

The Dawn

A Herald of Christ's Presence

NOVEMBER 2021





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*“Now these things happened to them as
an example . . . for our instruction.”
1 Corinthians 10:11*

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The DAWN

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The Voice of Thanksgiving

*“I will wash mine
hands in
innocency: so will
I compass thine
altar, O LORD: That
I may publish with
the voice of
thanksgiving, and
tell of all thy
wondrous works.”
—Psalm 26:6,7*

IN THE UNITED STATES, Thursday, November 25th will be observed as Thanksgiving Day. It is an occasion on which the people are encouraged to remember and give thanks for the bounties and blessings of life which they enjoy. Certainly it is appropriate that all God's

creatures recognize his goodness, and endeavor in whatever way they can to show their appreciation. It is better to be thankful one day out of the year than not to be thankful at all.

Christians, who have dedicated their lives to follow in the footsteps of Jesus should, above all others, give thanks to God. Every day with them should be an occasion for thanksgiving. Together with all the people, they appropriately give thanks to God for the material blessings of food, raiment, homes, family, and the many other good things of daily life. However, for those who are walking in

the path and after the pattern set forth by the Master, there are blessings of even greater importance and value than those which have to do with their temporal needs.

All should be thankful for the blessings related to the necessities of temporal life. How much more thankful we should be for those divine favors which relate to the necessities of eternal life! One of these spiritual blessings which is of prime importance is the knowledge of God. "This is life eternal," Jesus said, "that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3) A knowledge of God is possible only by knowing his plan, or as our text states, his "wondrous works," and our part in them. To know our part in the plan of God, and our share in his works, means having a knowledge of the manner in which he is dealing with us, as well as an understanding, by faith, of his providences in our lives, whether bitter or sweet.

KNOWLEDGE OF CREATION

To know and believe what the Scriptures say concerning the creative works of God is essential to knowing the Creator himself. In those awe-inspiring works, as outlined in the Book of Genesis, we see displayed God's mighty power, his infinite wisdom, and his boundless love. In the events which followed creation we see God's righteous justice displayed. How thankful we are for this knowledge! How glad indeed we should be that the Lord has given us eyes to discern and hearts to believe what his Word declares to be the truth concerning creation. How wonderful is this knowledge as compared with the unbelief of those whose god is chance.

In the creation of man and God's provision for him we see the purpose of the Creator concerning the human race. Man was made "a little lower than the angels," the Scriptures declare. (Ps. 8:4-8) He was not half human and half angel, or half earthly and half spiritual. He was not put upon the earth to live temporarily, to suffer and to die, with the possibility of enjoying a better existence in some other part of the universe later, or a far worse experience of suffering eternally in a fiery hell. A knowledge of the truth concerning man's creation and the divine purpose for him may seem commonplace, but it is well to remember with thankfulness what it means to us in connection with the complete plan of God through which the Creator's character is revealed. It is a fundamental truth which we should ever "publish with the voice of thanksgiving."

MAN'S FALL

Beautifully simple and understandable is the truth concerning the fall of man. Having been created perfect, and in the image of God, the Creator properly required Adam's obedience. However, he disobeyed, and the penalty of death was pronounced upon him. Here God's justice is revealed. Everything that Adam possessed, including life, was his because of God's goodness. The least he could have done was to manifest his appreciation by obeying the Creator's law, but he failed to do even this. Hence the withdrawal of his blessings by God was just and right. "Unto dust shalt thou return," demonstrates God's justice, and how thankful we should be to have learned that the penalty was not, "Unto eternal torment shalt thou go."—Gen. 2:15-17; 3:16-19

It is a blessed thing to know the truth in its individual facets, but when we recognize that its every detail contributes to our full understanding of God, then our knowledge becomes far more precious. God's justice condemned the race to death, but divine love provided a means of redemption from that penalty. The Creator's love immediately became operative, and he began to make promises of future deliverance. The "seed" of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head. The "seed" of Abraham would bless all the families of the earth. A "King," a "Messiah," a "Prince of Peace," an "Everlasting Father," a "Redeemer," was to be sent. (Gen. 3:14,15; 22:16-18; Ps. 2:4-7; Dan. 9:25,26; Isa. 9:6,7; 59:20) These promises reach a grand climax in the words of the Apostle Peter, who explained that there would come "times of restitution [Greek: restoration] of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:20,21) How inspiring it is to "publish" these promises with the "voice of thanksgiving!"

GOD'S UNSPEAKABLE GIFT

How meaningful also is the knowledge of God's gift of his beloved Son in order that his plan for mankind's restitution might be accomplished! Are we truly thankful for an understanding of the familiar text, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" May we never lose our appreciation of this "unspeakable gift" of God's love. (John 3:16; II Cor. 9:15) Rather, let us proclaim the great gift of his Son both

outwardly, and in our own hearts, with the “voice of thanksgiving.”

Because Jesus was faithful in laying down his life to redeem the sin-cursed and dying world, God’s great project of restitution is to be accomplished. This is truly a glorious prospect for all people! Has this knowledge given us such a vivid picture of God’s loving interest in the world of mankind that we, in our endeavor to be like him, thrill over the prospects of the restoration of the human race back to favor with God? Indeed, as consecrated followers of our Head, Christ Jesus, we are in training to be dispensers, with him, of the blessings of restitution to the world in the coming Messianic kingdom.

THE HIGH CALLING

Jesus is the world’s Redeemer, even as he is our Redeemer. As Christians, however, he is also our head, our advocate, our high priest, and our future husband and bridegroom. (Eph. 5:23; I John 2:1; Heb. 4:14; II Cor. 11:2) As we think upon these blessed realities, we are reminded of the glorious privilege that is ours of being workers together with God and with Christ in the outworking of the divine purposes and plan. Ours is a heavenly calling, and we have the privilege of running toward the “mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 3:14

As we think of the various details of God’s loving plan which make it possible for us, as members of the fallen race, to enjoy such a glorious position as partners with him and with Jesus, our “voice of thanksgiving” should know no bounds. With the psalmist, we can say, “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.” (Ps. 103:1)

The Apostle Paul, likewise, expresses the proper appreciation of divine grace that has been showered upon us: “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”—II Cor. 5:14,15

ACCEPTABLE THROUGH CHRIST’S SACRIFICE

We should never forget what the merit, or value, of Christ’s sacrifice truly means to us. Think of the fact that because of this loving provision God views us as righteous in his sight! Through faith in his shed blood, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, and God accepts our best endeavors which come from a pure heart motivation. (Rom. 4:6-8; I John 1:7) Upon this basis we have the privilege of presenting our bodies “a living sacrifice,” no longer dead in sins, with the assurance that they are “holy, acceptable unto God.” This living sacrifice, the apostle explains, is our “reasonable service.” It is the only reasonable way we can properly express our thankfulness for God’s grace.—Rom. 12:1,2

Our text gives us a similar thought. David, who prefigured Christ and the church, said, “I will wash mine hands in innocency.” Jesus was innocent, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” (Heb. 7:26) The sins of the fallen race did not contaminate him. Through the merit, represented in his shed blood, the church enjoys the same blessed position of innocency in God’s sight. We should remember, however, that with Jesus as well as with the church,

innocency before God was possible only through faithfulness in the doing of his will. Righteousness in God's sight is never an inactive attitude, but a positive, active, daily obedience to his will. Jesus said, "Lo, I come ... to do thy will, O God."—Heb. 10:7

Another thought with respect to our righteousness through Christ is brought out by the Apostle Paul when he writes: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:25-27) It is only as we thus wash that we have a standing of innocency before God and have the privilege of offering sacrifice.

Cleansing ourselves with the "water by the word" calls not only for a study of God's Word, but also the bringing of ourselves into harmony with its righteous requirements. Briefly stated, these requirements are: recognition of and repentance for sin; faith in the shed blood of the Redeemer; full consecration to do God's will; and a daily effort to conform our every thought, word and deed to the standards of righteousness set forth in the Bible.

However, there is more to the Christian life than to wash our "hands in innocency." Our text gives us a further thought, saying, "So will I compass thine altar." The cleansing of our lives by the blood of Christ, along with our best efforts to bring them into line with the righteous requirements of the pure "water" of the Word of God, is the necessary prerequisite to sacrifice, but is not of itself the sacrifice.

OFFERING SACRIFICE

In our text, David associates the altar, symbolic of sacrifice, with the voice of thanksgiving. This indicates that whole-hearted thanksgiving calls for sacrifice. As quoted earlier, Psalm 103:1 presents this viewpoint, saying, “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.” The expression, “all that is within me,” denotes all our powers and all we possess. Nothing short of this should be considered an adequate thanksgiving offering to the Lord in return for all that he has done for us.

