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The Troublesome Middle East

“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.”
—Zechariah 12:2,3

during the present time have been witnesses of the regathering of the people of Israel to their ancient homeland. We all see the fast-moving events

THIS REMARKABLE PROPHECY, written by Zechariah many centuries ago, reveals God’s intentions regarding the children of Israel after they have been regathered to the land of their forefathers at the end of the Gospel Age, and when they have been restored as a nation. The prophecy indicates that there will be many enemies who will be gathered against them at that time, but that their enemies will reel as a result of their actions, and by drinking of the cup of trembling. Their ultimate destruction is also foretold by the prophet. Many living

of our day as they transpire in the troublesome Middle East.

Nearly two thousand years ago a great event occurred in that part of the world—Palestine—which is also called the Holy Land. That great event was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The news of this mighty miracle, however, was not flashed around the world, as it surely would be if it were to take place in our time. In those days the news was restricted to a little band of Jesus' disciples. The Apostle Peter, when telling about this great event said, "Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead." (Acts 10:40,41) Peter and others were, therefore, witnesses that Jesus Christ had indeed been resurrected from the dead, and that this great event had occurred in the land of Palestine.

After his resurrection, Jesus commissioned his disciples to preach the Gospel throughout all the world, and to announce that "It is he [Jesus] which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick [living] and dead." (vs. 42) The proclamation of the Gospel has included the announcement that Jesus was raised from the dead, and thus his resurrection has become common knowledge throughout the civilized world. Some have sincerely believed these blessed things, and have endeavored to be faithful in following in the footsteps of Jesus. To others, however, it has been but a pleasant story, a sort of folklore based upon the imaginations of the disciples of Jesus, whose minds, it is said, became

overstimulated by the trying circumstances through which they had passed.

Those early disciples believed that Jesus had come to establish the kingdom which the holy prophets of Israel had foretold. While their hopes were temporarily dashed by his crucifixion, they were convinced that he had been raised from the dead; and they again had confidence that he was their foretold King, as spoken by the psalmist who said, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." (Ps.72:8) After his resurrection, Jesus announced to his disciples that "all power" had been given to him "in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18) Surely one with such great power would be able to set up that kingdom of promise, and the government that was to extend its influence throughout all the earth.

Jesus soon left them, returning to the heavenly courts. However, the angels promised that he would come again. (Acts 1:11) So the hope and inspiration of the Early Church was in the return of their Lord and King, and in the kingdom which they believed he would then establish. (vs. 6) They believed this kingdom would be the panacea for all of earth's ills, including the sentence of sickness and death. Paul wrote that Christ would reign until he had put "all enemies under his feet," and that the great enemy death would ultimately be destroyed.—I Cor. 15:25,26

ISRAEL IS REGATHERED

But that was nearly two thousand years ago. Today, the area of the world where these glad tidings

originated, and from where they went out to the nations far and wide, is in the grip of the most distressing and terrifying circumstances ever experienced. After Jesus was crucified and raised from the dead, the Israelites were scattered throughout all nations, but now they have repossessed at least part of the promised land, and have become an independent nation among nations. Withal, however, they find themselves in a desperate confrontation with many of their Arab neighbors even as in the days of old. Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and other nations are involved in continuing tensions with Israel even as they were in Old Testament times.

The difference now is that these nations, in the world family of nations, have not been rated among the strong and powerful of the earth, as they once were. Until recent years they have been viewed as inconsequential, and of importance only to the extent that the western powers could profit from their natural resources, principally oil.

ISRAEL IN CONFLICT

Suddenly this situation has changed. Not that these small Middle Eastern nations have in themselves become strong from a military point of view, but because of their geographically strategic position in a struggling world of more powerful nations, and because their natural resources are coveted and, to an extent, essential to the economic stability of some of the greater powers of earth. Further, the rising tide of terrorism is being used as a weapon to be feared.

There has been an especially dangerous condition developing between Israel and the Palestinian

people, over the granting to the Palestinians of a home land. This has led to much blood being shed among both peoples. Recently the foreign ministers of Israel and Egypt met to discuss the future of the so called "Philadelphi Route," which is a major means of travel in the southern Gaza Strip. This route, which lies along the Israeli and Egyptian borders, has become a crucial point of difficulty in the past few years. It is estimated that there are over one hundred arms-smuggling tunnels that have been excavated under it. Israeli army officials have stated that Palestinian terrorists continue to smuggle thousands of small arms, and great amounts of ammunition, into Gaza by way of this tunnel network. Egypt, and the international community, however, will not accept Israel's present plan to withdraw from Gaza unless they also abandon their military control of this tunnel network. Someone has said that Israel's Prime Minister Sharon is gambling on Egypt's promise to Israel that once they disengage their control over Gaza, including the arms-smuggling tunnels, terrorist activity will subside. Many in Israel are not convinced that this will happen.

A significant vote in the Sharon government recently took place which has significant and long-term consequences for Israeli settlement. This concerned the right of Jews to build communities for themselves in their own historic land. Narrowly defeated by a vote of 40 to 38, the bill would have allowed the Israel Lands Authority to establish a small community of up to 500 families for one particular sector of the population. The Israel Lands Authority thus canceled a tender which was to

lease several lots in one particular Jewish neighborhood. It was decided that the tender would adversely affect the country's Arab citizens. Rather than open the tender so that Arabs could lease land and move into the neighborhood, which would have changed the status quo from Jewish to a mixed Jewish-Arab citizenship, the offer was withdrawn. There is a Jewish National Fund that collects monies worldwide for the express purpose of reclaiming, through purchase, the land of Israel, and the resettling of Jews in their ancient homeland.

Events like these have begun to threaten the national action program that the Jewish people have implemented for over a century for the reestablishment of their homeland under their own control. This was to reverse the effects of nearly 2,000 years of brutal occupation, first by Roman, and then Arab neighbors. Further, it is noted that left-wing politicians are increasingly abandoning the Jewish national enterprise, and are regularly ignoring racist slogans and expressing sentiments to establish a "Jewish free" Palestinian state. In another instance, involving a community near Israel's Ben-Gurion Airport, there has been a systematic emmigration taking place of Jewish residents. Ten years ago the neighborhood was completely Jewish, today it is 70 % Arab.

ARAFAT'S DEATH

In mid November 2004, the *U.S. News and World Report* announced the death of Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization since 1969. Emotions ran high, and wild behavior erupted as his followers crowded into the streets to mourn

his passing. Guns were fired into the air, and many were chanting and crying his name aloud. Others surged toward the helicopter carrying his casket in memory of their seemingly invincible leader. It was an historic moment that ended a tumultuous era. He was buried in Ramallah where he had been a virtual prisoner for the past three years.

With his death there is talk that this may be an opportunity for the Israeli and the Palestinian people to put their differences behind them. It is hoped that their new leader may steer the Palestinian people onto a more peaceful course. Decisions will have to be made as to whether they will continue the armed struggle with Israel, or give diplomacy a chance to settle their differences. Arafat could never quite decide whether there should be a State of Palestine alongside Israel, or a Palestine State instead of Israel.

THE FRAGILE PEACE

Many other similar incidents are happening, and illustrate, to a small degree, the fragile relationships that exists within Israel itself, as well as in the entire Middle East today. Much of what is taking place centers around the tremendous need for oil. Western nations such as the United States and members of the European Union require greater quantities of this vital product all the time. Tensions are at an all time high throughout that region of the world. This situation has taken on more serious dimensions since the United States went to war in Afghanistan and Iraq. There is an increased polarization between East and West, and the cause is in the troublous Middle East.

Since Israel became a nation in 1948, there has been much resentment and hostility directed toward them by their Arab neighbors. Many attempts, through war and political opposition, have been made to destroy them as a nation. We are witnesses of these events, and in this connection we read, "Thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee." (Ps. 83:2-5) The psalmist (vss.6-8) enumerates these enemies of the Israeli state as being largely of Semitic origin.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

These events, together with other significant signs of the times, are an indication of the nearness of the long-promised kingdom. Some of these signs are foretold by another of the Old Testament prophets. Daniel foretells that this will be a troublous time, not only in the Middle East, but for all nations. He says, "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." (Dan.12:1) He also portrays the closing years of this age as "the time of the end." (vs. 4) This describes the current era of conflict, and points forward to the end of the present

social order. This order of things will be replaced by the kingdom of our Lord Jesus, together with the faithful members of his bride class. Together they will share in dispensing life-giving blessings to the whole world of mankind. This will occur under the provisions of a new and better covenant than the one under the administration of Moses.

