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August 2008



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Economic Woes: A Looming Crisis

“Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD’S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.”

—*Zephaniah 1:18*

unrighteousness. It will result in the ultimate and final overthrow of all social, political, ecclesiastical, and financial elements of earth’s ruling power and order.

In recent months, there has been increasing perplexity among powerful Wall Street financiers and the Federal Reserve Bank’s officials in connection with the growing crisis that is taking place within the economic sector of America, as well as in Europe,

THE PROPHETIC WORDS OF

Zephaniah speak of a fiery time that would occur during the closing years of this present Gospel Age, when the wealth and heaped-up treasures of men and nations will no longer have value to save them from the impending destruction. The mighty judgments of the Heavenly Father have been forecast to come upon the world to cleanse it from all sin and

Asia and other parts of the world. One particular aspect of this disaster, and one that has drawn a great deal of attention, has affected thousands of families throughout America who have been forced to vacate their family homes because of greedy and unwise lending practices among certain mortgage companies and financial institutions that have foreclosed on them. As the condition worsens, it is also extending into the commercial sectors of the economy as well, and with even more serious consequences.

THE REALITY

At the time of this writing, it is reported by the National Association of Realtors that housing prices have now dropped in two-thirds of American cities. The median price for a single-family home fell by 7.75% in the first quarter of 2008, the largest decline in nearly thirty years. Home prices are falling as foreclosed properties reduce the value of other real estate in a particular locality. Foreclosure filings have more than doubled in the first quarter from that of the previous year.

This situation has put more supply on the housing market and accelerates the price decline that has already taken place. Homeowners who may live near repossessed homes are powerless to prevent their own property values from dropping. It is estimated that, nationally, overall foreclosures will result in well over \$200 billion of lost real estate value. Prices have fallen in neighborhoods where there is a wide prevalence of subprime loans, because more foreclosed properties are being sold at discounted prices. One of the largest declines in the country

was in the Sacramento, California area that experienced a 30% drop, followed by the metropolitan areas around Riverside and San Bernadino. Lansing, Michigan also saw a 27% drop in home prices. The Federal Reserve's latest loan survey shows that lending institutions are now holding back on their loans to private citizens, as well as corporations who are requesting them. Defaults are on the rise and better banking practices point to smaller margins of error and leave less room for maneuver.

SPREADING CONCERNS

As the fallout from the credit crunch and the subprime mortgage crisis continues, many analysts are now carefully watching to recognize any potential spillover into other vulnerable segments of the economy. One area of particular concern involves the record levels of accumulated debt that is now owed by credit cardholders.

According to the latest Federal Reserve Consumer Credit report, the total revolving debt now owed by United States consumers—which is mostly from credit cards—is at its highest level ever recorded at \$947.4 billion. Americans are more in debt today than they have ever been, and there is increasing concern that the credit card industry could be the next domino to fall if consumers don't take charge of their personal finances quickly.

MASSIVE DEBT

Credit card debt has been described by financial advisors as the greatest obstacle to achieving financial freedom. It is an enormous problem and no matter what level of income a family may be in, it is essential that they learn to manage their debt

level carefully. Accumulating such huge debt leads to increasing levels of interest that has to be paid. As credit card debt continues to spiral, it also brings higher levels of stress and anxiety along with it. It is first necessary to recognize and acknowledge that there is indeed a problem, and that it needs to be resolved as quickly as possible.

The mounting debt problem in American households is occurring at the same time that property values are decreasing all over the country. Homeowners are no longer able to tap into their home equity lines of credit, and many are turning to their credit cards and other sources of revolving credit to obtain short-term cash. Analysts point out that families that are already experiencing economic hardship should be seeking ways to lessen their debt levels rather than adding to it.

A meltdown in the credit card industry would have very serious consequences on the broader economic climate by creating difficulties for lending institutions as well as the average consumer. Americans can help avoid a more serious situation by managing their personal and household expenses more wisely.

THE DECLINING DOLLAR

The United States dollar has been the world's symbol of stability for the past century, but now many analysts fear that its power is beginning to wane. The recent turmoil in money markets, the emergency bailout of Bear Stearns Investment Bank and the widespread lack of confidence with Wall Street and the Federal Reserve has caused increasing numbers of international traders to begin

transferring their wealth to other currencies that appear to be stronger, such as the Euro dollar or the Japanese yen. Many dealers will no longer accept United States dollars and are not willing to hold on to them for any period of time and wait for a possible turnaround in value.

The collapse of the subprime mortgage market in the United States is a key factor in the dollar's decline in value, and it has contributed to serious problems with banks in Great Britain, such as The Northern Rock Bank and other international banks that were forced to declare huge losses. This reflects the reason why the United States dollar has reached its lowest recorded level against the Euro. It has also fallen to its lowest level against the Canadian dollar since 1950, British sterling since 1981, and the Swiss franc since 1995. China's vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress said his country favored stronger currencies over weaker ones, and that they would be readjusting their holdings accordingly. The Chinese central bank vice-director said that the United States dollar was losing its status as the world's currency. The central bank of Iraq has stated that it wished to diversify its reserves of American dollars. Korea's central bank has urged shipbuilders to issue invoices in the local currency and to take other measures as a precaution against the weakened dollar. While this has been taking place, some of the world's largest exporters of oil, such as Iran, Venezuela, and Russia, are demanding payment in Euro currency instead of dollars. Iran demanded Japan to make its payments for oil in yen, rather than United States dollars.

THE POWER OF GOLD

The everincreasing price of gold reflects the general state of the United States economy. Gold is perceived by most investors and traders as a safer place to put their money. When the United States investment market is strong, there are fewer people buying gold, but when the market becomes unsettled many turn to gold and other precious metals as insurance against the instability that has been generated.

As investors leave the stock market to buy gold, they also sell their American dollars in favor of stronger currencies such as the Euro dollar or Japanese yen. This tends to weaken the dollar even further as the value cycle continues. Gold is traded in United States currency and the price rises accordingly. As foreign economies grow, the demand for gold also rises, as it has many modern industrial and technological uses. There is a great demand for this commodity in India.

RISING OIL PRICES

The rapidly escalating price of gasoline at the pump, and oil for household heating and other purposes, has aroused a great deal of anguish and concern among American homeowners all over the country. Since they require these commodities on an everyday basis, they must find workable solutions or viable alternatives.

The basis for price increases in any sector of the economy results from the simple law of supply and demand; that is, that either the supply of a certain product is lower or the demand is higher. In the case of oil production the increasing demands may

occur because of natural forces, or through artificial manipulation by a few dominant players in the industry. Huge oil companies, suppliers and politicians may employ manipulative action for political purposes and to greatly increase their profits.

The demand among major developing economies such as China, India, and other countries in recent years has had an enormous impact on the factor of supply and demand. For example, it is estimated that by the year 2010 India will have 36 times more vehicles on their roads than they did as recently as 1990, while during that same time period China will have increased their vehicular traffic by 90 times. According to the Energy Research Institute of Beijing, more than 4.5 million new vehicles are added to the roads of China every year, and by the year 2030, China will have more cars and trucks on their highways than those in the United States. Other emerging economies in Southeast Asia are also growing rapidly, and along with it their need for oil. As the consumption of oil grows in these areas their lifestyles also tend to be more energy intensive.

These are staggering statistics that help us understand why the law of supply and demand is relative to this industry in our modern industrial and technological world. Furthermore, disruptions to oil supplies have occurred because of terrorist activities in oil-producing countries. Oil prices are bound to escalate with these many factors at hand, and the effects on the American economy as well as other nations around the world will be significant. The impact is of major concern in the airline, trucking, agriculture, and other basic sectors of the country's economy.

