

The DAWN

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Out of Bethlehem

THE GREATEST NEWS item of all time was announced in Bethlehem. This item was the brightest of all messages in this world's night of sin and death. It was the announcement of the birth of Jesus. No other single event has so changed the course of the world, nor given so many millions of people a ray of hope for the future. For Jesus' followers, it has been a bright hope.

TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY

The circumstances associated with the birth of Jesus were strange. Destined to be "The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6), and the king of the whole earth; yet he was born in a stable. The world as a whole knew little or nothing of what was taking place, yet the coming to earth of the Son of God was announced by an angel, who said to the shepherds on the hills of Judea, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Then the angel, together with a "multitude of the heavenly host," sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—Luke 2:10-14

What an introduction this was to the world, and with what authority it was given! It was filled with

hopes of peace and life for all mankind—‘good tidings of great joy’—because a savior was born; one who had come to save mankind from sin and its penalty, death. No wonder the angels sang, ‘Glory to God in the highest!’

DIFFICULTIES ARISE

However, this one who was born to be a king was soon confronted with difficulties. His parents were instructed to flee with the young child into Egypt to save him from the wrath of Herod. From the beginning of his short ministry, he was hated and persecuted by the religious leaders of his own people. Finally, he was put to death upon a cross. A few years later the nation to which Jesus ministered, instead of entering an era of peace as a result of his coming, was removed from its land, and the people scattered throughout the earth, and subsequently bitterly persecuted.

We have confidence in the promises of God, and we will not fear. So, whatever the daily news may be, throughout all the days and weeks ahead, we can turn back with assurance to that Bethlehem dateline, and recall the announcement which came from heaven, ‘Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.’

GENTILES ACCEPT JESUS

Meanwhile, many Gentile nations professed to accept Christ and to practice his teachings; but as it turned out, this was in name only. Instead of promoting peace on earth under the banner of ‘The Prince of Peace,’ they waged war upon each other

in Christ's name. The bloodiest wars of the Middle Ages were participated in by professed Christian nations; and some of them—such as the crusades—under the banner of the cross.

There has hardly been a decade since the birth of The Prince of Peace that the world, or some part of the world, has not been plagued by war or the fear of war. Nor has the advancement of so-called civilization in recent centuries materially changed this picture. Even now, in 2004, while the world commemorates the birth of Jesus, millions are wondering, in view of the tense terrorist situation, where the next terrorist attack will occur?

This country is trying to emerge from a war in Iraq in which President Bush sought to intercept and destroy weapons of mass destruction. They find themselves hopelessly pinned down by insurgents attacking the forces trying to establish peace. Also, in Afghanistan they are seeking the leaders of Al Quaeda to stop terrorist attacks in other parts of the world.

LACK OF PEACE

But this does not mean that the purpose of Jesus' coming to earth has failed, or that the accomplishment of that purpose has in any way been delayed. The storm clouds of human passion hovering over the distraught and fear-filled world today are the result of human failure. This failure was foreknown by the LORD, and foretold; and he has permitted it in order that the human race might come to realize its need of looking to him for a way out of its confusion and perplexities.

One of the basic teachings of the Bible is that the 'peace on earth' proclaimed by the angels when Jesus was born is to be realized through the establishment of Christ's kingdom. This great truth was almost completely lost sight of very early in the Christian era. The viewpoint was gradually adopted that Christ's kingdom was to be set up through human efforts, with the thought that whatever God had designed to do for the human race depended upon the efforts of men who would work and fight in the name of Christ. How shortsighted to suppose that the great God of the universe, the Creator of heaven and earth, would depend upon the feeble, imperfect, and misguided efforts of his human servants!

The Christian world has done the best it could to set up Christ's kingdom, and the result is what we see throughout the earth today. Failure is emblazoned upon all the monuments reared by human folly and selfishness. But for those who have faith in the promises and prophecies of the Bible, the heart-cheering message is that God will do for the human race what it could not do for itself.

GOD'S PROMISES

Let us recall some of the promises in which God gives us this assurance. One of them is found in the prophecy of Isaiah and pertains to the birth of Jesus. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and

upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”—Isa. 9:6,7

There are two statements in this prophecy of Jesus’ birth to which many fail to give proper heed. One is that the government here promised shall be upon ‘his shoulder:’ and the other, that the ‘zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.’ Both of these statements emphasize that the LORD takes the responsibility for the fulfillment of this promise. Christ will shoulder the responsibility for the successful establishment and functioning of his kingdom and the zeal of Jehovah guarantees the results.

CHRISTENDOM

For centuries Christians have been trying to set up Christ’s kingdom by their own zeal. In devious ways they have endeavored to shoulder the responsibility of Christ’s kingdom themselves. In Europe, for example, they united with the state and called the union Christ’s kingdom—Christendom. But this arrangement did not bring peace on earth. Instead, it fostered cruel and bloody wars. Christianity, so-called, was spread by the sword, followed by the holy inquisition to force conformity. This was not the zeal of the LORD of hosts, but the work of ambitious, power-thirsty zealots whose zeal was contrary to the will and plan of God.

Christ’s kingdom is not set up by human intrigue and diplomacy. Nor will it function through balances of power brought about by the threat of destruction in the use of nuclear bombs. Instead, it

is established by direct intervention in the affairs of men, and in spite of all the misguided efforts prompted by human selfishness.

In the prophecy of Micah we are given a similar assurance. We quote: "In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it."—Mic. 4:1-4

GOD'S KINGDOM THROUGH ISRAEL

Beginning with David, the kings of Israel ruled as the representatives of God, with the headquarters of the government in Mount Zion at Jerusalem. (I Chron. 29:23) To the people of Israel, therefore, the 'mountain of the house of the LORD' would readily be understood as meaning the kingdom of the LORD, functioning through a ruling house of Divine appointment. The ruling house of David was typical of this foretold mountain of the LORD. God's typical ruling house ceased to function with the

overthrow of Judah's last king, Zedekiah. A prophecy then given declared that it would be no more "until he come whose right it is."—Ezek. 21:25-27

The one 'whose right it is' was born as a babe in a stable at Bethlehem. In the annunciation to Mary, the angel Gabriel said, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."—Luke 1:30-33

This is in keeping with the prophecy of Isaiah, in which we are told that Jesus would sit 'upon the throne of David, . . . to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.' Thus it is that Jesus became the head of God's antitypical ruling house. Then, beginning with his First Advent, there began the selection and preparation of a company called from the world of mankind to be joint-heirs with him in this ruling house. Through the begetting and birth of the Spirit these are made members of the Divine family with Jesus.

SELECTION OF THE ROYAL HOUSE

For a time, the opportunity of becoming a part of this royal house of sons was limited to the natural descendants of Abraham. These were the typical people of God to whom the promises had been made, and it was among these that Jesus conducted his ministry. "As many as received him, to them gave

he power to become the sons of God.” (John 1:12) But not a sufficient number of the Jewish nation responded to this call, so later, through the Gospel, the invitation was extended to Gentiles. The work of gathering and preparing these to live and reign with Christ has continued throughout the age. As each one, through trial, has proved worthy, he has fallen asleep in death to be awakened at the close of the age in the “first resurrection” to live and “reign with him [Christ] a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:6) Just as Jesus was raised from the dead by the mighty power of God at the beginning of the age, so his joint-heirs are resurrected at the close, or harvest, of the age, joining him to make up the spiritual and all-powerful mountain of the house of the LORD which is established in the ‘top of the mountains,’ that is, dominating all the affairs of men.

One reason men have misunderstood God’s plan is that they have failed to take into consideration his mighty power. Thinking that he has been limited to what impotent humans are able to accomplish in his name, it appears that the Divine plan has failed. But, on the contrary, God is abundantly able to accomplish his purposes despite the efforts of men and devils to hinder.

