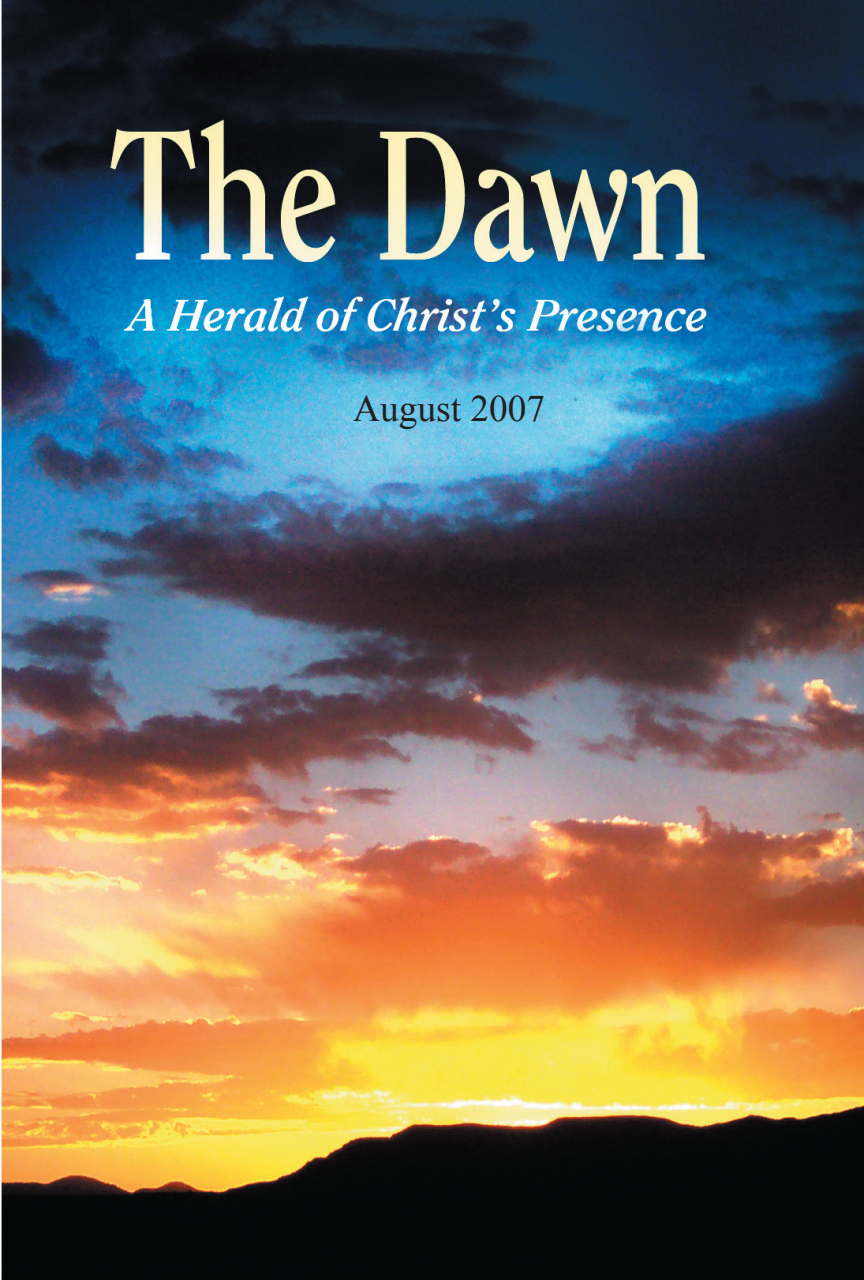


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Mass Murder: A New Dimension of Evil

“When he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.”

—Matthew 8:28

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT

of Jesus driving the demons into a herd of swine is one of the most remarkable of all his mighty miracles that were performed during his earthly ministry. It points to the tremendous power over evil and evildoers that was given to our Lord Jesus by his Heavenly Father, and serves as an apt illustration of the even greater power over evil that will be administered under his future kingdom of righteousness and judgment.

We note, too, the great power that is exercised by Satan and the corrupt spirit beings during this present nighttime of sin and death. The Apostle Paul points to Satan as the source of all evil, “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds

of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”—II Cor. 4:4

There are multitudes of invisible spiritual demons that continue to promote their evil deeds in our world, and are to be judged accordingly in due time. The demons that were encountered by the Master immediately recognized and feared him, and indicated that they were well aware of their forthcoming final destiny. “They cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (Matt. 8:29) The word ‘torment’ as it is used here suggests ‘being put to the test,’ or judged before the time.

Three of the gospel writers have included accounts of this great miracle: Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-17 and Luke 8:26-36. Each of these records includes unique and interesting details that are not found in either of the other two accounts.

ANGELS KEPT NOT THEIR ESTATE

During the world’s early history, angelic beings were permitted for a time to materialize in the form of men. This led to an unholy alliance between themselves and the daughters of men, and “The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” (Jude 6) It is in this present condition of dense spiritual darkness that they have since been confined, and their wicked activities restrained. Having thus been barred from any further materializing, they now use their superior powers over men by gaining

possession of their minds and actions. They have since that time used the subjected human body as their medium.

MIRACLE-WORKING POWER

During Jesus' earthly ministry, the influence of demons was very prevalent, and some of his greatest miracles took place when he expelled them from their hapless victims. "He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils." (Mark 1:39) Jesus gave this same power of the Holy Spirit to his apostles. "He called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." (Luke 9:1,2) He also gave this extraordinary power to the seventy whom he sent forth to preach the gospel. "The seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."—Luke 10:17

MEN OF THE TOMBS

When Jesus confronted the demonized men in our featured text they were 'coming out of the tombs' and they are described as being 'exceeding fierce.' During the time of Jesus' ministry, when a person died, the place of burial was often in a rock-cut tomb or perhaps a cave. An above ground cemetery may have had vaults or chambers. These, in turn, served as characteristic places of solitude and abode for the poor wretched maniacs. We read, "Immediately there met him [Jesus] out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, Who had his dwelling among the tombs."—Mark 5:2,3

Further important details are given that reveal the true nature of these demon-possessed men. Mark spoke concerning one of them, “Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.” (vss. 4,5) Luke’s account includes further details. He wrote, “There met him [Jesus] out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.”—Luke 8:27

When recognizing Jesus, the demon said, “I beseech thee, torment me not. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)” (vss. 28,29) The unfortunate man had been completely overpowered by the demons that were using his body.

EXCEEDINGLY FIERCE

These unclean spirits were also described as being exceedingly fierce. The word fierce as it has been used by Matthew in this scripture (8:28) describes someone who is extremely difficult to deal with, and in this case emphasizes the very dangerous nature of the demonized man. The word has been variously translated as violent, fierce, savage, or other words. It is found in only one other scripture where the Apostle Paul used it to describe the last days of this present Gospel Age. “This know

also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” (II Tim. 3:1) Here the translators used the word ‘perilous’ that describes the very difficult and dangerous world in which we now live.

CASTING OUT DEVILS

Tremendous power was shown by our Lord Jesus when he cast out the multitude of evil spirits who had been using the miserable man’s body as a medium. “There was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.” (Matt. 8:30,31) These demons made no attempt to conceal their own identity, and freely acknowledged Jesus’ greater power over them. “He said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.”—vs. 32

A LEGION

Our Lord was told that “Legion” was the name of one of the demons who had come out to meet him. “He [Jesus] asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.” (Mark 5:9) The name ‘Legion’ is associated with the mighty Roman Empire that was in power at that time. It refers specifically to a large group of soldiers comprised of thousands of fighting men. There were various types of Roman legions that differed in number depending on the particular historical period of the empire, and the time and place.

In connection with the name Legion and its numerical significance, we read in Mark’s account

that there were about 2,000 swine in the herd that ran violently down the hill to their deaths in the waters below. Perhaps Jesus chose that particular herd as an indication of the number of demons that he would drive out of the wretched man's body, inasmuch as all of them were drowned. "Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea."—Mark 5:13, *New American Standard Bible*

INIQUITY ABOUNDS

Most people will acknowledge that we are now living in a most dangerous and corrupt world. Evil and atrocious crimes are becoming more commonplace, and are being committed on an increasingly magnified and violent scale. There seems to be no logical explanation or conclusion concerning the perpetrators, their degree of lawlessness, or the extent of their mass killings.

