

The DAWN

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His Final Days

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

—John 17:4

WHAT WILL A PERSON DO

if he knows that he has only a few days to live? Each one's answer to this question depends to a large extent upon his general outlook on life and on what his understanding of the hereafter may be. An atheist who, even in the face of certain death, continues to believe that the moment of death is the end of everything, might easily decide that in his last few days of existence he should obtain as much enjoyment as possible. Hence he will likely spend those days in revelry. One who adheres to the false teaching of the Dark Ages concerning the doctrine of eternal torment for the wicked will probably do all he can to make sure he escapes such a horrible fate at death. A faithful footstep follower of the Master, however, having no dread of death, simply desires to make sure that nothing is left undone in his life concerning his covenant to do the Heavenly Father's will. This was the attitude of Jesus, and he is our perfect example.

It is not given to many of the Lord's consecrated people to know specifically when they will finish their course of self-sacrifice. Therefore, it behooves

all of us to live each day as though it were the last. We should zealously make use of each opportunity of service, and courageously accept and discharge every responsibility which God's providence may place upon us. Paul wrote, "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

Jesus did know when he had reached the final days of his earthly ministry. He knew the prophecy of Daniel which foretold that the Messiah would be "cut off" following the sixty-ninth symbolic week from the time a decree had been issued authorizing the Jewish exiles to return from Babylon to "restore and . . . build Jerusalem." (Dan. 9:25,26) He knew, furthermore, that it would be in the "midst" of the seventieth week of the prophecy that his "sacrifice and . . . oblation," or offering, would "cease." (vs. 27) Jesus understood that the middle of the seventieth week would fall at the Jews' Passover season in the spring of the year. Most importantly, he was aware that he was the antitypical Passover "Lamb of God," and that it was the Father's will for him to die for the "sin of the world" on the date appointed for the slaying of the typical Passover lamb, which was the 14th day of Israel's first religious month.—John 1:29; Exod. 12:1-14

For clarification, we note that this year, most in the Christian world kept a special remembrance of Jesus' death on Good Friday, March 25th. Indeed, it was proper on that day to keep in mind the death of our precious Redeemer, as it would be on any day of the year. However, in the Jewish calendar reckoning, the 14th day of the first month in 2016

is the twenty-four hour period beginning after sundown on Thursday, April 21st. This day will correspond to the slaying of Israel's typical Passover lamb, but most importantly, to the anniversary of Jesus' death as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8) Thus, we see the appropriateness of presently considering the final days of the Master's earthly life.

Since it is apparent that Jesus knew the exact day he was to die, it is both enlightening and inspiring to observe how he conducted himself during those last few days, and what his chief concern was. Our opening text beautifully summarizes his viewpoint: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Throughout the Master's ministry his great objective was to glorify his Heavenly Father. He knew that the only way to accomplish this was by faithfully doing the work which had been assigned to him by his Father.

Having been faithful to his Heavenly Father throughout his ministry, when the Master came within a few days of the end of that faithful service there was no need for him to change his course of action. To be fully faithful, even unto death, it was necessary that he continue in the same course he had been following, and that he keep doing the things he had been doing. It is in this that we see the perfect example of Jesus' life. From the inception of his ministry, Jesus "went about doing good," unselfishly using his time, his strength, and his talents for the blessing of others, and in this way glorifying his Heavenly Father.—Acts 10:38

JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM

The last days of the Master's earthly ministry were crowded with activity, beginning with his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and being acclaimed King of the Jews. In all that he did Jesus was very careful to conform to the instructions which had been recorded for him in the Old Testament scriptures. Earlier in his ministry, he noted that a large group of sympathizers desired to take him by force and make him king, but he did not permit it at that time. (John 6:15) Now, however, he recognized that the time had come when a certain prophecy of the Old Testament had to be fulfilled. He gave his disciples instructions to procure an ass, and in keeping with that prophecy, rode through the gates into the city, being enthusiastically hailed king by a multitude.—Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-38; John 12:12-15

Jesus' enemies objected to the loud commotion and asked him to have it stopped. In reply, he explained that if the people did not shout, the very stones of the Temple would cry out. (Luke 19:39,40) What great faith was thus manifested! Jesus knew that he would not then actually be made king. This show of honor, while enthusiastic for the moment, was not born of deep-rooted conviction in most cases. Indeed, not many days hence "all the people . . . said, His blood be on us, and on our children." (Matt. 27:25) Nevertheless, the Master understood that the apparent triumph as he entered Jerusalem was one of the experiences through which he was to pass, and a necessary part of the Father's arrangements for him. Jesus was so confident of this, and so sure that not a single detail of prophecy should

go unfulfilled, that if necessary, the stones would cry out to acclaim him king.

There is a lesson in this for all who endeavor to follow the example of Jesus. If we are faithfully proclaiming the Truth as the Master did, and in connection with this service manifest the same spirit of sympathy and kindness toward those to whom we minister, we may at times have a considerable measure of appreciation shown us. We may to some extent, and temporarily, be honored. However, we should not allow such experiences to divert our minds and hearts from the course of sacrifice for which our covenant with the Lord calls. We should remember that if today some may honor us, tomorrow the Lord may permit that we experience prejudice and opposition.

It was thus with Jesus, although he could have had it otherwise had he chosen to follow a course less faithful to his Heavenly Father. Present exaltation is a test to the consecrated, and especially when viewed in contrast with dishonor, shame, suffering, and death. This test came to Jesus just before it was time for him to be arrested and put to death. He possessed a marvelous personality, and great persuasive abilities. Thus, even at this late date, although his enemies were already plotting to kill him, if he had swerved from his course of loyalty to God and agreed to work with them, he could have become a prominent leader in Israel. Worldly acclaim always presents a temptation to please men in order that more honor might be attained, but Jesus did not yield to this temptation.

After riding into Jerusalem in such kingly style and receiving the enthusiastic plaudits of so many

people, Jesus went to the Temple. There he performed an act which increased the antagonism of his enemies—he drove out the moneychangers from the Temple. In connection with this, he denounced those responsible for having turned God's house of prayer into a den of thieves. (Matt. 21:12,13; Luke 19:45,46) Jesus then began to teach in the Temple, and although the religious leaders "sought to destroy him," they could not find an opportunity, "for all the people were very attentive to hear him."—Luke 19:47,48

DOING GOOD

While in the Temple on this occasion, the blind and lame came to Jesus and "he healed them." (Matt. 21:14) For more than three years he had been healing the blind and lame, so this was no new experience. However, it emphasizes that although Jesus knew he had but a few days to live, he was still willing to use his time and strength to help others. He took joy in extending to them the blessings which, although only temporary now, his death would make available permanently for all mankind when he actually became king of the whole earth. Jesus did not feel that he had a right to devote even those few remaining days of his life to his own interests. He was still to do his Father's work and thus to glorify him.

Jesus' service at no time was an obligatory one based on merely duty. He truly loved the people, and worked tirelessly to help them to the very end. His interest and zeal were genuine, and could not have been more even if he had expected to convert all Israel, or the entire world, at that time. This is

evidenced by the fact that earlier in the day, as he rode into Jerusalem, he looked out over the city and wept, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."—Luke 19:41,42

As the eventful day drew to a close, Jesus knew that his enemies were in Jerusalem seeking the first favorable opportunity to seize him. He was not afraid of this, but the exact day in his Father's plan for him to die had not yet come, so he did not risk remaining in the city overnight. Instead, he and his twelve disciples went to Bethany and there spent the night. (Mark 11:11) None of the Gospel accounts inform us where in Bethany Jesus and his disciples stayed that night, but it may have been at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. It is evident that they were entertained by these special friends the night before, which was stated to be six days before the Passover. (John 12:1,2) We recall it was on that occasion that Mary anointed Jesus' feet with the costly ointment and wiped them with her hair.—vs. 3

BACK IN THE TEMPLE

The next morning, Jesus and the twelve returned to the Temple in Jerusalem. On the way, Jesus saw a fig tree which had leaves, but no fruit. He spoke to the tree, saying, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward," and the "fig tree withered away." (Matt. 21:18,19) Jesus spoke to the fig tree not because he was angry with it, but because he knew that in Scripture it is symbolic of the nation of Israel. (Jer. 24:1-7) The fig tree he passed "in the way,"

having no fruit on it, represented Israel's condition at that time—their unfruitfulness and rejection of him, which would soon result in their being cast off and withering as a nation. We recall that later, Jesus gave as one of the signs of his return and Second Presence, the budding of a fig tree—picturing a return of favor to Israel, and finally their acceptance of him as their Messiah.—Matt. 24:32

Arriving at the Temple, Jesus again started to teach. Shortly after he began, “the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him,” and demanded to know by what authority he was doing “these things,” referring evidently to his teaching and to his driving out the moneychangers the previous day. (chap. 21:23) From here to the end of chapter 22, the Master provides a notable array of instructions, directed mostly to the Jews' religious rulers who had come to question him.

