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Who Is God?

“There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”

—*I Corinthians 8:6*

THE QUESTION RAISED IN our title—“Who is God?”—was asked by the psalmist in Psalm 18:31, and might seem at first to have a simple answer, as given in our theme text. Other scriptures state also that there is only one “true” and “living” God. (Jer. 10:10; I Thess. 1:9) Yet, throughout the ages there have been myriads of gods which people have worshiped and served. Many of those who have worshiped gods of one sort or another have not been satisfied to have them invisible, and they have erected images to the gods of their choice. These images, they claim, help them to visualize their gods, hence are a great aid to their so-called faith.

MANY “GODS”

A recent search on the Internet provides a wide variety of answers to the question—“Who is God?”—as well as to the number of gods that have been worshiped down through the ages. According to several independent sources, historians have catalogued nearly 4,000 “gods” that have been

worshiped during the past six thousand years, of which nearly 3,000 can be considered “deities”—that is, gods of supreme worship. In cataloguing these by region and culture, it is perhaps not surprising that the Greek gods comprise the single greatest number, about 370, or nearly ten percent of all the gods ever worshiped.

Scholars note that of all the major cultures and religions which have existed during man’s history, only three major groups claim to be monotheistic—believers in one God—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. All other groups, past and present, have been polytheistic—believers in many gods. Even among so-called Christianity, while claiming belief in only one God, the majority of its followers believe in, and have been taught, the unscriptural concept that the Supreme Deity is comprised of a “trinity” of gods.

Furthering the confusion as to “Who is God?” is the fact that, in addition to the estimated 4,000 gods mentioned earlier, “saints” have been canonized by man’s authority. These “saints” have also become objects of much worship and idolization among millions of people for nearly two thousand years. How many of these exist? According to *Catholic Online*, “There are over 10,000 named saints . . . from history, the Roman Martyrology and Orthodox sources, but no definitive ‘head count’.”

Given all of this information, it is no wonder that there is so much confusion in the world, and little in the way of satisfactory answers, as to who God truly is, and what his plans and purposes are for his creation. If we truly believe that there is a

Supreme Being who is in control of the universe and interested in the well-being of its creatures, then we should expect him to reveal to us something concerning his plans, purposes, and character, so that we might properly and knowledgeably worship him. The only source of consistent, harmonious, and reasonable testimony concerning the God of the universe is the Bible. It is to this source that we look for the answer to the question—"Who is God?"

"GODS" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

There were a number of prominent gods worshiped by heathen nations during Old Testament times. One of the great sins of God's chosen people Israel was their heedless desire to join in this heathen worship of false gods. The most popular god of those times was Baal. Baal was the supreme deity of the Phoenician and Canaanitish nations. There can be no doubt of the historical worship of Baal. We find it established among the Moabites and their allies the Midianites in the time of Moses. (Num. 22:41) Through these nations, the Israelites were seduced into the worship of this god under the particular form of Baal-Peor.—Num. 25:3-18; Deut. 4:3

Another prominent god worshiped by ancient heathen nations, and sometimes by the Israelites, was Molech. Molech was the fire god of the Ammonites. Fire gods appear to have been common to many heathen tribes, and were worshiped in most inhuman rites. The images of Molech are said to have been hollow and made of brass. A fire burned within, and children were thrown into the arms of

the image and burned to death, in the hope of appeasing its wrath.

In most instances, the people conceived of these gods as vengeful, seeking opportunities of venting their wrath upon their subjects. This concept of deity, however, is entirely foreign to the teachings of the Bible with respect to the true and living God. (Ps. 86:15) Human sacrifices were also offered to Baal, and concerning this inhuman practice God said, “They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind.”—Jer. 19:5

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament, we are again reminded of the many gods of the heathen world. Paul referred to these in his sermon on Mars’ hill. He said, “Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions [gods that ye worship, *Marginal Translation*], I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.”—Acts 17:22-25

The most outstanding of all the false gods mentioned in the Bible is Satan, the Devil. Paul described him as “the god of this world” who “hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest

the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (II Cor. 4:4) It is because Satan has blinded the minds of the people that the true and living God of the Bible is as yet an “unknown God” to the vast majority of mankind.

SUPERSTITION STILL PREVAILS

While the light of the Gospel shining forth from Jesus and his enlightened followers has been a blessing to many individuals throughout the centuries of the present age, the larger portion of mankind is still in darkness. Today, countless millions do not believe in any god, but those who do not believe in any god may perhaps be just as well off as those who are superstitiously bound to a false god.

Since the introduction of Christianity into the world, another false god has been created by human philosophy. This is the god of torture. Soon after the death of the apostles, some of the prominent leaders in the church became ensnared in Satan’s original deception that the penalty for sin was not death, believing Satan’s lie, “Ye shall not surely die.” (Gen. 3:4) They concluded that since no one could die, then that which appeared to be death must be a gateway into another aspect of life. Therefore, they reasoned that since the wicked would not be worthy of a happy life after seeming to die, it must be a life of torment. Conveniently, these church leaders also borrowed similar “eternal torment” teachings of heathen religions and philosophers.

It was further conceived, but without authority from the Bible, that this torment could have purifying

power in the “souls” of those sinners who experienced it, and that eventually, after a long period of time, they would be holy enough to enter heaven. In this theory, the place of torture was called purgatory, a word that is not found in the Bible at all. It is important to note that the teaching of purgatory did not replace the doctrine of eternal torment—it only added to it, attempting, perhaps, to make it more palatable.

Centuries later, the Protestant Reformers discarded the concept of purgatory. However, they failed to realize further that the Bible does not teach torture at all, whether styled purgatory or anything else. The Reformers, therefore, held on to the false theory of hell-fire, which they taught was to last forever. This presents God in an even worse light than does the theory of purgatory, for not only would the torture serve no purpose, but it would never end.

Naturally, our minds turn in revolt from the heathen concept of a Molech who would be pleased to have his worshipers cast their children alive into the flames to be destroyed. However, even this hideous concept of a god is not nearly as horrible as the one portrayed in the dogmas of purgatory and eternal torture. It is not surprising that many philosophers of today, sufficiently liberated from the shackles of superstition to think more freely on this subject, have announced that to them this god does not exist. How could anyone find a place in his heart for such a god?

DEATH OF “GODS” FORETOLD

The Scriptures make it clear that the true and living God of the universe, the Creator of heaven

and earth, does not intend to permit false gods to exist forever. They are all to be destroyed, including Satan, their instigator and chief. Let us note some of the Bible's prophecies which indicate this. Addressing the worshipers of false gods, the Prophet Jeremiah wrote, "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." (Jer. 10:11) The Prophet Isaiah wrote, "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. . . . In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats."—Isa. 2:17-20

The Prophet Isaiah also wrote, "O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name. They [the other gods] are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish." (Isa. 26:13,14) This is a remarkable prophecy. It refers to the time when, according to the Scriptures, the knowledge of the true God shall fill the earth "as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9) Then the people will recognize that they have been deceived by false gods and will acknowledge it. "Other lords beside thee have had dominion over us," they will confess. In most instances, how cruel that dominion has been. The people have been held in subjection through fear. They have feared torment and other evils. Then, however, they will rejoice to realize that all these

“other lords” are dead, destroyed from the people’s minds by the enlightening influences of the kingdom of Christ.

In reality, with the exception of Satan, the false gods which have plagued the people throughout the centuries have never been living gods, except as they have lived in the fear-filled minds of their worshipers. This is true of the torment god, and of other false concepts of the Christian God which have come down to us from the Dark Ages. Since these false gods exist merely in the minds of the people, when the light of truth shines forth to them, these gods will die.

SATAN ALSO TO BE DESTROYED

Satan, however, is a real personality—the fallen Lucifer. Isaiah wrote, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”—Isa. 14:12-15

The Hebrew word translated “hell” in this passage is *sheol*. It is this same word that is translated “grave” in Ecclesiastes 9:10, which reads, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” From this text, it is clear that *sheol*, here translated “grave,” is a state of unconsciousness. It is the

death condition, and for the fallen Lucifer to be brought down to hell, or *sheol*, means that he will be destroyed. This, indeed, will be the death of the greatest of all false gods.