THE INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE

The Bible alone supplies the true explanation of the present 'time of the end.' The prophet Daniel foretold a period in human experience in which there would be a great increase in knowledge, and that there would be much running to and fro. (Dan.12:4) It is the fulfillment of this prophecy that we are now witnessing. The general increase of knowledge, together with the much and rapid travel have come about in such a comparatively short time that it is almost unbelievable.

This does not mean that the people today are more brilliant than in times past. Through the invention of the printing press, and other modern day means of mass communication, the accumulated knowledge of the past and present is now made available for all in the various fields of research. Every inventor and scientist is thus helped by the findings of all the others. The people of Solomon's time could have done as well if current methods of communication had been available in their day.

Perhaps the best proof that the general intelligence of the human race has not increased is in the fact that man is not able to find a way to adequately safeguard himself against total destruction by his own inventions and weapons. Now that the increase

of knowledge in this prophetic time of the end has brought all the far-flung nations of earth into each other's backyards, there is a hurrying back and forth of presidents, prime ministers, secretaries of state, ambassadors, and other officials of state, for the purpose of finding solutions for the myriad of problems that exist in all parts of the world. Any one of these problems is serious enough, if solutions are not found, to lead eventually to the total annihilation of the whole world through the use of weapons of mass destruction. These weapons include not only chemical and biological means to destroy mankind, but nuclear as well. The Prophet Daniel forecast this when he indicated that this time of trouble would be such as 'never was since there was a nation.' We are now witnessing this trouble.

One reason the Middle East is now so prominently in the news is the fact that Israel is one of the most powerful nations in that part of the world. Because we are living in the period of time that precedes the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, it is the due time for the ancient people of God to repossess their land of promise. They are liked no more today than they were in the distant past, so the tensions mount, and will continue to increase, until the problems of Israel and the whole world are solved by our Lord's kingdom.

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

This foretold government will be on the shoulder of the Prince of Peace. (Isa.9:6,7) Many centuries have passed since the early disciples looked to Jesus to set up this government.

This does not imply, however, any delay in God's plans of reconciliation for the sin-sick world. During these intervening long centuries, God has been taking out from the Gentiles "a people for his name," a people to be associated with Jesus in the spiritual phase of his kingdom. (Acts 15:14) Now that work is nearly complete; and in his wisdom and overruling providence the Lord has turned loose the forces of knowledge that will continue to stir the world into more and more frenzied action, until man's social order is set aside, and room is made for the kingdom of Christ.—Luke 11:2

THE PROMISED KINGDOM

In that kingdom, the people of all nations will receive their God-given rights. Peace and security will be assured for all. One of our modern expressions refers to this as the abundant life! The Prophet Isaiah forecast that in the kingdom of Christ all would be assured of this abundant life. He describes it in beautiful symbolic language. "In this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."—Isa. 25:6

God, in his wisdom, knew that the human family would need a certain preparation for these blessings, especially an awakening to a realization of their need for them. He has permitted the great increase of knowledge to bring about this awakening, and at the same time give mankind the opportunity to discover that, apart from him and the controls of Christ's future kingdom, the very knowledge that will yet be such a marvelous and

lasting blessing would lead to international suicide without his intervention.

The rich and satisfying blessings of Christ's kingdom will include freedom from sickness and death. The increase of knowledge is helping to prepare the people for these blessings. Medical science is predicting that the time is not far distant when people will be living far past the century mark. We predict, on the authority of God's Word, that when the long-promised kingdom of Christ is established, those who accept the provisions of Divine grace through their Redeemer, and obey the laws of the kingdom, will live forever in peace and harmony with God.

The Revelator described this wonderful promise when he wrote, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."—Rev. 21:4,5 ■

"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

"In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called:

"The LORD Our Righteousness."

—Jeremiah 23:5,6, New International Version

Jesus Teaches God's Judgments

Key Verse: *“After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.”*
—*Revelation 19:1,2*

Selected Scripture:
*Matthew 13:24-30,
36-43*

OUR LESSON PASSAGE

outlines Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares, together with his explanation. Jesus said that the “good seed” of the parable are “the children of the kingdom,” and “the tares are the children of the wicked one.” (Matt. 13:38) Tares are imitation wheat, so the contrast in the parable is not between believers and unbelievers, but between true believers and those who profess to believe, but whose viewpoints and conduct are not the true Christian's way of life.

“The Son of man” (vs. 37) sowed the ‘good seed’ of the parable; reminding us that it was Jesus who, through his teaching and the Holy Spirit, established the Early Church. The twelve apostles and those who believed on him through their word were the original ‘children of the kingdom.’ But after the death of

the apostles there came a great falling away from the true Gospel of the kingdom, and in due course a counterfeit kingdom was established through the union of the apostate church and the kings of the earth. This false kingdom came to be known as Christendom.

The prophetic outline of the parable embraces the entire Gospel, or Christian, Age, and it is at the end of the age that the separation between the “wheat” and the “tares” takes place. (vs. 30) The Son of man sends “his angels” (vs. 41) to bring about this separation. The word ‘angel’ here used is a translation of a Greek word that means messenger. They could be spiritual, or invisible, messengers or they could be human, or visible, messengers. The scope of work accomplished in the parable might seem to indicate that both are involved.

The ‘tares’ are bundled and cast into a great “furnace of fire” to be destroyed. (vs. 42) We think this ‘furnace’ is symbolic of the great “time of trouble” (Dan. 12:1), which comes upon the world at this end of the Gospel Age, and destroys all of its false and selfish institutions in preparation for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ.

The ‘wheat,’ the children of the kingdom, ultimately “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” (vs. 43) This indicates that in the kingdom, following their resurrection from the dead, they will be part of that wonderful “Sun of righteousness” which will arise “with healing in his wings.”—Mal. 4:2

Our Key Verse follows a rather detailed symbolic account of the development, reign, and destruction of that false system which claimed to be Christ’s kingdom, but was not. The ‘whore’ of the passage is a reference to the false church that united illicitly with the civil governments of earth, and in this way gained power to foster her unscriptural viewpoints, and practices. Under this system true Christians were severely persecuted, but this comes to an end with the establishment in the earth of that “holy city” depicted in Revelation, chapter twenty-one. ■

Jesus Offers God's Forgiveness

Key Verse: *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*
—II Chronicles 7:14

Selected Scripture:
Luke 7:36-50

ability to pay. But this was not the attitude of Jesus.

To be worthy of forgiveness the LORD's people must not only desire it, but also be in the proper heart condition to receive and appreciate it. These and related conditions of forgiveness are beautifully set forth in our Key Verse—‘If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves.’ This shows that the application of the text is to the LORD's people; those who are called by his name. In the present age, these are the

IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR THE Pharisees of Jesus' day to appreciate the spirit of forgiveness. Their attitude as a whole is well indicated by Jesus in his illustration of the two who were forgiven their debts—one owing five hundred pieces of silver, the other fifty. The Pharisee, in whose house Jesus was taking dinner, seemed unable to comprehend this spirit of forgiveness and generosity. The consistent practice of the rank and file of the Pharisees at that time was to heap heavy burdens upon the people, apparently without consideration of their

faithful followers of the Master.

Since, by nature, all of us are members of the sinful and fallen race, we frequently do those things that cause us to stand in need of forgiveness. But to obtain this forgiveness we must humble ourselves by acknowledging our need. If we are proud, and pretend that we do not need God's mercy, his grace will not be extended toward us.

Another condition of forgiveness, according to our Key Verse, is that we pray. The LORD has made a wonderful provision through Christ whereby we might approach him in prayer to seek forgiveness. Paul speaks of this as going to "the throne of grace." We quote, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—Heb. 4:16

Our Key Verse also emphasizes that we must seek our Heavenly Father's 'face' if we would obtain his grace and forgiveness. Our Key Verse suggests one of the ways in which we are to seek: it is that we turn from our wicked ways which caused the Father to hide his face from us in the first place. If we seek the LORD's face through prayer, and earnestly endeavor to keep our imperfections under control, we will enjoy his grace and fellowship at all times.

