

The DAWN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

None Shall Say, "I Am Sick" 2

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

The Lord Appears 14

The Holy Spirit Comes 16

Living with Hope 18

Hope Comes from God's Grace 20

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

The Mind of Christ—Part 4

Oneness in Christ 22

Luke's Portrait of a Perfect Man 37

Soldiers of Jesus Christ 48

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 36

OBITUARIES 61

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS 62

CONVENTIONS 63

None Shall Say, “I Am Sick”

*“What man is he
that liveth, and
shall not see
death? shall he
deliver his soul
from the hand of
the grave?”*
—*Psalms 89:48*

MANY IN THE WORLD

were surprised when, on February 11, 2013, Pope Benedict XVI announced his resignation as the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, to be effective on February 28, 2013. His decision to step down will make him the first pope to relinquish the office prior to death since Pope Gregory XII in 1415, who did so in order to end a division within the church. Benedict is the first pope to do so on his own initiative since Pope Celestine V in 1294, or 719 years ago. His decision was unexpected, and the stated reason was that of declining health due to age—he is currently 85. In his resignation announcement, he noted “lack of strength of mind and body,” but declared that he would continue to serve the church “through a life dedicated to prayer.” Benedict was elected pope in 2005 and, at the age of 78, was the oldest person to have been elected since Pope Clement XII in 1730.

NONE ESCAPE DEATH

Our purpose in citing the above event is not to judge—positively or negatively—the work or service of those who are considered by millions of people as leaders of society, whether religious, political, or otherwise. God is the great judge of all, and we are thankful that it is so. Rather, we find that this event, like so many others which involve people well-known in the world, points out beyond a shadow of a doubt a universal fact—all who walk this earth are human, suffer from various maladies of mind and body, and eventually succumb to the great enemy of death.

As our opening text so well expresses, no one escapes this enemy—not the pope, not a single leader of any nation, not the most successful businessman or woman, not even the most intelligent doctor. All get sick, and all eventually die. In the words of our text, no one can deliver himself from “the hand of the grave.” The psalmist, in another place, says that no man “can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.” (Ps. 49:7) On the surface, these verses seem to paint a bleak picture for the human race, but let us look further into God’s Word.

The Scriptures tell us not only that all die, but that the reason for death is that all sin, and that this combined condition of “sin” and “death” go all the way back to father Adam. The Apostle Paul makes this connection for us, when he says, “Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Rom. 5:12) Earlier in the same epistle, Paul made these plain

statements: “There is none righteous, no, not one . . . For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.—Rom. 3:10,23

ONE PERFECT MAN

In the six-thousand years of man’s history on earth, only one individual has ever walked this planet and not suffered and died as a result of sin, sickness, or disease. That individual was Jesus. Though he died as a man, and at the young age of thirty-three, it was not because of any sinful condition in his being, or of any sickness or disease. He was perfect, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” (Heb. 7:26) He “knew no sin.” (II Cor. 5:21) Jesus died for none of these reasons, but rather because he voluntarily laid down his life—literally—in sacrifice to redeem father Adam and, hence, Adam’s posterity, from the penalty of sin, which is death. Jesus stated that his was to be a voluntary death, when he said, “I lay down my life. . . . No man [nothing] taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.”—John 10:17,18

It has been nearly two thousand years since Jesus laid down his life in sacrifice as man’s redeemer, yet we continue to see sin, sickness, and most assuredly, death, all around us. When and how will the benefits of his great sacrifice be made available to this “groaning creation?” While it is true that man has learned much about the human body, and has been able, through a great increase in knowledge, to prolong man’s life expectancy substantially from what it was just a few generations ago, death still eventually comes to all.

MAN'S AMAZING ORGANISM

Indeed, the design and functioning of the human body, even in its current imperfect condition, speaks of its grand Creator, Almighty God. There is not an organ of the body but what reveals a sublime wisdom in its design. The remarkably engineered heart has multiple valves and unique muscle designs that permit a squeezing out of blood, and in a twenty-four hour period pumps literally thousands of gallons. The eye excels any camera in that it automatically focuses and immediately adjusts the pupil, or aperture, to the desired opening for the amount of light present. The highly sensitized retina of the eye, seemingly crowded with millions of nerve endings, transmits to the brain its recorded images in glorious color and exactness. The stomach and digestive organs accept the food we eat, extracting and producing a multiplicity of needed chemicals and minerals. The blood, the body's "transportation system," carries out its efficient and complex distribution process—iodine to the thyroid gland, calcium to the bones, potassium here, and phosphorus there—until every minute area is serviced with every needed chemical and mineral. When nutrients are delivered, waste products are also picked up and then disposed of, and so the wonderful and continuous process proceeds. Truly, only "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."—Ps. 14:1

In spite of this wonderful body and brain that man has, it is evident, as previously noted, that much is still lacking to be a better functioning organism. Man is a member of a sick and dying race. Regardless of the excitement created when

new medical discoveries and advances are made, the overall picture is still the same—man gets sick and eventually dies. True, worldwide life expectancy has increased dramatically in a little over two centuries. In 1789, it was an almost unbelievably low thirty-five years. By 1955, it had nearly doubled to sixty-six years of age. In 2012, the median worldwide life expectancy was estimated at seventy-four years of age. However, regardless of increased life expectancy, in man's experience there is one chilling statistic rarely mentioned. Of all who are born, one hundred percent still die.

RECENT STATISTICS

Although advances in medicine and the treatment of many diseases have proven effective and beneficial for many, at best they have only provided a relatively short reprieve from the death sentence. Recent statistics show the percentages of man's leading death-causes are: heart, stroke, and other cardiovascular disease 29%; infectious and parasitic diseases 23%; cancer 12%; respiratory disease 6%; accidents 6%; digestive diseases 3%; and intentional injury (suicide, violence, war, etc.) 3%. All other causes of death combined are 18%. In all the efforts to conquer these causes, none has been so hopeful as to dare predict the end of death.

Notwithstanding increased life expectancy, how many who live to eighty, ninety, or even one hundred years of age, really enjoy consistently good health? Our human family has appropriately been called a "groaning creation." Throughout the world Americans have been known for generations as having enthusiasm and optimism. The usual greeting

upon meeting another is, “How are you?” with the usual answer a robust, “Fine.” However, generally it is not long after these formalities that then begins the usual mutual commiserations. Each has his or her story of aches and pains, sleepless nights, tiredness, and other frailties that have come upon us.

In addition to the somber realities concerning man’s sickness and death there are yet other facts, perhaps not so widely known, which make us cry out for the Lord to soon establish his kingdom. In the United States alone, according to the 2004 Census, an estimated 26.2% of the population ages 18 and older—about one in four adults—suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. This translates to nearly 60 million people. Of this, about 6%, or one in seventeen adults, suffer from what is termed “serious” mental illness. In addition, mental disorders, as opposed to the diseases cited above, are the leading cause of disability in the United States. If these staggering statistics exist in our country, what must be the number of mentally sick and their sorry plight in the less fortunate countries of the world?

GOD’S PROMISES

Thus, man’s efforts against disease and death, though laudable and ever-continuing, have yielded little in the way of positive, long-term results. Much more is needed, and thankfully much more has been promised by our Heavenly Father. In this we greatly rejoice, and pray indeed that the Lord’s kingdom may soon come and end earth’s weary night of suffering. It is this marvelous hope for mankind held out in the Bible which has

caused us to see our glorious God in such a loving light.

Again and again, God's infallible Word promises an end to this long reign of sin and death. He states it so positively and so tenderly. Hear his words in Isaiah 25:6,7: "In this mountain [kingdom] shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." Then notice the dramatic picture language used to illustrate the lifting of ignorance and superstition which has so beclouded man: "And he will destroy in this mountain [kingdom] the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations." It is just as though our Heavenly Father pictures the earth as being covered with a great veil which has prevented the glorious, healing, life-giving sun from shining through. This figurative veil of ignorance and superstition, induced by Satan, is to be torn loose and removed. Then shall beam to every nook and cranny of this sin-sick and dying world the warm, life-giving rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Every festering sore of hate shall be healed, and every dank, dark mold of evil shall be destroyed. Even the earth itself, which has been so long contaminated, will become purified and clean.

