

The DAWN

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GREECE: He Haravgi (The Dawn), Afxediou 81 AnSo Ilisia, GR 15771 Athens

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

NEW ZEALAND: B. Hanley, RD, Takapau, Central Hawks Bay

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

SPAIN: El Alba, Via S. Leonardo 21, Ottaviano 80044 Napoli, Italy

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HE MAKETH THE STORM A CALM

PSALM 107:29

THE YEAR 1998 has been the year of El Niño. This is the Spanish name for a weather phenomenon that was frequently seen in newspaper headlines as the weather effects of El Niño lashed the United States. El Niño is caused by a stream of warm water which flows to the surface of the Pacific Ocean just southwest of Peru. This year, weather patterns in the United States were severely altered by the phenomenon. Heavy rains caused flooding in the west, south, and southwest. In the northeast it was a mild winter, but with above normal precipitation. Desert areas that normally do not receive any rain were flooded. This El Niño was classified as the strongest of the century.

EFFECTS OF EL NIÑO

The effects of the El Niño season has been loss of crops in California because of flooding and delayed spring planting in farmlands in other parts of the United States, resulting in increased food prices. Insects (pests) have increased during the summer because of wet conditions and less winter damage is expected. Sudden

changes in seawater temperatures may result in a large fish kill in the ocean. Marine life off the coast of Peru has already been affected.

El Niño generates storms in the Pacific Ocean. These have a favorable bearing on the hurricane season in the Atlantic Ocean. When El Niño is present these hurricanes are not as devastating. As the El Niño season ends, farther south in the Pacific Ocean La Niña can be generated. Storm cells were reported in August in this area. These storms have an opposite effect on the Atlantic hurricane season, causing them to be more severe.

INCREASING DISASTERS

A technical journal recently published in graphic format the increasing number of natural catastrophes which were mainly related to weather. (The only exception in the list was volcanic activity.) The caption said, "Since 1960, the number of weather related great natural catastrophes has increased worldwide." Another graphical presentation showed economic losses in billions of dollars per year, and the caption read: "Worldwide economic losses from great natural catastrophes have escalated since the mid-1970's." The graph showed a sevenfold increase in losses (all figures corrected for inflation) from 1960 to 1996. These losses included landslides, forest fires, frost and heat waves, droughts, hail, windstorms, and flooding.

The Prophet Daniel prophesied: "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." (Dan. 12:1) The 'time of trouble' will be upon the social order of earth and the "earth" spoken of in II Peter 3:10

is a symbol for the order prevailing on earth. "The elements shall melt with fervent heat," symbolizes the effect on the elements of our society such as financial, educational, religious, social, and military. An increase in natural catastrophes are not associated with this trouble, but it may be possible to view these as part of God's "judgments . . . in the earth."—Isa. 26:9

The Bible uses natural catastrophes as illustrations of trouble. For example, when the Prophet Elijah was sent to Mt. Horeb, he saw a mighty wind rend the mountain, followed by an earthquake and fire. (I Kings 19:11,12) The wind represented war; the earthquake, social revolution; the fire, anarchy. All these are parts of the great trouble at the end of the age. Perhaps the increase in natural catastrophes and the damage they do is a sign of the proximity of God's kingdom.

WHO CAN CONTROL WEATHER?

There is an adage which says: "Everyone talks about the weather, but no one can do anything about it." This is true. We must accept whatever occurs on that part of the earth where we live. The only one who can do anything about the weather is God, and those delegated by him with this power.

The Prophet Job recognized God's power and answered the question, "Where shall wisdom be found?" (Job 28:12) First he tells of the great value in wisdom, and how only God knows the place where it can be found, citing God's great Creative powers. "God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof [of wisdom]. For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds, and he weigheth the waters by measure

When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder.”—Job 28:23-26

In this text, attention is drawn to the elements of weather: the wind, water, rain, including lightning and thunder. Man can do nothing about these; he can only seek shelter from a severe storm. Finally Job said, “Unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.” (Job 28:28) Hence true wisdom and understanding comes from reverence for God as well as for his plans and purposes.

Man is utterly dependent on air, sunshine, water, rainfall, and nutrients of the earth for the sustenance of life. These are controlled by God. Since man has had to till the soil to raise crops for his food, he has had to add nutrients to the soil and has hoped for rain to water his crops. God, in giving Job a quiz on his great Creative powers, asked Job: “Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain, and a way for the thunderbolt, to bring rain on a land where no man is, on the desert in which there is no man; to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground put forth grass?”—Job 38:25-27, *Revised Standard Version*

There are many places in the earth that have no caretaker, yet vegetation grows because of rain and thunderstorms. Lightning is responsible for converting inert nitrogen in the atmosphere into a useful nutrient form of nitrogen for the soil. It has been estimated that thunderstorms on the face of the earth produce more nitrogen fertilizer than all the chemical fertilizer produced in the world.

Weather phenomena, including sun, wind, rain, thunderstorms, are all essential to life on earth; but hurricanes and violent storms are not

These latter occur because we live on an imperfect earth, in an imperfect society, in which there is little reverence for God among imperfect men. At present, all receive the effects of weather alike. As Jesus said, "... that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."—Matt. 5:45

WEATHER IN GOD'S KINGDOM

In God's kingdom there will be a change in weather patterns to benefit the good and penalize the evil. (Zech. 14:17) Violent storms will become a thing of the past. Our theme text says, 'He maketh the storm a calm'. (Ps. 107:29) The psalm speaks about the distress and trouble suffered by different classes of people being developed in this present evil world, who cry to the LORD in their trouble. The LORD hears their cries and brings them out of their distress. The symbolic portrayal of the great time of trouble at the end of the Gospel Age by a violent storm is most appropriate. The trouble, however, will not endure forever, because God's intervention will make it a 'calm' with kingdom blessings for all.

During our Lord's ministry this illustration was demonstrated in events following the preaching of the Gospel message to the people in Galilee. When he decided to cross the Sea of Galilee to the other side, and after the boat was launched, he fell asleep. A violent storm arose, or as the text describes it, "there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm." (Luke

8:22-24) This was a dramatic fulfillment of Psalm 107:29.

Jesus then questioned his disciples' faith, asking, "Where is your faith?" (Luke 8:25) But his disciples were so awed by what had happened that they said one to another, "What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him." (vs. 25) Never before had they seen or heard of any man who could make a storm a calm as Jesus did on this occasion.

When the trouble at the end of the age ceases, God will say, "Be still and know that I am God." (Ps. 46:10) This is why Jesus asked the question about faith. All of God's people must have faith in the establishment of God's kingdom, no matter how severe the trouble may become.

STORMS OF LIFE

This lesson extends to our walk in life as followers of the Master. There are severe storms encountered by every Christian, difficult experiences of all types. In such situations we should pray to God and he will send relief. We cannot avoid the storms of life, just as we cannot avoid weather patterns that come upon us. However, we can prepare to withstand any storm that comes if we obey Jesus and his Father, and apply the principles of God's Word.

At the conclusion of our Lord's well-known sermon on the mount, Jesus said, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon the house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of

mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Matt. 7:24-27) Jesus gave a most powerful lesson to demonstrate that Christian survival in the present storms of life depends on proper building of our lives on the principles of God's Word.

Soon the present storms of life, and all the natural storm catastrophes endured by mankind, will come to an end. The Prince of Peace will calm the troubled seas and bring a great calm to all of earth's inhabitants. Instead of the hysteria of evil will come the calm of good. What a blessing that will be!