A good example of this is in the case of Jesus. He was born to be a king, and to sit upon the throne of his father, David. The religious rulers of his day hated him, and finally succeeded in having him put to death, one of the charges against him being that he claimed to be a king. So they killed the King; but this did not thwart the Divine purpose centered in him. Indeed, it was necessary that Jesus die in

order to redeem the world from death; and God raised him from the dead.

The significance of this, as it relates to God's promises pertaining to the ruling house of David, is brought to our attention by the Apostle Paul in a sermon preached at Antioch. We quote, "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."—Acts 13:32-34; Isa. 55:3

Just as it was good tidings that he who was to sit on the throne of David forever had been born, it was also glad tidings that, when his enemies put him to death, thus serving as cohorts of Satan in his efforts to thwart the Divine plan, God raised this antitypical David from the dead. Can we doubt the triumph of the Divine plan for the salvation and peace of the human race when power like this can be utilized to assure its successful conclusion? It is by the exercise of such almighty power that Divine authority will be established in the earth.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S KINGDOM

In God's kingdom, the people and nations of the world will want to be taught the Lord's ways; and when they do, they will no longer learn war nor practice the arts of war. All the time and resources now being devoted to the manufacture of munitions

of war will be directed toward peaceful ends. Then there will be security for all.

Then none 'shall make them afraid.' Today the world is filled with fear. There is fear of terrorists using chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons of mass destruction. There is no genuine peace and security anywhere. It is as though the angels' message of peace on earth had never been proclaimed. This is because we are living at the end of the age when, as foretold by the prophets, Satan's empire is being overthrown by a "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation."—Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21,22

To those unenlightened by the prophecies of the Bible concerning the meaning of the present "distress of nations" (Luke 21:25), it appears as though the angelic message of peace on earth is just empty words. This has led to an incorrect translation of the angels' words. Instead of peace on earth, and good will toward men, as it is correctly rendered in the *Common Version*, it is now more frequently quoted as "Peace on earth among men of good will."

This is not what the angels proclaimed. Their message was that peace would come to the earth because God's goodwill toward his human creatures was then being manifested through the birth of Jesus to be the Savior and King of the world. God's goodwill toward men had been shown in his promises to send a Savior, and then much more so when the Savior was born. God's goodwill toward the world of mankind was further shown by raising Jesus from the dead.

Although not recognized by the world, God's goodwill has continued through the preparation of

Jesus' followers to live and reign with him in his kingdom. Again it is shown through the resurrection of these from the dead that they might be associated with Jesus in dispensing kingdom blessings of peace and life to the people of all nations.

GOD'S GOODWILL MANIFESTED

God's goodwill is to be manifested through the exercise of governmental control over all mankind. This will be by means of that foretold government upon the shoulder of the Prince of Peace.

Through that long-promised government, the people will be assured of peace and security, and given the opportunity, by obedience, to be restored to perfection and live forever. All of this will be as a result of God's goodwill toward his human creatures, for, as we read, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3:16 ■

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 Mariam Mohr, Detroit, MI—October 29. Age, 81
Sister Alpha Koterba, Paterson, NJ—October 30. Age, 80



*"Thou shalt call his name
Jesus: for he shall save his
people from their sins."
—Matthew 1:21*

NEVER BEFORE IN human experience has there been such a dire need for a competent ruler. We need one who is able to lead the hate-infected nations of earth out of the crosscurrents of selfishness and despair into the wholesome atmosphere of trust and goodwill. Without this there can be no lasting peace, or security.

There are many outstanding heroes whose names and accomplishments glorify the pages of history. But none of them had to deal with such complex conditions as confront the world today. Today every nation has its problems, and no one seems able to find adequate solutions. The world needs a superman, to lead it out of the chaos that has developed from two global wars. But where such a leader may be found no one will venture to say.

In the Bible, the Creator has given his people a blueprint of his plan for world peace. His Word reveals in clear terms that Jesus is the chief One in the Divine arrangements for the blessing of the people. The song of the angels on the night Jesus was born is sufficient to confirm this, for they identified him as the Savior of the world, through whom God's goodwill would be manifested to the dying race.

—excerpt, *Jesus, the World's Savior*
(send for your **FREE COPY**)

The Call to Follow God

Key Verse: *“The LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee.”*
—**Genesis 12:1**

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 11:27-12:9,
Chapter 22

TODAY’S LESSON CENTERS

upon the greatest promise ever made to man, the promise of life and blessings. (Gen. 12:1-3) This promise was based on trust, faith, and full obedience in the following of God’s commands. Elsewhere we read, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (Rom. 4:3) This promise and its lessons reveal Abram’s complete walk of faith.

Terah was the father of three sons—Haran, Nahor, and Abram.

(Gen. 11:26) Terah lived in Ur of the land of the Chaldees in Mesopotamia. (vs. 28) This land on the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers was a land devoted to the false moon god Sin, called Ur-Nammu. Terah was a follower of this false god. (Josh. 24:2) Although his father was a believer in this false god, Abram resisted this pollution and followed the true God of the Bible.

Being a dutiful son, Abram respected his father as long as he didn’t go against the God of the Bible. “Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.” (Prov. 23:22) “Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.”—Col. 3:20

In due time, Haran, Nahor, and Abram married. One of Haran's sons was Lot. Abram stayed with his father until he died. Terah had moved from Ur of the Chaldees to the city of Haran, taking with him Abram, Sarai (Abram's wife), and Lot. Terah may have intended to go to Canaan but died in Haran at the age of two hundred five. (vss. 28-29,31,32) It was after Terah died that the faith of Abram shines out. Abram was seventy-five when God appeared to him telling him to leave his land, and his kindred, to go to a land God marked out for him.—Gen. 12:4

In chapter twelve, verse seven, we find God appearing unto Abram and promising that his seed would be given all the land of Canaan. The area of the land is mentioned in several scriptures.—Gen. 13:14-17; 15:18; 17:8; Ezek. 47:14-22

The promise made to Abraham was again given, and further elaborated, in Genesis twenty-two, after Abraham's son, Isaac, was born. God told him to take his son to a mountain and offer him as a sacrifice. (Gen. 22:1-2) Again, Abraham's faith was demonstrated. He was ready to take his son's life when God stopped him. "The angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (vss. 15-18)

"To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. 3:16) It is through Jesus and his followers that the Abrahamic promises are fulfilled.—vs. 29 ■

Leadership Qualities

Key Verse: *“The LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”*
—I Samuel 16:7

Selected Scripture:
I Samuel 16:1-4,6-13;
II Samuel 7:8-16

SAUL, ISRAEL’S FIRST king, had become unfaithful to God, and Samuel was sent to Jesse of Bethlehem to anoint one of his sons to be the new king of Israel. (I Sam. 16:1) Samuel was frightened to anoint another king while Saul was still on the throne, considering this to be treason, and that his life would be in jeopardy. The LORD tells Samuel to take a heifer and to make a sacrifice to the LORD, and to anoint one of the sons of Jesse. In this the LORD provided a plan in which an animal sacrifice and a ritual meal were part of anointing a king.

Samuel went to Bethlehem and the elders trembled at his coming and asked, “Comest thou peaceably?” Samuel replied, “Peaceably: I come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.”—vss. 4-5

As Samuel looked at the sons of Jesse, he saw Eliab and thought, surely this is the one. When man looks for a leader, he looks for one tall, handsome, like a soldier.

This is the difference between God and man. The LORD said to Samuel, 'Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.' How important is the heart! God looks on the heart, the will, and the character of a person.

Here is a good lesson. What we see in mankind is external, for only God can read the heart. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:8,9) The type of a king that the LORD was seeking would have to have the qualities of humility, wisdom, and obedience. Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel, who said unto Jesse, "The LORD hath not chosen these." (I Sam. 16:10) Samuel might have wondered what God had in mind. He asked Jesse, "Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him."—vs. 11

When he sees David, he sees a young lad—ruddy (rosy cheeks and fair complexion), beautiful appearance and good to look at. Isn't this odd? We just said God doesn't look at outward appearance. This is the one, says the LORD. "Anoint him: for this is he." (vs. 12) After Samuel had anointed him, the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. Man would only look at David as a child, not seeing that which God saw.