RANSOM PROVIDED

These health-giving rays will not only bless and heal all the willing and obedient, but God further promises that the work accomplished shall be so complete that "he will swallow up death in victory." (vs. 8) We know all this will come because our blessed Lord, Christ Jesus, was willing to become a

man and take Adam's place in death. Paul tells us, "Since it was through a man that death resulted, it was also through a man that the resurrection of the dead resulted. For just as all men die by virtue of their descent from Adam, so all such as are in union with Christ will be made to live again."—I Cor. 15:21,22, *Williams Translation*

As we have already noted, man's horrible experience with sickness, death, sorrow, and evil of every kind came because Adam disobeyed. Before God, in justice, could release Adam and his race, it was necessary that someone who could be his corresponding price would willingly replace him in death. Jesus became a man for that purpose. Thus it is that in God's due time he could "swallow up death in victory" and even raise, from the sleep of death, all who had gone there because of Adam's disobedience.

TEARS WIPED AWAY

Notice, too, in the words of Isaiah's prophecy, the suggestion of God's joy in this entire matter as well as his tender love. "The Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa. 25:8) How much this sounds like the tenderness of a loving parent who has been touched with the hurt of his child and stoops to love and console. Truly, there are many tears to wipe away—the tortured minds; the lonely; the misunderstood; the tired, the sick of every conceivable kind. For all of his human children, God has watched and waited for the due time when he can "wipe away tears from off all faces."

In the same verse, Isaiah continues, "And the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth." Every last vestige of the curse of sin

and death will be forever removed. There shall be no far-away outposts of sin or death, but the entire world shall be a glory to his name. To show with finality the absoluteness of this plan, our eternal God has the prophet to utter these solemn, great words: "The LORD hath spoken it."

When our glorious, infinite Creator tells us he will do something, we can be assured it will be done. At the time that our earth was being prepared for man's habitation, we read that God said, "Let there be light: and there was light." (Gen. 1:3) His word is absolute. "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isa. 55:10,11

THIS IS OUR GOD!

Returning to Isaiah, chapter twenty-five, we see another glorious promise that pierces the present gloom of sickness and death like a golden shaft of light. "It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." (vs. 9) To those who now appreciate these words, the darkness, by faith, is dispelled and the beauty of the promise leads our mental vision to see the majesty and glory of God. Even now we say, gratefully, "Lo, this is our God." Happy shall be the day when all shall

know him from the least unto the greatest, and say these same words.

These words acknowledging man's loving God have not yet been spoken by man in general. God is faithful, however, and he looks forward to the time when this shall be a reality. His loving-kindness is ready to fly to man's relief. Today we still see the sad march of all members of the human family. One by one they pass by—the lame, the sick, the unloved, the tired, the infirmed bodies and tortured minds, forlornly walking to the grave. Included in this procession is everyone—the great of this world, the leaders of nations and religions, the rich, along with the poor, the common folk, the mostly unknown millions of people who live in obscurity. None are exempt from the great enemy of death. All the efforts of man do but little to ease the rigors of this procession. Sometimes through one effort or another life is lengthened for a few years, but always there is the tomb at the end.

God, however, has promised a glorious day! Then “the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.” (Isa. 33:24) “Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.” (chap. 35:6) “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth,” and “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (John 5:28,29; Rev. 21:4) “Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The

flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.” (Song of Sol. 2:11,12) With joy we repeat the words once again which will be spoken in that day by all people, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him.”—Isa. 25:9 ■

In God’s Eternal Spring

*The petals of a lovely rose
May fall and die at summer’s close
And grief we feel for that brief hour—
For it had been a lovely flower.*

*It lies at rest on dewy grass—
So fragrant still to all who pass.
E’en tho it die . . . our Father knows
The Spring will resurrect the rose.*

*And so when death makes all seem vain
Mankind like flowers shall live again.
“All in their graves” shall hear their King.
And rise in God’s eternal Spring.*

—Poems of the Way

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“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

—Psalm 25:14

That wonderful covenant, shown to all who are seeking the word in honesty and sincerity, assures us that as our dear Redeemer humbled himself for our and the world’s redemption and has been highly exalted, so if similarly faithful we may suffer with him now and by and by share his glory and be co-laborers with him in the kingdom which is to bless all the families of the earth. O, what riches of grace! What loving-kindness! What tender mercy! What evidences of divine wisdom, skill, justice, love, and power! How this view of the Only Begotten of the Father shows him to us as our Redeemer and also as our Lord and Head, who by and by, according to the promise, will present us as his bride, blameless and irrefragable before the Father in love. Viewed from this standpoint, the recognition of Jesus, our dear Redeemer, the Sent of God, the Savior of the world, is not in derogation of the command of the text, “Jehovah, our God, is one,” for the apostle assures us that according to the divine authority all should reverence the Son even as they reverence the Father—not reverence him as the Father, but reverence him as the Son whom the Father has appointed heir of all things, and who, as the Father’s associate, is to bless all the families of the earth, and who a thousand years later will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that he may be all in all.

—Songs in the Night, April 1

The Lord Appears

Key Verse: *“He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”*
—*Luke 24:44*

Selected Scripture:
Luke 24:36-53

THE 24TH CHAPTER OF Luke details the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, and his various appearances to those to whom he had ministered during his earthly life. In verses 1-10, we read that two angels, appearing as men in shining garments, spoke to Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James at the door of the open sepulchre, saying, “He is not here, but is risen.” (vs. 6) Shortly following this, Peter came to the sepulchre, and finding it empty, departed, “wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.” (vs. 12) The risen Lord later encountered two disciples walking toward Emmaus. After finding out how upset they were that their Master had died, he spoke to them, and “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”—vs. 27

While he appeared after his resurrection to many of his followers (see I Cor. 15:6), Jesus was especially mindful to clearly establish the fact of his resurrection to his eleven chosen apostles. They were being prepared as his special witnesses to bear record to the entire church of the truth concerning his death and resurrection. Before

his death he had given them the testimony of the prophets concerning him, saying, "They shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again."—Luke 18:33

Jesus knew that the prophets had not only declared the coming glories which would be his, but also the sufferings and death which he had to experience prior to his resurrection and glorification. We are told in Jeremiah 11:19, "I was like a lamb . . . that is brought to the slaughter." Jesus willingly, as a lamb, offered himself as a sacrifice for the Adamic sin of the world. (John 1:29) He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—Phil. 2:8

The finest animal offering could not take away sin. A perfect man had sinned, and only a perfect man—Jesus—could redeem the sinner. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." (Ps. 40:6-8) Our Lord made a covenant of sacrifice and suffering at the age of thirty when he offered himself as the anti-typical bullock of the sin offering. The above words, "the volume of the book," make reference to the "books" of the Law and the prophets. These books foretold, through various types and shadows, his death and resurrection.

When Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, the words that he spoke to them were designed to remind them that those things he had earlier declared of himself were still true, such as his assertion, "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12) He also continued to give them words of comfort and assurance, "Peace be unto you" (Luke 24:36), and the account further states that he "opened . . . their understanding." (vs. 45) The importance of his words would later compel the Apostle Paul to tell us, "Fulfil the law of Christ."—Gal. 6:2 ■

The Holy Spirit Comes

Key Verse: *“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*
—Acts 2:4

Selected Scripture:
Acts 2:1-13

of the Holy Spirit in the members of the Early Church was indicated by certain miraculous gifts. This was allowed for the purpose of specially indicating that this was no less than the work of God through his resurrected son Jesus. The giving of the Holy Spirit had been promised by our Lord Jesus to his disciples. “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive.”—John 14:16,17

“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive.”—John 14:16,17

When the Holy Spirit came to them as they were gathered together on the “day of Pentecost” (Acts 2:1), there was a “sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” (vs. 2) Our Key Verse says that those gathered in the upper room were “filled with the Holy Spirit.”

The choice of the sound of a mighty wind as a symbol of the power and influence of the Holy Spirit was for the purpose of drawing the attention of the Apostles. It was indeed an appropriate symbol. The word “spirit” is translated from the Greek word *pneuma*, which means breath or wind. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit is merely breath or wind, but like breath or wind, it is emblematic of God’s great invisible power.

Our Key Verse also says that when the Holy Spirit came upon those gathered there, the eleven chosen apostles “began to speak with other tongues.” This gift, given to the apostles, served as a witness to all of the Jews gathered there at Jerusalem from all nations of the world. The miracle was in the fact that the speaking of the apostles allowed those of all tongues to hear their words in their own native language.—vss. 5-8

At this beginning period of the Gospel Age, miracles were employed which demonstrated the glory of God. Jesus had healed the sick and raised the dead. The apostles did the same, as symbolic of the great work of Christ’s coming kingdom. After the apostles fell asleep in death, these miraculous gifts ended, their purpose having been accomplished. Consequently, the Lord’s people have been called upon to “walk by faith” (II Cor. 5:7), and to be witnesses for Jesus. Those so doing have proclaimed the “gospel of Christ,” which, as Paul asserts, is “the power of God unto salvation.”—Rom. 1:16

The begetting of the Holy Spirit in the case of an individual Christian is for the purpose of helping with the transformation of their character from the fallen human nature to that of a “new creature,” the new mind or will. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 2:5) We are told in II Corinthians 8:12 to be of “a willing mind.”

