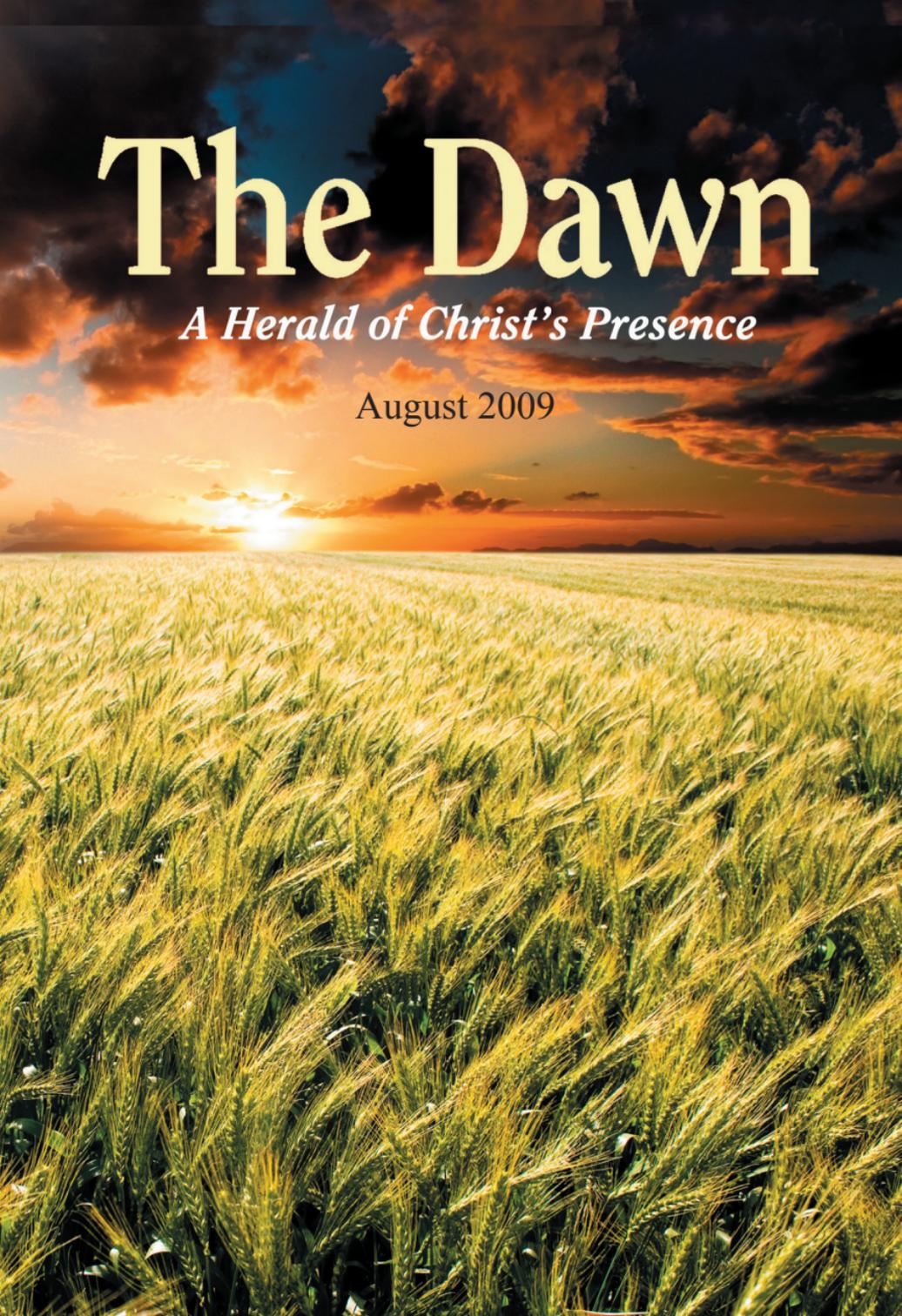


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The Troubled Auto Industry

*“Thou, O Daniel,
shut up the words,
and seal the book,
even to the time of
the end: many
shall run to and
fro, and knowledge
shall be increased.”*

—Daniel 12:4

WHEN DANIEL WROTE these prophetic words, he was looking down the long stream of time from the perspective of his own day to the events that would unfold during the closing years of the present Gospel Age. When doing so, it was also revealed to him that the signs foretelling the culmination of our present age would be kept secret until the day in which they would be made known by the Holy Spirit of God to those who would be watching.