INFLATION WORRIES

An interesting news item that points to some of the momentous events that would mark the end of the present Gospel Age was submitted by John Schoen, Senior Producer of *MSNBC* (April 15, 2008) under the heading “Surge in Energy Prices Stokes Inflation.” His subheading is also quite revealing, “Economic Slowdown Normally Tames Prices, But These Aren’t Normal Times.” We quote in part what Schoen said. “When the economy slows down, the resulting drop in demand normally takes some of the pressure off inflation. But these are not normal times: Even as the economy is slumping, oil prices are rising and food prices are jumping. All of which could spell more trouble for consumers in the coming months. Tax filers can look forward to some relief from the massive government rebate program. But that one-time shot in the arm won’t help consumers—or the economy—if energy and food prices keep rising. Food and energy prices tend to move up and down more quickly than other goods, but lately they’ve only been moving in one direction. In the last three months, gasoline prices are up by a third and food prices are up 10%.

“There are multiple causes to the current rise in prices. A falling dollar increases the cost of the steady stream of imported consumer goods made overseas. As the dollar falls, it takes more of them to buy goods priced in stronger currencies. Developing economies around the world are bringing increased demand for raw materials. Rapid expansion of ethanol production in the United States has diverted supplies of corn from grocery stores to

gasoline pumps. Underlying all of these is the rising cost of energy.”

Schoen further pointed out, “We’re seeing global problems on inflation, particularly on the food front in countries where their subsistence level (income) doesn’t give them any room for leeway. Indonesia became the latest country to clamp down on food shipments out of the country to try to maintain supplies. Rising global prices prompted more farmers to sell their crops at export prices that are nearly double local rates. The list of other countries that have placed restrictions on food exports in a bid to secure supplies and limit inflation includes Russia, Vietnam, India, Cambodia and Argentina—the latter is the world’s fourth largest wheat exporter. In Bangladesh, economists estimate 30 million of the country’s 150 million people could be going hungry. Haiti’s prime minister was ousted following food riots there.

“United States households spend a smaller part of their budgets on foods than any other country—some 7.2% in 2006, according to the USDA. But food costs in the United States are rising faster than they have in 17 years. It’s eating into a lot of people’s budgets, and we’re beginning to see it already in the retail sales numbers. All of which leaves policymakers at the Federal Reserve between a big rock and a very hard place. After the housing slump and mortgage mess threw sand in the gears of the credit markets last summer, the Fed began flooding the financial system with money to get things moving again. But it’s a risky move: too much money can also feed inflation. But if higher energy prices are the underlying cause of higher

prices, the Fed has a lot less room to maneuver. Raising interest rates now to fight inflation runs the risk of further damaging the financial system and global economy.”

RECESSION OR DEPRESSION

There has been considerable discussion taking place recently on Wall Street and with analysts in the United States Federal Reserve as to whether or not this country is entering a recession, or possibly a depression. The standard definition of a recession is when the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is in a decline for two or more consecutive quarters. However, this definition does not take into account changes in other variables such as unemployment statistics or consumer confidence. Also, by using quarterly data, this definition makes it difficult to determine when a recession may begin or end.

The Business Cycle Dating Committee at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) has set forth more reliable guidelines concerning what a recession really is. The committee includes employment, industrial production, real income, and wholesale retail sales. They define a recession as the time when business activity has reached its peak and starts to fall until the time when business activity bottoms out. They say that when business activity starts to rise again it is called an expansionary period, and by this definition the average recession thus lasts about a year.

The simple definition of a depression is that it lasts longer than a recession and has a greater loss in overall business activity. During a depression, the Gross Domestic Product declines by more than

10%. Using this as a standard reference point, the GDP declined by nearly 33% during the great depression that lasted from August 1929 until March 1933. A second downturn occurred during the years 1937-38, but was less severe.

CORPORATE LOOP HOLES

A revealing article addressing the loopholes by which the super wealthy are able to place their financial burdens upon the average citizen was published by the *Los Angeles Times* (April 13, 2000) under the heading, "Are you Paying for Corporate Fat Cats?" It was contributed by Gary Weiss from which we quote in part. He writes, "As you file your tax return, you may think you're paying off the tax obligations for just your household. But you're also footing the bill for American companies that are dodging billions of dollars in taxes. 'Most major corporations have a tax department not just to comply with the tax code but also as a profit center,' says Charles Cray of the Center for Corporate Policy, a nonprofit watchdog group.

"A 2004 United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) study found that 61% of American corporations, including 39% of large companies, paid no corporate taxes between 1996 and 2000. Last year, corporations shouldered just 14% of the total United States tax burden, compared with about 50% in 1940. While companies are getting off easy, thanks to loopholes, ordinary wage earners are getting stuck with the tab. The tax burden on individuals is expected to climb from \$1.16 trillion in 2007 to \$1.21 trillion this year, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), while corporate

tax receipts are expected to decline from \$370 billion to \$364 billion. By 2013, the CBO estimates, ordinary taxpayers' bills may climb to \$1.86 trillion while corporate tax bills drop to \$327 billion.

“One strategy of corporations is to create ‘shell companies’ in places like Bermuda, Gibraltar, and the Caribbean to avoid federal taxes. Corporations ‘set up an offshore division that has nothing more than a post office box,’ says Rep. Richard E. Neal (D., Mass), the chairman of a House subcommittee probing tax breaks. Experts estimate that the United States Treasury may be losing up to \$100 billion a year due to shell corporations. In one recent case, KBR—a former Halliburton subsidiary and the largest Iraq war contractor—admitted to ‘reducing tax obligations’ through two Cayman Islands divisions, reportedly avoiding hundreds of millions of dollars in Medicare and Social Security taxes. A 2004 study by the GAO found that 24 of the largest federal contractors use Cayman Islands units to shave their tax bills.”

Weiss brought further attention to corporate loopholes by explaining, “Oil and other multinational companies also benefit from tax breaks, some specially written for them. Most are perfectly legitimate but companies sometimes push the envelope too far. Pharmaceutical giant Merck paid \$2.3 billion to the government last year for profits relating to a Bermuda partnership. A study from the nonprofit group Citizens for Tax Justice found that, because of loopholes, the corporate tax burden in the United States is actually the world’s third lowest when measured as a percentage of gross domestic product.”

COMING JUDGMENT

When the prophet Zephaniah wrote the words of our featured text, he spoke of man's accumulated riches that would ultimately be destroyed in the day of the LORD'S wrath. Other prophets including Isaiah wrote, "In that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin." (Isa. 31:7) Hosea also said, "They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off."—Hos. 8:4

Later, the prophet Ezekiel wrote concerning the judgments that would come upon those who hoarded and put their trust in accumulated riches at the end of this present age. "They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed [for a separation, or uncleanness, *Marginal Translation*]: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity."—Ezek. 7:19

THE CORRUPTION OF RICHES

In the New Testament, James also points to God's judgments and identifies the underlying effects of corruption that are associated with the never-ending quest for wealth and power. He says, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you." (James 5:1) The wealthy and powerful have plundered the poorer classes to seek their own advantage. "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.”—vss. 2,3

During this time of judgment, the superrich will be the special targets of the people, as James says. “Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.”—vss. 4-6

THE PROMISES OF GOD

It was prophesied centuries ago that our loving Heavenly Father will execute his vengeance and righteous judgments upon those who, by fraudulent practices, unjust legislation and loopholes, have lived in luxury while depriving the poor groaning masses of earth’s working population an honest day’s wage. All such unrighteousness will ultimately be destroyed. We continue to pray for the long-promised kingdom of Christ to soon be established over the affairs of the human family to bring peace, justice, and blessings to all who are obedient to the Divine law. ■

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Doers of the Word

Key Verse: “*Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*”
—James 1:22

Selected Scripture:
James 1

ALTHOUGH THIS EPISTLE is addressed to the twelve tribes of Israel abroad, by identifying himself as a servant of God and the Lord Jesus, the Apostle James sets forth themes that apply to Christians throughout the Gospel Age.—James 1:1

He begins with an exhortation to rejoice if we have trials since they are permitted to test our faith in God. If we are properly exercised, they will assist in the development of patient endurance. This is required by all who would desire our Heavenly Father’s approval. “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”—vss. 2-4

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”—vss. 5-7

As his servants, God will be pleased to give us increased wisdom if we approach him with reverence, and believe that our prayers will be answered.

