

The DAWN

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GREECE: He Haravi (The Dawn), Afexidiou 81 Ano Ilisia, GR 15771 Athens

ITALY: Aurora, Via S. Leonardo 21, Ottaviano 80044, Napoli

NEW ZEALAND: P.O. Box 27468, Mt. Roskill, Auckland 1004

SOUTH AMERICA: El Alba, Calle Almirante Brown 674, Monte Grande 1842, Buenos Aires, Argentina

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ISRAEL IN HISTORY AND PROPHECY

ON MARCH 17, 1998, the newspapers in the Christian world carried an announcement from Rome that the Vatican was issuing a document which it described as an "act of repentance."

The New York Times, in reporting on this document, wrote that the Australian cardinal who is the head of the Vatican Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews, and which commission produced the 14-page statement, told reporters at a Vatican news conference that it was written as a teaching document for the worldwide church and represented more than an apology.

The document said, in part: "In the lands where the Nazis undertook mass deportations, the brutality which surrounded these forced movements of helpless people should have led us to suspect the worst. Did Christians give every possible assistance to those being persecuted, and in

particular to the persecuted Jews? Many did, but others did not.”

A LETTER FROM THE POPE

A cover letter for transmitting the document was written from the Vatican by the Pope on March 12, 1998, and published in *The New York Times*. It said:

“On numerous occasions during my Pontificate I have recalled with a sense of deep sorrow the sufferings of the Jewish people during the Second World War. The crime which has become known as the Shoah remains an indelible stain on the history of the century that is coming to a close.

“As we prepare for the beginning of the Third Millennium of Christianity, the Church is aware that the joy of a Jubilee is above all the joy that is based on the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God and neighbor. Therefore she encourages her sons and daughters to purify their hearts through repentance of past errors and infidelities. She calls them to place themselves humbly before the LORD and examine themselves on the responsibility which they too have for the evils of our time.

“It is my fervent hope that the document ‘We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah’, which the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews has prepared under your direction, will indeed help to heal the wounds of past misunderstandings and injustices. May it enable memory to play its necessary part in the process of shaping a future in which the unspeakable iniquity of the Shoah will never again be possible. May the LORD of history guide the efforts of Catholics and Jews and all men and women of goodwill as they work together for a

world of true respect for the life and dignity of every human being, for all have been created in the image and likeness of God."

These are noble sentiments, but will they be fulfilled? From the time that Israel became subject to the Gentiles to the present, Jews have been opposed and persecuted by various religious groups, including those who call themselves Christian. Was this persecution foretold in the Bible, and is more anti-Semitism possible? What does the Bible say about the Jewish people?

ISRAEL, A MONUMENT OF ANTIQUITY

In the Jewish people we have convincing evidence of the historical accuracy and the Divine inspiration of the Bible. While they were the people of God throughout Old Testament times, since the First Advent of Christ they have been a scattered, homeless, desolate, and persecuted people. Yet withal, in spirit they have remained a distinct and homogeneous people. They remained united by strong ties of blood relationship, and by a common faith in the wonderful promises of God, although they failed to comprehend the full import of those promises.

The first of these promises was made to their father, Abraham, to whom God said, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3) Later God added to this, saying to Abraham, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the

dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.”—Gen. 13:14-16

GOD MAKES A PROMISE

Later, after Abraham had demonstrated his faithfulness to God by his willingness to offer up his son Isaac in sacrifice, God said to him, “By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”—Gen. 22:16-18

These are the promises which relate to and have governed God’s dealings with the descendants of Abraham from the time they were first made until now. The repossession of the land of Palestine, the land promised to Abraham and his seed, as we see it taking place today, is related to this promise. Various of the Old Testament prophets foretold that the Israelites would be driven from their land, scattered among the various nations of the earth, and finally be caused to reinhabit their land.

When the Prophet Amos wrote to Israel: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2), he also said, “therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” Israel had exclusive favor from God and thus bore a responsibility to keep God’s commandments, which they could not do. Hence, they were punished for their iniquities by God. who dispersed them worldwide.

One of the most well-known and impressive prophecies concerning Israel is found in Isaiah 40:1,2: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins." The word 'double' in this text does not mean 'twice as much', as one might conclude. Rather it is translated from a Hebrew word meaning, 'fold in two', and refers to a like span or period of time. First came 1845 years from Jacob's death to Jesus' death wherein there were chiefly favors.

THE DOUBLE ENDS

Then after Jesus died in A.D. 33 came a like period, a double, of disfavor in dispersion and persecution. This like span of 1845 years ended in 1878. That year marked the beginning of a change. It involved events which would lead to a restoration of the land. This small beginning consisted of revising the treaty of San Stefano at the Berlin Congress of Nations. It included protection of minority groups in Turkey and Russia. Hence, for the first time in centuries, wealthy Jews were permitted to buy land in Palestine whereas they had not been permitted to do so heretofore. Since their dispersion, they were barred from owning land in most countries.

Jeremiah was another faithful prophet of the LORD who foretold Judah's conquest by Babylon. While he was so prophesying, the LORD instructed him to buy his uncle's land in Anathoth (belonging to Benjamin in Judea) even though he was saying that the land would be overrun by Babylonians. Jeremiah did as he was told, and then prophesied: "For thus saith the LORD of hosts. the God of Israel:

Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land." (Jer. 32:15) It might appear that Jeremiah was prophesying about the return of Jews from Babylon, but his prophecy continues in Jeremiah 32:36-44 and refers to the return from a longer dispersion. This prophecy has not been completely fulfilled.

ZIONISM BEGINS

When the opportunity to buy land in Palestine opened, another prophecy by Jeremiah began to be fulfilled: "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, the LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, the LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers. Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them."—Jer. 16:14-16

A liberal attitude started to develop toward the Jews in the lands where they were dispersed, beginning in the 18th century in a few places; but became more worldwide by the end of the 19th century. This caused many Jewish leaders to become alarmed. They had fears of their people being assimilated into the cultures of the different lands as persecution of the Jews subsided. Hence a movement called Zionism began. Its purpose was to seek a homeland for the Jew.

At the beginning, this movement was weak and disunited. Then Theodore Herzl, a Hungarian Jew, arrived on the scene. He was a journalist who saw anti-Semitism manifested during the Dreyfuss

trial in France. This persuaded him to devote his life to the cause of Zionism. In 1897 he invited interested parties to the first World Zionist Congress at Basel, Switzerland. This Congress set up Zionist organizations in every country where there were large Jewish populations. Mr. Herzl used his journalistic skills effectively in promoting Zionism.

As Zionism began to take hold, and Jews were going to Palestine, Great Britain, in 1905, offered land for a Jewish homeland in East Uganda, Africa. This offer was rejected. To the Jew it was clear that Palestine alone could serve as that homeland. Zionism did a 'fishing' work. (Jer. 16:16) It enticed people to go to Palestine by offering land and opportunity, just as a fisherman uses bait to catch fish.

THE END OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

During this period of early Zionism, many Jews returned to Palestine, a land under the dominion of Turkey. Many events occurred which led to the fulfillment of the second portion of Jeremiah's prophecy in Jeremiah 16:14-16. First, World War I broke out, accompanied by the end of the Gentile times. (Luke 21:24) Palestine was liberated by the Allies—the British army—and Great Britain was given a mandate over the land. The Balfour Declaration, issued in 1917, said in part that Great Britain and other Allied nations "view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."

In spite of obstacles and the opposition of the Arabs in the land of Palestine, the work of rebuilding continued successfully. Then, along came World War II, and with it a new fulfillment to the prophecy of Jeremiah 16:16. Zionism had accomplished its

purpose. It had gone as far as it could in bringing Israel back home: "Behold I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them." We note how carefully God has worded this prophecy: "and after [after Zionism has done what it could] will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks."

THE HUNTERS ARRIVE

With World War II came Hitler and anti-Semitism in all its fury. The Jews had emerged from the terrible persecution of centuries of dispersion, and now, again, they were facing that same terrible persecution. Nations with economic troubles found it convenient to make the Jews a scapegoat. They blamed them for all their economic ills.

Suddenly this people, who had enjoyed the benefits of newly-found friends, found themselves 'hunted' and fleeing for their lives. They had no place to go except to their own land of Palestine. Now they wanted to go to Palestine out of sheer desperation. They went by the boatload, merchant vessels filled to overflowing. Those who were permitted to land kissed the ground of their homeland. But many were turned away to the island of Cyprus because quotas were being exceeded.

This large influx of new settlers to the land caused by the 'hunters' created a problem for Great Britain. Great Britain was committed under the Balfour declaration to respect the rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine. They were obligated to hold the quota of new immigrants to 2,000 per month. The requests for entry were overwhelm-

ing the quotas, and Great Britain, in its protectorate role, was viewed by the Jews as an obstructionist.

ISRAEL BECOMES A NATION

It was inevitable that Great Britain would have to give up her protectorate role. She had to give up the mandate she had held for so many years, granted to her under the League of Nations, which no longer existed. The new United Nations set up a committee called the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, or UNSCOP. This committee recommended dividing Palestine into a Jewish State and an Arab State. On May 14, 1948, the state of Israel was proclaimed. It was immediately recognized by the USA, and Great Britain, and the other superpower of that time—the USSR—recognized it on May 17, 1948. It was fitting that Chiam Weizmann should become Israel's first president.

