

The background of the cover is a photograph of a valley at dawn. The sky is filled with soft, white and light blue clouds, with a bright glow of light breaking through on the right side, suggesting the sun is rising. The mountains are silhouetted against the light sky, and the valley floor is a mix of green and brown, indicating a natural landscape.

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Cloning: New Age of Biological Advancements

“God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”
—Genesis 1:26,27

THE MOST MOMENTOUS event in the recorded history of mankind centers around the simplistic scriptural account of the creation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We learn firsthand that our first parents were created in the very image of the great God of the universe, and that the reference to ‘us’ points to the fact that the *Logos* was also on hand to share in the wondrous plans of his Heavenly Father on that most blessed occasion. “The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made

by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”—John 1:2,3

The original Old Testament Hebrew from which our English word ‘image’ has been translated points to Adam’s likeness and resemblance to God. Its literal meaning is ‘to shadow forth.’ The same word is also used in connection with the birth of Adam’s son, Seth. “Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.”—Gen. 5:3

ADAM’S COVENANT WITH GOD

God’s law was written in Adam’s heart, thereby establishing a covenant relationship between the Heavenly Father and his earthly child. Adam was perfect mentally and morally as a human being, and was provided with similar powers of reasoning, as well as judgment, will, and memory. As a perfect man, he also possessed the moral faculties of justice, love, and benevolence. He was thus endowed with fleshly qualities that placed him in a suitable position to have dominion over the whole lower earthly creation.

COVENANT RELATIONSHIP BROKEN

Man’s part of the obligation and covenant relationship with God was to obey his Creator’s will. This was the least thing that could be expected from him to show forth his love and appreciation for his very existence, and the manifold blessings of life which had been so lovingly bestowed upon him. God’s part of the covenant was his continuing promise to extend man’s life, but, when our first parents violated his laws, that blessed relationship was broken. God was not bound to continue Adam’s

life after that relationship had been severed. “Like Adam they have transgressed the covenant.” (Hos. 6:7, *New American Standard Version*) As sin, violence, and corruption rapidly increased, man’s life spiraled downward as he began to experience alienation from his loving Creator.

GIANTS IN THE EARTH

“It came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”—Gen. 6:1-4

Some of these materialized angels, spiritual sons of God, were given the privilege to supervise mankind prior to the flood with the opportunity to assist and encourage fallen mankind in his present state of condemnation. Satan perhaps saw an opportunity to circumvent God’s righteous judgments and produce a new race of men of great physical vitality and mental powers. These angels became the fathers of a new and distinct race, ‘men of renown.’

The children of this unauthorized relationship between angelic beings and the daughters of men, had been grafted upon the condemned offspring of Adam. They were therefore a hybrid race of men. This was in total violation of the Divine will, and

they were thereafter restrained from ever assuming physical bodies again, and were isolated from God's other holy angels. Their illicit progeny were destroyed in the flood of Noah's day.

NEW RESEARCH TO IMPROVE LIFE

In recent years, scientists in various parts of the world have been involved in research that has the potential to alter human health, life, and life spans. New advancements in biological studies are now underway, and are contributing to further development through the use of modern technology that has even newer, and more unlimited, potential. During the last decade alone, researchers who were looking for improved methods to treat illness and injury in humans, unexpectedly stumbled upon startling techniques that can enhance the quality of life in certain animal species which have been under study. They are now finding advanced and improved ways to make these animals stronger, faster, smarter, and having longer life spans.

Scientists are now on the verge of applying this newfound knowledge to men and women. Researchers, who were looking for ways to cure Alzheimer's disease, in 1999 genetically engineered a strain of mice that can learn things five times more quickly than can normal mice. This same research that could cure Alzheimer's is also leading to the use of drugs and genetic techniques that have the potential to increase human intelligence. Further to this are recent methods being developed that will prevent heart disease and cancer, but also with the greater potential to halt, or even reverse, the aging process in human beings.

MORE THAN HUMAN

Ramez Naam is the author of a recent book entitled *More Than Human*, with the subtitle “Embracing the Promise of Biological Enhancement.” A *Los Angeles Times* review of his book says that his study is “A terrific survey of current work and future possibilities in gene therapy, neurotechnology, and other fields.” As recently as 1990, an American researcher discovered that by changing a single gene it is possible to double the life of a tiny nematode worm. The review of *More Than Human* continues by pointing out that Naam’s study “is about our growing power to alter minds, bodies, and life-spans through technology—a power we can choose to fear, or to embrace.” The questions being asked, therefore, are “How will these technologies affect society? What will they do to the economy, to politics, and to human identity? What social policies should we enact to regulate, restrict, or encourage the use of these technologies?” The future is uncertain as to how these questions will be addressed.

“The most widely feared and denounced genetic technology is reproductive cloning—the production of a human baby with genes copied from another person. Researchers have cloned sheep, cows, and monkeys, and dubious claims have been made that humans have been cloned. Whether that has happened yet or not, the fundamental technology exists, and the claims have aroused public fears. Human cloning has been almost uniformly denounced as morally repugnant. Leon Kass, chairman of the President’s Council on Bioethics (PCBE), describes

human cloning as a ‘threat to the dignity of human procreation and a first step toward a eugenic world in which children become objects of manipulation and products of will.’ Virtually every political leader in every country is publically opposed to cloned babies.”

U.N. ADDRESSES CLONING ISSUE

The *U.N. News Centre* addressed the growing and widespread concerns about cloning in its report (March 25, 2005) under the heading: “General Assembly Approves Declaration Banning all Forms of Cloning.” The report said: “The United Nations General Assembly today (March 8, 2005) approved a non-binding declaration calling on all U.N. member States to ban all forms of human cloning, including cloning for medical treatment, as incompatible with human dignity and the protection of human life. By a vote of 84 in favor, 34 against, and 37 abstaining, with 36 absent, the Assembly acted on the recommendation of its Legal, or Sixth Committee to adopt the text, called *The United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning*. But some delegates said they opposed banning therapeutic cloning. The Declaration, negotiated by a Working Group last month, also banned genetic engineering techniques that may be contrary to human dignity. It called on States to prevent the exploitation of women in the application of life sciences and to protect adequately human life in the application of life sciences. Those who voted for the Declaration welcomed it as a clear expression of the ethical norms that should guide scientific research.”

U.N. DIVIDED ON CLONING ISSUE

United Nations diplomats failed to reach agreement on a nonbinding declaration that would encourage governments to adopt laws on human cloning. It was hoped that those on both sides of the issue could find an acceptable approach to stem-cell research. The lack of consensus within the United Nations General Assembly's legal committee emphasizes the difficulty in adopting the panel's recommendations. Advocates of stem-cell studies were anxiously waiting for the General Assembly's decision on the matter.

POSITIONS OF MEMBER STATES

The United States voted for the Declaration and said it supported a total ban on human cloning. Their position, however, does not prohibit the development of cell and tissue therapies that involve cloning technology to produce DNA molecules, organs, plants, tissues, or cells and animals other than human embryos. They believe that other nations should also actively pursue potential medical and scientific benefits which have enabled researchers to develop innovative treatment for disease.

The South Africa delegation, which abstained from voting, said it believed that therapeutic cloning should be directed at protecting human life, and that it would continue to support these methods. Great Britain voted against the Declaration by saying that the General Assembly had missed an opportunity to prohibit reproductive cloning because of the unwillingness on the part of some States to compromise, and to permit controlled applications of therapeutic cloning. China voted against the

Declaration and said the prohibitions in the text could be misunderstood as covering all forms of cloning. Russia, France, and India regretted that there had been no consensus on banning reproductive cloning, but wanted to keep their options open on the whole question of therapeutic cloning.

THE HARVARD DEBATE

Gareth Cook, in a news item “Harvard Provost OK’s Procedure,” which appeared in the *Boston Globe* (March 20, 2005), said: “A top Harvard University official has approved the cloning of human cells to make embryonic stem cells, bringing scientists here closer to launching an audacious—and controversial—effort to battle juvenile diabetes, Parkinson’s disease, and other maladies in powerful new ways.

“The Harvard project, which Governor Mitt Romney and others have attacked on ethical grounds, cannot proceed until a university committee finalizes a protocol for protecting the volunteers who will provide the cells. But Dr. Steven E. Hyman, Harvard provost, said that after more than a year of review, the university has concluded that the work is ethically sound and scientifically important. This research holds the promise of important benefits for the understanding and treatment of serious human diseases. Hyman said he wanted to see the science progress within acceptable ethical boundaries.