The Apostle Paul expresses a similar thought, saying, “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.” (Heb. 13:15) Here Paul may have had in mind the statement of Hosea 14:2 where the prophet says, “Return to the LORD. Say to Him, Take away all iniquity; Receive us graciously, For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips.”—*New King James Version*

There are various ways, of course, whereby we can praise God. We can sing hymns of praise, which, without doubt, is pleasing to him. Not a great deal of sacrifice is involved, however, in this form of praise. Nevertheless, it is a delight to raise our voices in songs of praise to the giver of all gifts. We should also express our thanks to God by means of prayer. How blessed to pour out our hearts to him in praise and adoration, telling our Heavenly Father how much we love and appreciate him.

Acceptable sacrifice also includes our service to and on behalf of our brethren in Christ. The Apostle Paul especially commended the brethren at Philippi for their service and sacrifice on his behalf, stating

that such service constituted “fruit” that would abound to their account. Harkening back to the Golden Altar in the Holy of the Tabernacle upon which “sweet incense” was daily offered, the apostle adds that their sacrifice was “an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.” —Exod. 30:1-8; Phil. 4:15-18

WONDROUS WORKS

In our text David explains that to “publish with the voice of thanksgiving” also involves telling of all God’s “wondrous works.” To do this means to bear witness to the truth. David does not mean that we should tell the Lord about his own works. When offering our prayers, we may at times tell the Lord considerable about his plan. However, he knows all about his own works, and it is not necessary for us to remind him of any feature of it. Nevertheless, it is always in order, and needful, to give expression in prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God for all his wondrous works.—Ps. 89:5; 107:8; 150:2

It is to others that we tell of God’s wondrous works. It is by doing this that we show forth the praises of him who has called us “out of darkness into his marvellous light.” (I Pet. 2:9) What a wonderful privilege it is to tell others of God’s works! Every feature of his plan is a delight to his people, and their joy in the truth increases as they tell it to others. Even when relating it to one another, it becomes more precious, more wonderfully sweet.

There is no better way to “publish with the voice of thanksgiving” and praise God than by laying down our lives in sacrifice, service, and in showing forth his wondrous works. When we consider that all we have

and all we hope for are ours by God's grace, then we will know that our debt of gratitude calls for nothing less than the devoting of our all to him, no longer living unto ourselves, but for him each day.

It is this thought that is expressed by David in these words: "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the [sacrificial] death of his saints. O LORD, truly I am thy servant, ... and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds. 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. 116:12-18

In yet another psalm we read: "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing." (Ps. 107:21,22) How clearly does David here, as elsewhere, associate thanksgiving with declaring the works of God. This is a very practical arrangement. Had we received special favors from an earthly friend and wanted to show our appreciation by letting others know of his goodness, there would be no better way to do it than to tell of his works, of what he did for us.

How wonderfully God has favored us, and what rich blessings he has bestowed upon us! How grand are the things he has promised yet to do for us, and not only for us, but also for the whole world. To tell of the Heavenly Father's works it is necessary to publish the truth of his plan, because his love calls

forth the expression of our love in return. Thus, Jesus said: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid."—Matt. 5:14

THANKFUL FOR TRIALS

As we count our many blessings we should not overlook the trials which the Heavenly Father permits to come into our lives. If we had the choosing of our own experiences we would likely avoid the things which vex and try us. However, God, in his wisdom, sees that we need trials, and in his love permits them. If our wills are wholly resigned to him, then we will express with the "voice of thanksgiving" our appreciation that he is providing all our needs, including our trials, which are so necessary for the rounding out of our Christian characters.

Some of our trials may be permitted by God to test our faith and confidence in him. Others are allowed in order to develop our patience and long-suffering. Still others may be in the nature of discipline or instruction from the Lord. In all cases, they are permitted by our Heavenly Father, who is too wise to err and too loving to be unkind. Even though these experiences may be very difficult, God allows them because of his love, and our hearts should respond in grateful appreciation for this evidence that he is supplying all our needs.

"In everything give thanks," the apostle exhorts. (I Thess. 5:18) None but truth-enlightened, fully dedicated Christians can do this whole-heartedly. These know that nothing can come into their lives except that which is for their good. (Rom. 8:28) They know that they are the children of a loving

Heavenly Father who is watching over their every interest. They have the assurance that even the minutest affairs of their lives, illustrated by the hairs of their head, are known by him, and directed according to his wisdom and love.—Matt. 10:30

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD,” is a promise which every Christian should apply to himself and believe with all his heart. (Ps. 37:23) If we are truly thankful for the manner in which the Heavenly Father is directing our lives, then we will avoid resisting or going contrary to his will. Instead, with a prayer in our hearts and praise on our lips, we will continue to pay our vows unto him, keeping our sacrifice on the altar until it is wholly consumed.

We have been blessed with the light of the knowledge of God. His “wondrous works”—the glorious doctrine of his plan—has enlightened us. We have a hope not just for ourselves, but for the entire world. We have the assurance of divine care, forgiveness, help, and of instruction and discipline. All of this convinces us of divine love. Assuredly, we understand that he knows and cares, and that “no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”—Ps. 84:11

Shall we not then respond and “publish with the voice of thanksgiving” God’s glorious character and plan? Let us take to heart the words of Paul: “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; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Eph. 5:18-20 ■

A Great Multitude

Key Verse:

***“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.”
—Revelation 7:15***

Selected Scripture:
Revelation 7:9-17

AS WE STUDY THE VERSES

of our lesson taken from the Book of Revelation, we understand that they relate to a group of believers who, though perhaps with measureable difficulty, are considered overcomers and will be granted a heavenly reward. The Great Multitude, also sometimes referred to as The Great Company, is a class of Christians who, individually speaking, have lived through-

out the Gospel Age, although the Scriptures may infer that a larger portion of these belong to the ending period of the age. (Rev. 7:13,14) Because of their lack of complete faithfulness, they are granted a lesser reward than the hundred and forty-four thousand, who “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” (Rev. 14:1-4) They fall short also of becoming kings and priests with Christ Jesus, who is the Head, Captain, and “King of Kings” of this anointed class which will reign over the earth in God’s promised kingdom.—Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 19:16; 20:4,6

The one calling that has gone out during the present Gospel Age is to follow in Jesus’ footsteps. “If any man will come after me,” Jesus said, “let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke 9:23) An acceptable response to this call requires full faith in

the shed blood of Jesus' sacrifice, as well as an unre-served consecration, or dedication, to do God's will and to follow in the sacrificial footsteps of the Master. Hence, there is no call to be of the Great Multitude. The consecrated are all called in the "one hope" of their calling, and all begotten of the "one Spirit," through the "one faith" found in the Word of Truth. They are "one body," under "one Lord," "one God and Father," and baptized into "one baptism." (Eph. 4:4-6) The division of reward to those who have been part of this one called-out class is the result of some having a lukewarm attitude, lacking zeal, or severely neglecting the carrying out of the required life of service and sacrifice for the Lord, in comparison to those who zealously and diligently seek to do all these things daily.

While those of the Great Multitude class do not deny their relationship with God, they do not sufficiently walk in Jesus' footsteps, perhaps by compromising with the world and its spirit, or by habitually giving in to the fallen tendencies of the flesh. Therefore, they fail to obtain the glorious prize of this Gospel Age, namely, "glory and honour and immortality," and of being "joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. 2:7; 8:17) By contrast, the "more than conquerors," the "little flock," to whom it the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom, rejoice in tribulation, esteeming it an honor to be counted worthy to suffer for Christ.—Rom. 8:37; Luke 12:32; II Tim 2:12

Although they do not gain the position of being members of the body of Christ, the Great Multitude will be granted a rich blessing. They will not sit with Christ in his throne, but will be "before the throne," and serve God "day and night in his temple." (Rev. 3:21; 7:15) God's great mercy has made provision for the Great Multitude class in his plan. Nevertheless, as Christians, let us strive to be of the "little flock," and accounted worthy to share the divine nature as members of the Bride of Christ.—Rev. 19:7; 21:2 ■

Christ Shall Reign Forever

Key Verse: *“The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”*
—**Revelation 11:15**

Selected Scripture:
Revelation 11:15-19

is described by the Prophet Daniel, when speaking of the time when “Michael,” a prophetic reference to the glorified Jesus, would “stand up” at his second advent. Then, the prophet says, “there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.”—Dan. 12:1

In all of the passages cited above, including that of our lesson, in addition to a time of great trouble, there is reference made to the effect that the same period includes the rewarding of God’s faithful people. Further, a time of judgment is mentioned in Daniel’s prophecy, and

IT HAS BEEN GENERALLY

held by many sincere students of the Bible that the symbolic sounding of the trumpet by the “seventh angel” in our Key Verse, along with the “great voices” also mentioned, have a connection to similar prophetic statements by the Apostle Paul where he speaks of the “last trump” and the “trump of God.” (I Cor. 15:52; I Thess. 4:16) Revelation 11:18 goes on to tell us of conditions in the earth at the time of the seventh angel’s sounding: “The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come.” A similar setting

specified in John the Revelator's testimony. Both allude to the judgment of the faithful people of God, as well as a subsequent period of judgment for the rest of the world. (Dan. 12:1-3; Rev. 11:18) In II Timothy 4:1, Paul similarly speaks of the time when Christ "shall judge the quick [the living] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."