In Revelation 20:1-3, this god is described as “that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan.” This passage tells us that during the thousand-year reign of Christ, Satan will be bound, to prevent him from deceiving the nations. Then, in verse 10, we are informed that Satan is finally cast into “the lake of fire.” In verse 14, “the lake of fire” is described as “the second death.” Verse 10 speaks of Satan being “tormented,” but this is a poor translation. The root meaning of the Greek word here translated “tormented” is “a touchstone,” and the noted professor of Greek, Dr. Strong, shows that it is only by analogy that the thought of torture is derived from it.

What this text really means is that while Satan will be destroyed in the symbolic lake of fire, which is “the second death,” the memory of his wicked course of opposition to God will continue as a touchstone, or example, of the terrible results of disobedience to God and his righteous laws. The true and loving God of the Bible, while justly destroying those not worthy to live, including Satan—the “god of this world”—is not a God of torment. He will not torment even the Devil, but will destroy him, thus making an end of the chief of all false gods.

THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD

Through the Prophet Jeremiah, the true and living God said, “Let not the wise man glory in his

wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.” (Jer. 9:23,24) This great and loving God has not been known by those theologians of our day who proclaim that God does not exist. Their philosophies do not refer to him, but to the god of the Dark Ages, the god of torment—not the God who delights to exercise lovingkindness in the earth.

A prayer of Moses, recorded in the Psalms, says, “LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.” (Ps. 90:1-3) The true and living God of the Bible turned man to destruction through the original sentence of death which came upon our first parents. As a result of this, man has been a dying creature. This will not be so forever, for, as Moses foretold in his prayer, the time will come when God will say to the condemned, dying, and dead race, “Return, ye children of men.”

Although God sentenced our first parents to death because they transgressed his law, he still loved them, and loved their progeny upon whom the penalty of death also fell. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him

should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”—John 3:16,17

It was God’s love that prompted him to send his Son into the world to be the Redeemer and Savior of the people. Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, we see God’s justice operating. God could not set aside the just penalty of death upon the human race unless that penalty was paid by another, and Jesus is the one who took the sinner’s place in death. Jesus “poured out his soul unto death.” “Yet,” as Isaiah wrote, “it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”—Isa. 53:12,10

The “pleasure of the LORD” is the redemption and recovery of the fallen race from sin and death. Jesus made this possible through his own willing sacrifice on Calvary’s cross. He became the propitiation, or satisfaction, for our sins, “and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (I John 2:2) Paul wrote that Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, “to be testified [or made known to all] in due time.” (I Tim. 2:6) In this same passage, Paul also explains that it is God’s will for all to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

THE KINGDOM CLASS

The revealment to the people of the true God of the Bible will take place during the thousand years of Christ’s kingdom. Those who then accept

the provision of God's love through Christ and obey the laws of the Messianic kingdom will be restored to perfection of human life on the earth, and will have the opportunity of living forever. However, those during the present age who have followed faithfully in the footsteps of Jesus will be exalted to heavenly glory with him, and will share in the rulership of his kingdom. It is to these that Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—Luke 12:32

It is to these that Jesus also said, "I go to prepare a place for you, . . . And . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2,3) In order for these and other promises of the Bible to be fulfilled, the exercise of divine power is essential in the resurrection of the dead. When Jesus was raised from the dead he was highly exalted, symbolically speaking, to the "right hand" of God. Thus, while all things are of the Father, his blessings are dispensed through his beloved and highly exalted Son.

In the plan of God, there is another exercise of divine power in the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus' followers. This is described in the Bible as "the first resurrection." (Rev. 20:6) Those raised from the dead in the first resurrection are to be joined together with Christ, to then exert divine power for the restoration of mankind in general to live on the earth as perfect human beings. The period during which this is accomplished is described by the Apostle Peter as "times of restitution of all things," and he informs us that this loving feature of the divine plan was foretold by all God's holy prophets since the world began.—Acts 3:19-21

With all false gods destroyed, and the true and living God of creation exalted and worshiped by all mankind, there will come the fulfillment of the Apostle John's prophecy of the time when, as he wrote, "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, . . . and all that are in them," will be saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." (Rev. 5:13) The "throne" is here used as a symbol of the Creator's sovereignty over his creatures, and the "Lamb" is a symbol of Christ, who gave himself in sacrifice that mankind might be restored to life.

How thankful we are that in due time both the Father and the Son will be universally recognized and acclaimed. Then there will be no question as to who God is, for all will know him. All will understand that he truly lives, and that all false gods have been destroyed. Then the people, enlightened and restored to human perfection, will rejoice to worship and serve the one true God, and in doing so will themselves live forever in peace and in joy. ■

"This is what the LORD says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—he says: 'I am the LORD, and there is no other. . . . Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear.'"

—Isaiah 45:18,22,23 *New International Version*

God in Nature

*The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue, ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim:
The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.*

*Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale;
And nightly, to the listening earth,
Repeats the story of her birth;
While all the stars that 'round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.*

*What though, in solemn silence, all
Move 'round this dark terrestrial ball,—
What though no real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found,—
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing as they shine,
"The hand that made us is Divine."*

—Poems of Dawn

Praise for God's Justice

Key Verses: *“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners.”*
—Psalm 146:5,7

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 146

(vs. 3) On the contrary, full confidence can be placed in God, whose promises are always true.—James 1:17

In the Genesis account, the penalty for Adam's disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit was clearly stated to be death. Although there is a widely held belief that the soul cannot actually die, such a thought is contradicted in the Bible. (Matt. 10:28) Without the future hope of a resurrection of the dead, made possible by the faithful sacrifice of Christ Jesus in giving his perfect life as a ransom sacrifice for Adam and all of his posterity,

IN OUR LESSON, THE

psalmist expresses from the depths of his heart the gratitude due to the Creator who is most worthy to be praised. “Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.”—Ps. 146:1,2

David did not wish anyone to place their trust in him or in any human agency, even princes. No matter how mighty, wise, or prudent, they could not be depended upon to be always reliable and faithful to their word.

those who go into the tomb would forever remain in a state of unconsciousness and non-existence. “His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”—Ps. 146:4

Our Key Verses indicate that it was God’s special care for his ancient people Israel that was reflected in their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. His care was also shown in providing manna for them throughout their wilderness journey. It is the same God who will provide justice and blessings for all of the resurrected human family as they come into harmony with his purpose and plans.

“The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous: The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.” (vss. 8,9) God’s instrumentality for accomplishing all of this is Christ Jesus, who gave his life as a ransom for all to purchase mankind.—I Tim. 2:5,6

Jesus was offered for the purpose of eradicating sin and, therefore, had to be perfect in every way in order to redeem Adam and his race. Our Lord was a man of sorrows not because there was any deficiency in his being. Because of his perfection, he felt deeply the afflictions upon fallen humanity which he observed all around him. His perfect sensibilities enabled him to enter into the sorrows of the poor, groaning, and dying world of mankind. On many occasions during his ministry, he gave of his own vitality to heal those who were afflicted, thereby refreshing and restoring them at the cost of his own personal strength.—Isa. 53:4; Luke 6:17,19

When God’s kingdom is established, his love and justice will be seen and appreciated by all. At that time, the sentiments expressed in our final verse will become a reality. “The LORD shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.”—Ps. 146:10



God Promised a Righteous Lord

Key Verse: *“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.”*
—Isaiah 9:6

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 9:2-7

9:2,3) Our Lord was the light of the world during his personal ministry in Galilee. Throughout the Gospel Age, his consecrated followers have been representatives of that same light by showing forth the promise of the kingdom of righteousness in which the present conditions of sin, sickness, suffering, and death will be eradicated. Except for the members of Christ’s church, however, the nation of Israel and virtually the entire world of mankind, under the influence of Satan, have been blinded to the

GOD’S GREATEST GIFT TO

the dying race of mankind was promised during Old Testament times—the coming of his only begotten son, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who presented himself to the nation of Israel as their king during his First Advent.