“The project comes at a crucial time, when the Massachusetts government is considering new stem-cell legislation and some, including Romney, are seeking to outlaw the very research Harvard

plans to do. If Romney fails and the Harvard team, led by Kevin Eggan and Douglas Melton, begins the experiments, it will be the only active group at an American university, and one of only a handful in the world. The approval, which was quietly given in January, also puts the Harvard name solidly behind the cloning of human cells, which will probably encourage other U. S. scientists to follow their lead, and sharpen the national debate.”

REGENERATIVE MEDICINES

An enlightening article, “A Bright Hope to be Realized” was written by Mortimer Zuckerman, and appeared in *U.S. News & World Report* (January 3, 2005). He said: “Something like a hundred million Americans suffering from disease and the incubus of age hold out hope that relief may come one day from regenerative medicine, meaning that science may be able to reprogram the human body so that it can heal itself and impede many of the symptoms of senescence. The promise lies in the so-called stem cells.

“Three years ago, President Bush announced that only pre-2001 embryonic stem-cell lines could be used in federally funded research. There were enough of these lines, more than 60, the President said, for adequate research purposes. The plan, as many had suspected at the time, has not worked.

“Some 70 percent of all Americans supported stem-cell research. California voters just approved a \$3 billion, 10-year research program. Other states are likely to follow. But this isn’t the best solution. States simply cannot muster and focus the resources to repeat the great successes of American science

and medicine. Reliance on sporadic state-by-state initiatives in stem-cell research simply will not guarantee that the best proposals will be identified and funded.

“A national stem-cell program could organize teams to tackle complex problems and avoid duplication; evaluate diseases most susceptible to attack; ensure that research findings are transparent; establish ethical guidelines for the use of human tissues in research; and, finally, decide at what point treatments could progress to human trials.

“The real question, then, is how to amend the Bush policy in a way that might be acceptable to all. Some 58 senators now seek a change in the Bush policy, including 14 Republicans. ‘There is no greater way to promote life,’ says Utah’s Orrin Hatch, ‘than to find a way to defeat death, and stem-cell research may provide a way to do that.’”

JESUS’ BLOOD NECESSARY

Fallen man’s most aggressive attempts to promote life, and to defeat death, by stem-cell research, or any other effort, will never restore the human race to the perfect life Adam had in the Garden of Eden. Because of his sin and disobedience to Divine law, Adam was sentenced to death. Man is unable to help himself from the ravages of sin, sickness, and disease that will end in the grave. They needed a savior, and God provided his own Son, who willingly left his spirit nature to become a perfect man to die for the sins of Adam, thus fulfilling this feature of God’s plan of reconciliation for the sins of the world.

SPRINGS OF LIVING WATER

Jesus used the powerful symbol of water to illustrate his future program that would provide everlasting life for the whole human race. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."—John. 4:14

Job pointed down the stream of time to indicate that a provision for deliverance from death would be made possible through a ransom price. It would ultimately result in man's coming back from the condition of death and to one in which he would return to the days of his youth. "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom [*Marginal Translation*, an atonement]. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth."—Job 33:24,25

Isaiah provides us with a prophetic sketch of this inspiring scene, and the marvelous effects that this provision from the death sentence will have for the world. The times of restitution will make these blessings available during Christ's thousand-year kingdom. "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water."—Isa. 35:5-7

THE DEAD ARISE

One of the grandest features of the kingdom of Christ will be the foretold resurrection of all the

dead who have ever lived. Jesus explained this particular role of his kingdom reign when he said, “Wonder not at this; Because an hour comes in which all those in the tombs will hear his voice, and will come forth; those having done good things, to a resurrection of life; and those having done evil things, to a resurrection of judgment.”—John 5:28,29, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Medical science has made tremendous achievements toward the treatment of disease and the alleviation of suffering among mankind. They are to be commended for their untiring work. Many have devoted their lives toward research endeavors and have spent years in following through on difficult projects. Some have become discouraged at the amount of time necessary to realize significant results.

Students of the Bible continue to pray for the soon establishment of Christ’s kingdom as the only true and long-lasting answer for the sin-sick and dying human family. Let us continue to look forward to that time when all the families of the earth will be blessed by our Lord Jesus and his administration of righteousness over the world. ■



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Faithful Servant

Key Verse: **STEPHEN WAS ONE OF**
*“Stephen, full of
faith and power,
did great wonders
and miracles
among the people.”*
—Acts 6:8

Selected Scripture:
Acts 6:8-15; 7:53-60
seven chosen to be a deacon, a servant, chosen to do servile work in the church, one rendering free service without particular reference to its character. Of Stephen we are told, he was a man ‘full of faith and power.’ During this early time, the deacons were empowered to do wonders and miracles among the people they were ministering to.

The first authentic account we have of Stephen is in Acts 6:5. In the distribution of the common fund that was entrusted to the apostles for the support of the poorer brethren, the Hellenists complained that partiality was shown to the natives of Palestine and that their own widows were neglected. The apostles took measures immediately to remove the cause of the complaint. Unwilling themselves to be taken from the work of the ministry, they advised the church to select seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, for this business. (vs. 3) The brethren proceeded immediately to select the prescribed number, among whom Stephen is first mentioned. The newly elected deacons were brought to the apostles, who ordained them to their work. (vs. 6) From the first, Stephen occupied a prominent position.

We find that, in the early days, deacons did much more than wait on tables and take care of the widows. They also did evangelistic work. In Acts 6:9, we find those of the synagogue called Libertines (Freedmen), perhaps freed Roman slaves who built their own temple. These, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians were disputing God's Word with Stephen, but these were not able to resist the wisdom and Spirit by which Stephen spoke.

We read in Luke 21:15, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." Those who truly have faith and trust in God's wisdom will always be able to claim this text.

As the Adversary will often do, he found men who would stir up the people by saying that Stephen had blasphemed Moses and God. (Acts 6:11) These set up false witnesses, claiming Stephen was speaking against the synagogue and against the Law. They brought him before the council, accusing him of saying that "Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place" and "change the customs" brought by Moses. Those there saw Stephen's face "as it had been the face of an angel."—vss. 14,15

Stephen next gives his audience a brief outline of the plan of the ages, beginning with Abraham and ending with the condemnation of the Jews for killing the "Just One."—chap. 7:1-52

The Truth proclaimed in God's Word often causes persecution. Stephen's holding to the Truth of God's Word caused his death. Even during his stoning Stephen prayed for those who were stoning him saying, "Lay not this sin to their charge."—vs. 60

Persecution and even death are the concomitants of the life of a Christian. (Matt. 10:16-19,22,24,25) "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10) Let us emulate that faithful servant of the Lord! ■

Christians without Borders

Key Verse: “When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John.”

—Acts 8:14

Selected Scripture:
Acts 8:4-25

PHILIP, ALONG WITH STEPHEN and five others, were chosen as deacons. As there were many Philips mentioned in the Scriptures, we need to identify this Philip of Acts, chapter six, as an evangelist. Besides the fulfilling of the duties of serving tables and watching over the widows, these deacons had broad powers in witnessing and performing miracles. (chap. 8:6,7) These miracles were to cease, and in the main did, after the death of the apostles. (I Cor. 13:8) After the death of Stephen, Philip went to Samaria where he preached Christ to those of that area. We read that he cast out unclean spirits, cured those stricken with palsies, and healed those who were lame.

We find the deacons' duties outlined in I Timothy 3:8-13. As opportunities arose, they would also preach the Gospel and be helpers to the elders. Timothy outlines that an elder should be “apt to teach” (vs. 2), while a deacon's responsibilities lie in learning and being a good example. “They that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing.”—vs. 13, *American Standard Version*

In Acts 8, we find a man called Simon practicing sorcery and bewitching the people, saying that he was someone great. The people had given this man heed, saying his power was from God. After Philip preached to those in Samaria they believed concerning the kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ. Many were baptized both men and women. (Acts 8:12) Simon also believed and was baptized; however, we find that Simon's heart was not right.

