

The DAWN

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GIVING

***“He looked up, and saw the rich men
casting their gifts into the treasury.
And he saw also a certain poor widow
casting in thither two mites.”
Luke 21:1,2***

RECENTLY, THE *New York Times* daily paper had a twenty-page section devoted to “Giving.” Featured on the first page were pictures of billionaire Ted Turner standing alongside Oseola McCarty, with the caption, “*From the Heart*,” followed by, “Ted Turner gave a lot—\$1 billion. Oseola McCarty gave her all—a life savings of \$150,000.”

CONTRASTS IN GIVING

The article explaining the cover story picture was entitled, “*Why Do We Donate? It’s Personal.*” The introduction spoke of philanthropy and the fact that “individual living Americans—not corporations, not bequests—account for nearly 80% of the whopping amount of money (\$150.7 billion in 1996) donated for philanthropic purposes each year.”

It was said, while the rich can afford to give more per capita, the middle class has been the backbone of American philanthropy in this century. The article continued saying concerning Ted Turner that his pledge of \$1 billion for United Nations social programs over the next 10 years stands out even among the super-rich. When reporters asked Mr. Turner why he gave to charity, he acknowledged the more complicated personal dynamics involved in all charitable contributions, and said, "I've been learning how to give."

In contrast, what motivated 89-year-old Oseola McCarty to take \$150,000—her life savings as a laundrywoman—and establish a scholarship fund for black students at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, her hometown?

This contrast on "*Giving*" published in the *New York Times* reminds Bible Students of our Lord Jesus' words as he sat in the Temple and observed those putting their gifts into the treasury. We read of this in Mark 12:41-44, which says, "Jesus sat over against [opposite] the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." What a powerful lesson Jesus gave his disciples!

The attribute of generosity is patterned after God's character. He is always giving, and we are

always receiving. When we become generous we come closer to being in his image. As the Apostle James wrote, "Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."—James 1:17

There can be no doubt that the greatest gift given by God to men was his Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Likewise, we should never forget the generosity of our Lord Jesus in this plan, because he was willing to lay down his life as our Redeemer. The contrast we have in our society of rich and poor was used by the Apostle Paul to describe this willingness on the part of Jesus: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (II Cor. 8:9) In his prehuman existence, Jesus, God's first direct creation, was a glorious being assisting the Father. (Col. 1:15) He was rich, but gave up his riches to be made flesh and to dwell among us, becoming poor in contrast.

PHILANTHROPY

The *New York Times* section on "Giving" contained many topics related to philanthropy, which is a combination of two Greek words—*phileo*—and—*anthropos*—meaning literally 'loving mankind'. It is defined as 'goodwill to fellowman', especially an active effort to promote human welfare. The *Times* section contained five one-page ads by different charitable organizations seeking funding. The section covered every form of philanthropy: volunteer work, creative people, gifts to the arts, museums, opera and churches, and the different approaches to solicit funds.

We are living in “this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4), therefore an article entitled, “*In a World of Good Causes, Beware Waste and a Few Crooks.*” People have given freely to ‘Good Causes’, only to find that the great bulk of the money went for administration of the charity, and very little went to its designed recipients. Likewise, good causes can be used by dishonest people to line their own pockets.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

Only the feature article probed the motivation for giving, which to the LORD’s people is of utmost importance. What should be the proper motive for giving? Jesus gave the answer when a scribe came to him to ask a question. Jesus had skillfully answered questions posed by the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees—all trying to entrap him. This scribe observed that Jesus had answered well, and asked, “Which is the first commandment of all?” (Mark 12:28), doubtless referring to the Decalogue. Jesus replied that the first, the chief, of all the commandments is, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.”

Our Lord quoted from Deuteronomy 6:4-6. How wonderfully comprehensive the statement! Who today could more completely epitomize the great truth of this text? Heavenly wisdom was manifested in its first statement. The same heavenly wisdom was manifested in our Lord’s reference to it. He added nothing, because nothing could be added.

The Bible reveals forgiveness, which has been Divinely arranged through the giving of the precious blood of Christ as the Lamb of God. (John 1: 29) It also tells us that this forgiveness of sins is not merely for the church, the elect—a little flock now being called out from the world—but that eventually the love of God will be manifested to all of his creatures. These will come to a knowledge of that Divine love in due time. They may renounce sin and accept the Divine provision—receiving in return, under Messiah's kingdom, the great blessing of restitution of mental, moral and physical perfection, lost through Father Adam's disobedience.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

Jesus elaborated on the scribe's original question, explaining that the second commandment stands related to the first; namely, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Mark 12:31) This law of God, now nearly four thousand years old, was indirectly made known through the Jews to other nations and peoples (Deut. 4:6-8), but none of them grasped its true import.

Truly everything in the law of God stamps it as Divine. How beautiful the world would be, with all its thorns, thistles and difficulties, if men were only able and willing to live up to these two grand laws—each man loving the Heavenly Father supremely, serving him with every power and talent, and loving his neighbor as himself, seeking to serve that neighbor as he might have opportunity! That would be Paradise. Thank God, this is what we are assured the world will yet be, when the Messianic kingdom is established.

The Divine arrangement which provided the death of Christ as an offset for Adam's sin has also provided the reign of Christ as the offset of the reign of sin and death. And the Divine promise assures us that ultimately all who love and desire righteousness and truth shall be blessed and perfected, and shall have everlasting life. It assures us also that the earth, God's 'footstool', will be made glorious, during the millennial reign of Messiah. Eventually all lovers of sin, refusing to make progress in righteousness, will be destroyed from among the people. (Acts 3:23) Thus will the happy day be ushered in for which we have so long prayed: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is done in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) Then will be fulfilled the promise that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, and the whole earth be filled with the glory of God.—Phil. 2:11

"NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM"

The scribe was impressed, and conceded the truth of Jesus' answer. He said, "Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God!"—Mark 12: 32-34

By this the Master meant that the scribe was very near to the point where he might become one of his disciples—one of those waiting for the kingdom, hoping for it, striving for it, preparing for it. It was such 'Israelites indeed' (John 1:47), in whom was no guile, that Jesus especially sought to gather

from among the Jewish people, preparatory to throwing open to the Gentiles the door to kingdom privileges. The Jews understood that at his coming Messiah would select a kingdom class, to which would be granted Divine power. This is what Jesus was doing. His words, his teachings, were drawing some and repelling others.

All the sincere and the honest hearted are like this young scribe—‘not far from the kingdom’. If their honesty and sincerity led them to zeal to know and to do the will of the Father, then they will be blessed; for “the secret of the LORD is with them that fear [reverence] him; and he will shew them his covenant.”—Ps. 25:14

THE WIDOW’S MITE

It was Jesus’ turn to ask a question, which he did, the question being one concerning Christ being David’s son and Lord. The Mark account makes it appear that he asked the large crowd listening to him (Mark 12:35-37), but the account in Matthew 22:41-46 says that he asked the question of the Pharisees. To the delight of the crowd listening, they could not answer him. Jesus then warned the throng of the pride and hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees.

These events served as a background for the observations Jesus made of those putting their money into the treasury and of the widow’s mites placed there. What was the motivation for these donations? For any donation to be fully acceptable it had to be accompanied by a love for God—and not for God alone, but for all mankind. It is such motivation that the Father is seeking from his people,

for such was the motivation of this widow—which Jesus knew, because he could read her heart.

This little incident shows us the Heavenly Father's appreciation of sacrifices and services. It is not the great things that any of us do, or attempt to do, that he highly esteems. The very least affairs of our lives, the small sacrifices, and the insignificant self-denials that would, in the world's sight be nothing, in the Master's sight will be great if they denote a devotion and self-sacrifice to God and his cause. Jesus was able to see this motivation in the widow, and of her it could be said, as it was of Mary when she anointed our Lord with costly perfume, "She hath done what she could."—Mark 14:3-8. See also John 12:1-8.