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.” (Isa.

glorious prospect of salvation resulting from the faithfulness of our Savior in sacrificing his human life at Calvary.—II Cor. 4:4; Heb. 2:9

Throughout history, mankind has been oppressed by the weight of sin and unrighteousness existing in society. Relief from this burden, however, must wait until the completion of the bride of Christ, who will be exalted to reign with the Lord when the kingdom of righteousness commences.

“We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Rom. 8:22,23) Through the use of symbolic language, the Bible indicates that all evil institutions will be destroyed and mankind will be purged from the vestiges of error by the righteous rule of Christ that will be in operation during God’s kingdom.—Isa. 9:5

Our Key Verse describes the many titles associated with Christ and his body, who will be coworkers with him in establishing the laws and regulations that will be in operation during that reign of righteousness. Surely, such titles as “Wonderful,” “Counsellor,” “Mighty God,” “Everlasting Father,” and “Prince of Peace,” should invoke excitement in us as we anticipate the soon establishment of this kingdom.

“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.” (vs. 7) God has been the architect of this wonderful plan of salvation, even though Christ Jesus has been the honored agent for carrying out the Father’s eternal purpose. When this glorious arrangement has been completed, all the honor and praise will reside with the eternal Creator.—I Cor. 15:24-28 ■

God Promised a Righteous Branch

Key Verse: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”
—*Jeremiah 23:5*

Selected Scripture:
Jeremiah 23:1-6;
33:14-18

IN TODAY’S LESSON, GIVEN through the Prophet Jeremiah, God proclaimed a coming judgment upon Judah, because its leaders did not properly guide and protect the people. “Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.”—*Jer. 23:1,2*

Through unfaithfulness, various leaders had encouraged idol worship instead of obedience to their one true God, eventually resulting in the nation being taken captive by Babylon. Not all of the Jews perished by the sword while in Babylonian captivity. When Cyrus gave the edict that permitted a return to their land to rebuild their Temple in Jerusalem, a few responded to the call, but many chose to remain in exile. Jeremiah’s prophecy goes on to say that there would arise good shepherds who would feed the people so they would not be lacking.

(vs. 4) Even though there were some, such as Nehemiah and Zerubbabel, who enacted righteous laws for those who returned to their homeland, there was still fear and dismay. This indicates that the larger fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy related to a future time.

Israel was the only nation the Heavenly Father recognized and with whom he had entered into a covenant. However, because of their failure to repent, as a nation they were not of the proper heart condition to accept their Messiah at his First Advent. When Christ declared their house to be desolate, their typical arrangements and system of sacrifices were repudiated and their priesthood was no longer recognized by God. Eventually, the Romans destroyed their Temple and later razed the city of Jerusalem to the ground. The effect of this utter devastation was to scatter the Jews into every corner of the globe.

Our Key Verse describes a coming kingdom in which all Israel will be united together again as one people. This prophecy, relating to Christ and his church, as the heir of David's throne, indicates that they will be a righteous "Branch" and "King," who will establish a just government which will last throughout eternity. This government will not only unite all of Israel, but eventually will encompass all the nations of the earth.

Throughout the reign of sin and death, the human family has been starving for a ray of hope that things might be better for them. What joy they will experience as they return from the tomb and come into harmony with God's arrangements. That time long foretold by the prophets will have arrived, and there will be great appreciation and praise rendered to the Heavenly Father.

How wonderful is our God, who not only has great riches in store for the faithful members of the body of Christ during this Gospel Age, but has provided blessings for each member of the redeemed race, that they may come to a full appreciation of their Creator and worship him forever. ■

God Promised to Be With Us

Key Verse: *“I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.”*
—Ezekiel 34:23

Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 34:23-31

out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.”—vss. 12,13

Although Ezekiel was given the task of preaching righteousness to the Israelites while they were in Babylon, God foreknew they would continue to be unfaithful well beyond the end of their captivity. This would eventually result in their being scattered among other nations throughout the world.—vss. 16-21

Despite Israel’s disobedience, the rejection of her

THROUGHOUT EZEKIEL 34, a contrast is made between false shepherds or leaders in Israel who were not interested in the people’s welfare, and God, who as the Great Shepherd will rescue his sheep that have strayed from his protective care.—vss. 1-10

“As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them

Messiah, Jesus Christ, and the chastisements received for her iniquity, the prophet Ezekiel promises her salvation and restoration.—vs. 22

Our Key Verse declares that Israel will be blessed when the kingdom is established on earth through God's servant, David. In this verse, David is a symbol of Christ, who truly will be earth's ruler in God's kingdom. The beloved David of past ages will be raised from the tomb, and will also serve in a leadership capacity in that righteous earthly government.

During that time of righteousness, we learn of the mountains dropping down new wine, the hills flowing with milk and honey, and a fountain watering the valley of Shittim. This will perhaps have a literal application concerning the abundance of flocks and herds as well as pasturage that will exist in a renewed earth. However, the symbolic application of wine representing pure doctrine, milk symbolizing basic truths, and the water of life bringing blessings and peace to Israel and all who will become "Israelites indeed" in the earthly kingdom, seems very appropriate.—Joel 3:17,18; Isa. 55:1

Israel, as God's chosen people in the past, will then appreciate the Great Shepherd's care for them. Additionally, with the highway of holiness in operation, all mankind will be glad that the former conditions associated with sin and unrighteousness will have forever passed away.—Isa. 35:10

Today, only the Lord's true sheep, his church, hear and obey the Master's voice. (John 10:27) However, Christ died to bring an opportunity for salvation to all, so there will be other sheep of an earthly fold that will profit from his great sacrifice.—vs. 16

Thus, in due time will be realized the fulfillment of those words that Jesus taught his disciples to pray—"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) God surely will be with all who desire to be his sheep at that time. ■

If Ye Do These Things

“Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”

—II Peter 1:10

PETER’S WORDS, CONTAINED in our theme text, are just one of many reminders given to us in the Scriptures that the promises of God to his people have conditions attached to them, and that if we are to experience their fulfillment we must, as individuals, comply faithfully with those conditions. Jesus’ promise in Revelation 2:10 is another good example of this: “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Indeed, to receive the fulfillment of this ultimate promise—that being the crown of life—requires the meeting of the condition of faithfulness “unto death.”

In God’s dealings with his typical people, Israel, he promised them rich blessings if they obeyed his commandments. These promises, therefore, were not unconditional. If the people did not obey, then God would hold back the good things he promised and the people would not receive them. While various experiences were permitted to come upon natural

Israel which demonstrated the importance of the conditions attached to their blessing, the same holds true in principle concerning spiritual Israel. “Exceeding great and precious” are the promises which the Lord has made to us—promises which, if we are faithful to the conditions attached to them, will lead to the divine nature, and to “glory and honour and immortality.”—II Pet. 1:4; Rom. 2:7

In Peter’s reference to the precious promises of God, he emphasizes the necessity of adding to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. He explains that “if these things” be in us and abound, then we will not be unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, if we lack these, Peter continues, we will be spiritually blind, and eventually forget that we were once purged from our sins. Rather than this, Peter exhorts, we should “give diligence” to make our calling and election sure. He assures that “if ye do these things,” then an abundant entrance shall be ministered unto us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.—II Pet. 1:4-11

THE HEBREW BRETHREN

There are certain statements in Paul’s letter to the Hebrews which indicate that as a group they were not living up to their privileges as well as they might. Hence, to some extent they were “coming short” of the promises of God as they applied to them, and to all the followers of the Master. He speaks of them as being “dull of hearing,” explaining,

“When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”—Heb. 5:11-14

Many are the promises of God which assure his people of an abundant supply of spiritual food for their nourishment as New Creatures, food which will enable them to grow and become mature in Christ Jesus. This food must be faithfully used and assimilated if we are to develop from the immature, childhood stage of Christian experience into the mature, adult stage—“by reason of use,” Paul states. This is one of the conditions attached to the promises of God which builds us up in the most holy faith.