After the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John who prayed that the people might receive the Holy Spirit. (vs. 15) Up to this time none had received the Spirit. Simon saw what was happening, and coveted this power that had been give to the apostles, and offered them money. Peter said to Simon, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."—vs. 20

Today, the Holy Spirit is not given by the laying on of hands but through a full consecration and a laying down of life itself as Christ laid down his life.—Rom. 12:1,2; 8:9-11,14-16; Matt. 16:24,25

Peter pointed out to Simon that he must repent and pray to God that the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven. (Acts 8:22) Peter could see that Simon's heart was wrong and that he only wanted the power of the apostles to make himself someone to be looked up to. Mark 7:21 reads, "From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts." Simon only wanted exaltation and power to sway the people. Satan is very busy trying to deceive the hearts of God's people. Paul tells us regarding Satan, "We are not ignorant of his devices."—II Cor. 2:11

We find that Simon didn't pray to God to be forgiven but asked the apostles to do it for him. This again showed a wrong heart condition. After this the Word of God was preached in many villages of the Samaritans.—Acts 8:25 ■

Interpreting the Word

Key Verse: “*Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*”
—Acts 8:35

Selected Scripture:
Acts 8:26-40

PHILIP HAD BEEN IN-structed by an angel to take the road that goes south from Jerusalem toward Gaza. It was the Holy Spirit that guided the apostles and evangelists like Philip—the power from God that energizes the mind. Whether the angel had told Philip whom to look for is not indicated. The important thing was that Philip obeyed the angel, not debating whether his life would be in danger by taking a wilderness road. “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”—I Sam. 15:22

Philip obeyed the angel and came upon an Ethiopian eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of Ethiopia, reading God’s Word. It was here that the Spirit told Philip to stop the chariot and introduce himself to the eunuch. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The eunuch was reading from the book of Isaiah, “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” (chap. 53:7) This is one of the Messianic prophecies. The problem was that the eunuch was reading but not understanding. The Scriptures tell us the method God uses to help those seeking him to understand his Word. We read, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have

not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”—Rom. 10:14,15

For those who are truly seeking, God will open a way for them. “Seek, and ye shall find.” (Matt. 7:7) Philip was given the opportunity to help the Ethiopian eunuch to understand the scripture regarding the suffering of Christ. Evidently the eunuch knew about baptism, for he had heard of John the Baptist and his work of baptizing for the remission of sins.—Matt. 3:6,11

John explained that his baptism was for repentance for sins against the Law, but that Jesus’ baptism would be with the Holy Spirit and with fire, symbolic of trouble that was to come upon the Jewish nation, and eventually upon all Gentiles to be called into the body of Christ.—I Pet. 4:12,13

As they were traveling they came upon a body of water and the eunuch asked Philip if he could be baptized. (vs. 36) There was no hesitation. The chariot stopped and the eunuch was baptized. The Apostle Paul explains the real meaning of baptism, when he says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—Rom. 12:1,2

Full consecration, baptism, and Spirit begetting are the ways to a new life in Christ. Laying down of life as the Apostle Paul urges in the Book of Romans is to follow in the steps of Christ. Romans 6:3 says, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” ■

Breaking the Gospel Barriers

Key Verse: “*While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.*”
—Acts 10:19,20

Selected Scripture:
Acts 10:1-48

OUR LESSON FOR TODAY

revolves around the call of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert. God gave Peter a vision of a great sheet knit on all four corners. This sheet held all manner of unclean beasts, creeping things, and birds. Peter heard a voice telling him to “kill, and eat.” (Acts 10:11-13) Peter was hesitant and declined, saying he was not allowed to eat any common or unclean thing. The Law was very clear on this, saying they were not even to touch any unclean things.

God then tells Peter not to call anything unclean that he had cleansed; the Law had come to an end. The nation of Israel, to whom all of God’s promises pertained (Rom. 9:4), had proven unfaithful.—Matt. 23:37,38

God had heard the prayers of a righteous Gentile and was bringing him into the body of Christ. (Acts 15:14) Peter did not understand the meaning of the sheet until three men came to his house. The Holy Spirit indicated to Peter that he should go with the

men and not to doubt. (chap. 10:20) Peter spoke with the men asking them where they were from and what they wanted of him. The men told Peter about Cornelius; that he was a just man, one who revered God and one who had a good report of the Jews. They asked Peter to accompany them to the house of Cornelius. The three men told Peter that Cornelius had heard through an angel of God to send for Peter.—vs. 22

After arriving in Caesarea, they found Cornelius waiting for them. Cornelius had called his family and friends and fell down at the feet of Peter. Peter immediately told Cornelius to stand up, that he was just a man like Cornelius. (vs. 26) In this we find a lesson of humility. Peter indicated that he was just being used by God as a finger to point one to God. All of God's people are to be "clothed with humility" (I Pet. 5:5), not to call attention to themselves but to God.

Peter tells Cornelius how it had been unlawful for a Jew to keep company with a Gentile, but that now God revealed to his mind not to call anyone common, or unclean. (Acts 10:28) Cornelius explained to Peter how a man in bright clothing had appeared to him and told him that his prayers had come in remembrance before God. Now the time had arrived for the Gentiles to come into the body of Christ.—vs. 31

Peter understood and said, "God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him [reverences him], and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (vss. 34,35) Next, Peter recalls how God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and gave him power to go about doing good, and how God chooses certain ones to be witnesses of his Word. While Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all in the house.

Even the Jews that came with Peter were astonished at what was happening, seeing that even Gentiles received the Spirit and spoke in tongues. Peter then called for those who believed to be baptized. ■

Never Alone

Key Verse: “Behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.”
—Acts 12:7

Selected Scripture:
Acts 12:1-17

of prayer. We are told, “Pray without ceasing” (I Thess. 5:17)—that is, keep up our prayers, always looking for an answer. Again, “The effectual [active, powerful] fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James 5:16) Christians find that prayer is a lifeline between themselves and God. Again we are told, “Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all [human] understanding will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 4:6,7, *Revised Standard Version*

AT THE TIME OF OUR LESSON the church was receiving much persecution. Herod Agrippa, son of Herod the great, killed James the brother of John, and because it pleased the Jews, put Peter in prison. Four quaternion of soldiers were dispatched to keep watch over him. A quaternion is a squad of four soldiers each. This means sixteen soldiers were watching over Peter in the prison.—Acts 12:4

Prayer was made by the church for the safety of Peter. How important is this matter

With this in mind we find the Holy Spirit intervening in the life of Peter. Peter was asleep in the prison, bound with chains between two soldiers. In this we see that Herod wanted to make sure that Peter would not get away. Besides the two soldiers on each side of Peter, two more were at the door of the prison.—Acts 12:6

At this time of the night, an angel of God came into the prison. A light shined forth, the angel smote Peter on his side awakening him, raising him up and saying, ‘Arise up quickly.’ His chains fell off from his hands. The angel then told him to put on his sandals, put a garment around himself, and to follow him.—vss. 7,8

In this account we see how important it is to follow instructions. Get up, put on your shoes, take your garment and follow. “Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.” (Prov. 8:33) Again, “Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.”—chap. 23:12

Peter was obedient, not hesitating. Thinking he was dreaming, he followed the angel’s instructions and went past the first and second wards. It seemed like a dream to Peter to go past all the guards without being seen. Now he comes to an iron gate leading out of the prison into the city. This gate opened by itself—another miracle. Through all this we trace the overruling of Almighty God. Prayer by the brethren was being answered. Peter now knew of a surety that God had sent his angel to deliver him out of King Herod’s hands.

Peter came to the home of Mary, John Mark’s mother, where many were gathered in prayer. Knocking on the door, a damsel named Rhoda answered. Knowing Peter’s voice she was afraid to answer the door. Rhoda went and told those in the home but they believed not. Finally, they opened the door letting Peter in. He told them his story and said to tell James and the brethren. Prayer is a mighty tool in the life of a Christian. ■

Filled with the Spirit

“Be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

—*Ephesians 5:18,19*

THE EXPRESSION, ‘FILLED with the Spirit,’ is used a number of times in the New Testament, but not always with the same meaning. It was first spoken by an angel in a proclamation to Zacharias concerning his wife Elizabeth, assuring him that in answer to his prayer she

would bear a son, and that his name should be called John. The angel further said, “Thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.” (Luke 1:14-16) Here the thought simply is that John the Baptist would be endowed with God’s power and blessing to enable him to accomplish a special work of reformation in Israel.

In Luke 1:41, we are told that when Mary, the mother of Jesus, visited Elizabeth and heard her salutation, “the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.” This denotes Elizabeth’s great rejoicing over the miraculous events that were occurring in connection with herself and Mary. The Spirit, or power of God, was being exercised through both these women, and to their great joy.