Let us again recall that Jesus knew he had but a few days to live, yet we find him continuing to let his light shine, witnessing to those to whom he had little hope of being a real blessing at that time. However, his Father had given him a mission, and he was determined to be faithful to it. In addressing these religious leaders who had rejected him and plotted to kill him, Jesus took occasion to point out the exact position in which they stood as opposers of God's plan.

It is in this discourse that Jesus gives the parable of the two sons. One of these, when asked to work in his father's vineyard, refused, but later repented and went to work. The other agreed at first to work, but failed to live up to his agreement. The chief priests and elders agreed that the son

who at first refused and later repented was the one pleasing to his father. Then Jesus applied the parable, telling them that publicans and harlots—represented by the son who repented—would go into the kingdom of God before they would. Their position, he explained, was that of the son who agreed to serve, then failed to do so. Only those who do the will of the Heavenly Father—not merely make profession—shall enter into the kingdom.—Matt. 21:28-32

Jesus followed with the parable of the householder, who “planted a vineyard.” (vss. 33-41) In the Old Testament, we are told that the “vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel.” (Isa. 5:7) In the parable, Jesus said that the householder closed in the vineyard, dug a winepress in it, and built a tower for its protection. The householder then entrusted its care to husbandmen, while he went to a far country. Later, the householder sent his servants to gather fruit from the vineyard, but the husbandmen “beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.” Then he sent more servants, but “they did unto them likewise.” Finally, the son of the householder was sent, but the husbandmen killed him also, hoping that they could thus inherit the vineyard. Jesus explained that when the householder came to the vineyard he would “miserably destroy” those husbandmen who had been so unfaithful to him.

After giving these two parables, Jesus asked the chief priests and the elders if they had read in the Scriptures about the “stone which the builders rejected” that would become the “head of the corner.” He explained that those who “fall on this

stone shall be broken,” and those upon whom the stone “shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” (Matt. 21:42-44; Ps. 118:22,23) The lesson in this illustration was that the kingdom of God would be taken from these religious rulers who, until now, were recognized by him, and be given to “a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” This would be the “royal priesthood” and “holy nation” later described by Peter.—I Pet. 2:9,10

This was not a personal denunciation of the Jews’ religious rulers, for Jesus had no bitterness in his heart toward them. It was simply a plain statement of fact, and a witness to them of their wrong course and its certain result. When they “heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.” However, their hearts were not softened. Rather, they would have immediately seized the Master, but they saw that the crowd was sympathetic toward him, so they held back, waiting for a more favorable opportunity.—Matt. 21:45,46

Jesus did not fear those who were now his enemies. His life was in the hands of his Father, so he continued with another parable. A king made a marriage feast for his son, but the invited guests would not attend. Then servants were sent out “into the highways” to find others to fill the vacancies. (chap. 22:1-10) Thus, the religious leaders were again reminded that because of their unfaithfulness, others would take their places at the “marriage supper” of the King of kings.—Rev. 19:7-9

Not daring to lay hands on Jesus while the majority of his audience was friendly, his enemies sought to entrap him by “catch questions.” By so doing, they desired to reveal their own superior

wisdom, and possibly show that Jesus was not a safe teacher. This, they doubtless hoped, would turn the people against him, allowing them their long awaited chance to seize him. In this also they failed, to the extent that they “left him, and went their way.”—Matt. 22:15-22

Later that same day, the Sadducees came to Jesus with a question based on their disbelief in the resurrection of the dead. They propounded to the Master what they thought was an ironclad argument to prove that there could not be a resurrection, because it would result in chaos among the human race. The hypothetical question was about a woman who had seven husbands in this life. “In the resurrection whose wife shall she be?” Again, the wisdom of this world failed, for when the people heard the Master’s answer, “they were astonished at his doctrine.”—vss. 23-33

A GENERAL WITNESS

In Matthew, chapter 23, four days before his death, is recorded a message which Jesus gave to “the multitude, and to his disciples.” The religious rulers still sat “in Moses’ seat” as the representatives of God on behalf of the nation. Jesus therefore admonished his hearers to obey these rulers—that is, “observe” their teachings of righteousness, but do not follow their “works” of unrighteousness.—vss. 1-3

Jesus made it very plain in this chapter that “woe”—an exclamation of grief—would ultimately come upon these “blind guides.” (vss. 13-35) They were to be punished, as well as the whole nation, and this would not be in the dim and distant future.

He said that this woe “shall come upon this generation.” (vs. 36) Then Jesus gave that momentous, fateful decree to Israel, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. . . . Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”—vss. 37-39

PROPHECY OF HIS SECOND PRESENCE

Jesus was about to leave the unbelieving nation of Israel, not for eternity, but until the time when they would be ready to accept him as the Messiah, sent of God. The rulers were plotting to kill him, but Jesus recognized in this that his Father’s time for him to “finish the work” assigned to him was fast coming to an end. While he had uncompromisingly pointed out the sins of Israel’s religious leaders, he rejoiced that although they were about to kill him, the time would come when he could bless them.

With this assurance of blessings to come, Jesus and his disciples left the Temple. His work of witnessing to Israel was finished. He now wanted an opportunity to instruct and encourage his own. He told his disciples that the Temple would be destroyed—“There shall not be left here one stone upon another.” Retiring to the mount of Olives, the disciples came to him “privately” inquiring, “When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming [Greek: *parousia*, meaning presence], and of the end of the world [Greek: *aion*, meaning age]?”—Matt. 24:1-3

They had just heard Jesus tell the people that they would see him no more until he came again. He had told them that the Temple would be destroyed, so they were anxious to know more about these

events. When will these things be, and how will we know when you return? It was in response to these questions that our Lord's great prophecy pertaining to the ensuing age and his return near its close was given. Previously he had said little on this subject, for it would have been untimely. Not having the Holy Spirit, the disciples had difficulty in grasping much that Jesus said to them. Had they, prior to this, been confronted with the fact that his kingdom was not then to be established, and that there was to be an intervening age during which he would be away from them, they would have been confused and disheartened.

Now, however, truths which previously may have injured them were necessary for their encouragement. They had learned from the Master's own lips that the Temple was to be destroyed, and that he was going away, and would come again. This upset their calculations as to when he would be enthroned as king and they would be reigning with him. It told them that his acclamation as king the day before was not to be ratified by the Romans, nor meet with the approval of Israel's religious rulers. If the disciples' faith in Jesus as the Messiah was to be maintained, they needed to know more about his going away and returning again.

Still not begotten of the Holy Spirit, however, it is doubtful that the disciples grasped the real meaning of what Jesus told them in answer to their questions. In God's providence, nevertheless, these circumstances afforded the Master an excellent opportunity to outline an impressive array of events which would serve as signposts to his people when the due time would come for them to see and

understand these things. (Matt. 24:4-51) His prophecy, moreover, has served to lead those who “watch” to a proper harmonizing of his words with those of Old Testament forecasts. By this means, and later through the writings of the apostles, the “spirit of prophecy” has guided the Lord’s consecrated people throughout the night until “the day dawn, and the day star” has arisen in their hearts.—Rev. 19:10; II Pet. 1:19

The outlining of these dispensational truths was a part of the work which the Heavenly Father had given the Master to do, and while death was near, he was more concerned with completing this work than with the suffering he knew would be involved in consummating his sacrifice. Jesus could have given the disciples a much shorter answer to their questions, but he went beyond what they asked. He outlined the work of the Messianic Age, that portion of his Second Presence which would follow the calamitous world events which would constitute some of the first signs of his invisible return.

If we knew that we had only a few days to live, we would probably be so concerned with ourselves that we might give little thought to helping others by informing them of events far in the future. Jesus, however, not only preached a marvelous sermon of prophetic forecast, but having shown that Satan’s world would be destroyed as a result of his Second Presence, he revealed that this would be followed by a new world order. In the parable of the sheep and the goats, he describes a time during which “all nations” will be given an opportunity to return to God and “inherit the kingdom prepared” for them “from the foundation of the world.”—Matt. 25:31-34

FINAL MESSAGE TO THE DISCIPLES

Jesus was with his specially chosen disciples the final evening before his death. A portion of that time was spent in the “upper room.” We refer our readers to the two-part article, “The Upper Room Experience,” found in the current and prior month’s issue of *The Dawn*, for a detailed consideration of those vitally important events.