When we do not properly assimilate the promises of God, and through faith obey the conditions attached to them, our “first love”—enthusiasm for the Lord, the Truth, and the brethren—will be lost. This seems to be what had happened with the Hebrews to whom Paul addressed his epistle. He said to them, “Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.”—chap. 10:32,33

Seemingly these Hebrew brethren had been very faithful and zealous in the beginning of their walk in the narrow way. They then took joyfully the

spoiling of their goods. Apparently, however, their attitude had somewhat changed, else Paul would not have invited them to call to remembrance those former days. It is not a temporary faithfulness that will gain the crown of life. One of the conditions attached to the promises is continued faithfulness, not for a week, or a month, or a year, but until the end of the narrow way is reached in death.

It is this that Paul encouraged in the Hebrew brethren. He wrote, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (chap. 6:10-12) The promises of God hold before us a very rich future inheritance, but if we are to "inherit" what the called of God are promised, we must exercise faith and patience unto the end. Thus, the apostle wrote, "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."—chap. 10:36

"Ye have need of patience." Here is another of the conditions attached to the promises of God. Jesus illustrated this point in his parable of the sower, in which, as he explained, the "seed" is the Word of God. (Luke 8:5-15) In his Word are contained the promises of God and the conditions which are attached to these promises. In the parable, some of the seed falls by the wayside. This does not take root at all. Some of the seed falls upon stony ground, where there is not enough soil to

keep the new plants alive. Some falls among the thorns, which choke out the growing plants. Some falls on good ground where the new plants flourish and bring forth fruit.

The stony-ground believers, Jesus explained, are those which wither under the heat of trials and persecution. If these could enjoy the promises of God and inherit their fulfillment, but also at the same time enjoy the plaudits of men and be assured freedom from trials and opposition as they walk in the narrow way, they would rejoice. This is not the pathway which the Lord has designed for his faithful people. In order to demonstrate their faithfulness to him and their worthiness of the place in the kingdom which he has promised, they must endure opposition and persecution—and they must endure patiently.

The seed that fell among thorns, Jesus explained, “are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.” When we first accept the invitation and make a consecration to do the Heavenly Father’s will, it may not seem so difficult to give up the good things of life, and devote all our strength, time, and means to serving the Lord. If, however, we do not patiently endure the difficulties and hardships resulting from this prescribed way of life, but allow the deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this life to interfere with our walk in the narrow way, then we will not be pleasing to the Lord. Are we permitting these things to choke out the important interests of the New Creature, hindering its growth in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord?

Our aim should be to qualify as the “good ground” hearers of the Word, concerning whom Jesus said, these are “they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” How important it is that we “keep” the Word, that we treasure up in our hearts the precious promises of God, patiently enduring all the tests which the Lord, in his love and wisdom, permits to come upon us. Only thus may we expect, after having done the will of God in making a consecration to do his will, to inherit the fulfillment of the promises.

Bringing forth the fruits of righteousness is the great objective of our receiving the Word. After speaking of those who become so unfaithful that it is impossible to renew them unto repentance, Paul continues, “For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by [for, *Marginal Translation*] whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.” (Heb. 6:4-8) This grave warning follows Paul’s admonition to the Hebrew brethren to lay hold more firmly upon the Truth, to learn its great first principles, and adhere to them without wavering.

ABRAHAM AN EXAMPLE

Paul cites Abraham as an example of patient endurance in connection with the promises of God. We quote: “When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after

he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”—Heb. 6:13-20

Usually we think of Abraham as an example of faith, and correctly so. In this passage, Paul reminds us additionally of his great patience in waiting for the fulfillment of God’s promise. It was, in fact, his faith which enabled him to patiently endure during all those years of waiting, from the time God first spoke to him in Ur of the Chaldees, until, when he had demonstrated his faithfulness by his willingness to offer up his son Isaac in sacrifice, God confirmed the promise by his oath. Yet, this was not the fulfillment of the promise which Abraham received after patiently enduring, but its confirmation by God’s oath. It was not then the due time for Abraham’s seed to bless all the families of the earth, but God did assure Abraham that the promise would be fulfilled—he confirmed it by his oath.

Our glorious hope has its roots in the Abrahamic Covenant, not as part of the human race which is to be blessed, but as the promised seed which will,

together with Jesus, do the blessing. Because of this, God's confirmation of the promise is a "strong consolation" for us. It is a blessed assurance that if, like Abraham, we patiently endure, we will inherit the fulfillment of the promises. To us, the promises of reward are spiritual. The hope engendered by them entereth into that which is beyond the veil, where our forerunner, even Christ, has already entered.

We still "have need of patience," having need of it in all the trying experiences of life. When Paul used this expression he was applying it particularly to the fact that our long wait for the fulfillment of God's promises of glory, honor, and immortality is a severe test of our patience. It was this test of time which Abraham patiently endured. The waiting test has been upon all the Lord's people, from Pentecost even to the present. In this end of the age particularly, the Lord's people have been sorely tested by their long wait for the kingdom, and their exaltation to joint-heirship with Christ in his kingdom. That test is still upon us. Shall we patiently endure, or shall we become weary of waiting and fall by the wayside?

When Paul wrote, "Ye have need of patience," he added, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10:36,37) The brethren in the Early Church knew that they would not inherit joint-heirship with Christ in his kingdom until he returned at his Second Advent. Paul encourages them in the thought that it would be only a "little while" until he did return, and admonished them to patiently endure throughout that short time of waiting. We understand that "little while" turned out to be nearly nineteen hundred

years, but so far as the Hebrew brethren were concerned, it lasted only until they finished their course in death. Similarly, in this harvest period of the age, the test of time is no longer than the lifetime of any of the Lord's consecrated people. If we are faithful unto death, we will receive the crown of life, regardless of God's timetable in the outworking of his plans and purposes as a whole.

We believe the fulfillment of many scriptural signs indicate that we are now living in the days of our Lord's Second Presence. The "little while" of waiting for him to return is in the past. Still, we have need of patience. For each of us, there is still a "little while, now he has come," which is testing our patience. Are we enduring that test, or are we inclined to become lax in our zeal, and just drift along in a half-hearted way? How are we meeting the test of patience in waiting for the kingdom? It is important that we patiently endure if we are to receive the promised reward. This is one of the conditions attached to the exceeding great and precious promises whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature.

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Many times promises are made by those who are not reliable, or who lack the ability to fulfill them. This is not true with respect to the promises of God's Word. God, our beloved Heavenly Father, is the source of all the promises contained in his Word. In the two opening verses of the Book of Hebrews, we read, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days

spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”—Heb. 1:1,2

When God speaks through his prophets, through his Son, or through the apostles of the New Testament, it is his voice which we hear in all the exceeding great and precious promises of his Word. He is the Author of the promises, and we can depend upon God to fulfill them. Paul wrote, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)” God is faithful. He is both willing and able to fulfill all his good promises.