Looking back over more than a century, we now understand more fully the wonderful wisdom of the Heavenly Father, for these prophetic words and visions were shut up and sealed until the time of our Lord's promised return. They would thus mark the great events that would transpire in the world during that special time in the history of the human creation.

RUNNING TO AND FRO

One of the most significant evidences of our special day in prophecy, and one of which the prophet spoke, is the constant running to and fro, the tremendous increase in travel, and the overwhelming amount of traffic that it has produced during these final days of the age. This is clearly manifest throughout the country today.

Until recent times, travel had been limited to horse-drawn vehicles or by other animal power. When steam power became available in the late 1700s it was adapted to rail transport. This new-found source of energy was also used to power a motor car. The Stanley Motor Carriage Company produced their first car in 1897, and in 1906 their 'Rocket' model reached a speed of 127 mph, and still stands as the record for a steam-powered automobile.

With the inauguration of the automobile on the streets and roads, everyday life of the average citizen was changed dramatically. There is little doubt that the development and rapid growth of the auto industry has been the most revolutionary invention in the history of transportation since the wheel.

THE HORSELESS CARRIAGE

Throughout the ages there had been attempts from time to time to build a vehicle that could be run on its own transportable source of energy. During the 1800s, there were several enterprising men who attempted to mechanize the familiar buggy that had been previously drawn by horses. For example, in the 1880s Gottlieb Daimler and Wilhelm Maybach of Germany were successful in building a

horseless vehicle that was powered by a two-cylinder 1.5 horsepower gasoline engine that reached speeds of about 10 mph.

Karl Benz, also living in Germany about this time, built a four-stroke gasoline powered vehicle. His registered patent in January, 1886 is recognized worldwide as the official birth certificate of the motor car. The names Daimler and Benz are still familiar today.

THE MOTOR CAR IN AMERICA

The first gasoline-powered automobile in America was road tested in September, 1893, and was manufactured by Charles and Frank Duryea of Springfield, Massachusetts. It consisted of a horse-drawn buggy to which a 4 hp single-cylinder gasoline engine had been installed. The two brothers were bicycle makers but they became interested in building a motorized vehicle. Charles later founded the Duryea Motor Wagon Company in 1896 and it was the first to sell a gasoline-powered vehicle.

OLDSMOBILE

In 1896, Ransom E. Olds built a motorized vehicle in Detroit, Michigan. He named it after himself and production of the vehicle began in 1899 at the Olds Motor Vehicle Company in Detroit. In 1901, the Curved Dash Oldsmobile became the first motor car in the United States that was mass produced, thereby making it the first high-volume production car in America. It earned the distinction of being the top-selling motor car in the country for several years.

For most of its existence, the Oldsmobile automobile was produced by the General Motors

Corporation. When it was phased out in 2004 it had the honor of being the oldest surviving American motor car, having produced over thirty-five million cars throughout its 107-year history.

GENERAL MOTORS

Both before and after its acquisition by General Motors Corporation, Oldsmobile became the entry level of the luxury car division of the company. It was the first American car to be exported overseas, and when the United States Post Office Department ordered its first motor vehicles they purchased the Oldsmobile. It also had the distinction of being the first car to introduce a speedometer on its vehicles.

General Motors Corporation was founded in September, 1908 in Flint, Michigan. At that time, it was a holding company for the Buick automobile, and it was controlled by William C. Durant. General Motors acquired Oldsmobile that same year, and in 1909 it obtained Cadillac, Elmore, and several other motor car companies. Also, at that time, General Motors brought in the Oakland automobile which later became the well-known Pontiac division, which has just recently been discontinued. Durant lost control of General Motors in 1910, but during his absence he proceeded to set up the Chevrolet Motor car company. By way of this acquisition, he was able to secretly purchase a controlling interest once again in General Motors. Chevrolet has proved to be an important part of the General Motors business ever since. However, Durant lost control of the company once again a few years later.

