideology of consumerism.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH ISSUES

From fried onion rings to double-sized and loaded cheeseburgers, fast food is becoming one of the world's fastest growing food types. It is estimated that about half of all restaurant profits in the United States are now derived from the consumption of

fast foods, and the industry continues to expand. Both here, and in many other countries of the world, it is radically changing the way people eat.

The eating of fast foods has become a significant part of the younger generation's diet in the United States, and increasingly throughout the world. However, the nutritional value of these products is being questioned. Studies indicate that consumption of some of these foods may be related to an increasing health risk, especially in children. A particular hazard is the E-coli bacteria that meat products are susceptible to. Because of the long supply chain through which the fast-food industry operates, the handling and sourcing of meat is very hard to monitor.

The consumer buys fast food because it is cheap, quick, and heavily promoted, but its benefits are often deceptive. Foods that are eaten in the car, or at a desk, are replacing home-cooked meals that were once enjoyed with other family members or friends. Around the world, the more traditional meals and recipes are yielding to soft drinks, sodas, burgers, and other highly processed and standardized items. Many fast foods are fried which facilitates quick preparation. They are high in fat content and salt, and low in fiber, vitamins, and some minerals. This high level of consumption is fueling a global epidemic that may lead to obesity, and other more serious and chronic illnesses.

ADDED VALUE OPTIONS

Customers may be enticed to eat more than their daily requirements with the 'added value option' that some fast-food restaurants offer their patrons. For a small additional charge, people can order a

larger size of certain products. This adds considerably to the calorie intake along with the other factors. A typical meal from a fast-food restaurant containing a serving of fries and a cheeseburger amounts to approximately 1,000 calories. This is about half of the recommended daily allowance for the average person. However, a 'supersized combo meal' may provide a person's entire daily recommended intake of calories, but it will probably include very few of the essential nutrients.

The consuming of fast foods may be equated with bad eating habits. An extra large portion of a certain item may seem like a real bargain, but such features add excessive amounts of empty calories to the daily diet. This is due mainly to the large portions that fast-food restaurants are accustomed to serving. The tendency is for people to enlarge their appetites by eating far beyond their required limit.

PORTION RELATED PROBLEMS

A new type of health problem has arisen in recent years known as the 'portion distortion syndrome.' Along with the ever-increasing size of fast-food portions, the average waistline of the American consumer has also grown. According to recent studies, more than half the people are now in a weight range that increases the risk of developing health problems. These include heart disease, stroke, cancer, type-2 diabetes, and osteoporosis. Further, it is also reported that about one third of this number were considered to be overweight.

Part of the weight issue is linked to an increase in the size of the portion. With the gradual increase

in the amount of food consumed, people have lost touch with reality and what should be considered a healthy amount of food to eat. During the last fifty years, North American portion sizes have increased dramatically without consumers even being aware of it. The *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* reports some interesting statistics. In 1955, an average order of French fries weighed 2.4 ounces, while today it has risen to 7.1 oz. In 1961, Americans consumed 2,883 calories per person per day. By the year 2000, it had risen to 3,817 calories. A muffin had 200 calories and weighed 1.5 oz. Now it is 5.0 oz. with 500 calories. A bagel used to be 3 inches in diameter with 140 calories. Today it is 6 inches with 350 calories. Many convenience stores now sell soft drinks in 64 oz. containers.

One well-known restaurant now offers a sandwich that is bun-free. It features two chicken filets in place of the buns, with two pieces of bacon and two slices of melted cheese inside, and a mayonnaise laden sauce spread over it. It contains 540 calories and has 32 grams of fat. People have become gradually accustomed to the larger size portions and eat more whether they need it or not.

THE FIRST LADY'S CAMPAIGN

In February, 2010, United States First Lady Michelle Obama announced a new program "Let's Move" that she has directed at one of the most serious threats to the future of America's younger generation. Her intention is to help solve the staggering epidemic of childhood obesity that now affects one-third of all children. In her campaign, she

will consult athletes, farmers, doctors, the fast-food industry, and the media.

Her initiative aims to rally families, communities, schools, urban planners, politicians, and the media to help confront the growing problem. She pointed to the urgency of taking action today, at a time when there are already three times more obese children in the United States than there were even 30 years ago. Because of obesity and the many illnesses and chronic conditions related to it, health experts now proclaim that this generation of American children will be the first to have shorter life spans than did their parents.

Judith Palfrey, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, stated that the alarming rise was due to lack of exercise and a diet that is too heavy in fat and sugar, and too light on fresh fruits and vegetables. She said that the United States has the highest number of obese children in the developed world. One out of every five children aged 6 to 19 are obese, and are at greater risk for a whole host of maladies, ranging from high blood pressure to diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

Palfrey also points to the fact that military leaders confirm that obesity is now one of the most common disqualifiers for military service. Economic experts report that large amounts of money are needed to treat obesity-related conditions, and that medical costs associated with excessive weight have soared in recent years.

One man who attended the inauguration of the First Lady's campaign pointed to America's inner cities that are home to many of the nation's poorest people. He said eating healthful food is rare, and

many families live on cheaper processed meals that would not be recognized as being food by our grandmothers. Among steps to control obesity are an initiative to bring grocery stores that sell healthy food to inner cities, a rewards system for schools that offer healthy meals, and regular physical education classes.

Mrs. Obama has set a healthy example herself by planting a vegetable garden on the White House grounds, which local schoolchildren helped to cultivate. Private industry has backed the First Lady's campaign which helps serve meals daily to school children in the United States, pledging to include more fruit, juice, vegetables, whole grain, and milk options in lunches. Grassroots environmental organization The Sierra Club, praised the First Lady for her commitment to create community gardens and parks, and safer outdoor spaces for children. President Obama has signed an executive memorandum to set up a task force that includes members of his cabinet and other officials to draw up a master plan to combat childhood obesity.

THE KINGDOM PROSPECT

The human family will become acquainted with a healthful and wholesome way of life under the administration of Christ's future kingdom. They will eat natural foods and return to conditions much like they were before sin and death were introduced to the earthly creation. Mankind will receive the proper nutrition from the fruits, vegetables, nuts, and other wholesome foods that will be abundantly provided by a perfected earth that is no longer under the curse. (Gen. 3:17-19; Rev. 22:3) Even

those who are in their graves will come forth and be given opportunity to walk on the highway of holiness. (Isa. 35:8) All who willingly obey the laws of the kingdom will attain everlasting life. “They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.”—Mic. 4:4

THE BREAD OF LIFE

On one occasion during Jesus’ earthly ministry, he was asked to give proof concerning whether he had been sent by God. “They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”—John 6: 30,31

John recorded the Master Teacher’s answer wherein he made clear to the people that he was greater than Moses. “Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”—vss. 32-35

Jesus explained that the Heavenly Father had indeed given manna to his typical people Israel when they were in the wilderness, but had now sent a Savior into the world. He was the ‘true bread from heaven,’ and could offer them the bread of eternal life. He stood before them as that true gift from heaven.