Taken in total, the foregoing statements of Daniel, Paul, and John point to the time of the return and second presence of our Lord, and to some of the conditions and works associated therewith. At his First Advent, Jesus made prophetic reference to Daniel concerning a coming time of "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (Matt. 24:21) How faith-strengthening to know that all the trouble associated with the initial phase of our Lord's second presence is in preparation for his long-promised kingdom of righteousness and peace to be established upon the earth.—II Pet. 3:12,13

Jesus willingly offered himself as a "ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (I Tim. 2:5,6) Being obedient unto death, "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." (Phil. 2:8,9) He returns to set up his kingdom, both the heavenly phase and the earthly phase—"in earth, as it is in heaven," Jesus said. (John 14:3; Matt. 6:10) During his second presence, both the heavenly resurrection of the "firstfruits" class, as well as the raising from the dead of "all that are in the graves" to an earthly paradise, come to pass. (I Cor. 15:20-23; John 5:28,29) After mankind has been taught of God and learned obedience on "the way of holiness," will come the complete elimination of sin and death.—Isa. 35:1-10; I Cor. 15:24-26

The Prophet Isaiah says of Christ's reign: "The government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."—Isa. 9:6,7 ■

Marriage of the Lamb

Key Verse: *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”*
—**Revelation 19:7**

Selected Scriptures:
Psalms 45:13-15;
Revelation 19:7,8

THE PROCLAMATION OF

our Key Verse, according to the scriptural account, is said to have been as the sounds of a “great multitude,” “many waters,” and “mighty thunderings,” all of which give praise and honor to God. (vs. 6) This is a most blessed prelude to the grand prophetic announcement of the time when the “marriage of the Lamb,” Christ Jesus, and his “wife,” will take place. This “bride” of Christ

consists of the faithful members of his “body,” the “elect,” the “hundred and forty and four thousand,” whose “names are written in heaven.”—I Cor. 12:27; I Pet. 1:2; Luke 10:20; Rev. 14:3-5; 21:2

The making “ready” of the bride is the work of the present age. Each prospective member of this called-out class has been clothed with a “robe of righteousness”—the righteousness of Christ. (Isa. 61:10) Upon this robe is to be embroidered, “in raiment of needlework,” the cultivated character qualities of the fruits and graces of the Spirit. Only thus can she be counted “all glorious within,” and be “brought unto the king,” her bridegroom, Christ Jesus.—Gal. 5:22,23; II Pet. 1:5-8; Ps. 45:13,14

Verse 8 of our lesson states, “And to her [the bride of Christ] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness

of saints.” Herein is a beautiful picture. During the present age of the bride’s development, her righteousness is only found in the spotless “robe” of Jesus, which covers her Adamic imperfections. However, once faithful unto death, and presented at the “marriage of the Lamb,” the “fine linen, clean and white,” is shown to be the bride’s own righteousness, the “righteousness of saints.”

Then John the Revelator hears these words, “Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” (Rev. 19:9) Just as in an earthly wedding, where there is only one bride and one groom, the marriage of the Lamb will include only Jesus and the bride class. However, following most marriage ceremonies is a banquet and feast, to which many guests are invited to attend. Those who are “called unto the marriage supper” seems to refer to these. Although the verse does not specifically say who these “guests” are who attend the symbolic marriage feast, we can reasonably conclude that at least two groups will be included. First, The Great Multitude, those who are “before” the throne but not on the throne, the focus of our lesson for November 7. Second, it would seem appropriate that the myriads of holy angels will also have the privilege of attending this great feast. Indeed, they have been “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them [the bride] who shall be heirs of salvation.”—Heb. 1:14

Returning again to our Key Verse, it begins, “Let us be glad and rejoice.” Great will be the rejoicing in heaven and in earth at the bride’s abundant entrance into the King’s palace. All mankind will rejoice in the glorification of the church, through which blessings will then begin to flow throughout the earth to all people. Their eyes of understanding will be opened, and they will rejoice to see God’s great loving plan to lift up and recover the race from the ravages of sin and death. Thus, mankind, too, will sing praises to God as a result of the “marriage of the Lamb.” ■

The Gospel Opened to All

Key Verses: *“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”*
—Acts 10:34,35

Selected Scripture:
Acts 10:34-48

time, Peter also had a vision which at first he did not fully understand. However, upon being instructed to go to visit Cornelius at his house, and learning of this Gentile's sincere faith, Peter realized that the time had now come for the Gospel to be opened to the Gentiles who were of the proper condition of heart to receive it, as had been evidenced by Cornelius.—vss. 9-23

Peter had been given the “keys of the kingdom of heaven” by Jesus. (Matt. 16:19) One of these symbolic keys he used on the day of Pentecost when, upon receiving

THE ACCOUNT FROM

which our lesson is taken is that of Peter's sermon to the house of Cornelius, who became the first Gentile convert. The theme of the apostle's words is salvation through faith, which “cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17) In Acts 10:1-4, Cornelius was noted as a just, reverent, and devout man who gave many alms and prayed to God always. He was given a vision in which he was told to summon Peter to his house in Caesarea. (vss. 5-8) At the same

the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, he spoke of the opportunity which was now open for believing Jews to enter the heavenly kingdom. (Acts 2:14-41) A second key was used by Peter three and one-half years later, the time having come for the Gospel, and its hope of entering the heavenly kingdom, to be opened to Gentile believers. The apostle now realized the meaning of his vision, that the Lord had made Jews and Gentiles “both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition” which had previously separated them.—Eph. 2:14

The essence of the message which came to Cornelius was that “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures,” and was “raised again for our justification.” (I Cor. 15:3,4; Rom. 4:25) Those who, in faith, responded to this message, would be invited to become joint-sacrificers with Jesus, and have the hope of being sharers in Christ’s coming glory. (Rom. 12:1; 8:17) Cornelius’ heart had been touched. He believed in Jesus as his Redeemer and made a full consecration of his life to the Lord. God’s acceptance of Cornelius and his household was shown as the power of the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they magnified God. (Acts 10:44-46) Peter then explained to Cornelius that, as disciples and followers of Christ, it would be proper for him and his household to receive water baptism, symbolic of immersion into Christ’s death, to which they had already given themselves.—vss. 47,48

Peter was granted the great privilege of using two “keys,” given him by Jesus, to open the door of the heavenly kingdom hope to all—both Jews and Gentiles—and now he had used both keys faithfully. The apostle now perceived the full meaning of the vision granted to him, and the statement, “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common,” or “unclean.” (vss. 14,15) In Christ, the Apostle Paul states, “there is neither Jew nor Greek [Gentile], ... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” “By his own blood” he has “obtained eternal redemption for us,” that we might “serve the living God.”—Gal. 3:26-28; Heb. 9:11-14 ■

Consider the Lilies

*“Consider the lilies
how they grow:
they toil not, they
spin not; and yet I
say unto you, that
Solomon in all his
glory was not
arrayed like one
of these.”
—Luke 12:27*

PRIOR TO JESUS’ GIVING

the lesson concerning the lilies, one from the multitudes approached him and asked, “Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.” Jesus replied, “Who made me a judge or a divider over you?

... Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” (Luke 12:13-15) Here was a new thought for the Lord’s followers. Selfishness has become the mainspring of human activity ever since the disobedience of Adam in the Garden of Eden. Down through history, success in life has oftentimes been measured by the amount of wealth one possesses. Jesus, however, here indicates that this ought not to be the case.

The first lesson Jesus gave in the form of a parable. “The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to

bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” (vss. 16-21) The lesson of this parable is the folly of a life of selfishness and the utmost importance of becoming rich in God’s estimation.