The LORD had 'a people for his name' in ancient times and, as we have seen, he also has a people for his name at the present time. We thank God that provision has been made in his plan of salvation also to have a people for his name in the ages to come. These, however, will be dealt with upon a different basis, for upon conditions of obedience they will be restored to actual human perfection. We read of that time, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." As a result, there will then be no more pain and death, and all tears shall be wiped away.—Rev. 21:3,4 ■

God's Mighty Acts through Jesus

Key Verse:
*“Hearken unto
this, O Job: stand
still, and consider
the wondrous
works of God.”*
—Job 37:14

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 8:5-17

THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND the Divine plan for human redemption, and recovery from sin and death, see in Jesus' many miracles marvelous illustrations of what will be done for all mankind during the coming thousand-year reign of Christ.

At that time all sickness, pain, and death will be destroyed, and all the dead awakened to enjoy the blessings of the Millennial kingdom on conditions of belief and obedience.

We see in the miracles of Jesus a display of what our Key Verse refers to as 'the wondrous works of God.' The centurion, whose servant was sick of the palsy, sensed from what he had heard of Jesus' mighty works that he must be endued with great authority and power. While Jesus offered to go to the centurion's home to heal his servant, the centurion expressed his belief that with Jesus this would not be necessary, that all he needed to do was to issue the command from where he was, which was in Capernaum, and the servant would be healed.

When Jesus heard this man's expression of faith he marveled, and said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." (Matt. 8:10) Based upon this implied lack of faith on the part of the Israelites in general, Jesus said, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall

sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”—vs. 11

That the people should come to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—other accounts add, “and all the prophets”—means that they will then be awakened from the sleep of death. These to whom the people come are the ones referred to in Psalm 45:16 as the “fathers” of Israel, with the information that they are to be made “princes in all the earth.” Paul referred to this class as being brought forth from death in what he describes as a “better resurrection.”—Heb. 11:35

These will, in the Messianic kingdom, be the human representatives of the Divine and invisible Christ. They will be the rulers in the earthly phase of that kingdom. Those here referred to by Jesus as “the children of the kingdom” (vs. 12), to whom the high honor of a place in the spiritual phase of the kingdom was first offered, will, in the resurrection, find themselves “cast out” of this high position, because of their lack of faith and obedience. The “weeping and gnashing of teeth” on the part of these simply denotes their great disappointment.

Concerning the Israelites who rejected Jesus the Apostle Paul wrote, “All Israel shall be saved.” (Rom. 11:26) How glad we are for the extension of God’s mercy toward these, and for giving them an opportunity to gain salvation through Jesus, and through the agencies of his kingdom.

After Jesus made this observation concerning the lack of faith in Israel and what it would mean for the faithless, he turned to the centurion and said, “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” We are informed that the servant “was healed in the selfsame hour.” (vs. 13) Even at the close of the day the people continued to bring the sick and afflicted to Jesus, including those who were possessed with devils, and he “healed all that were sick.” (vs. 16) Jesus also awakened the dead to life; and thus his illustrations of kingdom work were all-comprehensive. ■

God Leads Man to Decision

Key Verse: “*Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”
—*Matthew 16:16*

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 16:13-23

IT WAS WELL ALONG IN Jesus’ short earthly ministry that he inquired of his disciples concerning the public’s opinion of him, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” (vs. 13) The disciples’ report to Jesus indicated that there were a number of opinions as to the Master’s identity. Some thought he was John the Baptist; others that he was the foretold Elias, or Elijah; “and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.” (vs. 14)

Turning to his disciples, Jesus asked, “But whom say ye that I am?” (vs. 15) Peter answered, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Peter had become convinced that Jesus was that most important personage who had been foretold in the Old Testament; that he was indeed the Messiah of promise, and that he had come in fulfillment of all those wonderful promises of deliverance for Israel, and blessings for all the families of the earth.

Jesus was pleased with this reply, for it revealed that Peter had grasped the real truth concerning him, and he said to his faithful apostle, “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” (vs. 17) The great truth concerning Jesus, which Peter had expressed, had not come to him through the process of human reasoning, but by the revealing

power of God's Holy Spirit.

When Jesus said to his apostle, "Thou art Peter, [rock], and upon this rock I will build my church" (vs. 18), he used two different Greek words. The one translated 'Peter' literally means a pebble, or small fragment of rock, while the word translated 'rock' means a large stone, or boulder. Thus, Jesus did not say that his church would be built upon Peter, but upon a much more substantial stone, or rock. It has been built upon the great foundation truth expressed by Peter, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

When the church is built, as Jesus explained to Peter, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (vs. 18) The word 'hell' is here translated from the Greek word *hades*, meaning the state of death. The purpose of the church in the plan of God is to work with Jesus in the deliverance of all mankind from death. He has the keys of death and of hell, and will open its 'gates' and set death's captives free. The gates will not prevail to hold its prisoners.

Jesus told Peter that he would give him "the keys of the kingdom of heaven." (vs. 19) Peter used one of the 'keys' on the day of Pentecost, when through his Pentecostal sermon, he opened up kingdom privileges to believing Jews. He used the other key three and one half years later when he opened up similar kingdom opportunities to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert.

Toward the close of his ministry he began to acquaint his disciples with the fact of his coming arrest and death. But Peter endeavored to dissuade Jesus from thus giving himself up voluntarily to die. He said to Jesus, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Jesus' reply was, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (vss. 22,23) It was God's will for Jesus to die, else the world could not be redeemed from death. ■

The Seventh Creative Day

“The LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.”
—*Genesis 3:22,23*

THE SEVENTH DAY RE-ferred to in the Genesis account of Creation is usually thought of as the one on which God rested, and properly so, for as we are informed “he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.” (chap. 2:2) On the other hand, the beginning of this same verse states “on the seventh day God ended his work.” The *Marginal Translation* of verse three explains that God rested from all his work that he “created to

make.” This implies that there was a further making, or finishing, of the creative work that was to be accomplished on the seventh day in which the Creator himself would not be directly active.

“He that is entered into his [God’s] rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” (Heb. 4:10) The ‘rest’ of believers is in the finished work of Christ, not an entering into a state of inactivity. It is a trust in Christ for that which one cannot do for himself—that is, justify himself before God by his own works of righteousness. Now, as Paul indicates, this rest from one’s own works that they may be accomplished by another is the way in which God ceased from his own works at the close of the sixth creative day. The literal meaning of the Hebrew word translated ‘rested’ in Genesis 2:2, is repose—by implication, to desist from exertion. The thought simply is that the carrying out of the great design of the Creator from the close of the sixth day forward was to be entrusted to another, even to his own beloved Son, the *Logos*, who had worked so faithfully with his Father up to this point.

The Creator did not rest from his work because he was tired. The Prophet Isaiah wrote, “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?” (Isa. 40:28) It is clear, then, that the Creator did not rest from his work because he was weary. It is equally clear that his originally designed objective in the creation of the earth had not been obtained by the close of the sixth creative day. This purpose was that the earth be filled with a perfect and happy human family in harmony with the Creator’s laws, and enjoying the blessings of a worldwide earthly paradise.

It was the Creator’s will that his human creatures, made in his image, should be given freedom

of choice with respect to his laws. God did not want the earth filled with mechanical beings that, like the inanimate objects of Creation, obey Divine law by compulsion. God knew in advance that, lacking experience, our first parents would disobey his law and bring upon themselves the sentence of death. With his infinite wisdom and ability God could know this without, in any measure, causing his human creatures to sin. He permitted sin to enter into the world because he knew that the eternal happiness of his human creation would be enhanced by having experienced the result of disobedience, turning therefrom, and understandingly dedicating themselves to him and his laws of righteousness.

Certainly man could never be secure against the temptation to disobey the Creator without a knowledge of what the result would be. There are four principal ways of obtaining knowledge. One is by intuition. God alone possesses intuitive knowledge. Another way is by being informed, and God did inform our first parents that transgression of his law would result in death. One can also learn by observation. But, if God's human creatures were to observe the result of sin and thereby learn of its terrible results in terms of suffering, it would have to be experienced by others, somewhere. God knew what some of his human creatures have since learned—that experience is the best teacher—so he permitted man to sin, knowing thereby he would experience for himself the terrible results of disobedience.

In our text God says, 'The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.' The pronoun us in the expression 'one of us,' refers to God and Jesus.

By intuition, God knew both good and evil. Jesus, his son, having implicit confidence in his father, consequently believing his every word and possessing a superhuman intelligence, with powers of perception far beyond anything we can imagine, would also know both good and evil. Besides, Jesus would, by now, have already seen the beginning of human suffering resulting from the sin of our first parents, for fear had already taken hold upon them.