Let us never cease to pray for God's wonderful kingdom. ■

CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE

*When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view I'm lost
In wonder, love and praise.
O, how can words with equal warmth
The gratitude declare
That glows within my inmost heart?
But thou canst read it there.
Through all eternity, to thee
A grateful song I'll raise,
And my eternal joy shall be
To herald wide thy praise.*

—Hymns of Dawn



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INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 1

COURAGE TO SPEAK FOR GOD

KEY VERSE: *"Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit. And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel."*—Amos 7:14,15

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Amos 6:1; 7:7-15

OUR LESSON FINDS Amos speaking to Amaziah, a priest from Bethel, whose rituals included the worship of calves. He was an evil man who sought to frighten and discourage Amos. Amos, like David the shepherd, had been especially called by God to cease from his life of tending the flocks and was, therefore, made a prophet of the God of Israel.

It was during this period in Jewish history that the twelve tribes of Israel were

tions—the two tribes of Judah living in the south, and the ten tribes of Israel living in the north. From his simple life as a shepherd in Judah, Amos was sent with God's message to the idolatrous ten tribe kingdom in the north, in Samaria. These people had settled down to a life of ease and self-gratification, while neglecting the special favors and care of God.

God had especially blessed the twelve tribes of Israel because they were his chosen people. He had brought them out of bond-

age in Egypt and had been careful to order their ways.

He had also given them the Law, and the Prophets. God's judgment rang clear to these favored people, however, when Amos proclaimed to them: "Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"—Amos 3:1-3

As a prophet of God, Amos proclaimed the dire results of Israel's disobedience that would shortly come to pass. There would be calamities, even as he proclaimed: "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!"—Amos 6:1

The prophet, continuing his message in Amos 7, sees the God of Israel standing with a plumbline in his hand. This illustration was intended to convey that he alone was the architect and director of Israel's upright

building. Then, the LORD was seen to use the plumbline to judge Israel and to find them wanting in righteousness. The nation of Israel had been built with great precision, and now it would be destroyed with the same degree of precision.

The false priest, Amaziah, reported to Israel's wicked king, Jeroboam, that Amos was conspiring against him, to which Amos replied: "Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land."—Amos 7:11

Although the words of Amos were directed to the disobedient natural children of Israel and specifically applied to their future captivity, there was, however, a prophetic glimpse of similar proclamations by other prophets.

Later our Lord Jesus and the apostles prophesied against Israel who, through Amaziah, represented false religious worship:

The powerful system of Christendom that has existed throughout the Gospel Age is seen to reap the judgments of God at the end of the age on a far grander scale than Israel experienced

THE SONGS WE SING

KEY VERSE: *"It is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the LORD God, that I may declare all thy works."*—Psalm 73:28

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Psalm 73:1-3,13,14,16-18,21-26

THE SEVENTY-THIRD PSALM begins the third group of psalms known as the Sanctuary or Levitical collection. They have been attributed to Asaph who lived during the reign of Hezekiah, Israel's king, in the period 745-716 B.C. The Scriptures indicate that he was a secretary, or court recorder, to the king (II Kings 18:18, 37), and was a contemporary of Isaiah.

This psalm gives us an account of the conflict he endured along with a temptation to envy the prosperity of a wicked people. The psalmist resented the careless actions and attitude of those evil people around him, who prospered in spite of their lack of devotion and appreciation for the blessings re-

ceived from God. He begins by saying, "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."—Ps. 73:1-3

Although Asaph clearly recognized that God had blessed his people Israel, especially those who had the proper heart condition, he was, nevertheless, nearly overcome by his despair. He then pointed out that the wicked seemed to flourish. They appeared to be healthy with no apparent suffering or pain.

The wealthy proudly flaunted their riches without acknowledging the fact that great wealth oftentimes

has been acquired dishonestly. Furthermore, their relationship with God was sadly lacking as they openly defied him.

Continuing his lamentation, the psalmist revealed the difficulty of his experiences. He said: "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning."—vss. 13,14

The experiences of the wicked rich people had challenged his faith because they were in glaring contrast to a righteous life. Renewing his faith that God is good to the upright in heart, he could not understand why he was being punished unjustly. The psalmist tells us in verses 16-18, that when he entered the sanctuary he received understanding. It was revealed to him that the ungodly wealthy found themselves in slippery places, and that they would be cast down to suffer utter ruin because of their unfaithfulness and disobedience. The sanctuary was a holy compartment in Israel's Tabernacle, which represented total consecration of Christians during this Gospel Age

The judgments which were pronounced upon Israel's wicked wealthy people foreshadowed those judgments which will be poured out upon false religious worship of wealth in Christendom at the end of the age, and which experience has been aptly identified with Babylon because of its much confusion.

It will suffer total destruction because of disobedience and corruption which has marked it throughout the Gospel Age. The closing message of the psalm points, in an antitypical way, to the spiritual class that has been in process of selection by God during the present Gospel Age. —Eph. 4:1-4

The promise is that God will surely direct the affairs of his people, and will assist them to a share in the heavenly calling. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."—Ps. 73:24

This blessed assurance belongs to those who have been called to be joint-heirs with Christ—those who trustingly declare: "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever"—vs. 26 ■

FALSE HOPES

KEY VERSE: *"Unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death."*—*Jeremiah 21:8*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Jeremiah 19:1-4,10,11; 21:1,2,8-10*

DURING THE REIGN of King Josiah of Judah (659-628 B.C.), God called Jeremiah as a young man, to become one of the major prophets of Israel. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."—Jer. 1:5

His ministry covered the period during the reigns of Judah's last three kings: Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah. He lived to see some of his prophecies fulfilled in the destruction and exile of Israel at the hand of the Babylonians.

He also foretold the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity, and from their later dispersion to

their homeland after Jesus' death.—Jer. 32:36-44

Jeremiah has often been called the 'Prophet of Doom', and in our Key Verse we see that his pronouncement to the children of Israel was indeed a foreboding one. The Chaldean forces were approaching Jerusalem, and King Zedekiah had sent Pashur, and Zephaniah the priest, to seek the LORD's protection.

There was no hope for the city, however, and Jeremiah reveals that it is God's will for Babylonian troops to destroy Jerusalem. The prophet urges the people, including the king, to surrender to the Chaldeans rather than attempt to remain in the city, for it would surely be besieged and destroyed. Chances of survival by stay-

ing in the city were slim. Those who remained would either die by the sword, or by famine and pestilence, but whoever left the city and surrendered to the Chaldeans would live. Their options were simple, even as the LORD had said: 'Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death', our key verse.

The prophet was told to obtain an earthen vessel and to take it, along with the elders of the people, and elders of the priests, to the valley of the son of Hinnom, in the vicinity of Tophet. The elders were commanded to accompany Jeremiah to act as reliable witnesses to the events that were to follow.

Once in Hinnom the LORD instructed Jeremiah to tell the children of Israel that their city was to be destroyed because of their idolatrous ways. Hinnom was the notorious place where the fiendish custom of infant sacrifices was carried out, and heathen gods were worshiped with detestable rites.

The earthen bottle that Jeremiah had taken with him on this journey was to be used to illustrate God's judgments upon Israel for their loathesome behavior.