MANNA FROM HEAVEN

Looking back to that time when the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for forty years, their diet consisted mainly of manna that had been miraculously supplied to them by God. It is recorded, "They took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no."—Exod. 16:1-4

Manna cannot be easily identified with any known foods today, but it was evidently a white substance, something like coriander seed. It was either ground, or pounded into cakes, and then baked. It tasted like a honeyed cake and was made available to Israel every day except on the Sabbath. They were required to gather enough the day before to facilitate their observance of the Sabbath.

SPIRITUAL FOOD

Throughout this present Gospel Age, the faithful followers of our Lord have been feeding upon

him and receiving the spiritual food of Truth. Even as fleshly Israel needed the manna which God provided for them, so also do we require spiritual food as our daily sustenance. It gives us strength to continue the journey of our consecrated walk toward the heavenly kingdom. The Truth must be sought daily if we would receive its special benefits. It requires searching the Scriptures and putting forth painstaking effort to gather our daily portion.

During their wilderness journey, the Israelites became thirsty for water, and cried unto Moses who, in turn, cried unto God for the life-sustaining water. It was granted to them through the smiting of the rock, which typified Jesus. "Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also." (Num. 20:9-11) The grace which flows to the Lord's people during this present Gospel Age comes through Christ as a result of his being smitten for us.

THE WATER OF LIFE

Under the administration of his glorious future kingdom, Jesus will be manifest to the poor groaning and sin-sick human creation as the real bread of life. All the obedient who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be given opportunity to feed upon the true bread from heaven. "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding

out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”—Rev. 22:1,2 ■



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JUNE 3—“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech, there are no words, their voice is not heard; but their melody extendeth through all the earth, and to the end of the world their words.”—Psalm 19:1-4 (*Leeser*) (Z. '95-121 Hymn 283)

JUNE 10—“Lord, teach us to pray.”—Luke 11:1 (Z. '95-213 Hymn 115)

JUNE 17—“Who may abide the day of His coming: and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner’s fire,...and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.”—Malachi 3:2,3 (Z. '96-45 Hymn 67)

JUNE 24—“If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.”—Romans 8:17 (Z. '96-151 Hymn 13)

The Needed Strength

I wandered o'er the mountain side, where rocks lay all around,

Within a tiny crevice there, a little tree was found.

Though crushed between two cold, gray rocks, the sapling still did try,

To grow into a tree, and reached its branches toward the sky.

"You may as well give up," I said, "Your chances there are few;

Against such odds, you try in vain—Life was not fair to you."

The years rolled by, and once again I wandered through that land;

And in that crevice, I beheld, a tree both tall and grand.

*And as I closer drew, I saw the rocks were pushed aside,
The crevice, once so very small, was many inches wide.*

"I might have known," I whispered then, "That God, who made the seed,

Would put within its tiny form the strength for every need."

How can we doubt our Father's care, who thus cares for a tree?

Will He not give His children strength to be what we should be?

When obstacles are in the way, should we sit down and sigh,

And so fall short of what we'd be, if we would only try?

We'll win, if we remember this, for it is very true—

God's strength is quite sufficient for all things we're told to do.

—Poems of Dawn

Visible to God

Key Verse: “*Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.*”

—*I Thessalonians 1:6*

Selected Scripture:
I Thessalonians 1

WE MAY VIEW THIS SCRIPTURE initially with a comprehensive view that shows the divine favor and care manifested in God’s providential overruling for the welfare of his sheep. It is pointed out to us in the text, “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.” (Ps. 23:1) Of all of the beautiful pictures which the Lord gave us through the Prophet David, perhaps none seems more forceful. It is true that our dear Redeemer was sent forth as the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, and by his death opened the door into the sheepfold of divine love, favor, rest, and peace. This was a favorite picture that our Lord Jesus gave us of himself: “[I] know my sheep, and am known of mine” (John 10:14); “My sheep hear my voice, . . . and they follow me” (vs. 27); “A stranger will they not follow, . . . for they know not the voice of strangers.” (vs. 5) The Apostle Peter followed the same thought when speaking of our Lord’s return. He refers to him as the Good Shepherd of the flock, saying, “Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” (I Pet. 2:25) The same thought is maintained when the elders of the church are referred to as pastors and “overseers, to feed the church of God.”—Acts 20:28

But, while it may be refreshing for us to take the viewpoint of the divine favor and care manifested in provisions made for our welfare as the Lord's sheep, it is also good that we keep in mind that the undershepherds do not own the flock. Their value to the flock as 'overseers' consists in their faithfulness in making known to the sheep the message of the Great Shepherd and, to the extent of their ability, communicating his attitude or spirit with his Word. The faithful of these, like Paul, may urge, as 'Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord.'

A key to understanding the point of our scripture is to come to the realization that the apostles and their experiences were recorded as examples for us. Their lessons of sacrifice and suffering were not provided as exceptions, but were given to us to follow. These important lessons from their teachings help to point out to us by means of various evidences that we are the children of God. We are referring also to the begetting, quickening, and sealing of the Holy Spirit by which it may be discerned that we are followers of our Lord Jesus, just as the apostles were. It is through our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus that we are able to hear the voice of the Heavenly Father, and follow him with joy. We are reminded of the verse, "The disciples were filled with joy." (Acts 13:52) Along with this joy in knowing that we are walking in the Lord's footsteps, we will also have trials, and the same types of testings as the apostles and our Lord Jesus had. But we should be especially glad to know that the 'little flock' which the Lord is selecting during this present Gospel Age is promised to be granted an entrance into the divine fold. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ."—Heb. 13:20,21 ■

Pleasing to God

Key Verse: “As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.”
—*I Thessalonians* 2:4

Selected Scripture:
I Thessalonians 2

WHEN WE LOOK BACK AT the attitude of Apostle Paul in which is viewed his role as a teacher, we need to look no further than to his letter to the Romans. In particular, we call attention to the way that he began this epistle. “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.)” (Rom. 1:1,2) It is evident by these words that they were penned by a divinely inspired apostle, and the Early Church carefully cherished this epistle, just as we continue to do today. Paul’s life, after his conversion on the road to Damascus, was one of brotherly love, sacrifice, devotion to God, and encouragement.