Matthew recorded Jesus' words concerning the end of this age, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matt. 24:12) The word 'iniquity' points to that which is without law, and is therefore a criminal act. John used the same word that has been translated "transgression" in the following text. He said, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."—I John 3:4

VIRGINIA TECH MASSACRE

Panic struck the citizens of Blacksburg, Virginia in April, 2007, when the local university campus—Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University—

became the scene for a virtual shooting ground. An unstable-acting student gunman, 23-year old Cho Seung-Hui of Korean parentage, killed 32 fellow innocent students and teachers before turning his weapon upon himself. The carnage would have been much greater if he had not been stopped in time. At least 15 others were wounded, some of them seriously, in what has been called the worst-ever campus massacre in United States history.

Federal, state, and local law enforcement investigators searched the university campus for clues to what set off the deadly mass shooting rampage. The shootings occurred just four days before the eighth anniversary of the Columbine High School massacre in Littleton, Colorado. At that time, two students killed 13 people before turning their weapons on themselves. Officials are searching for possible links between the two mass killings to help explain the gunman's actions.

WEAPONS AVAILABILITY

The culture of gun ownership and the right to bear arms is a long-established tradition in the state of Virginia. In the days immediately following the shootings at Virginia Tech, surprisingly there were more local expressions of support for gun ownership than there were for demanding stricter controls.

An article was published by the *Los Angeles Times* (April 19, 2007) under the title "Guns a Staple of Rural Virginia" and was submitted by staff writers Maura Reynolds and Richard Fausset. It reads, "As mourners left flowers at a memorial marked by 32 stones on the campus' central Drill Field, Scott Heldreth, a member of the religious

organization Operation Save America, urged the crowd to realize that the issue isn't guns, it's sin. Speaking over a microphone, Heldreth said, 'It wouldn't matter if you got rid of all guns. Instead,' he said, 'events like the Columbine and Virginia Tech shootings are a result of the deteriorating morality of society. It's [gun ownership] a constitutional right our Founding Fathers created. It wasn't my decision. It was theirs.'

"But the question of controlling possession of firearms was a hot topic at Virginia Tech last year, when the state legislature was debating a law that would have overturned regulations prohibiting firearms on campus. The bill was written in response to a dispute over a Virginia Tech student who was disciplined for bringing a firearm onto campus even though it was properly purchased and licensed. The bill eventually failed, but Todd Gilbert, the Virginia delegate who championed it, said the point was not to encourage students to tote guns but to restrict universities from infringing on rights granted by the Legislature. A majority of Virginians still believe that the right to bear arms is an individual right that the government should have a limited ability to infringe on. And, for many, gun ownership is a natural part of life."

A DERANGED KILLER

In light of the tragic loss of life on the Virginia Tech campus, the question has been raised as to how someone who was so mentally deranged and violently oriented could have purchased weapons locally with no difficulty. Gun control advocates point to the fact that Cho Seung-Hui had been previously detained

under a temporary legal order and that he had been judged mentally incapacitated at that time. They insist that he should have been denied the right to purchase firearms. They further said that there had been clear evidence that a Virginia judicial officer had found that the killer presented an imminent danger to himself and others. As a result of his severe mental condition, he should have failed his background checks that were necessary to purchase firearms.

State and federal law enforcement authorities, on the other hand, confirmed that there was no record found in their criminal background check systems to indicate that the killer had been involuntarily committed for observation, or that he had been declared mentally incapacitated by a judge. A spokesperson for the Virginia State Police Department said that a review of Cho's gun purchases found that there was no evidence to block the purchase of weapons to him. The killer's two guns had both been purchased in the state of Virginia, and their serial numbers had been obliterated. After the shootings they were sent to be examined at a laboratory of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

COLUMBINE MASSACRE

In April, 1999, eight years earlier almost to the day, news reports were suddenly turned toward the direction of the small town of Littleton, Colorado. It turned out that this was where two senior high-school students, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris had gunned down twelve students and one teacher before killing themselves, a total of 15 people in all.

The boys' original plan was to kill hundreds of their fellow students, and they were armed with guns, knives, and numerous types of bombs to carry out the scheme. They walked the high school hallways on a shooting rampage.

A PLANNED MASS MURDER

According to numerous notes, plans, and videos that Klebold and Harris left behind to be discovered later, Klebold had been thinking of committing suicide for over two years. Both boys together had been planning a mass murder a full year before they actually carried it out.

Further investigation reveals that in January, 1998 the two boys were arrested for breaking into a van. As part of their plea agreement, Klebold and Harris agreed to enroll in a juvenile diversion program in April of that same year. They were first-time offenders, and the program allowed for the removal of the offence from their record if they successfully completed the program. For nearly a year, the two boys regularly attended the workshops, conferred with their counselors, participated in voluntary work projects, and convinced all concerned that they were sorry for their crime, and had changed their unlawful ways. However, it is now known that during the entire time that they were enrolled in the juvenile program they were secretly planning for a very large-scale massacre at their high school.

It seems that the two boys were intensely angry at most everyone and, except for a very few, they hated them all. They were serious about acting out their hatred and were able to secure bomb-making

plans and to learn about explosive materials. Together they amassed an arsenal of knives, guns, and nearly one hundred explosive devices.

In their quest to kill the maximum number of students possible, they began to devise a plan that involved bombing the cafeteria when it was the most crowded. They observed that the peak number would be reached after the 11:15 A.M. lunch break began. Their plan was to time a propane bomb to explode shortly thereafter, and then shoot any survivors that would try to escape. Although this well-planned carnage was avoided they were able to kill 12 students, 1 teacher, themselves, and to wound 24 others.

Again, the question remains, what motivated them to plan and work out intricate details in an effort to carry out a large-scale massacre in their own high school, and against their fellow students and faculty members? From all outward appearances the two boys looked and acted very much like any other normal teenagers, but obviously they were not average school boys.

THE TEXAS SNIPER

In August, 1966, media attention was focused on the events that were taking place at the University of Texas at Austin. This was the flagship doctoral research institution of the University of Texas system. A student, Charles Joseph Whitman, had secured himself with a huge arsenal of firearms and ammunition on the observation deck at the top of the twenty-seventh floor Clock Tower of the university's Administration Building. From this vantage point, and with the aid of a powerful scope attached to one of his weapons, Whitman was able

to pick off individuals who were making their way around the campus far below.

He had shot and killed both his wife and mother the night before, and had phoned both of their employers early that morning to say they would not be able to be at work that day. He then rented a dolly to carry all of his firearms and equipment, made his way by elevator to reach the top of the building and then barricaded himself behind the door.

In addition to a variety of knives and a large quantity of ammunition, Whitman had brought with him a Remington 700 rifle with a 4x Leupold scope, an M1 Carbine rifle, a .35 caliber rifle, a 12 gauge shotgun, and three pistols including a .357 Magnum, a Galesi-Brescia, and a Luger pistol.

It took police and law enforcement investigators time to determine precisely where the shooting was coming from, and then more time to lay a strategy as to how to best overpower the deranged gunman. In the meantime, Whitman had murdered 16 people before being killed in turn by the police. There were 24 others who were wounded of which one later died of injuries sustained. The question remains as to what motivated him to carry out a mass-murder rampage of so many innocent people.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

No one knows to what degree the influences from Satan, or the evil spirits, may have had in prompting any of these mass murderers to carry out their deranged acts of violence in our modern 'civilized society.' What reason did Cho Seung-Hui have to carry out the largest massacre of students ever in a United States institution of learning? It is difficult

to understand what motivated either of the two boys, Dylan Klebold or Eric Harris, to elaborately plan a mass-murder campaign that would kill hundreds of their fellow students at Columbine High School. Why did the Texas sniper Charles Joseph Whitman choose to surround himself with a multitude of high-powered firearms at the top of the observation deck in Austin, Texas in a planned shooting rampage against innocent people far below?