God said, "Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, and shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury." —Jer. 19:10,11

As the bottle was easily and irrecoverably broken, so would Judah and Jerusalem be broken by the invading Chaldean army. Tophet was selected as the place where God's judgments were manifest to signify the forthcoming great slaughter. The Israelites had filled that valley with the slain which they had sacrificed to their ungodly idols.

How wonderful it will be when all false religious worship will end with the establishment of God's kingdom, and God sets before all people, as he did before Israel: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." —Deut. 30:19 ■

ENVISIONING A FUTURE

KEY VERSE: *"My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people."*—Ezekiel: 37:27

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Ezekiel 37:1-11, 25-27*

EZEKIEL WAS ANOTHER of the four major prophets of Israel and was among the captives taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar: He was from a priestly family, and was the son of Buzi, a priest.

He tells us that he began his work as a prophet in the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin. His writings spanned a period of approximately twenty-two years from about the period 613 to 591 B.C.

One of the remarkable visions that God gave through Ezekiel is the "valley of dry bones" in Chapter 37. This prophetic vision pertains to the regathering of the nation of Israel in the latter

part of the Gospel Age, with a clear identification of the bones: "These bones are the whole house of Israel." (Ezek. 37:11) As a nation, the Israelites became scattered a few years after Jesus was crucified, but by God's great providence his people are now once again regathered to their own land.

The symbolic picture of dry bones, representing the regathering process of the nation, is comprised of three distinct states of development. First there was a noise, and a shaking as the bones came together to form a complete skeleton. Next were seen the growth of sinews together with flesh and skin to cover the bare skeleton.

The third and final stage of development consisted of giving these lifeless forms the breath of life. "Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the LORD God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."—vss. 9,10

For nearly two thousand years the Jewish people were scattered abroad, living as aliens and strangers with no land they could call their own. Then, in the latter years of the 19th century, a movement known as Zionism began to promote Palestine as a homeland for the Jews.

A few years later, during World War I, British troops liberated Jerusalem from Ottoman-Turkish control which had continued since 1517. Palestine came under a British mandate, and the Balfour Declaration pledged British support for a Jewish home in Palestine.

These very small beginnings are likened to the

less framework 'came together'. There was, however, 'no flesh' to cover the 'bones', and no 'breath of life' in them.

Next, Ezekiel saw the skeletons being clothed with 'flesh' and 'skin', and with 'sinews' holding them together. The bare 'skeletons' which began to come together after 1917 experienced various difficulties during the 1920's and 1930's, until in 1948 the State of Israel was formally proclaimed and began its independent existence. The skeletons had been covered, and the Jewish nation was recognizable among the world family of nations. The giving of life to this body is still future, because Israel became a nation without the Spirit of God.

Tremendous events have occurred in the lives of the Jewish people since the late 19th century, and we may expect God's power to continue to be manifested in a remarkable way in the near future, during the time when he brings all of that nation back in the resurrection, and pours his Holy Spirit upon them as he has promised in his Word: I "shall put my Spirit in you,

RENEWAL AND WORSHIP

KEY VERSE: *"Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee."*—Nehemiah 9:6

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Nehemiah 8:13-9:3*

AFTER THE OVERTHROW of Judah's last king, Zedekiah, the children of Israel were taken captive and exiled to Babylon. There they remained in captivity for seventy years. During that long period of time God continued to care for his favored people although they had been disobedient to his laws, and were made to suffer the consequences. The Word of God records the experiences that the Israelites had when it was time for them to return from exile. Together they began to rebuild Jerusalem

Ezra and Nehemiah were the two principal servants who were especially used by God to provide us with this information.

The Jewish people were set aside by God as a distinct race, and for a special purpose, but after seventy years of living in a foreign land there was the tendency among some to become complacent in their captive surroundings. There were those who preferred to remain in Babylon, having made profitable and comfortable lives for themselves there. When the return from exile became an accomplished fact there was a need to rebuild

their identity spiritually as well as materially. It was one thing to rebuild their capital city Jerusalem, its walls and temple, but they also must remember their unique history as a peculiar people, and bring an end to the practice of mixed marriages which had become common as exiles.

Ezra played an important role in teaching the Law to the returning children of Israel. As all the people gathered together, "Ezra the priest brought the Law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month."—Neh. 8:2

The Israelites had a religious new year that occurred in the springtime, as well as a civil new year occurring six months later in the autumn. This was an integral part of their Sabbath system which was based on the number seven, and multiples of seven.

These Sabbath celebrations were special holy days, whether they happened every seventh day, or year, or in the case of their civil new year, at the beginning of the seventh month. They were important and long established features of their Law

The celebration of the civil new year was called the Feast of Tabernacles, or Booths. In past years the Jews were well acquainted with this event as given by Moses in their Law. Now they had forgotten it, so Ezra met with the priests and chief elders among the Jews, and endeavored to teach the people concerning this special occasion. "They found written in the Law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month."—vs.14

The Israelites were commanded to reside in 'booths' which were temporary dwelling places, which served to remind them of their freedom from bondage and their sojourn in the wilderness. it was a time of great rejoicing and ingathering of their crops, which, in a grand way, typified the coming kingdom when the ingathering fruitage of the spirit will restore mankind back to God's image again.

That will be a time of great rejoicing and blessing for the whole world of mankind, and thus will be fulfilled the meaning of this feast ■

LET US GIVE THANKS

*"I will offer to thee the sacrifice of
thanksgiving, and will call
upon the name of the LORD."*

Psalm 116:17

THROUGHOUT THE United States, on the fourth Thursday of November, millions of people will, for a few hours, turn away from the regular pursuits of life and, in a way at least, give thanks to God for the blessings of the year. Among these will be many sincere worshipers of God, those who at heart are desirous of doing his will in all that they think, and say, and do. With many, Thanksgiving Day will be one of feasting and merrymaking, and happy indeed will be those who remember that all the blessings of life which they enjoy from day to day come to them from the Giver of every good and perfect gift, even the LORD, the Creator of heaven and earth.

It is appropriate at all times to give thanks to the LORD, and followers of the Master do not wait for special occasions to express their appreciation to their Heavenly Father for the spiritual and ma-

terial blessings which are daily their portion. The Apostle Paul wrote that we should give thanks in everything, and if we follow this admonition every day will be one of thanksgiving. Every hour of the day there will be much for which our hearts will turn to the LORD in grateful appreciation.

It is also appropriate that we observe special occasions of thanksgiving. At such times we can recall in a more particular sense the many ways in which the LORD has blessed us throughout the year, and recalling these, renew our determination to show our appreciation to him. We are glad for a special occasion to "give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."—Ps. 106:1

CAUSES FOR THANKFULNESS

There is never a time in the Christian life when the blessings received from the LORD are not more abundant than we could reasonably ask or expect. If we are not in the habit of noting from day to day the many ways in which the LORD manifests his blessings toward us, we will be surprised, when noting them, to realize what the LORD has really done for us. We can never, of course, count all of our blessings, and should we attempt to do so, we would find, even as did the psalmist, that "they are more than can be numbered."—Ps. 40:5

Many of the LORD's blessings are common to all of his people, differing only in the manner in which they apply to their individual experiences in life. Along physical lines there are the blessings of the sunshine and the rain; of food, shelter, and raiment. To all of his people the LORD gives spiritual strength and guidance. He fills them with his Spirit in proportion as they are emptied of self and devote themselves to the doing of his will. How

thankful indeed we should all be for the assurance that he is more willing to give his Holy Spirit to those who ask him than is an earthly parent to give good gifts to his children!—Luke 11:13

We can all be thankful for the LORD's grace that through another year has kept us from falling, that we are still rejoicing in the truth and in the privilege we have of laying down our lives in his service. This is a great cause for thankfulness. True, we expected that the LORD would continue to hold us in the hollow of his hand, for we relied upon his grace to help in every time of need. But we recall the Apostle Peter's admonition in which he informs us that it is only if we "do these things" that we can have the assurance that we shall "never fall." (II Pet. 1:10) If, therefore, we have been kept from falling by the wayside, it means that the LORD has been pleased with our efforts to do his will, and that it is because of this that he has blessed us with his sustaining grace.