Another important benefit provided by the begetting of the Holy Spirit is given to us in these words: “Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.” (Matt. 13:16) This shows us that we have the opportunity to understand things that are only meant for the Heavenly Father’s called ones—true disciples of his son. “God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (I Cor. 2:10) We understand these “deep things” which have been taught us by our Lord Jesus and the apostles through the promised comforter, the Holy Spirit. ■

Living with Hope

Key Verse: “*God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
—*I Thessalonians 5:9*

Selected Scripture:
I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

Father, we should let our light shine, so that our walk with Christ is seen by others. Our goal should be “that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—Matt. 5:16

The complete desire of our hearts and minds, which is a vital part of our hope, should be to serve the true and living God through serving the cause of his son. “Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” (Col. 3:24) If we do this, then we will truly be part of the body of Christ, and beloved in his sight. John tells us this in I John 3:2,3, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” These verses point out to us the wondrous nature of our hope. Paul

THE SCRIPTURES TELL US

that we have been purchased by our Lord Jesus, and consequently we should be filled with faith and hope. Paul tells us, “Ye are not your own.” (I Cor. 6:19) We belong to Christ, as further shown in the words, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27) If Christ is in us, and we truly desire to serve and please him and our Heavenly

also identifies us as “heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”—Tit. 3:7

John’s words—“every man that hath this hope purifieth himself”—mean that we must maintain an attitude of heart, mind, and life desirous of always pleasing God, for he has “called us with an holy calling.” (II Tim 1:9) To be faithful to this “holy calling” necessitates our keeping thoughts, motives, and actions as pure as possible. It requires that we possess a heart condition that is founded upon pure and holy intentions. Thus, we are not to serve God with a heart of wrath toward others, but with a heart filled with love, compassion, peace, and hope. Paul gave evidence of a proper desire toward others, when he said, “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”—I Tim. 2:8

Our Key Verse says that God has appointed us “to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” With the Word of God as our guide, we are able to go forth with songs of praise upon our lips—praise to God for his love in sending Jesus to be the Redeemer and Savior of the world. We give praise for the divine wisdom which has designed such a loving plan of salvation, “that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” (John 5:23) We also render praise for divine justice which, being satisfied by the ransom merit, has made it possible to have our Adamic sins washed away by the blood of the Redeemer.

We have been privileged to know God’s loving plan as it is centered in Christ Jesus, the Redeemer. We rejoice that the Spirit of God has authorized us to be witnesses of Jesus, and that we are commissioned to tell the plan of God to others. Truly, our hopes are for those invited to be joint-heirs with Jesus in the spiritual phase of his kingdom. We also have the glorious hope of a “restitution of all things” for all mankind during Christ’s coming kingdom.—Acts 3:19-21 ■

Hope Comes from God's Grace

Key Verse: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."

—II Thessalonians 2:16,17

*Selected Scripture:
II Thessalonians 2:1-3,9-17*

we have given our all to him from the heart in consecration, we have the promise that he will "finish in you the same grace also." (II Cor. 8:6) Through his love God has committed a special work to his son, Christ Jesus our Lord, as shown by the words: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."—Heb. 12:2

THE HEAVENLY FATHER has made special provision for us as the footstep followers of his son, Christ Jesus. His love for us is shown in the assurance that, "The God of love and peace shall be with you." (II Cor. 13:11) This is made possible through the giving of his son. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Our Father, who has loved us greatly, will accomplish the work that he has begun in us, if we are submissive to his will.

God said, through the prophet, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jer. 31:3) If

From the beginning of our lesson we note that the words from our Key Verse are addressed to the called ones of God. Those who have answered this call by making a full consecration to God have been the recipients of God's grace. "By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8) Although salvation is by God's grace, it must be claimed by unwavering faith. Paul said, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1) Not only by faith do we have this opportunity, "but faith which worketh by love."—Gal. 5:6

Hope is mentioned in our title, and it should also have a place of great importance in our lives. Hope is listed along with faith and love in I Corinthians 13:13: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity [love]." To realize our hope, provided by God's grace, we must demonstrate complete loyalty to our loving Heavenly Father and his Son. To be pleasing to the Father requires a character in harmony with his attributes of wisdom, justice, love, and power, as well as full obedience of heart and mind. We must bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."—II Cor. 10:5

God has called and is preparing a special, select group, from the world of mankind—a New Creation. This great work of God was made possible because he also purposed that first Jesus "by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb. 2:9) As a result, those whom God has called are able "by patient continuance in well doing [to] seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." (Rom. 2:7) This opportunity brings with it much responsibility and work to those who answer God's call, and who desire to realize their hope. Each is required to put off the "old man" and its ways. "Put off concerning the former conversation the old man . . . And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."—Eph. 4:22,24 ■

Oneness in Christ

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.”
—John 17:21,23

AS WE CONTINUE OUR series under the heading, “The Mind of Christ,” this month we will examine the important subject of oneness with God, with Jesus, and with the brethren. In the words of our text, Jesus prayed the night before his crucifixion that his followers, including us nearly two thousand years later, would

have oneness with each other and with him, just as he was one with the Heavenly Father. As is clear from Jesus’ words, he was not speaking of oneness of person or identity, but oneness of purpose and character. Indeed, Jesus had said earlier that evening, “My Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28) We also know that, as our Master, Jesus is above his footstep followers in rank, as stated by the Apostle Paul, “He is the head of the body, the church; . . . that in all things he might have the preeminence.” (Col. 1:18) Thus, there is no thought in our examination of this subject which would lead us to believe in a literal interpretation of oneness

between God, his son Jesus, and those for whom Jesus prayed—his footstep followers.

An important part of our learning to have the mind of Christ is to understand the spirit of oneness and unity which he and the Father have. Then we must seek to apply the principles which govern their oneness to ourselves. One of the chief measures and evidences of oneness with God and his son Christ Jesus is the degree to which we have oneness with our brethren. In the Book of Ephesians, chapter four, the Apostle Paul gives us wise counsel concerning oneness and unity among the Lord's people. He begins, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."—vss. 2,3

In these verses, Paul makes it clear that oneness, peace, and harmony among the brethren of Christ are possible only where there exists an attitude of lowliness and meekness. These, he says, are to be mingled with long-suffering, which enables us to bear with the imperfections of one another because we love them as fellow-members in the body of Christ. Paul refers to this blessed harmony among the brethren as "unity of the Spirit," and where these elements of Christlike character are lacking, there will be no unity of the Spirit. On the other hand, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering and love could not, apart from other considerations, produce the unity of the Spirit of which the Apostle Paul speaks.

In addition to possessing these fundamentally important elements of character, they must be practiced upon the basis of, and in harmony with,

our knowledge of the fact that “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Eph. 4:4-6) This would indicate that true oneness in Christ is based upon a unity of fundamental knowledge. It is not difficult to realize why this is so. Any group of people whose aims and efforts are akin will find themselves drawn together in a common interest. In the circle of the family of Christ and their endeavors, the same principle holds true.

We should all heed Paul’s admonition to “keep the unity of the Spirit.” The brethren at Ephesus had special need for it, as the epistle shows. As was quite generally true in the Early Church, some in the group at Ephesus had formerly been Jews, and some had come into Christ from among the Gentiles. This is clearly shown in chapters two and three. In these chapters, Paul explains that in Christ these two groups had been brought “together”—that the Gentiles who had been “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,” were now “made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Paul says that peace had been preached to the Gentiles, “which were afar off, and to them that were nigh [the Jews].” He explains that because of this, both Jews and Gentiles now had “access by one Spirit unto the Father.”—Eph. 2:6,12,13,17,18

ONENESS OF JEW AND GENTILE IN CHRIST

It can readily be seen why a congregation made up of converted Jews and Gentiles would find it

necessary to forbear with one another in love. Their former viewpoints and experiences in life had been entirely different. The viewpoint of the Jews was that they were exclusively God's people. God had said to them, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2) They were the "chosen people" of the Lord, and the Gentiles were mere "dogs" in the eyes of the Jews.—Matt. 15:22-28

On the other hand, the Gentile converts would view matters quite differently. Accustomed to being treated as "dogs" by the Jews, it would now be difficult for them to feel kindly toward those who had so disdainfully regarded them. True, they had become followers of the Jewish Messiah, but old prejudices would not easily be forgotten. The Gentiles would also naturally exercise a greater degree of liberty with respect to their food, and other living habits, than would the Jewish converts. They would not have in mind the restraining ordinances of the Law, hence might be inclined to do things which, to the Jewish converts, would seem very wrong. In other ways also, these two groups of Christ's followers would find obstacles in the way of their viewpoints and activities being blended in a wholehearted oneness.