We have been witnessing the revitalization of Israel. God has slowly but surely caused this miracle to take place unknown to them. Most of the people have been regathered in unbelief, not aware that God's hand has been involved. Therefore, it is still necessary that final events take place which will serve to be an eye-opening experience for all Israel, and all the world as well. The events to come are those prophesied in Ezekiel 38 and 39. The timing follows the regathering of Israel.

The document issued by the Vatican says, in essence, "Never again will there be 'anti-Semitism'." This is not what the prophecies concerning Israel imply. Zechariah's prophecy, of the events leading up to those recorded in Ezekiel 38 and 39, says: "Behold. I will make Jerusalem a cup of trem-

bling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.”—Zech. 12:2,3,

It is hard to imagine all people of the earth gathered together against Judah and Jerusalem without anti-Semitism being involved again. Jeremiah speaks of “Jacob’s trouble.” (Jer. 30:7) In that time Jeremiah says, “All thy lovers have forgotten thee.” (vs.14) This is the time when God will fight for them as he did in days of old. It is this battle of the future that will bring a true end to anti-Semitism, as it ushers in the wonderful kingdom of Christ. ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JULY 2—“Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted we suffer it.”—I Corinthians 4:12 (Z. ’99-5 Hymn 299)

JULY 9—“When he [Jesus] putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.”—John 10:4 (Z. ’00-230 Hymn 257)

JULY 16—“Be ye filled with the Spirit.”—Ephesians 5:18 (Z. ’99-92 Hymn 85)

JULY 23—“If any provide not for his own, . . . he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.” —I Timothy 5:8 (Z. ’99-127 Hymn 23)

JULY 30—“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines.”—Canticles 2:15 (Z. ’99-172 Hymn 145)

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR JULY 5

CHOOSE WISDOM

KEY VERSE: *"The LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."*—*Proverbs 62:6*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Proverbs 2:1-15*

ONE OF THE attributes of God's character is wisdom. When father Adam was created in God's image in the Garden of Eden, God gave him wisdom. After Adam's disobedience man fell away from that original image. Solomon, the writer of Proverbs, knew the value of wisdom and opens his book by extolling its value. He says, "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning."—Prov. 1:5

When Solomon became king he offered a thousand burnt offerings on the brazen altar of the Tabernacle. The LORD was pleased with Solomon's devotion

and reverence, so in reward was willing to grant Solomon anything he wanted: "Ask what I shall give thee." (II Chron. 1:7) Solomon asked for wisdom and knowledge (vs. 10) and God granted this gift to him, along with riches and wealth, although he had not asked for the latter.

This special blessing God gave to Solomon is one we should seek. If we have a choice given us as did Solomon, let us choose wisdom to be like God. In Proverbs 2, Solomon continues to extol wisdom and how we should desire it, saying, "My son, if thou wilt receive my words,

and hide [store up] my commandments with [within] thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; . . . If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear [reverence] of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.”—Prov. 2:1-5

The Apostle James assures us that God, the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17), stands ready to give us wisdom, saying: “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.”—James 1:5

What is this wisdom that is so desirable, which comes from God? Proverbs 2:6 says that knowledge and understanding come out of “his mouth,” or as we also say, from “the Word of God”. For many centuries God employed his Holy Spirit on the ancient prophets to write of salvation for mankind. The Apostle Peter tells us of this salvation in I Peter 1:9-12.

Salvation is the good news of the Bible and the gift of God (Eph. 2:8), which we receive when we accept Jesus as our personal Redeemer. For those who have done this, the Apostle Paul says, “Unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” (I Cor. 1:18) Paul continues in his argument to show that worldly wisdom will perish and only God’s wisdom will endure. He was especially writing of God’s plan of the ages, and how it is centered around Jesus Christ.—I Cor. 1:19-23

However, the mere acceptance of Jesus is not the program God is using in this Gospel Age. He is calling certain ones out of this world to be associated with his Son (I Cor. 1:24-31), selecting them to walk in the same pathway. Concerning Jesus, Paul says that he of God “is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” (vs. 30) Christ enables us to see our fallen, imperfect state. This wisdom proceeds to look to the Word of God even as Jesus did.—Matt. 4:4 ■

LESSON FOR JULY 12

RELY ON GOD

KEY VERSE: *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."*—Proverbs 3:5,6

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Proverbs 3:1-20*

IN CHOOSING WISDOM as a gift from God, we are not to look for worldly wisdom, or our own capability in performing a given task. Instead we should accept his Word to direct our path and rely on God. We should be constantly aware that God stands ready to help us, if only we ask him. There are many benefits to this course of action which are listed by Solomon in opening this chapter and leading to the Key Verse. He says that by keeping God's commandments we can lengthen our days with long life and peace. We are instructed, and should bind mercy and truth

about our neck and find favor with God.

The trust that we must have in the LORD should not be superficial. It must be with all our heart. When we come to a crossroad in life's journey, not knowing which way to go, we are encouraged to call upon him and he will direct our paths. Isaiah says, "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." (Isa. 30:21) The 'word' mentioned by Isaiah is the word of both the Old and New Testaments. We are not to think that God will help some who call on him

to win a sports activity, to spare us from a severe illness, or to become rich, but his work of the present Gospel Age is the work of selecting a people for his name.—Acts 15:14

The wisdom of God includes the chastening and correction he applies when we deviate from the pathway of righteousness. The Apostle Paul quotes Proverbs 3:11,12, in Hebrews 12:5,6, saying: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the LORD, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." We have experienced the confirmation of this great truth in our Christian life.

To grow as sons of God, we must expect these chastenings for our learning and development, even though this might be painful as we submit to them. But eventually this correction will yield "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." (Heb. 12:11) It is under these conditions that we know we are being dealt with as beloved "sons" of God.—Heb. 12:7,8

If we rely on God and his wisdom we will be blessed beyond our imagination. The Scriptures say, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding." (Prov. 3:13) We might paraphrase this to say, 'Happy is the man to whom God has revealed his wonderful plan of the ages, and who understands the work that God is doing'.

There is no human wisdom that can compare to God's wisdom. It is this wisdom that planned life upon this earth, and which is a great marvel—more precious than gold, silver, and rubies. (Prov. 3:14,15) What a great joy to all mankind it will be when the earth is restored, sin and evil destroyed, and all nations and people learn to rely on God, "For his mercy endureth for ever."—Ps. 136:1

Proverbs says we should seek wisdom 'as for silver'. Every day people seek 'silver' as they go to work to earn money for their livelihood. The diligence applied to these routine tasks should now be applied to doing the LORD's will. ■

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

KEY VERSE: *"Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it."*—Proverbs 3:27

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 3:27-35; 14:21

THE CONTEXT OF Proverbs 3:27-29 deals with the relationship we have with our neighbors. We read, "Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee. Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee."

As a rule we have little control over who will live next to us, or nearby. Such are called neighbors. There are times when we have good neighbors, and other times when we have bad neighbors. We, however, should strive to be good neighbors always. Through-

out the Book of Proverbs we are admonished to be honest, helpful, and loving in our dealings with our neighbors so that they feel secure living next to us. There are those in the world who are violent, proud, perverse, and outright wicked, but never should we use their methods in our dealings with others.

Jesus was asked by a scribe, "Which is the first commandment of all?" (Mark 12:28) The answer Jesus gave was based on the text Deuteronomy 6:4. He said, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with

all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."—Mark 12:29-31

This question as asked by a lawyer (a scribe) has variations in the three Gospels where it is found. In Luke 10:25-29 a lawyer asked Jesus, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus responded, "What is written in the Law? How readest thou?" It was the scribe that answered, using the same words Jesus gave in answering which commandment was the greatest in Mark 12:30,31 and Matthew 22:37-40.

The scribe received our Lord's approval in giving a correct answer, and so Jesus said, "This do, and thou shalt live." (Luke 10:28) This prompted him to ask Jesus, "Who is my neighbour?" In answer Jesus gave an illustration which told of a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, who was set upon by

thieves. These took his raiment, wounded him and left him for dead. A priest went by, saw the man, and went to the other side of the road. Likewise a Levite did the same thing. A Samaritan who also came upon the scene, cared for this man's wounds, took him to an inn for recovery and paid for his stay at the inn. When Jesus asked the lawyer which of these three was neighbor to the man set upon by thieves, he answered, "He that shewed mercy on him," causing Jesus to say, "Go, and do thou likewise."—Luke 10:37

Let us heed our Lord in this exhortation and be good neighbors to all whom we meet, because we are to do good unto all men as we have opportunity. (Gal. 6:10) The Samaritan had mercy, and attended to the needs of this victim of a crime. All mankind are our neighbors, in the Lord's broad definition of this word, and all must and will learn to love one another. By doing so they will fulfill the royal law of God, which is: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—James 2:8 ■

LIVE WITH INTEGRITY

KEY VERSE: *"Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things."*
—Prov. 28:5

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Proverbs 28:4-10, 13*

THE TITLE OF this lesson states one of the principal admonitions of the Bible. A righteous life is to be lived by all who seek the blessing of God. The admonition to live righteously occurs throughout the Scriptures. When the nation of Israel was given the Law, they were told by God, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."—Deut. 30:19

In this lesson in Proverbs a comparison is made of those who keep God's commandments, and those who do not. "They that forsake the Law praise the

wicked: but such as keep the Law contend with them." (Prov. 28:4) In this present evil world, the righteous have a struggle in resisting evil even as Malachi wrote: "Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." (Mal. 3:15) This condition will not continue forever. God has a plan wherein the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness and accordingly be rewarded with blessings and life.