God will be faithful—of this there is no question. The important consideration is our own faithfulness. Paul attaches another test of our faithfulness to the promises in the statement, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.” The promises are sure. It remains only for us to hold fast to them, and without wavering. If we waver in uncertainty, we could well lose our grip on the promises, and find ourselves tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

Obedience is another test. Through the promises of God we hear the voice of God speaking to us, but if we are to be blessed in full by that voice, it is necessary to be obedient to all the conditions attached to the promises. Thus the apostle wrote, “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth

only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace [hold fast, *Marginal Translation*], whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.”—Heb. 12:25-29

Here we are warned against turning away from the voice of God. Are we ever tempted to do this? When we hear God speaking to us through his Word, outlining the conditions which make the narrow way so narrow, do we wish that we could turn away and not hear some of those conditions, the ones which seem particularly difficult for us? We may not consciously do this, but it is so easy to close our ears to the things which we do not wish to hear, and be tempted along this line. Let us be watchful of this. Let us listen attentively to everything which the Lord says, and by his grace and strength obey his voice, while we continue to serve him “acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”

MORE EARNEST HEED

Continuing to emphasize the need of faithfulness to the conditions attached to the promises, Paul wrote, “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we

neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.”—Heb. 2:1-3

Giving “earnest heed” to, and not neglecting the promises, are the conditions laid down in this admonition as prerequisite to obtaining the “great salvation” which “began to be spoken by the Lord.” It is easy to allow the vitality of the promises of God in our lives to “slip” away from us. The weaknesses of the flesh, the allurements of the world, and the attacks of the Adversary, all contribute to steal away from our hearts and minds that freshness of zeal and obedience which we manifested when first the Lord spoke to us. The revelator speaks of this as the loss of our “first love.” (Rev. 2:4) This is why the apostle urges that we give “more earnest heed to the things which we have heard.” A similar thought is contained in Peter’s admonition that we give “all diligence” to make our “calling and election sure.”—II Pet. 1:10

“We are made partakers of Christ,” Paul wrote, “if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.” (Heb. 3:14) Notice the condition—“if” we hold steadfast unto the end. Are we holding steadfast? This is the condition upon which we are made partakers of Christ, and if faithful, become part of the great Messianic company for the blessing of all the families of the earth. To hold fast implies willingness to suffer and to die with him, to be planted together in the likeness of his death. It is only if we suffer with him that we will be with him in the kingdom. It is only if we are planted together with him in death, that we may hope to live with him in the resurrection.

Here are further “ifs”: “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31,32) “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

How wonderful to know, as Paul wrote, that “the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil.” (II Thess. 3:3) Because the Lord is faithful, not one of his good promises will ever fail on behalf of those who strive as earnestly as possible to meet the conditions attached to his promises. “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”—Heb. 4:1 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

AUGUST 2—“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.”—Psalm 95:6 (’99-184 Hymn 360)

AUGUST 9—“If the light that is in thee be[come] darkness, how great is that darkness!”—Matthew 6:23 (Z. ’04-297 Hymn 145)

AUGUST 16—“In everything give thanks.”—I Thessalonians 5:18 (Z. ’03-25 Hymn 37)

AUGUST 23—“And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”—I Corinthians 13:13 (Z. ’03-58 Hymn 166)

AUGUST 30—“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—Matthew 5:16 (Z. ’03-206 Hymn 236)

The Conversion of Peter

“The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.”
—Luke 22:31-33

THE WORKING OF DIVINE

providence in the life of the Apostle Peter, from the time he was called by Jesus to be a fisher of men, is both enlightening and encouraging. Peter was the surname given to Simon, spoken of in our theme text, at the time that he stated with conviction that Jesus was the foretold Messiah. (Matt. 16:16-18) Peter fully believed that the Lord had come to break the Roman yoke of bondage over Israel and to set up his kingdom of promise which would begin its work of blessing at

Jerusalem, and finally extend its sphere of influence throughout the whole earth. Notwithstanding this, neither Peter nor the other apostles, prior to Pentecost, understood that there were to be two

phases to the kingdom of God. They knew only of the earthly phase of that kingdom.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus had indicated to his disciples in one way or another that if they were faithful to him they would be given a share in the rulership phase of this kingdom. Even this was, in the beginning, merely an earthly hope, because they believed that the Messianic kingdom was to be earthly. They doubtless knew of the manner in which the miracle-working power of God had frequently operated in Old Testament times. However, they seemed bound by their limited vision of truth to the idea that the Messiah would establish his powerful government by a kingly display of power. In their minds, such a display would result in the Roman soldiers capitulating before him as he marched to glory, leading his little band of faithful followers who would share his kingdom glory with him.

While Jesus had indicated to his disciples that he expected to die—that he would give his flesh for the life of the world—this was among the things which they did not understand until they were reminded of them by Jesus after his resurrection, and by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Indeed, he gave them a parable concerning “a certain nobleman” who went into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return. He gave this parable because his disciples believed that his kingdom was to “immediately appear.”—Luke 19:11

The full meaning of this parable, however, seemed also to escape the disciples. To them, the kingdom was at hand, and they did not want to believe anything else. Thus, as the ministry of

Jesus drew near to a close, he announced to his disciples that he was going to Jerusalem where he expected to be arrested and put to death. (Matt. 16:21) This was beyond Peter's ability to understand and accept. If Jesus was truly the Messiah, and had come to establish the powerful and world-wide kingdom of promise, why would he surrender himself to his enemies in Jerusalem and allow them to put him to death?

Peter said to Jesus, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Then Jesus said to Peter, "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." (Matt. 16:22,23) Jesus' covenant of sacrifice with his Heavenly Father required his death, and any influence—even the earnest advice of his good friend Peter—which was contrary to this was not of the Lord, but the expression of a human point of view, suggested, as Jesus indicated, by the great adversary, Satan.

GOD'S WAY

Jesus continued, and said to his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (vss. 24,25) This was a great truth, but was quite beyond the ability of the disciples at that time to understand, and seemingly Peter resisted it.

It was only a short time after this that Jesus passed through his ordeal in the Garden of Gethsemane. When the mob from Jerusalem appeared to

arrest him, Peter drew his sword in an effort to protect his Master. He had advised him against going to Jerusalem in the first place. Now he was determined to prevent his arrest and death if he possibly could. Jesus commanded Peter to put away his sword, for, if he wished, he could ask his Heavenly Father to send twelve legions of angels to protect him. Jesus did not need Peter's help, nor did he ask his Father to send the guardian angels to protect him, for he knew that it was the Father's will for him to die. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"—John 18:11

All the while Peter continued to believe that Jesus was making a mistake. Certainly a dead Messiah could not establish a kingdom at Jerusalem and assure the whole world of peace, health, security, and life. He went to the judgment hall where the Master was hailed before the high priest, possibly hoping he might still have an opportunity to help him. However, this also ended in near disaster for Peter, and he fled from the trial chamber weeping because he had denied the Master.

THE THIRD DAY

Early in the morning on the third day after his crucifixion, Jesus was raised from the dead. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome had gone to the tomb of the Master to anoint his body with spices. Suddenly, an angel appeared to them, explaining that Jesus was no longer in the tomb, but had been raised from the dead. Then the angel directed these devout women to go their way, and "tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth

before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.”—Mark 16:1-7

It would seem that there is real meaning attached to the fact that in addition to directing the women to tell the disciples about the resurrection, Peter should be singled out specially to receive this message. It was Peter who had advised Jesus not to surrender himself to his enemies and allow them to put him to death. It was Peter who, with his sword, attempted to prevent the Master’s arrest. It was to Peter that Jesus had said, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” Peter had also heard the explanation that those who lose their lives in sacrifice, as Jesus did, would save their lives.

When Peter had this message specially delivered to him that his Master had been raised from the dead, what a flood of reflections must have swept over him! Now he would know one thing for a surety—namely, that Jesus had not lost his life, even though he allowed himself to be put to death. No doubt Peter was still firm in his belief that one should not be punished for doing good, and that only evildoers should be punished. To him any other viewpoint would be contrary to sound reasoning.

ON THE SHORE OF GALILEE

Jesus appeared to his disciples a number of times before he returned to the heavenly courts. One of these appearances was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, or Tiberias. Here Jesus took occasion to question Peter concerning his love: “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?” (John 21:15) On the eve of the Master’s crucifixion, Peter

had avowed that even though all men, or the disciples, might forsake Jesus, he would not. Peter even said that he would die for him. Now Jesus was asking him, in view of his denial, if he still loved him more than did the other disciples, or more than he loved his fishing business.

Peter replied, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus replied, "Feed my lambs." Jesus asked the same question again, and Peter's answer was affirmative. Then Jesus asked the third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."—John 21:15-17

This was a remarkable reply! Peter had been rebuked and thwarted by Jesus, and it seems likely that the Master was eliciting from him this confession before the others so they might know that Peter was holding nothing in his heart against his Lord. Peter's expression, "Thou knowest all things," might well be predicated on the fact that Jesus predicted that he would deny him, even though Peter had said that he would die for his Master. In any case, the atmosphere was now cleared, and Peter received the commission to feed the Lord's sheep, which would help to establish in his mind the fact that Jesus still held him in high esteem and confidence.