God said that man had become like one of us, to know good and evil. This does not imply that Adam and Eve had already learned all there was to know about good and evil but, having partaken of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they now were to know and learn both by observation and by experience. And not only they, but all their progeny were also to experience the terrible results of disobeying Divine law. For a brief period in Eden, Adam and Eve enjoyed God's blessing, and thus for a limited time experienced good; but this would not be true of their progeny, every one of whom would now be born in sin and "shapen in iniquity."—Ps. 51:5

RESTORATION

The only way in which the human race as a whole could ever have an experience with good, under conditions favorable to learning the advantages of righteousness in contrast with the baneful results of unrighteousness, would be to awaken them from the sleep of death in an environment suitable for this purpose. But how could this be done since the Creator had justly imposed the sentence of death upon Adam, and, through heredity, upon all his children?

Motivated by love, and through the operation of Divine wisdom, a way was found by the Creator whereby fallen man might enjoy a future experience with good, and thus, having experienced both good and evil be able to decide intelligently whether to choose the good, and live forever, or to continue in his evil ways, and be cut off eternally in death. (Acts 3:23) That way was through God's son, the *Logos*; the Divine plan being for the *Logos* to be made flesh and die as man's Redeemer, and later return to restore to life those for whom he died. Thus the Creator could "be just," and at the same time "the justifier" of all who, when the opportunity is given, return to him through Christ.—Rom. 3:26

It is clear then, that having created man in his own image, and knowing that through lack of experience he would transgress Divine law and thereby plunge the whole race into death, God knew that if Adam and his offspring were to survive they would have to be restored to life by another; for in his righteousness he could no longer deal with man. This work of restoration was to be accomplished by his own beloved Son. Thus God rested from his work, while his Son has been carrying it forward to completion, the arrangement for this including the permission of evil, and man's instruction in the meaning of this experience. This has involved a long nighttime of sin and death, in which each generation has suffered and died. The Divine purpose in the creation of man being that the earth should be filled with his human creation. (Gen. 1:28) His plan in connection with the permission of evil embraces enough time for the birth of a sufficient number to

properly fill the earth. Meanwhile, during this same long period of time, the Divine arrangements for dealing with the people when awakened from the grave have progressed steadily.

WORLDS AND AGES

This seventh day, during which the creative design of God pertaining to the earth is being completed, is, the Scriptures indicate, divided into shorter periods of time called worlds and ages. The period prior to the Flood is described by the Apostle Peter as the “world that then was.” (II Pet. 3:6) Paul speaks of the period from the Deluge to the establishment of Christ’s kingdom in the earth as “this present evil world.” (Gal. 1:4) In Hebrews 2:5 we read of “the world to come.”

In a broad sense we might speak of these three worlds as the past, present, and future, and to understand the Divine plan it is essential to realize that what the Bible may say concerning one of these worlds might not necessarily be true of the others. Failing to recognize this, many have concluded that the Bible contradicts itself. Just as an architect’s specifications for each floor of a three-story building would differ according to the manner in which each floor was to be used, so the scriptural references to each of these three worlds differ, because the arrangements of the LORD, as they progress from period to period, are not always the same.

One basic fact, however, is true throughout both the first and second worlds mentioned in the Bible. It is that in both of them evil predominates. Malachi 3:15 reads, “Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they

that tempt God are even delivered.” This was even true in the world before the Flood. It has been true throughout this ‘present evil world.’ There have at all times, of course, been varying degrees of wickedness. The remnants of the image of God with which man was endowed at Creation have, throughout the ages, prompted many noble efforts of reform. There have been noble individuals who would rather die doing good than in any way injure another. But evil has predominated.

On the other hand, the Bible speaks of a time when the “righteous shall flourish.” The Prophet David explains that this will be in “his days,” that is, the days when Christ is King. (Ps. 72:7; 92:12) Texts of scripture like this cannot be harmonized with human experience at the present time, nor do they harmonize with texts which describe the reign of sin and death with which mankind has been plagued since the transgression in Eden. Their harmony and beauty are seen only when we realize that they are descriptive of conditions in a future period of the Divine plan.

That will be a time when the world will have a new Ruler, even Christ. Jesus spoke of Satan as the “prince of this world.” (John 16:11) Paul describes Satan as the “god of this world.” (II Cor. 4:4) This explains why the present evil world is so evil. It is because the archenemy of God and of righteousness is its ruler. By contrast, the fact that the ‘world to come’ will be ruled by Christ, of whom it is written that he loves righteousness and hates iniquity, means that then the forces of evil shall be destroyed and that truth and righteousness will prevail.

The fact that thus far evil has predominated in the experience of the human race does not mean that the Divine plan for the recovery of man from sin and death has not steadily progressed. It has, and through periods outlined in the Bible that we shall call ages. During the 'world that was' before the Flood there was little progress in the Divine plan, except the testing of the faithfulness of a few individuals such as Abel, Enoch, and Noah, to prove them worthy of being among the "princes in all the earth" during the age to come. (Ps. 45:16) It was after the Flood that the plan of God began more particularly to unfold, and to progress.

For more than six hundred years after the Flood Divine favor was shown and promises made to certain individuals whom we may refer to as the patriarchs, or fathers, of what later became the Jewish nation. The promise to Abraham was that through his seed "all the families of the earth [would] be blessed." This promise was reiterated to Isaac and to Jacob. (Gen. 12:3; 22:18) No effort was made at that time to evangelize the world. While these wonderful promises were made to the patriarchs, they were not instructed to proclaim the message to others. This was an age, in other words, when God's dealings were exclusively with these individual patriarchs. So we designate it the Patriarchal Age.

THE JEWISH AGE

With the death of Jacob a change occurred. The twelve sons of Jacob became the nucleus of a nation, the nation of Israel, and the period of more than eighteen hundred years, during which the Divine dealings were with this nation, we call the

Jewish Age. As a people, under the leadership of Moses, they were delivered from slavery in Egypt. The Divine Law was given to them, epitomized in the Ten Commandments. They were, through the priesthood, called upon to offer sacrifices to the LORD, which pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ.

Throughout the Jewish Age we are presented with a national picture. The whole nation was blessed or cursed together, largely according to the measure of obedience to the Law on the part of the leaders. The promised reward for keeping the Law was a blessed one, "which if a man do, he shall live in them." (Lev. 18:5; Neh. 9:29; Ezek. 20:11; Rom. 10:5) In other words, this one little nation was given an opportunity of gaining everlasting life by keeping the Divine Law; but they failed.

God, in the exercise of his foreknowledge, knew that no member of the fallen and dying race was capable of keeping his perfect Law inviolate. But the Jewish people did not know it; nor would any of the human race have known it unless it was demonstrated. Paul refers to the Law as a "school-master" which teaches the necessity of Christ as the Redeemer in the Divine plan. (Gal. 3:24,25) One of the lessons to be learned by the Divine permission of evil was that there was no way of escaping the penalty of death except through Christ, the Redeemer from death, and the ultimate Restorer to life.

Had the Jewish people been faithful to their calling they, as the natural descendants of Abraham, would have inherited the promise made to him that through his 'seed' all the families of the earth

would be blessed. But they failed. The final test came upon them when Jesus presented himself to the nation as the promised Messiah.

But in the Divine economy their persecution of Jesus unto death resulted in the redemption of the world.

Not all of the Jewish nation failed in the final test. John informs us that while “his own received him not,” as many as did receive him he gave power—or the right or privilege—to become the sons of God. (John 1:11,12) Among those of the Jewish nation who accepted Christ were his apostles. Paul speaks of “above five hundred brethren” who saw Jesus after his resurrection. (I Cor. 15:6) At Pentecost three thousand accepted under the preaching of Peter. Doubtless these had been somewhat prepared prior to this through their contacts with Jesus.

THE GOSPEL AGE

The foreordained number to be with Jesus as the promised seed of Abraham was one hundred and forty-four thousand. (Rev. 7:4; 14:1,3) The number of Jewish people who accepted Jesus was far short of this, so the Gentiles were then given an opportunity. But this involved the work of another age in the Divine plan, which we will speak of as the Gospel Age. It is properly called the Gospel Age because during this age the work of the LORD is accomplished through the preaching and drawing power of the Gospel.