The widow and her mite is an appropriate picture of the consecration of a class being called out of the world to be joint-heirs with Christ. The Apostle James describes them as "the poor of this world rich in faith." (James 2:5) Upon consecration to God we give all that we have. God in turn gives those things back to us and appoints us stewards over these, with the advice to use our possessions wisely and well in his service. This not only includes our wealth, time and talents, but also our entire being.

We cannot be sure, but it is possible that this widow became a consecrated follower of Christ in the Early Church. Of such self-sacrificing people God makes disciples. Do we love the LORD enough, and our neighbors as ourselves, to give all we have daily, until we finish our course? If we do, and succeed, we shall have an abundant entrance "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—II Pet. 1:11 ■

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR JUNE 7

WHAT IS THE POINT?

KEY VERSE: *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”—Ecclesiastes 12:13,14*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Ecclesiastes 1:1-3; 2:1, 2,10-13; 4:1-3; 12:1,13-14*

VANITY OF VANITIES, says the Teacher, Vanity of vanities! All is vanity. What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun?” (Eccles. 1:2,3, *New Revised Standard Version*) So laments an old and cynical Solomon, while looking back over his extraordinary life, and concluding that in it there is little of lasting substance.

Solomon immersed himself in all the pleasures and enjoyments that one could have as a king, but in the end concluded that the ac-

cumulation of material things and the pursuit of pleasure brings only frustration and emptiness. (Eccles. 2:1-4,10-15) He observed with heartache the “tears” of the “oppressed” (Eccles. 4:1-3) who are comfortless in the face of the power of their oppressors, concluding that it would have been best not to be born.

These conclusions were in stark contrast to the prevailing wisdom in Israel which preached an exalted role of man in God’s Creation and placed an empha-

sis upon human reason, experience, responsibility and decision making. This traditional wisdom claimed that those making wise, moral decisions would find life to be good, while those choosing unwisely would find life to be destructive. While acquiring great 'wisdom' during his life, Solomon ultimately found that contrary to popular belief, traditional wisdom was only vanity.

So, what is the point? Is there no good news in the Book of Ecclesiastes? At first the answer seems to be, "No." Solomon reveals himself as a realist and a cynic who speaks of death as bringing relief from the experience of human cruelty and folly, and seeing the wicked prosper. Despite this revelation, there is good news in God's Word. First, we are encouraged to receive each day of life as a gift from God. In five chapters (2:24-26; 3:13,22; 5:18-20; 8:15; 9:7-10) the Teacher exhorts us to embrace life and receive its simple pleasures—such as knowledge and joy; eating and drinking; daily labor; marriage and friendship—

as gifts from the hand of God. Jesus gave similar advice to his disciples (Matt. 6:24-34), admonishing us to trust God for our daily needs rather than to rely on our own wisdom or the works of our hands.

The second good news follows the first. The warning in Ecclesiastes about the vanity of the pursuit of pleasure and the acquisition of material things prepares us to hear Jesus' words: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matt. 16: 26) Solomon's remarks about death, a great anxiety to man, prepares us to hear Jesus' promise: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John 11: 25) So it is that this book has been written for our admonition. With its realistic expression of the injustices of life, it helps prepare us to receive the hope-filled and life-affirming promises of the one who said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."—John 10:10 ■

WHY SERVE GOD?

KEY VERSE: *“The LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.”—Job 2:3*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Job 1:1-11; 2:3-6; 3:1-3*

WHILE IT HAS been said that it is easy to believe in God when we are healthy and prosperous, the real test of our faith occurs when we are confronted by suffering and tragedy. The Book of Job has as a theme this question of the adversity of a righteous man, and how those afflictions affect his relationship with, and trust in God. How can the experiences of Job help us to understand the hardships of innocent people, and permit them to serve God during painful times of stress and difficulty?

God asks Satan to consider his faithful servant Job, “There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” (Job 1:18, *New International Version*) Satan, “the accuser” (Rev. 12:10) or the “Adversary” (I Pet. 5:8), sees this as an opportunity to show that human behavior is based on selfish motives. And to prove this, he challenges God to take away Job’s wealth and family. God permits Satan to test Job, saying, “All that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not

forth thine hand.”—Job 1:12

When Job remains faithful to God after losing all his wealth and family (vss. 9-22), Satan issues a more personal challenge: “Skin for skin! . . . Stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.” (Job 2:4,5, *NIV*) Again God allows Satan to test Job, saying, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”—Job 2:6, *NIV*

When Satan then “afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head” (Job 2:7, *NIV*), Job rebuffs his wife’s advice to “curse God, and die,” saying, “What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.”—vss. 9, 10, *NIV*) The pain finally convinces Job that it would have been better had he never been born, and he expressed it this way: “After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.” He said, “May the day of my birth perish.”—Job 3:1-3, *NIV*

For centuries Christian people have identified with Job’s words in Chapter 3, that show his conclusion that death is better than severe suffering. This becomes Job’s main question throughout the rest of the book, just as it has been the main question of many people. As Job states his case to God in Job 7:20, “If I have sinned, what have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you made me your target? Have I become a burden to you?”—*NIV*

Job’s feelings are expressed well in Chapter 3, and other places throughout the book, and he admits his lack of understanding of his experiences. However, Job reaffirms his strong trust in God, saying: “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: . . . He also shall be my salvation.”—Job 13:15,16

Job’s honesty about his feelings—his anger—shows his passion. Although he was in ignorance of God’s plans, yet he displays the zeal desired of God. We must maintain our faith! We must continue to serve God faithfully! ■

LESSON FOR JUNE 21

WHO IS TO BLAME?

KEY VERSE: *"I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God."*—Job 13:3

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Job 2:11; 4:1,6-7; 8:1-6; 13:1-4

FROM THE BEGINNING of human experience, man has generally sought to find blame whenever pain and suffering are encountered. When punished for their disobedience in the Garden of Eden, Adam blamed Eve, and Eve accused the serpent. From that day forward it has been a downward spiral of 'who should be blamed?' Job's three friends had a ready and simple answer; but it is not as simple as they would have us believe!

After traveling great distances to console their friend, Job's 'comforters' at first appear to be noble characters. Sitting silently for seven days (Job 2:13) to show their solidarity with

him in his insufferable pain is an impressive demonstration of sympathy and grief. Unfortunately their sympathy does not last long. One by one, they chide him for ignoring the plain truth of the matter, that he is being punished for sins against God.

Eliphaz is the first to speak. Claiming to speak absolute truth, he propounds the traditional theory of retribution, which holds that God punishes the sinner and rewards the righteous. His conclusion in Job 4:7, allows for no exceptions, including Job: "Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?"

(*New International Version*) Bildad is next to speak and echoes Eliphaz, saying: sin and suffering, righteousness and prosperity, are cause and effect. Because of his great suffering, Job must be guilty before God, and the only hope for his restoration is to repent and beg for God's forgiveness and mercy. Speaking arrogantly, as if he knows the mind of God, he adds to Job's suffering by deciding that Job's children also must have been guilty of sin or God would not have sent them to their death.—Job 1:19

Finally, Zophar picks up where Bildad leaves off. While exaggerating Job's claim of innocence in relation to his disproportionate suffering, Zophar says he speaks for God (Job 11:4-6) and to know the intricacies of how God judges Job. He condemns Job, saying that as bad as his suffering may be, it would be far worse if God punished him to the degree that Job's guilt really deserves.

With friends like these, who needs enemies? When friends are truly suffering, sometimes silent support

is all they need. Job says as much along this line in Job 13:5: "Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace! And it should be your wisdom." Instead, all three presume to speak for God, urging Job to admit his wrongdoing, confess his sins, and repent so God would restore his prosperity. In so doing, they show no sensitivity to Job's real need and deep suffering.

Even if they had all the right answers to Job's plight—which they did not—the time to present those answers was not when Job was at the lowest point of his emotional and physical suffering. What Job needed more from his friends was their loyalty and understanding, not self-righteous advice and he refused to embrace this philosophy in the way it was applied by his friends.