"TARRY AT JERUSALEM"

For a period of forty days after his resurrection, Jesus made intermittent appearances to his disciples. The record states that "he shewed himself

alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”—Acts 1:3

His last appearance was a notable one. At this time, the apostles asked Jesus, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (vs. 6) They still clung to the hope of the kingdom, the earthly kingdom which would first restore Israel to her freedom and then extend its blessings to all nations. They had learned much through the death and the resurrection of Jesus, but they had not yet discerned that there were two phases to the kingdom of God—the heavenly and the earthly—and that the gathering of those who would qualify for the heavenly phase was just beginning.

Jesus’ reply to the disciples’ question was straightforward. He said, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” (vs. 7) He had just instructed them to tarry at Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit, and now told them that, beginning at Jerusalem, they were to be his witnesses to all nations. Thus a further long wait for the kingdom was indicated.

PENTECOST

Shortly Pentecost came, and with it the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Through the power of the Spirit, many things which Jesus had said to them were brought to their memory, and they were enlightened with respect to the deeper meaning of the death of Jesus. Peter preached a sermon that day, and in it he quoted Psalm 16:10, to show that

Jesus' death and resurrection had been foretold in the Old Testament. Here was the man who only a short time before had tried to prevent the death of Jesus, believing it would thwart the plan of God concerning his Messiahship!

Now, as a result of the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, Peter had experienced the "conversion" which Jesus referred to when, on the night before the crucifixion he said to him, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22:32) This was not a conversion from sin to righteousness, but a conversion from one viewpoint to another. Peter held to the common human viewpoint that only evildoers should suffer, and he knew that Jesus was not an evildoer, so he tried to save his life. Now he knew that the plan of human redemption called for the suffering and death of those counted as righteous in God's sight, and that it was the divine will that the holy and perfect Jesus should voluntarily submit to being put to death by his enemies. What a conversion of understanding this was!

TO A LIVELY HOPE

How disconsolate all the disciples must have been when their Messiah was taken from them and crucified. Not realizing that they were talking to the risen Lord, two of them later said, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed [restored] Israel," the implication being that now they were no longer so sure, that their hopes in him as the Messiah had been dimmed.—Luke 24:21

How wonderful was their hope which centered in Jesus. They saw Israel restored to freedom and

the descendant of David enthroned in Jerusalem. They saw themselves sharing in his glory, for he had promised that those who left all to follow him would, when he sat upon the throne of his glory, also sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matt. 19:28) True, the hope they entertained was an earthly one, but it was glorious. Temporarily that hope was lost when Jesus was crucified.

Their loss of hope was not for long. Later, Peter wrote, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively [living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”—I Pet. 1:3-5

They now understood the fact that they had been “begotten again” to a living hope, and not only that, but to a hope of life which was far grander than they had known anything about when they walked with Jesus in the flesh. They were now begotten to the hope of a heavenly inheritance, which God had foreordained for those who would fully consecrate themselves to him, to be “kept” by his power “through faith unto [the great] salvation.”

Prior to the death of Jesus, when his disciples had labored so faithfully with him throughout Israel, they knew nothing about a heavenly inheritance, but now they did. Initially, they had thought that their reward was at hand, and that they would soon be reigning with Christ. Now they knew that their reward would not be realized until “revealed

in the last time,” even though they doubtless felt that the last time was close at hand.

STRENGTHENING THE BRETHREN

Jesus told Peter that when he was converted he was to strengthen the brethren, and in his first epistle we find him so doing. He begins by pointing out the fact that the sufferings of Christ had been foretold by the prophets through the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter says, “It [the Holy Spirit] testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”—I Pet. 1:11

Later in the epistle, Peter explains that the foot-step followers of Jesus share in these foretold sufferings. He writes, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” (chap. 4:12,13) When one suffers it is a great source of strength to know the reason for it, and here Peter is reminding us that there is the best possible reason for our suffering as Christians. The reason is that it is the divine will, having been foretold by God’s holy prophets.

Again, Peter writes, “What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.” (chap. 2:20,21) Peter was grieved when he saw Jesus suffer for well doing, but

through his conversion he came to understand that this was the divine will for his Master, and that it is now God's will for Jesus' disciples.

We quote Peter again on the subject of Christian suffering: "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." (chap. 3:13,14) We have a good example in Jesus of the principle involved in this exhortation, "Who . . . will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" It is true that cruel suffering was brought upon Jesus. A crown of thorns was placed on his head, and he was hung on a cross until he died. Yet, in reality, he was not harmed. These sufferings merely completed the sacrifice of his humanity—the sacrifice which he had covenanted with his Father to make.

It was as a New Creature that Jesus was not harmed. All that happened to him was that through death and the resurrection he exchanged his cross for a crown. It will be the same way with us if we continue faithfully to lay down our lives following in the Master's footsteps. This is what was meant by Jesus' words to Peter prior to his crucifixion—that one saves his life by voluntarily losing it through sacrifice.

GOD'S CARE

We should truly welcome Peter's admonition, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." (chap. 5:7) God's care of his people is exercised in many ways—through the Holy Spirit, by the guardian angels, through his Word of truth,

and by our association with the brethren. We need all these helps, especially when we are suffering with Christ. When everything is going well, we might be inclined to overlook the need of God's care. We need him all the time, however, in fair weather and in storms. May we never fail to seek the throne of heavenly grace in our every time of need, and also in times of relative calm.

Peter adds that we are to "be sober," and to "be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." (I Pet. 5:8,9) Satan attacks the Lord's people along many lines. Here the apostle seems to be reminding us that his attacks will often come through efforts to discourage us because of our afflictions, and indeed, this is one of Satan's methods.

However, we are to resist these attacks through steadfastness in the faith—the "most holy faith," revealed to us through the Scriptures. It is through the most holy faith that we understand the reason for Christian suffering. If we do not know why we are suffering we are very vulnerable indeed to Satan's endeavors to discourage us. How different it is when we know that we have been called to suffer with Christ—to enter into a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice, and to take up our cross and follow him.

The enlightened Christian who is faithfully laying down his life will not ask why he is suffering. He will rejoice in the fact that he is a partaker of the sufferings of Christ, and will in God's due time

partake of his glory. The enlightened Christian, rejoicing in the most holy faith, will realize that Christ suffered and died as man's Redeemer, and that he has been invited to die with him, to be planted together in the likeness of his death that he might also be in the likeness of his resurrection.

He will know that in the "first resurrection" he will enter into his heavenly inheritance, and have the privilege and honor to be associated with Jesus in the promised blessing of all the families of the earth. He knows that eventually all suffering and death will be destroyed, and the whole earth will be filled with the Lord's glory. For these reasons, he will not allow Satan's roars to frighten him, and will continue to cast all his cares upon the Lord. Let us be continually thankful that Peter, the other disciples, and the Lord's consecrated of this present time have been "converted" to understand these wonderful truths. ■

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 Juliet A. Tommy, Manila, Philippines—May
17. Age, 64

Sister Willa Mylroie Fassett, Olympia, WA—June 5.
Age, 95

Sister Rose Knockaert, Fairview, OR—June 5. Age,
86

Sister Sophia Kosky, Milwaukee, WI—June 24.
Age, 100

Sister Sophie Ryba, Detroit, MI—July 8. Age, 88

Children of the Day

“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”
—*I Thessalonians 5:5,6*

THESE WORDS OF ADMONITION are given in connection with Paul’s prophecy pertaining to events due to take place at the end of the age—the period which he designates “the day of the Lord.” In chapter 5, verses 1 and 2 he explains that during this day of the Lord, the “brethren” would not be in darkness concerning the meaning of events occurring around them. The reason is that they are “the children of light, and the children of the day.”