After departing the upper room, as they walked toward Gethsemane, Jesus gave his final message to the disciples—recorded in John, chapters 14-16—knowing that in only a few hours he would be taken from their midst. How precious were those things which he said! “Let not your heart be troubled.” “I go to prepare a place for you . . . ; that where I am, there ye may be also.” “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.” “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” “The Father . . . shall give you another Comforter, . . . even the Spirit of truth.” “He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.”—chap. 14

“I am the vine, ye are the branches. . . . Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” “These things have I spoken unto you, . . . that your joy might be full.” “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.” “These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.” “The Spirit of truth . . . will guide you into all truth.” “Your heart shall rejoice, and your

joy no man taketh from you.” “The Father himself loveth you.” “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”—chaps. 15,16

THE WORK FINISHED

John’s Gospel then records the wonderful prayer which Jesus uttered as they neared Gethsemane. (chap. 17) The work the Father had given him to do was now finished, and through it all he had glorified his Father. How fitting that at the conclusion of his work he should invoke his Father’s blessing upon those who would represent him after he had gone. Jesus was concerned about his disciples, so he prayed that they “may be one” as he and the Father were “one”—in purpose and desire. He prayed that God might “sanctify them” by the Truth, and that they might realize that the Father loved them even as he loved him.—vss. 22,17

In his prayer, Jesus also did not forget the world. He extended his petition to the ultimate purpose of the redemption work—“that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” (vs. 21) It was after Jesus had spoken these words of comfort to the eleven, and of prayer to his Father, that “he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron” and entered Gethsemane, where he was betrayed by Judas, and arrested.—chap.18:1-12

For Jesus, the “night . . . , when no man can work,” had begun. (John 9:4) He would now bear the mental and physical suffering which his enemies would heap upon him. He was fully satisfied to endure whatever would glorify his Father—“Not my will, but thine

be done.” (Luke 22:42) His work was finished, but still he did not hide the light of truth. When asked by Pilate if he were a king, Jesus replied, “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world,” explaining, nevertheless, that his kingdom was “not of this world.”—John 18:36,37

As Jesus was hanging on the cross in agonizing pain, one of the thieves requested to be remembered in his kingdom. Jesus gave yet another witness, saying to the thief, even on that dark day of ignominy and death, “Thou shalt be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:39-43) He knew that although he was being crucified by his enemies, he would be raised from the dead and exalted to be King over all the earth. The result of his reign would be the restoration of paradise, and the thief, as well as all mankind, would be there. They would be given an opportunity to believe on him, obey the laws of his kingdom, and live forever. Knowing all this, Jesus was glad to use his fast-ebbing strength to say so, speaking in full harmony with Peter’s words which would be spoken just a few weeks hence concerning “the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”—Acts 3:20,21

In his final moments, Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46) Actually, this was a quotation from Psalm 22. It may have been through meditation on the prayer recorded in the remainder of this psalm, in which mention is made of other incidents that Jesus saw taking place before him, that his faith lifted him out of this moment of despair. Fully confident in his last, dying breath, he said, “It is finished”—

wholly finished—"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," my life.—John 19:30; Luke 23:46

Jesus is our great pattern. While none of us today is able to know just when we may enter our final days, it is believed among most truth-enlightened Christians that the time is short—perhaps shorter than we think. How are we using our time? Are we thinking of self, and of how we can be sure of our own position in the kingdom? Are we content, rather, to leave that in the hands of our Heavenly Father while we, like Jesus, redouble our efforts to do the works of him who has called us?

Remembering how Jesus gave his strength to serve his disciples because he loved them, are we loving our brethren as he loved us? Are we laying down our lives for them, as he did for us? These are sobering questions which all consecrated believers should ponder carefully and prayerfully during this season, when shortly we will memorialize the death of the Lamb of God. Let us consider him, follow him, and die with him—believing his promise that if we are faithful unto death we shall receive from him the "crown of life."—Rev. 2:10 ■

*"So then, brethren,
consecrated and set apart for God,
who share in the heavenly calling,
thoughtfully and attentively
consider Jesus,
the Apostle and High Priest
whom we confessed as ours
when we embraced the Christian faith."
—Hebrews 3:1, Amplified Bible*

Healing a Servant

Key Verse: *“When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”*
—Luke 7:9

Selected Scripture:
Luke 7:1-10

IN TODAY’S LESSON, THE blessed quality of faith is epitomized. A Roman centurion, a foreigner to the Jewish people, had come to love them and their great God. His goodwill was marked by a generous gift, a synagogue he built for the Jews of Capernaum. His sincerity was also intimated by reaching out to a Jew for help in a dire time of need. His beloved servant was sick unto death. A man of great means, the centurion could have his choice of the best physicians money could hire. He wisely chose to seek the help of

The Great Physician—Jesus.

The centurion’s humility and faith are beautifully portrayed in this portion of Scripture. It may be inferred that this man, who commanded respect and wielded great authority, would expect Jesus to come to him. Instead, he sent messengers saying, “Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof.” (Luke 7:6) These words convey a tremendous meekness of spirit.

This centurion understood well the exercise of authority and obedience to it. In his profession he took orders as well as gave them, knowing how the chain of command worked. His instructions to those under him

were doubtless followed by prompt obedience. By faith, the centurion knew Jesus also was one “set under authority”—that whatever he commanded would be done—and if Jesus would merely “say in a word,” his servant would be healed.—vss. 7,8

We learn from Matthew’s account that the centurion personally came to Jesus. (Matt. 8:5-13) Reflecting on that meeting, we see standing together the Savior of mankind and this noble soldier, epitomizing the beauties of faith, obedience, and godly authority. The centurion’s words are powerful: “Just say the word, and my servant will be healed. I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.” (vss. 8,9, *New American Standard Bible*) This is a beautiful lesson for us who now believe. By faith we recognize Jesus’ authority in our lives, and we are to render humble obedience to him.

As stated in our Key Verse, Jesus had not yet met one with such faith as this man in all of Israel. Jesus marveled at how pure, simple, and strong his belief was. Indeed, faith in Christ yields to his authority, and daily obedience to godly principles is a means of grace to us. By this we give true honor to our Lord and grow in the fruits of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22,23) Thus, faith and obedience bring us great spiritual riches in the manifestation of the glorious likeness of Christ within us. Apostle Paul spoke of this as building on the foundation of Christ. We build with “gold, silver, precious stones,” symbols of the word and Spirit of God.—I Cor. 3:11,12

If our Lord would exercise his power to heal a man’s servant, unknown to him, how much more will he exercise his power to heal the hearts and provide for those who are known to him. We do not seek physical healing, but healing of our spirits. In so doing, let our hearts trust him in all things, as the centurion said, “Just say the word,” and it shall be done. ■

Forgiving a Sinner

Key Verse:
***“Wherefore I say
unto thee, Her sins,
which are many,
are forgiven; for
she loved much:
but to whom little
is forgiven, the
same loveth little.”***
—Luke 7:47

Selected Scripture:
Luke 7:36-50

THE PARABLE CONTAINED

in our lesson should resonate deeply in the hearts of earnest Christians as they realize how much they have been forgiven. In the setting, we find that Jesus had been invited to the house of Simon, a Pharisee, for dinner. (Luke 7:36) Simon may have thought he was doing Jesus a great honor to invite him into his home. This is suggested by the fact that, as the host, he did

not offer customary courtesies like washing Jesus’ feet, giving an embrace of welcome, or providing oil of anointing. Having a high station in life, the Pharisee may have excused himself from these customs, thinking that he was above such obligations.

An uninvited guest, a woman considered a social and religious outcast, took advantage of the opportunity Simon had ignored. Though looked down upon with contempt and judgmental words, her act of love and gratitude has been memorialized for the ages. She is addressed by no name, to respect her anonymity—being only referred to as “a sinner.”—vss. 37-39

This woman was deeply sorrowful for her sins. She realized that, by Jesus, she could find blessed relief from her soul’s aching. Sensing that he could bring healing to her troubled heart, she entered the feast uninvited. As

she approached Jesus, everyone could see that she was holding an alabaster box. It contained sweet perfume to anoint the Savior. She regarded that which the Pharisee neglected to see.

In his contempt, Simon's words as he "spake within himself" are troubling in their arrogance: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner." (vs. 39) He could scarcely have been more wrong about the situation. Reading the thoughts in Simon's heart, Jesus turned to the woman. Her tears poured out upon his feet, and her hair served to wipe them clean. From her heart she had anointed him with perfume. The blessed moment was nearly broken by the Pharisee's unkind thoughts, but our Lord had mastery of the situation, offering a lesson by parable. He asked who would love a lender more—one who was forgiven a fifty denarii debt, or one who was forgiven five hundred denarii.—vss. 41,42, *New American Standard Bible*

Seeing the obvious logic in Jesus' lesson, Simon was quick to answer, saying, "he, to whom he forgave most." (vs. 43) Although he saw the rationale, he appeared blind to the lesson's personal relevance. We can gain insights from this. The more spiritually mature we become in Christ, the more we realize how fallen we are. The Apostle Paul pointed out this fact in his Epistle to the Romans: "The good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:19,24 NASB) The answer to his question is "Jesus Christ our Lord."—vs. 25

Applying the lesson of our Key Verse, let us love our Lord much, that we may be forgiven much. Let us also love others, being merciful and forgiving despite their weaknesses and shortcomings. May we never be blind to our need of forgiveness. If we practice these things, Jesus may be heard in our hearts saying, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."—Luke 7:50 ■

A Sound Mind

Key Verse: *“Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.”*
—Luke 8:35

Selected Scripture:
Luke 8:26-36

THE SCENE DESCRIBED IN our Key Verse is the aftermath of Jesus’ casting demons out of a man into a herd of swine. (Luke 8:27-35) The swine immediately ran down a steep slope, plunged into a lake, and drowned. At the report of the herdsmen, the people of the town came to see what had happened. They did not know Jesus, but they knew the demon-possessed man. He had terrorized them for a long time—a wild lunatic. Attempts to restrain him were futile, and bonds or chains placed upon him were broken

in short order. He was a menace to the community.