Trials may stem from discouragement caused by

seemingly undesirable circumstances. Those of lowly station should rejoice in the spiritual blessings received because they have been accepted as followers of the Master. “Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted.”—vs. 9

“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.” (Jer. 9:23,24) Any trial that weans the believer’s affections away from the desire for earthly prosperity may prove to be a great blessing if it enhances increased confidence and trust in God.—James 1:10,11

Temptations are often permitted by the Heavenly Father to come upon believers. Christians need to manifest cheerful endurance as an element of character which is a prerequisite for attaining eternal life. Unholy temptations originate from a source other than God who never entices anyone to commit sin.—vss. 12-15

A deception that is sometimes found among members of fallen humanity is that of attempting to blame the Creator for their misfortunes. He is the “Father of lights,” the author of all that is righteous as well as pure and the one who has opened our eyes of spiritual understanding. His unchanging attributes of wisdom, justice, love, and power make it impossible for him to deny himself or veer from his purpose of always providing what will be best for our eternal good.—vss. 16,17

Our Key Verse asserts that God requires that we not merely hear his word but that we practice its precepts and principles as part of a transformation that will produce the fruits of righteousness in our lives. If we obey God, we will become associates of Jesus Christ in blessing mankind when his kingdom is established. ■

Impartial Disciples

Key Verse:
“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?”
—James 2:5

Selected Scripture:
James 2

say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?” (vss. 2-4) Such an unjust estimation of others is sinful.

Our Key Verse indicates that humble-minded individuals are more likely to respond favorably to God’s invitation to follow in the Master’s footsteps than others who are self-satisfied with their own feelings of righteousness and less inclined to develop the faith required to heed the Gospel message.

“If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.” God’s

THROUGH GOD’S SERVANT, the Apostle James, believers are reminded that the practice of showing favoritism or partiality is inconsistent with the teachings and example of Jesus Christ.—James 2:1

“If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and

‘royal law’ of love forbids Christians to exploit others because they appear to be insignificant. Although believers are not bound by the letter of the Mosaic Law, they are under the “law of liberty.” The spirit of love welling up in their hearts will promote holiness in their conduct as an outgrowth of their relationship to the Heavenly Father. This is based upon the acceptance of Christ’s meritorious sacrifice on their behalf.—vss. 8-12

Another portion of this study deals with the relationship between faith and works. “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”—vss. 14-18

As a practical assessment of our spiritual progress, since faith is an inner quality that cannot be perceived by outsiders, James emphasizes that the proof of our relationship with Christ can be seen by the fruitage of our service in the Lord’s cause.

In addition to spending time in prayer, meditation, personal Bible study and attending worship services as often as possible with fellow believers, Christians also engage in the work of sharing the Gospel. Some of these activities may include face-to-face discussions with others, arranging public meetings on Biblical topics, preparing exhibits at fair booths concerning God’s kingdom, distributing tracts, publishing religious newsletters, and creating websites on scriptural themes. What a privilege it is to share with others the wonderful plan of salvation for the entire human family! ■

Wise Speakers

Key Verse: “*Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.*”
—James 3:10

Selected Scripture:
James 3

Christians need to control their tongues so that their influence for good may be more pronounced.—vss. 2-4

“We put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.—vss. 3-6

“Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men,

SOME CHRISTIANS HAVE A strong desire to instruct others concerning the Word of God. Those selected to perform this function should not only be apt to teach, but also have sterling qualities of character.—James 3:1

Since it is impossible not to err in speech and, therefore, offend others from time to time,

which are made after the similitude of God.”—vss. 7-9

Our Key Verse contrasts the inconsistency of using our tongues for praise and prayer on the one hand while also using them for evil speaking and slander. Such a contradiction must be overcome if the believer is to develop the required purity of character that will make him acceptable to God.

The Apostle James amplifies this point further by citing the impossibility of a spring to bring forth fresh and bitter water simultaneously. Similarly, neither can a fig tree bring forth olives, a grapevine bear figs nor can both salt water and fresh water spring forth from the same source together.—vss. 11,12

God’s wisdom is “first pure” and not adulterated by the doctrines of men. It provides peace of mind under the Holy Spirit’s influence. Other characteristics of Divine wisdom are described as “gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” Believers who have learned to bridle their tongues appreciate the transforming influence of God’s wisdom in directing their lives.—vss. 13-18

This fruitage is akin to the development of the graces of the Spirit enumerated by the Apostle Peter. “Beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” (II Pet. 1:5-7) Those who apply these admonitions faithfully in their Christian walk have reason to entertain a great hope at the completion of their earthly sojourn. “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things.”—vss. 10-12 ■

People of Godly Behavior

Key Verse: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”
—James 4:8

Selected Scripture:
James 4

erected in our hearts, thereby exhibiting unfaithfulness to what the Bible teaches. With so many worldly attractions portrayed in the media to bombard our senses, if we are not careful, these intrusions will reduce the time we have for focusing upon spiritual matters.—vss. 3,4

“Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” (vss.5,6) In our fallen human condition, we must contend with fleshly inclinations but are assured of Divine assistance to help us overcome such tendencies if we manifest faith and humility.

SOMETIMES STRIFE EXISTS

among God’s people. Often it is caused by an inability to be satisfied. There can be cravings for material possessions, pleasures, or even unfulfilled longings for recognition by others.—James 4:1,2

We should love the Creator far above any individual or object. Covetousness is a form of idolatry which should not be

Our Key Verse emphasizes the need for prayer, meditation upon his message and lowliness of mind in order to receive God's grace. It also shows the importance that our deeds and motives be pure and with singleness of purpose toward God.

It is through the study of God's Word that one's sinful behavior can be recognized and an understanding that full acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus as a basis for forgiveness for one's undone condition must precede becoming sons of God. "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

The Apostle James draws to our attention a few other matters that illustrate inappropriate Christian conduct. To speak evil against a brother is a reprehensible form of behavior that violates the spirit of love. Additionally, those who commit this act are usurping God's authority as they dare to judge others.—James 4:11,12

Boastfulness in stating in advance what we would do without God's approval is improper. We cannot speak with assurance concerning what the future holds for any of us and therefore we should seek the Heavenly Father's direction concerning our desires and plans. "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil."—vss. 13-16

A final but important exhortation is not only for believers to abstain from committing evil against others, but also to realize that the failure to do good to others as we have opportunity is sin. What a high standard of righteousness is expected for all who profess they are truly followers of Christ.—vs. 17 ■

Prayerful Community

Key Verse: *“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.”*
—James 5:13

Selected Scripture:
James 5

the few who are rich, as contrasted with the economic disadvantage under which the vast majority of the human family lives.—James 5:1-3

The Master cautioned believers not to set their affections on attempting to attain earthly prosperity. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”—Matt. 6:19,20

The only solution for the deteriorating worldwide societal conditions that are increasingly evident even in our day is the establishment of God’s kingdom of righteousness, equity, and peace that has been guaranteed by the sacrificial death and resurrection of the Just and Holy One, Jesus Christ.—Acts 3:15,16; James 5:4-6

In view of the intense persecutions endured by the Early Church, and the fact that the Gospel Age would

USING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE, the Apostle James describes some of the conditions that would be manifest in the world before the long-promised kingdom of God would be established in the earth. Throughout history there has been a great disparity in terms of the great wealth accumulated by

continue for approximately two thousand years before the body of Christ would be complete and the blessings of a new era would be ushered in, the followers of Jesus would need to exercise great patience and submission under difficult conditions.—vss. 7-9

Prior to the Christian era, several Old Testament heroes demonstrated great faith and patience under adverse conditions as they served God. “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”—vss. 10,11

Our Key Verse underscores the need for Christians to avail themselves of the great privilege of praying to the Heavenly Father in every circumstance of life. He is able to provide succor during times of stress and suffering and gladly receives our expressions of praise as well.