Job never claims to be free of sin. He simply pleads that he has not committed such grievous sins as could warrant the severity of his suffering. The prophet asks for a hearing before God. He is confident that God will judge him in gentleness and mercy. ■

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

KEY VERSE: *"Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee."*—Job 42:1,2

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Job 38:1-7; 42:1-6,10

BEWILDERED BY HIS severe suffering, and receiving no comfort from his friends, Job repeatedly demands a hearing before God, confident that he would be vindicated. (Job 13:3,22; 23:3-7) He envisions a court-like setting where he could plead his case, but when his anticipated meeting with God arrives, Job receives the surprise of his life! Suddenly Job gets his request, only it is now God who demands a hearing, and God who asks the questions!

God answers Job "out of the whirlwind" (Job 38:1), symbolic of God's power

and mystery. The chaos of the whirlwind demonstrates something beyond Job's control, showing God's ability to come and go as he pleases, and not in response to our demands.

In the face of such power, Job is immediately humbled by God's words, "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?" (Job 38:2, *New International Version*) This is the same indictment Job had used against his three friends; wordiness and arrogance. 'Words without knowledge' refers to Job's many accusations against God

parently causing his suffering without a just reason.

God throws a steady stream of questions at Job relating to Creation, which he is unable to answer. (Job 38:4) The purpose of the questioning appears to be to humble Job, and to help him realize his folly in presuming to be as God, or in thinking he has a right to demand that God explain his suffering.

This line of questioning had an enlightening effect on Job, and his answer, in chapter 42, shows his increased understanding of God. "Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. . . . My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you." (vss. 3,5, *New International Version*) Having seen God with his 'eyes' indicates that Job experienced God's presence and came away with a deeper understanding of his total control over man's affairs.

As a result, Job no longer asked "why" this happened to him, because he knew "who" was directing the issues of his life. Job's ultimate peace came not

from getting answers to his questions. Rather, Job's peace came from not needing to know the answers, and by placing his trust totally in the Almighty Creator, assured that his purposes cannot be "thwarted."—Job 42:2, *NIV*

Here is the key to understanding the plight of Job: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—Isa. 55:8,9

Just as Solomon learned to give thanks to God for his daily gifts whether great or small, Job finally realized that faith in the Almighty Creator was the true source of peace.

The Holy Spirit reveals God's plan—the mystery of God's wisdom has been unveiled so that we can understand the reason for the permission of suffering and evil. It is not punishment for individual sins. It is God's eternal plan of the ages to teach us the exceeding sinfulness of sin. ■

FOLLOWING THE MASTER

***“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect,
go and sell that thou hast, and give to the
poor, and thou shalt have treasure in
heaven: and come and follow me.”***

Matthew 19:21

AN INDISPENSABLE REQUIREMENT in the life of one who consecrates to follow the Master is a vital relationship to the mind of God—a relationship which establishes and maintains the strongest possible communion with the great source of spiritual power. This will necessitate insulation from the world, from its false lures of ambition, wealth and fame. The man of God will say with the apostle: “This one thing I do. . . . I press toward the mark.” (Phil. 3:13,14) The most potent of all testimonies is that of example. The Christian’s affections should be set on things above; he should have only one mind, the mind of Christ. (Col. 3:1,2; Phil. 2:5) His attitude should be like the Apostle Paul’s, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (I Cor.

11:1) Foremost, he must be a follower of our Lord, and a fearless ambassador of the King of kings.

He who would follow the Master must have a vision. In Ezekiel 13:3 we find a reference to prophets who "have seen nothing." The Prophet Isaiah received a vision of the future. Beholding the glory of God in that power which he is yet to reveal to all, he could say, "Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:8), because, in pictorial representation he had seen the fulfillment of the great eternal purpose, the consummation of God's plan. The inauguration of Christ's reign will bring righteousness, truth, and love—based on Biblical promises which cannot fail.

SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

Have we caught Isaiah's vision, or that of Abraham, Ezekiel and Paul—all picturing an era when God shall make all things new by marvelous secrets of life opened up through Biblical instruction enlightening the mind? Have we caught a vision of the means God will employ to perform his work? Have we seen that God's plan is the great secret of the Bible, and that our risen, exalted Lord is the seed of Abraham long foretold by the prophets? Do we realize that we may be of this seed, and may thus confer the greatest conceivable blessings on suffering mankind? (Gal. 3:29) If so, God has sent us a degree of truth that has come to but few, and we have cause for joy indeed, for we know "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed" in those that follow the Master faithfully unto the end.—Rom. 8:18

The Christian should have great compassion on mankind in their sorrows and sufferings. He

should have a broad outlook and see humanity as it is, for this will most accurately show him its needs. What does he want to do for the billions of souls who have lived on this planet? Regarding the Master, we are told that he pitied the multitude, for they were as "sheep not having a shepherd." (Mark 6:34) As Jesus felt the burden of the world's woes, so should his servants grow in love and understanding, and each will continue praying, "Thy kingdom come" (Matt. 6:10), endeavoring to be an example of the righteousness of that kingdom in his daily life.

In the Divine economy, nothing is lost in the lives of those who are faithful. Every tear, every pang, is for a purpose. The Christian should have comfort for sorrowing hearts, even "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."—Isa. 61:3

PROBLEMS FOR US ALL

We see mighty, irresistible, transforming forces at work, and the coming birth of a new era preceded by the birth pangs of the approaching time of trouble.—Matt. 24:6-8

Never since man was created have such questions arisen as confront the world today. All these the Christian should answer with the viewpoint of the Word of God. While he catches the true light and lets it shine, he can be assured that others will see his good works and glorify their Father which is in heaven—in due time.—Matt. 5:16

He who follows the Master puts truth first. It is his great guiding star of life. He never subordinates it to anything else. It is his most sacred possession; for is not love itself a part of truth? He studies the Bible, not to read into it products of his

own imagination nor to pervert it and bring portions of the Scriptures into line with some pleasing theory; but he studies the Bible to find out what it has to say. His attitude toward it is truly humble and reverential. Before its mighty truths he feels as a little child. Often he prays for wisdom, and offers this beautiful prayer: "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation."—Ps. 25:5

ALLUREMENTS FOR THE UNWARY

The disciple of Jesus realizes how important is the exhortation of the apostle: "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." (Heb. 2:1) The Christian's wily foe, Satan, actively pursues the follower of Christ and tries gradually to lure his feet into forbidden paths. He masks them in the guise of truth, pretending to be the servant of God. He appears as an angel of light. (II Cor. 11:14) 'New light' is one of his lures. As a 'fisherman', he uses 'bait' which he dangles before the face of his intended victim. He knows well its powerful appeal. Thus stealthily he draws the gaze to some other head than the true Head, to some other teachings than that of the Word of the living God; and lo, the 'fish' is caught!

Before the Christian began to follow Jesus along the course of discipleship, the Master said to him, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build,

and was not able to finish. . . . So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:27-33) This scripture emphasizes that the way is narrow and difficult.

To sacrifice all that he had was no easy thing for Jesus, nor was it easy for the apostles, nor has it been easy for anyone who has undertaken to follow the Master—from Pentecost to the present time. It is still true that the darkness hateth the light and will not come to the light lest its deeds should be reproved or discovered. (John 3:20, *Marginal Translation*) It is apparent that the Adversary of truth is still diligently "seeking whom he may devour." (I Pet. 5:8) It is evident that we "walk by faith" and not by sight (II Cor. 5:7), and that we may need to take unto us the "whole armour of God" that we may be able to "withstand in the evil day, and, having done [*Marginal Translation*, 'overcome'] all, to stand."—Eph. 6:13

To be able 'to withstand', to hold our own, to maintain our position on the solid ground of truth to which we were called, will test our every power of endurance. The prince of darkness knows that certain ones have the truth, and he wants to take it away from them. He will, therefore, stop at nothing to accomplish his purpose, and will try to instill dissatisfaction and restlessness into the mind. He will endeavor to send us abroad into the realms that seem bright with promise, but which will eventually prove to be a delusion and a snare. To be able to hold our ground against all opposition means the possession of great qualities. It means to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (II Tim. 2:3) It means a crystallized determination to succeed.