Jesus later explained, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (vs. 34) Our “treasure” is anything which we highly value above all other things in life and, hence, it is that which we love the most. Our treasure is what inspires our heart and mind, and which acts as the incentive in how we use our time, energy and means.

Most people have some type of “treasure.” However, most often it results in only fleeting satisfaction because the treasure chosen is transitory and ultimately disappointing. Many choose as their treasure that which is based upon various earthly things, such as wealth, fame, friends, family, power, influence, popularity or admiration. However, such treasures are subject to change and decay. If one’s heart is centered upon any of them, they are liable in a moment to be swept away, leaving one desolate and despairing because their highest hopes had been centered upon such passing treasures.

Wealth and belongings, laboriously gathered and managed with great care, may vanish overnight. Popularity with others, dearly sought after through

much time and effort, may change and be replaced by reproach, causing one's name to be misrepresented, and sometimes leading to one being ostracized. Houses, obtained and maintained at great cost of time and wealth, may eventually disappear for various reasons. Friends, long trusted, may suddenly turn their back, or even become enemies. Even family members, though dearly loved, eventually pass away, leaving a gaping hole in one's heart.

If, on the other hand, our "treasure" is that which is "rich toward God," then his love and the divinely appointed promises given in the Scriptures become a sweet ointment in all our struggles in life, and they provide us much needed comfort and rest.

Jesus explained to his followers what their proper attitude must be if they were to lay up treasure in heaven. He said, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on." In the original Greek, the expression "take no thought" means "be not anxious." Thus, Jesus is not encouraging his followers to be careless or lazy, but rather that they should not be anxious in the sense of fretting about food or clothing.—Luke 12:22

"CONSIDER"

In conjunction with his parable, Jesus gave the following lesson: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows ... Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?"—Luke 12:6,7,24

Jesus continued, as stated in our opening text, telling us to consider—reflect upon, think, study and ponder—how the lilies grow, with such seemingly little effort and toil. Even King Solomon “in all his glory,” he says, was not as beautifully arrayed as the simple lily.

An important lesson regarding the lilies is “how they grow.” Jesus described this using the expression, “they toil not,” which in the original Greek means to “not feel fatigue or grow weary.” An important antidote against weariness reads as follows: “Therefore, having so vast a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, and throwing off everything that hinders us and especially the sin that so easily entangles us, let us keep running with endurance the race set before us.” (Heb. 12:1, *International Standard Version*) The lives and godly characters of the many faithful ones of the past and present, comprise a “vast cloud of witnesses,” and the experiences they have faithfully undergone provide wonderful examples to inspire us to greater devotion to God.

Most importantly, we are then admonished to consider Jesus. “Fixing our attention on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of the faith, who, in view of the joy set before him, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Think about the one who endured such hostility from sinners, so that you may not become tired and give up.” (Heb. 12:2,3, *ISV*) Elsewhere, the Apostle Paul admonishes us to “not be weary in well doing,” because “in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”—Gal. 6:9; II Thess. 3:13

The lily, Jesus said, is a flower so beautiful that it surpasses the glory of Solomon. Yet, it is not the

plant itself which has created its own glory. Rather, its glory is the result of the delicate design of the Creator, and the loving care he exhibits in his created work. The lily simply grows, without question or argument, according to its divinely appointed fashion. Jesus asks us to “consider” these things, saying in essence, that God’s provisions for the sparrows, ravens and lilies are reasons why we should have faith that he will care for us, as long as we are faithfully engaged in doing his will.

A MISCONSTRUED LESSON

The instruction Jesus gave to “consider the lilies” has been misconstrued by some to mean the direct opposite of the lesson which the Master was teaching. The portion of the verse which says, “They toil not, they spin not,” is misapplied by some to erroneously show that Christian growth in the fruits and graces of the spirit can be accomplished by a life of inactivity, and without any real effort on the part of the individual. On the contrary!

Rather, the lesson set forth by Jesus is the necessity for each Christian to not only develop faith in God’s promised care over them, but to also be actively engaged in carrying out the terms of their consecration, and by devoting their lives to him each day. These continually present their “bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” They realize that it is a “reasonable service” and are striving to “be not conformed” to this present evil world, but instead engage all their effort to being “transformed by the renewing” of their mind.—Rom. 12:1,2

Continuing our lesson, Jesus said, “If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and

to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Luke 12:28) The development of strong faith is a most important attainment to be reached. How true it is with all of us, at one time or another, that a lack of faith holds us back from enjoying the rich spiritual blessings of the Lord that might otherwise be ours.

SEEKING THE KINGDOM

Jesus further admonished, saying, "Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink. ... For all these things do the nations of the world seek after." He then assured his disciples, stating, "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Luke 12:29-31) The word "seek," used three times in the above verses, is translated from various forms of the Greek word *zeteo*, which means to "worship, demand, or crave."—*Thayer's Greek Definitions*

Evidently, Jesus knew that most in the "nations of the world" would rather seek after—worship and demand—temporal things than spiritual blessings. He also saw that a lack of faith would cause a majority of his professed followers to hide behind various excuses for not properly considering God's care for the lilies and its practical application to the Christian's life.

A "LITTLE FLOCK"

Jesus realized that there would only be a few, a "little flock," who would completely trust in the Heavenly Father's promises and totally devote themselves to serving God. To these he says, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—Luke 12:32

The test of faith, which Jesus is emphasizing in our lesson, is whether or not we are willing to depart from the attitude of the world of making earthly treasures our main priority in life, and instead set as our life's highest aim being "rich toward God."

How do we become spiritually rich? The Apostle Peter provides this answer: "The tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 1:7, *English Standard Version*) Literal gold is refined using fire to remove impurities. Similarly, God permits various experiences and trials to come upon us, to allow us to develop and crystalize our character.

Peter continues his admonition, saying, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed."—I Pet. 4:12,13, *ESV*

TO "FEAR NOT" REQUIRES FAITH

Jesus states why we should "fear not," because "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." However, this is on the condition that we first "seek ... the kingdom of God" by sacrificing our all in his service.

To "fear not" requires deeply rooted faith. As we consider the lilies, this important lesson is given to us in two ways. First, it is important to develop faith and trust in the Heavenly Father's willingness and ability to care for our needs, provided we are faithfully

devoting the choicest of all that we have and are in his service. Secondly, a more severe test of our faith comes when we may, at times, be placed in a position where we specially need God's provision for our temporal necessities. In such experiences, do we have the faith which tells us, "fear not?"

SERIOUS QUESTIONS

Jesus knew that human selfishness would argue for a course in life that assures the Christian a supposed condition of "economic security." Those chasing after the illusive bubble of present advantage or various earthly treasures, would be tempted to take their sacrifice off the altar and, as it were, return to the fishing business, instead of remembering that they had been called to be "fishers of men."—Matt. 4:19

A solemn consideration for every Christian is that the kingdom of heaven cannot be obtained in any other way except by giving up all that we have and devoting our life in this one great divine cause. Paul echoed these same sentiments when he said, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, ... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul sacrificed everything in the divine service, and thus is a noble example to us.—Phil. 3:8-14

SPIRITUAL BALANCE NECESSARY

It is true that every Christian must make needful provision for themselves, and for those dependent upon them according to the flesh. Indeed, the carrying out of this duty is one of the demands upon our consecrated lives, accepted by the Heavenly Father as service rendered unto him. (I Tim. 5:8; II Thess. 3:8-10) It is also true that we need to plan in some

fashion for the future in connection with nearly everything we do.

Even along spiritual lines, it is important that we make plans for future activities in an orderly manner. For example, if we desire to hold a meeting in a particular location on a certain day, we must save funds in advance, and then go to that location to contact the proper persons there in order to make arrangements for that activity. In short, the consecrated Christian life is one so fully devoted to God that whatever time or effort given to material things should not be with the thought of enriching ourselves, but to discharge our proper responsibilities toward others.

Jesus makes it clear that if we are faithful in sacrificing every earthly treasure, as he did, and follow in his footsteps, the Heavenly Father, knowing what temporal things we have need of, will overrule in making provision for us along those lines without the necessity of our giving anxious thought concerning them.