THE BLESSING OF THE TRUTH

Those who have known about the LORD's Divine plan for many years can be thankful that throughout these years the LORD has become ever more precious and that his truth has continued in brilliance as they understand it more. That such have maintained a clear vision of the great fundamentals of that plan is evidence of the LORD's keeping power in their lives. They have no will of their own, but are determined that his will only shall rule supreme in their lives, regardless of what that might mean in the way of sacrificing the flesh and its interests.

Others have been blessed with a knowledge of the truth within more recent years. How we rejoice

with them! It is impossible to adequately give thanks to the LORD for opening the eyes of our understanding in order that we might, through the vision of present truth, behold his glory. This we know, however, that whereas once we were spiritually blind, now we can see, and oh, how glorious the vision that enables us to comprehend the Divine plan for the blessing of both the church and the world. May our 'first love' for the LORD and for his truth never grow cold! May our appreciation increase daily, and our thankfulness overflow more and more!

HEARTS FAILING FOR FEAR

Today the world is filled with fear as they see the gathering forces of anarchy. We see our Lord Jesus' words fulfilled: "Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."—Luke 21:25,26

People in the world know the probability of the frightful destruction that will be wrought as opposing forces of conflicting ideologies seek to conquer one another—or at least subdue the other by the use of the heart-sickening modern methods of war. Poor world! It knows not that our present Lord, at the exact moment called for in the Divine timetable, will intervene and set in motion the agencies of his mediatorial kingdom to bring peace and joy and life to all mankind!

Jesus spoke of the prophetic "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21) Truth's vision enables us to see beyond the troublous seas, and to know that soon there will be a great calm when, by the administra-

tive powers of the Messianic kingdom, the people will be guided into their desired haven of security and peace. To have this assurance is truly great cause for thankfulness.

JOYS OF FELLOWSHIP

During the year, many have been richly blessed through the privilege of fellowship with one another. How spiritually stimulating this has been! And if our fellowship has been truly that of the Spirit, it has meant much more than merely rejoicing together in the LORD. Of those who speak 'often' together concerning the Divine plan, the prophet tells us that the LORD hearkens, that he hears, and that a "book of remembrance was written." (Mal. 3:16,17) Even where "two or three" (Matt. 18:20) join in fellowship, the LORD is in their midst; and how we should praise him for the blessing he thus bestows upon those who gather in his name.

The LORD has continued to give his people opportunities to serve him by serving one another, and by bearing witness to the truth. Surely we should always be thankful for our privileges of ambassadorship. (II Cor. 5:20) Many of these opportunities have been ours as individuals. Individually, we have been able to speak a word for the Master and for the truth, perhaps to a neighbor, or a friend, or to someone in the world. Those who have enjoyed these experiences know that there is no time when the LORD seems so near to them, and when his truth is a greater inspirational power in their lives, than when they are explaining it to others, especially to those who earnestly want to know and give evidence that the LORD has blessed them with hearing ears and understanding hearts.

Thus we all share in the joys resulting from the knowledge that here and there throughout the world the light of truth is, for the first time, shining into the hearts and lives of those to whom the LORD has given the ability to see. How much would we take for our knowledge of the truth? We know that it is priceless, and that it means more to us than life itself. How thankful we should be, then, that by our sacrifices this priceless treasure has become the blessed possession of others.

MODERN DAY MIRACLE

The evidence is irrefutable that the LORD is with his people today even as he was with his servants in ancient times. We are awestricken and inspired when we read the experience of Moses at the burning bush. 'A miracle', we say, and truly it was. But was the setting on fire of a bush more of a miracle than proclaiming the kingdom message by methods that carry it into millions of homes every week? We think not! Even though the radio and television may have become commonplace and accepted as normal in this modern age, the fact is that the LORD has, through the cooperative efforts of his people, made possible these methods of disseminating the kingdom message. This in itself is a miracle!

When the LORD spoke to Moses at the burning bush, he was bidden to take off his shoes, with the explanation that the place where he was standing was "holy ground." (Exod. 3:5) Should we not feel the same way concerning the ground on which we are standing today: is it not a higher ground of opportunity and honor to which the LORD has now led his people? Realizing the sacredness of the position which is now ours of being the LORD's ambassadors, let us give attentive ears to his voice. and

respond loyally as he makes clear the various ways he wants us to lay down our lives for him. Surely we can do no less at this thanksgiving time of the year than to echo the sentiments of the psalmist when he wrote:

“I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.”—Ps. 116:17,18 ■

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CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

THE PLAN OF GOD IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS— Part 17

JACOB'S SEPARATION FROM LABAN

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

VERSES 1-13 “And he heard the words of Laban’s sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father’s; and of that which was our father’s hath he gotten all this glory.

“And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before.

“And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.

“And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock,

“And said unto them, I see your father’s countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me.

“And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.

“And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me

"If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked.

"Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.

"And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstraked, speckled, and grisled.

"And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I.

"And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.

"I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred."

God's providences continued to overshadow Jacob. Just as the LORD led him to Padan-aram and to the home of Laban, the son of Nahor, twenty years before, now that the Divine purpose in this sojourn had been accomplished it was made clear to Jacob that he was to return to his own country. Happy are those servants of God who can recognize his leadings in all their affairs and who are ready and willing to make great changes in their lives whenever the LORD indicates it to be his will. During this age every consecrated follower of Jesus should bear in mind that he is but a sojourner in the land, and that here he has no continuing city.

When God reveals his will to his people he shapes the circumstances of their lives to coincide therewith. As a result of the Divine blessing in connection with the tremendous increase of his flocks and herds, Jacob noticed that Laban's attitude toward him began to change—that he was no longer as friendly as he previously had been. From the natural standpoint this was quite understandable. We could hardly expect Laban to rejoice over the providence of God which, as he viewed it, had robbed him of much of his wealth. Nevertheless, his attitude must have given Jacob cause for concern.

Jacob doubtless saw a problem developing which easily could become serious, yet the LORD's hand was in it, for it helped to prepare the patriarch to receive the LORD's instructions to return to the land of his fathers. Laban's changed attitude toward his son-in-law prepared him to receive and act upon the instructions of the LORD, and in obeying them Jacob found a way of escape from a trial which might have been too difficult to bear.

After the LORD asked him to return to his own country, Jacob called Rachel and Leah, and explained the matter to them, linking their father's growing unfriendliness with the proposed return to Canaan. This was quite a proper thing to do because they would of necessity be vitally concerned with the move. And, besides, their favorable reaction to the move served Jacob as a further confirmation of the LORD's will in the matter.

VERSES 14-16 "And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?"

“Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money.

“For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children’s: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.”

The decision of Rachel and Leah was quickly reached. Their association with Jacob over a period of twenty years and their observations of the LORD’s providences in connection with his affairs—and theirs also as his wives—made them realize that they had nothing to lose by leaving their father’s house, but much to gain. Their reply to Jacob indicates clearly that they had become somewhat acquainted with his God, and had learned to trust him. They said, ‘Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do’.