What God was looking for in a king was one humble and teachable, one who would be an example of a leader, obedient and trustworthy. David pictures our Lord Jesus Christ. The prophet Nathan gave a beautiful prophecy concerning David's offspring. He didn't have Solomon in mind, but Jesus Christ, whose kingdom and throne would be forever.—II Sam. 7:12-17 ■

When the Unexpected Happens

Key Verse: *“Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife.”*

—**Matthew 1:24**

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 1:1-25

put her away privily.”—Matt. 1:18-19

According to Jewish law, marriage in Israel demanded that espousal be a time of one year. Joseph had not consummated the marriage at the time he found Mary with child, even though at espousal, the woman was considered as the lawful wife of the man to whom she was betrothed. This engagement could not be ended by the man without a bill of divorce. (Deut. 24:1-4) Thus Mary, after she was betrothed to Joseph, might have been punished if the angel of the LORD had not told Joseph that Mary was with child by the Holy Spirit. This was an unexpected event for Joseph and, as written, he felt he would have to put her away.

Being a man of faith, Joseph thought about what to do. What would his countrymen think of Mary? Would

OUR LESSON CONCERNS

the birth of Jesus. We read “The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to

they think of her as an adulteress? For that matter, what would they think of him? Joseph was fearful. Then an angel appeared in a dream telling him not to be afraid, that Mary was with child by the Holy Spirit. Joseph then took Mary as his wife, but “knew her not” until she brought forth her firstborn. (vs. 25) The angel tells Joseph to call him Jesus, for he would “save his people from their sins.”—vs. 21

Names are very significant in Israel, the name Jesus from the Greek, means ‘savior.’ In Luke 19:10, we read of the purpose of his birth, “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” What was ‘lost’? Life forfeited by Adam in the Garden of Eden.—Gen. 2:16-17; I Cor. 15:22

An earlier prophecy of the birth of Jesus says, “The Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” (Isa. 7:14) This word ‘Immanuel’ means ‘God with us.’ Surely, through the death of Jesus as the corresponding price for Adam, he will save his people, the Jews, and the whole world from their sins. The name Immanuel—God with us—is significant. The name Jesus in the Hebrew is *Joshua*, meaning ‘the salvation of Jehovah.’

In Matthew 1:23, it is worthy to note that Jesus was to be born of a virgin. Jesus, we read, was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” (Heb. 7:26) Through a virgin birth, purity and human life from the Heavenly Father, our Lord would be a corresponding price for Father Adam. (I Tim. 2:3-6) We should note that Mary was not a perfect human being, just one of Adam’s fallen race. (Ps. 51:5) Jesus’ perfection came from God, his father.

It took faith and obedience for Joseph to follow this most unexpected event. We will find in our lives many unexpected events and our faith must be strong as was Joseph’s. ■

Searching for Hope in the Right Places

Key Verses: *“Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people.”*
—**Luke 2:30-31**

Selected Scripture:
Luke 2:22-38

AFTER EIGHT DAYS, JESUS was circumcised. Mary continued until the days of her purification were accomplished as per Leviticus 12:1-4. “Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days.” This purification is followed by presenting two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and one for a sin offering. (vs. 8) This ceremony brought Mary back into atonement with God and made her clean. Then Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem.

At that time there was a man named Simeon, a just and reverent man, who was waiting for the “consolation of Israel.” (Luke 2:25) Simeon had recognized through the Scriptures that the Lord would come and bring consolation to Israel. (Isa. 40:4,5) It was his desire to see the Messiah before he died. Through the aid of the Holy

Spirit, he came to the Temple at the time Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to be presented to the LORD. Recognizing him as the Messiah he took him in his arms and said, "My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." (Luke 2:30-32, *New International Version*) In this verse we see that the birth of Jesus would bring salvation for everyone. Hearing these words, Joseph and Mary marveled at what was spoken regarding their son.

Simeon, taking Jesus in his arms, spoke to Mary, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."—vss. 34,35

The sign of verse thirty-four, written about Christ, is found in I Peter 2:7,8 where it is written, "He is . . . a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word." How true this was to Israel. They stumbled over this 'rock,' condemning him to death. (Luke 23:22-23) Further, Simeon revealed to Mary that a 'sword' would pierce her own soul. It was Mary who stood at the foot of the cross and watched her son die.—John 19:25

With Simeon at the Temple, there was a prophetess named Anna, a devout woman, a widow of eighty-four years of age, who lived in the Temple. She, seeing Jesus, spoke of him "to all them that looked for redemption," which was to come to Israel and the world. (Luke 2:36-38) Many had been searching; looking for the redemption that the Scriptures revealed would come through Messiah, and the salvation he would provide.

Simeon and Anna went to the right place at the right time and found Jesus, having searched the Scriptures. We are to do likewise. ■

Hell Destroyed

“O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave (Hebrew, *sheol*), I will be thy destruction.”
—**Hosea 13:14**

THE TRANSLATORS OF our common version of the Bible (the *King James Version*) have translated the Hebrew word *sheol*, as ‘hell,’ ‘grave,’ and ‘pit.’ All are referring to the condition of death, or non-existence.

THE “GATES” OF HELL

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus is quoted as saying, “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell [*hades*] shall not prevail against it.” Many long centuries before this, God had promised Abraham that through his “seed” all the families of the earth would be “blessed.” (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18) In the New Testament we learn that this promised ‘seed’ is Jesus, and associated with him are his faithful, footstep followers. (Gal. 3:8,16,27-29) In their relation to Jesus these are described as “the church, Which is his body.” (Eph. 1:22,23) It is this ‘church’ which Jesus refers to, and says that the ‘gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’

This is a most reassuring promise. The divinely planned work of Jesus and the church is the blessing of all the families of the earth, but how can all

the families of the earth be blessed since they are all either in the Bible hell or on their way thereto? Jesus answers this question in his assertion that the gates of hell will not prevail against the church; that is, will not hinder the church, in association with him who has the “keys of hell,” from blessing all mankind as designed by the Heavenly Father.—Rev. 1:18

We already have proof that this is true. Jesus, the great Life-giver of mankind, was himself in death, in hell. The gates of hell did not prevail to hold him a prisoner in death. God exercised his mighty power and restored Jesus to life. Peter said, “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.” (Acts 2:32) Nor will the gates of hell hold the followers of Jesus prisoners in death. The release of these is prophetically described in Revelation 20:6, which reads, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

With this ‘first resurrection’ complete, the work of the thousand-year reign of Christ and his church will begin. Then will take place in reality what the Apostle John saw in vision. Describing his vision, John said, “Death and hell [*hades*] delivered up the dead which were in them.” (Rev. 20:13) For this to be accomplished, Jesus will use the keys of hell to unlock its gates to set its prisoners free. This great work of Christ and his church is otherwise described in the Bible as the resurrection of the dead.

HELL DESTROYED

The word hell (*hades*) appears for the last time in the Bible in the verse following the one in which John

tells us that he saw hell give up its dead. In this text we are told that hell is to be destroyed. The text reads, "Death and hell [*hades*] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." (vs. 14) In the Old Testament, God prophesied the ultimate destruction of hell, *sheol*, *hades*. Through the Prophet Hosea he promised to "ransom" the people from the power of *sheol*. This, we have found, was the purpose of Jesus' death, of his going into *sheol*. The ultimate result of this, the Lord said, would be, "I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave [*sheol*], I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."—Hos. 13:14

John saw hell [*hades*] destroyed in the 'lake of fire,' which he defines as the 'second death.' This is not a literal lake of fire, although many have used this text in their effort to establish the Satan-inspired teaching of eternal torture for the wicked. They have spoken of the lake of fire as though it were the hell of the Bible, failing to take into consideration that John saw the Bible hell cast into the lake of fire. Surely hell could not be cast into itself. Throughout the Scriptures fire is used as a symbol of destruction, and this is no exception to the rule. The condition of death which came upon the world of mankind as a result of original sin is to be destroyed, and this destruction is symbolized by a lake of fire.