Following the Master not only consists of fighting foes within and without, of overcoming temptation, of keeping our all on the altar of sacrifice, but it also means what the apostle calls, "Joy unspeakable and full of glory." (I Pet. 1:8) Who indeed can sing like the Christian:

*"I'm happy, I'm happy! Oh wondrous account!
My joys are triumphant, I stand on the Mount!" ■*



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JUNE 4—"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—I Peter 1:7 (Z. '95-135 Hymn 197)

JUNE 11—"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended."—Philippians 3:13 (Z. '95-250 Hymn 196)

JUNE 18—"In thy [Jehovah's] presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—Psalm 16:11 (Z. '96-54 Hymn 337)

JUNE 25—"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."—Colossians 4:2 (Z. '96-163 Hymn 241)

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

THE PLAN OF GOD IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS— PART 12

SEEKING A BRIDE FOR ISAAC

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

VERSE 1 “And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.”

Two points are revealed in this verse: Abraham was now old—‘well stricken in age’; and the LORD had blessed him ‘in all things’. At this time Abraham was 140 years old: his wife, Sarah, had been dead for three years; and Isaac was now forty years of age. While he had made mistakes, it was still true that the LORD had blessed him in all things, for, because of the covenant the LORD had made with Abraham, his providences overshadowed him continually. No testimony more worthwhile could be given of any servant of God than that which is here stated concerning Abraham. What life could be more rich and more satisfactory than one which the LORD blesses ‘in all things’!

VERSES 2-6 “And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put. I pray thee. thy hand under my thigh:

“And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

“But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

“And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?

“And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.”

The ‘eldest servant’ of Abraham’s house was Eliezer (Gen. 15:2), although his name is not mentioned in this chapter. He was not only his chief servant, but before the birth of Isaac, Abraham had decided to make him his chief heir. But the LORD corrected him in this and gave instructions that one of his own children must be his heir.—Gen. 15:4

Abraham was very solicitous that Isaac should not marry one of the Canaanites, but that a bride should be secured for him from among his own people. At the same time, for some reason not explained in the chapter, he did not want Isaac to go personally to his kinsfolk in Mesopotamia to find a wife, so he decided upon the course here outlined: namely, that of sending his chief servant to seek a bride for his son.

The fact that Abraham occupied such an important position in connection with the outworking of God’s plan, and that Isaac was the seed of promise, justifies the student in the assumption that the manner in which a bride was secured for the promised seed is intended to be illustrative of a still more important feature of the plan of God: namely, the

manner in which a 'bride' is found for Christ, the antitypical Isaac and the true spiritual seed of Abraham.

In this beautiful picture it seems reasonable to conclude that Abraham represented the Heavenly Father; Isaac, the Lord Jesus; and Eliezer, the Holy Spirit. It is through the work of the Holy Spirit of God, as it operates through the truth—which is the calling agency—that the church, the bride of Christ, is sought out and enabled to make the journey over the narrow way to her Heavenly Bridegroom, Christ Jesus.

VERSES 7-9 "The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

"And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.

"And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter."

Abraham had great faith that Eliezer's mission would be successful. God had blessed him, and he was sure that the same God would send his angel before Eliezer to direct in this important undertaking. And how true it is that, in the exercise of his influence, his power (the Holy Spirit), the LORD can and does make use of every necessary agency, or messenger, to accomplish his good purposes.

Abraham assured his servant that if he followed instruction and failed in his mission he would

be released from the covenant that he had made to find a bride for Isaac from among his master's own people. All of the LORD's people during the Gospel Age cooperate with the Holy Spirit in seeking and finding a bride for Christ: and Abraham's willingness to release his servant from responsibility for lack of success if he did the best he could, might suggest to us that we are responsible only for our best efforts to carry out the LORD's commission of service, not for the results we might or might not achieve.

VERSES 10-14 "And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

"And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.

"And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham.

"Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

"And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master."

In these verses is revealed what was probably one of the principal reasons that Eliezer had been

made the chief servant in his Master's household, for they reveal that he believed in Abraham's God and was glad to look to him for guidance and blessing in the undertaking assigned him by his master. Doubtless Eliezer sensed that this mission was one which had further to do with the covenant God had made with Abraham; and having witnessed the marvelous manner in which God had blessed his master up to this point, he believed that he would continue to do so. Hence he looked to Abraham's God in confidence that he would guide him to the proper maiden to be Isaac's bride.

VERSES 15-28 "And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

"And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

"And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

"And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

"And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

"And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water: and drew for all his camels.

“And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

“And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold;

“And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father’s house for us to lodge in?

“And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.

“She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

“And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

“And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master’s brethren.

“And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother’s house these things.”

Abraham’s servant outlined a plan in his mind by which he would be able to determine the LORD’s leading. Arriving in Mesopotamia, he halted by a well just outside the city of Nahor. It was apparently the custom of maidens to secure water for their households and Eliezer reasoned that here he would have a good opportunity to meet the one for whom he was looking.

It was at this well of water that Abraham’s servant found Rebekah—found her drawing water,

and glad to serve those in need. The spirit of service is one of the chief characteristics of those called by the Holy Spirit to be members of the antitypical Isaac's bride. They are not only found near the great fountain of truth—as represented by the well—but are on the alert to use every opportunity possible to refresh others with its sparkling waters—the exceeding great and precious promises of God which make up the Divine plan of the ages.

Upon inquiry Eliezer learned that Rebekah was indeed one of his master's own people. Also, in addition to being glad to serve him with water, she manifested further her desire to serve through her gracious hospitality. Like Abraham, who entertained angels unawares, Rebekah, unknown to her then, urged a messenger of the LORD to take lodging with them, saying, 'We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in'.

Receiving this cordial invitation, Eliezer bowed down and worshiped the LORD. How appropriate! Too often, perhaps, we think more of the means the LORD uses to bless us than we do of him. Nor did Eliezer overlook the fact that God was blessing his mission because of Abraham, and in addressing him in prayer said, 'Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren'.

James tells us that Abraham was called a "friend of God" (James 2:23), and what a wonderful testimony Eliezer gave to the effect that God does not leave his friends destitute of mercy and truth! Quite apart from his earthly possessions, Abraham was the richest man of his day simply because God

had entered into a covenant with him and had revealed to him that portion of his plan which was then due to be understood. And how rich are we today whose eyes of understanding have been opened to see and appreciate the length and breadth and height and depth of the Divine plan to bless all the families of earth, in keeping with the promise made to Abraham.

Eliezer gave Rebekah a 'jewel for the forehead' (*Margin*), and bracelets. These might symbolize spiritual blessings which all receive when they begin to respond to the influences of the Holy Spirit through the truth. Rebekah displayed enthusiasm over what was occurring, and ran to inform her family. Enthusiasm for the LORD and for the truth is another trait essential to all those who will eventually become members of the antitypical bride class.

VERSES 29-31 "And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.

"And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.

"And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels."

Laban, Rebekah's brother, displayed great interest in the one she had invited into the home. Before he confirmed his sister's invitation, however, he seemingly made sure that Eliezer was not

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(Continued from Page 31)

an impostor. He noted the jewelry he had given to Rebekah, and listened to her testimony of what the visitor had said, and was convinced.

Evidently Abraham was not the only one in his family who trusted in the true God; and it would seem also that Eliezer's manner of expression in connection with the God of Abraham, was familiar to Rebekah and Laban, for he said to their visitor, 'Come in, thou blessed of the LORD'.

VERSES 32-54 "And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.

"And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.

"And he said, I am Abraham's servant.

"And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.

"And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.

"And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell:

"But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.

"And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.

"And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper

thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house:

"Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath.

"And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go:

"Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink;

"And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son.