As Jesus made landfall in a boat, the demons in this poor man led him to approach the Lord. “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.” Jesus asked the demon, “What is thy name?” “Legion” was the answer, because “many devils were entered into him.” (vss. 28,30) At their request, Jesus permitted them to enter into a herd of swine, with the result that the swine ran madly into the lake and perished.—vss. 32,33

Our Key Verse states that as the townfolk approached, they saw their tormentor—the demon possessed one—sitting at the feet of Jesus. He was clothed and in his

right mind, speaking rationally with Jesus. The people were frightened by these things. Instead of rejoicing at the great miracle Jesus had performed, in their fear they asked him to leave.—vss. 35-37

The fact that the healed man was now clothed may express, in picture, the blessed clothing that we have received of the Lord. We once were naked and unrighteous before God in our sinful state. However, now we say, “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.”—Isa. 61:10

We empathize with the one who was possessed, remembering too that fears once tormented us. With gratitude we treasure the blessed haven afforded us in spending time communing with Jesus. As the Apostle John tells us, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (I John 1:3) People often speak of their personal “demons.” They are referring to fears, prejudices, hatred, malice, greed, desires—those dark and ugly attributes of their sinful nature. There is likely much truth to such a realization of one’s fallen condition.

As Christians, however, we are grateful that “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (II Tim. 1:7) The spirit of a sound mind directly reflects the transforming power of faith in Christ. Apostle Paul expressed this well in his admonition, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Rom. 12:2, *New American Standard Bible*) Our soundness of mind enables us to put the will of God to the proof and come to the profound understanding that his will is “good and acceptable and perfect” in all of life’s experiences. We rejoice that we may leave the madness of this world behind, and, through Christ, obtain a sound mind. ■

A Blessed Reunion

Key Verse: *“This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”*
—Luke 15:24

Selected Scripture:
Luke 15:11-24

“The Parable of the Merciful and Loving Father.” Clearly the father in this story is meant to symbolically represent God. Most importantly, it speaks with power to the fact that God is love.

For those who have a desire to turn from the ways of sin and be received back into the family of God, perhaps no other parable has been so helpful in illuminating his love and the desire to accept them. The poor and needy, the sinful and the weak, see their own picture in this parable. They are encouraged by its representation of the Father as all-loving. He is willing to receive them, but additionally is watching and waiting for any sign of return so that he may meet and welcome the repentant one.

This image of God is in stark contrast to the thought generally held about him. Our Heavenly Father’s character has been so misrepresented by erroneous creeds that most people fear him. Being fearful, they expect no warm and loving reception from him. The fact that the father in this parable was watching and waiting for his wayward

THE PASSAGE FROM which our Key Verse and Selected Scripture is taken is the parable of the prodigal son. It is so named because of the son’s prodigious—or immense—appetite for earthly pleasures and wasteful spending. While this is so, the parable might with equal validity be titled,

son, and even ran out to meet him, is a powerful testimony to the caring and loving nature of God. As the proper understanding of God's character reaches those who are spiritually poor and depraved, they receive hope. This parable and other scriptures give assurance that the statement, "God is love," is genuine. (I John 4:16, *New American Standard Bible*) The hope thus imparted has led sincere believers during this Gospel Age to a full return and surrender to the "God of all grace."—I Pet. 5:10

In the parable, the prodigal son is represented as finally coming to his senses. He awakens to a realization of his dire need and the fact that his father has abundant wealth. His father would likely be willing to let him have a share in the blessings which he no longer deserved, even if it was to live as a servant. His expression, "I will arise and go to my father," represents what should be the attitude of all who are repentant. (Luke 11:18) The nature of their attitude should be one of reliance upon the love and mercy of the Heavenly Father.

Indeed, we have perceived our neediness, and the abundant provision which God has made in Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins. Being thus forgiven, we have been welcomed to his love and care—returning to his fold—in harmony with the one from whom all blessings flow. The joy of sweet reconciliation with God is made clear in today's parable lesson.

In addition, as Christians, we have a ministry of reconciliation entrusted to us. "All things are from God, the One having reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and having given to us the ministry of reconciliation. . . . On behalf of Christ, we are ambassadors, as God is exhorting through us, we beseech on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God." (II Cor. 5:18,20, *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*) As Christ's ambassadors, we are charged with promoting the word of reconciliation, beseeching the fallen human family to return to God—a blessed reunion! ■

The Upper Room Experience

Perspectives of the Four Gospel Writers

“When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”

—John 13:1

THE VARIOUS INCIDENTS

which took place in the upper room the night before Jesus’ death were recorded by all four Gospel writers, though they did not all note the same details. Part 1 of this article, which appeared in last month’s issue, dealt with those experiences chronicled in the accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as Jesus and his twelve chosen apostles gathered together that evening. In Part 2 of this article, we will consider the record provided by the Apostle John in his Gospel.

John’s account of the upper room experience is found in the verses which follow our opening text. (John 13:2-35) Like Matthew, John was present on this occasion, being one of the twelve. His narrative is strikingly different, however, from that of

Matthew, as well as those of Mark and Luke. John seemed to have a much different perspective than the other Gospel writers, which gives reason for us to briefly examine why this was so.

UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE

John's unique perspective of Jesus' life, including the upper room experience, can be largely attributed to the time at which he wrote his account, which was evidently much later than the other three Gospel writers. As mentioned in Part 1 of this article, the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke were probably written in a range of years from approximately AD 40 to 65, and all prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

In the book of Revelation, which John also wrote, he states that he was on the "isle that is called Patmos" when he received this special vision from the risen Lord. (Rev. 1:9) Many religious and secular scholars believe that John was exiled to Patmos by the Roman emperor Domitian around AD 95. This means he would have recorded the vision of Revelation sometime after that. It was probably shortly thereafter, however, because by this time, John was possibly 90 years of age or more. We also note that, because of similarities in style as well as in some of the wording in the closing verses of both books, Revelation and the Gospel of John were apparently written close to the same time. (John 21:22-24; Rev. 22:18-20) Based on all these factors, most authorities place the writing of John's Gospel between AD 95 and AD 100.

If, as seems to be the case, John penned his Gospel record in the closing years of the first century, this

was well over sixty years after the close of Jesus' earthly ministry. It was also thirty to sixty years later than the writing of the other three Gospels, and at least twenty-five years after Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. It is, therefore, easy to understand that, from his much later vantage point, John's perspective of things was somewhat different from those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

At the time he wrote, John was undoubtedly the last living apostle. The Jewish nation no longer existed in any form, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, and their people had been scattered throughout the earth. John no doubt observed that Rome was now not only the center of a great civil empire, but had also become the focal point of Christianity, and he rightly perceived that this would soon have perilous consequences. Although the Early Church was well established by this time, John could see that the "spirit of antichrist" was already working. (I John 2:18,22; 4:3; II John 7) In addition, through the vision of Revelation, although he did not understand its meaning, it must have become clear to John that there was much still to happen before the Messianic kingdom would be established and the throne of David restored.

He could appreciate the fact that the followers of Christ who remained loyal to the Gospel message in its original purity would soon face very difficult experiences—ones which would test their faith to the very core. With this perspective, and as the last living apostle, John's primary objective as he wrote his Gospel account was to provide for the spiritual benefit of the church over the long-term, even down to our day. Thus, as he looked at what Matthew,

Mark, and Luke had recorded many years earlier, he felt the need to direct special attention to some of the more spiritually-focused lessons of Jesus' ministry. Indeed, we are thankful that God, through the power of his Holy Spirit, guided all of the Gospel writers to testify of everything relative to Jesus' life and ministry which would be necessary for his consecrated followers throughout the Gospel Age.

JOHN'S UPPER ROOM ACCOUNT

It is this same spiritual focus which permeates John's account of the experiences which took place in the upper room, as he recorded them over sixty years later. Our opening text, which begins John's testimony, is a prime example. Rather than explaining the immediate purpose of gathering together with his disciples, which was to keep the Passover type, it is the great love of the Master that is emphasized. As the elderly and very wise apostle now looked back on the entire upper room experience, in which he shared, he saw that although it was necessary for Jesus to fulfill the Passover feature of the Mosaic Law, his chief motivation for assembling together with his closest disciples was that of love. This was the Master's final opportunity to be with them before he was arrested, tried as a blasphemer, and crucified; and he knew how difficult those experiences would be since the disciples were not yet spirit-begotten. John could truly testify of Jesus: "He loved them unto the end."