Luke 1:67 informs us that Zacharias was “filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied.” Here is a work of the Holy Spirit similar to what occurred during Old Testament times, when the prophets “spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (II Pet. 1:21) Zacharias was undoubtedly happily in harmony with Truth and enthusiastic over the prophecy that the Holy Spirit enabled him to utter, but the Spirit did not beget him to a new life, neither did it fill him with the fruits of righteousness.

In John 3:34, it is said concerning Jesus, “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” This surely implies that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit. He was so filled, and so overwhelmingly controlled in his every thought, word and deed, that everything he said, and every act of his consecrated, Spirit-filled life, expressed the mind or will of his Father who sent him. Jesus’ filling with the Spirit occurred at Jordan, although even before this there was a certain preparation, in that he doubtless had acquainted himself well with the Spirit-inspired testimony contained in the “volume of the book”—that is, the Old Testament Scriptures.—Ps. 40:7

As we have noted in a previous article, the Spirit of God came upon Jesus as a miraculous revealing power, enabling him to understand the meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Spirit which filled Jesus' life empowered him to perform miracles—to cast out devils, open blind eyes, cleanse lepers, heal the sick, and raise the dead. Not all the Lord's followers may expect to be filled with the Spirit in this sense.

When the promise to send the Holy Spirit was fulfilled at Pentecost, there were miraculous manifestations of this 'shedding forth' of the holy power of God. One of these is mentioned in Acts 2:4, which reads, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Here, being filled with the Spirit denotes another miraculous exercise of Divine power, enabling those who were filled to speak in foreign tongues without the necessity of previous study. This was unlike the manner in which the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to perform miracles. Later, the apostles performed miracles other than speaking with tongues.

In Acts 9:17, our attention is called to a similar instance involving a filling with the Spirit. In this case, it is Saul of Tarsus who, struck down by a blinding light on the way to Damascus, and hearing the question, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (vs. 4) had, by the Lord's direction, gone to a certain home in Damascus to await further instructions from the Lord. Those instructions were sent to him by a disciple named Ananias. Entering the room where he found the converted persecutor of the church, Ananias said, "Brother Saul, the Lord,

even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Saul, or Paul, was appointed by God to take the place of Judas, and it was essential, therefore, that he be filled with the Spirit even as the other apostles were at Pentecost. He was thus filled, because he was able to perform miracles and speak with tongues, even as they.

One of the powers given Jesus and the apostles by the miraculous infilling of the Spirit was the ability to read the hearts of those with whom they came in contact. It was upon this basis that Jesus was able to call the Pharisees hypocrites. Paul was given this ability. In Acts 13:6-12, we are presented with a very interesting example of this. “Elymas the sorcerer” undertook to interfere with Paul’s work, especially Paul’s effort to interest a certain “deputy” in the Gospel of Christ. We read, “Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Spirit, set his eyes on him [the sorcerer], And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.” Paul was able to execute this punishment upon the sorcerer because he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

A further miraculous manifestation of the infilling of the Holy Spirit is recounted by Paul in his letter to the church at Rome, writing, “I will not

dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” (Rom. 15:18,19) Every ambassador of Christ should preach the Gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit, but it was given to the twelve apostles only to proclaim the message on a background of ‘mighty signs and wonders.’

ALL DISCIPLES MAY BE FILLED

While Jesus and the apostles were the only ones of the New Creation class who were filled with the Spirit in the sense of being endued with miracle-working power from God, all the true disciples of the Master may be filled with the Spirit in the sense that God’s thoughts and plans as revealed in his Word, and his will for them, become the all-absorbing, all-consuming, overwhelming power in their lives. It is this that is indicated in our text.

Immediately preceding this admonition, and in contrast with it, Paul writes, “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” Clearly the reference here is to the intoxicating effect of strong drink. To be ‘drunk with wine’ means to be brought fully under the control of its intoxicating power. One who is thus intoxicated is unable properly to exercise his own mind. This is wrong, Paul indicates, and instead of this, the Christian should endeavor to be filled with the Spirit. The thought is that if we are filled with the Spirit, our fleshly minds will also be rendered

subservient, not to the stupefying effect of alcohol, but to the will of God. God's thoughts, revealing his will through his written Word, will take control so that our chief concern, our only concern in all things, will be to do his will.

FILLING THROUGH FELLOWSHIP

Having written this exhortation to be filled with the Spirit, Paul then suggests one of the ways it can be accomplished. It is through 'speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.' In a general way this suggests the privilege and the value of Christian fellowship in terms of being filled with the Spirit. In this text he seems primarily to be describing a praise service, the use of spiritual songs.

The inspirational power of music is well known. The martial strains of a military band have encouraged many young men to die for their country. So the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs of the Christian have an inspirational value in his life. When sung together, as in an assembly, the result is salutary, helping all who participate to be more fully devoted to the LORD through the renouncing of self-will, that the will of God might rule more fully in their consecrated lives.

As a rule, however, these sessions of united praise to the LORD are not a large factor in any congregation of the saints. On the other hand, the entire plan of God for his New Creation and for the world is as a melodious, harmonious song. Indeed, it is designated the "song of Moses" and "of the Lamb." (Rev. 15:3; 14:3) In Psalm 40:3, also in Revelation

14:3, it is described as a “new song.” This marvelously harmonious unfolding of God’s eternal purpose through Christ Jesus, as set forth by the Holy Spirit throughout God’s written Word, when understood and appreciated, eclipses every other consideration of life. To know it, to believe it, to obey it, to have our lives consumed by it, is to be filled with the Spirit.

Sincere, energetic Bible study is, then, one of the potent means of being filled with the Spirit. Because of our faulty memories we cannot expect to read the promises of God once, and retain them in our minds. Besides, the Bible is so written that each time we open its Spirit-inspired pages we see some rare gem of Truth never before noticed. The poet has well said,

’Tis a mine, aye, deeper too,
Than can mortal ever go.
Search we may for many years,
Still some new, rich gem appears.

(Hymns of Dawn)

As we thus plumb deeper and deeper into the revealing thoughts of God recorded in the Word, and our minds and hearts yield in a rejoicing desire to bring our lives into harmony with each revealing ray of light that beams forth from it, we become increasingly filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus received the Spirit without measure. He was perfect. We are imperfect, and the “motions of sins” in our “flesh” bar the complete infilling of the Spirit for which our hearts yearn. (Rom. 7:5) We should strive to be more emptied of self that the Holy Spirit might fill, and more fully control, our thinking, our speaking, and our acting.

FILLED THROUGH PRAYER

Jesus said to his disciples, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13) Here is an important promise, for it assures us that one of the means of being filled with the Spirit is through prayer. Through prayer, we claim the promises of God, and since we know he wants us to be filled with his Spirit, it is proper, and needful, that we earnestly petition him to this end.

But we should not expect a miraculous answer to our prayers for the Holy Spirit. The miracle-working power of God has already operated in furnishing us with his written Word, the source of his thoughts for all the New Creation class. It is true that God still uses his unlimited power in shaping his providence for us, that we might be brought into contact with his Word. He has given his angels charge over us to see that nothing can happen which will defeat his purpose in our lives. (Ps. 91:11) But in asking him for his Spirit, we must not expect that God will miraculously fill our minds with his thoughts.

When we ask God for his Holy Spirit, we must cooperate with him in the zealous use of the provision he has made whereby we might be filled. We must go to his Word. If we could but fully realize, as the consecrated people of God, that when we open the pages of the Bible and read its wonderful messages, we are looking into the mind of our Heavenly Father, and there discovering his will for us, and his thoughts toward us, how much more precious would be the hours spent in the study of

his Word! Actually, they are hours spent with God. David wrote that God's thoughts to "us-ward" are more than can be numbered. (Ps. 40:5) Those we are informed of are all in the written Word, put there by the power of the Holy Spirit, that in studying it we may be filled with the Spirit.

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

The infilling of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the children of God is manifested in the fruits of righteousness. Paul wrote to the brethren at Rome, "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." (Rom. 15:13,14) Here we observe that being filled with 'joy and peace' is a result of the indwelling Spirit of God. To be filled with the Spirit also means to be 'full of goodness' and 'filled with all knowledge.'