GEHENNA FIRE

The everlasting destruction of individuals who prove themselves to be incorrigibly wicked is shown by Jesus to be accomplished by *Gehenna* fire. *Gehenna* is a Greek word that Jesus used on a number of occasions, and in our Common Version

English translations of the Bible is translated 'hell-fire.' Where the word is used without the association of fire, it is simply translated 'hell.'

This Greek word *Gehenna* described what was called in the Hebrew language the valley of Hinnom. This was a deep ravine just outside the walls of ancient Jerusalem. It was used as a place for the disposal of the refuse of the city, including the carcasses of cats and dogs and other unclean animals. According to tradition, bodies of humans who, according to the Jewish Sanhedrin, had committed crimes making them unworthy of a resurrection were cast into the valley of Hinnom. Fires were kept constantly burning in this valley to assure the destruction of everything that was thrown into it. Because of this use of the valley of Hinnom, or *Gehenna*, and the obvious significance of the fire which was kept burning therein, Jesus employed it to illustrate the utter destruction of the willfully wicked.

In Matthew 10:28, *Gehenna* is translated 'hell.' This text quotes Jesus as saying, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." This shows clearly that *Gehenna* is used by Jesus to denote destruction, not torment. The words 'kill' and 'destroy' are used with respect to both body and soul, thus the literal meaning of both words is shown to apply to the entire being.

In Mark 9:43,44 the word *Gehenna* is again used. Here Jesus is quoted as saying, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where

their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” This passage has been erroneously seized upon to teach the God-dishonoring doctrine of eternal torture. The ‘worm’ that ‘dieth not,’ they say, is the soul that is tortured in hell. However, this latter part of the text about the worm is evidently spurious, since the oldest manuscripts omit it. It does appear, though in the forty-eighth verse. But how contrary is this interpretation to Jesus’ own declaration that the soul is killed, or destroyed, in hell, the same as the body.

Besides, there is no scriptural authority for saying that a human soul is a worm. Here Jesus is again using *Gehenna* as a symbol of destruction. All know that dead bodies exposed to the elements soon become infested with worms, or maggots, and other insects that, if left alone, in time completely destroy the carcass. It is to this that Jesus is referring. Presumably, bodies hurled into *Gehenna* would not always reach the fire that was kept burning for the destruction of refuse. But if not, then they would be destroyed by worms. Thus does Jesus emphasize the certain inflicting of the death penalty upon all who are not found worthy of everlasting life.

THE RICH MAN IN HADES

There is one use of the Greek word *hades* in the New Testament that has been thought by some to confirm the doctrine of eternal torture. It is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, recorded in Luke 16:19-31. After the death of the rich man in this parable, it is said that “in hell [*hades*] he lifted up his eyes, being in torment.” (vs. 23) Simply because the word ‘hell’ is used here, and the rich man

is said to be tormented in hell, this parable has been seized upon to prove that all believers in Christ go to heaven when they die and that all unbelievers, the wicked, go to eternal torture.

Satan's original lie, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4), has gained such a hold upon human thinking that reason and logic have often been thrown to the winds in order to prove that there is no death, and that torment, not death, is the Divine penalty for sin. We have a vivid example of unreason in the generally accepted interpretation of this parable. We suggest a careful reading of the parable, as cited. It says nothing about the righteous nor the wicked. Nor are believers and unbelievers mentioned in the parable. Nothing is said in the parable about anyone going to heaven.

In the parable a poor beggar dies, and is carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom, not to heaven. The beggar is not described as righteous, or as being a believer in Christ. Nor is the rich man said to be a sinner. After his death, and when in *hades*, he is shown to be conversing with the beggar who is in Abraham's bosom. There is not a single detail of the parable that, in reality, harmonizes with the Protestant view that all good people go to heaven when they die, and all others are forever tortured. No one believes that those they claim are being tortured in hell are able to converse with the saved in heaven.

We refer to a booklet entitled, *The Truth about Hell* for a full explanation of this parable. We will mention here merely that the two men of the parable represent the Jews and the Gentiles, not as individuals, but as a people; the rich man picturing the natural descendants of Abraham, and the beggar,

the Gentiles. Beginning with the First Advent of Jesus, the Gentiles began to inherit the promises God made to Abraham, while those to whom the promises were originally made 'died' to their position of special favor before the LORD and, as a people, have been persecuted, 'tormented,' ever since.

Briefly, then, the torment mentioned in this parable symbolically describes the age-long national persecution of the Jewish people, and has no reference at all to the actual death condition of individual members of the human race. In recent years the Jewish national scene has undergone considerable change. Eventually the torments of this people will be entirely over, and for this we are glad.

NO MORE DEATH

In Isaiah 25:8 we read of a time when the LORD will "swallow up death in victory" and when he will "wipe away tears from off all faces." The Apostle Paul quotes this promise, and then adds, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave [*hades*], where is thy victory?" (I Cor. 15:55) Thus again are we given assurance of the destruction of death, and that this will mean victory over *hades*, *sheol*—the Bible hell. Just as Jesus explained, the gates of hell will not prevail. The victory will be the Lord's because he will destroy hell, and set its captives free.

Then, for the first time, it will be true that there is no death, not because Satan told the truth when he said, 'Ye shall not surely die,' but because the Lord will destroy death. Then, as we read in Revelation 21:4, "There shall be no more death, . . . neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." ■

Keeping the Heart

***“Keep thy heart
with all diligence;
for out of it are the
issues of life.”***

—Proverbs 4:23

THE HEART IS THE MOST

industrious of all organs in the human body. By rhythmic contractions it drives the blood to all parts of the body. If this organ ceases to work, death follows. If the blood current is interrupted even for a little while, a clot forms which often leads to death. In view of this important function of the heart, the Bible very properly uses it as a symbol of our motives, affections, intentions, and desires.

Concerning the ‘heart’ of fallen mankind it is recorded, “The heart is deceitful [crooked, slippery; *Young’s Analytical Concordance*] above all things, and desperately wicked.” (Jer. 17:9) If we are to be pleasing to the LORD there is an urgent need for the fulfillment of the psalmist’s words, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”—Ps. 51:10

As God’s children we have been taught through the Holy Scriptures concerning the only way by which we can have our hearts made right with our Heavenly Father. It is through his beloved Son, “who gave himself a ransom for all.” (I Tim. 2:6) “He is the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins:

and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”—I John 2:2

Realizing our need of a Redeemer, we have gladly and gratefully accepted Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior, and have accepted the invitation, “My son, give me thine heart.” (Prov. 23:26) We have fully consecrated ourselves, all that we have and are, to our Father in heaven. Following this consecration, something else that is wonderful happened. Paul mentions it: “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”—II Cor. 4:6

We receive of his Spirit, and God, having anointed us, has stamped us with his seal, giving us the Holy Spirit as a pledge “in our hearts.” (II Cor. 1:21,22) It is our great joy and privilege, as indicated in Hebrews 10:22, to “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled [clean] from an evil conscience.”

BROKEN AND CONTRITE

During our Christian walk we may at times feel discouraged with self. We may, on occasion, be vividly reminded that we still have the fleshly tabernacle to contend with. Let not discouragement hinder us. A humble condition, in such circumstances, becomes a very favorable one if we seek Divine assistance, willingly becoming submissive to the LORD, and ready to do his will. Then we will surely receive Divine blessing. “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” (Ps. 34:18) “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”—Ps. 51:17

A heart is contrite when it has a quiet, deep sorrow because of thoughts, words, and deeds not in harmony with righteousness. Our Heavenly Father, who is very great and lofty, is also particularly sympathetic towards those who are of a broken and contrite heart; whose spirit is humble; who realize that they are imperfect; who desire to be in accord with him, and to dwell in holiness. To such he is ever near to revive and to give them strength.

“Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”—Isa. 57:15

We should ever remember that a truly broken and contrite heart the LORD never despises. Therefore, if, when we stumble and come short of the LORD’s requirements, we find ourselves hungering for his forgiveness and fellowship—if we find our heart broken and contrite—never despair. “If we confess our sins, he [our Father] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” through “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son.”—I John 1:9,7

To us the exhortation comes: ‘Keep thy heart with all diligence.’ The LORD is looking at our hearts, at the motive that prompts what we say and do; also concerning what we are not doing. “The LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.” (I Chron. 28:9) “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”—I Sam. 16:7

(Continued on page 33)



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OUR MOTIVES

(Continued from page 31)

As fully consecrated children of God, the LORD is proving and testing us. He is not taking merely a surface view; for example, the amount of knowledge we have, or the extent of work done, or the esteem in which we are held by our brethren. He is not looking merely at these outward conditions, although they are all very fit, proper, and important. He is also looking down into the heart—our innermost thoughts and motives, our desires, intentions, our will—for ‘out of it are the issues of life.’ He is judging, from our hearts, whether we are fit for a place in his kingdom.

As we reflect upon this fact, we may find a great many things that would be perfectly right of themselves that will be condemned by him, because there was not the right motive behind them. This thought is expressed in Proverbs 21:4, “An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.” The plowing of a field is perfectly right and proper. It is not the act that makes it sin, but the man who plows the field with a wrong spirit, with wrong intentions, thinking angry thoughts, working on his field to get money to spend selfishly—no matter how this would affect others—that man’s plowing is sin.

We see, therefore the importance of having our hearts, our motives, right before God in all matters. If we do something that is perfectly right in itself, something that would receive the commendation and approval of all around us, and yet there is a wrong spirit behind it, then it would not receive God’s approval.

Because it is difficult to discern our motives clearly, we do well to go frequently, carefully, and

prayerfully, to the Word of God which our Father has provided for our learning and instruction, for it teaches us to discern our intentions—the thoughts of our heart. We read, “The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”—Heb. 4:12

The Lord has made it clear that we cannot judge correctly the motives of others. We cannot read their hearts. But we are to judge ourselves. We are to examine our motives in the light of the Scriptures, and not merely guess at the matter. We should not conclude, “Well, I am as good as so-and-so, and if he is a child of God, so am I.”

If this is our attitude, then we are deceiving ourselves. We should realize that our own personal ideas and imaginations, our own judgments (apart from the Word of God and the Holy Spirit) are not only unreliable, but very misleading. We need the cleansing and corrective powers of the Word of God. Paul wrote, “The weapons of our warfare [and God’s Word is the ‘sword of the Spirit’] are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations [reasonings, *Marginal Translation*].” (II Cor. 10:4,5) Our human imaginations, ideas, and reasonings, which are so very unreliable, are to be demolished.

ELIMINATE POISONS

In Proverbs 16:5 we read, “Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD.”

Pride is a deadly poison to the New Creature. If we should permit pride to fill our hearts and remain there, we would be led out of the path of light, Truth, and life.

We are also to rid our hearts of envy, anger, malice, hatred, selfishness, bitterness, and all the works of the flesh and the Devil. We are to watch always lest any root of bitterness enter our hearts and remain there. These poisons not only do great injury to ourselves, but frequently defile others as well. Even a small seed of these evil tendencies can grow.

Then there is distrust. This quality also must be kept out of our hearts. Have we the confidence, the faith, in the LORD that we should have? Are we closely embracing all the exceeding great and precious promises of God? The “high calling” of God in Christ Jesus is very wonderful. (Phil. 3:14) If for one moment we could have an actual glimpse of that glory which is beyond the veil there would be no question about our faithfulness. The heavenly glory would so overwhelm us that all the trivial distracting things of this life would be laid aside. But the glory is there just beyond the veil, not seen with natural vision, but with the eye of faith.—II Cor. 4:17,18

PURE IN HEART

How stimulating are the words of Jesus, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” (Matt. 5:8) And how beautiful are his words, “Come unto me, . . . and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” (Matt. 11:28,29) We want our hearts to be like his. “If a man love me,” Jesus said,

“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

We should see to it that, by Divine grace, our Father and his Son are abiding with us continually, and that their sweet, holy influence is the motivating power of all our thoughts, affections, desires, and will, circulating the new life within us. Thus we will be nourished as New Creatures, also cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh.

We can further help in the keeping, or guarding, of our hearts by increasing our attention and obedience to God’s Word. In this connection the context of our opening scripture is excellent instruction: “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.” (Prov. 4:20,21) In other words, keep my words in the very center of your thoughts, affections, desires, motives, and will.

In the Psalms we read, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” “Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.” “Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end.”—Ps. 119:11,80,111,112

We should ‘let’ Christ and his Spirit dwell in our hearts; and “let the word of Christ” dwell in us “richly” (Col. 3:16); we should also “sanctify the Lord God” in our “hearts” (I Pet. 3:15); and “let the peace of God rule” in our hearts, then “the peace of God which passeth all understanding,

shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”—Col. 3:15; Phil. 4:7

The ‘peace of God’ is an essential, so is the quality of love. Paul wrote, “May the Lord cause you to be full and to overflow with love to each other, and to all even, as we also to you; so as to establish your hearts blameless in holiness before God, even our Father.”—I Thess. 3:12,13, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

SPECIALLY NOURISHED

While the human, physical heart is the most industrious of all organs of the body, it is also the best nourished. Similarly, our heart, which relates to our desires, intentions, motives, and will, must be very specially nourished. And the means of doing this is by the inspired Word and the Holy Spirit.

We read, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” (Jer. 15:16) Here, the prophet is testifying, “I did meditate upon, and ponder thy words in my heart; I did eat, masticate and assimilate them, so that they formed part of my very being.”

We, also, are to see that the Word of God gets into our hearts, representing our motives, affections, and will. It is our joyous privilege and responsibility to see that the spirit of the Holy Scriptures gets to the very center of our desires, intentions, and will. Our hearts should be so full of God’s Word, together with the Holy Spirit, that it becomes as “a burning fire.” (Jer. 20:9) As we have opportunity, we must tell it forth, whether those around us will hear, or whether they will not.

This experience is graphically described by the Prophet Jeremiah: "I am laughed at all the time, every one mocketh me, . . . the Word of the LORD is become unto me a disgrace and a derision, all the time. And I thought, I will not make mention of him, and I will not speak any more in his name. But it became in my heart as a burning fire enclosed within my bones, and I was weary with enduring, and I could not overcome it." (vss. 7-9, *Leeser*) The prophet could not overcome that 'burning fire'; he could not stifle that great urge within him; nothing could prevent him from proclaiming the message that God had given to him.

It is true that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matt. 12:34) Our hearts should be full of God's Word; and his love, his peace, and the Holy Spirit—full, even to overflowing.

O for a heart more like my God,
From imperfection free;
A heart conformed unto thy Word,
And pleasing, Lord, to thee."

—*Hymns of Dawn* ■

"Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

"I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever."