Upon being released from prison at Philippi, Paul, Silas, and Timothy traveled to Thessalonica. As was his custom, he went first to visit the Jews. Not only were the Jews acquainted with the prophecies and looking for their fulfillment in a Messiah, being better prepared for the message of the Gospel, but additionally it was part of the divine will that the offer of the Gospel would first go to them. As we know from historical accounts, the synagogues were often opened for people such as Paul to

show what they knew of the teachings of the Scriptures. It was due to these opportunities that Paul was able to meet with the Jews on three Sabbath days. It was also between these times, according to his own narrative, that he labored with his hands for his temporal necessities. “Ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.” (I Thess. 2:9) It was also during this stay of from three to six months that he received help from his brethren in Philippi on two occasions.

The results of his labors would form the nucleus of a flourishing church, to which two of his epistles would be addressed. The apostle’s attitude toward these brethren may be taken as a standard for his general attitude toward all of the Lord’s own dear ones. He did not deal with them as a lord, or master, over them, or as subordinates, using his own words, “We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.” (vs. 7) He admonished, comforted, and instructed them, “as a father doth his children.” (vs. 11) Paul lived an unblamable, unselfish life amongst them, giving them in turn the Gospel, and with it his very life.—vss. 8,10

The method of Paul’s teaching is expressed in the statement that he “reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead.” (Acts 17:2,3) He appealed to the Scriptures, offered explanations of their meaning, and pointed out their meaning found in its fulfillment in the experiences of our Lord. In addition to teaching about the scriptures that spoke of Messiah’s kingdom, and the position of Israel as his people to bring blessings to all the families of the earth, Paul reminded them of the sufferings of Christ. (Luke 24:26,46) He encouraged them in the way of sacrifice, and showed the importance of leading a life pleasing to God—“For ye are our glory and joy.”—I Thess. 2:20 ■

Sustained through Encouragement

Key Verse: **PAUL WAS APPARENTLY**
*“Brethren, we were
comforted over you
in all our affliction
and distress by
your faith.”*
**—I Thessalonians
3:7**

Selected Scripture:
I Thessalonians 3 His hard experiences at Philippi, his limited success at Athens, his need for fellowship, and his problems with having enough money for his daily sustenance had added to his temporary condition.

Evidently, the Lord saw that his servant Paul needed some special encouragement at this time. He was being reminded of the words of our Lord Jesus, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) ‘Tribulation’ has the thought of serious trouble, a combination of troubles that makes the experience serious even to the point of being severe because of continued troubles. Tribulations are necessary for the perfecting of the saints of God, for their trial of faith, and for the testing and preparation of those who would be joint-heirs. Suffering in the present time for the Truth’s sake has with it the same thought as it had in Paul’s day. All who are running for the prize

should look for these trials as a proof that they are making progress along the racecourse. Indeed, since darkness and evil hate the light, we should always remember these words: “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth.”—I Pet. 1:7

Wherever we find one of the Lord’s followers, we have an opportunity of serving the Lord, of being channels of his mercy, and helping a person who might be downcast. All comfort, though working through God’s individual servants, or the Church at Corinth, was of God; this is God’s disposition—to comfort. We, through our love, should desire to be of comfort and consolation and help to those of like precious faith. Paul needed such experiences to bring out the best that was in him and to make his epistles all the more useful. With the Lord’s people, possibly his dealings with them at times may be with the goal of preparing them for future usefulness in his service. Paul shows how he exemplified his great love when he asks the Father to help bless and strengthen his brethren. “The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, . . . even as we do toward you.”—I Thess. 3:12

Hope for future work in God’s service is what should inspire us to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling.” (Phil. 3:14) Hope and courage, inspired by God’s precious promises and strengthened by experiences, will keep us joyful while we are still going on in our Christian walk striving to resist the Adversary. We should learn to rejoice in tribulation because it is an evidence that we are being made ready for a place in his glorious heavenly temple.

We must learn to trust in God’s providence in all of our affairs, not only in favorable experiences, but also in those that are difficult for us, “in all our affliction and distress.” (I Thess. 3:7) We have the present joys and hope and faith in the things unseen. “Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous.”—Ps. 33:1 ■

Demonstrated in Action

Key Verse: “*We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.*”
—*I Thessalonians 4:1*

Selected Scripture:
I Thessalonians 4:1-12

WE SHOULD IMMEDIATELY have our attention focused on the way that the Apostle Paul begins our key verse. He uses the words ‘beseech’ and ‘exhort,’ which both convey the thought ‘to ask for earnestly,’ or ‘to urge.’ He is admonishing, by way of encouragement, the footstep followers of the Lord Jesus. Paul is pointing out the necessity to apply the things that they have heard and been taught, so that they might go along in the narrow way in a manner pleasing to God. Through his writings, he is striving to bring out the best in himself and in others, and, in a sense, to make his epistles all the more useful to the true church. Possibly, the Lord’s dealings with us at times may be with the same end in view, which is our preparation for further usefulness in his service.

Certainly one of the most important factors to consider involves the development of our love. This development of love is the type that leans on the Lord, and asks not what we can do, but what the Lord can do in us

and for us. We recall the Lord's words, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5) It is the Lord's doing, and we can accomplish very little for ourselves. He also has many things at his disposal to help us with our development. The Father is well-pleased to help us increase our love, to increase in the knowledge of the Word of God, our recognition of divine providence, and our fellowship with the brethren.

"My beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (I Cor. 15:58) Our work at this time may seem to be insignificant, because there are few who have listening ears and hearts that are prepared to accept the Gospel message. But, our work, if rendered unto the Father with the proper heart attitude, will be deemed by God to be acceptable to him through Christ, and will lead us to joint-heirship with our Lord in the Millennial Age.