In the Gospel Age, the selection of those who will be associated with Jesus in his kingdom are mainly

from among the poor. In exhorting the Early Church not to be partial toward the rich, the Apostle James said: "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) There are blessings in store for all the poor in God's kingdom.

In God's kingdom there will be justice and equity for all. As our theme text indicates, those who are seeking the LORD understand justice, whereas evil men do not. A contrast is then made between those who have amassed wealth and are rich with those who are poor. "Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich." (Prov. 28:6) The poor who keep God's commandments are the fortunate ones in this contrast. The perverse man, though rich, will not be a happy person.

The Law helps those who love righteousness to be wise. (Prov. 28:7) They have inspiring communication with God; whereas God will not respond to the

prayers of the wicked. All of these blessings are for those who seek after righteousness and to live in integrity.

During the Gospel Age, those who are walking in the footsteps of Jesus are truly living with integrity. They are being conformed to the image of God's son. (Rom. 8:29) In the Millennial kingdom they are pictured as sheep in the parable of the sheep and goats (Matt. 25:31-46) and are told by Jesus, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." —Matt. 25:34

None of us can keep God's Law perfectly, hence Proverbs 28:13 says: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." The mercy of God has been made available for the church in this Gospel Age through the merit of our Lord's sacrifice. The Apostle John has written of our Savior, Jesus, "He is the propitiation for our sins: . . . also for the sins of the whole world." —I John 2:2 ■

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

THE PLAN OF GOD IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS—

PART 13

ABRAHAM DIES IN FAITH

(Jacob and Esau Are Born)

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

VERSES 1-4 “Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.

“And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.

“And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.

“And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Ephher, and Hanoah, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.”

These four verses present all that the Bible says about Abraham's marriage to Keturah. Inasmuch as the Apostle Paul speaks of Hagar, Sarah's bondmaid whom she gave to Abraham for a wife, as picturing the Law Covenant to which the nation of Israel was in bondage, Sarah as a symbol of the covenant under which the followers of Jesus are developed and enjoy freedom, it has been suggested

that Keturah represents the New Covenant under which natural Israel and the world will be blessed during the reign of Christ.—Jer. 31:31-34; Gal. 4: 21-31

In a prophecy of Isaiah concerning the glory of the Christ, the spiritual seed of Abraham, three of the offspring of Keturah are mentioned, as though to indicate the far-reaching blessings of the LORD which are yet to be available for all mankind. See Isaiah 60:1-7. Under the New Covenant arrangements, all the obedient of mankind—Jews and Gentiles—will receive blessings of life—human life—through the spiritual seed of Abraham, the Isaac class.

VERSES 5,6 “And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.

“But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.”

In verse one, Keturah is designated a ‘wife’, so it is not clear whether or not the ‘concubines’ referred to in these verses include her, but they probably do. (I Chron. 1:32) Emphasis is given to the fact that Isaac was Abraham’s real heir, thus a type of Jesus and also those who are “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” (Rom. 8:17) Jesus was made heir of all things, and the hope of the church is to share that inheritance with him.

The sons of Abraham’s concubines, however, received ‘gifts’ which suggests that in the Divine plan God has blessings also for those who are not partakers of the “High Calling” of joint-heirship with Jesus. (Phil. 3:14) Even fallen mankind throughout the ages has received many blessings

from the Creator. He has caused the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon both the just and the unjust. Later, when the kingdom is established in the hands of the Divine Christ, everlasting life will be offered to all as a 'gift' from God through the world's Redeemer.

VERSES 7-10 "And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred three-score and fifteen years.

"Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.

"And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre;

"The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife."

Abraham died at the age of one hundred and seventy-five—'a good old age, an old man, and full of years'. His was a wonderful life, for the LORD had blessed him. His faith in God and in his promises continued strong to the end. While he had seen many evidences of the power of God working in connection with the fulfillment of his promises, yet so far as the blessing of all the families of the earth through his seed was concerned, he 'died in faith, not having received [the fulfillment of] the promises'.—Heb. 11:13,39

Because it was not God's due time to reveal the fullness of his plan, and because there was no necessity for Abraham knowing it, he did not understand that Isaac was merely a type of the faith 'seed' that was to be the instrument of blessing for

all mankind. He was given all the truth pertaining to the Divine plan that was essential for him to know in order to cooperate with God in that which he wanted done at that time. Abraham demonstrated his faith in God's plan by his obedience in all that the LORD required of him. This is all that any of the LORD's people can do; and in doing it, they rejoice in the blessings which he so abundantly showers upon them.

Abraham was 'gathered to his people'. In the Scriptures expressions similar to this are used with respect to the death of a number of God's servants. In the case of Abraham, many of his people were heathen who did not believe in Jehovah, the true God, yet in death they were all together. This is in harmony with the general teachings of the Bible that both the wicked and the righteous are unconscious in death, and that the hope of a future life is in the promises of God to restore the dead to life. Abraham will be restored to be one of the "princes in all the earth" (Ps. 45:16), while the heathen members of his family with whom he is resting in death, will come forth "to the resurrection of judgment"—that is, to be put on trial for life.—John 5:29, *RSV*

Ishmael, together with his mother Hagar, was sent away from Abraham's household at the time Isaac was weaned because he persecuted Isaac. However, when Abraham died they cooperated in the burial of Abraham. Abraham was buried in the cave of Machpelah, the site which he had previously purchased as a burial place for his wife, Sarah.

VERSES 11-18 "And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahairoi.

"Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham:

"And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,

"And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa,

"Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah:

"These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.

"And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people.

"And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: and he died in the presence of all his brethren."

Verse 11 contains a simple statement of fact indicating the closing of the historical record of Abraham's life, and notifying the reader that now Isaac and his experiences, and the manner in which God blessed him, will be the principal subject matter under consideration. Verses 12,13 present a brief record of the generations of Ishmael, but inasmuch as he was not to be dealt with particularly by the LORD, no more than this scant information is provided, and even this is relatively unimportant in connection with the outworking of the Divine plan.

VERSES 19-23 "And these are the generations of Isaac. Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac:

“And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian.

“And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

“And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.

“And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.”

The expression, ‘generations of Isaac’, signifies the historical record of his life, beginning with his birth, as the son of Abraham. While his life was not as long, nor as filled with important incidents relating to the plan of God as was that of his father, nevertheless he was blessed by God as the heir of the promises made to Abraham.

In some respects, Isaac’s experiences paralleled those of his father: for example, the barrenness of his wife. We have already studied the account of the wonderful manner in which a wife was secured for him, and here we learn that he was forty years old when he married Rebekah. It was not until twenty years passed that his first sons were born. (vs. 26) The reason for this long delay was that Rebekah was barren.

Isaac prayed to the LORD about the failure of his wife to have children, and the LORD answered his prayers. Probably in this case, as with Abraham and Sarah, God wanted to impress the fact of his providence in connection with the development of

the promised seed, and that no matter what difficulties stood in the way, nothing could interfere with the fulfillment of his promises.

In connection with the bearing of her twin children, Rebekah sensed that something unusual was occurring and displayed a measure of anxiety over it, making it a matter of prayer. In answer to her prayer, the LORD gave a prophecy pertaining to the descendants of her sons, that both would become heads of nations, but that the one which would be born first would serve the one that was born last.

VERSES 24-34 “And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

“And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

“And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau’s heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

“And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

“And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

“And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:

“And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

“And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

“And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

“And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

“Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.”

In these verses we have the well-known story of the birth of Esau and Jacob, and of the different characteristics of the two boys. Esau was the first-born, hence, in keeping with the customs of those times, to him belonged the heritage of his father.

Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac, which meant that Isaac was rich in the material things of life. But more important than this, to him belonged the promises of God pertaining to the ‘seed’. These also he inherited from his father, and later they were confirmed to him by God. All of this, including the promises, belonged to Esau by right of birth. However, Esau’s readiness to sell his birthright to Jacob for so small a consideration as a mess of pottage indicates that he did not appreciate it as he should have. The account says that he despised it.