Paul describes being filled with the Spirit as being "filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3:19) Obviously, God does not personally enter into his people, but his Spirit does, his holy mind, which he has caused to be mirrored through his Word. Paul also speaks of Christ dwelling in our hearts. We will quote this whole revealing passage: "That he [God] would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And

to know the love of Christ, which passeth [human] knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”—Eph. 3:16-19

In Philippians 1:9-11, Paul, without using the words Holy Spirit, nevertheless reveals some of the qualities of a Spirit-filled life. We quote, “This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.” No one could be filled with the ‘fruits of righteousness’ without being filled with the Spirit, for the fruits of righteousness are the fruits of the Holy Spirit of God, the result of the Holy Spirit of Truth working in the heart and life.

Again, in Colossians 1:8-11 we read, “Who [Ephras] also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power [Spirit], unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.”

This is a remarkable summary of many of the things that result from being filled with the Spirit. It means to be ‘filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.’ If we are thus filled, we will ‘walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.’ Also, we will be ‘fruitful

in every good work,' the 'fruit of the Spirit' being abundantly manifest in our daily lives. Being filled with the Spirit also results in an increasing knowledge of the LORD, through the Word of Truth, which, in turn, will lead to our being 'strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power.' This power, this strength of the LORD which, if the daily portion of the Spirit-filled life, enables the Christian to be patient in trial, and long-suffering in the face of every difficulty—not merely in the sense of enduring what cannot be changed, but with 'joyfulness.'

The Holy Spirit of Truth with which every Gospel Age saint of God may, and will, be filled if he is living up to his privileges, is a gift from God. Paul mentions some of its characteristics in his second letter to Timothy. He speaks of stirring up the 'gift of God' that was in Timothy. (II Tim. 1:6) Then Paul adds, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."—vs. 7

As we have seen, the Spirit of God is a spirit of power. His Spirit-inspired Word is a mighty power in the lives of those who yield to its directives, and are strengthened by its promises. Besides, the Spirit of God, operating through whatever agencies he may choose to shape his providence in our lives, is 'Almighty.' He alone, through the instructions of his Word, and in whatever other ways his wisdom may choose, is able to cause "all things" to "work together" for the good of his people. (Rom. 8:28) His record of achievement always has been, is now, and ever shall be, perfect. Can we doubt his mercy, his ability, who through life has been our guide?

The Spirit of God with which his people are filled is also one of love. It displaces selfishness, and all of its characteristics of envy, malice, hatred, and strife. It leads to self-sacrifice on behalf of others and kindness in association with them. Christians who lack these qualities may question the extent to which they are filled with the Spirit.

Paul says that God has also given us the Spirit of a sound mind. This is because he has given us his own thoughts, his own mind, by which in our consecration we have agreed to be governed. The Holy Spirit of God does not change the contour of the brain to give us soundness of mind. It is simply that we have renounced our own will and ways, and are endeavoring to be guided in our thoughts, words, and actions by the holy thoughts of God as he has miraculously caused them to be recorded in his written Word.

The mind and will of God that guides the Christian may not seem sound in the judgment of the world. In fact, the reverse is true. When the Apostle Paul reasoned on the Truth before King Agrippa and Festus, this latter Roman ruler of Judea replied, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." (Acts 26:24) The Greek word here translated 'learning' is the same one used by Paul in II Timothy 3:15, and translated 'Scriptures.'

In this text, Paul notes that from a child Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures, the Scriptures that in the next verse he says were given "by inspiration of God," and therefore "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."—vs. 16

Evidently Festus recognized that Paul's reasoning was based upon the sacred writings of the Old Testament, and his claim was that these had made Paul 'mad.' Surely Festus did not consider that the study of the Scriptures had given Paul the spirit of a sound mind. Paul's reply was, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." (Acts 26:25) All the Spirit-inspired words in the 'volume of the book' are 'words of truth and soberness.' To the extent the Lord's people set aside their own reasoning and their own preferences and ways, and are governed by the inspired words of Truth and soberness, they will have the spirit of a sound mind.

But, as we have noted, the Christian's mind is not sound according to the human standards. Peter, before he had received the Holy Spirit, did not think Jesus was being guided by a sound mind in voluntarily surrendering himself to his enemies to be put to death. Paul's friends did not think he was acting wisely by insisting on going to Jerusalem where he knew that bonds and imprisonment awaited him. It is true, nevertheless, that the Holy Spirit of Truth does direct those who are controlled by it to lay down their lives in sacrifice. Paul admonished that we present our bodies a living sacrifice, explaining that this is our 'reasonable' service—a service, that is, which by God's standards is based on reason, reflecting the exercise of a sound mind.—Rom. 12:1

Paul sums up beautifully what it means to have the spirit of a sound mind and to be filled with the Spirit. He says "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the

things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—I Cor. 2:9-14 ■

Abide, Sweet Spirit

*Abide, sweet Spirit, heavenly dove,
With light and comfort from above;
Be thou our Guardian, thou our Guide;
O'er every thought and step preside.*

*To us the light of truth display,
And make us know and choose thy way;
Plant holy fear in every heart,
That we from God may ne'er depart.*

*Lead us in holiness, the road
Which we must keep to dwell with God;
Lead us in Christ, the living Way,
Nor let us from his pastures stray.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

The Church at the End of the Gospel Age

*“Do all things
without
murmurings and
disputings: That ye
may be blameless
and harmless, the
sons of God,
without rebuke, in
the midst of a
crooked and
perverse nation,
among whom ye
shine as lights in
the world.”*

—Philippians 2:14,15

A HISTORIAN WROTE CONCERNING the days of the French Revolution that it was “the worst of times and the best of times.” The same might truthfully be said about the era through which the world is presently passing. It is indeed the ‘worst of times,’ for it is the period foretold by Jesus and the prophets wherein there would be “distress of nations, with perplexity,” when evil men and seducers shall “wax worse and worse,” and when there would be a “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.”—Luke 21:25; II Tim. 3:13; Dan. 12:1

Who can doubt that we have reached such a time? In addition to international terrorism and

violence, there are internal upheavals within nations, with graft and crime rampant everywhere. No one dares hope that the measure of tranquility which may be enjoyed in some part of the world today will not be disrupted tomorrow, so there is a constant state of apprehension and fear from which millions are attempting to escape through avenues of questionable, and sometimes sordid, pleasures. Such are the death throes of this “present evil world” as it succumbs to the weight of its own sin and selfishness.—Gal. 1:4

On the other hand, it can be said that we are living in the ‘best of times,’ for these are the days immediately preceding the establishment of the kingdom of Christ. Only those who are blessed with the vision of present Truth can understand and appreciate this viewpoint. Apart from the Truth, the world situation today seems desperate indeed, for it denotes a failure of churchianity to accomplish its designed purpose of influencing the nations of earth to live at peace with one another.

To the many in the world who make no profession of belief in Christianity, the outlook is equally dark and threatening. There is a measure of wishful thinking on the part of some, but no genuine hope anywhere in the world, and apart from the Truth of God’s Word, nothing upon which to base such a hope. “All the foundations of the earth are out of course,” even as the prophet foretold, and human wisdom is unable to find an answer—“They walk on in darkness.”—Ps. 82:5

LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

The thought uppermost in the hearts of those who know the Truth is one of thanksgiving to God for opening the eyes of their understanding to know and appreciate his glorious plan of salvation. This spirit of thankfulness is bound to overflow, not only in direct praise to God for his abounding grace, but in showing forth his praise to as many others as possible. Those into whose hearts the LORD has shined with the Gospel, and who in turn are reflecting the light of Truth in order that those around them might see it, are lights in the dark world of today, and should not hide their light of Truth under a “bushel.”—Matt. 5:14-16

There should be no question in the minds of Truth-enlightened Christians as to the nature of the message which should be proclaimed at the present time—or, in fact, at any time—for now, as ever, it should be nothing short of the Gospel of the kingdom. The incentive for preaching this Gospel should be no other than love for God and a desire to bless those who may have ears to hear, and hearts to respond to the message. It is highly important, to keep these viewpoints in mind, else there may be danger that in our zeal we may place ourselves in the unfortunate position of being energetic, yet unapproved, ambassadors.

Jesus was persecuted, and we want to be like Jesus. The apostles and others in the Early Church were also persecuted, and we want to follow them as they followed Christ. We know that it is only “through much tribulation” that we may hope to enter the kingdom; that it is only if “we suffer with him” that we may also reign with him.—Acts 14:22; Rom. 8:17

These thoughts are scriptural, and should weigh heavily in our Christian thinking, but they should not be allowed to outweigh other important truths pertaining to the proper attitude of the Christian in this world of darkness. Persecution is not alone an evidence of being on the LORD's side. It would be comparatively easy to stir up the wrath of the world against ourselves, if that were the only consideration. But then the question would be whether or not we were suffering for righteousness' sake, or for our own misguided efforts.