Under these circumstances, only a unity and oneness produced by the Holy Spirit could make harmony in the church at Ephesus. Indeed, only the power of the Holy Spirit can overcome the carnal spirit of division wherever it is found. Such a unity is much more than merely a kind feeling brethren may have toward one another. This "unity" is admirable, but it is based merely on friendship, and

friendship is usually based upon a certain degree of similarity in temperament, habits, station in life, etc. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, produces oneness among the brethren in spite of natural obstacles that might stand in the way, such as differences in background, training, education, and nationality.

The unity of the Spirit is that oneness among the brethren which is inculcated only through the Word of God. Speaking through the prophets, through Jesus, and through the apostles, God had made it clear that believing Gentiles and Jews were to become “fellowheirs” in Christ. (Eph. 3:6) This was contrary to the experiences of the Jews throughout all the centuries of their national existence, but it was now God’s will, made abundantly plain by the working of his Holy Spirit. In the conference at Jerusalem, Peter explained that the Holy Spirit had come upon the Gentiles even as it had upon the Jews, and for this reason there was to be “no difference” between them.—Acts 15:8,9

ONE GOD AND ONE FAITH

Before becoming followers of Christ, the Jewish and Gentile converts served different gods. The Gentiles usually had many gods. However, now they all had but the one God, who was the Father of them all. They were all members of the one body of Christ. There was not to be one body of Jews and another of Gentiles. There was but the one faith for all—the “most holy faith.” (Jude 20) Followers of the Master, whether Jews or Gentiles, were all called in the “one hope” of their calling. There was but one true baptism for all, and that was baptism

into Christ, which meant being “planted together in the likeness of his death.” (Rom. 6:5) For a mixed group of Jewish and Gentile converts to order their lives in keeping with a program of this kind required the indwelling of a large measure of the Holy Spirit.

For God’s Spirit to dwell in the heart and control the life requires the subjugation of the selfish human will and desires. God’s Spirit is an enlightening influence in the lives of Christ’s footstep followers, and its power to change one’s life is partly in the fact that it reveals the need of change, and outlines a new program to be followed. It was this phase of the Spirit’s influence in the lives of the Ephesian brethren that called for the “endeavoring” mentioned in the text quoted earlier, in order that they might “keep the unity.” That is, all of the Lord’s consecrated people were to work in harmony with the divine plan of the Gospel as it had been brought to them.

This new program, revealed to them by the Holy Spirit through the divinely appointed channels of our Lord, the prophets, and the apostles, was different from that which any of them had previously followed. This meant that all of them, Jews and Gentiles, had to give up their former viewpoints and habits, and endeavor by God’s grace to conform themselves to his plan as it had been revealed to them through his Spirit. The one God, the one faith, the one baptism of their wills, was to take the place of their former many gods, many faiths, and many forms of devotion.

To be successful in such an undertaking they would need true humility of mind, a great deal of

forbearance, and much Christian love. This has been true of all the consecrated followers of the Master throughout the age. With true lowliness of mind, one would not be likely to exalt his own opinions and ways above the knowledge of Christ. He would realize that the knowledge of Christ was to be the order of his life, even as it should be the guide in the lives of all the brethren.

NEEDS TO BE PRACTICED

Humility needs to be practiced, not merely thought of and talked about. One might have a true appraisal of his own lack of wisdom and ability, yet not manifest it in his association with the brethren. This could lead to resentment when others seemed to be used more in the service of the Lord. It might also lead to unwarranted controversy over details of the Truth. When one is humble, truly lowly of mind, he will not be a troublemaker among the brethren. Such would rather withdraw from a scene of controversy than permit himself to become a storm center.

Meekness is also a necessary qualification for those who are successfully “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit.” Meekness is teachableness, and unless we are willing to be taught by God through the influence of his Holy Spirit, we can never be in harmony with others who are likewise being taught. The wisdom of the world and of the carnal mind is foolishness with God. Both the Jews and the Gentiles in the church at Ephesus had many foolish ideas before they became followers of the Master. Most of us in the past have had foolish ideas. There could have been no unity in the Early

Church had the believers brought their ideas along with them, and insisted upon promoting them among the brethren. Likewise, we must give up our theories, our hobbies, that we may all be taught the “one faith.”

NOT WEAKNESS

Meekness, however, is not weakness. God wants us to be teachable, in that we will accept the instructions of his Word without reservations or doubts; but he does not want us to open our minds to teachings which do not come from his Word and are not in harmony with its spirit—the spirit of truth. Not only should we lay aside our own ideas, but we should also resist the wrong ideas of others. As each consecrated follower of the Master endeavors to bring his mind and heart into closer harmony with the Lord, through his Word, he will find himself in closer unity with all others who are doing the same thing. Thus a willingness to be taught of the Lord is very important if we are to be successful in doing our part to maintain the unity of the Spirit.

The spirit of longsuffering and forbearance is also necessary. One might be lowly of mind, and meek, yet be unable to bear patiently with the imperfections of others. There was great need for forbearance among the various groups of disciples in the Early Church, and there is still great need for it today. We are all so very imperfect that forbearance with one another as we worship and serve together is most necessary if our viewpoints and activities are to be blended into that one harmonious program outlined for us by the Holy Spirit.

Love must be the motive behind this endeavor. Only unselfish love, shown by a desire to glorify God and to serve others, will make possible the exercise of true forbearance and humility in our association with the brethren. To the extent that self-interest enters into our fellowship, true humility and forbearance will be lacking. It might be possible for a time to get along with the brethren while having only a veneer of humility and forbearance: one might be seeking position, or popularity, and deem it good policy to be courteous to the brethren. This is not a proper basis, however, for attaining oneness and unity of the Spirit.

THE DIVINE PROVISION

How much the brethren now need God's grace to help them maintain the unity of the Spirit! Unity of the Spirit, like all other spiritual attainments, is possible only through the grace of God—that "grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16) This is especially true today in view of the severe trials through which all are passing during this present "time of trouble." (Dan. 12:1) How necessary that we all keep humble before the Lord and before each other—that we bear patiently with the imperfections of the brethren, and that we do this in the spirit of unselfishness and helpfulness. Thus the Lord's name, and not our own, will be glorified, and his cause, not our selfish interests, will be advanced.

Only by God's grace can this be done. Continuing our examination of Ephesians, chapter four, Paul speaks of this grace. Verse 7 reads, "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Here Paul says that God's grace

toward us is measured by the “gift” of Christ. As we study the succeeding verses we learn that the “gift” of God’s grace here referred to consists of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, all of whom the Lord has provided for the express purpose of “perfecting”—making complete—the saints. These have been given by God’s grace, Paul continues, for “the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in [into, *marginal translation*] the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature [age, *marginal translation*] of the fulness of Christ.”—vss. 11-13

OF THE SPIRIT AND OF FAITH

It is apparent from the sequence of Paul’s argument that he wants us to understand that the unity of the Spirit includes unity of the faith, as it also includes oneness in baptism. His testimony is that “there is one faith,” and the Lord, in helping us to attain unity in our understanding of that one faith, has given us apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. It is through these various servants of the body of Christ that the Spirit of God finds expression. As we scrutinize their teachings, we are given knowledge concerning the “one faith” which constitutes the basis of our oneness in Christ.

Due to endless doctrinal controversies among denominational groups, many of their leaders have adopted an interpretation of this chapter which makes the unity of the Spirit mean simply a kind attitude which all believers in Christ should be able to manifest toward one another, while unity of the faith, although desirable, is not, in their view,

fundamentally important. In these circles, unity of the faith is usually looked upon as a good ideal, but a condition which will probably never be reached.

This liberalizing of the apostle's lesson is not in keeping with what he would have us understand. It seems clear that the "Spirit" which is the means of unity in Christ is not our spirit, or disposition, but the Spirit of God. It follows, therefore, that to the extent unity is attained, it means also a unity of the faith, or leads thereto. This one faith is the "most holy faith" taught by all God's inspired writers of the Scriptures in presenting the divine plan. The teachings of these inspired servants constitute the outline of the faith within which the followers of the Master are to worship and to serve.

The extent to which this unity can be attained is in proportion to the degree of humility and determination with which the endeavor is made. We should not expect perfection on this side of the veil, and so long as imperfection exists, there will not be complete unity of the Spirit and of the faith. This is not because the Spirit, through the inspired Word, has not made the basis of unity clear, but because of the carnality of the fallen flesh, which more or less limits the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

If Paul's formula were followed without reservation, complete oneness of the Spirit and of faith would be attained. However, the fallen, imperfect tendencies of the flesh usually assert themselves, thus hindering to some degree the attainment of perfect unity. In some cases, we might not be able to bear with the imperfections of others as we should. In other experiences, a little selfishness of

one sort or another may prevent divine love from fully controlling our lives. Any of these and other slight degrees of failure to control the tendencies of the fallen flesh will impair the unity for which we are striving.