The context of this entire chapter addresses the impact of observing the various inequities that surround the human family and the need for believers not to be downcast because of their extremely difficult experiences. Nevertheless, there are occasions when we might be overtaken in a fault and need prayer offered on our behalf for restoration to wholeness. (Gal. 6:1) The healing from sin sickness rather than miraculous healing from physical ailments is what is implied by calling upon the elders for prayer, and the anointing with oil which seems to symbolize the Holy Spirit.—I John 2:20,27

How thankful we should be that we have access to the Father through the power of prayer, and that forgiveness of our unintentional trespasses is a divinely arranged provision for restoring our soul when we have gone astray. “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”—James 5:16, Ps. 23:3 ■

Ministering Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation

***“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”
—Hebrews 1:14***

IN THIS SCRIPTURE, THE Apostle Paul addresses the fact that our loving Heavenly Father has powerful beings in the spiritual realm that are commissioned by him to carry out his plans and purposes, and assist his people who are being called for a special purpose during this present Gospel Age. Long ago Solomon said, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” (Prov. 15:3) The Psalmist David pointed to the child of God, when he wrote, “Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way [perfect in the way, *Marginal Translation*], he shall serve me.”—Ps. 101:6

We are not given specific details in connection with the activities of these ministering spirits, or

how they go about carrying out the will of the Father. However, our Lord Jesus stressed the important and vital role that these angelic beings assume in the overall plans and purposes of God. He, therefore, warned, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 18:10) The fact that these 'angels' are assigned to look after the Lord's 'little ones' during this time of their High Calling in Christ Jesus, suggests that they have immediate access to the glorious throne of the Heavenly Father and receive his ready and unre-served attention.

The Father's knowledge in connection with the earthly affairs and spiritual interests of his specially chosen people is learned by methods of which we have little understanding, except perhaps through these ministering spirits and the laws that govern and control our natural surroundings. The Heavenly Father has laws that govern his entire universe, and these angels have insight into his wonderful working power, and may use whatever means at hand for the spiritual benefit of the called ones.

THE CHIEF MESSENGER

Our Lord Jesus, who was the first begotten of all Creation, has always enjoyed a very prominent position with the Father, and during the time of his prehuman existence he was known as the Word [*Logos*, Greek] or special spokesman for God. (John 1:1-3) He willingly left his heavenly nature to become a perfect man, and to die for the sins of the

human family. By doing so, he provided the ransom sacrifice for them, and was later exalted to the right hand of the Father. He was given the Divine nature like his Father, received greatly increased power to carry out his will and purpose, and was placed in charge of the angelic creation.

The Apostle Paul spoke of this elevated state of glory when he wrote to the Hebrew brethren. He addressed the one who “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”—Heb. 1:2-4

THE CHARIOTS OF GOD

From the Psalmist David, we learn, “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.” (Ps. 68:17) David had just spoken of the events that had occurred at Sinai when he wrote, “The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.”—vs. 8

When speaking before the Sanhedrin, Stephen spoke of the Jewish nation, saying, “Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.” (Acts 7:53) Paul explained, “The word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just

recompence of reward.” (Heb. 2:2) The apostle later provided further details of the angelic scene and the giving of the law at Sinai. “You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, ‘If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned.’ And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, ‘I am full of fear and trembling.’”—Heb. 12:18-21, *New American Standard Bible*

TWELVE LEGIONS OF ANGELS

When Jesus was about to be arrested at the conclusion of his earthly ministry, Peter drew his sword to prevent it from happening. However, our Lord took the opportunity to reveal the tremendous power of countless, and unseen, angelic beings that his Father had made available to him. If he needed their assistance, he could call upon them to do so at any time. “Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” (Matt. 26:52-54) There were six thousand men in a legion, which represents the great number of angels that the Father could have sent for his protection, but Jesus knew that it was not the proper time, nor the Father’s will, to do so at that time.

To put this all in perspective, we read, “Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost [Spirit]: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [age].”—Matt. 28:18-20

Our Lord Jesus is now the head of all spiritual powers. Ministering spirits are on hand to prevent any mishap and to fight alongside the people of God who are being called during this age of consecration and sacrifice. During this time, their life of sacrifice has been made acceptable by the Father. (Rom. 12:1,2) When we go to the Father in prayer, we do so in the precious name of Jesus. He is our representative and Advocate in our relationship and dealings with the Father, and is our teacher in the school of Christ.

PROPHETIC VOICES

Those who are being called to a place in the body of Christ during this present Gospel Age have been put under the special guidance of our risen Lord Jesus and the ministering spirits who are subject to his control. Further, in his letter to the Hebrew brethren, Paul quoted from several Old Testament prophecies to address the point he was making. He asked them, “Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? [Ps. 2:7] And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? [II Sam. 7:14] And again, when he bringeth

in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. [Ps. 97:7] And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire [Ps. 104:4].” (Heb. 1:5,6) The apostle was showing through the words of prophets and others, that the Father would commit all power in heaven and earth to our risen Lord Jesus.

SAVED BY AN ANGEL

Before his name was changed to Abraham, we read concerning the Lord’s angel who appeared to him, “The LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.” (Gen. 12:7) In the previous verses of the account, we read, “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”—vss. 1-3

Later, an angel instructed Abraham to slay his son Isaac. “The angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.” (Gen. 22:11,12) The angel gave God’s instructions to Abraham which had severely tested him.

BESEIGED BY ENEMIES

A powerful and unseen hand was manifest when the nation of Israel was besieged by their enemies the Midianites. They had no way to defend themselves against their foe, and the situation appeared to them as being hopeless. Then one of God's angels spoke to Gideon, one of Israel's most outstanding judges. He lived during a very turbulent period in his nation's history. For a number of years, neighboring pagan nations, especially the Midianites, had invaded them at harvest time. The angel explained to him that God was going to use him to deliver his people.

The scriptural account reads, "The angel of the LORD appeared unto him [Gideon], and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." (Judg. 6:12) In reply, Gideon said to the angel that it would take a miracle from God to deliver them from their great enemy. "Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." (vs. 13) The outlook was desperate. "The LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?"—vs. 14

He then asked for a sign that he might know that the messenger was really an angel of the Lord. "When Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.”—vss. 22-24

POWERFUL EVIDENCE

Gideon sought further evidence that God was truly with him, and requested that a fleece which he would place on the threshing floor be wet with dew the next morning while the floor around it remained dry. When his request was granted, he asked again that the circumstances be reversed, which they were. (Judg. 6:33-40) This marvelous demonstration of power convinced him that God was truly with him.

Thirty-two thousand men rallied to the call to fight the Midianites, who had a force of 135,000, and who outnumbered them by four to one. However, God indicated that there were still too many fighting men with Gideon. “The LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.”—chap.7:2,3

TESTING REQUIRED

God then instructed Gideon to lead the remaining 10,000 men down to a watering place where they would be further tested. A mere 300 of them

scooped the water to their mouths by hand, which showed their alertness to danger, while the remaining dropped to their knees while drinking. These 300 fighting men were selected along with Gideon to fight their enemies. “He divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.” (vs. 16) The men were instructed to break their pitchers which allowed their lights to shine, and then blow their trumpets. When they did this every man’s sword was against his fellow in the enemy camp thus giving Gideon the victory. This is an astounding example with many significant lessons for the Lord’s people who are striving to let their light shine, and proclaim Christ’s future kingdom that will deliver the world from sin and death.

THE FATHER’S WILL

As a group of the Lord’s people now living during the closing years of this present Gospel Age, we must learn to recognize and accept the Father’s will for us whatever that may be. We cannot expect to be delivered from evil in every case because we have given our lives unreservedly to him. These are the terms of our consecration vows to him. “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.”—Eccles. 5:4,5

We need the Heavenly Father’s spiritual guidance and the provisions of his grace on our behalf in all of our earthly and spiritual affairs. We are

not qualified to guide ourselves in the narrow way, but are reminded of Paul's admonition, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."—Phil. 2:12

The Father's will may be manifest in different ways, as shown when the Apostle Peter's life was spared while James' life was not. We read in the scriptural record, "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter [Passover] to bring him forth to the people."—Acts 12:1-4

REMARKABLE POWERS

While the Apostle Peter was in prison, we further read, "The angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision." (vss. 7-9) Peter's chains had fallen off his hands, and the prison's iron gate opened of its own accord before the angel departed. "When

Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.”—vs. 11

This remarkable incident in the lives of both James and Peter serves to illustrate the mighty power of the Father, who has commissioned his ministering spirits to care for his special people. In each case the Father’s will was manifest, although in different ways.