The LORD's people should always walk in the true path of righteousness. It is something that we will do well to remember. At present, the Gospel of the kingdom is being heralded by radio, television, and Internet, yet seemingly there is not a great deal of outward opposition to it. There is indifference, but little active persecution. Because of this we might conclude that our message is not useful.

What did Jesus mean when he said that his church was the "light of the world"? (Matt. 5:14) What did Paul mean when he said that we 'shine as lights in the world'? Do any of the scriptures which bear on the Christian's commission as an ambassador for Christ suggest he is to be a crusader in the world? There is much in the world that is wrong, and against which we could find fault. But is it in this manner that we are to shine as lights in the world? If so, how shall we decide which particular wrongs in the world we are to address? Shall we crusade against the liquor or drug traffic?

The overtones of war and terrorism are now being thundered around the world. The masses do not want war, but the international situation is

such that the youth are being sucked into a terrible abyss of slaughter. Here is something that every sincere Christian could easily be in open rebellion against, but is this what the LORD wants?

OUR EXEMPLAR

What would Jesus do? This is a question that each one of us should seriously ask ourselves as we consider the nature of the message that we are commissioned to proclaim in the violent world of today. One of the first messages Jesus gave when he began his ministry was delivered in a synagogue in Nazareth. It was based on Isaiah 61:1-3. This is a prophecy concerning Jesus' anointing by the Holy Spirit—his commission for service. It is also our commission for service; for as members of his mystical body we receive of the same anointing that came upon him.

Just what is included in this Divine authorization? "The LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; . . . to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, . . . the opening of the prison to them that are bound; . . . To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;" to give those who mourn in Zion "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

When Jesus said to his audience in Nazareth that this scripture was fulfilled in their ears, he did not quote all of it, stopping just before it mentions the 'day of vengeance.' There was good reason for this, for that part of the commission, indeed all the remainder of it, has its particular application in

this end of the Gospel Age rather than at the beginning of the age when Jesus conducted his personal ministry. The day of vengeance is one of the scriptural expressions that indicate the significance of the great time of trouble with which this Gospel Age comes to an end.

In a study of this entire commission, several points come clearly to light. One is that it calls for the proclamation of the whole Gospel. To specialize on some particular segment of the Truth would not be in keeping with this Divine commission. It calls for the proclamation of the great hope of restoration, as well as the “high calling” of this age—the ‘acceptable year of the Lord.’ (Phil. 3:14) These two great fundamentals of the Gospel cannot be presented properly and effectively apart from an explanation of man’s fall, his redemption through Christ, and his need for repentance and surrender to the LORD. This has been the work of the church throughout the age, and every consecrated follower of the Master is still bound by the same Divine commission. Nothing should be taken away from this Divine commission

“THE DAY OF VENGEANCE”

Now that we are at the end of the Gospel Age there is added the responsibility of proclaiming the ‘day of vengeance.’ This is not in reality an additional message, but more particularly an up-to-date application of the same glorious Gospel of the kingdom, in that it involves an explanation of present world conditions in the light of prophecy, and emphasizes the fact that the kingdom of Christ is man’s only hope of survival. It is God’s day of

vengeance that is upon the nations, and this means that we are in the time of Christ's Second Presence.

To declare these truths relating to the day of vengeance does not imply pronouncing vengeance, nor does it call for a campaign of smiting condemnation against the evils of the crumbling world. Generally speaking, the people already know how wrong the world is, but they do not know the basic causes of the world's insanity, nor do they have any conception at all of the Divine remedy—the kingdom of Christ. Only in the great plan of God is this information available, and it is our privilege to proclaim the glorious truths of the Divine plan.

Our preaching of the day of vengeance consists in explaining as clearly as possible the meaning of present world chaos, that the judgments of God are upon the nations, and that soon Christ's kingdom will be established to bless and restore the people to health and life. Properly presented, the truth concerning the day of vengeance should be one of great comfort. It will 'comfort all that mourn,' and surely the world is filled with mourning ones today.

In Isaiah 35:4, the responsibility of the saints during this time of trouble is again mentioned. The text reads: "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you." Jesus said that at this time the hearts of the people would fail them for fear as they looked ahead to the things coming upon the earth (Luke 21:26), but it is our privilege to say to as many of these as we can, "Fear not." We can say this by explaining that while the trouble now upon the earth is a manifestation of God's

vengeance, it is but preparatory to the blessings of Christ's kingdom, the salvation of all the willing and obedient from sin and death.

MOURNERS IN ZION

Isaiah 61:3 makes special mention of those 'who mourn in Zion.' These seem to be in addition to the 'all that mourn' mentioned in verse two. Those who mourn in Zion are those who, in one way or another, are associated with the professed people of God, and who are distressed over conditions with which they are surrounded, both in the world and in the church.

The same glorious message of present Truth that comforts sorrowing ones in the world in proportion to their faith to believe it, is also a satisfying portion to these who mourn in Zion. Indeed, it is especially so, for the reason that it provides an explanation for the confusing and disappointing situations in which they find themselves as a result of the church systems' failure to convert the world. It is not that a special message needs to be directed to these, for the Truth of the Divine plan, the Gospel of the kingdom, suffices to accomplish this desired end, even as the same message accomplishes all the other objectives of the Divine commission.

The term Zion is also sometimes used in the prophecies concerning God's typical chosen people, those who are Israelites after the flesh. The kingdom message also reaches and comforts any among these who have ears to hear.

We are not to suppose, though, that the Lord's commission implies that all who hear the message will be comforted, nor that every individual mourning

one in the world will even be reached by the efforts of the saints—although we should do all we can toward this end. The thought is, rather, that there are no restrictions on the scope of the commission. The whole world is the field of service, and in this world of darkness we are to let our light shine as brightly and as effectively as possible.

FOR A WITNESS

Jesus said that “this gospel of the kingdom” would be preached in all the world for a “witness.” (Matt. 24:14) It is not to be expected that more than this will be accomplished. That feature of the Gospel pertaining to the ‘high calling’ of this age is still reaching one here and there, and every effort should be made to nurture these in the Truth, and encourage them to run zealously for the prize of the High Calling. Indeed, no part of the Truth should be held back from those who show a desire to learn the way of the Lord more perfectly. Those who progress in knowledge should be instructed in all the truths of God’s Word, including its prophecies. As for the people in general we will find that our efforts have resulted largely in a witness, rather than in bringing large numbers into the Truth.

This will be true with respect to both Jews and Gentiles. The prophecies clearly indicate that the Jews would return to the promised land in unbelief, and that they would remain in unbelief until in the final phase of the great trouble they should be attacked by aggressor nations from the north, and the Lord would intervene to save them. In confirmation of this Paul declares that “blindness in part” came upon Israel “until the fulness of the

Gentiles be come in.” (Rom. 11:25) The reference here is to the grafting of Gentile branches into God’s olive tree of promise to take the places of the natural branches which were broken off because of unbelief.—vss. 17-24

This work is still going on. The ‘fulness’ of the Gentiles has not yet come in, and this explains why Israel is still in unbelief, and will remain so until their eyes are miraculously opened by the wonderful manner in which the Lord will protect and deliver them in that future hour of their greatest peril. An occasional one may accept the Truth, even as is true among the Gentiles, and has been true of both Jews and Gentiles throughout the age. But aside from this, let us not expect that our message will result in more than a ‘witness’ to those who hear.

“WITHOUT MURMURINGS”

In our text, the apostle admonishes us to ‘do all things without murmurings and disputings.’ How fitting is this counsel! The world in which we are to shine as lights is filled with strife and violence, and in such a world our witness will be effective in proportion to the wholesome influence of love and goodwill among ourselves as we proclaim the message. The LORD’s people should have but one objective in their labor of love, and there should be no reason for strife as together they lay down their lives showing forth the praises of their God.

It is thus, the apostle asserts, that we will be ‘blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke.’ If we continue faithfully to let our light shine in this dark and suffering world, sooner or

later we are sure to be rebuked by those who sit in darkness. But when it comes, it should be unmerited so far as any wrongdoing on our part is concerned. Our own conduct should be both harmless and blameless, hence without just cause for rebuke. Nor will we be rebuked by the Lord if we are faithful to the Truth and maintain the proper attitude of sympathy, understanding and love, as we minister the kingdom message to others.