FORD MOTOR COMPANY

Mass production and the assembly-line method of building automobiles is attributed to Henry Ford. He had been tinkering around with gasoline-powered engines from the early 1890's, and by 1893 he had a running engine. He was successful in building his first vehicle in 1896 at Detroit, Michigan, and formed the Detroit Automobile Company in 1899. In 1901 the company was dissolved.

In 1903, he launched the Ford Motor Company in an old converted factory building in Detroit with a group of twelve investors. Most notable among the investors were John and Horace Dodge who later went on to form an automobile company under their own name. Having survived two world wars, a devastating great depression, and many other disturbing setbacks, the Ford Motor Company became one of the largest and most profitable corporations in the world. It has been a family controlled company for well over one hundred years.

THE TIN LIZZIE

In 1908, Ford Motor Company began producing the famous Model T Ford which was the first automobile mass produced on an assembly line with interchangeable parts. The car became affectionately known as the 'Tin Lizzie.' It was later named the world's most influential car of the twentieth century.

When Henry Ford launched his famous vehicle, he did so by stating, "I will build a car for the great multitude. It will be large enough for the family, but small enough for the individual to run and care for. It will be constructed of the best materials, by

the best men to be hired, after the simplest designs that modern engineering can devise. But it will be so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one, and enjoy with his family the blessing of hours of pleasure in God's great open spaces."

The Model T became very popular because it was reasonably priced, reliable, and efficient. It ushered in a new era in personal transportation. It was easy to operate, maintain and to handle on the rough roads of the day. When the Tin Lizzie was discontinued in 1927, more than 18 million of these vehicles had been produced. It has been said that Henry Ford put America on wheels during this era. His highly versatile invention transformed the countryside of America as new horizons of adventure opened up for discovery, and became accessible to the great numbers of people who had purchased their own private motor car.

The Model T rode high off the ground with the 30-inch wheels that it came equipped with. This feature gave the vehicle extra clearance room to negotiate the rough and rutted roads of the day, and at a time when few roads were paved. The car became popular with farmers who could also adapt them to perform many functions around the family farm that were previously done with horses. One function required jacking up one of the back wheels, and then a belt could easily be attached to turn a circular saw for cutting wood.

During the winter months, snow-clearing equipment was unheard of in the early days of the automobile, and cars were usually put on blocks and stored for the season. Horse-drawn sleighs were

used instead. However, an attachment kit was available that could convert the Model T into a very reliable snowmobile that could negotiate the snow-drifted roads. The vehicle then became an entirely new convenience for those requiring dependable transportation in all kinds of weather. They were indispensable for country doctors, rural mail carriers, public utility companies, traveling salesmen, and many others. When President Calvin Coolidge's father died in the winter of 1926, a Tin Lizzie snowmobile led the funeral procession over the snow-covered and drifted roads of Vermont.

CHRYSLER CORPORATION

The third member of the 'big three' automakers still carries the name of its founder, Walter P. Chrysler. He set up the Chrysler Corporation in June, 1926, when the Maxwell Motor Company, which was established in 1904, was reorganized. In the early 1920's, he had taken over Maxwell-Chalmers to help straighten out some problems in the business, and in 1923 it was decided to cease production of the once familiar Chalmers automobile. In 1924, he introduced a 6-cylinder Chrysler motor car that was designed to give customers an advanced and well-engineered vehicle for an affordable price.

The new Chrysler automobiles included many improvements that were new to the industry, and at a time when most cars did not have these particular features. The original 1924 Chrysler came equipped with a high-compression engine, full pressure lubrication, a carburetor air filter and an oil filter. Among the many other new innovations that were introduced during the early years of its

production was the first practical mass produced four-wheel hydraulic brake system, and rubber engine mounts to reduce vibration. Chrysler also developed a wheel that had a ridged rim that was designed to keep a blown-out tire from flying off the wheel. This single safety feature was eventually adopted by the entire auto industry worldwide.

THE AUTOMOBILE'S IMPACT

Only a century ago the horseless carriage was little more than a renovated buggy, but during the auto industry's development in the early years of the twentieth century, its invention and innovation rapidly touched every aspect of life. The private motor car provided a superior method of transportation to that of horse-drawn vehicles and it offered a new sense of freedom to its owners.