SCRIPTURAL CONCLUSIONS

The Scriptures tell us that Satan, as the serpent, was more subtil than any beast of the field. (Gen. 3:1) The word “subtil” describes his cunning and evil pursuits, and has been translated “crafty” or “cunning” in some Bibles. Instead of assisting the newly created human family, the Prophet Isaiah said, concerning Satan, that he had weakened the nations. (Isa. 14:12) When Jesus was speaking to the Jews, he reminded them that Satan was a murderer from the beginning, and that there was “no truth in him” for “he is a liar” and the father of lies. (John 8:44) John the Revelator said concerning Satan, that he had deceived the whole world, and that he was the “accuser of our brethren” before God “day and night.”—Rev. 12:9,10

During Christ’s kingdom, all unrighteousness will be put down, and all who strive to obey God and his laws will receive life. “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.”—Rev. 22:14,15, *NASB* ■

*GOD'S ways are equal: storm or calm,
Seasons of peril and of rest,
The hurtling dart, the healing balm,
Are all apportioned as is best.
In judgments oft misunderstood,
In ways mysterious and obscure,
He brings from evil lasting good,
And makes the final gladness sure.
While Justice takes its course with strength,
Love bids our faith and hope increase:
He'll give the chastened world at length
His afterward of peace.*

*When the dread forces of the gale
His sterner purposes perform,
And human skill can naught avail,
Against the fury of the storm,
Let loving hearts trust in Him still,
Through all the dark and devious way;
For who would thwart His blessed will,
Which leads through night to joyous day?
Be still beneath His tender care;
For He will make the tempest cease,
And bring from out the anguish here
An afterward of peace.*

*Look up, O Earth; no storm can last
Beyond the limits God hath set;
When its appointed work is past,
In joy thou shalt thy grief forget.
Where sorrow's plowshare hath swept through,
Thy fairest flowers of life shall spring,
For God shall grant thee life anew,
And all thy wastes shall laugh and sing.
Hope thou in Him; His plan for thee
Shall end in triumph and release;
Fear not, for thou shalt surely see
His afterward of peace.*

—Poems of Dawn

Maintaining Hope

Key Verse: *“It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.”*
—*Lamentations 3:26*

Selected Scripture:
II Kings 25:1,2,5-7;
Lamentations 3:25-33,55-58

ZEDEKIAH WAS THE LAST ruler of Judah. Following a siege of Jerusalem, he was taken captive by the Babylonian army while trying to flee the city. At Riblah, Nebuchadnezzar punished Zedekiah by having his two sons slain in his presence, after which his eyes were put out and he was taken as a prisoner to Babylon.—II Kings 25:1,2,5-7

As an eyewitness to the suffering and anguish that came upon Jerusalem when Judah went into Babylonian captivity, in the beginning portions of Lamentations, Jeremiah mourns the destruction of the city and its Temple as a consequence of God’s chastisement upon wayward Israel. Nevertheless, the faithfulness of the Heavenly Father towards his repentant people offers hope to the afflicted.—Lam. 3:25

Implicit in the Key Verse is the thought that hope is necessary towards the strengthening of faith and, when accompanied by prayer, it affirms the expectation that God will in his own time and manner respond to such petitions. The act of quietly waiting, therefore, also implies an attitude of submission as opposed to being agitated or impatient that relief from one’s circumstances is not occurring as quickly as desired.

The Heavenly Father may permit afflictions in order

to develop humility, rather than a haughty spirit. Affliction is merely for a season and is tempered by God's compassion, as he does not take pleasure in bringing pain or grief upon anyone.—vss. 26-33

In addition to his lament concerning what Israel suffered in captivity, Jeremiah recalls some extremely difficult experiences he had personally endured at the hands of those who opposed him because he had warned the people of Judah they would be punished for disobeying God. Ultimately, however, he received Divine assurances that he was heard in his hour of trouble.—vss. 55-58

Although the circumstances under consideration relate to Old Testament times, there are lessons that can be derived from the experiences of Jeremiah and Judah which are applicable to believers during this Gospel Age.

The nation of Israel suffered affliction because of its disobedience towards God. Jeremiah's sufferings were permitted as a test of his faithfulness as a prophet in God's service. Christians may be sorely tried along both of these lines today. On occasion, suffering may be caused by some physical or mental health condition that requires professional consultation and assistance. Troubles may also face Christians in other areas such as bereavement, job insecurities, family problems, rejection, dangerous living conditions, false accusations, and spiritual concerns.

Even in the midst of great difficulties, faithful believers who have devoted their lives to following the Master have scriptural assurance that the Heavenly Father will ultimately deliver them from their adversities if their faith and hope in God's promises are maintained.—Rom. 8:35,38,39

Those whose lives are activated by such promises have a magnificent hope and will be employed as kings and priests and, as the spiritual seed of Abraham, they will inherit the privilege of blessing all the families of the earth in God's kingdom.—Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:27-29 ■

Personal Consequences of Sin

Key Verse: *“I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.”*
—**Ezekiel 18:32**

Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 18

THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH

used a proverb that attempted to place the blame for their misdeeds upon their ancestors. God reproved them for attempting to avoid personal responsibility for their actions.—Ezek. 18:1-4

The Prophet Ezekiel in our lesson states that for one to be considered just under the Mosaic Law, they had to be of those who “Hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man.”—vss. 7,8

If someone had a son who acted wickedly, it would be the parent’s responsibility to discipline his offspring. (vss. 10-13) Eli, the high priest of Israel, failed to reprove his sons for their corrupt actions and immorality while serving as priests and, as a consequence, their lives were taken from them.—I Sam. 2:34

If an evil man had an upright son, the father would

die for his own iniquity, but the son would continue to live if he chose to do right. (Ezek. 18:14-18) Those who act wickedly and repent from their sins will live. (vss. 21-23) According to God's arrangements, this principle will be in force during Christ's future millennial kingdom. "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—Jer. 31:34

During this present Gospel Age, believers who have received the Holy Spirit are considered righteous. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:1) Any Christian who thereafter turns away from God and practices willful sin would be destroyed forever.—Ezek. 18:24

The people of Israel did not appreciate God's principles of righteousness and continued to accuse him of injustice because they felt his requirements for their conduct were unreasonable. God, therefore, criticized their false reasoning in attempting to justify their own sinful conduct. The Heavenly Father is merciful and has provided a way of redemption for all mankind through the sacrifice of Christ Jesus.—vss. 25-30; I Cor. 15:21,22

Our Key Verse emphasizes the fact that God does not purposely desire the destruction of individuals. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3:16,17) The Heavenly Father is a God of love and compassion who has made ample provision for the salvation of all who desire to come into harmony with his righteous will. ■

Call for Repentance

Key Verse: “*Say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.*”
—**Zechariah 1:3**

Selected Scripture:
Zechariah 1:1-6;
7:8-14

AS ONE OF GOD’S HOLY prophets, Zechariah repeatedly spoke of Israel’s need to manifest genuine repentance in order to enjoy the blessings promised under the Abrahamic Covenant. The burden of his heart was that his people, now under Gentile domination, should return to God and pledge allegiance to his righteous statutes.—Zech. 1:1,2

Our Key Verse contains a merciful expression that God is long-suffering, and desires to bless Israel abundantly if they would seek and obey him. Zechariah also reminds Israel that their fathers had rejected the warnings of former prophets who pleaded with them to renounce their wicked ways. “Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD. But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.”—vss. 4,6

The Book of Zechariah contains historical accounts of God's past dealings with Israel. Additionally, it is prophetic in that it addresses future events related to that nation, as well as messianic in that it portrays conditions in the earth when the New Covenant will be in operation under Christ's righteous rule. All devoted Christians, therefore, should seek to study and apply lessons that will enable them to develop the character required of those who will be a part of the body of Christ. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."—Rom. 15:4

God's use of human agencies to provide instruction to his covenanted people should be heeded. Before Christ's First Advent, the prophets were sent to guide the people of Israel. During this Gospel Age, Christians can discern God's will by obeying the teachings found throughout the entire Bible, and noting in particular the words of Jesus and the apostles. The principles behind many of Zechariah's admonitions apply equally to God's Old Testament people as well as the followers of Christ.—Zech. 7:9,10