Our consecration to the Lord, while it must be sincere and complete, was only the beginning. We are to grow in sanctification, and grow in knowledge. Our hearts must gradually be increased in their capacity to be filled with the love of God, and in their complete devotion to him. The Apostle exhorts, "Be [ye] filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18); and again, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" and should abound more and more.—Rom. 5:5

The provision made for this enlargement of our hearts is expressed in the words of our Redeemer's prayer for us, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17) If we strive to do these things, our sanctification, or full setting apart, will increase along with our love and service for the cause of truth and righteousness. ■

God Speaks to His People

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds”
—Hebrews 1:1,2

WHEN WRITING TO THE Hebrew brethren, the Apostle Paul explained that it was through the inspired mouthpieces of God that he gave special instructions to his consecrated people. The Prophet Hosea confirms this fact, when he wrote, “I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.”—Hos. 12:10

God speaks to those who are willing to share and cooperate in the outworking and ultimate purpose of his eternal will. This means that, when we hear the call and respond to it, we must devote ourselves unreservedly to the commitment we have made. During the present Gospel Age, this has meant the setting aside of our own wills and denying self so that God’s will may be done in us. “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he

hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.”—Eccl. 5:4,5

DIVINELY INSPIRED

We can have confidence that God has spoken to us because what we have heard is in harmony with the entire Bible. Paul explained to Timothy, saying, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”—II Tim. 3:16,17

There is an old saying that the Bible is a fiddle upon which any tune may be played. Furthermore, by avoiding certain scriptures all sorts of tunes can be played, but they will not provide a true and harmonious sound. Even Satan, the Devil, quoted scripture when he tried to tempt Jesus at the beginning of his earthly ministry. The scriptural account provides the setting, where we read, “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.” (Matt. 4:5,6) Jesus, however, was well acquainted with the Scriptures, could recall them perfectly, and was guided by the Holy Spirit of God. In his reply, he confronted Satan with another text of scripture that left the Devil speechless. “Jesus said unto him, It is written

again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”—
vs. 7

UNCHANGING HARMONY

The words of our Heavenly Father are in harmony with his character. They reveal that he is absolutely just, unerring in wisdom, almighty in power and, above all, abounding in love. We may also be assured of his perfect and wonderful character, and can trust him on every occasion because the Scriptures further show that he is unchangeable. This fact is taught to us in both the Old and New Testament scriptures, where we read, “I am the LORD, I change not.” (Mal. 3:6) This marvelous trait is also brought to our attention by James who wrote, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”—James 1:17

The divine purpose, as revealed by God through his prophets of old, is still the same divine purpose many centuries later. If God has spoken to us through his servants it means that we now hear and believe the same thoughts and teachings that were made known a long time ago. The working out of God’s plan and purpose varies in detail from one age to another, but the plan itself does not change. God’s ultimate purpose is to bless all the families of the earth in due time. How that purpose is eventually accomplished has been in preparation for centuries.

FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

One of the fundamental truths of the divine plan of the ages includes the world’s recovery from the

ravages of sin and death. God's purpose was declared in the message of restitution that was spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:21) It was to provide an opportunity for this wonderful recovery from sin and death that Jesus gave himself a ransom for all. Ransom and restitution are two prominent teachings of God's great love for his human creation. Isaiah was one of God's holy prophets who wrote concerning this wonderful promise. "The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Isa. 35:10

Fallen men and women who are in their graves and yet awaiting the resurrection will not only return from death on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice, but will receive rich blessings of life under the administration of Christ's glorious, future kingdom. At that time, 'they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away' as written by the Prophet Isaiah. Those who are obedient to the laws of God will be restored to a state of perfection on a perfected earth, and will enjoy communion with their Creator forever.

There are various arrangements in the outworking of God's plan and purpose, but the great objective to which they lead is the promised blessing of all the families of the earth. God made that promise to faithful Abraham, and it permeates the whole message of the Bible. "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of

his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”—Gen. 22:17,18

Our all-wise and loving Heavenly Father declared his purpose to his servant Moses, when he revealed, “As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.” (Num. 14:21) If we have heard and appreciated these fundamental truths that were written many years ago, then we have heard the voice of God speaking to us.

DIVINE FAVOR

The blessedness of receiving divine favor is emphasized in the lives of those to whom God has directly spoken. This was especially true in the experiences of Noah. From God’s Holy Word, we are told that, “Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (Gen. 6:8), and God made a covenant with him. “God spoke unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you.” (Gen. 9:8,9) This was confirmed, “And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.”—vss. 12,13

Noah’s experiences are referred to in the New Testament and are used to illustrate certain features in God’s ultimate plan and purpose. Noah was building the ark over a long period of time, and he endured much scoffing while doing so. While working, he also preached to an unresponsive and indifferent public, but with no apparent results.

Noah had faith and fully appreciated the fact that God had spoken to him and given him a task to perform as a servant of God. He continued to preach and work irrespective of results. He was faithful despite the cost of weariness, scoffing and indifference. He responded wholeheartedly to fulfill the divine command faithfully. In his letter to the Hebrew brethren, the Apostle Paul wrote, “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”—Heb. 11:7

NOAH HEARD

When the plan of God is complete, the knowledge of his wondrous glory will fill the earth even “as the waters cover the sea.” (Isa. 11:9) It will then be seen that the destruction of the first world was justified by the lack of response to Noah’s preaching, and the level of evil among the people that was prevalent in those early times of human creation. That which Noah accomplished and preached will be appreciated during the future age of the world’s blessing. Perhaps it will help to fill the whole earth with God’s glory as spoken by the Prophet Isaiah.

The Apostle Peter said, “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto

them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”—I Pet. 2:12-15

ABRAHAM HEARD

As we also read, “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, And I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”—Gen. 12:1-3

In God’s message to Abraham, we have the first definite statement of his ultimate plan and purpose to bless all the families of the earth in due time. Paul also confirmed this wonderful fact to the brethren at Galatia, where he wrote, “The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”—Gal. 3:8

It was surely good news for Abraham to learn that it would be through his seed that all the families of earth were to be blessed by divine arrangement. We know this promise is true because it was God himself who announced it to Abraham. However, his faith was also to be tested for he was asked to give up his home in Ur, and for the remainder of his life he had no permanent home.

Of him, Paul wrote, “By faith Abraham, when he

was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”—Heb. 11:8-10

The Heavenly Father continued by testing Abraham very severely, even by asking him to offer up his dearly beloved son Isaac as a sacrifice. However, he showed his willingness to serve his Heavenly Father, and learned that God’s voice not only meant blessings, but also sacrifice. God spoke to Abraham to invite his cooperation in the outworking of his marvelous plan, and the message and the call were heard together.

Abraham discovered that in order for God’s promise to become a reality to him it would cost the uprooting of his whole way of life. All those, to whom the purpose of God to bless all nations has been revealed, have likewise been called to cooperate. This is God’s method of dealing with his people. He speaks to us by revealing his plan, and then invites cooperation therein.

MOSES HEARD

God also spoke to Moses at the burning bush. He instructed him, “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.” (Exod. 3:5,6) God told Moses to

take off his shoes, for the place whereon he stood was 'holy ground.' It was holy because God chose that place to speak to Moses.