Entire families could now travel wherever and whenever they pleased, and America's entire lifestyle was suddenly changed. Cities were no longer the only place to live, and all classes of people were able to find more comfortable places to dwell in the suburbs, away from smelly and noisy factories. Cars have redefined this country's industry, and have completely altered the way people go about their everyday lives. The motor car became a national craze and it would be difficult to imagine life today without it. It is now an absolute necessity.

NEW ROADS

Road construction changed dramatically after the invention of the automobile. What had once been dirt or cobblestone streets and roads were converted to hard surfaces of asphalt or concrete. Old roads were rebuilt and new ones added. Auto

designers produced faster cars as the roads became improved. This produced an increase in the amount of people travelling, and the need for speed and safety controls.

With increased travel, the whole infrastructure of America's tourism industry was changed. Small town hotels were suddenly brought into the public spotlight as salesmen traveled from one town to another. Tourist homes and roadside cabins were made available for the weary traveler that provided reasonably priced accommodations. The growing number of tourists also increased business in small towns. These included restaurants and coffee shops, as well as service stations, garages and repair shops. Gasoline pumps began popping up all over America, and it was no longer necessary to purchase gas at the general store, or to locate the neighborhood blacksmith for mechanical repairs.

DEMAND FOR OIL

The emergence of the motor car immediately revolutionized the petroleum industry. Before 1900, only a small amount of petroleum was converted into gasoline. When gasoline-powered automobiles began to appear, more and more amounts of oil were needed to keep the new vehicles running. During the early years, new oil fields were opened up in Texas but, despite the expansion, the industry could not keep up with the demand and supplies were sought elsewhere. Abundant supplies were discovered in Middle Eastern countries, and this had a major impact on their economies which had previously been very poor. Oil refineries also needed thousands of new workers.

Widespread changes to America's landscape has been the direct result of the automotive industry's success. Since its inauguration over a century ago, hundreds of makes and models of cars have come and gone. The great depression of the early 1930's witnessed the end of many of these, and Detroit's 'big three' automakers have acquired others. Since that early time in the history of transportation thousands of miles of new and modern highways have been built in every part of the country to handle the high-speed traffic of today. New services of every kind now dot the landscape to accommodate and provide comfort for the traveler.

UNCERTAIN TIMES

In spite of this tremendous growth, Detroit's 'big three' automakers have experienced huge financial losses in recent years. Analysts point out that several factors may have contributed to this disturbing situation. These include the emerging effects from the present worldwide recession, mismanagement within the industry, and fierce competition—especially from overseas manufacturers who are free to operate within the network of a cheaper work force.

General Motors Corporation had the distinction of being the world's largest carmaker for 77 consecutive years from 1931 to 2007. At the time of its decline, it manufactured cars and trucks in 34 countries and employed a quarter of a million people around the world. It also sold and serviced vehicles in 140 countries. In the autumn of 2008, General Motors, along with Chrysler Corporation, received loans amounting to billions of dollars from the

United States government in an effort to keep the companies afloat and to avoid what appeared to be inevitable bankruptcy. This took place amid ongoing financial difficulties and major efforts to restructure their businesses.

In February 2009, General Motor's Saab division filed for reorganization after being denied loans from the parent government in Sweden. In April, amid restructuring efforts, General Motors announced it was phasing out the popular Pontiac, a car they had been manufacturing for decades. It was also announced that the sale of its Hummer, Saab and Saturn models would be forthcoming. It had previously eliminated the once proud Oldsmobile, and would now focus on producing four brands of cars and trucks in North America, Chevrolet, Buick, Cadillac and GMC trucks.

At the time of this writing, General Motors has received additional funds amounting to billions of dollars from the United States Treasury Department under the "Troubled Assets Relief Program" (TARP). GMAC, the company's financing department also received additional funds. General Motors of Canada and the government of Ontario has also committed to large sums of money for the ailing auto giant. General Motors has filed for government-assisted Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, with plans to reemerge as a smaller and less debt-burdened company. They plan to close several plants and lay off workers in the process.