Additionally, our vision of the one Lord, one faith, and one baptism may not be as clear as it should be. Perhaps we are permitting other gods to supplant in our affections to some small degree our wholehearted devotion to the one Lord who has been revealed to us by his Spirit. There are many of these idols which we are prone to set up in our wayward hearts, permitting them to displace the “one Lord,” whose will should be the unifying power among all the consecrated. To whatever extent we permit the idol of pleasure, or of pride, or of ambition, or of vainglory, or of wealth, or of ease, to influence our habits of thought and action, it means that we will not be wholly at one with those whose devotion to the “one Lord” is more complete.

It may be that the “one faith” is not as clearly delineated in our hearts and minds as it should be, due to our imperfections. Perhaps we find a measure of selfish satisfaction in mixing the most holy faith with theories of our own. These theories in themselves may not be harmful, but because they are ours we may attach too much importance to them and, by attempting to force them upon the brethren, may be lending our influence in the direction of disunity rather than unity.

A failure to enter wholeheartedly into the “one baptism” by which our wills are immersed into the divine will, would also affect our oneness with the brethren. The unity of the Spirit is only in proportion

to the degree to which each of the Lord's consecrated people submits his will to the instructions and leadings of the Lord. To whatever extent our own spirit—or the spirit of others who may influence us contrary to the divine will—is permitted to govern what we think, say, and do, we will be standing in the way of attaining the full oneness among the brethren which could be our blessed portion if we were more completely immersed into God's will.

ECCLESIA ORGANIZATION

We also find that the Scriptures teach a certain decorum for the church, in the way of local ecclesia arrangements in which elders and deacons are appointed by the brethren to represent them in service. We should be lowly enough in mind to recognize these arrangements, and be subservient to them. This will call for longsuffering and forbearing one another in love. However, if we permit our own interests, of whatever sort they may be, to supersede or nullify the influence of these Christ-like qualities, and decide that we can get along as well, or better, by ourselves than we can with the brethren, it will mean failure, to that extent, to keep the unity of the Spirit.

We may attempt to justify our failure by claiming that we are standing for principle. Let us be on guard, however, lest we interpret our own carnal approach as being a principle of righteousness. There are real principles for which every consecrated child of God should stand, and when these are at stake the way before us should be clear, and our course uncompromising. Let us be sure, though, that we are standing for principle. Let us remember

that the brethren probably find it just as hard to get along with us as we find it difficult to get along with them. Rather, let us all encourage each other to keep our hearts and minds fixed more and more upon the perfect pattern, Jesus, and to have our lives controlled more and more by the truth of the divine plan, the “most holy faith.”

CHRIST THE HEAD

If, to any extent, we have wandered off into by-paths of false doctrine and false practice, let us come back to the “old paths,” back into the narrow way of full submission to the divine will, as that will is revealed in the Scriptures. Thus may the Holy Spirit, through the Word, lead us ever nearer to the center of that glorious unity of faith, where we will be “no more children [acting childish], tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”—Eph. 4:14,15

While Paul makes special mention of certain servants in the body of Christ, and shows the value of their aid in helping the brethren attain oneness in the faith, he would not have us understand that these special servants are the only ones who help bring about this true oneness in Christ. The fact is that we all have some part to play in helping to bring about this unity, and no matter what that part may be, we should be faithful in performing it. We should all be promoters of oneness and love among the brethren.

The basis of that unity, however, must be the Truth. We cannot promote true oneness in Christ by compromising the doctrines of the Truth. However, we can promote unity by “speaking the truth in love,” by forbearing with one another, and by lowliness of mind and meekness. Thus, when our endeavors are in harmony with the Truth, and the Spirit of the Truth, we will have God’s blessing because we will be working in harmony with his will. Paul expresses the thought beautifully, saying, “From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”—Eph. 4:16 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

APRIL 4—“Let us walk honestly, as in the day.”—Romans 13:13 (Z. ’03-122 Hymn 315)

APRIL 11—“Let us walk, . . . not in rioting and drunkenness.”—Romans 13:13 (Z. ’03-123 Hymn 196)

APRIL 18—“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”—I Peter 4:12,13 (Z. ’96-31 Hymn 149)

APRIL 25—“Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”—Hebrews 11:6 (Z. ’00-139 Hymn 174)

Luke's Portrait of a Perfect Man

*“There is one God,
and one mediator
between God and
men, the man
Christ Jesus.”
—I Timothy 2:5*

EACH OF THE FOUR GOS-
pel writers described Jesus
from quite different perspec-
tives. Matthew described
him as the King of Israel,
the Messiah. He mentioned

the wise men and the expensive gifts they presented to Jesus, but said nothing about the visit of the shepherds. Mark saw Jesus as the perfect servant of God, one who acted quickly and spoke seldom. John described Jesus as the Son of God, God's personal representative on earth. His was an account of Jesus' teachings, not a narrative of his life, and consisted largely of the words which he spoke.

Luke presented Jesus as a perfect man. His Gospel is the most comprehensive, comprising a prologue, a growing up period, and includes an account of his ascension into heaven after his resurrection. Luke traced Jesus' genealogy back to Adam, the first perfect man. His portrait of Jesus emphasized the relationships which Jesus had with others, including his Heavenly Father.

As followers of the Master, we should study Luke's portrait to see what we can learn from it—to see how we can bring our own lives into conformity with this image of Jesus as the perfect man. It was Paul who wrote, "Whom he did foreknow [true followers of Christ], he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."—Rom. 8:29

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

In Luke's portrait, Jesus is shown to be sympathetic to the poor, the despised, children, women, and even the hated Samaritans. On occasion he did associate with the rich, the powerful, and those of high social status, but few of those really interested him. We get a clearer insight into why this was the case from the account in Luke, chapter 7, beginning at verse 36. The following quotation is from the *New International Version (NIV)*: "Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them."—vss. 36-38

The Pharisee who hosted this dinner was named Simon. Although he said nothing outwardly, it is evident from verse 39 that in his heart he was critical of Jesus for permitting this sinful woman to act as she had. Jesus knew what was in his heart, and so he spoke a parable. "Two men owed money to a certain money-lender. One owed him five hundred

denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he cancelled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more? Simon replied, I suppose the one who had the bigger debt cancelled. You have judged correctly, Jesus said. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.”—vss. 41-43,47, *NIV*

At the time of Jesus, women were almost non-persons. They were rarely educated, and had almost no rights. Then, as now, those who became prostitutes were labeled sinners. Civil and religious leaders spent their time with other men, not with women. However, Jesus did not limit his fellowship to men—he was as comfortable with women as with men. We read, “As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said.”—Luke 10:38,39, *NIV*

Jesus was also comfortable with publicans, or tax collectors, as we see from a criticism recorded in Luke 5:29,30: “Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?”

Who were the publicans? This is what one Bible commentator says about them: “The publicans were hated as the instruments by which the subjection of the Jews to the Roman emperor was perpetuated. They were noted for their extortion and were tempted to oppress the people with illegal exactions so that

they might the more speedily enrich themselves. The publicans were regarded as traitors and apostates, . . . willing tools of the oppressor. They were classed with sinners, with harlots, and with the heathen. The scribes and the people alike hated them.”

Considered still worse than publicans were the Samaritans. Another Bible commentator says this about them: “The Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans that they could possibly avoid. ‘Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil’ was the mode in which the Jews expressed themselves when at a loss for a bitter reproach. The Samaritan was publicly cursed in their synagogues; could not be adduced as a witness in the Jewish courts; could not be admitted to any sort of proselytism; and was thus, so far as the Jew could affect his position, excluded from hope of eternal life.”

Jesus, however, refused to accept the common prejudices of those around him. Far from avoiding Samaritans, on appropriate occasions Jesus praised them. In Luke 10:30-37, we read Jesus’ well loved parable of the good Samaritan. In Luke 17:16, it is recorded that after Jesus cured ten lepers, only one—a Samaritan—returned to give thanks.

The easiest way for us to live is to copy those around us, but that is not the way the perfect man, Jesus, behaved. We learn from Luke’s portrait of him that Jesus considered all human beings to be valuable, and worthy of his time and attention. He indulged none of the common prejudices of his day. He willingly spent time with women, children, tax collectors, and even non-Jews like the Samaritans.