—*Psalms 86:11,12, New International Version*

Preaching the Gospel

THE QUESTION IS still being asked, “Which is the true Gospel?” The answer is in the Gospel. It is found in Galatians 3:8, which reads, “The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” This surely was the Gospel, or good news, to Abraham. It was glad tidings to know that he was to have a “seed,” and through that ‘seed’ all nations would be blessed.—Gen. 12:1-3; 28:14

Our God has both a purpose and a plan. His purpose is to bless all the families of earth. The method, or plan, by which that purpose will be accomplished is through the seed of Abraham. Those who, together with the glorified Jesus, will constitute the long-promised seed of Abraham, through whom the promised blessing will come, are being called of God during this Gospel Age—“Precious promise, yours and mine, Galatians three and twenty-nine.” This verse reads, “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

This seed is being prepared during this Gospel Age for their future work of service and blessing. This 'called-out' company takes supreme delight in showing forth the praises of him who hath called them "out of darkness into his marvellous light." (I Pet. 2:9) The sentiments of their hearts are well expressed in Psalm 34:1, "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

To this called-out company, those who have denied self, taken up their cross daily, and are faithfully following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:14) One of these commandments of Jesus which we must do, in order to be numbered among his friends, is found in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." It was by preaching and bearing witness to the Truth that Jesus glorified, or honored, his Father.

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus said in Mark 1:38, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." At the close of his ministry he said, in John 18:37: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." We not only do what we can to let the light of Truth shine, but like the dear Master, in whose steps we are privileged to follow, the motive must be to glorify, to honor, our Heavenly Father.

One phase of this light of Truth, this Gospel, this good news, is found in Acts 17:31, "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the

world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” What a privilege we have of telling out the good news that the poor world of mankind is to be judged in righteousness by him whom God raised from the dead; that the dear Lord is to restore those whom he so loved as to redeem with his precious blood. How this Truth honors and glorifies God!

By way of contrast, error dishonors and belittles our God. This is seen in a verse of a hymn concerning the appointed time for judgment:

“That fearful day, that day of dread,
When thou shalt judge the quick and dead;
O God I shudder to foresee,
The awful things which then shall be.”

To receive the Truth in the love of the Truth, means to tell out the Truth. By so doing, a witness is given that the Bible does not teach those God-dishonoring doctrines, taught and sung about for so long. We endorse the poet’s words:

“I love to tell the story, it did so much for me;
And that is just the reason I tell it now to thee.”

As recorded in Matthew 24:3, the disciples of Jesus asked him for a sign of his presence and of the end of the age. One of the signs given is recorded in verse fourteen, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” (The Greek word translated ‘end’ in this text is translated “utmost” in I Thessalonians 2:16) This good news of the kingdom is to be preached until the dark night comes in which “no man can work.” (John 9:1-5) It is to be noted and appreciated that Jesus

uttered these words in connection with one of his greatest public ministries: the giving of sight to one blind from birth.

The troubles of our day will give opportunity for preaching the good tidings of coming good, such as is seldom afforded. ■

The Glory of God Revealed

*Great God who hast forever been,
Whom thru thy Word we know
As giver of each perfect gift
To creatures here below.*

*To prophets and those Saints of old
Thy might and power were shown.
They bowed in awe before thy face—
In reverence sought thy throne.*

*Thou art revealed in thy great plan,
Lost Eden to restore.
When all mankind shall live again
In peace forever more.*

*For by thy love thou did'st send forth
Thine only Son to die.
That he might pay the debt of sin
That o'er the world doth lie.*

*When to the earth thy Kingdom comes,
Thy glory shall be shown
In love revealed to all the world
Thy name shall then be known.*

—*Poems of the Way*

“One Thing” of Importance

WE HAVE CHOSEN for consideration four instances in the Scriptures where the importance of “one thing” is stressed as essential to a walk of faith and devotion to God. Certainly all of these are important to us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.

(1) In Psalm 27:4 David wrote, “One thing have I desired.” This ‘one thing’ was to “dwell in the house of the LORD,” and to “inquire in his temple.” Here we have the thought of contemplation, as in the case of the Israelite approaching the Tabernacle and high priest for cleansing.

(2) Jesus said to the young ruler, “One thing thou lackest.” (Mark 10:21) The man with riches found renunciation too taxing, representing all those who discern what is required in full devotion to God, and fail to take action.

(3) To Martha Jesus said, “One thing is needful.” (Luke 10:42) Mary chose that ‘one thing,’ which was to become better acquainted with her Lord and his teachings. This corresponds to those who dwell inside the Holy of the Tabernacle, feasting upon the shewbread, enjoying the light from

the golden candlestick, and offering incense of devotion, obedience, and prayer upon the golden altar.

(4) Paul wrote, "This one thing I do." (Phil. 3:13) Paul was determined that nothing would deter him from his course of faithfulness, and thereby attaining the "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (vs. 14) Paul, like Mary, continued to the end to offer the affections of an endearing heart.

In David's desire, we have contemplation of God. The wealthy inquirer for eternal life lacked consecration. With Mary, there was complete contentment and satisfaction; and with the Apostle Paul, determination and endurance. Thus, four important steps in our walk are revealed.

In each instance there is singleness of purpose and concentration. To concentrate assures success in a general way, because one's energies are thus centered on one objective, one department, one issue, one end—affording a clear vision of the particular objective in view, and the procedure for gaining that objective.

In the Christian's life, where the objective is Christ, its fruitage is clearness of Truth and cleanness of life and walk. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine [teaching]." (John 7:17) "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (I John 3:3) "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—John 8:32

The Word of God is light and life. It is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

(Heb. 4:12) To read the Word of God and to meditate its maxims proves it to be a mirror of the human heart, thus assisting one's reasoning faculties in arriving at a correct understanding of one's relationship to God, with a right appreciation of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

All appreciating this revelation from God's Word adjust their habits and ways of life thereto, and become, by its influence in the mind and heart, clearer and purer in mind and life, as Jesus remarks, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."—John 6:63

The Word of the LORD and the Spirit of Truth will always be the sources of light and life to every man, and the natural trend of thought of a perfect man in ages to come. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Prov. 4:18) "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. 119:105) "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."—Ps. 119:11

DAVID'S QUEST

This was David's longing aspiration and quest: "One thing have I asked of *Yahweh* [Jehovah], that will I seek to secure: that I may dwell in the house of *Yahweh* all the days of my life, to view the delightfulness of *Yahweh*, and to contemplate in his temple." (Ps. 27:4, *Rotherham Translation*) To 'contemplate' is to consider studiously, to meditate, to give time and attention. It is also the act of looking forward with a longing heart for some desired objective.

Surely David's longing and quest should also be our longing desire. It should be constantly with us,

as an urge of soul, to know God more fully, and to enjoy his favor and blessing in unbroken communion. To experience the conviction of faith expressed by Jesus is an honored privilege for imperfect men. "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

Our spiritual life has first to do with our heart and faith, our inner desires and affections. Paul said, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (Rom. 10:10) Jesus, in his sermon on the mount, declared, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6) "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD."—Ps. 84:2

DAVID'S OBJECTIVE

Let us notice the great objective of David's desire. It was to behold the beauty of the LORD. *Rotherham* translates it, 'the delightfulness of Jehovah.' God's dealings with David hitherto had revealed God's name as known to past patriarchs, and his graciousness, his compassion to fallen men. His attributes of wisdom, justice, and love drew from David adoration, worship, and praise. He desired to inquire in the LORD's temple; to contemplate in his temple; to have accurate information and understanding of God's desire from man in worship, obedience, and submission. The great urge of David's being was to erect a temple for worship; but God, in his graciousness, is to build David a "house" forever.—I Chron. 17:12; II Sam. 7:1-16

May we continue to inquire of God and contemplate through his Word, and, by his Spirit, meditate

upon and cultivate habitual thoughts of God and his purposes for us and for man. How wonderful is the power of thought and meditation! "Whatsoever things are true, . . . honest, . . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely, . . . of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things: . . . and the God of peace shall be with you."—Phil. 4:8,9

We read in Malachi 3:16,17, "They that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, . . . and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." To behold the delightfulness of Jehovah, and to inquire in his temple, is a lofty aspiration and a worthy quest.