Chrysler Corporation, which is the nation's third largest automaker, has survived for months on government loans. They are presently filing

Chapter 11 for bankruptcy protection, and negotiating terms with the Italian auto producer Fiat. Under this arrangement, the company would gain access to Fiat's expertise in building small, energy efficient vehicles. Chrysler plans to totally reorganize and to emerge as a smaller company. Its executives plan to build cleaner cars through its alliance with Fiat. So far, however, a group of creditors has not agreed, even in the face of government pressure to remove Chrysler Corporation's debt. The federal government has agreed to give the company additional funds.

Officials at Chrysler say they plan to close all of their plants and stay closed until the company has completed its bankruptcy procedures. Chrysler's filing is the latest step in the unprecedented restructuring that is taking place in the American auto industry.

Meanwhile, Ford Motor Company executives continue to monitor the present circumstances. They say that they do not expect any major disruptions to their operations even in light of the news concerning General Motors and Chrysler. Ford appears to be in position as the strongest of the 'big three' automakers at the present time. They have taken no federal bailout money, and may be in position to profit from the troubles at General Motors and Chrysler.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

In our featured scripture, the prophet Daniel spoke of the much running 'to and fro,' and that knowledge would be increased in the closing years of this present Gospel Age. (Dan. 12:4) The invention

and widespread use of the motor car in millions of American families, and at all levels of society, has been a major contributing factor in the closing scenes of this age.

The prophet also spoke of another major sign that would accompany the last features of this age. He wrote, "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." (vs. 1) Cars are no longer a novelty or a luxury. The average family now depends upon their cars to go to work every day and for running errands and for shopping.

There are serious ramifications in connection with the declining auto industry, and it is producing widespread hardship throughout America. Hundreds of auto dealerships are being forced to close, thereby putting thousands of employees out of work. Customers came to these dealerships not only to purchase their vehicles, but for routine service as well. In many cases, these businesses were the centers of small town communities. The shutting down of these dealerships also means the decline in other local businesses such as gas stations, coffee shops, restaurants, and a whole variety of other types of stores.

Interstate highway systems have taken up vast amounts of land especially for interchanges. Shopping malls require many acres for parking, and motor vehicles have introduced new levels of pollution. The frantic and hurried pace of life and increasing levels of speed has led to countless violent accidents resulting in severe injury and death. We now learn about drive-by shootings because of higher degrees of impatience and stress.

THE APPROACHING KINGDOM

As we witness this Gospel Age coming to a close, we know that Christ's kingdom will soon be established for the blessing of the whole human family. In God's wisdom, we now see that the knowledge necessary to create the present scenes of 'running to and fro' was hidden from the worldly-wise until the promised return of our Lord. Under the establishment of his blessed kingdom, man will learn to obey the Divine Law and obtain the right to life.

The present frenzy and rushing about will give way to the pursuit of peace and quietness as expressed by the Prophet Isaiah, who wrote, "Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."—Isa. 32:15-18 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

AUGUST 6—"Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you."—James 4:7 (Z. '00-30 Hymn 149)

AUGUST 13—"We are ambassadors for Christ."—II Corinthians 5:20 (Z.'04-72 Hymn 118)

AUGUST 20—"Whom therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."—Acts 17:23 (Z. '03-29 Hymn 116)

AUGUST 27—"Henceforth know we no man after the flesh."—II Corinthians 5:16 (Z. '03-170 Hymn 165)

People Grumble

Key Verses: *“The mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.”*
—Numbers 11:4-6

Selected Scripture:
Numbers 11

through the study of his Word and frequent assembly through meetings and conventions with others of like precious faith.

THE ISRAELITES HAD PREVIOUSLY voiced their discontent at Marah because the water there was too bitter to drink. (Exod. 15:22-24) Now, after departing from Mount Sinai, the people complained again and God manifested his displeasure by sending a fire into the outskirts of the camp.—Num. 11:1-3

In our Key Verse, it is evident the earlier warning concerning the spirit of being malcontent did not have a sustained impact upon the Israelites. The provision of manna for which the people had originally been thankful was now a source of vexation.