The hardness of heart by Israel led to their rejection of Christ as their Messiah during the time of his First Advent. Additionally, they have suffered since that time as they have been scattered as a people throughout the world. (Zech. 7:14) Now that they have been regathered to their national homeland, other scriptural promises for their return to God's favor await fulfillment.—Isa. 35:10

The Heavenly Father has arranged, through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, to eradicate sin in repentant believers during this Gospel Age and also for the world of mankind during Christ's kingdom. "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—I John 2:2 ■

Living Responsibly in the Community of Faith

Key Verse: *“I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in. . . . But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap.”*
—Malachi 3:1,2

Selected Scripture:
*Malachi 2:17-3:5;
4:1-3*

AS THE LAST MESSENGER

to Israel prior to the time of John the Baptist, the Prophet Malachi issued a stern rebuke to that nation for their faithlessness and hypocrisy. “Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?”—Mal. 2:17

Our Key Verse indicates the Heavenly Father would use some agency to prepare Israel for their Messiah during his First Advent even though, as a nation, they failed to receive him. By his ministry of repentance to the Jewish people, John the Baptist served in that capacity by pointing to Jesus as

the ‘messenger of the covenant’ described by Malachi.
—John 1:19-28

True Christians also have been proclaiming that Jesus Christ, at his Second Advent, does a judgment work to separate his faithful followers from others who profess to be believers but, in fact, teach false doctrines or have lifestyles that do not reflect devotion to godly principles.

The ultimate result of Christ’s Second Advent will be to eradicate all unrighteousness and bring blessings to members of the human family who respond positively to the regulations of God’s kingdom, when Satan is bound for one thousand years and no longer will be able to deceive mankind.—Mal. 3:3-5; Rev. 20:1-3

“Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.”—Mal. 4:1-4

The foregoing passage indicates the ‘Sun of righteousness,’ the leadership of Christ and his elect church, will end earth’s weary night of sin. Man will have his heart healed from the effects of sin, and will desire to ‘grow up’ as truly righteous beings. All who desire to come into harmony with righteousness from both present and past ages will benefit from the great atonement sacrifice by the Master. How comforting it is to appreciate the precious promises recorded in the Bible. “All flesh shall see the salvation of God.”—Luke 3:6 ■

What Manner of Persons Ought Ye to Be?

***“Seeing then that
all these things
shall be dissolved,
what manner of
persons ought ye to
be in all holy
conversation and
godliness?”***

—II Peter 3:11

IN THIS SCRIPTURE, THE

Apostle Peter was emphasizing the worthlessness of all earthly hopes, ambitions, and desires which had their foundations and their associations in the things of this old decaying world, and are to be dissolved. The followers of

Christ look forward to having a part in the promised “new heavens and a new earth.” (II Pet. 3:13) These are the things that they should be looking forward to, and thus giving all diligence to the making of their calling and election sure.

The apostle asks, ‘What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?’ If this question was a serious consideration in his day, how much more is it true now when we stand

at the very threshold of the new dispensation, and are in the very midst of the disintegrating influences all around us that are bringing an end to an old and decaying world.

Satan's world will be fully ended soon, and the human family will come to understand the blessings that are to be established under the administration of Christ's kingdom. Within a comparatively short space of time, we believe the true church will finish her earthly course. It is important, therefore, that we properly redeem the time, zealously carrying out in our hearts and lives the Divine will for us in the evil and violent days of this closing Gospel Age.

THE DAY OF PREPARATION

The hope that we have for the future kingdom of truth and righteousness is not merely an illusion of the mind, which the worldly-wise would call wishful thinking. We know that we are now living in the 'day of his preparation,' when the old order is actually passing away. The more we look into and study the prophecies of the Word of God pertaining to this time, the more vividly do we realize the importance of the days in which we are now living. Truly, we stand all astonished with wonder when we realize that it is the joyous and blessed privilege of the followers of Christ to see the mighty events of prophecy, long awaited by the faithful throughout the centuries and that are now actually transpiring.

Time prophecies of the Bible show clearly that we are now very close to the new day of Christ's kingdom, when the world will find rest and peace, and the blessedness of health and life which is

promised. It is being abundantly realized by those whose lamps are properly 'trimmed and burning.' It is as Peter said in the context of this lesson. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."—II Pet. 3:10

TIME PROPHECIES BEING FULFILLED

We see being fulfilled the foretold increase of knowledge and running to and fro. (Dan. 12:4) This is resulting in a great time of trouble which Jesus prophesied would mark the time of his Second Presence. "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."—Luke 21:25-28

The foretold shaking of the powers of the symbolic heavens, and the mourning of the tribes of the earth because of Christ's presence are events that will mark the end of the harvest of the present Gospel Age. These were to be seen in the successive spasms of travail, the clouds of trouble, and the melting of the elements of the earth and heavens that are now taking place before our very eyes.

To those who have been blessed with present Truth has been the fulfillment of Jesus' own words that when he returned he would gird himself, and serve his people with meat in due season. (Luke 12:36,37) We are now rejoicing in the fulfillment of this promise. The truths of the Divine plan in all their glorious brilliancy are bringing to our attention not only the meaning of the times in which we are living, but also the glorious hope of restoration for the human family, and the privilege which we now have of suffering with Christ that we may reign with him.—Rom. 8:17; II Tim. 2:11,12

COMFORT ONE ANOTHER

In seeking an answer to Peter's question, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" we are reminded of the Apostle Paul's words concerning the practical application of dispensational Truth. "Comfort [exhort, *Marginal Translation*] one another with these words." (I Thess. 4:18) To those who understand the real meaning of the symbolic expressions that are found in God's Word, and the glorious truths which they set forth for the enlightenment and encouragement of the saints at this time are indeed comforting. All of the truths that have been set forth pertaining to the end of this Gospel Age are of importance to the people of God now, because we are living in the Day of the Lord, in the day when the prophecies pertaining to the time of Christ's presence are being fulfilled. The foretold events are unfolding before us day by day.

Our life of holy conversation and godliness should, therefore, be one filled with thoughts,

words, and activities in keeping with the glorious fact of Christ's presence and the end of the age. We are to 'comfort one another' with these thoughts. We are not merely to learn about them and then keep them to ourselves. We are not to be ashamed of our knowledge of Christ's presence, nor think it unimportant.

The glorious truths pertaining to Christ's return and the establishment of his long-promised kingdom constituted the inspiration of the Early Church. Still more should it be the basis of our rejoicing now when we see so many evidences all around us that the elements of this world are in the process of melting with fervent heat and that soon the new heavens and the new earth will be established.

LOVE THE FINAL TEST

Examining ourselves with the thought that no promise of the Lord, nor any requirement of his, should be overlooked in view of the importance of the times in which we are living, we are reminded of the apostle's lesson on the importance of love. Paul reminds us, "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love], I am nothing." (I Cor. 13:2) Even though we might have sufficient faith to accept these wonderful and fundamental truths, we are told that love will be the ultimate test of that faith. If these truths do not inspire within us that burning love for God and his people which will cause us to devote our all to the Divine service and the laying down of our lives

for the brethren, the apostle says that it would count as nothing.

PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE

The Apostle John also speaks of the vital test of love. He explains, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”—I John 3:14-16

In the light of the Apostle John’s inspired testimony, we understand that love is not to be viewed in its mere outward sense. We should not believe that the true love of God of which John is speaking is simply that which has no animosity toward others, and would not willingly and knowingly do them injury. The love which he points to should be the true motive of all of our ‘holy conversation and godliness’ in our consecrated lives. It should be the Christlike principle that will motivate us to lay down our lives for others. The practice of justice, therefore, may keep us from injuring our brethren and our fellow men, but love will prompt us to serve them.

Our love for the brethren should be manifest toward all, as the Apostle Paul says, “The foundation of God standeth sure [steady, *Marginal Translation*], having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” (II Tim. 2:19)

Our knowledge of the brethren may be limited. "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:20) Therefore, our service for the brethren should not be limited to those few with whom we may be immediately associated, but we should reach out in an effort to acquaint all who may have a hearing ear with the glorious truths that have been such a comfort and encouragement to us. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—John 13:35

LABOR OF LOVE

The Lord could have made it easy for us to serve the brethren had he so desired. He could have let us know exactly who the individual brethren are in our particular area, and arrange matters so that all we would need to do is to call upon them with the Truth. They would in turn accept the wonderful truths of God's Word, and we would rejoice in the privilege of thus being used of the Lord to communicate his message to his people.