On the other hand, Jacob, born a few moments later than Esau and thus by legal right deprived of the birthright, apparently longed to possess it, particularly as it pertained to the promises God made to his grandfather, Abraham. Because of this, when the first favorable opportunity came, he offered to purchase it from his brother. Esau seemed quite willing to accept Jacob’s offer and the transfer of the birthright was made, at least as far as Jacob and Esau were concerned. Later developments indicate that it still had to be confirmed by the parental blessing. ■

OUR HERITAGE OF LIBERTY

*"The creature itself also shall be delivered
from the bondage of corruption into the
glorious liberty of the children of God."*

—Romans 8:21

A GREAT DEAL is said in the Scriptures about liberty, and also of its contrasting principle of bondage. Those who enjoy liberty are free, while those who are held in bondage are slaves. The Scriptures do not, however, teach that liberty, as such, is always desirable, nor that the exercise of liberty is always pleasing to the LORD. The Scriptures do not support that well-known expression of human wisdom, stated in the words of Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death." In its final analysis this would mean that personal liberty should come before every other consideration, which is not according to the Scriptures. Adam and Eve exercised their liberty but died as a result, for they broke away from the legitimate bondage of Divine law.

The typical people of God were held as slaves in Egypt. They longed for liberty, and finally God set them free; but their freedom did not imply the

right to do as they pleased, for almost immediately they were brought under the restraints of the Mosaic Law. However, it was only because of their fallen condition, their inherited sin which the Law condemned, that the Law Covenant was a burden to them. The Law was "holy, and just, and good." (Rom. 7:12) It was even spiritual because it came from God, and had the Israelites been able to measure up to its standards they would have enjoyed a wonderful liberty in their obedience to it. (Rom. 7:14) Instead, it proved to be a yoke upon their necks.

One of the most degrading periods in the life of the Israelites was during a short time when they were without a leader, king, or judge. Of that time it is written that everyone did according to that which was right in his own eyes. (Judges 17:6; 21:25) The Apostle Peter speaks of some who mingle among spiritual Israelites proclaiming the doctrine of 'liberty'. "With their high-sounding nonsense," writes the apostle, "they use the sensual pull of the lower passions to attract those who were just on the point of cutting loose from their companions in misconduct. They promise them liberty. Liberty!—when they themselves are bound hand and foot to utter depravity. For a man is the slave of whatever masters him."—II Pet. 2:18,19, *J.B. Phillips Translation*

Thus the apostle points out clearly that there is a liberty which is displeasing to God. It is a liberty which appeals to the lusts, or desires of the flesh; and those who preach this doctrine make their appeals along this line, pointing out in subtle ways that it is not necessary to be bound by any restraining influence of the will of God. Any expression of God's will which restrains one from doing what he

likes best to do, is displeasing to the flesh; and if someone teaches that such restraint is destroying the liberty that should be enjoyed in Christ, the fallen fleshly mind is quick to agree.

Fundamentally, that which made the death of Jesus necessary in order that man might be redeemed from death was the insistence of the human race to enjoy full personal liberty. In a prophecy concerning Jesus' death, the people are represented as saying, "We have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. 53:6) Here the principle of full liberty to do as one pleases is characterized as 'iniquity'. It is fitting in this connection to note that Jesus proved worthy to be man's Redeemer because of his obedience to his Heavenly Father's will. "Not my will, but thine, be done," was the way Jesus viewed the matter. (Luke 22:42) He did not go his own way, for as he said, "I came . . . not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."—John 6:38

FREEDOM IN RIGHTEOUSNESS—BONDAGE TO SIN

The 'liberty' which the Scriptures speak of as desirable for the Christian is a freedom from enslaving cords of sin and death. The Jews had tried to conquer sin and be free by keeping the Law, but had failed, with the result that the Law itself, condemning sin as it did, and prescribing death as the penalty for sin, had brought the Israelites under an additional bondage. There were teachers in the Early Church who, not understanding the truth clearly, were insisting that believers must still remain under the Law. The truth was that through faith in Christ they had been made free from the condemnation of the Law. so Paul wrote: "Stand

fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”—Gal. 5:1

By taking this text completely out of its setting, it is often improperly used to substantiate the arguments of those who offer the brethren freedom and encourage each one to go his own way, insisting that the ideal state of the Christian community is one in which all are free to think and to act as they please. There is only one condition under which a Christian is warranted in doing just as he pleases, and that is when his heart is so in tune with the Divine will, and so glad to give up all his own preferences and notions, that all he really desires to do, all that he pleases to do, is the will of God. Those who are thus fully devoted to God can enjoy a glorious liberty. They can be free indeed.

But such freedom is not wholly obtainable at present, for the mind of the flesh strives against the mind of the Spirit, causing the latter to be more or less hampered in carrying out the entire will of God. This restraint is referred to in our text as the ‘bondage of corruption’, and from this bondage every true Christian longs to be delivered in order to be entirely free to serve the LORD in every detail of his holy will. This is the ‘glorious liberty of the children of God’. It will be enjoyed beyond the veil only by those who have humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God, and who have learned to love the will of God so completely that even a thought that is contrary thereto would be painful to them. While these will, indeed, enjoy a liberty which to them will be ‘glorious’, their rejoicing will not be on account of finally having the privilege of

(Continued on Page 38)

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ALABAMA

Guntersville
WTWX 95.9 fm 6:45 a.m.

ARIZONA

Phoenix KHEP 1280 6:00 a.m.

ARKANSAS

Little Rock KAAY 1090 6:30 a.m.

CALIFORNIA

Concord KATD 990 11:30 a.m.

Los Angeles KIEV 870 8:45 p.m.

Riverside (Sat.)
KPRO 1570 8:00 a.m.

FLORIDA

Jacksonville
WIOJ 1010 7:45 p.m.

St. Petersburg
WTIS 1110 5:00 p.m.

GEORGIA

Augusta WGAC 580 8:00 a.m.

ILLINOIS

LaSalle WLPO 1220 9:45 a.m.

Marion WFRX 1300 9:15 a.m.

INDIANA

Hammond WJOB 1230 8:30 a.m.

MAINE

Portland (Mon.)
WLOB 1310 8:45 p.m.

Rumford (Mon.)
WWMR 96.3 fm 8:45 p.m.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston (Mon.) WROL 950 8:45 p.m.

Springfield (Mon.)
WACE 730 8:45 p.m.

Worcester (Mon.)
WCRN 830 8:45 p.m.

MICHIGAN

Livonia WLQV 1500 9:30 a.m.

MISSOURI

Osage Beach
KBMX 101.9 fm 8:30 a.m.

NEW JERSEY

Camden (Tues.)
WTMR 800 2:30 p.m.
Flemington WJHR
1040 8:30 a.m.

NEW YORK

Buffalo WHLD 1270 12:00 noon

New York WEVD 1050 6:45 a.m.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro (Tues.)
WQMG 1510 3:00 p.m.

NORTH DAKOTA

Fargo WDAY 970 7:45 a.m.

OHIO

Cincinnati WSAI 1530 8:30 p.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Carlisle WHYL 960 7:45 a.m.

Pittsburgh KQV 1410 7:30 p.m.

TENNESSEE

Nashville WSM 650 7:45 a.m.

TEXAS

Dallas/Ft. Worth
KXEB 910 a.m. 11:30 a.m.
KTCY 104.9 f.m. 11:30 a.m.

VIRGINIA

Brookneal WODI 1230 3:05 p.m.

Chester WGGM 820 7:45 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Spokane KAQQ 590 7:00 a.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

Wheeling WWVA 1170 6:15 p.m.

*"A WORD IN season, how good it is! A word fitly
spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."*

—Proverbs 15:23

.... WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

CANADA

ALBERTA

Banff CFHC 1340 11:45 a.m.
 Brooks CIBQ 1340 8:00 a.m.
 Calgary CFAC 960 7:15 a.m.
 Canmore CFNC 1450 11:45 a.m.
 Stettler CKFQ 1400 7:45 a.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan CKAY 1500 10:00 p.m.
 Grand Forks CKFG 1340 9:00 a.m.
 Qualicum-Parksville
 CHPQ 1370 9:30 p.m.

MANITOBA

Winnipeg CKJS 810 9:00 a.m.

ONTARIO

St. Thomas
 CHLO 1570 10:45 a.m.

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan CJSL 1280 8:45 a.m.
 Meadow Lake
 CJNS 1240 7:15 a.m.
 North Battleford
 CJNB 1040 7:15 a.m.
 Weyburn CFSL 1190 8:45 a.m.

BRITISH WEST INDIES

Trinidad Radio Trinidad 610
 10:30 p.m.

CHILE (Spanish)

Talcahuano Radio Almirante
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COSTA RICA (Spanish)

San Jose Radio Sonorara
 105.9 fm and 700 am 6:15 a.m.

MEXICO (Spanish)

Culiacán Ranchera
 XECQ 8:30 a.m.
 Guadalajara
 XEWK 1130 8:30 a.m.

NIGERIA

Radio Africa (Thurs.) 7:45 p.m.

PANAMA (Spanish)

Panama City (Fri.)
 HOQ 1250 6:15 p.m.

PERU (Spanish)

Trujillo 105.7fm
 9:30 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.

PHILIPPINES

Manila
 DZAM 1026 kHz 7:45 a.m.