This serves as an important lesson to those who have committed their lives to God, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:28

WRESTLING WITH SPIRITS

Throughout this Gospel Age, the followers of Jesus have encountered formidable enemies that have confronted their spiritual life and growth as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. Our fight is one of faith as we must struggle against these powerful unseen foes. Paul encourages all to “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [*wicked spirits, Marginal Translation*] in high places.”—Eph. 6:11,12

Satan and the wicked spirits who carry out his will are always seeking ways to weaken the defenses of the Lord’s people, but the apostle has outlined

the necessary armour that will help strengthen us as we continue to walk the narrow way. He says, "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."—vss. 13-17

Although we readily obey these instructions as given here by the Apostle Paul, we must keep in mind the loving providence of our Father to provide the ministering angels of righteousness on our behalf of which he spoke in our featured text.—Heb. 1:14

IN TIME OF NEED

There are numerous illustrations in the Word of God wherein angelic beings were used by the Father to carry out his will and purpose. During earlier times, some of these angels materialized in human form to deliver their messages. The present Gospel Age is the age of faith, and throughout this long period of time, ministering spirits have been made available for those who are presently being called as members of the bride of Christ. These angels fight alongside the Lord's people to assist them in their Christian warfare. These are comforting thoughts to those members of the body of Christ who are now living during the closing years of this Gospel Age.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:16) “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”—Eph. 6:10 ■

Love's Alchemy

Love is the filling from one's own

Another's cup.

Love is a daily laying down

And taking up;

A choosing of the stony path

Through each new day

That other feet may tread with ease

A smoother way.

Love is not blind, but looks abroad

Through other eyes;

And asks not "Must I give?" but "May

I sacrifice?"

Love hides its grief, that other hearts

And lips may sing;

And burdened, walks, that other lives

May, buoyant, wing.

Brother, hast thou a love like this

Within thy soul?

'Twill change thy name to saint when thou

Dost reach thy goal.

—*Poems of Dawn*

Members in Particular

“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”
—*I Corinthians 12:27*

THERE IS A CLOSE AND INTIMATE relationship that exists between those in Christ and our Heavenly Father. This relationship which we feel toward him is what we should also feel toward one another. Our theme text presents a very positive statement from the Lord, and our response likewise should be very positive. Yet, it is not always so because we have an Adversary, Satan, the Devil, who is attempting in every way possible to destroy the faith of the child of God. He is bent on destroying the positiveness of our position, and our standing in the body of Christ.

Why is the Adversary interested in destroying our faith? Before we can know what steps we should take to defend ourselves against our great enemy we have to know what his motives are. We have to know why he is interested in us. We must realize that Satan has already been judged. He knows that he is ultimately to be destroyed if God’s plan is carried out to completion. He understands that the

only hope he has of saving himself is to upset God's plan in some way, to frustrate it, and to somehow as a result, perhaps, avoid that sentence of death that has already been pronounced against him.

SATAN'S METHODS TO DESTROY THE BODY OF CHRIST

Satan tried to destroy Jesus at his First Advent. Then, down through the Gospel Age, he endeavored to destroy the church as it existed through that period by means of the great Antichrist system. Here, during the harvest of the Gospel Age, he is making a final desperate attempt to destroy the remaining members of the body of Christ on this side of the veil, i.e., the faith of the Lord's people. He is a very active and potent enemy.

The Adversary would have little success by coming to us openly and in such ways as to be easily detected, but he is a wily foe and never uses that approach. He comes to us in subtle ways that are very apt to deceive us if we are not careful. He makes his attacks primarily through the weaknesses of our flesh and sometimes through the power of suggestion. God permits this because it is a means of testing, proving, developing and crystalizing our faith structure.

When Satan approaches us in these very subtle ways, we may not always recognize that it is the voice of the Adversary tempting us. We here suggest a few examples of things he might 'whisper' in our ears. Notice in these that each one, regardless of how minor it may seem, might have an effect not only upon ourselves, but also upon the body of Christ—the ecclesia with which we are associated.

For example, we might, in our minds, say this, ‘I’m too tired to go to meeting tonight. I’ve had a hard day. I’m tired and the Lord will understand.’ Or, we might say, ‘I’ve got so many weaknesses, I’ll be satisfied with whatever the Lord gives me.’ These are very subtle thoughts, and on the surface it appears there is nothing really wrong with them. Perhaps this thought might enter our minds—‘That’s just my way. The Lord will forgive.’ Or, ‘I won’t comment in meeting because others can say it so much better.’ Or, ‘My judgment isn’t always so good, so I won’t participate in voting in class elections.’

Notice that each one of these in some way affects the whole body. They seem minor, unimportant in some respects. Yet these negative thoughts, although they represent only small beginnings, if they are persisted in, if that trend of thought is continued, could develop into an attitude which could not only ultimately stunt our Christian growth, but also be detrimental to the spiritual well-being of the entire ecclesia. Indeed, one of the purposes of this lesson is to center our thoughts on our association with the ecclesia.

RESISTING SATAN

How can we resist the Devil in the areas we have cited? We know if we can resist him, he will “flee” from us. (James 4:7) There is only one way to do this, and that is by maintaining a very positive and aggressive approach to the carrying out of our consecration vows and our responsibilities within the body of Christ.

Our text emphatically declares, ‘Ye are the body of Christ.’ That means now, on this side of the veil.

Not only this text in I Corinthians 12:27, but throughout the entire chapter, Apostle Paul talks about the relationship and the responsibility that each of us has in connection with our association in the body of Christ now. Nothing in Paul's words here has any reference to that which is beyond the veil. This is why it is such an important matter. Further, whether we are privileged to be counted as faithful and enter into the glories beyond the veil will depend on what we are doing about our responsibilities while we are right here—today—and throughout the remainder of our earthly walk in the narrow way.

MEMBERS IN PARTICULAR

Our theme text, however, goes further. It does not merely say that we are members of the body of Christ. It declares very emphatically that we are 'members in particular.' It has been said that when we come into the body of Christ we lose our identity; we are lumped into one basket, and God deals with us as a collective body. This is true from certain standpoints, but the apostle is here telling us about a very special identity that each of us must have, peculiarly ours, that develops over the course of our Christian life—an identity that develops on the basis of our relationship with our Heavenly Father and also with our brethren.

When gemstones are taken out of the miry pit, each one requires a little different preparation in order to be made beautiful by the lapidary. He treats each one of these little gems as he prepares them as though they were the most important one of all. He does not rate them, as though saying, 'I will make

this one more beautiful than that other one.’ The lapidary never does that. He develops each gemstone individually to the fullest beauty and reflection of light possible. So it is that our relationship to the Heavenly Father is a very personal one. He treats each one of his children as a most important jewel that he is developing and making beautiful. Each member of the body of Christ is very special to the Heavenly Father. Through his guardian angels he is overruling the affairs of each according to his special design and plan for them. He desires to have a very special relationship with every individual body member throughout the period of their Christian life. Other translations of the last part of our theme text are as follows: “Each is a separate and necessary part.” (*Taylor Translation*) “Members with assigned parts.” (*Berkley Translation*) We do not decide what part we will have in the body. It is God that sets the members, every one of them in the body, as it pleaseth him.—I Cor. 12:18

ALL MEMBERS OF THE BODY IMPORTANT

The apostle describes in I Corinthians, chapter 12, the diversity of administration that various members have in the body of Christ. He pictures it using the symbol of the human body. In verse 7 of this chapter we read, “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” This means that God gives each one of his people the opportunity through the manifestation of his Holy Spirit in their lives to contribute something to the profit of all the ecclesia, of all the body. This leaves no one out. It means there is not a brother or sister in any ecclesia, in any location throughout the

world, those who are members of this body, who do not have a very important and particular responsibility that must be fulfilled on behalf of, and for the profit of, the body as a whole.