In this respect, Rachel and Leah were more reconciled to the LORD’s will for one whom they loved than some others of his people have been. When, in doing his Heavenly Father’s bidding, Jesus announced that he was going to Jerusalem where he would suffer and die, Peter said, “Be it far from thee, Lord.” (Matt. 16:22) When Paul likewise was going to Jerusalem, the brethren advised against it. Let us be watchful lest we set ourselves against the providences of the LORD in the lives of others as well as our own.

VERSES 17-24 “Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels;

“And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan

“And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father’s.

“And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled.

“So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the mount Gilead.

“And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled.

“And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days’ journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead.

“And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.”

When it was definitely decided to start back to Canaan, Jacob lost no time. He began at once to prepare for the journey, timing his movements so as to get away while Laban was busily engaged shearing his sheep. Jacob was a man of God, but many circumstances of his life indicate that he was more timid than a fighter. He loved the God of his fathers, and had great faith in his promises. He was quick to purchase the birthright from Esau when he had an opportunity: and was glad to get the blessing of the birthright from Isaac, but he fled from home, fearing the wrath of his brother.

So now, although God’s providences had overshadowed him during all the time he was in Padan-aram, and the LORD had made it clear to him that the time had come to leave, yet through fear he slipped away quietly without telling Laban of his plans. However, in God’s dealings with Jacob we have wonderful examples of how he can

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Concord KATD 990 11:30 a.m.
Los Angeles KIEV 8870 8:45 p.m.
Riverside (Sat.)
KPRO 1570 8:00 a.m.

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

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LaSalle WLPO 1220 9:45 a.m.
Marion WFRX 1300 9:15 a.m.

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Hammond WJOB 1230 8:30 a.m.

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WWMR 96.3 fm 8:45 p.m.

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WTMR 800 2:30 p.m.
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New York WEVD 1050 6:45 a.m.

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

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Cincinnati WSAI 1530 8:30 p.m.

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Carlisle WHYI 960 8:15 a.m.
Pittsburgh KQV 1410 7:30 p.m.

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The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.
—Proverbs 9:10

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 CJNS 1240 7:15 a.m.
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 CJNB 1040 7:15 a.m.
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BRITISH WEST INDIES

Trinidad Radio Trinidad 610
 10:30 p.m.

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 105.9 fm and 700 am 6:15 a.m.

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

Psalms 43:3

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 Tuscaloosa 403BF 6:30 a.m.

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ARKANSAS

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Chico K2210 4:30 a.m.
 Los Angeles TV6 4:30 a.m.
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 Los Angeles KSTV
 Chan. 44,54 7:00 a.m.
 San Diego Cablevision
 Chan. 3 10:00 a.m.
 Santa Barbara
 Ch. 25 KSTV 7:00 a.m.
 Ventura Ch. 57 KSTV 7:00 a.m.

FLORIDA

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

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"It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good."
—I Samuel 3:18

We know not what is for our highest welfare. Sometimes those things which we crave and desire to grasp, considering them to be good, might really be to our disadvantage. Blessed are they who are able by faith to pierce the gloom of every trial and difficulty and perplexity, and to realize that "The LORD knoweth them that are his," and that he is causing all things to work together for their good. We are to wait patiently for the LORD, and to take patiently such experiences as his providences may mark out for us, questioning not the wisdom, the love and the power of him with whom we have to do.

—Daily Heavenly Manna, November 2

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(Continued from Page 31)

weaknesses and mistakes of his people, and care for them despite their fears. In this case, after Laban learned of Jacob's flight—which he was sure to do sooner or later—God spoke to him in a dream and warned him not to harm his son-in-law. The margin of verse 24 states that Laban was not to speak to Jacob 'from good to bad'.

It was probably fortunate for Jacob that God did intervene on his behalf in this way. It would have been difficult enough for Laban to be reconciled to the move had Jacob reasoned it out with him before leaving, but to have run away unannounced doubtless made Laban very angry. Thus by attempting to flee from trouble, Jacob actually made matters worse for himself, and only by Divine intervention was a tragedy prevented.

VERSES 25-35 "Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead.

"And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword?

"Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?

"And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing.

"It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad

“And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father’s house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?”

“And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me.

“With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.

“And Laban went into Jacob’s tent, and into Leah’s tent, and into the two maidservants’ tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah’s tent, and entered into Rachel’s tent.

“Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel’s furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not.

“And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images.”

Leaving Padan-aram, Jacob crossed the river Euphrates, and pitched his tents in Mount Gilead. Laban pursued him there, and after a great deal of discussion they separated on outwardly peaceful terms. The precarious position in which Jacob had placed himself by fleeing as he did is revealed in verse 39, where Laban tells him that it is in his power to hurt him, but that the God of Jacob spoke to him saying that he should take heed to speak neither ‘good or bad’ to Jacob.

Laban realized, of course, that according to the various agreements he had made with Jacob all

that he was taking with him was justly his, including Rachel and Leah for whom he had served fourteen years. But Laban knew he had not bargained away his idols, yet they had been taken, and he was insistent that Jacob was responsible for the theft. Rachel had stolen these without Jacob's knowledge of what she had done. Jacob was, therefore, very sure that Laban would not find the images among his goods.

It is not clear just why Rachel stole the images. It would seem that although she had learned much about Jacob's God, and had a great deal of confidence in him, she was not entirely weaned from the worship of the gods of her father. She probably thought that these images would be something tangible to which she could cling in the event that the God of Jacob was unable to care for them in this new venture. Her reverence for the images was not unlike that of millions today who imagine that images of 'saints' can help them in time of need.

VERSES 36-42 "And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?

"Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both.

"This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.

"That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it. whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.

“Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.

“Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.

“Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.”

Although Jacob gave Laban permission to search his goods in an effort to find the stolen images, the thoroughness with which it was done, and Laban's continued insistence, began to irritate him. Laban had revealed that God warned him not to harm his son-in-law, and perhaps this gave Jacob courage. In any event he took occasion to remind his father-in-law that he had not brought anything with him that was not properly his; that he had worked hard for it all, and frequently under very trying circumstances.

Properly, however, even in this outburst of righteous anger, Jacob gave credit to God for caring for him, and in an eloquent testimony to Laban, told him that if it had not been for the LORD he would have been leaving Padan-aram empty handed. From this, Laban would know that it would be futile for him to oppose Jacob. Thus the way was prepared for a reconciliation between the two.

It is well always to realize that our victories and our successes are due to the LORD's care and overruling providences. God's chief blessings upon

his people in this age are spiritual, and as New Creatures we have many enemies. Let us ever realize that we cannot cope with these in our own strength, and that our victories over them are by the LORD's grace. Let us remember that greater is he who is for us than all who are against us.

VERSES 43-55 "And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born?

"Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.

"And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar.

"And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap.

"And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed.

"And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed;

"And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.

"If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee.

"And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee:

"This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm.

"The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac.

"Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount.

"And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place."

There was no real answer to Jacob's reasoning concerning his rightful ownership of his wives and of the flocks which he had acquired by bargain from Laban. And no one could deny that the LORD had blessed him in acquiring them. But Laban insisted that they were his. Like the proverb, 'He was convinced against his will; hence of the same opinion still'.