SOUTH AFRICA

Swaziland SWAZI 8:15 p.m.
 Commercial Radio 1400 am
 Shortwave 49m 6156 kHz



*"O send out Thy light
 and Thy truth: let them
 lead me; let them bring
 me unto Thy holy hill,
 and to Thy tabernacles."*

Psalm 132

THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV PROGRAMS

SUNDAYS UNLESS OTHERWISE LISTED

ALABAMA

Birmingham 12 6:30 a.m.
 Florence WXFL 6:30 a.m.
 Florence F28AP 6:30 a.m.
 Guntersville Chan. 5 10:30 a.m.
 Guntersville Chan. 5 7:30 p.m.
 Guntersville (Mon.) Ch.5 7:30 p.m.
 Tuscaloosa 403BF 6:30 a.m.

ARIZONA

Phoenix K23BJ 5:30 a.m.
 Phoenix KBHC 5:30 a.m.

ARKANSAS

Fort Smith KFDF 6:30 a.m.

CALIFORNIA

Chico K2210 4:30 a.m.
 Los Angeles TV6 4:30 a.m.
 Los Angeles KPAL 4:30 a.m.
 Los Angeles Chan. 44,54 KSTV 7:00 a.m.
 Santa Barbara Chan. 25 KSTV 7:00 a.m.
 Ventura Chan. 57 KSTV 7:00 a.m.

FLORIDA

Jacksonville (Sat.) WTEV (Ch. 47) 6:00 a.m.
 Miami WWFD (Ch. 8) 7:30 a.m.

GEORGIA

Atlanta W34AG 7:30 a.m.

HAWAII

Honolulu Cab. Chan. 22 11:30 a.m.

ILLINOIS

Champaign W41BL 6:30 a.m.

INDIANA

Evansville WJTS 6:30 a.m.
 Evansville WBP 6:30 a.m.
 Evansville TV24 6:30 a.m.

KANSAS

Wichita KSMI 6:30 a.m.

KENTUCKY

Lexington WOGBC 7:30 a.m.
 Lexington W10BM 7:30 a.m.
 Lexington W02BP 7:30 a.m.
 Lexington W07BY 7:30 a.m.
 Louisville 406AY 7:30 a.m.
 Louisville (Tues.) WBNA 8:30 a.m.
 Paducah WQTV 6:30 a.m.

MAINE

Augusta W67BE 7:30 a.m.

MARYLAND

Baltimore WMJF 7:30 a.m.

MICHIGAN

Grand Rapids W25BI 7:30 a.m.

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque K31CT 5:30 a.m.

NEW YORK

New York (Wed.) WLNY 6:30 a.m.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro WAUE 7:30 a.m.
 Raleigh W67CD 7:30 a.m.
 Wilmington WSSN 7:30 a.m.
 Wilmington TV 10 7:30 a.m.

OHIO

Cleveland WOHz 7:30 a.m.
 Columbus WDLR 7:30 a.m.

OKLAHOMA

Tulsa KPOC 6:30 a.m.

OREGON

Portland K25EB 6:30 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia-Reading Chan. 51 WTVE 7:00 a.m.
 Wilkes Barre W35AT 7:30 a.m.
 Wilkes Barre W47AO 7:30 a.m.
 Wilkes Barre W65CE 7:30 a.m.

UTAH

Salt Lake City KSGF 5:30 a.m.
 Salt Lake City KVLV 5:30 a.m.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

America's Voice Satellite 7:30 a.m.
 Washington WTMW-14 9:30 a.m.

WISCONSIN

Green Bay W04CW 6:30 a.m.
 La Crosse KQEG 6:30 a.m.

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee."—Psalm 55:22, Songs in the Night, June 1

ANY SAINT OF God may have tears in the trying experiences of the journey in the narrow way, but none is excusable for murmuring. Rather, each should say with the Master, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" To those who approach the springs of bitterness with the proper faith in God as did Moses, the LORD makes known precious promises, which "steal the bitter from life's woes." As the Israelites were led from the bitter waters to Elim and its rest and shade, so God's spiritual Israel are not tempted and tried above what they are able to bear.

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(Continued from Page 31)

doing as they please, but because in their resurrection body they will have the ability to do God's will perfectly, with no cords of imperfection to restrain them from doing the will of God which they have learned to love.

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) Personal liberty must of necessity be relative. In the home, members of the family must to some extent be subject one to another. Each one in the family can do as he pleases only if that which pleases him most is that which will contribute to the best interests of all. The automobile driver is not free to drive where and how he will on the road. The exercise of such liberty would quickly result in death to himself and to others. The employee is subject to his employer. The president of a business corporation is subject to a board of directors. Absolute freedom is unworkable in any field of human experience or endeavor.

What, then, did Jesus mean when he said that the truth makes free? Comprehensively speaking, the 'truth' to Jesus was the will of his Heavenly Father. On behalf of his disciples he prayed: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth." (John 17:17) The Word of God to Jesus was the Old Testament Scriptures—the "volume of the book" (Heb. 10:7)—which he agreed to obey at the time of his consecration at Jordan. Supplemental to the Old Testament, his followers have been blessed with the New Testament Scriptures. These enlarge upon and elucidate that which had previously been

written, and thus is the will of God made plain to those who are sanctified by it.

The 'truth', then, not only makes us free, but it sanctifies us. But these two results of the Word of God in our lives are in reality merely parts of one accomplishment. First, the truth separates us from the binding influence of error, and then sets us apart to do the will of God. It liberates us from being slaves of sin, and makes us the bond "servants of Jesus Christ." (Eph. 6:6; Phil. 1:1) In other words, the freedom which Jesus offered his followers through the truth was not personal liberty to chart their own course in life, because no one knew better than Jesus did that such liberty leads to death. He wanted them to be free from traditions of men, and from the burdens imposed upon them by the religious leaders of that day; and in the place of that bondage he invited them to take his "yoke" upon them. His yoke, he explained, they would find "easy," and his burden "light." (Matt. 11:30) It would be easy and light because they would learn to love it.

The whole universe is controlled by law. Even the planets are not free to traverse the heavens where they will. Similarly, the intelligent creatures of God, when in harmony with the Divine will, are restrained and controlled by law, and that law is the will of God. Their obedience is voluntary up to a point. Any of us can say that we will not do this, or we will do that, regardless of God's will in the matter; but we cannot continue in such a course of liberty without suffering for it. God is dealing with us, and with the entire human race—and even the angels—with the view of all learning to love his

will—learning to love it so wholeheartedly that it will be our delight to do it.

This was true of Jesus. He did not exercise personal liberty in his service of God and of the truth, but came to do the Father's will. (John 6:38) However, the will of God was not burdensome to the Master, but a delight: "I delight to do thy will, O my God: Yea, thy Law is within my heart." (Ps. 40:8) God was his Head, his governor, and the Head of the church is Christ. (Eph. 1:22; 5:23) This means that as Christians we have freedom only within the circumscribed limits of the will of God and of Christ, our Head.

TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE

We should guard against the mistaken notion that the will of God is always to be found in doing the things which we like to do. Many times, and in many ways, the preferences of our fallen flesh will run counter to the will of God. On any such occasion it would be easy to conclude that a brother in Christ who might admonish us to faithfulness in doing God's will was trying to bring us into bondage. The criterion by which the will of God can be properly determined is not our preferences, but the plain statements of the Word of God. In our Christian experience, if we find ourselves circumventing the Divine requirements, it will be because we have not yet learned fully to appreciate our privilege of being bond slaves of the LORD, that we are being guided by the reasonings of the flesh while trying to make ourselves believe that we are merely exercising our liberty in Christ.

Depending upon our background of experience and education, and also upon our natural tempera-

ments, there are various requirements of the will of God which we may find grievous until we learn to love them. For example, the apostle admonishes, "Obey them that have the rule over you." (Heb. 13:17) This, of course, does not mean that a Christian is to render servile obedience to any human being, but it does indicate that in the properly constituted organization of the New Creation some are elected to be servants, and that these should be respected in proportion to their faithfulness to the LORD, to the truth, and to the brethren. Obedience to this admonition involves recognition of the LORD's arrangements for his people in connection with each local ecclesia or congregation. But this is not always pleasing to the flesh. We might be inclined to say, "I am free in Christ. I do not need to recognize the authority of any congregation of the LORD's people. I prefer to exercise my liberty in Christ and not to be tied down to any ecclesia." Such expressions are merely the reasonings of the fallen flesh, and to use the expression, "Liberty in Christ" as a justification for our own preferences is unwarranted, and a misnomer.

The apostle exhorts us to "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." (Heb. 10:24) If in obeying this admonition a brother exhorts us to be faithful along these lines, encouraging us to be zealous in laying down our lives in the service of God as an expression of our love for him, let us not resent it. Let us not try to justify our lack of zeal with the excuse that someone is trying to bring us into bondage by encouraging us to faithfulness in the Divine service. We would much rather conclude that there is nothing to be done, that all God expects of us is to study his Word and

attend meetings with a fair degree of regularity, exercising the spirit "of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7) by not going to meetings when we are too tired, or the weather is unfavorable. This, some may argue, is their liberty in Christ, hence they resent being reminded of their responsibilities toward God, and charge that someone is trying to bring them into bondage.