During the Jewish Age, a whole nation was given the opportunity to qualify as the Messianic nation. But this arrangement ceased with the coming of Messiah. With the failure of the nation to qualify

for this high position in the Divine plan, the invitation was extended to individuals—for a short time, exclusively to individuals of the Jewish nation. Then it was extended to any of the Gentiles who, as individuals, responded to the drawing power of the Gospel of Christ, and dedicated themselves to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, to suffer and die with him. Nationalities count for nothing in this arrangement of the Gospel Age. Paul wrote, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”—Gal. 3:28,29

So this work of the Gospel Age has continued throughout the centuries. Millions have become nominal followers of Christ, but only a few in each generation have actually qualified through faithfulness to live and reign with Christ. Indeed, the vast majority were more pleased to ally themselves with the church-state systems of the old world which claimed to be the kingdom of Christ, no longer desiring to wait for his return and the establishment of his real kingdom.

WHEAT AND TARES

In his parable of the wheat and the tares, Jesus gave a preview of what would happen throughout the Gospel Age. The parable relates that in the beginning of the age good seed was sown in a field. Then an enemy came and sowed tares—imitation, or counterfeit wheat. But the householder would not permit the tares to be uprooted, saying that both should be permitted to grow together until

the harvest. Then the tares were to be bound in bundles and burned, and the wheat gathered into the barn.—Matt. 13:24-30

Jesus explained that the wheat were the children of the kingdom; those, that is, begotten of the glorious gospel of the kingdom, and inspired by it—inspired to suffer and die with Jesus that they might prove worthy to live and reign with him in his kingdom. The tares, Jesus continued, are the children of the wicked one. These are not the immoral and degenerate of the world. They are the offspring, so to speak, of the false and Satan-inspired teachings that man, by his own efforts, can establish the kingdom of Christ, and bring in everlasting peace and righteousness. The church-state systems of Europe, together styled Christendom, were Satan's counterfeit of Christ's true kingdom. Those systems, as such, are passing out of existence, but the viewpoint of a kingdom of righteousness without Christ still prevails. Few indeed today are looking to Christ to establish his long-promised kingdom. The vast majority of his professed followers believe that whatever the Lord does for the world will be done through them and their imposing systems.

Jesus explained that in the harvest at the end of the age there would be a separation of the wheat from the tares, that the tares would be destroyed, and that the wheat would then "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13:37-43) He speaks of a furnace of fire in which the tares would be destroyed. There are many prophecies which reveal that the Gospel Age comes to an end in a "time of trouble such as never was since there

was a nation.” (Dan. 12:1) The furnace of fire in the parable of the wheat and tares is symbolic of this same destructive trouble. In it are destroyed the great counterfeits of Christ’s kingdom, while the frustration and disappointment of their adherents is symbolized in the parable by the wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Developments in the world today clearly indicate that we are in that period of dissolution. The age-old systems that constituted the bulwarks of Christendom are crumbling. Churchianity is on the defensive everywhere. Fear of destruction, by nuclear armaments and various types of weapons of mass destruction, is producing a fervor of religious excitement, leading in many instances to increased attendance at church; but the newcomers, as well as the old, have little or no conception of the true teachings of the Bible. Churches today teach high moral and ethical principals, but they are not always practiced. The people are not being taught to expect the establishment of Christ’s kingdom.

EXPERIENCE ENLARGED

Thus the preparatory features of the Divine plan for human salvation from sin and death have continued to progress throughout the various ages. Meanwhile, as the world in general have come into contact with the LORD’s people whom he has been preparing to be the personnel in Christ’s kingdom, they have profited. Some have been encouraged to live better lives. Some, however, unwittingly, have lent themselves to be cohorts of Satan in the persecution of the righteous, and have sunk deeper into

the mire of degradation and sin, thus having an opportunity to learn even more clearly the terrible results of disobedience to God's law.

In the Divine economy, the permission of evil has served to test the fidelity of those whom the LORD will use in high positions in the Messianic kingdom. It offered a further opportunity for the *Logos*, the beloved Son of God who participated in all the works of Creation, to prove his zeal for his Father's plan for him to redeem fallen man from death by his own death, and later restore to life those for whom he died. Satan said, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." (Isa. 14:13,14) By Satan's attempt to accomplish this ambitious scheme, the world has been filled with sorrow and death; but Satan himself will eventually be destroyed. (Heb. 2:14) Jesus, on the contrary, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. God has highly exalted him, and through him the suffering and dying world will be restored to life.

Christ must reign, Paul tells us, until all enemies are put under his feet, and the last enemy to be destroyed is death. (I Cor. 15:25,26) It will be during the thousand years of Christ's reign that mankind will have their first experience with good. The earth will then be filled with a knowledge of God and of his glory. (Isa. 11:9; 40:5) Of that time Isaiah wrote, "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." (Isa. 33:24) They will then learn that the love of the Creator provided redemption and forgiveness for

them through Christ Jesus, and because of this, there will then be no need for them to suffer.

God's original plan for the earth to be subdued and made like the Garden of Eden will be accomplished, under the righteous administration of the Messianic kingdom laws. Then they will build houses and inhabit them, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. Verse twenty-two states, it will be then that the LORD's elect will make all mankind "long enjoy the work of their hands." (Isa. 65:20-25) The elect referred to in this prophecy includes all those who, through the various ages of the seventh creative day, have been tested, and prepared to administer the laws of the kingdom—both the spiritual and the earthly phases of that kingdom. Primarily, the reference is to Christ and his followers, who, as the seed of Abraham, will be the channel of blessing to "all the families of the earth."—Gal. 3:8,16,27-29

EVENING AND MORNING

Man thinks of the day as beginning in the morning, but those long periods of time referred to by the Bible as the days of creation, began in the evening. The eve of any event is its beginning. How appropriate this is when considering the creative days. While the evening is properly, and scripturally, the beginning of the day, it is also a time of darkness and obscurity, and so was the beginning of each of the seven days of creation. They began in obscurity, and not until the morning of the closing of the day, was its full purpose recognized.

This is particularly true of the seventh day. With the fall of man into sin and death a pall of darkness

settled down over God's human creation. Man was to learn both good and evil by experience but how could he now thus learn good? The seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head, but what did this mean, and how was it to be brought about? God's design for the seventh day is to be carried forward to completion by Christ, and the earth filled with a perfect and happy human family, rejoicing in their knowledge of good through actual experience, as they also will have known evil through their contact with it throughout the time when darkness covered the earth. Then the Creator's purpose in the creation of man will be fully realized by all. Then, as the obedient and restored world, freed from sin, sickness, pain and death, stand at the threshold of an eternity of joy and life, in a global-wide paradise in which there is every tree pleasant to the eye and good for food, a post-script to the Genesis account of Creation can be written, reading, "The evening and the morning were the seventh day." ■

Adore and Praise the Lord

*Praise the Lord! ye heavens adore him;
Praise him, angels in the height;
Sun, and moon, rejoice before him,
Praise him, all ye stars of light.*

*Praise the Lord, for he hath spoken;
Worlds his mighty voice obeyed;
Laws which never shall be broken,
For their guidance he hath made.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

Know Ye Not?

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. . . .

Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

—I Corinthians 9:24-27

THE OUTSTANDING remarks of the apostle are, ‘So run,’ and so ‘obtain.’ These are prefaced with the telling phrase so often used by Paul, ‘Know ye not?’ Here are a few instances, and all so impressive:

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?”—Rom. 6:3

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?”—Rom. 6:16

“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?”—I Cor. 5:6

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?”—I Cor. 6:9

“Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus

Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”—II Cor. 13:5

The Apostle James adds, “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?”—James 4:4

“Do you really not know that they which run in a race run all; so,” as Ferrar Fenton says, “The runners on the track all run, but one carries off the prize.” (I Cor. 9:24, *Fenton’s Translation*) Therefore, as the apostle emphasizes, so run that you may win. Run with diligence, perseverance, constancy, and care that you will gain the reward.

To do this implies concentration of purpose. Not one thing is ever achieved without a conviction of its being right, and a growing enthusiasm to accomplish it. The apostle assures us of this great principle when he says, “This one thing I do” (Phil. 3:13), and again, “So fight I, not as one that beateth the air.”—I Cor. 9:26

When Paul was journeying from Ephesus to Jerusalem, he was assured by the Holy Spirit that bonds and afflictions awaited him, and he said, “None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”—Acts 20:24

Let us seek to follow the apostle as he followed Christ, and so run in the race of life and immortality, not uncertainly, thoughtlessly, but with a clear definite objective in view, as did Paul. “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”—Phil. 3:7

OLYMPIC GAMES

In the Olympic games, to which Paul so often refers, there were prescribed regulations for each competitor to observe and obey in order to become eligible to race or to play in the games. These were: (1) Freemen only were eligible, (2) Ten months' training under a professional trainer or tutor, (3) Particular attention to one's diet, (4) Special discipline to one's habits, (5) Repeated and continual exercise and practice.