Laban realized, however, that there was nothing he could do about it, so he suggested entering into a covenant with Jacob, to which the latter agreed. A pillar of stones was erected as a token of this covenant and as a marker for the boundary line between them. Three names are given to this pillar: Jegar-sahadutha, Galeed, and Mizpah.

Mizpah means 'watchtower', hence Laban's statement in connection with it, 'The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another'. (vs. 49) While this is frequently thought of as a symbol of unity, it is actually that of separation. The pillar was to mark the separation between Jacob and Laban. They were to go different ways, and

the suggestion that the LORD watch between them evidently was intended not only to act as a safeguard over Laban's children, but also would stand between them to keep them separated, that they would not come near to each other, especially to do injury. See verses 51-53.

Jacob expressed his appreciation to the LORD for this happy conclusion to a situation which could have been disastrous, by offering a sacrifice—a thank offering. The next morning Laban bade farewell to all concerned and returned to his home, leaving Jacob free to go on his way toward Canaan. ■

Joy Dependent Upon Hope

There could be no joys were it not for our blessed hopes. If our joys were dependent upon circumstances of this life merely, we should be without joy; and, as the apostle has declared, be "of all men most miserable." (I Cor. 15:19) It is when hope lays firm hold upon the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word, that joys spring up as flowers in a desert, vivified by our tears—such flowers of joy and blessing as the poor world in its wilderness condition could not produce or imagine. And as our joys depend upon our hopes, they depend also upon our activities. It is not sufficient that a promise has been left us, and that our hope has grasped the promise. By Divine arrangement the joy which springs into being through the implanted hopes and prospects must be nourished by prayer, and by activity in the LORD's service.—*The*

CHAMPIONS OF THE FAITH

A FEW NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

THE MOST OUTSTANDING New Testament example of a champion of the faith is Jesus, who is our Redeemer and Head. Not only did God reveal the 'light' to him in a marvelous manner, but he was faithful to the obligations the truth exacted of him. To Jesus, even as to Ezekiel, the heavens were opened, and in a more outstanding manner. Jesus, unlike the prophets, anticipated the privilege of service, and was alert to ascertain the Father's will. "Lo, I come," wrote the psalmist concerning him, "to do thy will, O God."—Ps. 40:4-8; Heb. 10:5-10

In these words we have expressed the true spirit of consecration. While no one is called into Divine service without being shown the necessary light by which he is enabled to serve acceptably, it is also true that the beauties of the Divine plan are revealed only to those who indicate their willingness to do the will of God. True consecration is not making a bargain with the LORD, but it is a whole-hearted expression of our desire and determination to do his will, ever and always, regardless of what

that will might be, and what our faithfulness in doing it might cost.

THE HEAVENS OPENED TO JESUS

This is the thought expressed in the words, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God'. In a general way, Jesus knew considerable even before this concerning the plan of God. He realized that he had come into the world to perform a special mission, and at the age of twelve was concerned about his "Father's business." (Luke 2:49) But not until the proper time came, and he demonstrated his willingness to do the Father's will, were the heavens opened so he could behold the glory of God and learn the details of the Divine mission which had been assigned to him.

How wonderfully faithful was Jesus in meeting the responsibilities imposed upon him! Peter epitomized the Master's life in one short statement: He "went about doing good." (Acts 10:38) We cannot imagine the Master doing anything else but good, even as God has always been doing good to his creatures. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift. (James 1:17) The greatest good the Creator had purposed to do for the human race was to be accomplished through Jesus, and it was inevitable that every detail of Jesus' life of faithfulness should exemplify the spirit of benevolence, and together add up to make that one great sacrifice which was consummated at Calvary—that good deed which was meritorious to redeem the whole world from sin and death.

When on the cross Jesus cried, "It is finished," he had reached the end of a life of sacrifice to which he had been inspired by the 'light' which had been shown him when the heavens were opened. He had

seen the meaning of that vision, and forthwith bound his sacrifice to the altar until it was wholly consumed. While it is true that the completion of his sacrifice at Calvary was a wonderful event, and somewhat spectacular when compared with the lesser deeds of love which made up his everyday life, nevertheless it was these that helped to prove his faithfulness, and they led up to that glorious consummation which made him the Redeemer of the world.

THE NIGHT COMETH

As we join that little band of disciples which followed so closely to Jesus and observed the details of his life, we note his untiring zeal and devotion to God and to the service which had been given into his hands. He said: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is called day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:4) In the first instance, Jesus used these words with reference to his own earthly ministry. His 'night' came when he was arrested and crucified. To him the night had settled down only when it was impossible to say anything further concerning the plan of God. Even while hanging on the cross, Jesus preached a wonderful sermon on restitution to the thief when he said to him: "Thou shalt be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43) The thief will be given an opportunity to enjoy everlasting life here on earth when Jesus sets up his kingdom.

The 'works' of the Father, which Jesus was commissioned to do, were the preaching of the kingdom message—illustrating them by his miracles—preparing the disciples to be his ambassadors after he returned to his Father; and giving his flesh for the life of the world. In carrying out this mission he

was never guided by his own preferences. He was glad to toil and suffer as the Heavenly Father indicated it to be his will. He did not purposely expose himself to danger before the due time. He did not court persecution just to be a martyr.

Jesus loved all mankind and would have gladly preached the kingdom message to Gentiles and Jews alike, but he recognized the times and seasons of the Divine plan and was guided by them. Hence, Jesus said to his disciples, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."—Matt. 10:5,6

In all these ways we can with spiritual profit follow the example of Jesus. Like him, we should work while it is called day, for we also know that the night cometh wherein no man can work. For some of us this might well be when we have reached the end of the way, or when the great 'time of trouble' settles down upon the whole earth with such devastating effect that it will no longer be possible to bear witness to the truth. In either case, we are not to cease telling the glad tidings of the kingdom as long as it is physically possible.

Time prophecies of the Divine plan served to guide the Master with respect to the need of withholding the Gospel from the Gentiles until the full end of the seventieth prophetic week. (Dan. 9:24-27) But when he told his disciples that they were to go into all the world to preach the Gospel it was the Divine intention that this commission was to remain in effect until the last member of the body of Christ has finished his course. There is no time prophecy that is intended to set aside this inspired

True, the preaching of the Gospel accomplishes a different result now than it did in the beginning of the Gospel Age. In the Divine providence, the kingdom message does a sowing work at one time, and a reaping work at another time. Besides, the Gospel today includes dispensational truths which were not due to be understood earlier in the age, and would have been untimely to preach, even if known. But these slight variations in the message, and the different results of our labors, do not change the commission to let our light shine before men by holding forth the Word of life in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation.

SAUL SAW THE LIGHT

In the experience of Saul of Tarsus we have another example of one to whom the Lord revealed the light of truth, and who, in turn, bound his sacrifice to the altar. It was a glorious vision that was given to Saul. He saw a light shining above the brightness of the sun at noonday. He heard a voice speaking to him—the voice of Jesus of Nazareth whom Saul was persecuting. He even caught a glimpse of the glorified Jesus, seeing him as “one born before the due time.”—I Cor. 15:8, (*marginal translation*)

Saul was quick to grasp the meaning of this wonderful experience. He was doubtless well acquainted with the manner in which God dealt with the ancient prophets, and knew that an experience of this kind could mean only that he was being called into a special Divine service. Realizing this, he inquired, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6) This is the meaning of revealed truth. Are you rejoicing that the eyes of your understanding have been opened to behold the beauty of the

Divine plan, and through the truth, to discern the glory of God? Continue to rejoice, but remember that this blessing is yours because God has something for you to do, not a mission as great as that assigned to Saul, but one nevertheless that will become great in the Lord's sight as you prove faithful to it. It is a mission that will require the remainder of your life to perform.