As a footnote to the experiences that evening, John recalls something important in the words of verse 2. Although it may not have been apparent to him or the other disciples at the time, looking back

he now understands that Judas had consented to the influence of Satan—"the devil having now put into the heart of Judas . . . to betray" Jesus. Here is a sobering reminder and warning to the church throughout the Gospel Age—that there is the possibility of one entering among us as a wolf "in sheep's clothing," "not sparing the flock."—Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29

AN EXAMPLE OF SERVICE

Following his solemn reminder of Judas, John recalls that as the Passover meal was concluding, the disciples began arguing about who should be the greatest among them. This contention was recorded by Luke, and is discussed in Part 1 of this article. (Luke 22:24-30) Luke, however, did not record the great example of service which Jesus provided, and that most likely was the immediate result of the disciples' wayward discussion. Realizing that neither Luke nor the other Gospel writers recorded it, John gave testimony to this all-important lesson, which he knew would be of great assistance to all consecrated believers during the Gospel Age.

In John 13:3-17, we have presented to us Jesus' great example and lesson of humble service, which he provided in the upper room. "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." (vss. 4,5) As he looked back on this, John realized that all of them were puzzled by what Jesus did, yet no one said anything or questioned him—until he came to Peter.

Peter was the spokesman of The Twelve, and on most occasions he was quick to speak his mind or ask questions. This instance was no different. He said, echoing the same question they all likely had in mind, “Lord, dost thou wash my feet?” (vs. 6) Then is recorded what must have seemed to be a vague answer from the Master, who said to Peter, “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.” (vs. 7) In hindsight, John knew how true this was, that none of them understood at the time what was happening, and why Jesus was washing their feet. They would “know hereafter,” when begotten of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

“Thou shalt never wash my feet,” Peter replied. “Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” (vs. 8) John does not say precisely what motivated Peter to reply as he did. Perhaps he thought it was too menial a task for Jesus to perform—that a slave or servant should be doing this. Another possibility is that Peter did not feel that he needed his feet washed, since he had most likely kept the customs of the Law related to washing prior to entering the room.—Mark 7:3,4

Given the rest of the account which follows, both of the above may have been plausible reasons in Peter’s mind to respond as he did. However, John does not say, because he understood that the real lesson of the experience was yet to be revealed by the Master. It was not nearly as important to know exactly why Peter did not want his feet washed as it was to learn the lesson Jesus was about to give in the following verses. Thus, John simply records Jesus’ statement that Peter and the other disciples—including us—could have “no part” [“no

share," *Weymouth New Testament*] with him unless they allowed this lesson to be given, and eventually learned.

ALREADY CLEAN

Upon hearing these words, Peter asked the Lord to not only wash his feet, but also his hands and head. (John 13:9) At this juncture, John begins to testify of the real lesson the Master intended to give. First, Jesus reminded Peter that, as far as literal washing was concerned, he was already clean, because he had done the customary washings prior to the Passover meal. The only exception, perhaps, was with regard to his feet, which could no doubt always benefit from the refreshment provided by washing. (vs. 10) By this response, Jesus hinted that the real lesson he was conveying was not about literal washing, whether it be feet, or any other part of the body.

Continuing with the account, Jesus said, "Ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean." (vss. 10,11) Just as the lesson was not about literal washing, these words indicate that the real import was also not about symbolic, or spiritual, cleansing. "Ye are clean" in that way also, Jesus says, except for one—Judas, whose heart had been entered into by Satan, and was now defiled—unclean.

John, as he looked back on this experience through the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, knew well that Jesus would not have said, "Ye are clean, but not all," if the lesson had been that of either literal washing or even spiritual cleansing. Literal washing was proper and needful for the

physical well-being of the body, and Peter and the other disciples had undoubtedly taken care of these matters. Yet, this was not the point of the lesson.

Spiritual cleansing is of absolute importance to the child of God. Each must be cleansed, have a pure heart, and thus be protected from the defilements of the world and the flesh to the greatest extent possible. Various Scriptures point out the sources of this symbolic washing: God; the blood of Christ; the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit; the water of the word of truth; and our full cooperation with all of these agents of cleansing.—I John 1:7,9; Rev. 1:5; I Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:25,26; Heb. 10:22; II Cor. 7:1

As critical as symbolic washing is to the consecrated believer, however, it likewise was not the primary focus of the lesson Jesus provided in the washing of his disciples' feet. The disciples gathered in the upper room had not yet received the benefits to be derived from the blood of Christ, or from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Jesus, though, could read their hearts, and saw that, except for Judas, they were "clean" to the extent which was possible at that time.

HUMBLE SERVICE

Returning to John's account, after explaining to the disciples that the meaning of his action was not particularly related to washing, Jesus sat down again and asked, "Do you understand what I have done to you?" (John 13:12, *WNT*) Looking back, John must have realized that, at the time, none of them could have answered the Master's question

affirmatively. He continues, however, with the record of Jesus' explanation: "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."—John 13:13-15

It was proper, Jesus said, for them to call him "Master and Lord," but he was also there to serve them, and had just demonstrated that by washing their feet. This was most often the job of a lowly servant, but Jesus had taken on this role. Furthermore, if it were appropriate for him to take on the role of a humble servant, how much more should his disciples do the same toward one another. "I have given you an example," Jesus says, of the kind of humble service which should be rendered by one fellow body-member toward another.

Jesus emphasized this lesson by his use of the words "servant," "lord," and "sent." He said, "The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." (vs. 16) Each disciple was a "servant," and Jesus was their "lord." He was also, however, a servant, and they were not to consider themselves "greater than" he by refraining from being servants in like manner. Similarly, those with Jesus in the upper room were chosen to be his apostles, which in the Greek means "one sent forth." (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*) As those who would soon be "sent" by their Lord to preach the Gospel and establish the Early Church, they were not to consider themselves "greater than" the one who sent them to engage in this service.

“IF YE DO THEM”

Jesus concluded his explanation by saying, “If ye know these things, happy [blessed] are ye if ye do them.” (vs. 17) There seems to be a particular importance in these words to the Lord’s people today. We indeed “know these things,” and understand the real lesson contained in Jesus’ act of washing the disciples’ feet, but only if we “do them” will we receive the Lord’s approval and blessing.

The washing of one another’s feet should not be considered as our having the authority to cleanse or wash a fellow brother or sister from sin. As already noted, the Scriptures indicate the many means by which cleansing from sin is accomplished in a consecrated believer. None of these, however, include the presumption that it is our responsibility to look for the shortcomings and faults of fellow brethren, and then attempt to “wash” them—even if our intentions are good. We can, and should, be of assistance by being an example, providing encouragement, praying for each other, reasoning together on the Word of God, and helping in other ways, but not with the thought of cleansing.

Just as Jesus explained when he gave this lesson, humble service is also our means of “feet-washing.” In addition to the aforementioned assistance we can render to one another, other forms of service might include: engaging in frequent fellowship; providing assistance to the brethren; sharing our experiences—joys, sorrows, successes and even failures—with one another; opening our homes for meetings and entertaining the brethren; visiting the sick and isolated; comforting the bereaved or others in severe trial; providing a warm handshake

and smile to our brethren each time we see them; always seeking to edify and build up one another; supporting the activities of the present Harvest work in its many forms; telling our brethren that we love them. These, and many more activities constitute the washing of one another's feet. What a refreshment is provided to those who receive these helps, and what a joy it should be to render such service at every opportunity!

JUDAS, THE BETRAYER

John, as he continued to recall the events which took place in the upper room, knew that Matthew, Mark, and Luke had all previously recorded Jesus' prediction that one sitting among them would betray him, along with the ensuing interchange that took place with Judas and the rest of the disciples. Yet, rather than forego a repetition of this episode, John provides it once again, with even more detail than the other Gospel writers. (John 13:18-30) We may wonder why John chose to do this, as it seems to take away from the important lesson of humble service which he had just recorded.

Although we cannot be sure of his reasoning, John may have seen the appropriateness of mentioning the episode concerning Judas for the very reason that it took place immediately after the lesson of feet-washing. Jesus had washed the feet of all twelve disciples, including Judas, even though he knew that evil was in his heart. By washing his feet, the Lord perhaps gave an indication to Judas that he still had an opportunity to change his heart and repent, even at that late hour. Regrettably, this did not occur. Thus, John felt it was appropriate to

reiterate the account concerning Judas which followed the great lesson of service—a lesson which Judas sadly did not learn.

LEAVING SHORTLY

The next portion of John's record of the upper room experience is also unique to his Gospel, as had been the lesson of feet-washing. He called to memory that, upon Judas' departure, Jesus turned his full attention toward the remaining eleven disciples, whose hearts were clean. While they did not yet understand the import of what was happening, and even asked questions which demonstrated their lack of knowledge, their hearts were right and they loved their Lord and Master very much.

In verses 31 and 32 is recorded a veiled reference by Jesus to his impending departure. He says that although God was already being "glorified in him"—that is, by his words and actions—there was soon to be a greater glory manifested in his beloved Son. This was to be when God would "straightway glorify him" with the divine nature. Although John did not understand this at the time, he and the other disciples later recognized that Jesus' glorification had to be preceded by his death as man's Redeemer.