If we recognize this, in order to carry out this responsibility, we need to cultivate a very close and unique relationship with all of our brethren. Referring to Ephesians 4:15,16, Paul states, "Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

To apply this principal in a practical way, we may think of the ecclesia with which we associate as a miniature example of the body of Christ. Apostle Paul further describes the beautiful relationship that exists between each of us as parts in this body. "As the human body, which has many parts, is a unity, and those parts, despite their multiplicity, constitute one single body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by the Spirit into one body, whether we were Jews, Greeks, slaves or free men, and we have all had experience of the same Spirit. Now the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand I don't belong to the body', does that alter the fact that the foot is a part of the body? Or if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye I don't belong to the body', does that mean that the ear really is not part of the body? After all, if the body were all one eye, for example, where would be the sense of hearing?"

Or if it were all one ear, where would be the sense of smell? But God has arranged all the parts in the one body, according to his design. For if everything were concentrated in one part, how could there be a body at all? The fact is there are many parts, but only one body. So that the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' nor, again can the head say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' On the contrary, those parts of the body which have no obvious function are the more essential to health; and to those parts of the body which seem to us to be less deserving of notice we have to allow the highest honor of function. The parts which do not look beautiful have a deeper beauty in the work they do, while the parts which look beautiful may not be at all essential to life! But God has harmonized the whole body by giving importance of function to the parts which lack apparent importance, that the body should work together as a whole with all the members in sympathetic relationship with one another. So it happens that if one member suffers all the other members suffer with it, and if one member is honored all the members share a common joy."—I Cor. 12:12-26, *J. B. Phillips Translation*

These verses indicate how important it is that we maintain and earnestly strive to develop a very close, sympathetic and loving relationship with each one in the ecclesia, in the body of Christ. Each are 'members in particular.' We have not placed ourselves, nor has anyone else in the body of Christ, placed us where we are. It is our Heavenly Father only who has placed us in the body of Christ, and we must fulfill those very personal and special things that are required of us according to our ability and

our overruled circumstances. This is vital for the making of our calling and our election sure.

In the matter of the ecclesia relationship, it is especially important that the elders of the ecclesia realize the tremendous responsibility which is upon them of seeing that, so far as is reasonably possible, each member is made to feel that they are a contributing part, a necessary part, of the whole body of the ecclesia. Each should be encouraged to attend meetings. Each should be encouraged to take an active part in the studies, and participate in the activities of the ecclesia. All should be engaged wholeheartedly in these things. If this is done, the ecclesia will prosper spiritually by that which every joint supplieth.

LESSONS FROM ROMANS 12

Apostle Paul examines this subject further, and in a very personal way, in Romans, chapter 12. This chapter is one that we should become very familiar with and pay close attention to, as it bears upon our entire Christian life, from consecration until we finish our course in death. We would like to glean a few points from this chapter. In the first verse, we see consecration represented. Presenting our bodies a “living sacrifice” marks the very beginning of our Christian walk. The second verse suggests, on the basis of that consecration, there is something that must be accomplished, that being the transformation of our minds, the transformation of our words and actions, away from the flesh to the doing of the Heavenly Father’s will in our lives. In the third verse, the apostle suggests that before we can accomplish this—before this transformation can even begin—

we must humble ourselves. It is only on the basis of a sincere humility of heart and mind that this transformation could ever occur.

Beginning with the fourth verse, the apostle begins to develop a positive action program that, if carefully applied in the life of a Christian, will carry out the requirement of the second verse—this transformation. If we apply the program that the apostle outlines to the best of our ability in our lives, it will break down all the barriers of pride, self-esteem, selfishness, evil speaking, criticism of our brethren, negligence, slothfulness, disinterest in the well-being of our brethren and the ecclesia, discouragement, and fear. All of this can be done if we carry out and apply in our lives the simple instructions that the apostle has outlined in this chapter. Such application will accomplish the transforming work in our lives. No one else can do this, nor work these things out for us. We must become active participants in this work of faith, and it should be a matter of great concern to us that it be accomplished.

The Lord has placed us in our present circumstances because there is something very special, very unique, that he wants us to do, and which can best be done in the particular circumstances we now find ourselves in. If we are “fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:11), the windows of heaven will open and God will pour out a blessing so much that we cannot contain it all. (Mal. 3:10) We will begin to see opportunities to serve the Lord and the brethren that we never realized were there. If we truly apply ourselves to the words of the lessons here, our lives will become exciting, they will

become very busy in our close relationship which will develop between ourselves, our Heavenly Father, our Lord Jesus, and our fellow members of the body. We should not look, however, for big things, as is sometimes mistakenly thought. We do not have to do some great work in order to be noticed by the Lord. The ‘big thing’ we may contemplate might be motivated by pride, and a desire to be seen and recognized by our brethren.

We should also notice the words of Romans 12:16, “Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.” Another translation puts it this way, “Do not aspire to eminence, but willingly adjust yourselves to humble situations.” (*Berkley Translation*) How plain that is. These humble situations are apparently where the Lord wants most of us to be. Here in these lowly places—our day-to-day environment, our common circumstances of life—the Lord is carefully preparing each of us through experience. He is chiseling, shaping, polishing, washing away the dross, the clay, carefully preparing each of us as precious gems that will ultimately be able to reflect his glory and his light throughout all of the ages to come. Psalm 139:15 states, “My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.”

MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER

In verses four and five of Romans 12, notice that each of us has been placed in the one body in a very special way, with gifts and responsibilities differing one from the other. Yet, the apostle says, we are “members one of another.” (vs. 5) It is impossible

to express a closer relationship than those sentiments, ‘members one of the other.’ The thought contained here is that each of us are part of the whole body, and also mutually dependent on the other parts of the same body.

We do not always appreciate this mutual dependency. Sometimes we seek the fellowship of those who are more active and outgoing in our ecclesias, neglecting others, those whom we may think are less mature. Perhaps the more timid ones sit in the back row and we do not hear from them very often; or there may be those who do not speak with command of the language, and we have difficulty communicating with them and take the easy way out by avoiding them most of the time. There could perhaps be other little inhibitions that we may have in respect to certain ones in the ecclesia. Some may have a weakness that is particularly distasteful to us. We may forget that our relationship is not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Regardless of any of these things, let us make a point to have full communication with all of those of the ecclesia so far as possible—the body of Christ. Let them know that we care about them and love them. They will be greatly blessed and encouraged by our fellowship and concern, our interest, and ere long, we will discover how much we need them as well. The unity and love flowing between all will be of mutual benefit, because we are members one of another.

SERVING THE ECCLESIA

In the sixth and seventh verses of Romans 12, Paul identifies some as having the ability to effectively speak—the gift of prophecy. Those who have

that ability should use it to full advantage for the benefit of the ecclesia. "Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering." (vs. 7) Another translation says, "If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well." The thought seems to be that we are not to be choosy in our service—not just serving those whom we want to serve, but serving the whole body. Continuing in verse seven, "Or he that teacheth, on teaching." In a Bible study it is important that the elder leading it have the qualifications of being "apt to teach." This is a scriptural qualification (I Tim. 3:2), yet one of the best forms of teaching is to draw discussion from the congregation. This approach serves two purposes. First, it will encourage the brethren to private study in preparation for the meeting and, second, it will stimulate thought and concentration in the study that is in progress on the part of all present. We believe the Lord has greatly blessed this arrangement for the spiritual prosperity of the ecclesia.

Romans 12:8 says, "He that exhorteth, on exhortation." Looking once again at another translation, it reads, "If our gift be the stimulating of the faith of others let us set ourselves to it." Some have a special talent for encouraging others. Who is there among us that does not need encouragement from time to time? We need to encourage those who are in a more active role in the labors of the Bible Student movement. We want to look to those in our ecclesias who are performing services faithfully on behalf of the body of Christ, and encourage them. Let us extend this thought to every member of the ecclesia and feel a profound responsibility of encouraging each one of them.