One of Moses' main characteristics was being meek. He felt incapable to carry out the great task that God had asked him to perform. We read, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." (Num. 12:3) However, meekness is an essential quality of Christian character which all members of the Christ must develop. Jesus, therefore, said, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart."—Matt. 11:29

The world often mistakes meekness for weakness. However, true meekness is not weak. Moses was meek in the sense that he recognized and acknowledged his own limitations according to the flesh. When God assured him that all of his needs would be supplied, his faith made it possible for him to hold on to the promises of God. Thus was he made strong and courageous. We can only be used of God as we rely upon his wisdom and strength. The expression "When I think of self I tremble, and when I look to thee I'm strong" was the experience of Moses. In the strength which God supplied, he courageously took up the task which God assigned to him.

God spoke to Moses and, having responded, he was no longer his own. No longer was he free to think, to choose, to act, or to do as he preferred. Henceforth, the will of God was to be the guiding star of his life. God's presence accompanied him, and he had peace of mind and heart. Yet, his way was difficult, and his burden was heavy.

Moses had to face and defy the austere and arrogant Pharaoh. He also had to patiently bear the murmurings of his own people. He had to put down rebellion against the divine arrangements concerning Israel. In many ways, Moses had to bear a load of care and responsibility that was his because of the high position of honor God had given him in the outworking of his plan. His was a blessed experience when he heard the voice of God and, like Noah and Abraham, he too found it very costly.

THE GREATER MOSES

The life of Moses illustrated the future work of a 'greater than Moses.' "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." (Deut. 18:15) These prophetic words speak of our Lord Jesus. "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."—vss. 18,19

The Psalmist David also spoke of our Lord Jesus, saying, "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.”—Ps. 40:7-11

Much of what the prophets had written concerned the manner in which God would speak to Jesus—directing him in performing his part in the divine plan. Not only was he blessed by the revealing testimony of the prophets, but he heard the voice of God speaking to him directly. “Lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”—Matt. 3:17

What a blessed assurance this must have been to Jesus. He was honored and blessed, but it proved to be very costly. It meant the laying down of his human life until it was consumed at Calvary. As Jesus said, “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”—Matt. 20:28

Jesus came at the First Advent to lay the foundation for his future kingdom that would bless all the families of the earth. He did so by sacrificing his own life as man’s Redeemer. He dedicated himself to God and agreed to do all that was written of him. On one occasion during his ministry, he was speaking to some of his critics, and in doing so referred back to the life of Moses as an apt illustration. He said, “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have

believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?”—John 5:43-47

In harmony with the spirit of Jesus’ ministry, we have the words which he spoke to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus after his resurrection from the grave. “Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”—Luke 24:27

FAVOR TO US

How blessed it was when we first heard God speaking to us, and telling us of the great plan of recovery for the sin-cursed and dying world that was based upon the ransom sacrifice of Jesus. It appealed to us and we rejoiced to learn that all mankind, who are the ransomed of the Lord, will be given opportunity to walk up the highway of holiness into Christ’s future kingdom. Not only did we come to the light, but we also desired to walk in the light. We learned that together with God’s love for all mankind there was also an invitation of the heavenly calling during this present Gospel Age.

Like the worthies of old, we, too, were asked to leave our own people and our father’s house, which is the household of Adam. We responded to a call to give up the hope of earthly restitution for ourselves, and in its place to run for the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. Henceforth, we were to touch lightly the things of this earth, esteeming them only of trifling worth. This is more than merely exchanging an earthly hope for a heavenly hope. It means following in the steps of Jesus, and walking in the way of sacrifice and suffering,

even unto death. We are to do this until that which remains of our present earthly life is wholly and acceptably consumed in God's service.

As were God's servants of old, we rejoice to know that by means of the ransom and the promised restitution, all the willing and obedient of mankind are to be blessed with everlasting life and enjoy peace and quietness and assurance forever. The clear distinction made by the Truth between the heavenly hope of the church and the earthly hope for the world emphasizes the importance of Jesus' earthly ministry in the ultimate plan and purpose of God for the reconciliation and uplifting of the human creation. How truly satisfying it is to know that God has a future blessing for all others, as well as for the footstep followers of this present Gospel Age. How it enhances our appreciation of the high and heavenly calling in Christ Jesus. The test upon all God's people is to hold fast to the Truth and in the spirit of Truth. Let us praise God for speaking to us through his servants of old, and thank him for all the way he has led us. ■

*Charge not thyself with the weight of the year,
Child of the Master, faithful and dear;
Choose not the cross for the coming week,
For that is more than He bids thee seek;
Bend not thy arms for tomorrow's load—
Thou mayest leave that to thy gracious God;
Daily only He sayest to thee,*

“Take up thy cross and follow Me.”

—Poems of the Way

Satan, an Instrument of God

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?”
—Romans 11:33,34

OUR LESSON WILL EXPLORE a concept beyond the reasoning of human finite minds and, when we examine God’s Word, we find that his infinite wisdom planned it so. In Ezekiel’s prophecy, we find a word portrait of the glorious Lucifer in his original state. The prophet identifies him as the Prince of Tyrus (Ezek. 28:2) and the King of Tyrus (vs. 12). This corresponds to his correct name—Lucifer.—Isa. 14:12-14

The Scriptures give certain details, and describe Lucifer in his pristine state. We read, “Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee.” (Ezek. 28:3) The prophet says that Lucifer was wiser than Daniel, yet God had

imprinted in Daniel's mind extraordinary wisdom, perfect judgment, and understanding of dreams and visions. (Dan. 1:17) Lucifer had even more than this, as no secret was hidden from him.

LUCIFER CREATED PERFECT

Concerning Lucifer, Ezekiel wrote, "Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God, "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty." (Ezek. 28:12, *New American Standard Bible*) Lucifer was the pattern of beauty and wisdom in his original state, and this was stamped upon him. "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created." (vs. 13) The precious stones of his covering are also included in the high priest's breastplate. (Exod. 28:17-20) The words "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God" tells us that the one being portrayed is Lucifer before iniquity was found in him.

"Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire." (Ezek. 28:14) Lucifer was full of wisdom, perfect in beauty, anointed to cover, and set by God upon the mountain (kingdom) of God in Eden, the garden of God. He was anointed to that office, an honor reserved for priests and kings, and he was set so by divine appointment.

We have no conception of his beauty, but clues suggest that it was a glowing brilliance of perfection. “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” (vs. 15) There was monumental pride: “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.”—vs. 17

LUCIFER’S FALL

Isaiah speaks of his arrogance and blasphemy. “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”—Isa. 14:12-14

Pride was one cause of Lucifer’s rebellion, but these verses tell us of the incredible magnitude and depth of iniquity that caused his fall. His ambition was to be ruler over the sons of God. “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.” (Ps. 48:2) Most blasphemous of all, he wanted to be like the Most High God. This boast, and the ambition to become ruler, seems to have developed as Lucifer beheld the first human pair with their procreative powers. He reasoned that if he could control them, he could gain dominion over all their offspring.