An experienced trainer or tutor was necessary for the competitor to become conversant with every need and detail. The Scriptures suggest that our trainer and tutor is Christ Jesus our Lord. In his experiences he became our forerunner and captain, and as we concentrate on the hope set before us, looking to that which is beyond the veil—"the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10)—we shall be inspired by the instructions imparted to us through his Word. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."—John 6:63

We can see Jesus crowned with glory and honor. "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:10) "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (chap. 3:1) Again, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (chap. 12:2) We are to be copies at heart of God's dear Son, and be "conformed" to his image.—Rom. 8:29

FREEMEN

To be a freeman implies that all encumbrances and hindrances would need to be disposed of. Engagement in other contracts taking one's interest and time would prevent one from holding a position as a competitor for the prize. As children of Adam, and therefore as children of disobedience, and as men of the world fulfilling the desires of the flesh, we could not hope to enter upon the race for life in Christ, and for immortality and the Divine nature, as promised.—I Pet. 1:4; II Pet. 1:4

We must first be delivered from Adam's condemnation and freed from the burden of sin in our hearts. Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, demonstrated by a full consecration, are the steps necessary to attain this freedom. Being made free through Christ, we are eligible to enter the race for "the prize of the high calling of God" (Phil. 3:14); and then we should remember that "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life."—II Tim. 2:4

This being our happy heart experience, we can say with the apostle, and with all who accept this great honor, "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (I John 3:21) It is here that we learn the first principles and go on to perfection, not forgetting them, but in building up our increase of faith upon those principles of elementary faith and full appreciation of God's Word.

The giving up of oneself in consecration to do the LORD's commands is a glorious experience in human life, and the outworking of Romans 12:2, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may

prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." This is one of the greatest privileges, and one of the highest honors, ever conferred upon angels or men. It is the noblest deed that man can possibly perform. Those who have thus devoted themselves to God can enjoy the thrill of the poet's expression:

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
Shall have my soul, my life, my all."

It is right here in our experience of Christian life that the race set before us actually starts.

TRAINING

The ten months' training of the Olympic athlete would compare largely with our earlier experiences in the Christian way, prior to our definite consecration. Whereas consecration—coming to a decision to take up our cross, to deny ourselves, and to follow Jesus Christ—marks the time of actually entering the race.

Just as a professional tutor in the Olympic race would furnish all competitors with a knowledge of the dangers and ensnarements during the actual race, so our tutor in the Christian race encourages and exhorts us to perseverance and endurance. We also become aware of every pitfall before and during the running of the race.

PITFALLS IN THE RACE

Sometimes there may be disappointments at the position given to start off in the race. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have." (Heb. 13:5)

“Godliness with contentment is great gain.” (I Tim. 6:6) Do not complain or compare yourself to others with greater advantages and less disability. Through “much tribulation” we enter the kingdom of God.—Acts 14:22

Some may run because their friends do, rather than for personal eagerness to gain the prize. But we should individually run for the prize. Paul wrote, “Being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”—Phil. 3:10,11

There may be real faintness, fatigue, resulting from self-effort. Always remember that “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:13) “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” (Isa. 40:29) Let us, then, “lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”—Heb. 12:1,2

There is a tendency with some to be careless. “Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”—I Pet. 1:13

Others are self-reliant, proud of strength and form. These easily miss the way. They keep running, but never arrive. “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”—James 4:6

Some runners are too self-centered and vain. They give too much attention to externals—how they shine, whether or not spectators are taking note of all their salient points. “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do

mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” (Rom. 8:13) “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.” (John 6:27) Jesus assured his disciples, “The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.” (Luke 12:23) “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”—Gal. 5:1

All these are as pitfalls in the way of those taking their place as runners in the race for the crown of life, and will be encountered as the race proceeds. As the tutors of the Olympic games and races warn their runners, or prospective winners, so our heavenly tutor and High Priest warns and admonishes us against these things. In the heavenly race all these possibilities have to be accounted for, and even greater temptations than these confront us.

The apostle brings to our attention the devices of our great Adversary. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood [merely], but against principalities, against powers, . . . spiritual wickedness in high places,” and against “the rulers of the darkness of this world.” For this reason, since these are more powerful than ourselves, we are exhorted to take every precaution in fortifying our hearts and minds with the whole armor of Truth provided for our security in Christ. (Eph. 6:11,12) “Beware,” says the apostle, “lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”—Col. 2:8

The response to the Adversary is by the human heart. The human heart, as God’s Word says, is

deceitful and “desperately wicked.” (Jer. 17:9) The Adversary’s method of operation is by strategy rather than by open violence. Therefore, we find it necessary to be quite convinced and fully enthused with the faith that wins.

If this is so, we shall find ourselves adhering more strongly to the principles of Truth and love, even to one’s own hurt. “Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.” (I Cor. 9:25) We may be called upon during this race to sacrifice our human attainments and prospects for the will of God, and we readily acquiesce. In these tests and experiences we become more restful, and equipped for even greater trials of our faith. We are more peaceful amidst confusion, and more resigned to every experience, whether it be sweet or bitter. We learn to count it a “joy” when we “fall into divers temptations.” (James 1:2) We well know that “God is able to make all grace abound” toward us, that we, always having “all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”—II Cor. 9:8

God’s commands are his enablings. If he bids us go forward, it is lack of faith in him rather than distrust in ourselves if we hesitate, falter, and draw back. This inspires one to go on and on with humble spirit, and with a stout heart, full of confidence and assurance to so run that he may obtain.

All who hold fast to the conviction of faith, strong and unwavering, embrace confidently the promises of God and become victors before God. Think of Moses who, by faith, when he came to years “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a

season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.” (Heb. 11:24-26) Abraham went out from his own country, not knowing whither he went, and was among those who “died in faith, not having received the promises, but . . . were persuaded of them,” and looked for a city prepared of God.—Heb. 11:8-16

As those who preceded us reached their goal by faith and endurance, so must we reach our goal. These things are recorded for our benefit, to supply us with food for thought and meditation, that we might take comfort in the Scriptures. (Rom. 15:4) Let us take a lesson from these noble worthies of the past and note their severe discipline, the intensity of their struggles, and their reward in comparison with our own privilege of being called to a throne. (I Cor. 1: 26) ‘Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, . . . and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.’

Every man that strives is temperate—agonizes, indulges self in no way whatever, but bruises the body, keeps it in subjection. (I Cor. 9:27) He fulfills not only some, but all conditions relating to the race. He does it for a corruptible crown, “but we an incorruptible.” (I Cor. 9:25) If men show such extraordinary devotion to self-sacrifice for a perishable crown, what should be the devotion and sacrifice of those for whom an imperishable crown is certain! (II Tim. 4:8) What an encouragement to mount up in the spirit of Christ with “wings as eagles;” to “run, and not be weary;” to “walk, and not faint.”—Isa. 40:31

In the Olympic races and games there is continual practice thirty days prior to the race. So we should give greater diligence. No day should be allowed to pass without meditation, prayer, and earnestness in righteousness, unity and love, and in fellowship and communion with God.

DEVOTION AND SERVICE

The race involves contemplation and activity, devotion and service. The exhortation is not only to so run. The apostle also says, 'so fight I.' The illustration changes from running to boxing. So contend I, Paul wrote. He had an adversary to strike, and did not do so wildly or impotently, thus merely beating the air. There is a definite aim, a decided purpose. We should not wear out our strength with vain flourishes, but with a telling aim. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."—James 4:7

Many people of God flounder, and often repress merely the symptom of trouble instead of attacking the real disease. It is better to examine the particular hindrances, bring them into subjection and make them slaves, conquered and led captive. 'Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?'

If there is anything we delight to do, we shall be found at every opportunity doing that thing. Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:23) The great objective of this race is that we might dwell with God and with Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us make it our delight.