HOW GOD CARES FOR US

As we “consider the lilies,” and how God cares for us, it is first important that we not dictate to him what our “supposed” needs may be. The promise is not that he will supply what we think we may need, but what we actually need according to his perfect judgment. (Phil. 4:19) If our estimate of what we need is based upon a desire to retain earthly treasures, then we will be constantly holding back our full devotion to him. If, though, as Paul did, we count all earthly treasures as “loss” [Greek: a detriment] in order that we might “win Christ,” then we will be content with whatever God’s providence may decree

as being best for our spiritual and eternal interests.
—Phil. 3:7,8

It is a great advantage to always remember the sacrificial viewpoint of the Christian life, and to properly appreciate the manner in which the Heavenly Father cares for us. We have covenanted to lay down our lives, therefore we should not lose faith in God's care. (Matt. 10:39; 16:25) If God permits us to suffer hardships which are designed to assist in the consummation of our sacrifice, we can rest assured that he will not permit us to be tried beyond what we can endure. Paul states: "God is faithful," and "will not permit you to be tried beyond your ability; but with the trial, will also direct the issue, that you may be able to bear it.—I Cor. 10:13, *The Emphatic Diaglott*

God does not shield the Christian from physical suffering. Even the faithful Apostle Paul, who in obedience to the terms of discipleship had sacrificed everything in the ministry of the Gospel, and who, therefore, had a right to claim the Master's promise of divine care, knew what it was to suffer want. Concerning this Paul says, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."—Phil. 4:12,13

If we are faithful to our consecration vows, we too will joyfully accept whatever situation God sees is best for us, as Paul did. The test of our faith in following in the Master's footsteps is indeed a severe one. If our faith is sufficiently developed, however, we can rest in the full assurance that whatever the Lord may permit to come upon us in the way of joy or sorrow, will (*Continued on page 36*)

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(Continued from page 31) be for our highest spiritual welfare and growth.

God provides for the lily and thus it grows, but at times it is also subjected to winds, storms, heat and cold. By means of these experiences it grows stronger and fulfils its function of helping beautify the earth. Similarly, God cares for us, not by shielding us from the hardships of life, but by allowing the storms and the winds of trial to strengthen us. Through these experiences the New Creature is being prepared to perform its future function as a joint-heir with Jesus in the blessing of all mankind.—Rom. 8:17,18

God is dealing with the fully consecrated as New Creatures, and “though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” (II Cor. 4:16) Paul further admonishes us to consider our present trials as but a “light affliction,” permitted only for a “moment,” compared to eternity. All our experiences and trials are overruled by our loving Heavenly Father to work out in us “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” The apostle concludes his admonition, stating, “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”—vss. 17,18

GOD’S PROVIDENCES

God’s providences may vary. Therefore, it is not for us to decide when shall come remarkable deliverances and when we shall be permitted to continue in a difficult experience for a time. For example, while the Lord intervened to deliver the three

Hebrews from the fiery furnace, he did not intervene to prevent the beheading of John the Baptist, even though regarding John it is specifically declared, “There has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist.”—Matt. 11:11, *ESV*

Similarly, although Peter was delivered from prison by the angel of the Lord, James was not, and instead was permitted to be killed with the sword. (Acts 12:1-11) We remember also that Paul’s life was miraculously preserved on several occasions, while on other occasions dire disaster came upon the Lord’s faithful ones, such as in the case of Stephen who was stoned.

It is not for us to determine what should be God’s providence in respect to ourselves. We are to simply apply divine principles in our life, regardless of the consequences, and “trust in the LORD.” (Ps. 125:1; Prov. 3:5; Isa. 26:4) This attitude was beautifully expressed by the three Hebrews, who declared to King Nebuchadnezzar that God was entirely capable of delivering them from the king’s power, but that, whether God chose to do so or not, they would remain faithful to him and would not violate divine principles. (Dan. 3:1-18) It is such a character that our Heavenly Father is seeking to develop in us.

Let us continually “consider the lilies how they grow.” May our consecration be so complete that we will gladly permit our Heavenly Father to decide what we need. Let us also rejoice in the abundant manner in which he cares for us, being fully assured that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:28 ■

The Ministry of Reconciliation

*“All things are of
God, who hath
reconciled us to
himself by Jesus
Christ, and hath
given to us the
ministry of
reconciliation.”*

—II Corinthians 5:18

THE NECESSITY FOR A ministry of reconciliation lies in the fact that the human race is estranged from God on account of sin. The original sin which alienated mankind from God was committed by Father Adam. Through him the whole world came under

condemnation to death because, through heredity and by continuing in the wrong course, they also are sinners. (Rom. 3:23) The basis for reconciliation is in the redemptive work of Christ. Through him God is “reconciling the world unto himself.” (II Cor. 5:19) That we have been made ministers, or servants of reconciliation, as stated in our opening text, means that we are coworkers with God.

The grace of God manifested in extending the honor of being coworkers with him is beyond human comprehension. Were the matter not so clearly stated in the Scriptures we would be presumptuous indeed to aspire to such an exalted position in the divine

arrangement. This ministry belongs both to the present and to the future. Its present aspect is largely that of sacrifice, service, and at times, suffering, but while laying down our lives in the divine service now, we are inspired to zeal and faithfulness by the hope of the glorious future ministry to follow.

The sacrificial phase of the ministry of reconciliation was begun by Christ, our High Priest, foreshadowed by the high priests of Israel, and it is participated in by the entire "royal priesthood." (Heb. 4:14,15; I Pet. 2:9) All the prospective members of this priesthood share in the sacrificial work which has progressed throughout the present Gospel Age. Paul writes, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, ... that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." (Rom. 12:1) This is indeed a high honor! The apostle further states, "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest."—Heb. 5:4,5

Just as Jesus was invited to this high station in the divine program of reconciliation, so his footstep followers, the under-priesthood, have likewise been called of God. "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," writes the apostle, "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Heb. 3:1) Writing concerning the same great honor of being coworkers with God, the apostle says, "Such trust have we through Christ to Godward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."—II Cor. 3:4,5

We gladly acknowledge that "our sufficiency is of God." To begin with, we were "by nature the

children of wrath, even as others.” (Eph. 2:3) We were in sore need ourselves of being reconciled to God before we could be called and accepted by him as coworkers in the great project of reconciling the world of mankind. We were unable, however, to bring about our own reconciliation. We had nothing with which to commend ourselves to God. He was the one who made provision for us. As our text relates, he “reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.” Truly then we should recognize that our sufficiency comes only from God.

THE FUTURE WORK

The major work of reconciliation so far as the world of mankind is concerned belongs to the next age, to the time when Christ and the church will rule together and serve as the world’s High Priest to dispense blessings of enlightenment, health and life. It will be in that future age, with Christ and the church as ministers of the New Covenant, that the knowledge of the Lord will be caused to cover the earth “as the waters cover the sea.” Then, none will need to say to his neighbor, know the Lord, “for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest.”—Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:31-34

This is a glorious prospect, a joy set before us in the Scriptures, which helps us to bear the cross and despise the shame connected with the present privilege of sacrifice. (Heb. 12:2) However, let us not suppose that the entire ministry of reconciliation belongs to the future. There is a present ministry of reconciliation to which we are called, and it is our faithfulness to this privilege that demonstrates our worthiness of the future opportunities in glory.

This is as it should be. Whoever receives the Spirit of sonship, is impelled to begin this ministry of reconciliation at once. God has made provision for such zealous ones to manifest their love for him and their joy in his plan by engaging in that work with him. Indeed, it is for this very purpose that he has, at the present time, reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, so that we can be of comfort and encouragement to others.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST

In his introduction to the subject of reconciliation the apostle writes, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one [Christ] died for all, then were all dead." (II Cor. 5:14) Judging this matter correctly we come to the conclusion, Paul explains, that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, "but unto him which died, ... and rose again." (vs. 15) It is well to examine our hearts at this point. Have we been so stirred by the love of God and the gracious provision he has made for us through Christ, that henceforth we desire to live only and fully for him?

It is not enough that we conclude to serve God to some extent and serve self whenever we feel like it. Quoting the words of a familiar hymn, "Some of self, and some of thee" is not true consecration, nor will "Less of self, and more of thee" be fully acceptable to God. Not until we appreciate God's love to the point where we can say from the heart, "None of self, and all of thee," are we in the attitude of heart that God will use and bless us to the highest degree. It is this that Paul has in mind when he says that we "should not henceforth live unto ourselves," but unto Christ.

It is the fully consecrated whom God begets and anoints with his Spirit, and who thus become “new creatures.” To these new creatures “in Christ,” Paul declares, “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (II Cor. 5:17) According to verse 18, these “all things” which have become new “are of God.” The apostle explains that they are the things concerned with the “ministry of reconciliation” which has been given to us as New Creatures in Christ.