Since we are to be followers of Jesus’ example, we do well to ask ourselves, How are we living today?

Do we share the prejudices of those around us? Do we think our time is best spent with others just like ourselves? Are we willing, rather, to follow the example of our Master and take time to associate with the poor, with children, the disadvantaged, and even those who are openly sinful or might be considered unacceptable to the leaders of society? We need to remember that God has predestinated that we should be conformed to the image of his Son.

RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

If we did not know differently from what we learn in the Scriptures concerning Jesus, we might think that a perfect man would have no need for outside support. We could assume he would have inexhaustible energy, and could tap his own source of inner strength at any time. However, that is not how Luke portrayed Jesus, the perfect man. From Jordan to the cross, Luke recorded many occasions not mentioned by the other Gospel writers which evidenced the fact that Jesus spent a great deal of time in prayer, seeking guidance and strength from his Heavenly Father.

Here are a few examples:

“Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened.” (Luke 3:21) The baptism of Jesus was described by others, but the fact that he prayed to his Father at that time is mentioned only by Luke. At the very beginning of his walk as a New Creature, we find him praying to his Heavenly Father!

“So much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear,

and to be healed by him of their infirmities. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.” (Luke 5:15,16) As time passed, Jesus had built up a large following, but he did not take credit for this success. He knew that the credit belonged to his Father, and therefore he continued to approach him in prayer.

“He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.” (Luke 6:12,13) Selecting the twelve was an extremely important decision, and Jesus did not presume to make a choice without guidance from his Father. He spent the entire night in prayer, and on the following day he was prepared to take the proper action.

After the twelve apostles had been very successful in their preaching and healing efforts among the people, “it came to pass, as he [Jesus] was alone praying, his disciples were with him.” (Luke 9:18) Again, he went to his Heavenly Father in prayer to thank him that the ministry of his apostles had been blessed.

“As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.” (Luke 9:29) Matthew and Mark both have accounts of the transfiguration scene, but neither recorded that Jesus prayed on that occasion. There, as the three especially favored apostles received a transcending vision of the kingdom in glory, Jesus prayed.

“It came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray.” (Luke 11:1) The disciples were aware of Jesus’ constant

communication with his Father, and they knew his relationship with God was one that they did not have the privilege of enjoying. They asked to be taught how to pray as he did, in order that they could enjoy a similar communion with God.

“He was withdrawn from them [his disciples] about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.” (Luke 22:41,42) Up until the close of his earthly ministry, Jesus again and again went to his Father in prayer to have fellowship, to receive guidance and assurance, and strength.

It is clear that he drew his strength from his Father, not from within himself. If he or his associates had success, he prayed about it. If he had a decision to make, he prayed about it. At his baptism and at the cross, he prayed for insight and guidance. It is by his example that we see how vital prayer is to our spiritual health—it is indeed the very foundation of our relationship with God.

WEALTH

Luke believed that there was no better test of a man than to look at how he used his money. Jesus himself was born into an exceedingly poor family. This is confirmed by the fact that at the time of Jesus’ circumcision, Mary brought two turtledoves, a practice which the Law permitted only by those who were too poor to bring a lamb. (See Leviticus 12:8) Paul wrote concerning Jesus that “though he was rich, . . . he became poor.”—II Cor. 8:9

Luke was the only gospel author who recorded a parable of Jesus that contrasted false riches with

the true. “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with anyone who stores things up for himself but is not rich toward God.”—Luke 12:16-21, *NIV*

Clearly the parable indicates that this rich man did not understand the difference between earthly riches and true riches. As recorded a few verses later, Jesus spoke to his followers to build on the lesson of this parable. He said, “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”—vss. 32-34, *NIV*

Where is our treasure? We will know by discovering where our hearts are. It could be our businesses, our investments, our careers, our homes, or any of a variety of places where “moth destroys” and thieves “come near.” These words seem to imply that to the degree that we are interested in the treasures of earth, to that degree we will have less treasure in heaven.

In another parable, a good Samaritan—with no hesitation—gave of his time and his money to help another person, one whom he did not know, and who was obviously not his nationality. In Luke’s recounting of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we see the insensitivity of a rich man who did not do anything to help someone in great need who had been laid “at his gate.” (Luke 16:20) The commendations and reproofs expressed by Jesus clearly indicate the attitude he favors.

Those with much of this world’s goods may tend to have more difficulties along this line. Will they love earthly things so much that they lose an opportunity for spiritual things, or will they willingly sacrifice what they have in the interest of others? No matter how great the sacrifice, nothing can compare to Jesus’ sacrifice, when he gave up his position of preeminence and authority in heaven as the only begotten Son of God. He was the archangel over all the creatures of heaven, and yet came to earth as a man to die for us.

Paul expressed Jesus’ understanding of the matter, when he wrote, “Doing nothing from party-spirit, or vain-glory; but in humility esteeming others as excelling yourselves; not each one regarding his own interests, but each one also those of others. Let this disposition be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though being in God’s form, yet did not meditate a usurpation to be like God, but divested himself, taking a bondman’s form, having been made in the likeness of men; and being in condition as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”—Phil. 2:3-8, *Emphatic Diaglott*

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Luke's portrait of a perfect man is magnified by his description of how God showed his love for all mankind. The purpose of Jesus' ministry is summarized in Luke 19:10, which reads, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Luke compiled his account as a historian through interviews with those who were eyewitnesses of the events. Throughout his account, he emphasized those events that prove God's love is not limited to the Jews. He quoted Simeon's words that Jesus will be "a light to lighten the Gentiles." He quoted Jesus, giving examples of God's favor to non-Jews—a Sidonian widow, and Naaman the Syrian. He quoted Jesus commending the faith of a non-Jew as exceeding any faith found in Israel. He quoted Jesus as saying, just before his ascension, "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached . . . among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."—Luke 2:32; 4:25-27; 7:9; 24:47

Why did Luke emphasize these points which the other Gospel writers did not? Unlike the other writers, he was a Gentile, an outsider, despised by the Jews. He was a convert to Christ, one who accompanied Paul in bringing the Gospel to other Gentiles. We know this is true, because in Colossians 4:10-14, it is stated that Aristarchus, Marcus, and Justus are "of the circumcision." Epaphras, Luke, and Demas—mentioned next—were not included among those listed as being in the category "of the circumcision" and, therefore, were not Jews.

Like Luke, we have received a knowledge of the will of God because someone was faithful to the

commission to preach the name of Jesus among all nations. Let us draw lessons from Luke's portrait of a perfect man and apply them to our own lives. Since we must become conformed to the image of our Master, let us:

1. Not draw arbitrary distinctions among ourselves or others, based on age, gender, wealth, or social standing. As James said, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"—James 2:5

2. Recognize the importance of prayer in our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Following the example of Jesus, we should come to the Father in prayer and thankfulness at all times, especially when he grants us success in his service, when he grants success to others, when we must make important decisions, or when we must endure a particular trial.

3. Pay special attention to the way we use our money. The rich young ruler who wanted to inherit eternal life thought he had been reasonably successful following the commandments. Yet, it was impossible for him to do as Jesus said, "Sell everything you have and give to the poor." "Jesus looked at him and said, How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! . . . Peter said to him, We have left all we had to follow you! I tell you the truth, Jesus said to them, no-one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."—Luke 18:22,24,28-30, *NIV* ■

Soldiers of Jesus Christ

“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”

—II Timothy 2:3,4

The Apostle Paul evidently had in mind our “good fight of faith” when he penned the words of our text.

The basic lesson of the soldier illustration as applied to our life is that of loyalty and devotion to the Heavenly Father and his son Christ Jesus. Obedience, courage, faith, sacrifice, suffering, and death all enter into the life of being a soldier. *Moffat’s* translation of our text emphasizes some of these points: “Join the ranks of those who bear suffering, like a loyal soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets

AS CHRISTIANS, WE should be peacemakers, and so far as possible should seek to live peaceably with all men. Yet in many respects our life as a follower of Christ may be compared to the life of a soldier, and the Bible employs this illustration to teach us important lessons of obedience to the divine will.

The Apostle Paul evidently

entangled in civil pursuits; his aim is to satisfy his commander.”

A basic and essential quality of a good soldier is obedience, so we as followers of Christ must learn to obey. The success of any army in battle depends in no small measure upon the obedience of each soldier to the directions of the commanding officer. Those in God’s army are made up of those who are willing to obey to the greatest degree possible the commands of the “captain” of their salvation. (Heb. 2:10) Christ is our commanding officer, commissioned by the Heavenly Father to be the leader of this company of soldiers, who through trial and hardship are forging ahead to victory and to glory. The victory of this army is certain, but our victory as individuals in God’s army depends upon our obedience to orders.