In both Ezekiel's and Isaiah's prophecies, it is shown that once sin entered into Lucifer, it completely took over his character. 'Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.' "Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee." (Ezek. 28:18) Paul calls him 'the god of this world' who has blinded the minds of the people.—II Cor. 4:4

Despite Lucifer's fall, God's purpose from the beginning has not changed. "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Ps. 50:5) "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."—Eph. 1:9,10

FREE MORAL AGENTS

God's plan from the very beginning was to have a divine family, made in the image and likeness of his Son, and to bring the entire human family to perfection, to eternal life in harmony with his perfect will. He has chosen to grant free moral agency to his entire creation, that he may be obeyed and worshipped from a loving and willing heart. The basis of free moral agency incorporates the possibility of

disobedience and rebellion. The mighty Lucifer, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, exercised to the fullest extent his freedom of will to an unthinkable and unimaginable height of sin, carrying him far beyond the realm of repentance.

It has been suggested that God could have endowed his creation with no other choice but to obey him with no freedom of will, but to serve him in a robotic sense. This suggestion is repugnant to any reasoning human mind. No one would desire love that was not freely given as a choice from the heart, and neither would God. Freedom of will and choice must, of necessity, conform with righteousness.

This is what is alluded to in our opening scripture, ‘Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?’ God, who knows the end from the beginning, knew Lucifer would choose rebellion and has used this means to bring about his eternal purpose—to have a divine family in the image and likeness of his Son; also, to bring the entire human family to perfection and eternal life in harmony with his perfect will. God’s foreknowledge in no way influenced Lucifer’s betrayal and rebellion. Jesus said, “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (John 6:70) Jesus had foreknowledge of Judas’ betrayal, but he in no way coerced Judas’ free will. So it was with God’s foreknowledge of Lucifer’s free choice.

SATAN—GOD’S CHISEL

Lucifer, having made the choice to sin and rebel, became an instrument God has used to have free reign over the human family so that they will learn the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It is this same

instrument God is using to polish and fit those who are prospective members of his divine family. Satan is God's chisel, or tool.

We are not told how long Adam and Eve were in Eden under the covering of Lucifer before sin entered. God provided only one prohibition to test their obedience and this was all that Lucifer needed. We recall his lie to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die." (Gen. 3:4) In this lie, he suggested that God was lying when he told Adam and Eve "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:17) That was rebellion of the most shocking degree, and this lie has endured throughout the centuries since it was first told.

This entrance of sin into Satan and its resulting introduction into the human family was known and permitted of God. The Scriptures testify that man has 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, but was manifest in these last times for you." (I Pet. 1:19,20) Satan's rebellion must also have been foreknown since the need of a Redeemer was foreordained.

LESSON FROM JOB

The underlying principles of free moral agency and the permission of evil are brought to our attention in the Book of Job. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up

and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.”—Job 1:6-12

In this conversation, it is God who brings Job to Satan’s attention. Then Satan replies that Job’s faithfulness is only because of the prosperity he enjoys and the good life with which God has blessed him. He claims that God has put a ‘hedge’ around Job to protect him and if that were taken away, Job would curse him. God then tells Satan, ‘Go ahead, all that he has is in your power, only do not put your hand on him.’

PERMITTED TO TEST GOD’S PEOPLE

Satan knew that he must have permission to work his evil on Job. He would have no power over the situation unless it was granted him. He was also convinced he would succeed in destroying Job’s faith because he knew God did not coerce his subjects. He knew that Job was a free moral agent. Having God’s permission, Satan began to work on him. He lost all his flocks, his property, and his

children. Yet, with all this, he fell down and worshipped God, saying, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."—Job 1:21,22

Continuing we read, "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown."—chap. 2:1-7

Once again Satan received permission to afflict Job with a loathsome disease of sore boils from head to toe. His wife urged him to curse God and die, "But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive

good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.” (vs. 10) Later, in addition to this suffering, Job’s so-called friends came to him to convince him that he must have sinned to cause all this suffering.

GOD VINDICATED

God’s action in this confrontation was that he removed the hedge and permitted Satan to have full power in afflicting Job. No force was applied to Job, but God was vindicated by speaking to Job out of the whirlwind in chapters 38-41, where the marvels of creation in which wisdom, power, and the care of God were presented to Job’s mind. God did not explain the cause of his suffering, but Job became so sure of God that he accepted his affliction to be in harmony with God’s righteousness. The vital lesson in this experience was that Job learned to trust God implicitly, and said, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.” (Job 42:5) “And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.”—vs. 10

Job’s experience depicts God’s method of proving his people entirely without coercion, leaving them with free choice. He does this by removing the hedge and allowing Satan to use his power in a limited way as he did with Job. By doing this, God is completely vindicated. This becomes the way of polishing his new creation by the tool, or chisel, ordained for this very purpose.

Through the many centuries of Israel’s experiences, their disobedience, rebellion, falling into

idolatry and sensuality became proof of Satan's controlling influence and his desire to corrupt those whom God called his people—the fleshly seed of Abraham. Israel was admonished by its prophets but, as a nation, they gave in to their fleshly desires and succumbed to Satan's influence.

SATAN'S ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

A further step in God's plan is alluded to. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. 3:15) Satan knew that Jesus was the great *Logos* by whom all things were made, including himself as Lucifer. This was a fearful development and he took steps to protect his evil empire. King Herod became a willing tool of Satan when he ordered the slaughter of every male child two years and under. God knew Satan's ambition and through his overruling providence protected the young boy Jesus.

When Jesus, at the age of thirty presented himself to John to be baptized by water immersion in the Jordan, Satan knew that the firstborn of God had now become the firstborn of many brethren. "Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. 3:16,17

Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit in the likeness of a dove alighting upon him, which was an outward representation of God's power coming upon him. Jesus became conscious of a great change

in his condition and relationship to his Father because of the Spirit being poured without measure upon him. John was granted the privilege of seeing this demonstration, and hearing the voice, so that he might bear witness to this historic event in God's plan. It is doubtful that anyone else saw or heard anything. However, Satan was surely attentive to this event, planning and plotting how to neutralize, or corrupt, this beginning of God's divine family.