The Lord in his wisdom, however, and as a test of the genuineness of our love, has arranged that it should be done in a different manner. God's way has called for self-sacrifice, labor, reproach, and persecution. That is why the apostle refers to our ministry on behalf of his people as a labor of love. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."—Heb. 6:10

We must be willing and rejoice in the privilege of laboring in the Lord's service on behalf of his brethren. We could question how much true love

for God has filled our hearts if our response to this labor be lacking. We may spend a great amount of time in ministering the Truth to others, yet seldom if ever are we rewarded with a certain knowledge that our efforts have borne fruit in the enrichment of other hearts and lives.

God tests our faith as well as our love. The principal result of what we do is the preparation of ourselves for future joint-heirship with the Master. If faithful, we will later have the privilege of sharing with him in the enlightenment and blessing of all mankind. How profitable will our efforts be during a few fleeting years this side of the veil, if thereby we are found faithful unto death, receive the crown of life and are privileged to share in bestowing God's blessings to the whole sin-cursed and dying race of mankind!

We should learn to view what manner of persons we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness from God's standpoint. The apostle said that 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love.' It should not matter to us whether men hear or whether they do not, whether they appreciate our efforts or are indifferent to them since God does not forget. We may enjoy the rich blessings of faith and hope now, and will be rewarded with all the great joys of the kingdom in his glorious presence if we are faithful unto death.

REASSURING OUR TRUTHFULNESS

During the past many years of the church's experiences, we have witnessed many outstanding fulfillments of prophecy. These should reassure us of the truthfulness of present Truth. It is now necessary

more than ever to maintain a burning zeal for the service of the Truth and the brethren, and to maintain our zeal for God and his service. In the former days, the zeal of many was quickened by the momentum of being associated with a larger group movement. It is always easier to go along with a crowd than to walk alone.

The Lord has permitted conditions to arise among his people which are calculated to test their individual loyalty to him. We must be prepared to meet this test. The beauties of the Truth should still be an inspiration to us, an inspiration that will carry us on to self-sacrifice in making known its glories to others. The Truth today is the same and should be just as vital an influence in our lives as in the past. Jesus is still the Captain of our salvation, and the Truth which he has served to his people should still be the motivating factor in our hearts and lives. "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles."—Ps. 43:3

OUR FIRST LOVE

If our faith in present Truth is strong, it becomes a reality to us, and is something that will lead us in the footsteps of the Lord regardless of how few or how many may also be walking with us in the same narrow way. Paul said, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." (Phil. 3:13) We may look back with profit to some of the former days if thereby we may be inspired to return to our first love and enthusiasm for the

Lord and his Truth, remembering the admonition of John the Revelator to not leave our first love.—
Rev. 2:4

The Apostle Paul speaks of an earlier time, “Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.” (Heb. 10:32,33) According to this text, these brethren were at one time zealously engaged in a ministry of love to the Lord’s people, but they had evidently permitted a spiritual lethargy to creep over them. In his effort to revive their first love, Paul admonished them to ‘call to remembrance the former days.’ Their zeal in their former days had led to a ‘great fight of affliction,’ and they had been ‘made a gazingstock both by reproaches and affliction.’ Yet they had taken the experiences joyfully.

Here is a vitally important lesson for any who may have permitted their first love and zeal for the Truth to slacken. God does not want his people to outgrow that wholehearted and irrepressible enthusiasm with which they responded to his love, and when he first shone into their hearts the wonderful Gospel message. What God does want is to see that zeal continue until it consumes our lives even unto death in his service. Let us all then, with profit, call to remembrance our former days, not merely as a pleasant memory, but with the view of having our zeal rekindled thereby, and that we may continue our labor of love faithfully unto the end of our earthly sojourn.

WHEN INIQUITY ABOUNDS

In Jesus' great prophecy, he sets forth signs that would indicate his Second Presence and the end of the Gospel Age. "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matt. 24:12) Here is another reminder that we should be especially on guard lest the conditions to which the Master refers should cause a cooling off of our love and zeal. Surely, if we are giving proper consideration to what manner of persons we ought to be, we will not only be avoiding iniquity in our own lives, but will not permit the iniquitous influences with which we are surrounded to turn us away from our consecrated walk and course of sacrifice.

The iniquity to which the Master referred may apply to anything that may be out of harmony with the Lord and his Truth. Iniquitous practices of false leaders in the church have contributed to the dampening of zeal on the part of many, and this should not be so. Our relationship to God through his Truth should be so independent of others that even if they should turn aside from the narrow way it would not influence us. Our belief in the Truth should not rest upon our confidence in men.

Many are the tests today—the fiery darts of the Adversary—which tend to dampen the zeal of the Lord's people if their eyes are not steadfastly fixed upon him, and their hearts not filled with his love. Ingenious are the arguments presented from various sources as to why the Lord's consecrated people should now hide their light under a bushel. Personal grievances that one brother may have toward someone may be permitted to influence his

reasoning, and where iniquity may enter into a brother's own heart his love may wax cold.

Let us seek to rise above petty personal things that have no real bearing on the Truth and our relationship to it. It should not matter if someone may say that which does not please us. If something is said purposely to injure us, is not the Lord able to overrule and cause all things to work together for our good? (Rom. 8:28) Let us not permit iniquity to enter our hearts and take us away from the Lord, the Truth, and the brethren.

Giving closer consideration to what manner of persons we ought to be, let us therefore remember that first and foremost we should try to be like Christ. If we are truly endeavoring to follow his example, we should remember that he was tested in all points like we are. (Heb. 4:15) He was reviled, persecuted, finally put to death, and yet, in his dying moments, he continued to be a faithful ambassador of the Truth. Let us remember that the servant cannot expect to be above his Master, and if we are true servants we will daily strive to be more like him.

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Holy conversation and godliness, if genuine, is not something that we can wear merely as a veneer. True godlikeness springs from within and is based upon our habits of thinking. Peter's question, 'What manner of persons ought ye to be' will be answered according to the manner in which our thoughts are controlled by Christlikeness. True Christian thinking is outlined by Paul where we read, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever

things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”—Phil. 4:8

There are many good and praiseworthy things with which we are surrounded, and upon which our minds could profitably dwell. But we believe that, as Christians seeking to have our minds filled with the things from above and that truly pertain to life and godliness, we will do well to give special attention and thought first to our Heavenly Father and his beloved Son. Our thoughts should then be on the Truth in all its glory, and the brethren. Our hearts and minds will thus be elevated with things pertaining to God, his plan and his people. These pure, noble, praiseworthy, and virtuous thoughts will be constantly overflowing for the blessing of others. By holy conversation and godliness, we will be used of the Lord to comfort the brethren, and to be able ambassadors of the new kingdom. ■

“O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.

“Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

“How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

“And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

—Psalm 139:1,3,17,23,24

Who Shall Ascend?

***“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.”
—Psalm 25:14***

THE LORD’S PEOPLE ARE

neither perplexed nor distressed by the current global turmoil. They know that the present circumstances are the long-prophesied events

that indicate the closing years of this present Gospel Age, and the soon deliverance of the saints. Looking to the present day, the Lord Jesus said to his apostles, “Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matt. 24:21) He also said, “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”—Luke 21:28

With this in mind, the children of God continually search their hearts for any indication to succumb to the delusions that so beset the world and dishonor God. As they await their deliverance, they earnestly heed the loving admonition of the Apostle Peter—“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the

error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”—II Pet. 3:17

THE PSALMIST'S QUESTION

The psalmist asked, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?” (Ps. 24:3) He then went on to answer his own question. “He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”—vss. 4,5

The ‘hill of the LORD’ here referred to by the psalmist is where one receives the blessing of salvation during this Gospel Age. It is the holy place of which Isaiah spoke concerning the dwelling place of God. “Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isa. 57:15) ‘Place’ often means ‘condition’ in the Scriptures, and does not refer to a literal location but to a state of being. The wonderful blessing of understanding God’s secrets will be conferred only upon those who have figuratively ascended unto him in the condition of full consecration, and faith in the precious blood of Christ wherein they have received justification. They continue to demonstrate contrition and humility by the evidence of having ‘clean hands and a pure heart,’ which expresses the conditions under which God will confer eternal life upon those whom he calls and chooses during this Gospel Age.