OF THE HEART

There is much more to obedience than one might at first suppose. In the case of Christ’s followers, it should reach down into the secret recesses of our hearts. The divine commands by which we are guided are stated very explicitly in the Bible, yet the slightest degree of insincerity or disobedience on our part will result in a misinterpretation of those commands. Only the spirit of full surrender to God will safeguard us against the hazard of disobedience. Certain disciplinary measures may be employed by the Heavenly Father for a time to remind us of the terms of our enlistment. However, if we choose continually to disobey, we risk eventually being dropped from the ranks, and at great personal loss.

A soldier has both pleasant and unpleasant duties to perform, and so it is with us. It is the doing of things which by nature we would rather not do that tests our obedience to divine commands. Sometimes we render only partial obedience. The human heart can also be very deceitful. If our allegiance to the will of God is not complete, we may endeavor to convince ourselves that we are obedient to all the divine commands governing our warfare when, as a matter of fact, we are obeying only some of them—those which appeal to us the most, or which seem the easiest to carry out.

In such cases, where the spirit of full consecration is lacking, the commands which we ignore, or those which we obey, depend largely upon our likes or dislikes. An ideal soldier, however, is not guided by his personal preferences, but only by the commands of his captain. In the army, there are times for rest, exercise, training, study, and engaging in battle. The faithful soldier will participate in all these activities as directed—and without question.

NOT OURS TO CHOOSE

How easy it is at times, however, for us as soldiers of Christ to pick and choose with respect to the particular phase of soldiery we undertake. If we are of an active, aggressive nature, we will delight in carrying out those orders which have to do with being busy in the Lord's work, but we may overlook the fact that there are other things that he expects as well. If, on the other hand, we are of a more studious nature, we will find it much to our liking to spend a great deal of time in "rightly dividing the word of truth," but we may not fully

realize that one of the objects of our study is that we might be properly equipped for the ministry, or service of the truth.—II Tim. 2:15

We might be of a combative nature and well trained for exposing popular error, and in this way “battle for the Lord and for the Truth.” However, we may overlook the fact that we should also use our combativeness against our own fleshly weaknesses. If we are a meditative follower of Christ, we may spend long hours in prayer, because this phase of the divine will is especially to our liking. Yet, we may fail to realize that one of the objects of prayer is to keep the armor of the Lord bright, that we might be better prepared do battle for our captain.

LOYALTY

Loyalty is much akin to obedience. It is a word that is used to describe one’s allegiance to another, or to his country, in contrast to an attitude of partial sympathy with, or friendliness toward, the enemy. As soldiers of Christ, we cannot fraternize with God’s enemies and remain pleasing to the captain of our salvation. We must be completely for the Lord, and for all the principles of righteousness involved in our warfare. We must know of what country we are citizens, and for what government we are fighting, and give no place to the influence of other issues in our lives which would undermine our loyalty to Christ.

Christ Jesus our captain said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” (John 18:36) This means that as soldiers we cannot ally ourselves with this “present evil world.” (Gal. 1:4) We need to always be on the alert against the subtle efforts of “the prince of this

world” to entice us into joining his ranks—if not openly, at least to partake of the worldly spirit and fraternize with his soldiers. The forces of the great Adversary, which oppose the army of the Lord, frequently appear as angels of light to deceive. (II Cor. 11:14) If not on guard, we may be induced to lay down our arms and go over to his side. If as faithful soldiers, however, we keep ourselves well-informed concerning the enemy’s tactics, we will not be “ignorant of his devices,” and will not be led astray by them.—chap. 2:11

Our citizenship is in heaven, and it is to assure an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom that we are fighting. Nothing positive can be gained by a compromising attitude toward any of the allurements of the great Adversary. We are to seek first and always the kingdom of heaven. To do this we must avoid entangling alliances with any of those things which belong to the passing empire of Satan.

Loyalty to our Heavenly Father and his son, our captain, must be voluntary and complete. We have learned to know them, and upon the basis of this knowledge we have full confidence in the integrity of their cause. Our loyalty should be complete because we love our God and our captain, and are pained at the thought of displeasing either of them or being out of harmony with their plans and purposes for man’s salvation.

COURAGE

Courage is also an essential quality we must develop as a soldier. There is no room in the Lord’s army for the fainthearted. However, our courage should not be the sort that is born of self-confidence.

“When I think of self, I tremble,” should be our attitude as a soldier of Jesus Christ. When we thus realize our own weaknesses we can be courageous by putting our trust in God and looking to him for strength to help in every time of need. When we look to God, and to Christ, our captain, and realize that we are made strong by their strength, then we can indeed be courageous.

To be a good soldier requires confidence in the cause for which one is fighting. Upon the basis of this confidence, one can be fully devoted to that cause. This is especially true of soldiers of Christ. Our faith and confidence in the righteousness of the cause which we are serving should be so complete as to call forth all of our powers and abilities in a freewill, self-sacrificing effort to cooperate with the captain of our salvation.

As Christ’s soldiers we should have no mental reservations as to the propriety of that which our captain asks us to do. Our faith in God and in Christ should be so complete that even though we may not always understand just why we are called upon to do certain things, nevertheless we will have full confidence in the fact that we are being guided by heavenly wisdom. Although we may err in carrying out the commands of our captain, he cannot make mistakes.

Because of our implicit faith and confidence in the righteousness and final victory of the divine cause, we will be glad to make any sacrifice that is asked of us while fighting under the banner of the Lord. Not only will we be sure of victory over all enemies, but our hope in a glorious “homecoming” after the “fight of faith” is over should stimulate us

to even greater efforts in pressing forward in the battle.

Our “homecoming” as a soldier of the Lord will not depend upon our escaping death in battle, for we must continue in the warfare until we have finished our course in death. In order to have the “captain of our salvation” bestow honors upon us at the conclusion of our warfare, we must be faithful unto death, for this is the term of our enlistment in the Lord’s army.—Rev. 2:10

OUR PERFECT CAPTAIN

One of the things which gives us confidence in the commands of our captain is our knowledge that he has himself given battle even unto death. Jesus received his commission to be the captain of this army because of his own faithfulness in suffering. It was through suffering that he was trained for his present high office. Concerning this, Paul wrote, part of which we have earlier quoted, “It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”—Heb. 2:10

The full objective of our warfare is not only the present conquering of enemies, but also a glorious future service beyond the current conflict. This “good fight of faith” is in preparation for that service. If we are to be a joint-heir with our captain in the future kingdom of service and blessing, to be one of the “many sons” mentioned by Paul, we must be made like Jesus. Like our captain, we also must be made perfect through suffering. In all things we are to become like him—conformed to his image.

Concerning this, Paul wrote, “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”—Rom.8:29

CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE

In joining an army there are certain conditions of enlistment with which the applicant must comply, and so it is with God’s army. Soldiers must be physically and mentally fit. A weak heart will disqualify. In fact, physical disability of almost any sort disqualifies one for enlistment in an earthly army. However, in God’s army it is different. To join, all that is needed is a perfect “heart”—not a literal heart, but that for which the heart is scripturally used as a symbol, namely, the affections, desire, and determination to do God’s will.

To have a perfect “heart” means we must desire and strive to do perfectly, and to render all that we have to God. If the spirit of our consecration is undivided, then the Lord makes up for the unwilling imperfections of our flesh. It is essential, however, to recognize our own weaknesses and that these would stand in our way of full acceptance except for the loving provision which God has made through Christ—the provision of Christ’s righteousness to cover our imperfections. We must be humble enough to accept this provision and to rejoice in it.

Based upon our confidence in the covering merit of Christ’s blood, we must make a full consecration of ourselves to God and to the doing of his will. Nothing short of a full dedication of heart, mind, and being is acceptable. Only thus can we enlist in his army. This complete dedication means full-time

service, and the pledging of all that we are and have to the holy cause of God, to be used as he deems best. No measurement is taken of anything except our heart intention to devote all to God, and if that measure be full and complete, we are accepted, taken into his army, and the warfare begins.

LEAVING HOME

Very seldom is a soldier permitted to remain at home during the period of his enlistment, and this also is true of us as soldiers of Christ. Sometimes enlistment in the Lord's army means a literal breaking away from what we call home. The terms of our enlistment require that we are willing to go anywhere God directs us, and that we be what he wants us to be. Even though we may not be required by our captain to literally leave our present home, yet, in a larger sense, we do have to leave our "own people," and our "father's house."—Ps. 45:10

As soldiers of Christ we must love our captain more than we do father, mother, children, or friends. We must please him, as well as our Heavenly Father, even though it may mean the loss of all our earthly friends and relatives—and frequently it does mean just this.