In gentle words, Jesus then spoke more directly: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." (vs. 33) As he looked back, John could no doubt appreciate that these were some of the most difficult words Jesus had ever spoken to his disciples. Nevertheless, they must be said, because they related directly

to the very next words he uttered, which, down to this very moment, stand as one of the most important statements ever made by the Master.

A NEW COMMANDMENT

Only in John's Gospel do we find these vitally important words of Jesus: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:34,35) Not only was this the statement of a new commandment, but it also was a climactic moment with regard to all that had happened that evening in the upper room. They had gathered to eat the Passover meal. Almost immediately there was contention about who should be the greatest, which indicated a lack of unselfish love. Jesus had then given the lesson of feet-washing, or humble service, as being the outward manifestation of love, though they did not yet comprehend the meaning of his actions. The disciples had even been reminded, by observing the character of Judas, of the terrible results of an evil heart—filled with hatred and betrayal.

In climax to all of this, Jesus now sums up the entire matter by directly telling his disciples, and us, that having unselfish, godlike love for one another is a commandment. If love is not developed and possessed, our position as a consecrated member of the body of Christ is in grave danger. It is by love, Jesus says, that we will be known by "all men," and God, as his disciples. We will have no part in any reward or work in God's coming kingdom if we fail to keep this commandment.

MEMORIAL NOT CITED

After recording the “new commandment” given by Jesus, John mentions the exchange of words which took place between the Master and Peter, which concluded with Jesus’ prediction that Peter would deny him three times before the night was over. (vss. 36-38) This exchange is also recorded by the other three Gospel writers, all of whom place it as occurring after Jesus had instituted the Memorial Supper.—Matt. 26:26-34; Mark 14:22-30; Luke 22:17-20,31-35

John did not record the Lord’s inauguration of the Memorial. However, in comparing his record of the prediction of Peter’s three denials with that of the other Gospel writers, and their placement of this incident as cited above, we can reasonably conclude that the Memorial Supper took place prior to verse 36 of John’s account. This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that Matthew, who, like John, was present in the upper room, recorded the episode concerning Judas just prior to Jesus’ institution of the Memorial. (Matt. 26:21-25) As already noted, John’s account concerning Judas ends at chapter 13, verse 30, and beginning with verse 31 he immediately transitions to Jesus’ words about his imminent departure, followed by the giving of the “new commandment,” recorded in verse 35. Taking all this into account, placement of the Memorial into John’s account would seem to put it between verses 35 and 36.

Whether the above suggestions concerning the sequence of events in the upper room are precisely correct, we cannot be fully sure. Indeed, it is not critical to our understanding of the important

lessons of those hours to be certain of the exact sequence. However, we may rightly inquire as to why John makes no mention at all of Jesus' institution of the Memorial, nor of the symbolic emblems of the "bread" and "fruit of the vine," since these had such important significance, as detailed in Part 1 of this article.

John doubtless knew that Matthew, Mark, and Luke had all given specific accounts of the Memorial celebration in the upper room. He also was probably aware that later the Apostle Paul had reiterated Jesus' instructions, as recorded in I Corinthians 11:23-28. By the time John wrote his Gospel, late in the first century, consecrated brethren had been keeping the Memorial for over sixty years. For these reasons, we surmise that John may have felt it was unnecessary to repeat this part of the evening's events in his account, and simply chose to leave it out.

EATING HIS FLESH—DRINKING HIS BLOOD

While John did not record the Lord's institution of the Memorial in his upper room narrative, he does furnish important testimony on the subject of the body and blood of Jesus. In John 6:26-66, we are provided with Jesus' discourse about the bread of life, his flesh and blood, the requirement of his followers to "eat" his flesh and "drink" his blood, and the explanation that this was not to be considered literally, but that to eat and drink of him means to "live by" him.

We quote from this passage selected portions of Jesus' words: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto

everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.” “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” “Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” “For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.” “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

How true are these last words. (vs. 63) Literally eating Jesus’ flesh or drinking his blood “profiteth nothing.” Rather, it is by feeding upon and appropriating the words he spoke, the example he set, and the sacrifice he made on each one’s behalf, all under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that gives “life” to his consecrated followers—“that quickeneth” them. John realized that these words of the Master, though not spoken in the upper room, gave the essence of what is meant by the partaking of the Memorial emblems.

It perhaps comes as no surprise that this discourse of Jesus, partially quoted above, and which he gave shortly after feeding the five thousand, is only recorded in John’s Gospel. From his vantage

point of more than sixty years later, John may have seen that the Memorial celebration had, to some extent, turned into a ritual observance. Thus, in his perspective of the Memorial's significance, he felt it was more important to emphasize the greater spiritual lessons and daily application of the principles embodied in its symbols, rather than the specific instructions provided in the upper room concerning its annual observance.

JOHN'S ACCOUNT CONCLUDES

After recording Jesus' giving of the "new commandment," John ends his testimony of the upper room events, choosing not to repeat the Memorial institution provided by the other three Gospel writers. By doing so, he leaves Jesus' great commandment to stand on its own as the final, all-encompassing lesson of those moments spent with his disciples. John understood that without love, the partaking of the Memorial emblems would be meaningless, and counted as doing so "unworthily." (I Cor. 11:29) How sobering it is to realize the vital connection between the keeping of this annual Memorial and the fulfillment of Jesus' command to love one another.

The Matthew and Mark accounts state that after the Memorial observance, Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn and began their journey to the Mount of Olives, where Gethsemane was located. (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26) In that intervening period, Jesus gave his final message to the disciples, and then prayed for them. Once again, only John records these all-important words, found in chapters 14-17. In them are much in the way of spiritual truths which they would understand once begotten of the

Holy Spirit, and which all consecrated believers down through the Gospel Age have come to know and apply in their Christian walk. How wonderful to know that we are included in the message and prayer Jesus gave. He prayed not only for the eleven disciples, “but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.”—John 17:20,21

John’s unique record of the upper room—especially Jesus’ lesson of humble service and the giving of the new commandment—set the stage for the account of the Master’s final message and prayer. How thankful we are that this aged and wise apostle saw the need to include these closing experiences of Jesus’ earthly ministry in his Gospel record. Let us seek to emulate John’s perspective, and to complete our walk of humble service and love faithfully, even unto death. ■

2016 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after sunset on Thursday, April 21, 2016.

A complete Memorial Service is available for isolated brethren, or for any who wish to have it.

The audio cassette tape, CD, or DVD can be purchased for \$6.00. All are also available free on loan, from:

Dawn Recorded Lecture Service
199 Railroad Avenue
East Rutherford, NJ 07073

Please place your order by April 11, if possible.

“Convincing Proofs”

“After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom.”

—Acts 1:3, New International Version

DURING THE FORTY DAYS

following his resurrection, the risen Lord Jesus appeared to his disciples on multiple occasions, and gave many “convincing proofs” that he had been raised from the dead as a spirit being. He also spoke on these occasions about the kingdom of God, and the privilege his disciples would have of proclaiming it throughout the earth.

In Luke 24:1, we read, “Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.” The expression “they” refers to a small group of women. Their names are given in verse 10: “It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them.”

Earlier in Luke’s Gospel, we are told that Jesus traveled with the apostles through “every city and

village,” proclaiming the glad message of the kingdom of God. In addition, there were “certain women” that traveled with him “which ministered unto him of their substance.” (Luke 8:1-3) These women were voluntarily contributing to support Jesus and the apostles. It has been suggested that Jesus’ seamless robe—a fitting representation of his human perfection—may have been a gift from one of these noble women.

Jesus never took up a collection or in any manner solicited money from people. As followers of Christ, we should likewise make no appeals for money. We should merely use our own means, and other funds if voluntarily given for use in the Lord’s service.

MARY MAGDALENE

Mary Magdalene was from the town of Magdala, which was located near the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had healed Mary Magdalene of seven evil spirits which had possessed her. (vs. 2) Later, she was part of the small group of women who were present while Jesus was being crucified. (Matt. 27:55,56) She and the other women followed Joseph of Arimathaea to see where the tomb of Jesus was located, and how his body had been prepared for burial. (vss. 57-61) Two days later, after the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and the other faithful women brought spices to the tomb, in order to more thoroughly anoint Jesus’ dead body. (Mark 16:1-2) They were anxious to bestow upon the lifeless remains of their beloved Master the last tokens of their esteem and love.