As consecrated believers we must exercise care not to be enticed by the flavors and stimulation of what the world has to offer. God provides spiritual manna as nourishment for us

Despite God's continued provision for the people's temporal needs by means of the manna, Moses became overburdened by Israel's continued complaints. (vss. 7-9) "Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased. And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?"—vss. 10,11

God then directed the institution of seventy elders to hear and counsel the people who had various issues. While Moses still would remain as the head of the nation, the elders would share in the responsibility of guiding the people. Moses then directed these leaders to meet him at the Tabernacle where they were given a measure of God's Spirit and the ability to prophecy. "I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.—vss. 16,17

In view of the continued murmurings of the Israelites, God sent them a month's supply of quail which the people were able to gather and eat to their full. The end result, however, was that they partook of this flesh in such a greedy manner that a pestilence broke out among them.—vss. 18-20,33

Israel's sin of murmuring has profound implications for true Christians who can profit by examining that nation's experiences. To the extent that our focus is on spiritual goals instead of yearning for earthly things, we have a great future prospect. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."—Col. 3:1-4 ■

People Rebel

Key Verse:
“Wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?”
—Numbers 14:3

Selected Scripture:
Numbers 14:1-25

They also proposed organizing their efforts to return to Egypt, much to the grief of Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb. (vss. 4-6) The congregation violently rejected the counsel of Joshua and Caleb to trust God and instead threatened to stone these two faithful servants.—vs. 10

“The LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.”—vss. 11,12

Upon hearing these words Moses, more mindful of the LORD’s honor than that of his own, interceded with

FOLLOWING THE EVIL RE-port given by ten of the spies who surveyed the conditions in Canaan, that the Israelities would be unable to conquer that land, the people once again murmured and expressed the wish that they had either died in Egypt or in the wilderness.—Num. 14:1,2

The Key Verse underscores their rebellious and blasphemous attitude towards God as though it was his design to have the men and their families per-

God on the people's behalf. He appealed that if such a course were taken, the Egyptians would surely learn of it and inform Israel's enemies, who would declare that God was unable to bring his people into the promised land and, therefore, slew them in the wilderness.—vss. 13-16

Moses made this petition in harmony with the Divine law, not asking God to clear the persistently willful sinners, but in accordance with his justice and holiness, pardon their iniquity as he had done in the past. Instead of consuming them in his wrath would he extend his merciful forgiveness towards Israel as he had been doing since they had departed from Egypt.—vss. 17-20

God hearkened unto Moses and granted the people a pardon as a manifestation of his grace. (vs. 21) Nevertheless, a sentence was imposed upon those adults who had constantly murmured against God and they died in the wilderness. "Ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, . . . But your little ones, . . . them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised."—vss. 29-31

The example of Moses pleading to God on behalf of Israel contains an important lesson for the Lord's people today. We have the duty and privilege of praying for our brethren even when they are overtaken in a fault. (Gal. 6:1) Let us also beware of any tendency towards disloyalty toward God by rebelling against him and expressing a desire to return to the world after having pledged to do his will.

The typical nature of Israel's experiences were recorded for the edification of the Gospel Age church. "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."—I Cor. 10:10-12 ■

Moses Disobeys

Key Verse: *“The LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.”*
—Numbers 20:12

Selected Scripture:
Numbers 20:1-13

on’s rod that budded—gather the assembly of people together, and speak to the rock, and it would bring forth water for the congregation and the animals to drink.—vs. 8

On a previous occasion, about thirty-eight years before near Mount Sinai, the Israelities had similarly complained to Moses about the lack of water for themselves and their cattle. At that time, God instructed Moses to smite the rock and water gushed forth to remedy the situation.—Exod. 17:1-6

In this latter instance, however, Moses was instructed to “speak” to the rock rather than to strike it. (Num. 20:8) After gathering the representatives of Israel

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

had resided in the wilderness for nearly forty years and, after the death of Moses’ sister Miriam, the people were preparing to enter Canaan. At this time, there was a shortage of water and once again the congregation murmured against Moses as well as Aaron.—Num. 20:1-5

The burden of these complaints prompted Moses and Aaron to seek Divine counsel, and “the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.”—vs. 6

They were instructed to take the rod—in all probability Aaron’s

rod that budded—gather the assembly of people together, and speak to the rock, and it would bring forth water for the congregation and the animals to drink.—vs. 8

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before the rock, Moses said, “Here now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?” (vs. 10) Moses then lifted his hands and with the rod he smote the rock twice and water gushed forth. (vs. 11) Our Key Verse indicates God’s displeasure with Moses’ disobedience in smiting the rock and declared that neither he nor his brother Aaron would enter Canaan.