With Israel, the Tabernacle was the meeting place between themselves and God. A true Israelite would always be in contemplation of his God. The Law of God would be his constant meditation. We read, in Deuteronomy 6:8, that it was to be as "frontlets" between his eyes. He was to talk of it by the wayside, and in the house, and to his children, when lying down and rising up, lest he forget the LORD.

The psalmist wrote, "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways." (Ps. 119:15) And again, "My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate upon thy promise." (Ps. 119:148, *Revised Standard Version*) Surely his nights were filled with sweet communion, and his days with meditation upon the Law of God in which

he delighted. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."—James 4:8

THE ONE THING LACKING

'One thing thou lackest,' Jesus said to the rich young ruler. This indicates a need. It was after the incident of Jesus blessing the children, and he had gone on his way, that this young man came "running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17) Doubtless the young man came with an earnest desire to inherit life, but with certain reservations.

How often it is the holding to some cherished desire which prevents one from enjoying the sweetness and restfulness of decision to do the LORD's will. This young man's request, 'What shall I do?' was natural. It is the first thought that occurs to most people when the mind and heart turn to the LORD and righteousness.

To the young man, Jesus quoted from the commandments, "Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother." The young man answered, "All these have I observed from my youth." Jesus looked upon him and loved him, and said, "One thing thou lackest." Finally, closing with a test, Jesus said, "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up thy cross, and follow me."—vss. 19-21

When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. The one thing he lacked was renunciation of self—a full

resignation of all he had and was. Jesus could not say, "Be my disciple," until he had secured from the young man his full devotion. So the test was applied. How true it is that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit"!—Rom. 14:17

Jesus said to the young ruler, 'One thing thou lackest: . . . sell whatsoever thou hast.' "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."—Matt. 13:44

It might have been hoped that this lofty counsel would have aroused the young man to devotion and sacrifice, but the test required more than he was prepared to give. It was precisely the least expected, and a thousand times harder than any legal enforcement that could be imposed. The young man was ready to do, but there were certain reservations. In his case, he had great possessions, none of which can be retained in true consecration to God, or true renunciation of self. Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." It remains what it was, a corn of wheat, "but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be."—John 12:24-26

This one thing—that is, wholeheartedness in consecration—will, in the age to come, also need to be taken into account with all who anticipate everlasting life. It will always be the first maxim of life.

“Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. . . . this do, and thou shalt live.”—Luke 10:27,28

“THAT GOOD PART”

“One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:42) Whatsoever may be said of the contrast between these two women, Martha certainly shared the piety of her sister Mary, evidenced by the fact of her welcome and loving desire to serve even in temporal needs and refreshments for her Master. It was merely that she failed, just then perhaps, to rise to such a high conception of the nature and dignity of their illustrious friend, and busied herself with the practical cares of life to such an extent that Jesus considered it excessive. “Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”—Matt. 6:31-33

Martha, anxious for the comfort of her guest, was absorbed in every detail of hospitality to please, while Mary sat at the feet of Jesus to listen to his words of counsel and love. She may have remembered some other words of Jesus: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”—Matt. 4:4

The busy, motherly Martha, seeing Mary thus seemingly careless, felt an annoyance, unworthy of her usual self. A word to her sister would probably have been sufficient to secure her interest and

help. Instead, Martha—and who does not at times?—came rather impatiently with a complaint, “dost thou not care?” as though Jesus had encouraged Mary to neglect duty.—Luke 10:40

Jesus replied wisely and lovingly, Martha, Martha, my wants are easily satisfied, and it is better, like Mary, to choose the one thing needful first: the supreme concern for the things of God, for these alone can never be taken away, and Mary has made this her choice. ‘Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.’

Let us learn the lesson: the cares of this life are dangerous, even when they seem to be needful and commendable. Nothing could have been more proper and delightful than for Martha to provide for the Lord’s temporal needs, when required. Yet, even this, where too much time and effort were spent, might be gently reprov’d. “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.”—John 6:27

It is indeed more important to attend to the instructions of the Lord Jesus than always to be engaged in the affairs of the world, home, and self. The one will abide forever, the others only for a while. If devotion be omitted at the proper time, it may be always omitted. If Mary had neglected just then, she may never again have heard the same words of counsel and life.

Mary enjoyed the sweetness of satisfaction and contentment of those fully resigned to the LORD’s will, and represents those dwelling in the “secret place of the most High” (Ps. 91:1), most beautifully

pictured in the Holy of the Tabernacle, feasting upon the shewbread, the Word of God, the sustaining power of life, enjoying also the illumination from the golden candlestick—the light of the glory of God.—II Cor. 4:6

Let us seek to dwell there more and more continuously, remembering the assurance of Jesus, “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) “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.” (I John 1:7) This is truly a needful thing for the Lord’s saints. It is here in the school of Christ that we need his Word, his Spirit. Creeds leave us cold and disappointed. Christ gives warmth and life.

PAUL’S “ONE THING”

“This one thing I do,” wrote Paul, “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:13,14) One of the predominating characteristics of the Apostle Paul was determination. He was firm, resolute, decisive. Whatever decision he made, all his energies were directed to achieve the end in view.

He explained to King Agrippa that before his conversion, as Saul of Tarsus, he persecuted the church of Christ and “punished them oft in every synagogue, . . . being exceedingly mad against them.” He added, “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” (Acts 26:11,9) Thus

did Paul witness against himself and his misdirected zeal.

On another occasion, when he planned to go to Jerusalem to be there on the day of Pentecost, he found that in every city he visited the Holy Spirit testified that bonds and imprisonment awaited him in the holy city. But he was determined to go, and 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."—Acts 20:16,24

The Apostle Paul, like the rich young ruler, enjoyed certain possessions. Obstacles almost insurmountable were put aside and removed for Christ, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him."—Phil. 3:8,9

Paul enumerated those things that could have been hindrances to him in the Christian way and life, but they were all disregarded for Christ. His talents, fame, possessions, and social rank, had all been put away years before writing this letter to the church at Philippi. Paul determined to do 'one thing,' and was triumphant.

"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." (Phil. 3:11) What a wonderful example Paul has been to all the Lord's dear saints, especially to those called of God to that high, holy and Heavenly Calling in Christ Jesus, whose urge of soul had been, and still is, in zealous contemplation, resignation, satisfaction and loving devotion,

with full and complete submission to do God's will as revealed in his Word.

In consecration of himself and of all human aspirations, Paul gave evidence of being completely satisfied with Jesus and his teaching. So was Mary with her Lord and Master. He is to all such the "lily of the valley, the fairest of ten thousand," who, contented, enjoy sweet and unbroken communion and fellowship with Christ Jesus, even though often deprived of many material comforts.

May we be resolute and determined, steadfast and unmovable, with sobriety and watchfulness. May we be established in the faith, offering incense in every experience at the golden altar, pouring out the affections of an endearing heart of gratitude and praise to God, and to our beloved Redeemer and Lord.

Let us, in our daily walk before the Lord, maintain to the end an increasing contemplation of God, his will, and his kingdom. Let us complete our resignation to his will for us, fulfilling our renunciation of self and consecration to our Heavenly Father.

May we be completely satisfied in all things under the providence of God as Mary was, making our High Calling of God, and our response, the most cherished delight of our life, looking always for "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."—Titus 2:13 ■

2004 International Convention Report

Bro. Bob Gorecki and Sr. Deanna Gorecki were sent by the Dawn to the International Convention. This is their report.

THE TWELFTH INTERNATIONAL Convention of Bible Students was held August 8th through the 13th in the little town of Polanica Zdroj. The town is located in southern Poland, about ten miles from the border of the Czech Republic. An abundance of mineral water in the area provides an opportunity for visitors to enjoy the benefit of mineral baths and drinking of fresh mineral water.

The convention was held for the third time in a school, which has a large gymnasium. Polish brethren, from all parts of Poland, arrived early to transform the empty gym into a grand meeting hall, bringing in rolls of carpeting for the floor, banners, sound systems, video cameras and projectors, along with a ten-foot viewing screen, translation booths, radios, computers, and nine hundred rented chairs and tables.