“On the first day of the week, Mary the Magdalene, cometh early, while it is yet, dark, unto the tomb,—and beholdeth the stone, already taken

away out of the tomb.” (John 20:1, *Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible*) Mary must have had great faith in coming to the tomb by herself, that somehow she would have the strength to roll away the large stone which had been placed over its entrance. She must have also ignored the thought that Jesus’ body might have started to decay, after having been dead and in the tomb for parts of three days. Just a few weeks earlier, when Jesus had asked for the stone to be rolled away from Lazarus’ tomb, Martha, one of Lazarus’ sisters, replied to the Lord, “By this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.”—John 11:39

LIVING ONE NOT AMONG THE DEAD

The other women joined Mary Magdalene at the tomb, and from the account in the book of Luke we read, “They found the stone, rolled away from the tomb; but, when they entered, they found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, while they were perplexing themselves concerning this, that lo! two men, stood near them, in dazzling raiment.”—Luke 24:2-4, *EBR*

The two men, dressed in white, “dazzling raiment,” were angels sent by God. (John 20:12) They said to the women, “Why seek ye the Living One with the dead? He is not here, but hath arisen: Remember how he spake unto you while yet he was in Galilee: Saying, as to the Son of Man, that he must needs be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified,—and, on the third day, arise.”—Luke 24:5-7, *EBR*

Jesus had previously told his disciples that he was going to be crucified and then be raised from

the dead. "He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." (Mark 8:31) The women at the tomb "remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest." However, when the apostles heard this message from the women, they did not believe it, and considered it as "idle tales," an incredible story.—Luke 24:8-11

Evidently none of Jesus' followers had thought of his resurrection. The women had brought spices to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. The message given to them by the two angels was not believed by the apostles and, most likely, not understood by the women. To these human minds, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of the dead seemed difficult, if not impossible, to comprehend.

From the account given in John's Gospel, it appears Mary Magdalene remained at the tomb while the other women left to tell the apostles about the events which had transpired. We read: "Mary stood sobbing outside the tomb. As she sobbed, she glanced inside the tomb and noticed two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. Woman, they said to her, why are you sobbing? She said, Because they have taken away my master, and I do not know where they have put him! With these words she turned round and noticed Jesus standing—though she did not know it was Jesus. Woman, said Jesus, why are you sobbing? Who are you looking for? Supposing he was the gardener, she said, Oh, sir, if you carried him away, tell me

where you put him, and I will remove him.”—John 20:11-15, *James Moffatt Translation*

Mary Magdalene again demonstrated great faith and determination, telling the one whom she thought was “the gardener,” that somehow she would find the strength to carry away the body of Jesus. The Lord then revealed himself to Mary by speaking her name in an old, familiar way. “Mary! said Jesus. She started round and said, Rabboni! (a Hebrew word meaning teacher).” (vs. 16, *Moffatt*) How quickly Mary’s faith understood that it was Jesus! She did not ask why there were no visible marks from the nails on his hands or feet.

Jesus said to Mary, “Cease clinging to me. I have not ascended yet to the Father, but go to my brothers and tell them, I am ascending to my Father and yours, to my God and yours.” Mary then showed her obedience to the Master: “Away went Mary of Magdala to the disciples with the news, I have seen the Lord!—telling them what he had said to her.” (vss. 17,18, *Moffatt*) Jesus appreciated Mary Magdalene’s faith, devotion, and determination. Thus, she had the privilege of receiving a “convincing proof,” being the first person to speak with the risen Lord, who had been resurrected as a spirit being by the mighty power of God.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

“That very day two of them [the Lord’s disciples] were on their way to a village called Emmaus about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were conversing about all these events, and during their conversation and discussion Jesus himself overtook them and walked beside them, though they were

prevented from recognizing him.”—Luke 24:13-16,
Moffatt

It probably took several hours for the two disciples to walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus. While we do not know where along this walk Jesus joined them, there was possibly a lengthy period of time during which Jesus was with them, during which they all would have had the opportunity to converse together. For that reason, this was perhaps one of Jesus’ longest-lasting appearances to his disciples during the forty days following his resurrection.

As they walked toward Emmaus, Jesus asked the two disciples, “What is all this you are debating on your walk? They stopped, looking downcast, and one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, Are you a lone stranger in Jerusalem, not to know what has been happening there?” Jesus questioned them again, saying, “What is that?” to which the disciples replied, “All about Jesus of Nazareth!”—vss. 17-19, *Moffatt*

We notice the wisdom of the risen Lord, and his use of questions during this discussion with the two disciples. Jesus knew, of course, why they were sad, because he had been invisibly present with them prior to joining them on the road to Emmaus. In similar fashion, on subsequent occasions during the forty days before he ascended, Jesus would appear to his disciples while they were talking about him and the events which had recently transpired. The disciples were thus in a better frame of mind to receive Jesus’ message to them, and the lessons he provided would leave a deeper impression.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus said concerning Jesus, “He was a prophet strong in action

and in utterance, but the high priests and our rulers delivered him up to be sentenced to death and had him crucified.” (Luke 24:19,20, *Moffatt*) Now they had lost confidence that Jesus was the Messiah, and said to this stranger, “Our own hope was that he would be the redeemer of Israel; but he is dead, and that is three days ago!” (vs. 21, *Moffatt*) Instead of Jesus becoming a great king of Israel, he had been crucified along side of two criminals, and this seemed to settle the matter in their minds that Jesus could not have been the Messiah.

Then the two disciples told this stranger about the events which had occurred earlier that day. “Some women of our number gave us a surprise; they were at the tomb early in the morning and could not find his body, but they came to tell us they had actually seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our company did go to the tomb and found things exactly as the women had said, but they did not see him.”—vss. 22-24, *Moffatt*

SUFFERING, THEN GLORY

The risen Lord began to build upon this testimony of the two disciples. He said to them, “O foolish men, with hearts so slow to believe, after all the prophets have declared! Had not the Christ to suffer thus and so enter his glory?” (vss. 25,26, *Moffatt*) Here we have another reason why Jesus gave “convincing proofs” to his disciples following his resurrection. It was necessary to teach them why he had to suffer, die, and rise again as a spirit being, and to show them that these things had been spoken of by the prophets of the Old Testament.

Then Jesus, beginning “with Moses and all the prophets . . . interpreted to them the passages referring to himself throughout the scriptures.” (vs. 27, *Moffatt*) We are not told exactly what the risen Lord said to the two disciples. Perhaps he explained to them how Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac, his only son whom he loved, was a type or picture of God sending his only begotten Son, Jesus, whom he loved, into the world as a willing ransom sacrifice for Adam and his progeny—all mankind.—Gen. 22:1-18; I John 4:9,10; I Tim. 2:5,6

Jesus might have reminded them of Moses’ day, and that by keeping the Passover, the Israelites were delivered from bondage in Egypt. The Passover lamb which was selected, a male of the first year, without blemish, was a type or picture of the perfect man Jesus, who willingly offered up himself as the ransom sacrifice for Adam and all mankind. (Exod. 12:1-14; I Cor. 5:7; Heb. 7:26,27) At the very beginning of Jesus’ ministry, John the Baptist had spoken of him in this way, saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”—John 1:29

The Apostle Peter referred to Jesus as an unblemished lamb, writing: “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.”—I Pet. 1:18-21

God instructed the nation of Israel that none of the bones of the Passover lamb were to be broken. (Exod. 12:46) In the hours following Jesus' crucifixion, the soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves in order for their deaths to occur before sundown—the start of the Jewish Sabbath day. The Scriptures specifically state, however, that the soldiers did not break Jesus' legs, because he was already dead. (John 19:31-33) We are emphatically told in verse 36, "These things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken"—just like the Passover lamb—and as also prophesied in the Psalms.—Ps. 34:20

Jesus may have also recounted the Psalms which foretold of his betrayal, sufferings, and death, as well as his subsequent resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of God. (Ps. 41:9; 22:1-18; 31:5; 118:22; 110:1) To the two disciples walking to Emmaus, this stranger had shown that the things which had discouraged them were the very things which the prophets had foretold concerning the Messiah.

CONSTRAINING THE STRANGER

As they reached the town of Emmaus, the stranger continued to walk on. However, the two disciples insisted he stay with them and come to their home. We read: "They constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them." (Luke 24:29) In this verse, the word "constrained" is translated from a Greek word used only one other time in the New Testament, when Lydia "constrained" Paul and Silas to stay at her home.

(Acts 16:15) This Greek word carries a strong connotation, and has the meaning “to employ force contrary to nature and right.” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*) We can picture the two disciples gently holding this stranger by the arm, while urging him to stay with them.

The stranger complied, and stayed with them at their home in Emmaus. As they assembled at a table to eat, he “took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him.” The two disciples then realized that this stranger was Jesus himself. Having accomplished his purpose, the risen Lord then “vanished out of their sight.”—Luke 24:30,31

Jesus taught the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and gave them “convincing proofs” of his resurrection in several ways. First, he explained the Old Testament scriptures and prophecies concerning himself in a logical and understandable manner. Then, by his act of blessing and breaking bread at the table with them, he brought to their remembrance an example of things he had done during his ministry. Finally, he demonstrated that he was no longer “the man” Jesus, but rather had been “changed” and was now a spirit being, with the ability to come and go as the wind.—John 3:8

The disciples then said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (Luke 24:32) As we realize the fulfillment of God’s promises in the past, may our heart likewise “burn within us,” in order that we might exercise even greater faith in the fulfillment of the assurances of his Word which relate to the future.