This narrative provides important lessons for the Lord’s people today. The smitten rock was symbolic in that it represented Christ. “They [Israel] drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” (I Cor. 10:4) The earlier smiting of the rock by Moses, which God authorized, shows the necessity of Christ being smitten in death in order to redeem the fallen human race.—Isa. 53:5,6

A sobering application of Moses’ sin in smiting the rock a second time is suggested in the New Testament. For any truly consecrated believers to repudiate the value of the ransom sacrifice, or to engage in willful sin, would seem to signify a crucifying afresh and putting Christ to open shame. Those who have been enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift of the Holy Spirit and of the blessings to come would demonstrate a lack of worthiness for a place in the kingdom.—Heb. 6:4-7

Moses, as the meekest man “upon the face of the earth” (Num. 12:3), disobeyed God’s instructions and allowed a little self-exultation to enter into his heart by rebuking the Israelites when they had no water, and taking the credit as though it was his own miracle of bringing it forth in an unauthorized manner.

Let us never boast but always give God the glory for anything he permits us to do in the cause of his service. “Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?—I Cor. 4:7

God Calls for Obedience

Key Verses: *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.”*
—Deuteronomy 6:4-6

Selected Scripture:
Deuteronomy 6

in truth. This theme of love, obedience, and reverence towards God was of such great importance that it was to be a subject of meditation, instruction to children, and frequent discussion with others. “Thou shalt . . . talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way.”—vss. 7-9

In keeping with the earlier exhortation to give all of their worship and love to God alone, mindful that the

TODAY’S LESSON RELATES

to a reminder by Moses to the children of Israel to follow the commandments of God given years before to the fathers of the present generation. By obeying these laws, God’s blessings would be realized in the form of long life, happiness, prosperity, and numerous descendants.—Deut. 6:1-3

Our Key Verses underscore the principle that God was to be the sole object of Israel’s worship, affection, and allegiance. These words implied a sincere love for him, not merely in word, but inwardly

Israelites had been in contact with idolatry in Egypt and would again be in contact with it after entering Canaan, the matter of false worship, or seeking after other gods, was such a serious offense that God's anger would be kindled against his people if they violated this command.—vss. 14,15

Despite these warnings, Israel later on repeatedly worshipped other gods. “The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroath. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.”—Judg. 2:11-14

Christian believers are not in danger of worshipping idols of wood or stone. Nevertheless, the appreciation of our great calling should cause us to give our worship and praise to God as the priority in our hearts. Under no circumstances should we erect idols in our lives, including our families, the pursuit of wealth, the desire for recognition by others, nor even faithful servants who minister unto us.

This principle is also given as an admonition for us in the final chapter of the Bible, where it is written, “I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.”—Rev. 22:8,9

God Calls for Decision

Key Verse: *“The LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”*
—Deuteronomy 30:6

Selected Scripture:
Deuteronomy 30

Our Key Verse points to the time when the people’s hearts would be purged from wickedness and idolatry and enjoy a renewed relationship with God as they render obedience to his laws. As a faithful servant who was concerned about his people, Moses continued to set before them the blessings of obedience, and the fact that God would do all the good that he promised on their behalf if they would keep his commandments.—vss. 7-10

Moses also reminded the people that the covenant they had been given was not too hard for them to comprehend and all that was necessary was for them to commit themselves to obedience. As a closing exhortation, he indicated that the Israelites could choose to obey God and receive his blessings. “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”—vss. 19,20

DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE

was manifested in the prediction that Israel would violate its covenant with God and be carried away into exile. It was promised further that God’s mercy and compassion would be bestowed upon them and they would ultimately be re-gathered into their land.—Deut. 30:1-5

Our Key Verse points to the time when the people’s hearts would be purged from wicked-

Many years later, as a result of continued disobedience, God permitted various Gentile powers to dominate Israel, beginning with Babylon. The promised regathering of Israel from distant lands has been in process for some period of time. It became a sovereign nation once again during the mid-twentieth century, but it still faces persecution and hostility from surrounding enemies.