Faithful followers of the Master have never found themselves at home in the world. Its spirit is contrary to their spirit, and it is a struggle to overcome the spirit of the world. This is especially true today. We are surrounded by turmoil and chaos, by violence and hatred, but let us rise above these in our association with one another and in our attitude toward those to whom we proclaim the message. Paul speaks of the 'perverse nation' of his day, and now we have the privilege of shining as lights in a perverse world. It is a world that is falling apart under the weight of its perverseness. We cannot do anything to hinder this, nor would we want to, but we can tell the people that a new world order is near.

The Prophet Isaiah, in symbolic language, describes this new world order of Christ's future kingdom of righteousness. "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind." (Isa. 65:17) Peter confirms this wonderful feature of that kingdom which describes the new social order administered by Christ. "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—II Pet. 3:13

We do not know how much longer we will have the privilege of shining as lights in the world; so let us make faithful use of every opportunity we have, rejoicing in the realization that if faithful in doing the LORD's will now, we will be united with Christ beyond the veil, and together with him, "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their [our] Father." (Matt. 13:43) Then it will not be a case of lights shining in the darkness, for the darkness will be dispelled by the glory of the Sun of Righteousness, and the knowledge of the LORD shall fill the whole earth "as the waters cover the sea."—Isa. 11:9 ■

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Endurance

AS FOOTSTEP FOLLOWERS of Jesus we have learned from the Scriptures that we are to develop and maintain endurance in the carrying out of our consecration vows. The quality of endurance has been well defined as ‘continuing under pain or distress without impatience and without sinking.’

The condition of pain or distress referred to in this definition may well come upon us as soldiers of the cross in suffering for righteousness’ sake. This could be in the form of persecution—either by revilings, or by the infliction of actual bodily harm. Christian suffering may also take the form of weariness, or other infirmities of the flesh which result from our faithful and enduring efforts to proclaim the true Gospel of the kingdom.

The most outstanding example we have of endurance in suffering, brought on by faithfulness in Divine service, is our Lord Jesus. From Jordan to the cross his was a very strenuous service. Daily he gave his all, never sparing himself. Literally he “poured out his soul [his very being] unto death.” (Isa. 53:12) His journeyings from place to place were exceedingly difficult as compared with traveling today. Even though Jesus was a young and

perfect man, his ministry is generally recognized as an exceptional feat of endurance.

It is also very apparent from the Scriptures that the healing of the sick, as performed by Jesus, although through the use of the Divine miracle-working power that was at his command, was not without expending his own energy in his healing ministry—giving out his own vitality. (Mark 5:30; Luke 6:19, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) It could be truly said of Jesus that he “took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”—Matt. 8:17

Jesus thus gave himself faithfully and with endurance. He cheerfully endured pain and suffering, desiring only that the Father's will be done in and through him. He knew that faithful endurance also called for continuance in the work of bearing witness to the Truth; that not until he had thus been faithful unto death would his part of this great work be accomplished.

PAUL'S EXAMPLE

Another faithful servant who endured prolonged physical suffering for the Lord's sake, ever willing and glad to “spend and be spent,” was the Apostle Paul. (II Cor. 12:15) His general pattern of experiences in every place he visited on his various missionary journeys, included revilings, and often the inflicting of physical pain by one means or another. Writing about this, Paul said of himself:

“In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a

day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.”—II Cor. 11:23-28

In writing to Timothy, Paul, who had endured so much for the Lord’s sake, exhorted, “Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” (II Tim. 2:3) To show that he never expected others to do what he was not willing to do himself, Paul could say, “I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”—II Tim. 2:10

Paul added a wonderful testimony relating to his many tribulations. He said, “Out of them all the Lord delivered me.” (II Tim. 3:11) Let it not be understood, however, that the instances of Paul’s physical endurance in the Lord’s service were easy for him, because he wrote, “I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage.” (I Cor. 9:27, *American Standard Version*) Or, more literally stated, Paul said, “I became a slave driver to my body.”

It is important to note that in spite of Paul’s zeal for the LORD, and his resolute determination to carry out all that was required of him, his experiences were not endured in his own strength. He had special help from the LORD, as indicated in his exhortation to Timothy: “Join me in bearing suffering for the gospel, by the power of the God.”

(II Tim. 1:8, *Moffat Translation*) What Paul meant by this was that he was able to bear the suffering that came upon him in the service of the Truth because of the help supplied by the LORD.

This special help was through the Holy Spirit, a holy power; and we are similarly to be “strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” (Eph. 6:10) As in the case of all the faithful ones who have gone before, our Heavenly Father is able to do for us “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”—Eph. 3:20

In contrast to the experiences of some in the Early Church, we today are not called upon to make even fifty miles on foot, in order to carry out our commission to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom. In many respects our experiences as followers of the Master result in much less suffering than was endured by many who preceded us. But this is all the more reason for holding back nothing in the way of time or strength as we endeavor, by all the means at our disposal, to prove our willingness to endure whatever suffering may result from our faithfulness.

To walk in this way, as our Lord set us an example that we should follow in his steps, implies not only a passive conformity to his disposition or spirit, but also an active, energetic zeal in the promulgation of his Truth at all hazards.

While the hazards or risks of danger to which we are exposed today in witnessing to the Truth are vastly different from those of the early disciples of Jesus, yet there are dangers. Many of these are subtle, deceptive, discouraging, and, if we are not watchful, will cause us to stumble, as well as to be unfruitful and unfaithful in the LORD’s service.

Let us not permit any deceptive human philosophy to convince us that we need no longer endure self-sacrifice in the service of the LORD, the Truth, and the brethren. Theories, which offer plausible excuses for not continuing to endure hardness in the proclamation of the Truth, are very tempting to the flesh. Nothing but the sincerity of our consecration, and the determination to endure faithfully to the end, will safeguard us against such delusions. This attitude of endurance and faithfulness will keep us faithfully in the Truth, and loyal to it.

We who have come to realize our Father's unspeakable favor to us as better than this present life with all it could have or give; we who have faithfully laid upon his altar every earthly good thing, every hope and ambition, every power of our being, rejoice to tell the good tidings to others. We rejoice to sound forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into this marvelous light. The message is too good to keep! If we could not proclaim it, it would be as a "burning fire shut up" in our bones, so we must tell it. (Jer. 20:9) We are willing that the telling of it cost us something—cost us money, misunderstanding, and persecution of former friends, and possibly the breaking of home ties. We are willing that it shall cost us the frown of the world and of organized Christianity.

Today, as in the past, we have the privilege of witnessing to the Truth by word of mouth in private conversations, and in public assemblies. We also have the privilege of writing letters to friends and relatives when it seems opportune to do so. Now we are further blessed by the availability of the printed message of Truth. There are the radio,

television, and Internet that we can help to support, and in the follow-up of which we can participate. By all these means the Gospel of the kingdom continues to go out to all the world “for a witness unto all nations,” and we rejoice.—Matt. 24:14

The great variety of ways now available for witnessing, including the recorded lecture service, enabling us all to have some part in our Master’s great and glorious service, inspires confidence and gives us courage—courage to endure faithfully as ambassadors of Christ. Surely all who are standing firm in the one Spirit will delight to cooperate in one way or another as the Lord gives them opportunity. All certainly will be able to contribute through their prayers on behalf of this service of “vigorously cooperating for the faith of the glad tidings.”—Phil. 1:27, *WED* ■

“Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?”—Matthew 8:26

Each experience should be helpful to us. If at first we were fearful and cried aloud, by and by we received the succor with perhaps the reprimand, “O thou of little faith;” but as lesson after lesson has come to us, the Master will expect—and we should expect of ourselves—greater faith, greater trust, greater peace, greater joy in the Lord, greater confidence in His presence with us and His care over us, and in His power to deliver us from the adversary and from every evil thing, and to bring us eventually in safety to the port we seek—the heavenly Kingdom.

—Daily Heavenly Manna, October 9

Pilgrim Trip to Europe May, 2005

Report By Bob And Deanna Gorecki

IT WAS EARLY Friday morning when we arrived at the airport in Frankfurt, Germany after an all-night flight. A short time later, we were greeted by a sister who speaks English and lives an hour from the airport. After picking up our rental car at the airport, the three of us drove to her home in the village of Hofheim. Later, her husband joined us and together we had fellowship and discussions on the Scriptures.