Soon the clock of the ages will have struck, and the last members of that glorious priesthood will have completed their course. Then shall be heard once more, 'It is finished.' Then shall we enter into joys abundant forevermore, and we shall be with the Lord to express perfect praise to him and our Father. This will be our happy ending! ■

“Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”—Ephesians 3:20,21

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

FEBRUARY 3—“My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.”—Proverbs 4:20,22 (Z. '96-180 Hymn 264)

FEBRUARY 10—“Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”—I Timothy 4:12 (Z. '95-251 Hymn 145)

FEBRUARY 17—“Take my yoke upon you, . . . for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”—Matthew 11:29,30 (Z. '00-137 Hymn 284)

FEBRUARY 24—“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”—Romans 8:3,4 (Z. '02-248 Hymn 190)

Children of Light

“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”

—I Thessalonians 5:5

DURING HIS MINISTRY, Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world,” and the Scriptures elsewhere record of him that he “was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” (John 8:12; 1:9) The

light at that time was only local. Only a few saw it, for it shone in a dark place, and to those who did see it, the Master said, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see.”—Matt. 13:16

All those who will ever have the right to life must have the light, Divine Truth, and since it is God’s purpose that everyone, including those in the prison house of death, shall have an opportunity to accept life, the time must come when all will see the light of Truth. It is the will of God for “all men to be saved [from Adamic death, ignorance, and blindness], and to come to an accurate knowledge of the Truth.”—I Tim. 2:3,4, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

The Scriptures reveal that before the world will have this light, or knowledge, a saintly class—the true church, the bride of Christ—must be enlightened as ‘children of light,’ and must be completed

and glorified together with Jesus beyond the veil. Concerning the true church during her earthly pilgrimage we read, "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." (Eph. 5:8) When classified as 'darkness' we were in ignorance and misunderstanding of God and his Holy Word and will. But now we are enjoying the light.

The children of light gauge their views, and direct their thoughts, words, and deeds, not by what the majority of their neighbors think to be right, but by what the Word of God teaches. In harmony with their full consecration unto death, they say, "To my Lord I must be true." Thus they are led by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of love, which actuates them.

Our Heavenly Father's sacred Word is indeed a "lamp" unto our feet, and a "light" unto our path (Ps. 119:105), and we each can gladly testify:

The light of the Word shines brighter and
brighter,

As wider and wider God opens my eyes;
My trials and burdens seem lighter and
lighter,

And fairer and fairer the heavenly prize.

The wealth of this world seems poorer and
poorer.

And farther and farther it fades from my
sight;

The prize of my calling seems surer and
surer,

As straighter and straighter I walk in the
light.

My joy in my Savior is growing and growing,
As stronger and stronger I trust in his
Word;

My peace like a river is flowing and flowing,
As harder and harder I lean on the Lord.

My praise and thanksgiving are swelling
and swelling,

As broader and broader the promises prove
The wonderful story I'm telling and telling;
And more and more sweetly I rest in his
love.

WATCH

“Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” (I Thess. 5:6) In the context of this verse we are exhorted to watch the signs of the times related to “the day of the Lord” (I Thess. 5:2), even the dispensational change, now close at hand. While Satan, our Adversary, is ever active in his efforts to do harm to the Lord’s great and glorious cause, he will be still more seductive in his evil influences, “with all power and signs and lying wonders” (II Thess. 2:9), during the days in which we now live. We must, therefore, be more and more alert in guarding every point of attack. “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, . . . be strong.”—I Cor. 16:13

Our Father requires us to do this watching, and he will reward the faithful ones. He urges us to keep awake and with all the ‘children of light’ to be learning more and more of his Holy Word and will; to be more comprehensively informed concerning his wondrous “Plan of the Ages, which he formed for the Anointed Jesus our Lord.” (Eph. 3:11, *WED*)

We are to grow in grace and in knowledge as we watch.

The world is still a dark place. But God's people are granted a special light; they are children of light, and they love the light. "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist [one who announces good tidings], fulfil thy ministry." (II Tim. 4:5, *Marginal Translation*) Carefully watching the increasing signs of the times, we, as faithful watchmen, always on the alert, call the attention of others to those wonderful fulfillments of Divine prophecy, and how they are related to the long-promised kingdom.

In addition to being watchful, we are to be sober in mind, not excited or heated with passion, but calm and well exercised in self-control. Some people easily become excitable, and are carried about by every wind of doctrine. They cannot give the reason for what they accept. They do not appear to know that Divine truths are intended for those who are seeking, waiting, watching, hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

A part of our sober watchfulness is also specially with a view to the keeping of our sacrifice upon the altar; maintaining full consecration to God; growing in Christlikeness; faithfully witnessing to the Truth, and assisting others to do the same.

WALK

The faithful followers of Jesus do not walk "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. 2:2) They are the light of the world, and they "walk

as children of light.” (Eph. 5:8) God’s Word is continually a lamp to their feet.

Human imaginations and ideas, or even consciences, are not sufficient to guide us aright. We need the begetting of the Holy Spirit, and its illumination of our mind in respect to what has been written in God’s Word of Truth for our learning and instruction. “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but that spirit which is from God, that we may know the things graciously given to us by God.” “Because that God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine into our hearts for illuminating with the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”—I Cor. 2:12; II Cor. 4:6, *WED*

As ‘children of light’ we should lay particular stress upon honesty in our walk before the LORD. “Let us walk honestly, as in the day.” (Rom. 13:13) Every true child of God should see to it that he is honest, not only in financial matters, but in his treatment of his neighbors, his brethren in the ecclesia, and above all, in his confessions respecting his faith. A test is being made along this line, and those who love the favor of men rather than the favor of God will be given an opportunity to prove that they are unfit for the kingdom, no matter what else they may be fit for.

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him [make progress]: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith.” “Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” “Walk in newness of life.” “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”—Col. 2:6,7; Rom. 8:1; 6:4; Gal. 5:16

In our walk of complete sanctification we shall experience, even as Jesus did, that the darkness hateth the light. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19) Nevertheless, we are to be zealous for the Truth: growing and walking in Truth; faithfully proclaiming it; never compromising with error, and at all times speaking forth the Truth in love.

SHINE

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:14,16) Our lamps are to be cleaned, trimmed, and brightly burning, if our light is to shine out brightly to the glory of our Father. It would appear that some of the LORD's dear children seem very indifferent to the matter of trimming their lamps and letting their light shine. They get some Truth and some error, and hold them both together. As a result their light does not shine brightly, for the vessel is darkened by the error.

Others may have the light, but fail to let the Truth have the proper place or effect upon their character; and so the light in them is very dim because of the uncleanness of the medium through which it passes. The admonition of the Scriptures should be kept in mind—"Light is sown for the righteous."—Ps. 97:11

The Apostle Paul has referred to our privilege and responsibility as light bearers. "Ye are our

epistle, . . . known and read of all men.” “We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.”—II Cor. 3:2; I Cor. 4:9

As far as we permit prejudice, pride, selfishness, self-esteem, strife, injustice, or unrighteousness to interrupt the freedom with which we receive and hold forth the light of Truth, in that same proportion will the light rapidly decline; and such a course persisted in will ultimately lead such a one into utter darkness. If that light within us should go out, we would be in greater darkness than we were before, “If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”—Matt. 6:23

A great exhortation for us is, “Quench not the Spirit.” (I Thess. 5:19) It could be extinguished entirely, but by the Lord’s help, we must keep this priceless treasure. It is an evidence that we are children of God. It is the earnest—pledge, or assurance—of our eternal inheritance.

As children of light, “we are ambassadors for Christ.” (II Cor. 5:20) While still living in the world, we are not of it, but have transferred our allegiance and citizenship to the heavenly kingdom. As representatives and ambassadors, surely we feel both the dignity and the honor of the position, and the weighty responsibility, as, whatsoever we do in word or deed, we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. The desire of our heart is to “shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life.”—Phil. 2:15,16

TRIALS

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange

thing happened unto you.” (I Pet. 4:12) We, today, are to be prepared for severe tests, of which we read, “There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”—Matt. 24:24

Not only will our knowledge of the Truth, and our faith, be tested, but so also will our Christian love. “Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love], I am nothing.”—I Cor. 13:2

We can be quite sure that the Adversary will use every means to present to us darkness for light, and to turn us aside from the plainly stated rule of love. It should be remembered that a loveless condition of heart, a hypocritical spirit, so foreign to our Master’s spirit, does not enter us suddenly, but develops gradually.