MANKIND TO BE BLESSED

The world has not had faith in God, but has placed its faith in the promises of governmental leaders, superior military power, and religious fantasies. However, it is becoming increasingly aware that it has been betrayed by those very devices, and thus begins to ponder the consequences of that betrayal. Luke wrote, "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." (Luke 21:26) Mankind has a growing doubt and fear concerning the events that are taking place throughout the world during these closing years of the present Gospel Age, and look forward with great alarm concerning the things that are coming upon society.

The process of liberation from mankind's condemnation to sin and death will be completed under the administration of Christ's future kingdom of truth and righteousness. Then the world will be methodically instructed of God's righteous ways. The instruction to which they must give heed may be characterized as being of the same nature as that to which the nation of Israel had historically failed to attend, and of which the Prophet Isaiah wrote, "Precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: . . . Yet they would not hear."—Isa. 28:10,12

THE GOSPEL AGE CALL

Having received the highest order of life—the Divine nature—after having given his life in sacrifice, the Lord Jesus during this Gospel Age offers that same grand prospect to those who are willing

to follow him into the likeness of his death. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23) The world is not presently interested in following Jesus' steps since they will certainly lead to suffering and death. Thus, only a relative few are so invited during this age, working no disadvantage to the world.

No one embarks upon this path but by their own will. Those who would tread this path are called and chosen of God. Jesus affirms, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:44) "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."—I Pet. 2:9

Christ's spirit of sacrifice is the example to which the called and chosen of God aspire to follow. "Even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." (vs. 21) "If we [the called and chosen] have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."—Rom. 6:5

SACRIFICIAL DEATH

As the nature of Christ's death was sacrificial, so the deaths of his disciples are also to be of the same condition, as the Apostle Paul emphasizes, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not

forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."—II Cor. 4:8-11

The nature of Christ's resurrection was to the Divine nature. Christ's faithful followers are also promised a resurrection to that same spiritual condition. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."—II Pet. 1:3,4

THE DIVINE NATURE

Christ's faithful disciples enter the grave as fleshly beings. At their resurrection, they will receive a heavenly spirit body. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." (I Cor 15:44) "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (vs. 49) These sons of God are promised that they will see Jesus in his resurrected heavenly body, and that they will have bodies of the same nature. "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."—I John 3:2

That the church is to be like Jesus is affirmed by the Apostle Paul, when he says, "Our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. 3:20,21) Christ Jesus is now of the same Divine nature and appearance as his Heavenly Father. "Who [the Son] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." (Col. 1:15) The prospect of resurrection to that same Divine state of being is yet being offered to those who are invited to become the sons of God during this present Gospel Age.

This wonderful prospect is summarized by the revelator who wrote, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10) The promise of life from the dead on any plane of existence is indeed wonderful, but the prospect of being raised from the tomb and fashioned in the likeness of Christ Jesus, who is now the express image of God, is nearly beyond the capacity of our human minds to grasp. It is to this calling that the gospel of John alluded, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."—John 5:24

HEARING AND BELIEVING

The attainment of Divine immortality for any is dependent upon their hearing, understanding and believing God's promises of life from the dead through Christ. From the Divine perspective, he who

believes and who is fully committed to follow in Christ's footsteps, as John has said, has 'passed from death unto life.' They are no longer considered dead in the flesh, condemned in Adam, but are seen as alive through the Holy Spirit of God. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."—II Cor. 5:17

We read further, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."—Rom. 8:8-10

STAGGER NOT

The Apostle Paul characterizes the true disciple of Christ as one who, from the first moment of his consecration until the moment of his last breath, remains convinced and determined that the promises of God in Christ are true. "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." (Heb. 3:14) Christ's people are to have faith that is similar to that of Abraham, who did not stagger at the promise of an heir in his old age. Paul explained, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."—Rom 4:20,21

Those who have such faith during this Gospel Age High Calling in Christ Jesus will not stagger at the marvelous prospect of resurrection to the Divine

nature, that is neither beyond the ability or everlasting will of God to confer upon his faithful people. The true disciple must hold his confidence to the very end of his Christian course. This is stated emphatically by the Lord in the Gospel of John, “Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”—John 6:28,29

Let us therefore continue to rejoice in the age-long promise of our loving Heavenly Father concerning those whom he has called and chosen to ascend to a position alongside our dear Lord and Savior, for the blessing of all the families of the earth to be testified in due time. ‘Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.’ ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

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

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

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

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

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

Our Heavenly Father

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

—John 3:16,17

WHILE HE WAS WITH HIS

disciples, Jesus taught them many things. Some were familiar, others were new. Still others they did not understand until they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Jesus spoke to the people in parables, so even his disciples could not understand his message. When his disciples asked him why, “He [Jesus] answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto

you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” (Matt. 13:11) These same truths have continued to be hidden during this Gospel Age to all except those who have received the begetting of God’s Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul spoke of these truths as mysteries, “And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.”—Eph 6:19

One of the most beautiful truths Jesus taught concerned his Heavenly Father. While imparting the Golden Rule to his disciples, Jesus told them, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."—Matt. 5:43,44

These must have been confusing words to his disciples, for what man could ever love his enemies and his persecutors? Could the Master really be teaching such a thing? Jesus was teaching his disciples a most important lesson about God. Continuing, we learn the reason for loving our enemies. "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."—vss. 45-48

Herein lies a great truth, for we are 'children' of our Father which is in heaven. We are privileged to know that God is not merely our God, but is also our Heavenly Father. This is overwhelming when we consider what Jesus is teaching. If we are to be the children of God, we are to be perfect as God is perfect. It is impossible for anyone to be perfect as God is, so what did Jesus mean? He was turning our minds to a great fact, that if we are to be faithful footstep followers of our Master, and to develop

as New Creatures fit for a place in God's great kingdom, we must develop the character of God. It is this standard, and none lower, which God expects us to seek after. Our Heavenly Father has purposely set this standard very high, and it takes constant diligence to meet it.

God knows best what we need. We do not set the standard because any standard we might set would fall far short of what is expected of those who one day will share in the work of the kingdom. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (I Cor. 6:2) This is one of the rewards for being faithful until death so God's standard for us must be high, and we must never lower it. The standard is, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.'

Jesus is teaching us the lesson that we must develop perfect love for all of God's children. He created all with the intent of blessing them for eternity, the evil and the good, the just and the unjust. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Cor. 15:22) John describes God's perfect love, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (I John 4:7,8) We have the great privilege to know God before the rest of mankind. How comforting to know that those who do not love him in this world and may oppose him are not doomed forever, but do so out of ignorance. While dying on the cross, Jesus did not ask for revenge on those who were unjustly putting him to

death, or those who mocked him, beat him, and cast lots for his clothes.

This is the perfect love of God, and the perfect love we are required to develop. The disciples of the Early Church may have thought this an impossibility. Jesus might have been able to have such love, but was it possible for them to also develop such love? They were quickly shown that it was possible. Not long after Pentecost, a young brother named Stephen was confronted by certain ones in the Temple while he was preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "They were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." (Acts 6:10) After these Jews bribed false witnesses to claim he had blasphemed God, Stephen recounted to them, as recorded in the seventh chapter of Acts, God's plan—beginning with father Abraham and covering their history down to the coming of Jesus as the Anointed One, finishing with the accusation, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." (Acts 7:52) When they heard these words they were extremely agitated, but did nothing because they knew he spoke the truth.

Then Stephen next looked up and saw a vision, and said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul."—Acts 7:56-58

As the stones rained down upon Stephen, he displayed the wonderful Spirit of God toward his enemies and persecutors that Jesus had previously taught to his disciples. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." (Acts 7:59,60) With God's help, he was given the strength to demonstrate that it is indeed possible for us to develop the perfect love of which Jesus had taught, and that is required of all who have taken up their cross to follow him faithfully even unto death. Without such a marvelous example as seen in the young brother Stephen, we would doubt that it is possible.