"And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.

"And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.

"And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.

"And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son.

"And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

"Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.

"Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken.

"And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth.

"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.

"And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master."

Eliezer was extended every courtesy in the home of Rebekah's people. Food was at once set before him, but for the moment he had more important things on his mind than satisfying his hunger. The LORD had blessed him so wonderfully in leading him to this home that now he wanted to settle the matter at once as to whether or not the arrangements could be consummated. This show of hospitality and desire to serve by Rebekah and Laban might quickly change when they learned the real purpose of his mission.

So, before he would eat, he insisted on telling his story. He started in by identifying himself as Abraham's servant. It had been many years since they had seen or heard from Abraham and when

they learned that his chief servant was now under their roof, they were overjoyed and anxious for Eliezer to proceed with his story. Then he explained the real purpose of his mission, going into great detail as to the exact manner in which the LORD's providences had guided him up to this point.

Having set the facts before the family, Eliezer put the matter right up to them as to whether or not they were willing to cooperate. In telling them the story, he stressed the thought of the LORD's directing hand in the matter, and when Laban answered his pointed question concerning their willingness for Rebekah to accompany him back to Canaan and to Isaac, he said, 'The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken'.

Hearing this reply, Eliezer again 'worshipped the LORD'. Then he gave further gifts of jewelry to Rebekah, as well as clothing; bestowing gifts also on Laban and their mother. This seems to represent the additional blessings which come to the prospective members of the bride class when they come to the point of decision to walk in the narrow way; and also the blessings which come even to members of their families who cooperate with rather than oppose, those who make a consecration of their all to follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit.

VERSES 55-60 "And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.

"And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.

“And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth.

“And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

“And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham’s servant, and his men.

“And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.”

Eliezer remained but the one night in this hospitable home. He arose early the next morning, and asked that he be permitted to leave at once for the return journey. But when Rebekah’s mother and brother were faced with her actual and sudden departure, it was seemingly more of a shock to them than they had expected, for they pleaded with Eliezer that she remain with them for a while—at least ten days. The *Margin* indicates “a full year, or ten months.” The betrothal of a year was customary in those days. But Eliezer insisted on the importance of being on his way.

Then they said to their visitor that they would call Rebekah, and let her decide the matter. If she was willing to start right away, they would not hinder her. This was done, and when the matter was put before her, she said, ‘I will go’.

How beautifully this represents the attitude of those who become members of the antitypical bride class! It is the spirit of true and prompt consecration. Through the truth, these learn about the love of God and the love of Christ. They learn that Christ is the One “altogether lovely” (Song of Sol. 5:16), full of grace and truth. They learn of their privilege of following the leadings of the Holy Spirit

and eventually reaching the heavenly Canaan to be forever with the LORD. They hear the Holy Spirit, through the truth, saying to them, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty." (Ps. 45:10,11), and, like Rebekah, they respond, 'I will go'.

While it was apparently the custom of the day for the family to have some say in the matter of who the daughters would marry, the final decision, apparently, was left up to them. At least it was so in the case of Rebekah. And, having made the decision favorable to Isaac, the mother and brother blessed Rebekah, and said to her: 'Be thou the mother of thousands of millions.' (vs. 60) This, in reality, is a prophecy. The antitypical Rebekah class, the bride of Christ, will, in association with him, be the channel of blessing through which life will come to the entire race—easily, 'thousands of millions'!

VERSES 61-67 "And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

"And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country.

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming.

"And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.

"For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the

servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself.

“And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.

“And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.”

Rebekah and her maidens—servants—made the journey to Isaac on camels. These might well represent the Word of God, or the various doctrines of his Word, which support the prospective members of the antitypical bride-to-be, as they make their journey to him. Only a wholehearted love for the LORD and a well-grounded faith in the “exceeding great and precious promises” (II Pet. 1:4) of his Word will carry us through to the end of the journey, joyful in our anticipation of being finally accepted into glory with our Beloved, the King of Glory.

In the antitype, it is not an individual who becomes the bride of Christ, but the entire church class, beginning with those accepted at Pentecost, and continuing even until now. Rebekah’s journey would, therefore, represent the journey of the church throughout the entire Gospel Age.

As Eliezer brought Rebekah safely to the end of her journey, and to the presence of Isaac at Lahai-roi, so the Holy Spirit guides the church to the end of her journey, even to the presence (the *parousia*) of Christ. How stimulating it is to realize that now we are in the time of his presence—that already the majority of the bride class no longer needs its camels, and that those still this side the veil have the assurance that their deliverance

draweth near, and that they, too, soon will be with their Lord, the Heavenly Bridegroom, in glory!—
Luke 21:28 ■



“O ZION, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

“Behold, the LORD God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

“He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

“Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

“Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?

“With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?”—*Isaiah 40:9-14*

GOD'S GIFTS TO THE FAITHFUL

*"God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but
of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."
II Timothy 1:7*

EVERY PRECIOUS TEXT of the Bible is like a rare jewel, which by itself is brilliantly beautiful, yet the more glorious when viewed in the light of its setting. This is certainly true of the text which heads this article. We know that God has not given his people the spirit of fear, and we know that he has given them the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, yet these blessed assurances take on an added depth of meaning when examined in the light of the subject matter of which they are a part, and the background of the epistle in which they appear.

What is that background? The epistle was written by Paul during his last imprisonment in Rome, and shortly before he was executed—at a time when he knew that he was to be put to death. It is therefore in the nature of a farewell message

to Timothy and to the church. "I am now ready to be offered," he wrote, "and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—II Tim. 4:6-8

The epistle indicates that Timothy was planning to visit Paul before he was executed, and the apostle encouraged him to carry out his plan. Paul knew—and so did Timothy—that there was a certain amount of risk attached to an undertaking of this kind, but apparently Timothy was willing to hazard his life in order to encourage Paul in this great time of need. And Paul was quite willing to have him do so—indeed, he urged him to come.

There would seem to be a connection between this contemplated visit and the words of the apostle in the verse following our text, where he writes, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God." (II Tim. 1:8) These words are not outlining a mere theory, for they were written from the heart, and reveal the true attitude of Paul, and the experience of his entire Christian life. That life had been one of suffering, of privation, of weariness, of imprisonment; and now it was to be climaxed by violent death at the hands of pagan executioners. Yes, Paul had truly experienced the 'afflictions of the Gospel', but in so doing he had also experienced the 'power of God' to sustain him in his every time of need. God had given him the 'spirit of power'.

Now he was assuring Timothy that God would also strengthen him, that the Divine 'spirit of power' would be his ready helper, no matter how severe the 'afflictions of the Gospel' might become—and they are severe for all those who are truly faithful to the Gospel. No follower of the Master has known that better than did the Apostle Paul. Indeed, he was told about it right at the beginning of his walk in the narrow way. Concerning Paul the Lord said to Ananias, "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."—Acts 9:16

This statement was verified throughout Paul's entire Christian life, for it was almost continuously marked by suffering. Nor did he ever try to sidestep the opportunity of suffering with Christ. That which directed every decision of his life was not how it would affect him, but what the will of the LORD might be, and oftentimes the will of the LORD directed him to do things and to go to places which the apostle knew in advance would lead to suffering.

A notable example of this was when he was journeying to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit testified that bonds and imprisonment awaited him there. The brethren, who had less spiritual discernment than did the apostle, interpreted these testimonies of the Holy Spirit to be warnings from the LORD, a definite indication that he should not go to Jerusalem. But Paul disagreed. He decided, and properly so, that the LORD was testing him by giving him this further opportunity to suffer for his name's sake, so he said to his advisers, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."—Acts 21:13

Paul went to Jerusalem, was imprisoned, and by his own choice appealed his case to Rome, knowing that it would prolong his bondage and perhaps lead to his death. Truly, Paul was a partaker of the 'afflictions of the Gospel', not because he was unable to escape persecution, but because his faithfulness to his covenant led him to the forefront of the battle against the powers of darkness. In this he followed the example of Jesus, who voluntarily laid down his life for the sins of the people and to the glory of God.