Paul continues, saying, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ.” That is to say, God is reconciling the world to himself through Christ, and as consecrated followers of the Master, we are able to participate also in this ministry. Thus, God invites us to proclaim the message to the world, “Be ye reconciled to God.” —vss. 19,20

AN UNCHANGED MINISTRY

Thus we have presented to us by the apostle one of the unchangeable fundamentals of the Christian life. No changes of time or circumstance in any way reduce our privilege and responsibility toward this ministry of reconciliation. It was important in the seed-sowing time during the Gospel Age, and it is just as important now during the harvest at the end of the age. It is also essential with respect to individual Christians, and it is equally vital respecting the responsibilities of organized groups of Christ’s followers.

In the beginning of the age Paul said, “God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should

repent.” (Acts 17:30, *New American Standard Bible*) This message to the world was given through the Early Church, the members of which were ministers of reconciliation. It is still effective at the very close of the age, when the storm clouds of trouble and distress are hovering over humanity, when it is the church’s privilege to say to the world, “Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger.”—Zeph. 2:3

Of his followers Jesus said, “Ye are the light of the world.” (Matt. 5:14) Certainly, God is able to use other means for proclaiming his truth. He can cause the stones to cry out if need be, but the Scriptures are explicit, nevertheless, that it is the responsibility of the church, the priestly class, to bear the message of reconciliation to all who mourn at this time. It is the faithful followers of the Master who are blessed with this privilege.—Luke 19:40; Isa. 61:1,2

It is well that we endeavor to have this great fundamental truth firmly established in mind and heart, and that we be prepared to meet the privileges it provides to us. If we are seeking to shirk responsibility, we will, no doubt, be able to find some method of human reasoning by which we can convince ourselves that God no longer wants us to be ministers of reconciliation, and that all he wants us to do now is to wait until he calls us into the kingdom to be with Christ.

However, any such viewpoint can be based only on human thinking. There is no hint in the Bible that the time would ever come when God would not want his faithful people of the Gospel Age to be engaged in his service as ministers of reconciliation. It is to this that we are called, and it is as faithful

ministers that we demonstrate our love for God and our appreciation of his grace in making it possible for us to be coworkers with him.

Satan is always ready to discourage the Lord's people whenever the opportunity presents itself. All of us are more or less influenced by our surroundings and through personal circumstances affecting us. At times, some might conclude that God's work in the earth is all done, simply because they are no longer able to be active in his service. This is but natural. Elijah thought he was the only one left in Israel who stood for the Lord, but he was assured otherwise—that there were yet seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal.—I Kings 19:13-18

Indeed, there are those dear ones who have been long in the way, and who have used their time and strength faithfully until they have no more to use. Their life has been consumed in the service and work of the Lord, and as ministers of reconciliation. For those of us who follow such faithful examples of service, however, and as we have strength and opportunity, there is still work to do. The ministry of reconciliation is still to be carried on! No matter what our circumstances in life may be, let us try to get this larger viewpoint of God's will for his people. If we can do nothing more, let us pray for God's blessing upon those who are active in the Lord's vineyard.

THUS SAITH THE LORD

As consecrated followers of the Master, our guide to what constitutes God's will is what the Scriptures say. Whether many or few are coming into the body of Christ has no bearing upon what God has commissioned us to do. Even if there were no apparent

results from our efforts, this would not mean that we should cease our service as ministers of reconciliation. How we wish that the joyful message of reconciliation should bring a ready response in every place and from every hearer, but it does not. As a rule, the true ministry of Christ is mostly ignored or rejected. So far as large numbers are concerned, it has always been this way.

The prophet foretold that the message of reconciliation would not be generally accepted. Speaking for the priestly class, Isaiah inquires, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" (Isa. 53:1) In every part of the present age, the Gospel message has been accepted by only a few—one here and one there. The reason for the general rejection of the message of reconciliation is evident. It is because the world is steeped in sin and, therefore, the way of selfishness and pride is more appealing. The darkness hates the light, hence those in darkness reject the light-bearers.—John 3:19,20

Under these circumstances, with the results of sin still abounding in the world, is it any wonder that those who are faithful as ambassadors of Christ may at times suffer with him for righteousness' sake? The great High Priest, Christ Jesus, who through his ministry was the light of the world, was despised, rejected, and crucified by those who professed to love and follow righteousness. The apostles were similarly treated because of their refusal to compromise the message—the "word of reconciliation."

Jesus said of all his followers, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake," and again, they "shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for

my sake.” (Luke 21:17; Matt. 5:11) These experiences will not be true of any of us, however, unless we let our light shine. If we keep our light “under a bushel,” it is most likely that the world will not hate us, and if such be the case, it will not be true of us that “the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.”—Matt. 5:15; Ps. 69:9

What wonderful wisdom is displayed in the divine arrangement! It is while performing the present ministry of reconciliation, to which the Spirit of our anointing impels us, that we each recognize the privilege and responsibility of offering up ourselves as a living sacrifice. Indeed, it is in this ministry that we may find our chief opportunity for sacrifice. If, on the other hand, we give up this privilege, or esteem it as unimportant, we take our sacrifice in significant measure off the altar.

The extent of self-sacrifice and suffering for Christ endured by each of the consecrated ministers of reconciliation is not the same in every case, nor is it the same in every part of the world. Circumstances are different for each one, and in each place. The important point, however, is that each of us, as God’s ambassador, should be willing to suffer for Christ’s sake and the truth’s sake, if in God’s providence we should be called upon to do so.

Indeed, each ambassador of Christ should not expect to continuously suffer for the truth’s sake, nor are all called upon to suffer in the same manner or to the same degree. Paul speaks of those who were merely the “companions” of those who served and sacrificed in the forefront of the ministry. (Heb. 10:33) Even Jesus did not suffer every day, but he was willing to do so whenever it was part of his

Father's will. The main consideration is to be faithful to the ministry to which we have been called, to refuse to compromise the truth, and to tell it out far and wide through the various means available to us. Doing this, we can leave the results in the Lord's hands, knowing that he will be pleased with our sincere and diligent efforts in his service.

THE GRACE OF GOD

Paul continues his discussion of the ministry of reconciliation saying, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." (II Cor. 6:1) The privilege of being coworkers with God is a marvelous manifestation of his grace, or favor. How tragic it would be to have received the Heavenly Father's grace in vain through unfaithfulness in its use. The apostle references the Old Testament concerning the ministry which has been given to us, and in the quotation we are assured of divine help in this time when the better sacrifices of the Gospel Age are being offered: "In a day of salvation, have I helped thee."—Isa. 49:8; II Cor. 6:2, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*

Then Paul writes, "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings." (II Cor. 6:3-5) It is evident from this that faithfulness in the ministry will lead to various forms of trial. It is manifest also that divine help will be needed in order to endure the experiences through which an active ministry will lead us.

Further, we are to examine ourselves that we may be approved as ministers of God: "By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."—II Cor. 6:6-10

It will be noted that in this listing which Paul sets forth concerning the things necessary for an approved ministry, he mentions nearly every phase of Christian character development. This indicates that all of these important factors in Christian living constitute the background and basis of our ministry. It means that we should be patient, kind, pure, know the truth, have on the armor of God, be filled with his Spirit, and lay down our lives in his service. All of this should be with the thought in mind of giving no offense in anything, "that the ministry be not blamed," and that we "receive not the grace of God in vain."

Finally, the apostle reaches a grand climax in his argument, exclaiming, "Oh ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged." (vs. 11) Indeed, Paul's heart had been enlarged by the truth, and the grace of God had permeated his very soul. The Spirit of God impelled him to faithfulness in his ambassadorship. The love of God in his heart caused him to yearn for the blessing of others—not a few only, but all he could possibly

reach. Whether God called him to Asia, Macedonia, Greece, Jerusalem or Rome, Paul was ready and anxious to go and to use his strength to spread far and wide the “word of reconciliation.”

Paul endeavored to emulate the example of the Master, and he bids us to follow him as he followed Christ. (I Cor. 11:1) Have our hearts been enlarged as was Paul’s? Is the truth to us merely a better religion than we ever heard of before, or is it active in our lives? Is it the power of God unto salvation, both our own and others, as we engage in the ministry of reconciliation? Have our hearts been enlarged by the Gospel, or have we permitted them to shrink simply because the results of our ministry seem meager, or because we are fearful of the message being rejected?