The proper exercise of love for the brethren in our association with them presents problems at times. Our love for the brethren is not, of course, based upon a personal liking for them. Nevertheless, through our association with the LORD's people precious friendships develop. These in themselves are not wrong unless we permit them to influence our judgment or our course of action with respect to the expressed will of God. Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus that some would arise in their own midst who would speak "perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:30) This has been true in every part of the age. It is true today, and when it occurs a test is presented to those involved.

In the church at Ephesus, for example, doubtless those who began to speak perverse things had become the special friends of many in the ecclesia, and therein was a test. If those who held steadfastly to the truth, and decided to exercise what they called their liberty in Christ, they might decide that it did not make much difference about the perverse things their friends were teaching. And even when these withdrew from the ecclesia and endeavored to draw others with them, these 'liberty loving' brethren might have decided that they would keep in touch with them—"just to show a good spirit". After

all, they might reason, Why should I be in bondage to the congregation? I am free in Christ to come and go as I please.

Such decision and such conduct on the part of any of the brethren in the ecclesia at Ephesus, regardless of how plausible it might have seemed, would have been acting in defiance of the clearly expressed will of God through his apostle. It is but natural to want to keep in touch with our friends. We love them, and dislike to give them up; but in reality, we injure them by a course of action that is contrary to the expressed will of God. It is very easy to injure our friends by encouraging them in the wrong course they have taken. The most effective way of reclaiming our brethren who have erred is to stay where we belong ourselves, and by our example of faithfulness beckon to them to return to the right way. It is a mistake to suppose that by going along with them to show a good spirit they will be helped. This merely encourages them in their wrongdoing.

The will of God in a matter of this kind is not pleasing to the flesh, and we may reason that our liberty is being circumscribed; but again let us remind ourselves that our liberty in Christ is liberty merely to do God's will—it is not liberty to follow our own inclinations when they run counter to the clearly discerned will and approval of God and his Christ. On this point we have an express command by the inspired apostle, a command that should be recognized as binding by every consecrated follower of the Master—"Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned: and avoid them."—Rom. 16:17

What does it mean to 'mark' them which cause divisions contrary to the doctrine? It certainly does not mean to brand them with a hot iron, or to persecute them, or to speak all manner of evil against them, falsely. But the least it can mean, nevertheless, is that we should not ignore their course of action, but rather take note of them, and of what they are doing, and where others are in danger of being misled by them, to sound a warning. Our love for the whole church demands that we 'mark' to this extent those who cause divisions.

And Paul adds that we should 'avoid' them. Surely this does not mean that if a brother has separated himself from our ecclesia, and is endeavoring to draw others after him, we should refuse to speak to him on the street, or cross over to the other side when we see him coming. But it would mean that we should avoid such a one to the extent that we would carefully refrain from giving any encouragement to the wrong course he is taking; or by our conduct lead others to believe that we think he is justified in what he is doing, and that probably the LORD is pleased with the course he is taking. To do or say anything which would even in the slightest degree bid Godspeed to a wrongdoer makes us equally guilty before God.—II John 10,11

I WILL EAT NO MEAT

A very illuminating illustration of the importance of restraining our personal preferences is the problem which existed in the Early Church with respect to eating meat which had been offered to idols. Those well developed in the truth knew that the meat had not been defiled by its being presented in sacrifice to an inanimate god, and they

felt at liberty to eat such meat. Probably it could be bought at bargain prices in the market, hence its use would be an economic advantage to those whose consciences would permit.

In this situation, nevertheless, was an excellent opportunity to restrain one's use of liberty. Here the rule of love superseded the exercise of liberty, as it so often does. Paul caught the spirit of the matter. He realized that if he ate meat which was offered to idols, brethren who thought it wrong to do so might be led to follow his example against their conscience, and thus their fortitude for doing right would be weakened. The apostle reasoned, therefore, that the exercise of his liberty might cause injury to his brethren, so he wrote, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth."—I Cor. 8:13

The law of God involved here is the one which calls for self-sacrificing interest on behalf of our brethren. This law, this restraining cord limiting the exercise of our personal liberty, will be found to apply in many situations with which we may be confronted from time to time. Even where there is no specific command of Scripture to explain the will of God in a given circumstance, this principle may well show us the course to take. How will my words, actions and attitude in this matter affect my brethren, particularly those who may be only recently in the way and who are not yet well grounded in the truth? The general welfare of the entire congregation including new members should constitute a rigid control on what we do, where we go, and what we say.

It is a mistaken notion of Christian liberty to suppose that we are free to do anything that we feel

reasonably certain will not endanger our own standing in the truth. As members of the body of Christ we are not free to say or do anything which even in the remotest degree may injure another member in the body. Our liberty must be restrained, or limited, to meet the viewpoint of the babes in Christ. Our flesh may rebel against such restraint, but as we learn to love God's will, we will rejoice in the privilege of curtailing our own liberties in order that others might be blessed.

EVERY THOUGHT INTO CAPTIVITY

Constant vigilance is necessary in order not to misuse our liberty to do God's will, which is our true liberty in Christ. Paul speaks of "casting down imaginations [*Margin* 'reasonings'], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (II Cor. 10:5) Surely an injunction of this kind should impress upon our hearts and minds the folly of supposing that as Christians we are not hedged about by restrictions. The only sense in which we can be truly free to do the things of our choice is by becoming so oriented to the will of God, that its every detail is a delight to our hearts.

So far as the mind of the flesh is concerned, we have no liberty, for our every thought is to be brought into captivity. As bond slaves of Jesus Christ we are to have no plans of our own that will in any measure run counter to the will of God. There is a broad latitude in this, however, provided we have learned to love his will. We are free to "add" to our "faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godli-

ness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity [love]." (II Pet. 1:5-7) We are free to lay down our lives for the brethren. (I John 3:16) We are free to hold forth the Word of life. (Phil. 2:16) We are free to let our light shine that others may have an opportunity to be blessed by the truth. (Matt. 5:16) We are free to use all our time and strength and means in the service of the LORD, the truth, and the brethren, up to the point where such service does not infringe on the rights of others toward whom we may have obligations.

We are free to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. (Jude 3) We are free to admonish the brethren to faithfulness in love and in good works. We are free to study the Bible in order that we may better understand the will of God. We are free to love the brethren and to manifest that love toward them within the limitations laid down for us in the Word of God. We are free to do good unto all men as we have opportunity, and especially unto the household of faith.—Gal. 6:10

We are not free to walk after the flesh. We are not free to speak or act in any way which may even remotely be injurious to our brethren. We are not free to render evil for evil, reviling for reviling. We are not free to separate ourselves from the brethren and endeavor thus to serve the LORD independently of our local ecclesia. We are not free to conclude that our judgment is superior to that of the ecclesia with which we are associated. We are not free to do as we please according to the preferences of our fallen flesh.

If and when we learn to love the will of God as we should, the only restraint we will find burdensome will be the hampering imperfections of the

flesh which prevent us from rendering that absolute obedience to the LORD in every detail for which our hearts long. In the resurrection we shall be delivered into that glorious liberty of the sons of God—glorious because we will then be able fully to render that absolute obedience which we are trying to do now. May the anticipation of that sublime future liberty spur us on now to greater faithfulness as slaves to our Master, even Christ. ■

“Go ye , . . and teach all nations.”—Matthew 28:19,20 “Songs in the Night” for September 26

SURELY HE WHO was careful to supervise the sowing work is not less interested and careful in respect to the reaping. Let us then thrust in the sickle of truth with energy and courage, remembering that we serve the Lord Christ, remembering that we are not responsible for the harvest, but merely for our energy in gathering what ripe ‘wheat’ we can find. If the labor be great for the finding of few grains of ripe wheat we are to rejoice the more in those we do find, and learn to love and appreciate the more that which is scarce and precious. Let us remember too, while using all the wisdom we can in this service, that the LORD’s object in giving us a share in his work is not so much what we can accomplish, as in the blessing that the labor will bring upon us. This will be an encouraging thought to the dear ones who are engaged in the ‘volunteer’ work. ■

“WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM”

II Corinthians 6:1

A STATE OF idleness anywhere in the great universe of God is contrary to Divine law. Of the Creator Jesus said, “My Father worketh hitherto,” then added, “and I work.” (John 5:17) Everything in nature, animate, and inanimate, has a function. Solomon said to idlers, “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.” (Prov. 6:6) Yes, the lowly ant works, the bee works—all creation works. Even the individual members of a body—the heart, the lungs, the stomach, the brain, the hands, etc.—they all work. When any member of a body fails to work, it becomes a handicap to the entire body, and affects other members of the body, even to the extent of causing death.

Those who become “new creatures” in Christ Jesus are no exception to this universal law of the Creator. (II Cor. 5:17) There is much said in the Scriptures concerning the work of a Christian. Paul

speaks of Christians as being a people “zealous of good works.” (Titus 2:14) In one of his parables, Jesus speaks of Christians as servants hired to work in a vineyard. (Matt. 20:1-16) Paul speaks of those “abounding in the work of the LORD,” and assures them that their labor will not be in vain. (I Cor. 15:58) This same apostle also speaks of the “work of faith, and labour of love.” (I Thess. 1:3) James reminds us that “faith, if it hath not works, is dead.” (James 2:17) In Revelation 2:26 a precious promise is given to those who overcome and who keep the LORD’s works unto the end.