TEMPTATIONS REJECTED

Immediately after the events surrounding Jesus' baptism, we read, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." (chap. 4:1) The heavens were then opened to Jesus' perfect mind. Time was required to ponder, to meditate upon, to pray and commune with the Father. Yet, at this very time, we are told that the Spirit led him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and Satan received permission to tempt him at this crucial time. Without doubt, Jesus had spent this time recalling to mind all the prophecies concerning himself. He had a perfect memory, and gained a complete understanding of the plan of God which was necessary before beginning his ministry.

Satan selected what he considered the perfect time to tempt our Lord. However, Jesus rejected every offer by quoting scripture, and counteracting each proposal of the Adversary. It is interesting to note that Satan also quoted scripture to Jesus, but misapplied it. "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear

thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” (Ps. 91:11,12) He quoted this when suggesting that Jesus should cast himself from the pinnacle of the Temple to recklessly prove that he was the Messiah. Satan knew this would be tempting God, and something he was accustomed to doing and apparently getting away with. Jesus repelled any suggestion of tempting God by rejecting the temptation.

Satan’s arrogance exposed itself to the full when he suggested that all the kingdoms of the world would he give to Jesus if he would fall down and worship him. This indicates that the kingdoms of the world actually did belong to Satan at this time (II Cor. 4:4), but this was only by God’s permission. This suggestion to Jesus was simply an attempt to thwart God’s plan for his only begotten Son, who was a free moral agent. God’s plan was that by obedience, suffering, death, and subsequent resurrection, Jesus would eventually become King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Jesus once again rejected Satan and defeated him by the Word of God.

SATAN’S TARGETS

Satan now turned his attention to Jesus’ followers. Since the heavens were opened to Jesus, he knew the danger that his followers would also face. He recalled the time when sin entered into Lucifer back in Eden, and said, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” (Luke 10:18) Jesus must have realized that one of his beloved but impetuous followers, Peter, would be in danger. After the last supper, he informed the twelve that one of them would betray him, and then he alluded to his

approaching death. “The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke 22:31,32) Here again, we see that no opposition was offered to Satan.

We see the Heavenly Father’s infinite wisdom manifest in permitting Satan to obtain access to the New Creatures in Christ Jesus, even those whom he has set his special love upon. Recalling God’s words to Satan concerning Job, he said, ‘Behold, he is in thy hand; but save his life.’ As with Job, the opposition of Satan is the very means by which God is vindicated without the use of force. Satan was aware that the New Creatures in Christ Jesus have free moral agency, and he felt confident that he could tempt and sway them to disobedience. However, this is the tool that God permits to prove the chosen ones.

Jesus’ prayer for Peter was all that stood between Peter and Satan, the enemy. The prayer did not fail and Jesus simply looked at Peter who broke down and wept bitterly. Satan had attempted to break Peter, but without coercion the prayer of Jesus strengthened him. After Pentecost, Peter was used mightily in the outworking of God’s plan.

On another occasion, the Apostle Paul had to severely remonstrate the Corinthian brethren because they continued to receive a brother who had committed incest. Paul wrote, “I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”—I Cor. 5:3-5

Again, we find Paul instructing the church to receive this man back into their midst and confirm their love to him. He said, “Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.” (II Cor. 2:6-8) Later, we find not only this one who had sinned, but the whole Corinthian church in godly repentance, which Paul highly commended. (chap. 7:8-12) This episode is all the more striking when the one who was delivered unto Satan, as well as the church who failed to perceive their sin in letting him continue in his deeds, all repented fully and completely. Once again, the tool, or chisel, had been used as God’s polishing agent without force.

FURTHER TESTIMONY

Concerning Paul, we read, “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”—II Cor. 12:2-4

“Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”—vss. 7-9

The apostle tells us plainly that this ‘thorn in the flesh’ was given to him lest he be ‘exalted above measure’ from the abundance of the revelation that he saw in the third-heaven experience. He says it was a ‘messenger’ sent of Satan to buffet and afflict him. In this experience, God permitted the one who is the embodiment of pride—Satan—to work on the great apostle to perfect in him the grace of humility. Paul showed his submission to this chiseling work by saying he gladly would ‘glory’ in his infirmities that ‘the power of Christ’ might rest upon him.

Paul’s letter to Timothy is another scriptural example, where he wrote, “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare: Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”—I Tim. 1:18-20

Here we see Satan identified as an instrument used to teach these two not to blaspheme. This

shows, once again, God's method of removing the hedge and allowing the tool, or chisel, to perfect those who are running for the prize of the High Calling in Christ Jesus. If the chisel was used on the examples found in the Scriptures, we expect that it is used even now on the prospective members of the New Creation. The hedge may be removed so that the chisel may chip away the rough places in our characters.

As our opening scripture states, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"—Rom. 11:33,34 ■

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 Byrdie Jane Dahl, Helena, MT—April 3.
Age, 89

Sister Marjorie Theis, Middletown, NY—April 8.
Age, 91

Sister Doris Shuster, Portland, OR—April 10. Age,
98

Brother Moses Ashiegbu, Ihiagwa Owerri, Nigeria—April 12. Age, 78

Sister Barbara Krasonic, West Newton, PA—April
15, Age, 75

Sister Pushparani Emmanuel Dass, Ooty, India—
April 21. Age, 66

Sister Lynn Gamble, San Diego, CA—April 23.
Age, 89

Sister Paula (Balko) Ashley, Akron, OH—April 24.
Age, 49

Jesus Teaches His Disciples

“He went up into a mountain: and when he was set [down], his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them.”
—Matthew 5:1,2

SOON AFTER JESUS BE-gan his earthly ministry and selected his disciples, he invited them to follow him. “He saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matt. 4:19) Our featured scripture provides the background for his

first lessons after being baptized by John at the river Jordan. Having separated himself from the multitudes, he thus gathered his disciples together to teach them valuable lessons that would assist them in their new walk in Christ Jesus.

MARKS OF CHARACTER

Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:3) The characteristic of being ‘poor’ in the spirit of self marks those Christians who see weakness in their own character and lives, and realize a much needed dependency upon our loving Heavenly Father and his beloved Son, our Lord and Savior. They are not of the proud,

haughty, or high-minded class among the fallen human creation. God can thus deal with those who possess a low, humble esteem of themselves. "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."—Matt. 23:12

Our Lord continues, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." (chap. 5:4) To 'mourn' means to grieve, and those endowed with this attitude of heart realize the present condition of the sin-sick human family and long for Christ's future kingdom of righteousness. Under the administration of that glorious kingdom, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—Rev. 21:4

Those who are willingly submissive to the will of God are next identified by Jesus. He taught, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." (Matt. 5:5) They are not among the arrogant or self-assertive of mankind, but are ready to wait upon the Lord and forbear even under injury or other obstacles. "Let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."—I Pet. 3:4

SEEKING RIGHTEOUSNESS

In the Master's next lesson, he said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6) To 'hunger and thirst' suggests a very strong and passionate desire to know and serve our loving Heavenly Father and to learn the ways of Truth and righteousness. To be righteous, suggests giving diligence when striving after those things that are right and good. The thought behind the expression 'shall be filled'

points to the child of God who will be abundantly satisfied with whatever God provides for his people.