PAUL, CHAMPION OF THE FAITH

From the day that Paul accepted the responsibility imposed upon him by the light from heaven, he was a bond slave of Jesus Christ. He had no other mission in life but to seek "first the kingdom of God." (Matt. 6:33) How true were his words, "This one thing I do"! (Phil. 3:13) Whatever of material needs confronted the apostle, he treated them as mere incidentals upon which as little as possible of time and attention should be spent, his chief concern ever and always being the 'one thing' to and for which he had been called of God. This is why he could testify to the king and tetrarch of lands comprising present day Palestine, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."—Acts 26:19

Paul knew that the 'heavenly vision' was not given to him merely for his own benefit, for he realized clearly that he was called to be an ambassador for Christ. The Lord asked Ananias to tell Paul what great things he was to suffer for the cause of Christ, and in order for this to be true it was essential for him to make known the Gospel of Christ. (Acts 9:15,16) It was Jesus' faithfulness in letting his light shine that led him to Calvary, and Paul's faithfulness along the same line that led him to the Roman prison and death. Any Christian can

by neglecting to hold forth the Word of life. And it is well to remember that it is only those who suffer with Christ who will reign with him.

THE APOSTLES' EXAMPLE

The progress of truth throughout the ages has not been gradual, but rather it has been intermittent and dispensational, and as the LORD has revealed it to faithful servants of his own choosing. Thus God used the prophets, and to each of them he gave a special message that was due and needed at the time. Isaac and Jacob, for example, did not, through their own studies, increase the light that was given to Abraham. The privilege of the children of Israel was to be faithful to the light that God gave to them through Moses, not to change or add to it. They failed because they were unfaithful to that light.

There was a marvelous revelation of truth through Jesus, and from Pentecost on, through the apostles. This was by special revelation, and in keeping with important time features of the Divine plan. It was not to be expected that following the death of the apostles the light would increase through the efforts of some of the brethren remaining to delve into the mysteries of God. The responsibility of the LORD's people, on the other hand, was to hold fast to what had been revealed to them through God's specially chosen servants. It was because some of them failed in this that a great apostasy developed.

While God's rich blessing was upon the faithful members of the church throughout all the age, no further outstanding revelation of the truth occurred after the apostles died. It was a case of holding fast rather than making progress. Church

history reveals that there were individuals in every part of the age who held to the great kingdom Gospel as taught by Jesus and the apostles, despite the errors with which they were surrounded. These were the wheat which, according to Jesus' parable, were to grow together with the tares.

THE END OF THE AGE

In the end of the age however, another special revelation of truth was due, and was foretold by Jesus in one of his prophecies concerning the time of his Second Presence. He said that he would come forth and serve the household of faith with "meat in due season." (Luke 12:37, Matt. 24:45) One of the great truths which was 'due' to be understood now was the hope of restitution blessings for the world. The Early Church understood this but it was measurably lost sight of throughout the age by all except possibly a very few. In the end of the age, however, it was important that the church have this doctrine restored, because soon humanity would enter into restitution blessings.

The promised 'meat in due season' included a clearer understanding of all the great fundamentals of the Divine plan. This "heavenly vision" which has been given to the church in this end of the age through "that faithful and wise steward" embraces all the precious items of truth as they were known to the various servants of God in the past. (Luke 12:42; Matt. 24:45) It has given us an enhanced appreciation of the Abrahamic Covenant. We understand the purpose of the Law Covenant, and why it was added to the original covenant made with Abraham. We now understand the real purpose of the first advent of Jesus and why his kingdom was not established in power and great glory

at that time. We understand that the purpose of the Gospel Age was not to convert the world, but to select a people to be the bride of Christ and to share the glory of his kingdom.

How glad we are to have so clearly established that fundamental fact of truth that the “wages of sin is death” and not eternal torment! (Rom. 6:23) The Early Church understood this, but during the Dark Ages it became buried in the rubbish of human tradition.

OUR LORD'S RETURN

How satisfying is the truth pertaining to the manner of our Lord's return, and that he is even now present as a “thief in the night,” leading his people as Chief Reaper in the prophetic harvest which is the end of the age! (I Thess. 5:2) The harmony of all these great truths and the special beauty with which they have been made to shine in this due time of the harvest has not been the result of the laborious study of all the LORD's people, but by a special dispensation of Divine grace reaching us through the returned Lord who used ‘that servant’ to minister this rich portion of spiritual food to the household of faith.

PRESENT DAY CHAMPIONS

Let us rejoice in this heavenly vision, but let us remember that if our ‘eyes’ have been blessed to ‘see’ the truth, if we are among the favored few to whom the LORD has shown the ‘light’, it is because he wants us to sacrifice our all in his service, to bind our sacrifice with cords “even unto the horns of the altar.” (Ps. 118:27) It is just as true of us now as it was of Noah, Moses, the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles. that God has revealed his plan because he

wants us to cooperate in it; so let us endeavor not to be disobedient to the 'heavenly vision'.

We should see to it that our lives conform to the high standards of righteousness set forth in the Word of God. We should add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. If these things be in us, and abound, we will not, according to the Greek text, be "idle" in the knowledge that has been given to us; that is, we will be using it in keeping with the Divine will, and that will is that we proclaim the truth to all the world as a witness.—II Pet. 1:4-8

Let us not be misguided by human philosophy which seeks a method of getting into the kingdom without sacrifice and suffering, and decides that it is no longer the LORD's will for his people to let their light shine for the blessing of others. Let us realize that Satan, the prince of darkness, is back of all such philosophy. He confuses the truth in our minds if he can, and when he gets us to believe error, he is quite satisfied that we proclaim it far and wide. But when he finds that we are determined to hold to the purity of the truth, his next effort is to make us believe that it is wrong to preach it to others. If Satan can keep the truth shut up in our hearts, he is almost as pleased as though he had induced us to discard the truth and accept error instead.

The Apostle Paul said of himself, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel," and that is just as true of every one of us today. (I Cor. 9:16) The opportunity is still ours to let our light shine. To Ezekiel the LORD said "Whether they will hear, or

whether they will forbear,” and that is true of us also. (Ezek. 2:5) We are not to judge the LORD’s will in this matter by the results secured. The only result may be the proving of our own faithfulness to the heavenly vision. At times, and for our encouragement, the LORD may give us the privilege of seeing some results from our efforts, but whether he does or not, let us continue to be faithful in binding the sacrifice ‘even to the horns of the altar’. Surely, the LORD has shown us the light, so let us be faithful to it even unto death, and thus receive the “crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

NOVEMBER 5—“Having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.”—Hebrews 10:21,22 (Z. '00-170 Hymn 321)

NOVEMBER 12—“Be not faithless, but believing.”—John 20:27 (Z. '04-89 Hymn 263)

NOVEMBER 19—“Let us watch and be sober.”—I Thessalonians 5:6 (Z. '02-239 Hymn 272)

NOVEMBER 26—“The LORD said unto Moses, What is that in thine hand?”—Exodus 4:2 (Z. '94-143, Z. '01-348 Hymn 191)

EUROPEAN TRIP REPORT

BY ROBERT AND DEANNA GORECKI

IN LATE MAY, we began a month's visit with the brethren in Germany, Poland, France and England. Our trip began in Korbach, Germany where approximately 140 brethren assembled for a three-day convention. Many wonderful discourses were given on the Word of God including a baptismal discourse. This was followed by an immersion service held on a farm 30 miles from the convention where two sisters were immersed.