WORK OF THE CHRISTIAN

The Apostle Paul admonishes us to work out our own salvation, and adds that God is working in us “both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:12,13) Here we have a suggestion of being coworkers with God—that we have a work in cooperation with what he is doing in and for us—‘workers together with him’. Herein is a fundamental difference between the natural functions of everything else in the material universe, and the work assigned to Christians as New Creatures in Christ; for ours is a new work, entirely different from anything else we ever did. It is God’s work, a work in which he has given us the privilege of participating. No wonder the apostle explains that “all things are become new.”—II Cor. 5:17,18

Yes, we are ‘coworkers’ with God. This is a thought that is almost beyond comprehension! We marvel, and properly so, when we think of the high honor that Jehovah bestowed upon his beloved Son, the *Logos*, (Spokesman for God), when he assigned to him the work of Creation. In this he was a coworker with God, for “without him was not any

thing made that was made.” (John 1:3) But he was the beloved Son of God, and always his Father’s delight. (Prov. 8:22-31) He was a powerful spirit being, next to the Creator himself. He had ability to do the work of God. With us it is so different, yet the grace of God has made it possible for us also to be co-workers with him. No wonder the apostle admonishes us not to receive this grace “in vain.”—II Cor. 6:1

And what is this work of God in which we have been invited to participate? Jesus explained, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” (John 6:29) Jesus does not here mean simply to believe that he came as the Christ of God. James declared that faith, or belief, if it has not works is dead. (James 2:17,18) A true belief in Jesus implies obedience to his teachings and a willingness to walk in his steps. True believers are disciples, and Jesus said, “If any man will come after me [be my disciple], let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”—Matt. 16:24

RANSOM PROVIDED

Jesus came to do the work of God. “I must work the works of him that sent me,” he declared. (John 9:4) Fundamentally, what was the work of God which Jesus came into the world to do? Paul answers, saying, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” (II Cor. 5:19) There would have been no occasion for the Logos to come into the world except for the fact that the human race had sinned and was alienated from God. The loving plan that God had made has a provision to redeem and restore as many as would accept his grace; and Jesus came to be the Redeemer, and the one through whom reconciliation would be made.

This, then, is the work of God on behalf of humanity. But can we have a part in that work? Did not Jesus die and 'pay it all'? Do not the Scriptures speak of the 'finished work' of Christ? (Rom. 9:28) It is true that the blood of Christ is sufficient to cleanse from all sin due to Adam's transgression. He is "the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (I John 2:2) However, to obtain life through Christ it is necessary to believe and to accept the provision of Divine grace that has been made through him; and Paul asks the question, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?"—Rom. 10:14

The answer to this question is obvious—they cannot. Hence, the apostle explains that our part in the great work of God, that work of reconciling the world through Christ, is in the fact that he has given to us the "ministry of reconciliation," a ministry that is accomplished through a faithful use of the "word of reconciliation." (II Cor. 5:18,19) The blood of Christ serves as a satisfaction for the sins of both the church now, and the world in God's kingdom; and as co-laborers with God in the work of reconciliation our work embraces both periods of time.

WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION

We are not to suppose, however, that our responsibilities as coworkers with God are fully discharged simply by ministering the word of salvation to others. In the Divine plan there is a wonderful goal set before us. It is described by Paul as the "prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14) Again, it is spoken of as a "heavenly calling." (Heb. 3:1) Much effort is needed in order to attain to this exalted position in the Divine

plan, and this is described by the apostle as 'working out our own salvation'.—Phil. 2:12,13

This is a reference to the "great salvation" which began to be spoken by our Lord, and was, as the apostle says, "confirmed unto us by them that heard him." (Heb. 2:3) Salvation from Adamic death is made possible through the finished work of Christ on Calvary. But the expression, 'great salvation', is descriptive of that high reward of 'glory and honor, and immortality' which is promised to the followers of Jesus who strive for it through "patient continuance in well doing."—Rom. 2:7

Our striving and our working for this great salvation is along the lines set forth in the Scriptures. We must endeavor to emulate Christ in our daily walk in life. We must seek to be kind and patient toward those who oppose us, and strive to put away self that the will of God may rule more supremely in our hearts and lives. We must seek to be filled with the Spirit of God that it may produce in us the fruitage of love in all its various aspects. And in all these efforts, God works with us. He encourages us with his promises, and guides us by his counsel. He warns us against dangers into which we might fall as our Adversary, the Devil, deceitfully sets his traps for us. Thus he works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

The matter of working out our own salvation should not be undertaken from a selfish standpoint. We cannot work out 'our own' salvation by ignoring the interests of others. The context indicates that this expression is intended merely to emphasize our own personal responsibility before the LORD, and that we cannot expect others to make our calling and election sure for us. It means that we must

individually lay hold upon the exceeding great and precious promises of the LORD, and to make personal use of all the means of grace which have been provided in order that we might gain the prize of the high calling. We can assist others, and they can help us, but the final responsibility of being faithful is our own. If we fail to attain that "great salvation," the fault will be ours, not someone else's—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."—Phil. 2:12

SERVANT OF ALL

Far from being a selfish undertaking, to work out our own salvation properly calls for a life of service to others. There is no surer way of losing the prize of the High Calling than to center attention chiefly upon ourselves. It is only as we forget self and plunge wholeheartedly into the Divinely appointed service to others in the great ministry of reconciliation that we can successfully work out our own salvation.

True, there is to be a work of grace in our own hearts and lives. We are to grow up into Christ in all things. Paul writes, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2:5) The mind of Christ was unselfish. It led the Master to humble himself and to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (vs. 8) In this we have a supreme demonstration of Divine love, a love that is willing to sacrifice all that others might be blessed. And this is the mind, the viewpoint, for which we are to strive. It is this willingness to sacrifice our own interests, our time, our comforts, our reputation, our everything, in order that others might come to know the LORD and be drawn closer

to him, that will make us “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”—Col. 1:12

If we focus attention merely upon ourselves, thinking thus to grow along spiritual lines, and to become more like Christ, we will be deceiving ourselves, for Jesus did not focus attention upon himself. He was exceedingly careful to do the work of God as it had been outlined for him in the Scriptures, but the work itself was for others, not for himself. And this is the example that we are to follow.

It is true that the present great objective of the Christian is to make his calling and election sure to joint-heirship with Jesus in his kingdom. Our present objective is not to convert the world, but to prove ourselves worthy of “glory and honour and immortality.” (Rom. 2:7) However, this cannot be done by concentrating on self and self-interests. It has been well said that love is the sum of all the Christian graces, and if we are filled with love our constant aim in life will be to bless others. If we can succeed in keeping self in the background, and concentrate our efforts on blessing others by conveying to them the ‘word of reconciliation’ in keeping with the work of God which has been assigned to us, the great prize of the High Calling will be ours.

To put the matter in other words, we might say that one of the best ways to work out our own salvation is to work for the reconciliation of others, to tell them the glorious Gospel of the kingdom and to assure them that if they come to God through Christ in repentance and full devotion to his will, they will have peace with him, and by faith will pass from death unto life. Some seem to have the mis-

taken thought that in order to serve others, it is necessary to take 'time off' from working out their own salvation. This is a serious error. Every time we make known the glad tidings to others, the truth becomes more powerful as a transforming influence in our own lives.

SATAN'S PLOY

The church at Thessalonica was very zealous in work for the LORD. In the space of the several weeks and months that Paul had preached the Gospel message to them before being driven away by persecution, they began to preach in Macedonia and Achaia in spite of the severe persecution they endured. (I Thess. 1:5-8) Paul mentions this zeal on their part, and that he and Silas and Timothy did not have to preach in these regions because they were so proficient in doing so.

But later there developed an evil among some of them, and some walked in a disorderly manner. (II Thess. 3:1-6) Satan is always on hand to confuse. Some thought that they did not have to work to support themselves, and took advantage of their brethren. Perhaps they may have felt that if they worked together with the LORD, he would provide their needs. Paul had to speak very plainly to these brethren and use his own work for the LORD as an example. He did not expect support from the brethren, but worked "night and day." (vss. 8,9) There were some that did not work at all, and were busybodies.—vs. 11

Paul had told them before, "If any would not work, neither should he eat." (vs. 10) To all the other brethren who were faithfully working together with the LORD, he gave these words of en-

couragement: "Be not weary in well doing." (vs. 13) Likewise we should strive to do with our might what our hands find to do and not be weary in well doing.