The children of darkness are those who are unenlightened by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and therefore still under the blinding and darkening influences of the god of this world. Concerning these, Paul wrote, “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the

image of God, should shine unto them.” (II Cor. 4:4) The children of the day are not thus blinded by the Adversary. Concerning these, the apostle wrote, “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.”—vs. 6

It has been important for the brethren in every part of the age to be awake and alert with respect to their relationship with God. In this sense of the word, the faithful of the entire church class have been watchful, taking careful notice of all the directions which the Lord has given concerning the manner in which they could render acceptable service to him. Now that we are living at the end of the age, and thus in the day of the Lord, it is even more important that we watch ourselves, striving to walk as nearly as possible in the footsteps of our great High Priest, our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

We are not only to “watch,” but we are also to be “sober.” This is the opposite of spiritual intoxication, which is a very unhealthy condition for New Creatures in Christ Jesus. We need to be on the alert that we do not become intoxicated with the spirit of the world, or with the love of pleasure, or of money. Especially do we need to be on guard lest we become intoxicated with the love of self. If we are truly awake to our privileges as Christians, and to the times in which we are living, we will realize how very unwise it is to permit earthly pleasures and advantages of any kind to stand in our way of full obedience to the divine will.

The day of the Lord is the time of the Master’s Second Presence, and the fulfillment of many signs

given in the Scriptures indicates that we are now living in this period of the divine plan. We are witnessing the portentous events which will ultimately result in the passing away of this present evil world. Our affections should, more than ever, be set upon the things of God which pertain to the new world, the “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Peter wrote, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”—II Pet. 3:11-13

If we are fully living up to our privileges as children of the day, we will be ordering our lives as though we were actually living in the time when the “Sun of righteousness” (Mal. 4:2), shall have scattered all the mists of satanic darkness, and the laws of the new kingdom are in operation. Admonishing us along this line, Paul wrote that we should walk “as in the day.” (Rom. 13:13) This is a very high standard of conduct set before us.

To be sober, in keeping with Paul’s admonition, means to have the spirit “of a sound mind.” (II Tim. 1:7) This, in turn, means to be guided by God’s Spirit as it reveals the divine will through the written Word. To be guided and controlled by the Spirit of the Lord means that we will be meek and gentle, and that we will have love for God, for our brethren, for all in the world, and even for our enemies. If we are truly watchful and sober, we will have an earnest appreciation of present opportunities and privileges in connection with the Lord’s service. We will not be thoughtlessly negligent, letting opportunities and privileges slip through our hands, afterward to be regretted.

PROVOKING ONE ANOTHER

Proper watchfulness on the part of the consecrated also involves being on the alert to serve the brethren by encouraging them to greater faithfulness and steadfastness or, as Paul states it, provoking them “unto love and to good works.” (Heb. 10:24) Watchfulness along this line is particularly appropriate in the day of the Lord, as is indicated by Paul’s suggestion that we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and “so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”—vs. 25

It is not difficult to discern why the Lord’s people should be especially watchful of their relationship to the Lord during the time of his Second Presence. The present time is spoken of in the Scriptures as “the evil day” (Eph. 6:13; 5:16), even as we see beyond the clouds the dawning rays of light of the coming new day. The evils of today are manifested in many ways. It is a time when strong delusions of false doctrines are being put forth on every hand, even among those professing to be footstep followers of the Master. It is a time when the importance of discerning between the true teachings of the Bible as opposed to the traditions of the past, as well as the falsely-claimed “new light” of the present, is crucial. Never was there a time when a “thus saith the Lord” was more indispensable to the faith structure and guidance of the children of the day than now. Many are the subtle influences today which tend to lead away from the pure truth of God’s Word.

The greatly accelerated tempo of following world events resulting from electronic communication media, has done much to increase the stresses of

business and daily life in general, and has inflicted man with an unprecedented pressure to keep abreast of the times. This has brought a correspondingly greater danger to the Lord's people of being "choked" with the cares of this world, as pointed out in the parable of the sower. (Matt. 13:22) While few of the Lord's people may be in danger of intoxication from the actual possession of riches, yet "the deceitfulness of riches," leading to undue efforts to secure them, is an intoxicating influence in the hearts and lives of all who are not on guard against this worldly allurements.

Perhaps never before has the mere matter of making a living been such a strenuous one. It is a time when we especially need the counteracting influence of the Spirit of God in our lives to offset the pressures of the world and its cares. One of the best means of obtaining and retaining God's Spirit is through association with the Lord's people—the children of the day. We need this communion with one another, and also with the Lord. What rich blessings are received when, by meeting together, we exhort and encourage one another to steadfastness along the lines of the instructions laid down in his Word.

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

In Ephesians 5:18,19, the Apostle Paul again explains the advantages of meeting together with the Lord's people for mutual encouragement. In this passage, he contrasts the blessings thus received with the unrighteous condition of being "drunk with wine," that is, with false doctrines, and selfish, ambitious practices. As an antidote for such a

condition, Paul says, “Be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

Jesus agrees with Paul on the necessity of spiritual soberness and watchfulness on the part of the children of the day. He said, “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”—Luke 21:34-36

Among the things coming to pass during the day of the Lord is the destruction of man’s social order, including the false creeds, traditions, dogmas of men, and denominationalism which is based upon these false teachings. The symbolic fire of the day of the Lord not only destroys man-made opinions and institutions built upon them, but also reveals that which is in harmony with God and that which is opposed to his precepts.

Paul’s lesson on how a Christian should build upon the proper foundation, Christ Jesus, shows that in the day of the Lord it shall be revealed just how one has built. Those who have built with the wood, hay, and stubble of human tradition will have their works destroyed. Those who have built with gold, silver, and precious stones of the divine Word will see their works abide. (I Cor. 3:11-16) These are the ones who will “stand before the Son of man.”—Luke 21:36

The children of the light who are faithfully taking heed to their own standing before the Lord, and also watching the prophecies pertaining to the events at the end of the age, are not in darkness pertaining to the fact of Christ's Second Presence and associated developments. They are not, therefore, blindly and complacently saying, "peace, peace" (Jer. 6:14), so far as man's social order is concerned. For this reason, the destruction that comes upon the whole world is not a surprise to them. These understand the significance of what is occurring, and the necessity for it. As the children of the light, they are sympathetic to the groaning creation, but they do not question the troubles of the world, not even the incidental inconveniences and sufferings that world conditions bring upon them. Instead, and in harmony with Jesus' instructions, they joyfully look up, and lift up their heads, knowing that their deliverance "draweth nigh."—Luke 21:28

THE ARMOR OF GOD

Paul indicates that the matter of being sober includes the necessity of putting on "the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." (I Thess. 5:8) This is in keeping with what he writes as recorded in Ephesians 6:11-18: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." And again: "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done [overcome, *Marginal Translation*] all, to stand." (vs. 13) Putting on the whole armor of God implies a proper use of all aspects of

the truth, in its every relationship to the Christian life.

Certainly we need the whole armor of truth as a protection against the many defiling errors and other evil influences of the present time. We need the truth as “an helmet” of salvation; that is, we need to understand the doctrines, and how they apply to us as Christians. We need to know God, and to be assured that he is caring for us, and causing all our experiences to work together for our good. Without this knowledge, we might well become discouraged and give ear to one or another of Satan’s sophistries designed to lure us away from the light of God’s Word, and into the darkness of human traditions.

We need “the breastplate of righteousness”—the heart application of the Truth as it is centered in Christ Jesus and his blood by which we are justified. How wonderful it is to know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, and that our imperfect works are, through Christ, acceptable to the Heavenly Father.

We need also “the shield of faith.” “This is the victory that overcometh the world,” writes John, “even our faith.” (I John 5:4) We also need the girdle of truth, which symbolizes our consecration to the service of the Lord, the Truth, and the brethren. All the other parts of the armor fail of their purpose if we do not serve the Truth.

We are also to have our feet shod with “the preparation of the gospel of peace.” This indicates that our walk in life as children of the day should be in keeping with our most holy faith. Walking thus, we are promoters of peace and goodwill, rather than of strife and hate.