After attending the German Convention, we traveled into Poland where it was easy to see the effects of the many years of suppression of the Polish people. We were told conditions had improved greatly although it was still possible to see horses pulling plows and farm wagons and men and women in the fields gathering hay with pitchforks. Each night a meeting was held in a different town or village where many of the brethren came by bus, walked, or drove to the meeting by car. Each class in Poland had their own meeting hall, sometimes a designated room in a home but most often a sepa-

On Sunday, a convention was held in Poland at a school where approximately 500 brethren assembled. It was a hot day. There were simple wooden chairs, no fans or air conditioning, yet all assembled were anxious to hear the message of truth delivered from God's Word. There were five discourses which began early in the morning and most everyone was there when the last discourse was given at 4 o'clock. Later in the week, we visited the Polish Retirement Center where 53 elderly brethren live. Even though three share a room, there was much rejoicing because of being together and having the privilege of meeting and studying the Word of God on a regular basis.

We found the brethren, in every class we visited in France and England, sharing the same zeal and love for the LORD as those in Germany and Poland. The first meeting we attended in France had French and Polish brethren and translations were made in both languages. A convention in northern France had approximately 60 brethren in attendance. In every home, we were greeted with loving hospitality. Fellowship and discussions lasted well into the night.

In addition to meeting with the brethren in halls and homes, we also had the privilege of visiting isolated brethren as well as those in hospitals. We visited the retirement home in England where five brethren are living at the present time. Even though there are only two major classes in England, we were happy to visit a number of isolated brethren who were hungering for fellowship and discussions on the Word of God.

Driving over 3,500 miles we visited approximately 1,000 brethren in our travels. We found it

difficult to leave each home or gathering, knowing that, in many cases, we may never see those dear brethren again. Throughout the trip, we found all the brethren eager to discuss the Word of God and asking many questions about the witness activity that takes place in America. They were thrilled to hear how extensively the radio, television and printed page, along with the Internet, are being used to proclaim the wonderful message of truth and the hope of God's coming kingdom. All the brethren continue to pray for the kingdom that it may soon come and end earth's weary night of sin and sickness.

We appreciate the privilege that was ours of becoming better acquainted with our brethren in Europe and sharing their love and zeal for the LORD and his work. ■



OBITUARIES

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to the families and friends in the loss of these dear ones. We appreciate information concerning any brethren to be included in this list.

Brother Jack Specht, Middletown, NY—August 30. Age, 80.

Brother Ed Worfler, New York, NY—September 4. Age, 81.

Sister Helen Urban, Detroit, MI—September 27. Age, 95.

Sister Mary Best, New York, NY—October 2. Age, 80.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

SALVATION AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

QUESTION: Dear Dawn: Some of my friends who claim to be saved live more carelessly than I choose to do; yet they tell me I am lost because I have never joined a church, and that they have eternal security because they have done so. I would like your opinion upon this point of constant discussion.

ANSWER: Dear Friend: It is a God-given privilege to be a true Christian, the only way to have communion with the Heavenly Father. Eternal security cannot be bought in any other way than by faithfulness to the "high calling" (Phil. 3:14) of Christian consecration and devotion even "unto death." (Rev. 2:10) Every Christian must wage a valiant battle against the allurements of the world, the temptations of the Devil, and the natural tendencies of his own fallen and imperfect nature. If this battle is not constantly pressed, the worldly mind prospers at the expense of the spiritual life.

Once devoted Christians, through careless living, have become alienated from God, and their love for him and his ways is cooled, they jeopardize their standing with God. This can be because of the love of money, the pleasures of the world, or the desire for honor among men who know not the Gospel. They would be replacing their reverence and devotion which they had promised to God.

There is much worldly-mindedness among many Christians today. In fact, some have become church members because of business or social advantages. Others enjoy the recreational facilities

now commonplace. Such are not true footstep followers of Jesus Christ, as it is written, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8:9) Those who are called of God and desire to do his will are attentive to the standard set by the Master when he said, "Let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16:24) Surely the truth expressed in the apostolic statement found in Galatians 6:8,9 is not hard to understand—"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

It is not given to us to judge another individual in his relationship to God, but it is proper that we examine ourselves. Whether it is our lot to serve him in the heavenly or earthly division of the kingdom of God, to the extent that we carefully follow the principles of righteousness in our lives we shall be blessed. Let us not be smug in our own self-righteousness, but rather seek the righteousness that comes through Christ's death. ■

"Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. For-sake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."—Proverbs 4:5-7

TALKING THINGS OVER

“I WISH I KNEW WHAT TO DO!”

HOW OFTEN WE hear this statement made by those who are zealous for making known the glad tidings of the kingdom. May we suggest one thing that practically all can do is to send one or more ‘*Dawn*’ gift subscriptions to their friends. Just think, one gift subscription means that “*The Dawn*” magazine enters the home twelve times during the year as your messenger of truth. Isn’t this something worthwhile doing? Each subscription is only \$3.00, and you can have four names entered for just \$10.00! It is simple to do when you use the coupon(s) below and on the next page:

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SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

J. Panucci

Trujillo, Peru	November 15-18	Berazategui, Argentina	25-29
Guayaquil, Ecuador	19-21	Montevideo, Uruguay	30-Dec. 3
Titicaca, Bolivia	22-24	Curitiba, Brasil	December 4-7

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

K. Fernets

San Diego, CA November 26-29

R. Goodman

Melbourne, Australia Nov. 11
Brisbane, Australia 15

R. Gorecki

New Haven, CT November 1
San Diego, CA 26-29

S. Jeuck

Louisville, AL November 8

R. Shahan

Claymont, DE November 8

L. Wesol

St. Petersburg, FL November 8

A. Williams

Middletown, NY November 8



"Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."

—Psalm 100

CONVENTIONS

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

NEW HAVEN, CT, CONVENTION, November 1—Italian American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact Mrs. Richard Suraci, 171 Johnson Rd., Hamden, CT 06518

Phone: (203) 248-3793

JERSEY CITY, NJ, PRE- THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 21,22—Masonic Temple, 1912 Morris Avenue, Union, NJ. For information contact Mrs. Charlotte Teklinski, 84 Arthur St., Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660

Phone: (201) 440-0925

DETROIT, MI, MONTH-END CONVENTION, November 22—Redford YWCA, 25940 Grand River, Redford Twp. Contact: Frank Nemesh
Phone: (248) 649-6599

SAN DIEGO, CA, CONVENTION, November 26-29—Pt. Loma Nazarene College, 3900 Lomaland Drive. Contact: Sandra Bierman, 624 Altamira Ct., Vista, CA 92083

Phone: (760) 630-1717

PHOENIX, AZ, NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, December 31, 1998-January 3, 1999—Embassy Hotel, 2577 Greenway Road & I-17. For information contact: Mrs. Esther Bachorski
Phone: (602) 546-0430

CHICAGO, IL, NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, January 1-2, 1999—Elk Grove High School, 500 Elk Grove Blvd., Elk Grove Village, IL. Contact: Donna Whitaker

Phone: (630) 293-4810