Truly, we have been called with a "High Calling," and in our partnership with God may we daily endeavor to be faithful as "workers together with him." It is a costly, but blessed partnership. The joy of the LORD and the peace of God are ours now, and the assurance of the Divine nature and joint-heirship with Christ later; for, if we are faithful in doing these things, an abundant entrance "shall be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—II Pet. 1:11 ■

"Be Ye Filled with the Spirit"
—Ephesians 5:18, Manna July 16

THE MEASURE OF our filling will correspond with the measure of our emptying of the spirit of self-will, and filling with the spirit of faith and obedience. And although the obedience cannot do otherwise than manifest itself in the daily life, nevertheless it is the obedience of the intention, of the will, of the heart, that the LORD regards in his consecrated people. Hence some whose hearts are thoroughly loyal to the LORD may be pleasing to him, while not the most pleasing to some of those with whom they come in contact; while others, "highly esteemed among men" because of outward moralities, may be an abomination in the sight of God because of coldness or dishonesty of heart. Nevertheless, he that hath the new hope in him, and the new spirit, will seek to purify himself, not only in his thoughts, but also in his words and deeds and all his affairs. inward and outward. ■

TALKING THINGS OVER

General Convention Bulletin

July 25–30, 1998 Johnstown, Pennsylvania

ALTHOUGH THIS year's General Convention is almost here, it is still not too late to make plans for attending. You will have an opportunity to enjoy six days of fellowship with several hundred brethren, as well as hear many messages from God's storehouse of truth.

We realize that as the days in which we live become more filled with turmoil and distress in the world around us, the more we all need to take advantage of the privileges we have of "Not forsaking the assembling or ourselves together . . ." (Heb. 10:25) The benefits to be derived from attending this year's General Convention will far outweigh the sacrifice and effort put forth to be there, and since none of us know whether the Lord's providence will permit us to attend in future years, we should not wait, but make plans for 1998 now!

If you are just now making the decision to attend this year's convention, registration forms and pricing information are available in prior month's issues of the Dawn (see March and May, 1998). You may write, phone or e-mail your registration to: General Convention Registration, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272; e-mail to Nekora@aol.com or phone (310) 454-5248. Time is running out, so don't wait any longer. Register today for the 1998 General Convention, and we are certain you will not be disappointed!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

PREDESTINATION

QUESTION: As a child I heard my parents discuss the doctrine of 'Predestination'. My father, a Presbyterian, believed it; my mother, a Methodist, did not. I have often wondered which one was right. Today, no one seems to know much about this doctrine. In your opinion, does the Bible teach 'Predestination'?

ANSWER: Yes, we understand the doctrine of predestination is taught in the Scriptures. This doctrine has been the cause of a great deal of controversy among religionists, but if we observe the law of order in "rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15) on this subject we should have no difficulty in learning what the Bible teaches concerning it.

That which is known as the "Calvinistic" view of predestination we believe to be unscriptural. It holds that it is because "God is all wise, that he knows the end from the beginning and all his purposes will be accomplished; that there are only a very few being saved compared with the many who are not; therefore, he never could have intended to save more than a few." The Calvinists teach that "these few individuals are saved because God has elected or predestinated them for heaven. All others have been predestinated to be lost and go to a hell of eternal torment, for 'known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world'."—Acts 15:18

We disagree with this view because justice, love and mercy are lacking in this conception of our Heavenly Father's plan. It does seem inconceivable

that a God of love would have a plan wherein the majority of his creatures are damned to everlasting torment even before they are born.

The foreknowledge of God cannot be denied. See: Acts 2:23 and I Peter 1:2. God's plan of salvation was known to him "before the foundation of the world." (Eph. 1:4,5) In this plan, the election or choice of the church had been predetermined on God's part—not as an unconditional election of certain individuals, but rather, he predestinated that there would be a church class: that some would be given special favor and, through becoming copies of his Son, would be accepted into the spiritual family of God as joint-heirs with their Lord. (Rom. 8:16,17,29,30) This class, or family was predestinated, not necessarily the individuals.

Those who will be of that favored class must exercise their own volition as free moral agents in choosing the way of salvation. They, as individuals, must consecrate themselves to God to do his will. Peter assures us in these words: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. . . . 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."—II Pet. 1:4,10,11

"Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. 8:29) This text emphasizes that the fore-

knowledge of God predestinated a class to be conformed to the image of his Son. The election, or selection, of the individuals who will constitute this class has been in progress during the Gospel Age, for they are the true disciples who are willing to deny themselves, and take up their cross, and follow him.—Matt. 16:24

We believe many have made the mistake of believing that all the non-elect will be damned to eternal torment. This is not so! The election of the church during this age is for a purpose. They will live and reign with Christ a thousand years, during which Christ's kingdom will cause God's will to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. The grace of God will then extend freely to the non-elect of this age; and his plan to bless all the families of the earth will be accomplished, for Christ died for all, not merely for a few.

How marvelous and beautiful is the Bible message. How unreasonable is Dark Age Theology! ■

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

BEST LITERATURE!

Dawn Publications: Enclosed is money order for literature. Please send me another catalog. How I love the Dawn publications! The best literature I have ever read! It helps me understand the Bible as only

you have been able to help me. God bless you in your wonderful work. In Christ's name. —NM

TO BE A BETTER WORKER FOR CHRIST

I just want to thank the Dawn for helping me understand the Bible so much better than I ever

had on my own. I read all books that I get from Dawn along with my Bible as I study to prove myself a better worker for Christ. Thanks a million times! —MS

REQUESTS A REPLACEMENT DAWN

Dear Dawn Brethren: Several weeks ago, I took the February issue of *The Dawn* with me when I drove my school bus run, and I believe I left it on the bus at the end of the day. Is it possible to obtain another copy? Would be appreciated, as I didn't finish reading it. Thank you. I have enclosed 25 cents in case you can send me the extra issue. Thank you.—CT

FROM TRINIDAD

Greeting from Tacaryua in Trinidad. Many thanks for your copies of "*Book of Books*," which I received in good condition. Please permit me to express my special pleasure for the opportunity of your wonderful

and very educational reading re Biblical subject matter. I want to express my sincere thanks also to Messrs. "*Frank and Ernest*," as listening to their broadcast over NBS on Sunday nights I was able to contact Dawn, thereby supplying me with sessions of pleasant, exciting reading of the Scriptures.

As a continued result I respectfully submit this order for copies of some of your publications. I enclose fifteen dollars U.S. to cover cost. Again, many thanks indeed. Yours very truly.—*West Indies*

FROM PAKISTAN

Please send me the free copies of the booklets, "*Hope Beyond the Grave*," and "*God and Reason*." Please also write me how I can get a copy of "*The Divine Plan of the Ages*," either by bank draft, pay order, money order, or any other method of service?—*Pakistan* ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

Sid Jones		F. Nemesh	
Los Angeles, CA	July 3-5	Seattle, WA	July 1
Vernon, B.C. Canada	11-12	Gig Harbor, WA	2
Julius Panucci		Duncan, B.C. Canada	4,5
North Brookfield	July 19	Vancouver, B.C. Canada	8
		Vernon, B.C. Canada	11,12

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

A. Allers		W. Harp	
Los Angeles, CA	July 4-6	Clay City, IN	July 18
R. Goodman		J.R. Shahan	
St. Augustine, FL	July 12	Middletown, NY	July 12
R. Gorecki		G. Passios	
Cincinnati, OH	July 12	Vernon, B.C. Canada	July 10-12

CONVENTIONS

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

**LOS ANGELES, CA,
BIBLE STUDENTS
July 3,4,5—**Claremont
McKenna College, Claremont, CA. Contact: Robert Wagoner, 901 North Westwood, Santa Ana, CA 92703,
Phone: (714) 542-8466

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

OKANAGAN BIBLE STUDENTS CONVENTION, July 10-12—Eagles Hall, 5101 25th Avenue, Vernon, B.C. V1B 3K8. For information or reservations, contact A. Fernets.

Phone: (250) 558-3055

1998 BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 25-30—University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, PA. See Page 58 for information.

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

NEW YORK BIBLE STUDENTS, NY, LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 4-6—Ramada Inn, Two Bridges Rd. & Exit 52—Route 80, Fairfield, NJ. *A meal count is needed before August 20th.*

Contact for reservations and information: Mrs. A.T. Lange, 76 Longview, White Plains, NY 10605
Phone: (914) 948-5428

JACKSON BIBLE STUDENTS, MI, LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 5, 6, 7—Holiday Inn, I-94 at 127 North, Jackson. A meal count is needed *before August 20*. Contact:

Mrs. Ray Lumley, 2531 Ashton Rd., Jackson 49203 for reservations.
Phone: (517) 782-7252

SEATTLE, WA, LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 5-7

—Bastyr University, 14500 Juanita Dr., N.E. Bothell, WA. Exceptional room rates @ \$10 per person, per night, on campus. For information contact: Ginger Brann, Secy. Phone: (425) 353-8983, or e-mail at Brannx@aol.com; or D. Bruce, Phone: (425) 821-3813 or e-mail at Bruce1874@aol.com

HUNTSVILLE, AL, September 18, 19, 20—Holiday Inn Research Park, 5903 University Drive. Reservations: (800) 845-7275. Mention 'HBS Block' for reduced rate. Contact Sandy Cothren for information: Phone: (256) 551-0696

FREDRICKSBURG NORTH, VA, September 26, 27—Holiday Inn, 564 Warrenton Rd., Fredericksburg. Reservations: Mrs. Helen Earl, 2613 Hughes Rd., Adelphi, MD 20783. *Cutoff September 11.*

Phone: (301) 434-8480