SUSTAINED BY GOD'S POWER

Paul, like every other follower of the Master, could not have walked the Christian way alone. He struggled and suffered and endured only because God gave him the spirit of 'power'. And the apostle could rely on the "everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27) always being underneath and around him to sustain and to comfort, for God had promised that it would be so, and each day of his life of faithful service this promise was verified over and over again.

God had promised in many meaningful ways to give Paul, and all of his people, power and strength. "They that wait upon the LORD," wrote the prophet, "shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."—Isa. 40:31

Paul had experienced the fulfillment of this and the many other promises of help in time of need, that he could write so confidently to Timothy—even when facing the executioner's axe—that God gives his people the spirit of power. God does

not give the 'spirit of fear', he wrote. It was this spirit that had caused some to forsake Paul in his hour of need. (II Tim. 1:15; 4:10,16,17) But not all had thus succumbed to the spirit of fear. Onesiphorus was one who had remained loyal in the face of danger, and concerning him the apostle wrote: "He oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me."—II Tim. 1:16,17

What a beautiful compliment to Brother Onesiphorus! This humble brother in the LORD could not be an apostle, but he shared in the apostle's ministry by his willingness—at the risk of his life—to stand by Paul and encourage him. This was doubtless one of the ways that the LORD gave Paul the 'spirit of power', for he uses his consecrated people to strengthen one another. Those who are fearful, however, cannot thus be used by the LORD.

There is, of course, a proper fear for a Christian to possess. Paul speaks of it, saying, "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) Here the word 'fear' is used to describe an alertness which we should all exercise in connection with the carrying out of every detail of our covenant of sacrifice. We should have a genuine concern lest, by carelessness, or for some other reason, we come short of doing the whole will of God. But fear, in the sense of being afraid of what the consequences of faithfulness might be to the flesh, does not come from the LORD, but from Satan.

Knowing that God had given him the spirit of power, Paul also knew that he would do the same for Timothy, hence urged him to carry out his good

intention of coming to see him in his prison home. In the apostle's own heart and mind there was not a shadow of doubt about the LORD's willingness and ability to sustain him all the way to the end. I "am persuaded," he wrote, "that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (II Tim. 1:12) Being persuaded of this for himself, he was also persuaded of it for Timothy; for he knew that if Timothy was faithful to his covenant, God would also give him the 'spirit of power' which would enable him to endure whatever experiences might come to him as a result. What a blessed assurance!

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

The LORD also gives his people the 'spirit of love'. In this connection the apostle seems to be speaking of the spirit of love particularly from the standpoint of its being the motive which induces the Christian to choose a path of sacrifice and suffering. Love is a godly motive, exhibited by the Creator's own sacrifice on behalf of humanity when he "gave" his dearly beloved Son to die for the sins of the people. Concerning this we read that "God so loved the world, that he "gave his only begotten Son." (John 3:16) The natural desire of fallen man is to protect his own interests, and to acquire that which he thinks will give him security and happiness. If one voluntarily takes a course in life which means giving and sacrificing and suffering, and finally death, there must be a strong motive for so doing.

There could be various motives to inspire one to sacrifice. Patriotism leads some to lay down their lives. In other cases, the supposed glory of martyrdom has been a motive. Paul indicates the possibil-

ity of one giving all his goods to feed the poor, and even of giving his body to be burned, yet not having love as the motive. But in such a case, the apostle writes, "it profiteth me nothing."—I Cor. 13:3

Paul knew that one of the terms of the narrow way was that of giving all one's goods to feed the poor, for Jesus had so stated it to the rich young ruler. (Luke 18:18-30) He knew also that, symbolically speaking, a Christian must give his body to be burned. (Heb. 13:11-13) Paul was not one to set aside these terms of Christian discipleship, and he is not doing it in this Corinthian epistle. He is merely pointing out the importance of being prompted by the proper motive when we lay down our lives in the Lord's service.

A service rendered to another from a wrong motive might conceivably be a benefit to the one served. It was evidently this that Paul had in mind when he wrote to the Philippians, saying, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."—Phil. 1:15-18

When Jesus said to the rich young ruler that he should sell all he possessed and give the proceeds to the poor, he added, "and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." (Luke 18:22) But Paul explains that in order for this to be so, the sacrifice must be motivated by love, else it 'profiteth' us nothing. This is an important principle to remember. Our service in preaching the Gospel at the present time is not so

much the blessing it will bring to others—although those who have a hearing ear find it for their good, for it is the means by which the bride makes herself ready.—Rev. 19:7

In other words, the true endeavor of a Christian should be to become godlike, and God is love, and because God is love, he gave. So with us, if, through the Divine plan of the ages God has given us a vision of himself and of his love, and we are inspired by that vision to give as he gave, then our work of sacrifice will not only bless others, but will result in laying up treasures in heaven for ourselves—it will profit us much, even “glory and honour and immortality.” (Rom. 2:7) How glad we should be, then, that God has given us the spirit of love, and thereby has inspired us to lay down our lives in his service. Paul rejoiced in this, even though it had resulted in his imprisonment, and would eventually result in his death.

THE SPIRIT OF A SOUND MIND

It is through the instructions of his Word that God gives us the spirit of a sound mind. The psalmist sums up this thought for us very beautifully, saying, “Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.” (Ps. 119:98-100) How true this is, and even in the material things of life the LORD’s people should be able to exercise better judgment than those who are not blessed by the guiding principles of the Word of God.

Soundness of mind, of judgment, was manifested by Jesus, and we should have the mind of Christ. It was evidently the example set for us by Jesus that the apostle had in mind when he wrote to Timothy that the LORD gives his people the spirit of 'a sound mind'. However, the apostle's viewpoint on the subject seems to be quite different from that of many of the LORD's people when they speak of exercising the spirit of a 'sound mind'.

Let us, by way of contrast, note that difference. At times we may be inclined to offer excuses for not attending the meetings this week because the weather is unfavorable, and it would not be the 'spirit of a . . . sound mind' thus to expose ourselves. Or we may offer excuses for not doing other things which clearly come within our privileges in carrying out the terms of our covenant of sacrifice with the LORD. Is this offering of excuses for unfaithfulness what the apostle meant by exercising the 'spirit of a . . . sound mind'?

Evidently not, for had it been, he would have advised Timothy not to undertake the hazardous effort to come and visit him in prison. Rather, he would have written to him that taking such a risk would not be exercising the spirit of a sound mind. Just the reverse of this is apparently what the apostle was urging Timothy to do, and assuring him that by so doing he *would* be exercising the spirit of a sound mind. This brings us face to face with the question of what soundness of mind really is from the Divine standpoint.

Again we observe that Jesus exercised soundness of mind in carrying out the terms of his covenant with the Heavenly Father, and certainly there is no way for us to manifest the spirit of a sound

mind other than faithfully to follow his example. Let us, then, explore the mind of Christ as we see it functioning in connection with some of the experiences of his life. Let us note, for example, what he said to the man who expressed a desire to become a disciple, but asked the Master to wait until he buried his father.

We, of course, do not understand all the customs of that day, and we know that other scriptures reveal clearly that every Christian has a certain responsibility toward those dependent upon him according to the ties of flesh. But aside from this, there is a straightforwardness about Jesus' reply to this man which is worthy of consideration. He said to him, "Let the dead bury their dead," it is your privilege to become a follower of me without delay. (Matt. 8:22) Perhaps some of us might have said to this man that what he suggested doing would be but the exercise of a 'spirit of a . . . sound mind', but Jesus did not say this. From the standpoint of worldly wisdom, Jesus' reply might seem unsound—radical, in fact—but because it was Jesus who said it, we have to accept it as a manifestation of true soundness, and therefore an example which should serve for our guidance.