Let us not hide behind the fact that this is not God’s time to convert the world and use that as an excuse not to serve as ministers of reconciliation. We know that the world will not now be converted. However, we know too that God desires our faithfulness to the ministry of the truth, and to say on all suitable occasions, and to whomsoever will listen, “Be ye reconciled to God.” What a blessed privilege is ours, and how highly we are honored! ■

[Jesus] said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.
Luke 24:46-48

Spiritual Pride

*“Love vaunteth not
itself, is not
puffed up.”*

—I Corinthians 13:4,

Revised Version

THE ACT OF VAUNTING

oneself, or being puffed up, is unacceptable to God in all cases, but especially so with those who name the name of Christ. Such conduct is the evidence of pride, and pride is the by-product of cultivated selfishness. The selfish spirit anxiously seeks after all that it esteems as valuable and gratifying, such as wealth, fame, and distinction among men. To the extent that it is successful in attaining these, the tendency sometimes follows to feel complacent, independent, and superior to others. Among some, pride is cultivated until it enlarges itself to outlandish thoughts of imagined importance.

The proud do not realize how difficult it is for others to love them, or how really unworthy they are in the eyes of others. It is no wonder that the wise man declared: “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” (Prov. 16:18) This is true because the egotistical have overestimated their value and ability, and when they are weighed in the balances they are found to be sadly lacking a godly character.

The one who honestly and seriously estimates his worth usually comes much nearer the truth than

the one who over-esteems himself. When we stop to consider the matter soberly we realize that by nature we are all fallen and degraded by sin, and that even at our best we come short of perfection along every line. We really have nothing of which to boast. Thus when we compare ourselves with others, we must make a thoughtful and cautious estimation of our capabilities.

Pride is manifested in varying degrees, and usually those who are affected with this common malady do not realize it. The fact that one does not manifest a haughty look, nor an all-knowing spirit, does not mean that there is no pride dwelling within their heart. The absence of the extreme evidences of this trait is not sufficient grounds to believe that he is free from such an affliction.

Pride also demonstrates itself in different ways. One is by stubbornness, in which strong-willed individuals want their own way. Hurt feelings indicate that we want others to think well of us. The same is true of those who may be hypocritical or insincere. Boasting is an obvious form of pride which often involves possessions, knowledge, accomplishments, and the honor of men.

SPIRITUAL PRIDE AMONG CHRISTIANS

The pride which we often find in the world, based mostly on foolish thinking, takes a much more serious aspect when it is found among the Lord's consecrated people. Those of the world in general are not on trial at this present time, whereas the true people of God are. We are living during a "day of salvation" for the church, therefore, judgment is taking place with "the house of

God.”—II Cor. 6:2, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*;
I Pet. 4:17

True Christians have no cause for pride or glory in themselves, for they have nothing that they did not receive. (I Cor. 4:7) All that they have, all that they are, and all that they hope for, comes from God. He has blessed and enriched his people. He has taken them “out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay,” and has set their feet upon a rock, “and that Rock was Christ.” He has clothed them “with the garments of salvation,” and has covered them “with the robe of righteousness.”—Ps. 40:2; I Cor. 10:4; Isa. 61:10

The Apostle Paul said that God has “blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” (Eph. 1:3) How altogether unbecoming for any who have been so blessed and so benefited by the grace and favor of God, to endeavor to glorify themselves or to take pride in what they have or who they are. All the glory belongs to the Lord: “Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”—Jer. 9:24

The Scriptures declare: “Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” (I Pet. 5:5) Hence, we can safely conclude that to the extent any of the footstep followers of the Master have pride, to that degree God and his Son Christ Jesus are resisting them, and to the same extent they are without the grace that otherwise would be their portion if they had the proper humility. What real progress can we make as Christians if God and Jesus were to resist us?

Jesus answered, saying, “Without me ye can do nothing.”—John 15:5

Without the Lord’s grace we surely cannot develop or bring forth any spiritual fruitage to maturity. Much less shall we be able to accomplish anything of enduring value if, because of secret or hidden pride in our hearts, the Heavenly Father is resisting us. If there is any vaunting of self, any swelling or puffing up, it is manifest that such a one is not made complete in love, for as our opening text says, “Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.”

On the contrary, the Christian is exhorted to be “clothed with humility.” How very becoming is such attire, and how beautifully it adorns the faithful followers of Christ! Contrariwise, what poor and wretched apparel is the cloak or covering of pride! Not only is humility beautiful clothing for the saints, but it helps to cover the imperfections of their fallen humanity. Pride, however, is so undesirable that it hates to be known for what it really is, and so it often uses discretion to give it the same appearance as humility.

As Christians we should prepare our mind and heart to battle against pride in every form, however small or insignificant the symptoms may be. We should also learn to detect pride in whatever form it appears, whether as envy, evil-speaking, stubbornness, hurt feelings, self-assurance, a know-all attitude, aspiration or ambition, spitefulness, vanity, hypocrisy, a proud look, or even a proud tone of voice. We will be better prepared to slay this adversary when we learn to recognize it upon sight. Hence it would be most appropriate for us to look into the lives of those who were made examples to us in the Scriptures.

EXAMPLES IN SCRIPTURE

The first character that comes to mind when we think of pride is Lucifer. When first created he must have been extremely beautiful and bright, perhaps far excelling most other heavenly beings in his glory. Unfortunately, however, his beauty and brightness became a snare to him, for it is written, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." (Ezek. 28:17) We see in him the awful effects of pride and ambition. How it debased and defiled his character when he said in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."—Isa. 14:13,14

Let us consider well the example of Lucifer and note carefully how pride of thought on his part paved the way for full corruption of his heart. Pride led to other sins, and ultimately to the complete debasement of his character. This brought him to the lowest depths of depravity, where he opposes the God of mercy to the utmost of his ability. Lucifer's downfall should warn us to flee pride, despise it, and to loathe its slightest appearance.

There was a holy man of old, beloved of the Lord, self-sacrificing and "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." (Num. 12:3) He served the Lord faithfully for forty years, but on one occasion was guilty of spiritual pride and self-assurance. It was Moses, who, throughout most of his career was meek and humble, but later was hindered from entering the

Promised Land because of a wrong act indicating pride.

On this occasion, the children of Israel thirsted in the wilderness, and cried to Moses for water. Moses was commanded to speak to the rock that it bring forth water. (Num. 20:2-9) Angered at the people, he said, "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" Then, instead of speaking to the rock as he was commanded, Moses struck the rock twice. Because of this act of disobedience, Moses was disallowed from leading the Israelites into the land of Canaan.—vss. 10-12

The lesson to us lies in the fact that so meek and humble a character as Moses, even if only for a moment, was lifted up with pride and self-importance, and failed to obey the Lord before the people. We, too, could be deceived into magnifying our own importance as, through the years, the Lord has honored us with privileges of service, and in our case, we perhaps were less humble and meek to start with than was Moses. How very careful we must be, lest we begin to feel that we ought to share in the glory that belongs to God alone.

Previous to the foregoing experience, we notice the largeness and beauty of Moses' humility. On one occasion Joshua heard of two young men, Eldad and Medad, who were prophesying in the camp of Israel. He said, "My lord Moses, forbid them." To this Moses replied, "Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!" (Num. 11:27-29) If Moses had any pride in his heart, how easily he might have acted in harmony with Joshua's flawed counsel. The Lord's people everywhere should have a heart trained as Moses' was, free from pride

or envy. How thankful we are that Moses, in the totality of his long life of service, though not perfect, was found to be pleasing to God, and is cited by the Apostle Paul as one of the great Old Testament heroes of faith. (Heb. 11:23-29) Surely we can take comfort in this, knowing that we, too, fall short at times with regard to pride.

Another example of how the humble minded can often be lifted up with pride is found in Saul, the first king of Israel. When he was initially told that Israel desired to have him as their king, he said, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribes of Benjamin?" (I Sam. 9:21) Then, when Samuel desired to present him before the people and the Lord as the king of Israel, Saul could not be found for he was "hiding among the baggage." —I Sam. 10:21,22, *New Living Translation*

How quickly Saul seemed to forget his humble beginning, and began to feel that he was important enough to decide what part of God's commandments he should comply with, and what portion could be omitted. (See I Sam. 15:1-23) He no longer remembered that he was from the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin when the people cried out: "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." (I Sam. 18:7) The very thought of David, a lowly shepherd boy, being renowned as a greater warrior than he, was more than the proud and arrogant king could endure.

What had happened? Saul had forgotten his own insufficiency and insignificance, and that it was because God had been working through him that his efforts had been fruitful. Forgetting this, he was

willing that all the credit and glory should be his own. For this reason, Samuel was sent to remind him: “When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?”—I Sam. 15:17

We, too, as the Lord’s anointed people can easily forget our own unworthiness, and begin to strain our hearing for words of praise and commendation from our brethren or our fellowmen. The blessed work of proclaiming the glorious truth, and especially when this work prospers, can, in our minds, quickly turn itself into our own accomplishment. How important to remember, though, that any such success “is the LORD’S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.”—Ps. 118:23

While they are humble-minded, and “condescend to things that are lowly,” the Lord often leads his people to higher positions in his service, or to some significant triumph in the Christian warfare. (Rom. 12:16, *RV*) At this point comes a severe test, in which the Lord’s people can easily be stumbled by pride. With their lips they may give glory to God for what he has done; but in their hearts they may be tempted to feel that at last their talents are appreciated.