Saturday morning the four of us drove several hours north to the town of Korbach where the German convention was to be held. We arrived at the hotel in the early afternoon and were greeted by many of the German brethren. For the next two and a half days, we shared the love and affection that the German brethren expressed through translators; but smiles, hugs, and handshakes said it all. Over sixty-five brethren attended the convention. There were discourses in Greek and English, as well as German. Several different brethren translated the German discourses for us and we had many wonderful conversations and dis-

cussions. Brethren sat at tables arranged in front of the stage. At mealtime, the dining room had very large round tables where brethren joined in fellowship and discussions.



German Convention

We met many new brethren, as well as renewed old acquaintances. The brethren planning the convention expected another twenty or so, but they were not able to

attend due to age, illness, and other reasons.

All too soon, Monday afternoon came and it was time to end the convention. For many it would mean returning to small classes and, for others, a return home to await the next convention. But for us, it was just the beginning of a four-thousand-kilometer trip through Germany, France, and England.

After the convention ended, we drove to a small village near Dortmund where we were entertained, along with two Greek brethren. For the next two days, the house was filled with studies, questions, and discussions. The air was filled with German, Greek, and English words, sometimes all at the same time. Translations helped us all understand each other; sometimes thoughts had to be repeated two or more times. We were grateful for the opportunity to get to know these brethren better.

Thursday morning came quickly and it was time to travel to France. As we left, our hearts were filled

with gratitude for the wonderful days spent together. To make our travels pleasant, a large bag of food, candy, and drinks was provided for our trip south.

As we drove south, we passed through numerous small villages with houses, having orange-tiled roofs, attached to barns. In Germany, many farmers live in small villages with their barnyard and cows all within the village, and each morning the farmer leads his cows out of the village to the farmland that surrounds the village.

We arrived in eastern France on Friday evening and traveled to a small French village where we met brethren that we have known for many years. We enjoyed their fellowship and discussions while renewing old friendships. Sunday morning, we were taken to a small town where a brother, many years ago, added a meeting room to his house for the brethren. Over seventy brethren from two classes met and filled the small meeting room. In addition to the English discourse, there was a Polish discourse from a visiting Polish brother. Many of the French brethren are of Polish descent. Both discourses were translated so all could understand. It was a blessing to see many familiar faces among the French brethren.

After lunch at one of the brethren's homes, we went to an apartment in the city



Meeting in Mulhouse, France

of Mulhouse where eighteen brethren gathered for additional food, fellowship, and questions regarding the Scriptures. A few hours later, we were taken to another home where fourteen brethren were gathered for still more food, fellowship, and questions.

The next day we were off to a small town north of Paris where a meeting was scheduled for 7 P.M. There were about fifteen brethren at the meeting, and questions were discussed after the meeting. The next morning we drove to northern France where a brother took us to visit isolated brethren. There was a meeting held at 3 P.M. in a widowed sister's home in Auby where approximately eighteen brethren attended. Again, more questions and discussion followed the discourse.

Early the next morning the same brother arrived and we went to visit additional isolated brethren for fellowship and Bible discussions. One of the sisters we visited, who was in her eighties and living on a small farm, had immigrated from Poland back in the early 1930's. Her family back in Poland was persecuted for their belief in the Truth. One of her brothers had his arms cut off and died, and a second brother was hung. Through all this, her belief in the Scriptures and in the Truth remained strong. We had a delightful time with her.

We arrived back in Arenberg in the early evening in time for a meeting. The home where we were staying had a room set aside for meetings. After the meeting, a discussion and questions continued for approximately two hours. We had dinner that evening about 11 P.M.

Early the next morning we left for our trip under the English Channel to visit the brethren at the Retirement Center in Sherborne, England. Four elderly brethren live at the Retirement Center.



Retirement Center

We had sweet fellowship with them that afternoon and again the next morning. A meeting was scheduled in the chapel at 3 P.M. and several more brethren in the area came to the meeting.

After tea, we drove to a small village north of London called Chesham where we had evening fellowship and renewed old friendships. On the following day, a meeting was scheduled for 3 P.M. and eight brethren met to study the *Manna* and listen to a discourse, followed by tea. That evening, we departed to another home on the east side of London, about two hours away. Sunday morning was filled with fellowship and discussion. A meeting was scheduled for 4 P.M. The meeting began with a study of the seventeenth chapter of John, a short discussion on the *Manna*, followed by tea and an evening discourse.

Monday morning, the brethren packed us a lunch and led us by car through numerous small villages and roundabouts to the main highway for our return trip through the Euro Tunnel, a long trip through Belgium and then on to Germany and

the Frankfurt Airport. We thought that the price of diesel fuel was high in Germany; about five dollars a gallon, but fuel prices in England were almost seven dollars a gallon. Coming back to the United States and paying \$2.45 a gallon seems like a bargain now!

Words cannot express all the abundance of love and thoughtfulness conveyed to us by the European brethren. Their dedication and enthusiasm for the Truth, though they are small in number, touched our hearts, and every departure left us a little teary-eyed. We felt our efforts to be a blessing were far overshadowed by the great love and warmth exhibited by the brethren at each step of our visit. Deanna and I came away from Europe with a greater appreciation for our brethren there than ever before. We thank our Heavenly Father for the opportunity, and we thank the brethren for their generosity towards us. ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

OCTOBER 6—“Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”—Luke 9:55,56 (Z. ’04-43 Hymn 296)

OCTOBER 13—“I will show thee my faith by my works.”—James 2:18 (Z. ’04-45 Hymn 306A)

OCTOBER 20—“Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”—Matthew 10:16 (Z. ’04-91 Hymn 260)

OCTOBER 27—“My times are in thy hand.”—Psalm 31:15 (Z. ’04-237 Hymn 186)

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

K. Fernets

Pittsburgh, PA October 8,9

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

M. J. Balko

Pittsburgh, PA October 8,9

E. Kuenzli

St. Petersburg, FL October 9

B. Clark

Pittsburgh, PA October 8,9

L. Wesol

Louisville, AL October 9

R. Goodman

Pittsburgh, PA October 8,9



OBITUARIES

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

Brother Eugene Burns, Hebron, IN—July 14. Age, 79

Sister Edna Moyle, Fairview, OR—July 28. Age, 86

Brother Jean Wozniak, France—August 14.

CONVENTIONS

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

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 30, October 1,2—Holiday Inn Select (formally Huntsville Hilton), 401 Williams Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35801. Phone: (256) 533-1400. Contact P. Mosley, 1006 Mill Race Circle, Guntersville, AL 35976. Phone: (256) 582-3640

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 8,9—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue, MI 49544. Contact J. Houlmont. Phone: (231) 972-4259

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 8,9—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA. Contact G. Balko, Jr., 1300 High Street, West Newton, PA 15089. Phone: (724) 872-6418

NEW ENGLAND CONVENTION, October 14,15, 16—Ramada Inn, Crooked Street, Plainville, CT. Contact A. M. Suraci, 171 Johnson Road, Hamden, CT 06518. Phone: (203) 248-3793

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 15,16—Masonic Temple, 859 Marsh Street. Contact L. Murray. Phone: (805) 544-3037

DETROIT/DETROIT METROPOLITAN JOINT CONVENTION, October 23—Pleasant Ridge Community Center, 4 Ridge Road. Contact N. Zandler. Phone: (248) 399-8843

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 29,30—Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Drive (corner of Hwy. 17-92), Sanford, FL. Contact H. Jeuck, 587 Queens Mirror Circle, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 699-8303

NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 6—Italian American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact A. M. Suraci, 171 Johnson Road, Hamden, CT 06518. Phone: (203) 248-3793

JERSEY CITY PRE-THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 19,20—Loyalty Lodge, 1912 Morris Avenue, Union, NJ 07083. Phone: (908) 688-9842. Contact M. J. Rodriguez, P. O. Box 6685, Bridgewater, NJ 08807-6685. Phone: (908) 917-8211

SAN DIEGO THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 25,26,27—Doubletree Club Hotel, 1515 Hotel Circle South. Phone: (800) 489-9671 or (619) 881-6900. Contact D. Rice. Phone: (619) 589-1534

CHICAGO NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, December 31, January 1—Contact R. Tabac. Phone: (630) 231-1874

PHOENIX NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, December 31, January 1—La Quinta Inn, 2510 W. Greenway Road. Contact J. Porcolab. Phone: (602) 363-3612

The Place of Prayer

*Jesus, where'er thy people meet;
There they behold thy mercy seat;
Where'er they seek thee thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground.*

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Reveal thy glory to our eyes.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

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

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

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

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

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

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