Jesus taught us that God is our only Father. He said, "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." (Matt. 23:9) The term 'father' can denote the meaning 'respect of title.' Jesus makes it clear that such a title and respect is not to be observed by his people of human religious leaders, because 'one is your Father which is in heaven.'

We have learned many of the characteristics of our Heavenly Father which makes us appreciate him even more. Like any good father on earth, he is constant, and we can trust that he will never change. Most children are comforted by the knowledge that they can turn to their father at any time, and it is even more so with our Heavenly Father. James tells us, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,

with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (James 1:17) Malachi also wrote, “I am the LORD, I change not.” (Mal.3:6) What a blessing to know that our Heavenly Father gives us all the perfect gifts we need and is always there whenever we call upon him.

As a good father, God provides for us all that we need. Matthew describes the love God has for the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, and the grass of the field and asks, “Are ye not much better than they?” (Matt.6:26) He tells us that our Father which is in heaven loves us so much more than what we can see in nature, reassuring us we need not worry about the day-to-day activity of seeking raiment and food, for God “knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”—vss. 32,33

The lesson does not teach us that we should not plan or take care of our temporal responsibilities, but that our Heavenly Father will watch out for all things because we are precious to him. We can focus on seeking first his righteousness and learning as much as we can about his character, plans, and purposes as described in his Holy Word.

We know that God, like an earthly father, will give us things we ask, when asked for properly. “I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? Or if he

shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"—Luke 11:9-13

We are further told that like a good, earthly father, our Heavenly Father disciplines us so we might grow characters ready to be blessed and to be partakers of his holiness. Paul wrote, "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."—Heb. 12:5-11

Knowing these things of the Heavenly Father's character leads us to ask, how do we approach him? The disciples wanted to know this. "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, as John also taught his disciples.”—Luke 11:1

Jesus had provided an example of acceptable prayer to his followers, and waited for them to inquire about it themselves. They had prayed to God previously, but they knew the teachings of Jesus were different from the Law, and sought after the proper form of prayer to be in harmony with his teachings. In Matthew 6:1-7, he answered their question with examples of the hypocrites, who prayed amiss by doing so with an outward display to gain attention for themselves. Jesus’ lesson was that we should avoid any show of piety or to impress those around us. Rather, we should go into a secret place and speak humbly to our Heavenly Father.

He teaches them how to pray with the beautiful words that have become known as the Lord’s Prayer. “After this manner therefore pray ye. Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”—Matt. 6:9-13

Here again is the perfect love of God that we must develop in ourselves. We must love perfectly by forgiving others, and if we do not we will not be forgiven by him. This is what Jesus meant when he told us we must be perfect, as our Father, which is in heaven, is perfect.

The Bible is full of examples of different kinds of fathers: Adam was a sinful father who had taken all of mankind into the slavery of sin and death. Enoch was a godly father, because the Scriptures

say he walked with God. (Gen. 5:22-24) Noah was a faithful father who worked for God. (Gen. 6-9) Moses was a noble father because he served God. Joshua was a wise father because he chose God. (Josh. 24:15) Joseph was a fruitful father because he honored God.

The model 'father figure' recorded in the Scriptures was Abraham because he represented perfect obedience. He was promised that through his seed all the families of earth were to be blessed, but as he grew to an old age along with his wife, he bore no son and no heir. After mistakenly trying to help God's plan along by giving birth to Ishmael through his concubine Hagar, Sarah finally provided the promised seed—Isaac—when Abraham was one hundred years old. When his son had grown to manhood, God put Abraham to the ultimate test of obedience, telling him to take Isaac to a place he would show him and there offer him as a sacrifice to God.

The account of this event is recorded in Genesis 22:1-14. Abraham displayed complete trust in God by following the instructions. Isaac displayed complete trust in his father by obeying the instructions to carry the wood to the place of sacrifice, even after he realized they had no animal to offer. He submitted himself to being bound and laid on the altar when he easily could have escaped and lived. This represents Jesus who voluntarily laid down his life as the ransom price for Adam because of his love for the Father. Similarly, as Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only begotten son in obedience to the instructions of God, God himself was willing to offer his Son in sacrifice for us.

Jesus once described to his disciples what is considered the greatest love. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:12,13) That is what Jesus did for us, for he said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." (chap. 10:11) That is what Jesus did during his earthly ministry, and we are expected to do the same. But, we have to strive diligently toward that ultimate goal in our consecrated lives because it is not a natural thing to be willing to lay down your life for a stranger, or even for a friend. This is a true manifestation of love.

Our Heavenly Father gave his Son Jesus' life for us. That act of God giving his Son as the ransom price for Adam, was the greatest act of love that has ever been displayed, or that ever will be. Is it reasonable to think that if it were possible God would have preferred to die himself for us instead of allowing his only begotten Son to die? Consider Abraham on his journey to sacrifice the son he had waited so long to have. No doubt he would have gladly offered himself rather than to slay his only begotten son. But God cannot die, so he gave his own Son to be the ransom price for Adam. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.' Personal experiences as parents continue to deepen our understanding and thankfulness for the love of God.

A young man had died at the age of forty, and at the funeral his father was overheard telling a friend that he could not believe his son had died, and that it was not the natural order of life. "A son should outlive his father," the man said. "That should have been me that died, and not my son. I would give anything to make it so." Many parents may have expressed similar sentiments when a child has preceded them in death. The lesson concerning our Heavenly Father and his Son is clear. If we are capable of such love for our children, how much greater is the love of our Heavenly Father towards his children. God loves us more than we know, enough even to give his only begotten Son in sacrifice on our behalf.

'If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' Shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits?

Let us always keep in mind the great love God has for us, and the little we can do to show our love and appreciation to him. May we then continue to worship and praise our loving Heavenly Father for his great blessings to us for as long as we have the opportunity and privilege to do so. ■

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Thy Word Was Found

“I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.”

—Psalm 119:16

THE WORD OF THE LORD

was lost in a most important sense during the Dark Ages. Forms and ceremonies, and the decrees of councils, took its place. The result was increasing confusion and deterioration of spiritual vitality among those professing the name of Christ. Not only was the Word of the LORD lost in the sense of not being followed, but it was also lost by not being studied.

The writing of the Scriptures was generally discontinued and the old manuscripts were lost sight of. The finding of the Word of God seemed to begin afresh with the introduction of the art of printing, at a time when certain of the LORD's people were aroused to inquire more particularly for the “old paths.”—Jer. 6:16

Thank God conditions are so changed now that his Word is ‘found’ in the sense of being easily accessible to all people, and in the sense that under his providential care, in the “time of the end” (Dan.

12:4), knowledge has been increased so as to be universal in Christian lands.

Today his Word is abundantly distributed in all civilized lands, and is obtainable in all languages. Nevertheless, the Word of the LORD is in one sense still hidden. It is covered with a thick coating of false teaching and human tradition, so that in the homes where the book is to be found, there is often so much blindness upon the eyes of the understanding that the Truth of God cannot be appreciated. It is still necessary for us to pray that the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we might be able to comprehend with all saints the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God, which passeth understanding. (Eph. 1:18) It is only as our eyes of understanding open that we see the wonderful things of God's book, and that we get the wonderful blessings which he intended for those who seek in truth and in sincerity. ■

OBITUARIES

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

Brother Alexander Kotian, Mangalore, India—May 4.
Age, 83

Brother A. V. Kumar, Bangalore, India—May 12. Age,
64

Brother George Balko, West Newton, PA—June 5. Age,
83

Sister Ruth Slivinsky, Hartford, CT—June 15. Age, 70

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

QUESTION: Please explain the resurrections to “life” and “damnation” mentioned by Jesus in John 5:28,29. Does this text prove that we will live forever either in heaven or in hell?

ANSWER: The passage cited in the question reads, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his [Jesus’] voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” The true meaning of this scripture has been obscured by the word ‘damnation,’ which is an incorrect translation of the Greek word *krisis*.

This same Greek word appears in verse 24 and is translated “condemnation.” In verse 27, *krisis* is correctly translated “judgment.” In this verse, Jesus explains that the Heavenly Father had given him authority to execute judgment; that is, *krisis*.