We reflect upon another less prominent character of the Bible, one whose advice was greatly esteemed and appreciated by King David and his son Absalom. We are told that the “counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.”—II Sam. 16:23

Usually this counsel was well received and acted upon, but when Absalom rebelled against his father’s

rulership, and fought against him, he inquired of Ahithophel as to what would be the best procedure to gain the victory against his father. Ahithophel counseled him to give a command for the raising of an army that would pursue David and take him while he was weary and off-guard. However, Absalom called in another counsellor who thought that Ahithophel's counsel was not good and who advised a different course of procedure which appealed more to Absalom. By the Lord's overruling providence, Ahithophel's counsel was defeated.—II Sam. 17:1-22

The lesson of interest to us lies in the fact that Ahithophel, when he realized that his counsel had been rejected, found the pain of humiliation greater than his desire for life. He whose counsel had always been esteemed and appreciated was suddenly ignored, and his feelings were crushed. His pride and dignity could not stand such abuse, so we are informed that he “put his household in order, and hanged himself.”—vs. 23

QUESTIONS TO THINK UPON

From the foregoing examples we can learn lessons as we see how pride can dominate and rule the spirit of man. It is well to examine ourselves and to ask:

Do I fret and feel offense when my counsel and suggestions are ignored or set at naught?

Do I quickly challenge statements that underrate my abilities or impugn my goodness?

Do I feel great embarrassment when others, with less background, can answer questions that I cannot?

Do I feel indignant with those who may point out a fault of mine?

Do I encourage compliments and praise?

Do I hasten to put people “in their place?”

Do I shun reproof and hate instruction, especially when it comes from those I feel are less esteemed of the Lord’s people?

Do I belittle the deeds of others?

If our answers to some or all of these questions are in the affirmative there is need of significant improvement, for it would mean that there is a measure of pride in our hearts, which, if allowed to develop, could make shipwreck of our Christian lives.

Another example of one who was extremely proud and puffed up is found in the Book of Esther. That was Haman. He was one of the honored servants of the Medo-Persian king, Ahasuerus. Haman was promoted to a position of honor above the princes that were with him, so that all were commanded to bow before him. This gratified his ego in no small way. However, there was a certain man named Mordecai, who was a Jew and who would neither bow nor give reverence to Haman under any circumstance. Hence, Haman was filled with wrath and indignation against Mordecai and his kinsmen, the Jews. Haman had arranged with King Ahasuerus to have the Jews massacred on a given date, and planned further to have Mordecai hanged on a gallows which was specially made for this purpose.—Esther chapters 3-5

However, when Haman went to the king to arrange for Mordecai’s hanging, he was greeted with the question, “What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?” (Esther 6:6) In his vain imagination, Haman conceived the thought that surely the king was thinking of him.

Accordingly he suggested that the one whom the king delighted to honor should be arrayed with royal apparel and placed on the king's horse and delivered to the most noble of the princes to be proclaimed throughout the city as the one whom the king delighted to honor.—vss. 8,9

To Haman's chagrin and sorrow he learned that Mordecai was the one whom the king desired to honor, and, most painful of all, he was commissioned to the task of seeing that all he had suggested to the king be carried out in detail. Thus Haman was forced to lead Mordecai, whom he had clothed with the king's apparel and whom he had set upon the king's horse, throughout the city proclaiming, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour."—vs. 11

The pain of humiliation was crushing to Haman, for we are told that he "hasted to his house mourning, and having his head covered." (vs. 12) The very one he despised most was the one he had to glorify before the people, but it did not end there. As the matter developed, Queen Esther exposed the wickedness of Haman before the king, and, in turn, the king's wrath was not pacified until Haman was hanged on the gallows that he had built for Mordecai.—Esther 7:7-10

In this we see the results toward which pride leads, not that it always culminates in premature death, but that it ultimately leads to disappointment and to bitterness of soul. If this is so among the ungodly, how much more would it be true among the Lord's people. What a tremendous price to pay for self-gratification! The puffing-up of self is sure to incur divine displeasure, and hinder greatly our joy and rejoicing in the

Lord. It can be truly said that pride in no way enriches us, but leads to impoverishment of soul.

EXAMINING OUR HEARTS

Our hearts are the scale by which we weigh the various matters presented to our judgment to discern whether they are right or wrong. The scale can be very inexact, or it can be fine-tuned and well-balanced. The Christian, if he has been long in the school of Christ, should have a heart very sensitive to right and wrong, and, from the Word of God, should be able to draw the weights by which he would properly balance all the questions of life. Indulgence in spiritual pride would impair this scale, and would need to be rectified before further progress could be made in the narrow way.

To safeguard against spiritual pride and avert its corrupting influence on our characters require daily examination of ourselves. It behooves each of us to go to the Heavenly Father at the opening of each day and ask for divine wisdom and guidance, and then throughout the day endeavor to live in accordance with that prayer. Additionally, at the close of each day we should examine ourselves as to the things done and the words spoken throughout the day to see how nearly they were in accordance with our vows of consecration.

If we continue daily reckoning with the Lord our thoughts, words and actions, and if we do so with an honest, sincere, and properly guided heart, we may be sure that we will be keeping ourselves in the love of God. We will be growing in grace and in love, and there will be no “occasion of stumbling” in us.—I John 2:10 ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

J. Freer

Online Broadcast of Convention
Milwaukee, WI November 7

R. Goodman

Online Broadcast of Convention
San Diego, CA November 20,21

L. Griehs

Online Broadcast of Convention
San Diego, CA November 20,21

M. Kerry

Online Broadcast of Convention
Milwaukee, WI November 7

E. Kuenzli

Online Broadcast of Convention
Milwaukee, WI November 7



OBITUARIES

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

Sister Katharina Stalder, Germany—August 19.
Age, 95

Sister Ruth Burns, Hebron, IN—September 28.
Age, 91

Sister Maria Maniawski, Moose Jaw, SK, Canada—
September 30. Age, 95

Sister Otylia Lechowicz, Kostki Duze, Poland—
October 6. Age 96

Sister Violetta (Wojciak) Biela, Zamosc, Poland—
October 7. Age 53

Brother Charles Willis, Greenfield, OH—October
12. Age, 88

Brother Allan Allers, New Haven, CT—October
13. Age, 92

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, PO Box 521167, Longwood, FL 32752-1167

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, November 7—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact D. Farchione. Email: debfarchione@aol.com

NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 7—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact A. Suraci. Email: annasuraci@comcast.net

SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, November 20,21—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact R. Brand. Email: blatbrand@aol.com

CHICAGO CONVENTION, January 1,2—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact C. Martire. Phone: (312) 925-5434 or Email: christina.martire@gmail.com

FLORIDA CONVENTION—March 5-7—WILL BE IN PERSON, AND BROADCAST ONLINE ALSO—Holiday Inn Orlando Airport, 5750 T. G. Lee Boulevard, Orlando, FL 32822. Contact L. McClellan. Phone: (727) 260-2632 or Email: larrydmcclellan@gmail.com

*“Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!
Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence
with singing! Know that the LORD, he is God!
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him;
bless his name! For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.”
—Psalm 100, English Standard Version*

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

NOVEMBER 4—“[He] made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.”—Philippians 2:7 (Z. '00-318 Hymn 261)

NOVEMBER 11—“Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue [fortitude].” II Peter 1:5 (Z. '04-10 Hymn 78)

NOVEMBER 18—“The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”—Psalm 34:7 (Z. '97-120 Hymn 333)

NOVEMBER 25—“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.”—James 1:13 (Z. '04-7 Hymn 150)

*Our hearts o'erflow in prayer and praise
To thee most gracious Lord,
That thou hast opened up our eyes
To understand thy Word.*

*That thou hast sought us out to run
This narrow heavenly way.
O lead us by thy Spirit, Lord,
For this we daily pray.*

*We're thankful for our blessings too.
We never should complain,
For even trials are stepping stones
That bring us lasting gain.*

*Give us fresh courage to go on,
For in our strength, we're weak.
We “need thee every hour,” dear Lord,
Thy will alone we seek.*

*With gratitude and courage then,
O let us follow on.
By faith we see the prize in sight
As we behold the dawn.*

—Alice M. Ripper

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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 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. 55