Another occasion in the Master's life furnishes us with even a more striking example of the manner in which his mind viewed the privilege of sacrifice. It was when Peter advised him not to go to Jerusalem, where he would fall into the hands of his enemies and be put to death. "Be it far from thee, Lord" (Matt. 16:22), Peter said to the Master, and the thought he had in mind when offering this advice is what we might have told Jesus, but it

would not be exercising the 'spirit of a . . . sound mind'.

But Jesus did not agree with Peter. "Get thee behind me, Satan," was his rebuking reply to Peter. (Matt. 16:23) Then Jesus explained to this well-intentioned, but misguided, disciple that his advice was simply a human viewpoint—"Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Soundness of mind from the human standpoint would certainly have dictated that Jesus would be doing wrong—making a terrible mistake—to go to Jerusalem under the circumstances. But such is human wisdom, which is based upon self-interest and self-preservation.

Soundness of mind from God's standpoint is expressed in the Master's words—also spoken on this occasion—"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 16:25) From the human standpoint a philosophy of this kind seems very unsound, but it is expressive of a principle which, as Christians, we are to follow. It is a Divine principle, and the Master's expression of it, as well as the manner in which he applied it, are among the means by which our Heavenly Father has given us the spirit of a sound mind. For us to plan our lives contrary to this principle of sacrifice would mean that we were not exercising the spirit of a sound mind.

Paul was confronted with a similar situation to the one which tested the Master's willingness to lose his life sacrificially, when the Holy Spirit testified that bonds and imprisonment awaited him at Jerusalem. Paul accepted this opportunity of sacrifice in the same manner as Jesus. He expressed himself as being willing to die at Jerusalem if this

should be the LORD's will. His advisers, even as did Peter in the case of Jesus, urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem. These were influenced by the viewpoint of worldly wisdom, to the effect that one's first consideration should be to take care of himself.

"YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE"

Turning from the examples of Jesus and Paul, let us note a well-known statement by the apostle in Romans 12:1. In this scripture he speaks of a "reasonable service." What the apostle speaks of as 'reasonable' must of necessity be expressive of a sound mind, for when one is no longer able to reason, he is said to be of unsound mind. Obviously, therefore, what the apostle here speaks of as 'reasonable' would manifest what he describes in our text to be the 'spirit of a sound mind'. And what is it?

"I beseech you therefore, brethren," he writes, "... that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." In other words, soundness of mind on the part of a Christian can be manifested only in the presenting of himself and all that he has in sacrifice—the losing of his life, as Jesus expressed it. The mind that leads us to do this is the mind of Christ, for Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who . . . humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:5-8) And the mind of Christ was a sound mind.

Just as the LORD assures us of his sustaining power to strengthen us in our every time of need, and just as through his Word he inspires us with his love, so also through his Word he gives us the spirit of a sound mind. He has done this through

the types, by precept, by examples—the examples of Jesus, and Paul, and others who sacrificed their all in his service.

In Paul's farewell letter to Timothy, we find him urging this faithful disciple not to fear the results of faithfulness, but to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "It is a faithful saying," wrote Paul, "For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him." (II Tim. 2:1,3,11) Thus does the apostle verify the words of Jesus that if we lose our life in sacrifice with him, we will save it, and live with him and reign with him in his glorious kingdom to come.

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," wrote Paul. (II Tim. 3:12) We would be manifesting the spirit of an unsound mind were we to chart a course in life with the object of avoiding persecution and suffering, yet the mind of the flesh would have us so do. But let us strive to 'keep the body under' and be guided by the mind of Christ. This does not mean that we are to search for trouble, but it does mean that we should be faithful to the LORD, to the truth, and to the brethren, regardless of what the consequences to the flesh might be. This we will do if the LORD has given us the spirit of love. And we can be assured of the necessary strength to perform our covenant of sacrifice, for the LORD has also given us the 'spirit of power'—strength for every time of need. ■

One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, and to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple." Psalm 27:4

General Convention Bulletin

July 25-30, 1998 ~ Johnstown, Pennsylvania

THE THEME OF this year's General Convention will center around the work of the Harvest. Portions of the convention program will touch on various aspects of this general topic, including a discourse on the convention theme text, Exodus 4:2, "What is that in thine hand?"

In addition to the theme text, there will be a discourse on the assigned topic, "Early Work of the Harvest: 1874-1916", and a panel discussion on the subject "The Harvest Work Today." Both of these services will focus our thoughts on the tremendous privilege that we and so many others have had, and continue to have, of participating in the Harvest work and spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom.

There will be sessions dealing with some of the important doctrines brought to light during the Harvest: "The Two Salvations" and "The Lord's Second Presence." Capable brethren will discuss these and their importance to our understanding of God's plan. A panel of brethren will consider a passage from our Lord's great prophecy of Matthew 24 concerning "The Servant."

These are just a sampling of some of the convention program highlights. As always, there will be testimony meetings, and ample opportunities for fellowship. With all this, we encourage you to make your plans now to attend and participate in the blessings of this year's General Convention.

“KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS”

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN has the best intentions in the world. He fully intends to please God, the Heavenly Father, and to please his Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, and as much as possible, his brethren. His good intentions go still further, reaching out to all those with whom he comes in contact, including those in the world. “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”—Gal. 6:10

We all realize that serious errors are made with the very best of intentions, and many an innocent person has suffered greatly through no cause of his own, when another simply acted with good intention.

The Apostle Peter, by his own actions on one occasion, gives an excellent illustration of good intentions, which, if followed, would have brought disaster. Peter, of course, learned his lesson, but it

was a hard one. Jesus had announced that "he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan [Adversary]: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."—Matt. 16:21-23

The disaster that would have resulted if our Lord had followed Peter's advice would have been overwhelming. Jesus would have gone directly against his covenant of sacrifice which he had made with God when he said (Heb. 10:7), "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." These were the words of Jesus when he presented himself to God at the river Jordan and was baptized of John. Here the antitypical Passover lamb died legally in the sight of God. If our Lord had followed Peter's advice there would have been no redemption for the world of mankind, because thus Jesus would have taken his sacrifice off the altar. There would have been no ransom price to pay for the release of Adam and his race from the power of the grave. Then again, what of himself—would he not have lost his own life for his unfaithfulness? These thoughts are appalling, but such an outcome was possible, nevertheless. Is it not written, "He (who in the days of his flesh, having offered up both prayers and supplications, crying aloud with tears to him who was able to deliver him out of death, and was heard for his devotion.)—

Heb. 5:7 *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*

The statement is often heard: "Good intentions get you nowhere." This is quite true from the same standpoint, that intentions without results are of no value, James tells us: "Faith without works is dead." (James 2:20) Good intentions, like faith, must be backed up by a righteous zeal in the service of God which, of course, means service for the truth and for the brethren. Just how far would we get in the Christian way without good intentions, without right motives, without a firm resolve? The answer is, of course, nowhere. We would be like a ship without a rudder.