The two disciples were so moved by this experience that they immediately turned around and traveled the seven miles back to Jerusalem, probably walking most of the way in the dark of night, in order to tell the other disciples. (Luke 24:33-35) Indeed, as we receive a blessing from the Truth, and our studies and discussions with the brethren, let us share it with others, that they might also receive a blessing. We recall the words of the prophet: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name."—Mal. 3:16

APPEARING IN DIFFERENT FORMS

After the two disciples reached Jerusalem and found other followers of Christ gathered together, Jesus appeared and "stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." (Luke 24:36) However, they were afraid, supposing that they had seen a spirit. The Lord said to them, "Why are ye troubled? . . . Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."—vss. 37-39

We note that Jesus used the expression "flesh and bones," and not "flesh and blood." In the Old Testament, blood was associated with human life. The fact that Jesus did not use the word "blood" indicates that what they were seeing, although giving the outward appearance of being human, was not a body of the earthly, human nature. Jesus' sacrifice was completed when he died on the cross.

His human life was forever given up, and his “precious blood” was poured out unto death, in order that redemption and atonement for mankind might be secured. (I Pet. 1:19) Once again we have confirmation from the Old Testament: “It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”—Lev. 17:11

The “flesh and bones” in which the resurrected Jesus appeared on this occasion were only a visual materialization, used strictly for the benefit of his disciples. The Lord knew that if his disciples could see flesh and bones that bore a physical resemblance to their Master as he looked during the time of his earthly ministry, they would have less fear, and therefore be able to listen better to what he had to tell them.

On other occasions following his resurrection, the risen Lord appeared in different physical manifestations to his followers. To Mary, he appeared as a gardener. To the two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus, he appeared as a stranger. To Peter and several others in the boat on the Sea of Galilee, he appeared as a visitor on the shore.—John 21:3,4

By showing himself to them in different physical appearances, Jesus proved that none of these forms was the actual body which he now possessed—that of a highly exalted spirit being. Indeed, on nearly every occasion during these forty days, Jesus’ disciples did not recognize him by physical appearance, but by his words, his voice, or his conduct.

WITNESSES OF THESE THINGS

After alleviating their fears, Jesus explained, just as he had to the two on the road to Emmaus, all of

the Old Testament prophecies and psalms which foretold that he would be betrayed, suffer and die, and then rise from the dead on the third day. (Luke 24:44-46) He then gave them a commission, that their future work would be to preach “repentance and remission of sins . . . in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” They were to be “witnesses” of these “convincing proofs” concerning Jesus’ resurrection, not only by what they saw, but especially by their increased understanding, through the Holy Spirit—“power from on high”—which would soon come upon them.—vss. 47-49

Peter also wrote about the disciples being “witnesses” of Jesus’ resurrection, saying, “Him God raised up the third day, and permitted him to become manifest, not to all the people, but to those witnesses previously chosen by God, to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to proclaim to the people, and to fully testify that this is he who has been appointed by God the judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear testimony.”—Acts 10:40-43, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

TRIED AND TESTED BEFORE ENTERING INTO GLORY

One of the most important teachings Jesus provided to his disciples during the forty days following his resurrection is found in his words, quoted earlier in our lesson—“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:26) Many Scriptures emphasize this principle of having faith tried and tested unto death first, before entering into glory. This

arrangement applied not only to Jesus, but also to each individual who will become part of the Christ, head and body.

The apostles testified, saying, “If children, also heirs; heirs, indeed, of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if indeed, we suffer together, so that we may be also glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of the present time, as unworthy of comparison with the future glory to be revealed in us.” (Rom. 8:17,18, *WED*) “Rejoice, . . . as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”—I Pet. 4:13

May these “convincing proofs” of Jesus’ resurrection help us increase our faith in all of God’s promises. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively 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.”—chap. 1:3,4 ■

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.

Brother Peter Ferlejewski, Portland, OR—February
23. Age, 94

Sister Helen Gorgas, Salem, OR—March 10. Age,
97

The Secret of His Presence

*In the secret of His presence
How my soul delights to hide:
Oh, how precious are the lessons
Which I learn at Jesus' side.
Earthly cares can only vex me,
Trials never lay me low,
And when Satan comes to tempt me,
To the secret place I go.*

*When my soul is faint and thirsty,
'Neath the shadow of His wing
There is cool and pleasant shelter,
And a fresh and crystal spring.
And my Savior rests beside me,
As we hold communion sweet;
If I tried, I could not utter
What He says, when thus we meet.*

*Only this: I know, I tell Him
All my doubts, and griefs, and fears;
Oh, how patiently He listens,
And my drooping heart He cheers.
Do you think He ne'er reproves me?
What a false friend He would be,
If He never, never told me
Of the faults which He must see.*

*Do you think that I could love Him
Half so well, or as I ought,
If He did not plainly tell me
Each displeasing word and thought?
No! for He is very faithful,
And that makes me trust Him more,*

*For I know that He doth love me,
Though sometimes He wounds me sore.*

*Would you like to know the sweetness
Of this secret of the Lord?
Go and hide beneath His shadow,
This shall then be your reward.
And when'er you leave the silence
Of that happy meeting place,
You must mind and bear the image
Of the Master in your face.*

—Poems of Dawn

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

APRIL 7—"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:19 (Z. '96-163 Hymn 261)

APRIL 14—"He hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors."—Isaiah 53:12 (Z. '99-125 Hymn 168)

APRIL 21—"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—Hebrews 4:15,16 (Z. '98-23 Hymn 274)

APRIL 28—"We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us."—Romans 5:3-5 (Z. '03-348 Hymn 165)

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

E. Blicharz

Louisville, AL April 10

T. Krupa

Detroit, MI April 30-May 1

O. B. Elbert

Detroit, MI April 16,17

E. Kuenzli

Jacksonville, FL April 17

R. Goodman

New London/Groton, CT April 10

T. Ruggirello

Detroit, MI April 30-May 1

L. Griehs

Detroit, MI April 30-May 1

*Come ye that know and love the Lord,
and raise your thoughts above;
Let every heart and voice accord
to sing that "God is love."
This precious truth his Word declares,
and all his mercies prove;
Jesus, the gift of gifts, appears,
to show that "God is love."
—Hymns of Dawn*

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CONVENTIONS

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

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 16,17—Quality Inn of Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48003. Contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588 or Email: nemeshfp@aol.com

METRO DETROIT CONVENTION, April 30-May 1—Brighton Community Center, 555 Brighton Street, Brighton, MI 48114. Contact J. Kienast. Phone: (248) 496-5611 or Email: jenkienast@gmail.com

JACKSONVILLE CONVENTION, May 1—Holiday Inn Hotel, 620 Wells Road, Orange Park, FL 32073, (904) 562-7400. Contact C. Hughes. Phone: (904) 781-0506 or Email: clanky3@att.net

CHICAGO CONVENTION, May 28-30—Prisco Community Center, 150 W. Illinois Avenue, Aurora, IL 60506. Contact L. Larson, 5445 W. 149 Street, Oak Forest, IL 60452. Phone: (708) 535-2066, (708) 341-2067 or Email: secretary@chicagobible.org

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, May 28,29—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91504. For room reservations (subsidized rate of \$55/night ending April 20), contact N. Nekora. Phone: (310) 454-5248 or Email: npnekora@aol.com. Other information, contact J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 438-1086 or Email: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com. Please place LABible in the subject line of the email.

VANCOUVER CONVENTION, June 11,12—Aldergrove Kinsmen Community Center, 26770 29th Avenue, Aldergrove, BC, Canada V4W 3B8. Contact B. Smith. Phone: (604) 576-6070 or Email: bas@telus.net

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, June 12—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA. Contact R. Griebhs. Phone: (267) 456-8889 or Email: rgriebhs@gmail.com

PORTLAND CONVENTION, June 17-19—June 17 at BSRC. Remaining days at Shilo Inn Portland Airport, 11707 NE Airport Way, Portland, OR 97220. Contact N. Austin. Phone: (360) 907-4243 or Email: ntaustin@gmail.com

PRINCE ALBERT AND SASKATOON CONVENTION, July 1-3—Siwak Farm. Contact A. Siwak, RR1 Stn Mpp, Prince Albert, SK Canada S6V5P8. Phone: (306) 764-7692 or Email: ahsiwak@inet2000.com

VERNON CONVENTION, July 8-10—Schubert Centre, 3505 30th Avenue, Vernon, BC, Canada. Contact T. Fernets. Phone: (250) 558-3055 or Email: afernets@telus.net

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 16-21—University of Pittsburgh, 450 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown, PA. Contact E. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or Email: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 2-7—Orle Gniazdo Conference Center, Szczyrk, Poland. Contact L. Griebhs. Phone: (267) 688-8617 or Email: griehs@comcast.net

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3-5—Seabeck Conference Center, 13395 Lagoon Drive NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (206) 518-2678

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
—Colossians 3:16