For six days brethren gathered in the hall to hear discourses, testimony meetings, and evening vesper services, delivered in several different languages. Each service was translated into

five different languages, with the help of brethren in translation booths who read the text, or translated non-published words. The translations were then transmitted by FM radio on five different stations. Each person in the audience, having a radio and headset, tuned into their respective language station to hear what was being said on the stage.



Over eight hundred brethren attended the convention, coming from more than seventeen countries. From Australia to Siberia, from America to Israel, brethren came to hear the message of Truth spoken from the stage; to share experiences, to fellowship with old friends, and to make new friends. Eager translation volunteers helped to bridge the language communication problems.

The convention started on Sunday with a discourse in English, "Preparing for the Last Days" and ended with the French discourse, "And the Lord Harkened and Heard it." There was a live panel discussion on "Bible Prophecy Today," discourses on "The Sin Offering," "Trials of the New

Creature,” “The Power of Example,” and “He who has Ears, Let Him Hear.” These were but a few of the encouraging, and faith-strengthening discourses given.

Testimony meetings shared experiences of witness work, and the perils of living and witnessing in some villages where the local priest controls the vast majority of the village. We heard brethren from Siberia, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, and other countries, having so little of this world’s goods, speak of their efforts to use what they have to spread the message of the kingdom, even though it may cost them dearly.



The days of convention went by quickly, and on the last evening, after the closing vesper service, the brethren from each country represented were asked to stand up country by country and wave good-bye to the eight-hundred plus brethren when each verse of the hymn, “God Be with You Till We Meet Again” was sung. There were tears in the eyes of many on Friday evening as the convention ended with this hymn.

The convention ended at 9:30 P.M. and many of the one-hundred plus Romanians hurried out of the hall to board their chartered buses that were leaving at 10:00 P.M. for a thirty-five hour ride back to their towns and villages.

It was a wonderful and outstanding convention; filled with countless smiles, firm handshakes, and greetings in a foreign tongue that translated love and joy into our hearts.

Back in America with all its abundances, we hope to keep alive the thoughts, words, faces, and experiences of our dear brethren of foreign lands that we may learn from their example. We thank the Lord for the privilege of being part of the twelfth International Convention. ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

DECEMBER 2—"And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized."—Acts 22:16 (Z. '01-186 Hymn 291)

DECEMBER 9—"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."—James 1:12 (Z. '98-41 Hymn 342)

DECEMBER 16—"How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God follow him: but if Baal, follow him."—I Kings 18:21 (Z. '02-42 Hymn 306A)

DECEMBER 23—"A word in season, how good it is! A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."—Proverbs 15:23; 25:11 (Z. '02-381,382 Hymn 116)

DECEMBER 30—"Thou crownest the year with thy goodness."—Psalm 65:11 (Z. '00-365 Hymn 78)

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

BELIEVING GOD'S PROMISE

Dear Frank & Ernest: I have been an avid listener of your program aired here in Manila at station DZAM for almost 2 years. I am a college student taking up Education where I would want to later on pursue a major in Pre-school education.

Your program has been a source of inspiration in my day-to-day activities, especially in dealing with other people. I always keep in mind that God has so many blessings bestowed on my family and me, and truly I am grateful to him, so I always keep tab of my attitude towards others. I believe his promise of everlasting life and salvation and just the thought of this promise gives me the strength to overcome all trials and

difficulties in life.

I am also grateful for people like you who inspire many people to be always God-centered and good to others. Thank you very much and may your program last thru the years.—MANILA

A REGULAR LISTENER

Dear Sir: I can't put into words how I love to listen to your wonderful programme on Radio Africa Two. It really makes an impact on my whole being. I am sure your message changes the lives of all who dare to listen. I wish it could come more than once a week.

May God enable you to keep up the good work. I am one of your regular listeners. Yours in Christ—ZIMBABWE

"HOPE"

Dear Dawn: Thank you for sending me the booklet, *Hope*.

Reading it gave me more strength to cope with the loss of my wife in 2003. Your booklet of *Hope* now made me know I'll be with my wife of 26 years of marriage again, when our Lord permits.

I thank you for your booklet. It did help greatly. God be with you.—CA

SPIRITUAL BATTLES

Dear brethren in Christ: With much gratitude to God Almighty for the great things he has been doing for me. How are you doing there, and how is the work with you all?

I am very grateful to inform you that I and my family here are all doing fine without any problem and also I thank God he is helping us with both physical and spiritual needs.

I am also here to inform you that *The Dawn* Bible magazines are still

reaching my hands up till now, and are helping me in my daily studies to know more about God's Word and my spiritual growth.

I want you to keep me in your daily prayers because there are lots of problems and spiritual battles in this our country, so that God will give us the victory over all temptations that will come over our way.

May the Lord Jesus Christ help you and continue to bless you. Your brother—NIGERIA

RECORDED FRANK & ERNEST

Greetings: I understand you have a publication, *The Dawn* magazine and I would appreciate a copy to read. I love to read and study in the Bible.

A few years ago when my wife and I lived near Fargo, ND, I heard your Frank & Ernest program over WDAY. I

turned on my tape recorder and recorded quite a few of your programs. Now we have moved out here to the State of Washington to live. I have not found any of your programs being broadcast in this area, so am thankful for the tapes made of the ones over WDAY.

I recall hearing your programs over WSAU in Wausau, WI way back in the early 1940's! I was about 8 or 9 years old at the time. Over the years I have found that this life is all too short, but God, Jehovah, has a wonderful plan for us in the future.

I hope to hear from you and learn more of the background of your work. Sincerely—WA

FAMILY SUFFERING

Dear Sir: I am going through some old family death records, I found this little booklet called *Hope*.

My brother has only 6 months to live and my sister is dying now in the hospital. In the back of this book it says you will send a free copy of another booklet, *God and Reason*. I hope the years haven't taken away this offer.

Could I receive 3 each of both booklets for my family—*Hope* and *God and Reason*. This would be very much appreciated by me and the family. We are going through a very hard time. If you have others that you could send, they would help a lot. Thank you.—WV

THANKFUL FOR TRACTS

Dear Dawn: Shalom! Thank you for the tracts you sent to me, I really appreciate them, and my prayer is that God will continue to bless your ministry. Yours in him —NIGERIA ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

E. Blicharz

St. Augustine, FL December 5

R. Gorecki

Phoenix, AZ Dec. 31-Jan. 3

W. Blicharz

Phoenix, AZ Dec. 31-Jan. 3

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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.

NIGERIAN ANNUAL THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, December 4—Obatej (WES) Schools, Nursery and Primary, No. 4, Oba Akenzua Crescent, Onireke Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Contact Cajetan O. Egbu, No. 2 Darlington Street, Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

DETROIT CHRISTMAS GATHERING, December 18—Pleasant Ridge Community Center, 4 Ridge Road, Contact Norm Zendler for further information. Phone: (248) 399-8843

CHICAGO NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, December 31, January 1,2—Elk Grove High School, 500 W. Elk Grove Blvd., Elk Grove Village, IL. Contact Roberta Tabac, 4N233 Norris Avenue, West Chicago, IL 60185. Phone: (630) 231-1874

PHOENIX NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, December 31, January 1,2,3—LaQuinta Inn, 2510 W. Greenway Road. Phone: (602) 993-0800. Contact hotel directly for reservations. For other information, contact Janell Porcolab, 21941 N. 107th Drive, Sun City, AZ 85373. Phone: (623) 362-2056

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 18,19, 20—The Clarion Hotel, 2600 Auburn Blvd. For reservations contact Donna Burke, 10771 Wood Reed Court, Nevada City, CA 95959. Phone: (503) 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

FRESNO CONVENTION, April 1,2,3—Best Western Garden Court Inn, 2141 N. Parkway Drive. 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

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

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

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