The will must be exercised in harmony with the principles of truth and righteousness, and also in harmony with the Divine plan of the ages, even as we now cooperate with our returned Lord as the Chief Reaper in the precious harvest work at the end of the age. The exercise of the will in connection with the desire to do the will of God and come to a knowledge of the doctrine is brought to our attention by Jesus, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."—John 7:17

With these thoughts in mind, we appreciate the fact that the Christian is to be a firm, positive character, well rounded out in the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit, like unto Jesus his Lord, rooted and grounded and established in the faith. (Col. 2:7) He has a fight on his hands—a hard fight—and the foe is strong and cunning, but then the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient" enabling the Christian to engage in a "good fight of faith."—II Cor. 12:9; I Tim. 6:12

The Master gave us "a new commandment," the law of love, one that went far beyond the law of Moses, one that called upon us to "love one an-

other” as he loved us. (John 13:34) The Lord loved his disciples to the extent that he died for them, and “having loved his own, . . . he loved them unto the end.” (John 13:1) We see, therefore, that the lesson for us is that we should lay down our lives for one another, love as Jesus loved. We cannot do it so well, or in so spectacular a manner, but we must, as the Apostle Paul said of himself, “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.” (Col. 1:24) Thus we bear affliction for the church’s sake; thus we love our own as Jesus did; and so it is stated, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”—I John 3:14

Who would be so foolish as to think that God or Christ would take good intentions alone as all that is required to fulfill this new commandment? Nay, we all must know, that it is our efforts to perform this law and conform to its requirements which prove our zeal, our real attitude of heart and mind. As Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.”—John 14:15,21

In trying to do these things perfectly, the effort is the proof of our sincerity. All through this Gospel Age, ever since Pentecost until the present time, the LORD’s people have been hindered by their weaknesses, some more, some less. They have neglected to put the commandments of Jesus into full operation in their lives. There has been some excuse because we are not perfect; we need the covering robe of Christ’s righteousness. And how thankful we are that God looks to Jesus for our

sufficiency, and that we are "accepted in the beloved."—Eph. 1:6

We wish to call attention to one commandment of Jesus that seems to be almost forgotten or, at least, not followed very strictly. If this were followed more closely, we believe that it would bring a speedy end to many of the trials and difficulties that sometimes are permitted to go on and on until good fellowship among brethren is disrupted. We refer to Matthew 18:15-17, which gives us the rule, and reads, "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he shall neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

In these verses in Matthew 18, 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him', we note that this is a trespass on the other brother's part against us. Then in Matthew 5:23,24 we see that the Lord reverses the matter, for in this case, it is our trespass against another: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Here it is a question of our brother having something against us, that we have trespassed against him, so the rule works both ways.

Anything that is wrong and is important enough, must be rectified. If the matter is too small

to bring to our brother's attention, it is also too small to consider, and too small to affect our brotherly fellowship in Christ, and should be forgotten. But if the matter is something that affects our spiritual growth, something to retard it, something to affect the growth of the 'joints' in the body of Christ, then we should proceed with the rule Jesus gave, acting in wisdom and in love.

In conclusion, let us keep in mind that good intentions are not enough, that love for the Lord, the truth, and the brethren will lead us to be doers of the Word, and not hearers only. "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." "If ye love me, keep my commandments."—James 1:22-25; John 14:15 ■

OBITUARIES

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to the families and friends in the loss of these dear ones. We appreciate information concerning any brethren to be included in this list.

Sister Lois Adams, Boise, ID—April 11. Age, 92.

Sister Nellie Zuba, Ft. Myers, FL—April 17. Age, 88.

Sister Louise Boyd, Phoenix, AZ—April 18. Age, 90.

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

FINALLY GETTING THE TRUTH!

Dear Gentlemen in Christ: Glory be to God! I cannot tell you how much I rejoiced in God, my Savior, after I read your little book, *"Our Lord's Return."* I read it and reread it, and I shared it over the phone with a sister in Christ who is searching for God's truth. I must have more copies of this book!

Please send me several copies of *"Our Lord's Return,"* and other booklets or tracts that I may share with others like my daughters, and other relatives. We do not get similar teachings from other ministries.

I never could believe that a loving father would ever turn a son or daughter into an everlasting, burning hell. Our love for God is so much greater through your teaching. This is surely God's plan! Recently I heard enough on

my radio of *"Frank & Ernest"* to order the booklet, *"The Truth about Hell,"* and I must have two or more copies of it. Also, *"How God Answers Prayer,"* and *"Jesus, the World's Savior,"* *"The Book of Books,"* and a subscription to the monthly magazine, *The Dawn*. I enclose a check to cover the cost of these publications.

I was raised in the Roman Catholic Church, and was searching since age 54. What a blessing to get God's truth! Now I am an old lady, 75 years of age; my sister in Christ is 84, and we share God's love and teachings over the phone almost every evening, as we are finally getting it. We thank him in prayer that this is truly God's nature and the truth!—MI

COMFORTING MESSAGE IN "HOPE"

Dear Sirs: I thank you so much for your booklet, *"Hope."* It was very com-

forting for me since my husband passed away in September. Most comforting to know is that I will see him again someday. Thanking you once more. By the way, I have some old Dawn booklets I still read. Thank you too for the other booklet, *"Hope for a Fear-filled World."*
—NY

SHARING HER BLESSINGS

Greetings in our Lord's name! I am in an assisted living plan. The rent for my care is high, but I can no longer live alone. I am in a wheelchair. I spend my time telling others here of the kingdom soon to be established on earth. I am so blessed to know the Divine plan of the ages!

I also have shown the video *"For this Cause"* to those who are interested, and leave tracts for others to take. May God bless the Dawn Family. Love, in our Father's name!—MI

THANKFUL FOR WHAT THEY HAVE

Dear Friends: We do not get radio or TV coverage of the *"Frank & Ernest"* programs. But we do have a number of the audio tapes and *The Dawn* magazine, so we are very fortunate. The article, *"Blessed Art Thou among Women,"* December Highlights of Dawn, is especially interesting. God's blessings to you.—MN

BOOKLET FOR A FRIEND

Please send me a couple of booklets on *"Divine Healing."* I believe our Lord can heal—I just don't believe in 'Divine healing'! I cannot believe in 'healers'. I have a friend that believes in them, yet she is so crippled in every fiber of her body that she cannot sit down in a chair or lift herself up again from the chair. I would so much like to give her one of these booklets! Your friend in Christ.—AR ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

M. Balko		Switzerland	15
Pittsburgh, PA	June 7	France	16-21
R. Gorecki		England	23-28
Korbach, Germany	June 1		
Poland	4-10	Julius Panucci	
France	13,14	Clinton, CT Area	June 21

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

E. Blicharz		E. Kuenzli	
St. Augustine, FL	June 7	St. Petersburg, FL	June 14
Detroit, MI	21		
K. Fernets		F. Nemesh	
Portland, OR	June 26-29	Portland, OR	June 26-29
R. Goodman		G. Passios	
Louisville, Al	June 7	Portland, OR	June 26-29
Atlanta, Ga	21		
Wm. Harp			
Milwaukee, WI	June 7		

CONVENTIONS

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

WATERBURY, CT, CONVENTION, June 6,7—New location. Write for information to Mrs. Anthony Tsimonis, Secretary, c/o Waterbury Bi-

ble Students, P.O. Box 1494, Waterbury, CT 06721 for information and directions.

ALLENTOWN, PA, CONVENTION, June 12,13,14—New location: E. Stroudsburg University, E. Stroudsburg, PA. Contact: Ms. Rachel Lounsbury, Allentown Bible Students, P.O. Box 3214, Allentown, PA 18106

Phone: (610) 280-7538

DETROIT MONTH-END CONVENTION, June 21—Redford YWCA, 25940 Grand River, Redford Twp. Contact Frank Nemesh.

Phone: (248) 649-6588

PORTLAND, OR, CONVENTION, June 26-29—Collins Retreat Center, Eagle Creek. Reservations and information, contact Tim Krupa, 1801 N.E. 201st Avenue, A3, Fairview, OR 97024

Phone: (503) 669-4191

LOS ANGELES, CA, July 3-5—Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, CA. Contact: Los Angeles Convention, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pac.

Palisades, CA 90272 or: Nekora@aol.com.
Phone: (310) 454-5248

NORTH SASKATCHEWAN BIBLE STUDENTS, July 3,4,5—East Central School, Hwy. 302E., Prince Albert. Contact: Ann Michalyca, Box 1371, Melfort, Sask. SOE 1A0
Phone: (306) 752-2197

OKANAGAN BIBLE STUDENTS CONVENTION, July 10-12—Eagles Hall, 5101 25th Ave., Vernon, B.C. V1B3K8. For information or reservations, contact A. Fernets.
Phone: (250) 558-3055

1998 BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 25-30—Johnstown, PA. Registration Form and Program in May 1998 Dawn magazine. Contact: Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272
Phone: (310) 454-5248

1998 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 9-14—Miskolc, Hungary

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

—Proverbs 17:22