A LIFELONG PROCESS

Throughout the remainder of Romans 12, we see many other admonitions the apostle addressed, all related to our Christian responsibility one toward the other, and especially as members of the one body. This washing away of the clay, the polishing, the chiseling, the shaping, is a lengthy process. It is this way because of the barriers of our fallen flesh, and because our Heavenly Father has ordained that it can only be accomplished through the full cooperation of a willing and humble heart in each one of us. God is determined that our free moral agency is not to be circumvented in this work. It is our responsibility, and he will allow us the option of going as slow as we want in this work to our spiritual detriment. He would be pleased, however, to see us take these steps quickly which would continue our development in this wonderful relationship of love that we must maintain between ourselves and the whole body of Christ.

We see the traces of clay, the fallen human nature that we all have in a measure. We see the little faults both in others and certainly in ourselves. Let us be all the more determined to help each other. Let us be determined that we are going to encourage each other to overcome these things through a very close fellowship and through the outpouring of love, sympathy, and forgiveness, where needed. Indeed we are all of the one body, and members in particular. All of the Lord's dear people are very special to the Heavenly Father, each and every one, and all should likewise become very special to each of the other members of the body of Christ. ■

Trip Report: Manila, Philippine Islands

Bro. Ray Charlton and Bro. Adam Kopczyk

Berean Bible Institute, Australia

February 12-20, 2008

WE ARRIVED AT the Manila airport and were met by Bros. Agripino Polistico, Eugenio Roque, his son Edlien Roque, and Luciano Rosauero. A 15-minute taxi ride and we were at the Taguig Apartments where Bro. Adam and I stayed.

DAY TWO

Bro. Agripino met us at 9:00 A.M., and the first visit was with Sr. Melecia Mejia and her 14-year-old son who suffers from cerebral palsy. The home is very small—one room serves as the kitchen, lounge and bedroom for her 92-year-old mother Sr. Mamerta. The upper room which is small and low, is Sr. Melecia and her son's bedroom. She survives by washing clothes for other people.

We saw Bro. Agripino's original home that was now empty and was to be occupied by his niece, but it still had the sign on it "Manila Bible Students." It is a small basic dwelling and we were surprised to learn that not long ago all the brethren (20) managed to fit into such a small area sitting on the floor to have their Bible studies and services.

The next brother we met was Bro. Nando, who is blind, crippled with arthritis, and suffering from diabetes. He lives with his nephew in a one-room packing crate with an earthen floor next to the pig sty. Although obviously in pain and worried about how he will survive as his relatives cannot afford to keep him, his greatest joy is singing hymns at the meetings.

From there, we went to the house of Bro Genio and Sr. Delia, who has made his home available to the brethren for meetings. He has three children—Merlyn, Edlien, and Jocelyn. Kamille, their niece, also a Bible student, was present to welcome us. They earn money by "on selling" of water in their area to other residents that do not have running water. He earns 1 peso per bucket of water, (3/4 U.S. cent). From this money, he has to buy food and pay for Edlein's education.

Bro. Rommel and Sr. Vicky live in a shack made from a packing case behind Bro Henio's home. They have no furniture, with only a carpet on the floor to sit and sleep on. A jar with kerosene and a piece of cloth as a wick is used for light. For cooking, they use a kerosene tin cut open, with coals for heat and a grate for the top. They have both lost their employment, and depend on handouts from the other brethren.

We next visited the house of Sr. Norma Maesa where we were again made very welcome. We arrived just as she was preparing the evening meal, the staple diet being fried tuna and rice with a few vegetables. Rice is eaten for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Those who can afford it may have chicken and pork. The town has open-air markets as well as many very small shops. Other people earn a living selling their wares from their bicycles street to street.

Bro. Agripino then took us to his home, (two bedrooms and a lounge/eating area) which doubles as the Dawn office and printing plant. He shares this home with a friend to keep the cost of rent down. The accommodation Bro. Agripino is now in is much better and more secure than the previous address.

The last home that we visited was that of Sr. Lita, who has given over the majority of her small home for the three meetings which are held there each week. She has made her home as comfortable as possible. The wooden benches and a few chairs allow the 20 brethren to meet and study. Her two granddaughters, Sr. Regina and Sr. Miriam, both take an active part in the services. We also had the privilege of meeting their friend Venessa, who is becoming very interested in the Bible studies. Sr. Lita lives in an area that is facing government demolition. Her case is before a tribunal and, if she gets a negative decision, then her home and the Manila class hall will be in jeopardy. After sharing an evening meal with Bro. Agripino, it was time to return to our hotel and go over all that we had experienced in our first full day.

DAY THREE

The next morning was spent on the internet, and then checking the market for a cure for Bro. Agripino's computer. We were able to buy an up-to-date virus checker which his computer needed. Being the only two European visitors in the area, we received a very warm welcome from the Filipino people, especially the children, who wanted to know our names and whether we were Americanos. They were surprised that we came from Australia.

We then joined the elders of the Dawn Philippine Bible Students—Bros. Agripino, Luciano and Eugenio—for lunch. After the standard chicken and rice meal, we headed back to the hotel for a chance to tell the elders about the operation of the Dawn in America and the Berean Bible Institute in Australia. There were many questions about how the classes are run in the United States and Australia. There were questions about the roles of elders and deacons in our classes. The class here is very new and this brings about its own set of challenges; however, these are being met and it was obvious that the elders have the spiritual and material needs of their flock well in hand.

We then went to Bro. Agripino's for the evening meal of tuna and rice, prepared in coconut milk, which was very enjoyable.

We made our way to Sr. Lita's for a midweek worship service, and 20 brethren attended. The meeting started with the singing of hymns in Tagalog, the local language, then prayer and hymns from the Dawn in English. This was followed by the reading of *Songs in the Night* with discussion on both the verse and the comments. The next part of

the worship service was a testimony meeting, followed by a study in *God's Plan for Man*, with all members taking part. The session, which went for two hours, was finished with hymns and a prayer. After the service, the brethren shared bread and soft drinks together.

We had the privilege of meeting Bro. Agripino's niece, Sr. Leonora Polistico, and her husband Bro. Val Ellarma who were a great help to us over the next few days. After the meeting, the tricycle taxis were organized to take us back to our hotel and the brethren back to their homes.

DAY FOUR

This was to be a rest morning; however, Bro. Agripino arrived to say that his computer was once again very slow and not loading the programs. After many tries at fixing the computer, it was decided that it was time to take it to the repair shop tomorrow, for a more technical appraisal. We joined Bro. Agripino for the evening meal before joining the brethren for evening worship.

The evening service included hymn singing in both languages, along with Bible readings and discussion on the Scriptures. The enthusiasm of the brethren to meet together and to rejoice in the Lord was very evident.

DAY FIVE

We were met by Bro. Agripino and Sr. Leonora, who had brought the computer with them on the back of a tricycle. We headed to the Mall of Asia in one of the very colorful Jeepneys. It was noticed that all Jeepneys have very loud horns which are used in a vain attempt to get through the crowded

streets. The Mall has everything that you would expect to find in the best Malls of the United States or Australia, with many of the world's most fashionable stores and fast food outlets. The mall is the largest in the southern hemisphere.

The computer was delivered to the repair shop and as we had several hours to spare waiting for the technician to repair the computer, it was decided that we would take a Jeepney and then a train into the center of Manila. On arrival, we went to the Jehovah's Witnesses complex, where we picked up several children's Bible storybooks in the local language. This is a very large and opulent complex of libraries, workshops, meeting halls, and accommodations, with manicured lawns and gardens. The men in charge were very gracious in supplying our request free of charge. From there, we went to Rizal Park in the heart of the city of Manila—named after Dr. Jose Rizal who was executed for advocating reforms during the Spanish colonial days. It has a small man-made lake with a replica of the Philippine archipelago in the middle. An area is set aside for debates which often happen on a Sunday evening, as the speakers from various religions gather to debate their beliefs. We then traveled to Bible House to look at the various Bibles and Bible helps that were available in the local language. It was then time to board the Jeepney for the trip back to the Mall of Asia to pick up the computer.

That evening Bro. Agripino's nephew-in-law, Val Ellarma, used his woodworking skills to make a timber frame for the white board so it would be portable and visible to all in the hall. We had an

enjoyable evening discussing scriptures and preparing for the Sunday service, which would start at 9:00 A.M.