The psalmist addressed this special mark of character, when he wrote, "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour."—Ps. 15:1-3

THE MERCIFUL

What a wonderful trait of Christian character is mercy. Jesus brought this to his disciples' attention, when he told them and us, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt. 5:7) We must learn to be 'merciful' even as God is merciful. In proportion to our willingness to be merciful toward others, will God be merciful to us.

David wrote, "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."—Ps. 103:8-14

Jesus addressed the matter of being merciful in a very meaningful parable that he taught on another occasion. He said, "Therefore is the kingdom of

heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.”—Matt. 18:23-27

The parable speaks of a king who was taking account of his servants. This is directed to those who have a special relationship with their Lord and are members of the household of faith during the present Gospel Age. The sum of money owed is very large, suggesting the great debt that the true child of God owes his Heavenly father by the provision of grace and forgiveness of sin—a special gift through Jesus. The king’s servants could never pay the debt without the mercy of God on their behalf.

Jesus then focused his lesson on the servant’s lack of mercy even toward others who were closely associated with him. “The same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.” (vss. 28-30) The sum of money owed to the servant by his ‘fellow servant’ was paltry in comparison to what he had in turn owed to his master. This lesson teaches

the importance of remembering our own weaknesses according to the flesh, and our readiness to be especially sympathetic toward our fellow servants according to the common faith which we share.

The conclusion of Jesus' parable should be sufficiently clear to all who are striving to know and serve our loving Heavenly Father during the present Gospel Age calling in Christ Jesus. We read, "When his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."—vss. 31-35

HEART CONDITION

Continuing with Jesus' lessons to his disciples, he next said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8) To have a pure heart is a very necessary mark of the Lord's true people. We must be cleansed in will and spirit, and, as far as possible, in our words and thoughts. The Apostle Paul wrote to his beloved Timothy and encouraged him to greater faithfulness. He said, "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling."—I Tim 1:5,6

The consecrated child of God should be identified as a person of peace. “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” (Matt. 5:9) Peacemaking starts within the very heart of the individual. It means that one will not stir up strife, cause trouble or dissention, because these are works of the flesh. The Apostle James says, “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”—James 3:13-18

SUFFERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

When ending the list of beatitudes, Jesus speaks of suffering at the hands of those who would oppose the true followers of Christ. “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”—Matt. 5:10-12

Jesus cautioned his followers and warned them about the reality of suffering, when he said, “Behold,

I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.”—chap. 10:16-20

“The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.”—vss. 21-24

In concluding his wonderful lessons to his disciples, Jesus spoke these most treasured words. “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”—Matt. 5:13,14

Salt helps to preserve and purify in the midst of a sin-sick and polluted society. Light comes from God’s Word that shines in the hearts of his people and illuminates their pathway. Let us strive with diligence to be light bearers in a very dark world.■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

E. Blicharz		E. Kuenzli	
St. Petersburg, FL	June 13	Portland, OR	June 18-20
R. Goodman		H. Montague	
Portland, OR	June 18-20	Portland, OR	June 18-20
E. Kalinski		G. Tabac	
Milwaukee, WI	June 13	Portland, OR	June 18-20

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*In the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, . . .
Gather the wheat into my barn.—Matt. 13:30*

The time is short; the harvest work is great; the laborers are few; our time is consecrated; we must labor while it is called day, knowing that a night cometh wherein no man can work. We have consecrated our lives even unto death; we are commissioned . . . to seek for the true ‘wheat’ and to gather it into the barn. What time have we for frivolities or worldliness or the many social amenities? We must . . . press along the line, engaging heartily in the work given us to do.

—Daily Heavenly Manna, June 30

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.

WATERBURY CONVENTION, June 5,6—Saturday afternoon in Morris, CT. Sunday at the Litchfield Firehouse Hall, Rt. 202, Litchfield, CT. Contact H. Tsimonis, Phone (860) 567-0109 or Waterbury Bible Students; P.O. Box 1494; Waterbury, CT 06721-1494

PORTLAND CONVENTION, June 18-20—Ramada Inn Portland, 6221 NE 82nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97220. Contact D. Grudzien, 11970 SE Zion Hill Drive, Damascus, OR 97089. Phone: (503) 658-4757

PRINCE ALBERT/SASKATOON CONVENTION, July 2-4—Siwak Farm. Contact A. Siwak, RR 1, Stn. Mpp, Prince Albert, SK, Canada, S6V 5P8. Phone: (306) 764-7692

OKANAGAN CONVENTION, July 9-11—Shubert Centre, 3505 30th Avenue, Vernon, BC, Canada. Tourist area, reserve early. Schell Motel (1 block away). Phone: (888) 772-4355 or (250) 545-1351. For other information, contact B. Blencowe. Phone: (250) 545-0780

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 17-22—University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, PA. Contact M. Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 8-13—Baia Mare, Romania. Contact Tom Machacek. Phone: (219) 662-8107 (International Youth Seminar follows, August 16-20.)

ALBERTA CONVENTION, August 13-15—Pioneer Lodge, 4324 47th Avenue, Red Deer, AB, Canada. For hotel reservations, call Stanford Inn, (403) 347-5551.

Contact A. Baumgarten. Phone: (403) 356-0004

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, August 21,22—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact L. Boyd. Phone: (414) 736-1106

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 4,5—Fa-Ho-Lo Camp and Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Unit 1, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact R. Lumley. Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 4,5—Doubletree Hotel, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NY 07430. Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact G. Passios. Phone: (201) 939-3196

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 4-6—Seabeck Christian Conference Center, 15395 Seabeck Hwy NW, Seabeck, WA 98380-9583. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (253) 838-3822

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 10-12—Radisson Inn Huntsville Airport, 8721 Madison Blvd., Madison, AL 35758. Reservations: (800) 395-7046 or (256) 772-8855. Mention Huntsville Bible Students. Deadline for rooms: August 31. Contact J. Cothren, 1300 Huntsville Hills Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802. Phone: (256) 852-8505

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

*“If we love one another, God dwelleth in us,
and his love is perfected in us.”*

—I John 4:12

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

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

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

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

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

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

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