Hence, every day, each of the Lord’s people should have a searching of his heart to see whether or not he can find there toward anybody—saint or sinner—any of the spirit of malice, hypocrisy, or error which the Lord figuratively represented as leaven, contaminating in its influence.—Matt. 16:6

“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (I Cor. 5:6) A little envy, a little malice, or anger, hatred, and strife, may leaven our heart completely, and in a comparatively short time turn the sweetness of our nature, the spirit of love, into acid bitterness. Moreover, the leaven is not likely to be confined to one person, but spreads to others, and thus many may be defiled.

STEADFASTNESS

“Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked [*WED*, deceit of the lawless], fall from your own stedfastness.” (II Pet. 3:17) It will be seen from the context of this verse that the apostle’s exhortation has special application to the LORD’s consecrated people, the children of light, living today, during our Lord’s presence, when the present social order shall be dissolved.

The apostle here is not exhorting us merely to be aware of the recognized, notoriously wicked persons, but rather that we be watchful lest we be led away with the error of the unstable, or unsettled. The Greek word *athesmos*, here translated ‘wicked,’ actually means unsettled, lawless.

There is danger that those once enlightened in the Truth might be so led away, become unsettled, and wrest the Scriptures, handling the Word of God deceitfully. Thus they become unstable, lawless, in the sense that they would set aside the Word or Law of God, and take instead a twisted interpretation that would the better suit some theory of their own.

Such a wrong course, the apostle points out, would surely unsettle them and eventually mean the destruction of their spiritual interest. Thus they would go into outer darkness in respect to present Truth.

The implication is that the unsettled ones would first be shaken out, and that subsequently there would come still more insidious trials that would test even those who are steadfast. Such trials are, indeed, now upon the LORD’s true people. We must be on guard. “To the law and to the testimony: if

they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”—Isa. 8:20

The children of light are to cultivate more and more all the various graces of the Holy Spirit. “Knowledge [alone] puffs up, but love builds up.” (I Cor. 8:1, *WED*) There is one way only whereby we may insure ourselves against falling into any of the delusions and traps of the Adversary. This insurance is not secured wholly by knowledge, although knowledge is vital, a very important element in it. Another element, of paramount importance, is obedience to the principles laid down in our Father’s Word, and illustrated in the life and character of our Lord Jesus. We are to “superadd” to our faith: fortitude, knowledge, self-control, patience, piety, brotherly kindness, and love.—II Pet. 1:5-11, *WED* ■

“This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing.”—Isaiah 28:12

We are resting in the LORD’s promises—we are resting in his strength and in his ability to make good his promises. . . . This peace, or rest, is the special blessing of the Holy Spirit. Only in proportion as we receive the Holy Spirit, the holy mind of God, the holy disposition, can we have this peace fulfilled in us. . . . As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the LORD, in the knowledge of the Truth, we shall have this to comfort and strengthen us; and we shall thus have more of the peace of God every day, and be able to abide in his love.

—Songs in the Night, February 16

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

QUESTION: Revelation 20:14 reads, “Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” What is the ‘second death’?

ANSWER: The text says, of course, that the ‘lake of fire’ is the second death, fire being used as a symbol of destruction. It is the second death because it will be the second time that the death penalty will be imposed; the first time being in the Garden of Eden, when our first parents were sentenced to destruction—“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:19)—because they transgressed Divine law.

Death—destruction—is ever, and always, the penalty for sin. Everyone and everything out of harmony with God must eventually be destroyed. Jesus, by his death, provided redemption and release from the first death penalty, and all of the Adamic race will be given a full opportunity to benefit from this manifestation of Divine love on their behalf. The Scriptures reveal that those who do not accept Christ, and obey the laws of his kingdom, will “be destroyed from among the people.” (Acts 3:23) For these, of course, it will be the second time the death penalty will have fallen upon them.

But our text declares that ‘death and hell’ will also go into the second death. Verse 10 of the same chapter reveals that the “beast and the false prophet,” as well as Satan himself, are to be destroyed in the “lake of fire” which is the second death. The ‘beast and the false prophet’ are symbolic descriptions of evil institutions which are to be destroyed with the full establishment of Christ’s kingdom.

These had not been destroyed before, nor had Satan previously been destroyed. And death and hell, likewise, have not previously been destroyed.

We conclude, therefore, that the second death does not necessarily imply a second destruction, but more particularly the second time God interferes in human experiences to destroy that which is contrary to his will, which includes all the evils which contribute to unhappiness. We are assured that eventually the LORD's will is to be done on the "earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10), and this calls for the destruction of all evil—of willfully evil men and women, as well as evil institutions which have deceived and oppressed the people. Ultimately Satan, the instigator of all evil, will himself be destroyed. ■

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 Beryl Cave, Brooklyn, NY—November 7. Age, 78

Brother Louie Gruszka, Detroit, MI—November 29.
Age 87

Brother Carl Boughton, Pittsburgh, PA—December 13.
Age, 97

Sister Dovie Buel, Pass Christian, MS—December 21.
Age

Brother Glenn Baker, St. Louis, MO—December 21. Age,

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A living, bright reality!
More present to faith's vision keen,
Than any outward object seen;
More dear, more intimately nigh,
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie.*

—*Poems of Dawn*

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

M. Balko

Sacramento, CA February 18-20

S. Jones

Sacramento, CA February 18-20

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

A. Allers

Sacramento, CA February 18-20

R. Goodman

St. Petersburg, FL February 13

W. Austin

Sacramento, CA February 18-20

R. Gorecki

Sacramento, CA February 18-20

E. Blicharz

Louisville, AL February 13

B. Keith

Sacramento, CA February 18-20

C. Chandler

Sacramento, CA February 18-20

E. Kuenzli

India February 5-18

K. Fernets

Sacramento, CA February 18-20

P. Robinson

St. Augustine, FL February 13

MOVING?

If you are moving, please let us know six weeks before you move so that we can change the address on your Dawn subscription.



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.

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 18,19, 20—The Clarion Hotel, 2600 Auburn Blvd. Contact Donna Burke, 10771 Wood Reed Court, Nevada City, CA 95959. Phone: (530) 265-8252

ROCKLAND ANNUAL CONVENTION, February 27—Comfort Inn, Nanuet, NY. Contact Mrs. Russell Shallieu, 1041 Johnston Drive, Watchung, NJ 07069. Phone: (908) 756-4954

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 5,6,7—Clarion Hotel, 3835 McCoy Road, Orlando, FL 32812. Contact Bob Goodman, 426 Sundown Trail, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 695-6815

NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION, March 12,13—Beachfront Holiday Inn, Gulfport, MS. Contact Michael Costelli, 1505 18th Avenue, Gulfport, MS 39501. Phone: (228) 868-2464

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, March 25,26,27—Wyndham Hotel (at Albuquerque International Airport), 2910 Yale SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact Sandra Thomassen, 402 Bryn Mawr SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Phone: (505) 268-8170

FRESNO CONVENTION, April 1,2,3—Best Western Garden Court Inn, 2141 N. Parkway Drive, Fresno, CA 93705. Contact Bob Wilson, 2103 N. Price Avenue, #112, Fresno, CA 93703. Phone: (559) 255-2241

NEW YORK SPRING CONVENTION, April 3—Wellesley Inn, Two Bridges Road & Exit 52, Route 80, Fairfield, NJ. Contact Ann Truth Post, 24 Lexington Road, New City, NY 10956. Phone: (845) 634-5876

COLUMBUS CONVENTION, April 9,10—Radisson Hotel, 7007 North High Street. Contact Todd Alexander, 5463 Eaglesnest, Westerville, OH 43081. Phone: (614) 891-1181

GREATER NEW LONDON AREA PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 10—Contact Rebecca Armstrong, 99 Cliff Street, Norwich, CT 06360. Phone: (860) 204-9702

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 15,16,17—Macomb Community College, 14500 12-Mile Road, Warren, MI. Contact Norm Zendler, 20 Devonshire, Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069. Phone: (248) 399-8843

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, April 24—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA. For reservations, contact the hotel directly. Phone: (215) 547-4100

BOISE CONVENTION, April 29,30, May 1—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main Street. Contact D. Allers. Phone: (208) 375-6873

WEST NEWTON SPRING CONVENTION, May 1—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136. Contact John Krasonic, Sr., 1106 State Route 136, Belle Vernon, PA 15012. Phone: (724) 872-6215

AGAWAM CONVENTION, May 14,15—Radisson Hotel, 1 Bright Meadow Blvd., Enfield, CT. Contact Priscilla Tusia, 22 Briar Hill Road, Norwich, CT 06360. Phone: (860) 859-0719

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 16-21—University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, PA. Contact Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

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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