“The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” is also a very essential part of our armor as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. Possessing the sword of the Spirit suggests a faithful use of the Truth. Not only should we wield it as an influence for good among others, but also in cutting down the evil imaginations, or reasonings (margin), of our own hearts.—II Cor. 10:5

We should ever remember that having on the whole armor of God includes more than possessing a mere head knowledge of the Truth, as represented by the helmet of salvation. This knowledge is important, and we should seek to know the Truth in as much detail as possible. However, this knowledge alone will not protect us against the wiles of the Adversary in this evil day. In addition to knowing the Truth, we need a heart reliance and appreciation of the message, and a realization of the righteousness of God as it is represented in the Truth.

THE LIFE-GIVER

Jesus speaks of himself as being “the light of the world.” (John 8:12) He is that “true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” John wrote. (chap. 1:9) The light of truth, emanating from the Heavenly Father himself, is reflected through Jesus, the living Word of God. By means of this light, the knowledge of God’s glory will soon fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14) To be children of the day means that we are followers of Jesus. As Jesus reflected the light of the Heavenly Father, and because of this was the light of the world, so his

followers, who radiate the light shining from him, are said by Jesus to be the “light of the world.”—Matt. 5:14

This should mean more to us than a mere theory. It should mean an earnest, intelligent effort on our part to learn the Truth and obey it, and also to copy the characteristic qualities of the great Light-giver. This means that as the children of the light we will be faithful in bearing witness to the light, which is the glorious Gospel of the kingdom.

As true followers of the light as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, we will endeavor as far as possible to be like him. We will strive to be like him in meekness, in patience, in gentleness, in forbearance, and in love. Jesus was a servant of all, and we will also endeavor to be faithful in our service of our Heavenly Father, of the brethren, and of all with whom we come into contact.

The true standard of soberness, from the spiritual standpoint, is represented in the Master. We see it in his temperance and moderation in all things, and in his complete devotion to his Father. As children of the day, we will endeavor to walk as faithfully as possible in the footsteps of the Day Star who, in this time of his Second Presence, has arisen in the hearts of the faithful watchers.—II Pet. 1:19

PROPHECIES AND EVENTS

It is also important to watch the developments of God’s plan, as we see them taking place through the fulfillment of prophecy. It is through our watching the fulfillment of prophecy in the events of the world and the church that we are able to know that

the day of the Lord is at hand. Failure to watch along this line might well make the difference between our being the children of the day and the children of the darkness.

To know that we are living in the days of the presence of the Son of man is in itself inspiring knowledge. What great joy has been brought into the hearts of thousands in learning of the Bridegroom's presence, realizing that he has come and has been conducting the harvest work foretold to be done at the end of the age. This knowledge, however, is intended to be more than an inspiration. It is given to the consecrated children of the day as a guide to the manner in which they are to serve the Lord.

To know that Christ is present, and that the harvest continues to progress, reveals the privilege of the consecrated to join in that work. It means that in their service of the Lord they are cooperating with him intelligently, showing themselves approved by him because of their faithfulness in "rightly dividing the word of truth."—II Tim. 2:15

Faithfulness as watchers, however, does not imply the necessity of seeing in advance all the details of those things which are to happen with regard to the religious, economic, social, and political systems of this present evil world. The increasing light of the new day does not reveal the exact details in advance as to just how these systems are to fall. However, we know that the prophecies of God's Word contain all the information along this line which we need to enable us to be faithful children of the day. We know also that as these

prophecies continue to be fulfilled we can discern more details of their meaning. This is God's loving provision for the daily renewal of our full assurance of faith and of hope—so let us continue to be faithful watchers.

It would not be an evidence of soberness on our part should we attempt to change our role in the plan of God from watchers to prophets. We believe that the Master is present. We believe that the Gentile “kings have had their day.” We see the deterioration of Satan's evil order continuing to take place. We see natural Israel re-established as a nation in its own land. We recognize the futility of all human efforts to straighten out the tangled affairs of a dying world. These things we believe, in accord with the evidences of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy as seen through the events of this harvest period of the Gospel Age. May the understanding of them continue to stimulate us to even greater watchfulness and diligence as children of the day.

We know also that it is true now as never before that the time is short in which to make our calling and election sure. The night is indeed far spent, and the new day is at hand. Thus it behooves us more than ever to be on the alert as watchmen. Faithfulness in this is the only way we can be assured of soberness, and of being safeguarded against all the intoxicating influences of this evil day. Let us then be truly faithful, and watch and pray that we may stand before the Son of man, and in due time be exalted to reign with him for the blessing of all the families of the earth. ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

G. Balko

Red Deer, AB August 10-12

C. Chandler

Red Deer, AB August 10-12

J. Freer

Cold Lake, AB August 8

Red Deer, AB 10-12

Prince Albert, SK area 13-20

L. Griehs

Baia Mare, Romania

August 5-10

E. Kalinski

Janesville, WI August 19

H. Montague

Baia Mare, Romania

August 5-10

P. Mora

Red Deer, AB August 10-12

A. Oystryk

Red Deer, AB August 10-12

B. Siwak

Red Deer, AB August 10-12

B. Sweeney

Red Deer, AB August 10-12

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“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

—Romans 14:19

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.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 5-10—North University, Baia Mare, Romania. Contact L. Griehs. Phone: (215) 953-9935 or (267) 688-8617. E-mail: griehs@comcast.net

RED DEER, ALBERTA CONVENTION, August 10-12—Pioneer Lodge, 4324-47th Avenue, Red Deer, AB, Canada. Lodging at the Super 8 Hotel, 4217-50th Avenue, Red Deer, AB. Phone: (403) 358-7722. Contact A. Baumgarten. Phone: (403) 356-0004

OHOBA, NIGERIA CONVENTION, August 25—Contact M. C. Uzor. E-mail: kelechiuzor4u@yahoo.com

JACKSON CONVENTION, September 1,2—Fa-Ho-Lo Camp & Conference Center, 3000 Mount Hope Road, Unit 1, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact V. Lumley, 2531 Ashton Road, Jackson, MI 49203. Phone: (517) 782-7252 or E-mail: lumley@aol.com

NEW YORK CONVENTION, September 1,2—Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ 07430. Deadline for subsidized rate is August 15. For room reservations, contact G. Passios, 245 Grand Avenue, Rutherford, NJ 07070. Phone: (201) 939-3196 or E-mail: gpassios11@verizon.net

SEATTLE CONVENTION, September 1-3—Seabeck Conference Center, 15395 Seabeck Hwy NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (253) 838-3822 or E-mail: laurie@flinn.us

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 7-9—Radisson Inn Huntsville Airport, 8721 Madison Blvd., Madison, AL 35758. Hotel Reservations: (256) 772-8855. Contact K. Getchel. Phone: (256) 660-1566 or E-mail:

biblestudents@gmail.com

CLAY CITY CONVENTION, September 14-16—Canyon Inn, McCormick's Creek State Park, 451 McCormick Creek Park Road, Spencer, IN 47460. Cut-off date for reservations is August 14. Contact S. Clark, 7861 Clearwater Parkway, Indianapolis, IN 46240. Phone: (317) 578-2634

COLORADO CONVENTION, September 15,16—DoubleTree by Hilton Denver, 3203 Quebec Street, Denver, CO 80207. Contact L. Turner. Phone: (303) 278-4091 or E-mail: twink94@comcast.net

COLUMBUS, INDIANA OLDE TIME HARVEST CONVENTION, September 22,23—D. Ledwinka Farm, 10004 E. 550 N., Columbus, IN 47203. Contact G. Davis. Phone: (812) 372-7165

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, September 30—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91504. Contact J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 982-7253 or E-mail: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com

LAGOS, NIGERIA CONVENTION, October 6—Ejigbo, Lagos State, Nigeria. Contact C. M. Oledibe, #29 Morning Star Church Street, Ejigbo, Lagos, Nigeria. E-mail: oledibe@yahoo.com

PITTSBURGH CONVENTION, October 6,7—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact G. Balko. Phone: (724) 771-0139 Or contact L. Mlinek. Phone: (724) 689-8733

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 13,14—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact J. Houlmont. Phone: (231) 972-4259 or E-mail: ljhoulmont@charter.net

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 20,21—Masonic Temple, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. Contact M. Allard. Phone: (805) 773-2963