In verse 24, Jesus explains that those who now hear his words, and believe and obey the One who sent him, “hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [*krisis*, judgment]; but is passed from death unto life.” Believers now receive life by faith, but will receive it actually in the resurrection. It is these who will ‘come forth’ from death to a ‘resurrection of life.’ As Jesus explained, they will not come into judgment, their trial—or judgment—being past.

But those who do not now believe will, when awakened from the sleep of death, come into judgment, just as Jesus indicates in verse 24. These are the ones who have ‘done evil.’ They fail to believe, therefore do not receive the imputed righteousness

of Christ, apart from which there is “none righteous,” for “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”—Rom. 3:10,23; 5:12

However, their coming forth from death unto judgment does not imply that they will be eternally condemned, or ‘damned,’ as the *King James Version* indicates. The word *krisis* includes the idea of a test. It has the same meaning as our English word crisis. The unbelieving world, when awakened from death, will face a crisis, which, if properly met by turning to the Lord in belief and obedience, will result in eternal human life. Those who do not meet this crisis successfully will be cut off in death.—Acts 3:23

In John 12:47,48, Jesus elaborates further on this theme, saying, “If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” In verses 49 and 50, Jesus further explains that the word, or “commandment,” which he had received from the Father, that word which will judge believers in the ‘last day’—the time of resurrection—“is life everlasting.” Believers by faith receive life now, and actually in the resurrection. Unbelievers who obey the word when awakened from death will then obtain everlasting life.

So we see that Jesus is not talking about heaven and hell, but about life. Other texts reveal that the life received in the resurrection by faithful believers will be immortality—the Divine nature. Mankind who, in the earthly resurrection pass through their ‘crisis’ successfully, will receive everlasting human life in a global paradise. ■

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

FROM WEBSITE

Dear Dawn Bible: I just finished reading this month's *Dawn* and I really enjoyed it. I have been receiving it for several years now. I have the *Studies in the Scriptures* and a lot of the videos. All this material is my source of help, hope, faith, and strength.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. May God continue to bless you and me through your program. I pray for you.—WV

FUNERAL WITNESS

Dear Dawn: I was at a funeral and got your *Hope* booklet.

When I was leaving, I was looking around to see what else could be interesting. There were some books I noticed, 3 *Creator's Grand Design* books on the shelf. I asked the attendant if I could buy one. He said, "I'll give it to you, if you

like." Did I ever get a prize! What a plan God has for all people!

Could I now order the other books I see on the inside cover?—IL

RADIO BROADCAST

Dear Frank & Ernest: On Sunday, my wife and I were listening to your radio broadcast on Inspirational Radio. This is the first time we have heard your broadcast, and it was very interesting.

You are offering a book entitled, *The Day of Judgment*. Please send us your free copy. Myself and family are Christians. Please send us any other Scripture materials.

Keep up the Word of the Lord through the airwaves.—WEST INDIES

FOUND THE TRUTH

Dear Dawn Brethren: I am so thankful to have found you and to see the truth about the ransom. I was told you do not

have the truth. However upon studying, I find the opposite. I find that you have the real truth, and I can see the helps Bro. Russell brought out are true and harmonize with the Bible. That's proof to me.

I enjoy the *Dawn* so much, as I am telling you my life starts when I get the *Dawn*. I can't stop reading it. God bless you dear people who write the articles.—FL

FROM WEBSITE

Dear Dawn Bible: Excellent work! Love all the information you have available to the public as an added proof of the true living God. God bless.—CANADA

RADIO AFRICA

Dear Frank & Ernest: Thank you for your inspiring programme on Radio Africa. From the time I started listening to this programme, it has been my indispensable diet, nourishing my

spiritual life, also giving me courage and meaning to my life.

God must continuously add you more grace day after day to continue the work he has entrusted to you. I want to request you to send to our fellowship some copies of Bibles, few books, and also tapes of your programme. Thank you.—GHANA

NEW OPTIONS

Dear Dawn Bible: We love the new options on the site! (www.dawnbible.com) For years we have wanted to listen to the *Frank and Ernest* program and now we can. Thank you so much. The doctrinal discourses are wonderful as well. The Lord continue to bless you.—OH

FRESH AIR

Dear Dawn: The booklets I've received are a breath of fresh air in an otherwise stuffy world. Thank you for being here.—KS

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

Yorkton, SK August 10-12

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

W. Austin

Milwaukee, WI August 18,19

J. Freer

Yorkton, SK August 10-12

G. Balko, Jr.

Milwaukee, WI August 18,19

R. Goodman

St. Petersburg, FL August 12

D. Blencowe

Yorkton, SK August 10-12

S. Jeuck

Louisville, AL August 19

R. Carnegie

Yorkton, SK August 10-12

T. Krupa

Milwaukee, WI August 18,19

D. Christiansen

Yorkton, SK August 10-12

D. Rice

Milwaukee, WI August 18,19

B. Clark

Yorkton, SK August 10-12

A. Stocki

Yorkton, SK August 10-12

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.

CANADIAN CONVENTION, August 10-12—Best Western Parkland Inn, Yorkton, SK. Phone: (800) 667-1585 (Ask for group #46 when booking rooms.) Contact B. Sweeney, 110 Circlebrook Drive, Yorkton, SK S3N 2S4. Phone: (306) 782-0436

NIGERIAN GENERAL CONVENTION, August 15-19—Emmanuel College Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. Egbu, #2 Darlington Street Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Phone: 2348033339949 or 2348082146621

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, August 18,19—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact D. Moore, 2176 South 71st Street, West Allis, WI 53219. Phone: (414) 541-8937

PORTLAND AREA CONVENTION, August 24-26—Collins Retreat Center, 32867 SE Highway 211, Eagle Creek, OR. For information, contact T. Krupa. Phone: (503) 436-2296. For reservations, contact C. Grigalunus. Phone: (503) 667-2797

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 1,2—Fa-Ho-Lo Camp and Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Unit 1, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact R. Lumley. Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 1,2—Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ 07430. Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact D. Szybinski, 250 West 102 Street, 1A, New York, NY 10025. Phone: (212) 998-2095

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 1-3—Seabeck Christian Conference Center, Seabeck, WA.

Contact L. Flinn, PO Box 67, Pacific, WA 98047-0067.
Phone: (253) 939-9838

CLAY CITY CONVENTION, September 28-30—McCormicks Creek State Park, Clay City, IN 46240. Contact S. Clark, 7861 Clearwater Highway, Indianapolis, IN 46240.

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 6,7—Sewicky Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA. Contact G. Balko, Jr., 1300 High Street, West Newton, PA 15089. Phone: (724) 872-6418

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 13,14—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact J. Houlmont, 6825 Clubhouse Drive West, Canadian Lakes, MI 49346. Phone: (231) 972-4259

DETROIT/METRO DETROIT JOINT GATHERING, October 21—Pleasant Ridge Community Center, 4 Ridge Road, Pleasant Ridge, MI. Contact F. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 27,28—Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Drive (Corner of Hwy. 17-92), Sanford, FL. Contact J. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 831-2098

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*“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”—Hebrews 10:23-25, New American Standard Bible*

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*To us the Scriptures clearly teach:*

**THAT THE CHURCH IS “THE TEMPLE” OF THE LIVING GOD** —peculiarly “his workmanship;” that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age—ever since Christ became the world’s Redeemer and the chief “corner stone” of this temple, through which, when finished, God’s blessings shall come “to all people,” and they find access to him.—I Cor. 3:16,17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29

**THAT MEANTIME THE CHISELING, SHAPING, AND POLISHING** of the consecrated believers in Christ’s atonement for sin progresses, and when the last of these “living stones,” “elect and precious,” shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Rev. 15:5-8

**THAT THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD** lies in the fact that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God “tasted death for every man,” “a ransom for all,” and will be “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” “in due time.”—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; I Tim. 2:5,6

**THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH** is that she may be like her Lord, “see him as he is,” be a “partaker of the divine nature,” and share his glory as his joint-heir.—I John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; II Pet. 1:4

**THAT THE PRESENT MISSION OF THE CHURCH** is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God’s witness to the world; and to prepare to be the kings and priests in the next age.—Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6, 20:6

**THAT THE HOPE FOR THE WORLD** lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ’s millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35