DAY SIX

The brethren met us at the hotel in time to take us to the meeting hall. Twenty brethren had arrived for the meeting, which was started with hymns sung in Tagalog, then prayer, and hymn singing in English from the Dawn hymnbook—all accompanied by Bro. Agripino on his guitar. This was followed by the children's session with a story from *God's Promises Come True*. This was followed by questions about the story. The children were then asked to recite the scriptures that they had been given to memorize. After the children's session, there was a Bible lesson taken from *The Dawn* magazine. Many of the brethren asked questions, or made comments, about the study passage. After a break, a discourse was given, followed by a lunch where the brethren broke bread together. After lunch, there was another discourse, and both discourses were on different aspects of Christian character. The meeting ended at 3:00 P.M. with Bro. Nando singing hymns in Tagalog. It was wonderful to hear this brother, who was not only blind but suffering from diabetes and crippled with arthritis, standing to sing praises to our Heavenly Father.

After a snack and a drink, we made our way to the Unitarian Church where we were met by the Pastor, Bro. Paul who had asked Bro. Agripino if one of us was willing to speak that afternoon at his church. On our arrival, this was changed to a request for both of us to give a discourse. The topics

requested were “God’s Love for Mankind” and “Christians and Pride.” The subjects were well received and we were asked to speak again if we returned to Manila.

That evening we had the privilege of taking the young members out to the Taguig Mall for supper, which was a great treat for the brethren, giving them a chance to fellowship and ask questions about the brethren in Australia and America. It was a very enjoyable evening finished off by riding the Jeepney back to our hotel.

DAY SEVEN

After the busy Sunday, it was decided that we would have the morning off so that the brethren could catch up with their work and to give us time for a rest. We headed to the local mall for breakfast and spent some time shopping and speaking with the locals who had become quite used to us.

Mid-morning some of the brethren found us in the mall and joined us for lunch. This would be our last night that we would have a meal together. The afternoon was spent speaking with the elders and seeing what they had planned for witness work in the months ahead. They were looking into advertising in the local newspaper offering free booklets in the local language.

The meeting that evening included hymn singing in both Tagalog and English, followed by two discourses, with time for questions from the brethren. After the discourses, we sat down to enjoy our last meal together. This time of fellowship was sweet, with more time for questions about doctrine and Christian character development.

DAY EIGHT

The time in Manila had flown, and with sadness we came to the end of our time with these dear brethren. We were surprised to find that Bro. Agripino's boarder had cooked us a breakfast to thank us for coming to Manila. The morning was spent going from house-to-house thanking the brethren for their hospitality and the fellowship that we had over the past week. The brethren decided that many of them would like to join us as we departed back to Australia. The decision was made to hire the local school bus to take us all to the airport. We arrived at the airport and it was a sad time for us, leaving these wonderful brethren. We had to promise to return next year. The departure time came too quickly, and we were leaving Manila for Sydney.

The time in Manila with the brethren was a wonderful experience. What a lesson we had received, and are grateful for what the Lord has given us. These brethren rejoiced in conditions that many of us would be unable to cope with. There was no complaining about the conditions, the food, and the disruption to the meetings from the planes that fly just overhead. The example of their dedication to the Lord and each other was an example for us. The way they dressed for the meetings and their preparation for the studies set an example for all. We had been asked to come and help them in their Christian walk, and they in turn strengthened us and our resolve to serve our Lord and Master.

We thank our Heavenly Father for his watch care over us, and ask his continuing providence of these, his people, with their many difficulties to remain faithful and to be an inspiration to us all. ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

AUGUST 7—“If a man contend in the games, he is not crowned unless he strive lawfully.”—II Timothy 2:5 (*Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*) (Z. ’02-265 Hymn 13)

AUGUST 14—“It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?”—Matthew 10:25 (Z. ’03-13 Hymn 261)

AUGUST 21—“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.”—Matthew 6:33 (Z. ’02-350 Hymn 4)

AUGUST 28—“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season.”—II Timothy 4:2 (Z. ’03-189 Hymn 131)

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Phoebe Murchie, Duncan, BC, Canada—
May 9.

Sister Beatrice Nwarie, Ohoba, Nigeria—June 2.
Age, 60

Sister Lakshmi Samuel, Chennai, India—June 12.
Age, 37

Sister Ruth McDonald, New York, NY—June 13.
Age, 89

Brother Milo Lupsor, Buenos Aires, Argentina—
June 20. Age, 82

Sister Vicmat Amissah, Ghana—June.

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.

M. Balko

Red Deer, AB August 8-10

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

K. Ajise

Seattle, WA Aug. 30-Sept. 1

W. Austin

Nowy Sacz, Poland August 2-8

Baia Mare, Romania 11-15

New York, NY 30,31

M. J. Balko

Seattle, WA Aug. 30-Sept. 1

C. Chandler

Red Deer, AB August 8-10

D. Christiansen

Milwaukee, WI August 16,17

A. Fernets

Seattle, WA Aug. 30-Sept. 1

J. Freer

Red Deer, AB August 8-10

New York, NY 30,31

T. Gilbert

Seattle, WA Aug. 30-Sept. 1

R. Goodman

Seattle, WA Aug. 30-Sept. 1

R. Gorecki

Nowy Sacz, Poland August 2-8

Baia Mare, Romania 11-15

M. Grudzien

Seattle, WA Aug. 30-Sept. 1

L. Hicks

Seattle, WA Aug. 30-Sept. 1

S. Jeuck

Milwaukee, WI August 16,17

T. Krupa

New York, NY August 30,31

E. Kuenzli

Milwaukee, WI August 16,17

B. Montague

Seattle, WA Aug. 30-Sept. 1

F. Nemesh

Red Deer, AB August 8-10

A. Oystryk

Red Deer, AB August 8-10

J. Parkinson

Milwaukee, WI August 16,17

Seattle, WA 30-Sept. 1

D. Rawson

Seattle, WA Aug. 30-Sept. 1

R. Sconyers

Louisville, AL August 31

A. Siwak

Red Deer, AB August 8-10

T. Ruggirello

New York, NY August 30-31

T. Thomassen

New York, NY August 30,31

CONVENTIONS

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

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 3-8—Nowy Sacz, Poland. Contact T. Machacek. Phone: (219) 662-8107

ALBERTA CONVENTION, August 8,9,10—Stanford Inn, 4707 50th Street, Red Deer, AB, Canada T4N 1X3. Hotel reservations, phone: (877) 347-5551. Other information, contact J. Neumeier. Phone: (403) 746-5052

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, August 16,17—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact D. Moore, 2176 South 71st Street, West Allis, WI 53219. Phone: (414) 541-8937

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, August 30,31—Fa-Ho-Lo Camp and Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Unit 1, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact V. Lumley, 2531 Ashton Road, Jackson, MI 49203. Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, August 30,31—Doubletree Hotel, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ 07430. Contact D. Szybinski for reservations at the hotel, and for a meal count, by August 20th. Phone: (212) 998-2095

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, August 30,31,September 1—Seabeck Christian Conference Center, 15395 Seabeck Hwy NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (253) 939-9838

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 12,13,14—Bevil Conference Center & Hotel, Huntsville, AL 35816. Contact J. Cothren, 1300 Huntsville Hills Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802. Phone: (256) 852-8505

COLUMBUS INDIANA OLDE HARVEST TIME CONVENTION, September 20,21—Dan Ledwinka Farm, 10004 E 550 N, Columbus, IN 47203. Contact D. McClellan, 3181 Martha Court, Columbus, IN 47302. Phone: (812) 344-0066 Or contact E. Ledwinka. Phone: (812) 546-5311

CLAY CITY CONVENTION, September 26,27,28—McCormicks Creek State Park, Clay City, IN 46240. Contact S. Clark, 7861 Clearwater Highway, Indianapolis, IN 46240

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 4,5—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136 West Newton, PA. Contact G. Balko, 308 Burger Street, West Newton, PA 15089. Phone: (724) 872-6418

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 11,12—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

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 18,19—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

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 18,19—Masonic Temple, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA. Contact M. Allard, 637 Shamrock Lane, Pismo Beach, CA 93449. Phone: (805) 773-2962

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Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.*

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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