Then, too, we must leave our "father's house"—that is, father Adam's house. For the world of mankind in general there is the divine provision of restitution, which means that all will have an opportunity to enjoy the blessings of the restored paradise—that glorious home which the Creator provided for his human creatures. However, enlistment in the Lord's army means the giving up of

the hope of restitution—the giving up of a place in father Adam’s house.

WHO ARE CALLED?

Those whom God calls into his army would not, for the most part, be considered ideal material for a worldly army, because he does not call those whom the world considers noble, wise, and strong. The Apostle Paul wrote, “Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.”—I Cor. 1:26-29

Even the noblest and wisest of the world come far short of the standards of divine righteousness, hence even these would not be qualified for enlistment upon the basis of their natural endowments or attainments. How wonderful it is that those far less qualified by nature can be acceptable to God through the merit of Christ’s righteousness. It is the nobility of heart that is important with the Heavenly Father, and one of the qualities of a noble heart is humility, a willingness to learn and to follow the instructions of the captain.

THE SOLDIER’S ARMOR

Like the soldiers of ancient times, we as “good soldiers of Jesus Christ” are provided with armor. It is because of this divine provision that we are

able, successfully, to combat our enemies. One of the secrets of full victory in our warfare is to put on and keep on “the whole armor of God.” There must not be any picking and choosing as to what piece, or pieces, of the armor we shall wear, nor can we substitute armor of our own making. It is “the armor of God,” and our implicit confidence is manifested by the enthusiasm with which we take and wear the armor he has provided.

The Apostle Paul described this armor as follows, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”—Eph. 6:10-17

All these various parts of the “armor” represent the Truth, each from its own standpoint. The “helmet” symbolizes our knowledge of the Truth—not only of the divine plan, but of God’s love and care for us; we “know” that all things work together for our good. (Rom. 8:28) The “breastplate of righteousness” represents a personal application of the

Truth, particularly those truths pertaining to our righteousness in Christ.

The “shield of faith” pictures our use of the Truth to protect ourselves from the fiery darts of the Adversary. The sandals of “the gospel of peace” symbolize our peaceful walk in life, and our efforts as ministers of reconciliation. (II Cor. 5:18,19) The “sword of the Spirit,” Paul explains, represents the Word of God. We are to use this to slay the uprisings of sin in our own bodies, and to fend off the attacks of the Adversary, but never to injure others.

The girdle of truth is that part of the armor which suggests the necessity of our serving the Truth. No matter how faithful we may be in other respects, if we do not serve the Truth we do not have on the whole armor of God, hence will not be able to stand as faithful soldiers. We must hold the Truth in unselfishness. If we think of the Truth merely as something with which we alone are concerned, or through which we alone are blessed, and do not employ it in the service of others, we have failed to capture its true spirit. Sooner or later we will fail if we do not have the spirit of service illustrated by the girdle of truth.

OUR ADVERSARIES

As soldiers of Christ, we have enemies to battle against. The leader of these enemies is our “adversary the devil.” (I Pet. 5:8) He operates through the world, and through our fallen flesh, hence we speak of our enemies as being threefold—the world, the flesh, and the devil—Satan. Allied with Satan in the spirit world are the fallen angels. Additionally, in the material world there are many agencies of

selfishness and superstition through which the Devil is able to strike against us. (Eph. 6:12) Although our enemies are formidable, threatening, and wily, our victory is sure if we continue to put our trust in God, and make use of all the means of grace which he has provided for us.

HELP CERTAIN

Our Heavenly Father has given us many assurances of grace to help in time of need. Some of his promises are:

“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”—Heb. 13:5

“Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”—I John 4:4

“If [Since] God be for us, who can be against us?”—Rom. 8:31

“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in [your] weakness.”—II Cor. 12:9

“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.”—Isa. 54:17

The Lord’s protection over us as members of his army does not mean that we will be free from suffering and trouble. A soldier cannot expect this. We should expect and be prepared to endure much suffering, hardship, and weariness. If we do not have these experiences we may well question how faithful we have been to the terms of our enlistment.

If the pursuit of being a soldier of Christ is merely a side issue in our life, to be worked at when convenient, or when we are not too tired, or when there is nothing more interesting to do, the chances are that we will find it possible to lead a fairly quiet life. However, if we are of those who are being

consumed by the zeal of God's house, and if we are not satisfied unless we are actively engaged in the business of being a faithful soldier, we will encounter hardship and suffering, even as did Peter and Paul and the other apostles, and even as did the captain of our salvation.

If we are good and faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ, we will rejoice in the privilege of suffering in the great cause of our captain. Hence, we will endeavor to follow faithfully in his footsteps of loving service in the divine cause. While doing so, we will rejoice in the blessed promise of our Captain, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."—Rev. 3:21 ■

OBITUARIES

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to their family and friends in the loss of these dear ones.

Sister Dorothy Strzelczyk, Buffalo, NY—February 14. Age, 91

Sister Dorothy Weber, Fairview, OR—February 14. Age, 89

Sister Franklyn Ebepu, Agwa, Nigeria—February 20. Age, 28

Sister Anna Tomic, New Brunswick, NJ—March 3. Age, 88

Sister Sharon Powell, Wilmington, DE—March 7. Age, 63

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

K. Fernets

Boise, ID April 26-28

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

M. J. Balko

St. Petersburg, FL April 21

D. Blencowe

Boise, ID April 26-28

C. Chandler

Boise, ID April 26-28

D. Christiansen

Boise, ID April 26-28

M. Davis

Boise, ID April 26-28

J. Dolan

Ghana, Africa
March 25-April 17

O. B. Elbert

Boise, ID April 26-28

J. Freer

Boise, ID April 26-28

R. Gorecki

Boise, ID April 26-28

K. Humphreys

Boise, ID April 26-28

S. Jeuck

New York, NY April 14
Boise, ID 26-28

B. Keith

Boise, ID April 26-28

B. Montague

New York, NY April 14

H. Montague

Ghana, Africa
March 25-April 2

P. Mora

Chicago, IL April 28

M. Nemesh

New York, NY April 14

MOVING?



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

CONVENTIONS

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

NEW YORK CONVENTION, April 14—Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact A. Williams. Phone: (718) 261-3053 or Email: austin@osnetinc.com

BOISE CONVENTION, April 26-28—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main Street, Boise, ID. Contact D. Allers, 7558 W. Hathaway Lane, Boise, ID 83714, by April 7. Phone: (208) 375-6873

JACKSONVILLE CONVENTION, May 5—Holiday Inn Hotel, 620 Wells Road, Orange Park, FL 32073. Phone: (904) 562-7400. Contact C. Hires, 2405 Hugh Edwards Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32210. Phone: (904) 781-0506 or E-mail: clanky3@comcast.net

WEST NEWTON CONVENTION, May 5—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact G. Balko. Phone: (724) 771-0139

AGAWAM CONVENTION, May 19—Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA 01001. Contact A. Gonczewski. Phone (863) 450-8299

CHICAGO CONVENTION, May 25-27—Addison Park District, 120 E. Oak Street, Addison, IL 60101. Contact L. Manzuk. Phone: (630) 660-1874 or E-mail: leemanzuk@aol.com

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, May 25,26—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91504. Contact J. Wojcik. Phone: (818)982-7253 or E-mail: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com. Special room rate at Ramada Inn by contacting N. Nekora. Phone: (310) 454-5248. Deadline for special rate is April 24.

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, June 2—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA 19047. Contact R. Eldridge. Phone: (215) 949-0652

PORTLAND CONVENTION, June 28-30—Ramada Inn, 6221 NE 82nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97220. Contact D. Grudzien, 11970 SE Zion Hill Drive, Damascus, OR 97089. Phone: (503) 658-4757 or E-mail: dariusg@acm.org

PRINCE ALBERT/SASKATOON CONVENTION, June 29-July 1—Siwak Farm. Contact A. Siwak, RR 1 Stn Mpp, Prince Albert, SK, Canada S6V 5P8

EAST SASKATCHEWAN CONVENTION, July 5-7—Sturgis Community Hall, Highway #9, Sturgis, SK, Canada. Contact N. Paley, Box 1522, Canora, SK, Canada S0A 0L0. Phone: (306) 563-5441

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 20-25—(see page 59 of this issue) University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Johnstown, PA. Contact E. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

*How sweet to leave the world awhile,
And seek the presence of our Lord!
Dear Savior, on thy people smile;
Draw near according to thy Word.*

*From busy scenes we now retreat,
That we may here converse with thee.
O Lord, behold us at thy feet;
Let this the gate of heaven be.*

*Chief of ten thousand now appear,
That we by faith may see thy face.
O speak, that we thy voice may hear,
And let thy presence fill this place.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*