At the time of his First Advent, Jesus Christ came to the nation of Israel and offered himself as their Savior and King. As a nation, they were given the opportunity of becoming a part of the spiritual seed of Abraham to help bless all the nations of the earth. (Gen. 22:18) After being blinded to the import of this offer, they were cut off from this special opportunity which has now been given to the Gentiles. Nevertheless, all the promised earthly blessings will begin to flow to the nation of Israel in God's kingdom, when they may manifest obedience to his law and profit from the many bitter experiences they have had throughout their history.—Acts 15:14-17

This will be the promised time for Israel's restoration to God. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—Jer. 31:31-34 ■

Testifying to God's Grace

“Now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.”

—Acts 20:22,23,
New American
Standard Bible

THESE SOBERING WORDS

were spoken by the Apostle Paul and were recorded by Luke, who was an historian and a companion to the apostle on his many journeys. Paul spoke these words to the Ephesian brethren who had gathered together to bid him farewell as his last pilgrim journey was drawing to a close.

He realized that troublous times were indeed awaiting him when he would leave his dearly beloved brethren at Ephesus and make his way to Jerusalem. Yet he willingly put his life and ministry in the hands of the loving Heavenly Father, and said, “None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.”—Acts 20:24,25

RECOLLECTIONS

The apostle then reflected on his ministry and labor of love, and reminded the brethren at Ephesus, “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” (vs. 27) He then brought their attention to the fact that they had been given responsibility of being overseers in their new Christian life, and that they should help to further establish their fellow members in Christ Jesus. He also admonished them to be on guard against false brethren who would seek to draw them away from the Truth as they had been taught. “Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”—vss. 34,35

THE PARTING SCENE

Luke has recorded the apostle’s departure, saying, “When he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him, Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.”—vss. 36-38

These parting words of Paul must have been very sobering to the members of the church at Ephesus, but especially for the elders of the ecclesia. They realized that the responsibility for this congregation

of the Lord's people would now be on their shoulders. They could no longer look forward to any more future visits by Paul to help resolve any of their problems. They knew that the only strength they could derive from the apostle any more would be through his wonderful example of faithfulness under trial, and the depth of his teachings of the Truth.

VALUABLE EXPERIENCES

Preaching the glad tidings of the Truth provided Paul and his companions with valuable experiences which helped them all to become more faithful in their consecrated walk in "newness of life" with our Lord Jesus. (Rom. 6:4) We also see his wonderful Christian growth that is often reflected in the letters that he wrote to the various churches which he helped to establish. Many of these were written after he had gone through much suffering for the cause of Truth. We believe that all of his experiences were especially directed by the Heavenly Father.

This same spirit of love and care for the spiritual interests of his brethren is also shown when he wrote to the brethren at Thessalonica. He encouraged them by saying, "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour."—I Thess. 4:1-4

SEEKING GOD'S WILL

As the apostle's ministry was drawing to a close, we believe that the Heavenly Father had already begun to prepare him for his final witness for the Truth, and one which would be accomplished under very different circumstances than any he had previously encountered. The events that were to occur, and the way in which he would respond to them would ultimately affect his growth as a faithful follower of Christ Jesus. He no doubt sensed that his life would be in danger in his service to the Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus. We catch a small glimpse from the scriptural account that has been recorded. Luke wrote, "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome."—Acts 19:21

The apostle knew through the Holy Spirit that his presence in Jerusalem would ultimately lead to his arrest, many fiery trials, and finally the end of his earthly life. The brethren would never see his face again. He knew perhaps more deeply than any of the other apostles that when the especially appointed leaders of the Early Church had all finished their courses in death, the Adversary would create many problems among them, and ambitious leaders would arise to draw them away with new and false teachings.

JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

From the scriptural record, we learn some of the interesting details of Paul's journey. "It came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had

launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: And finding a ship sailing over unto Phoenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.”—Acts 21:1-3

When the ship docked for a seven-day layover at Tyre to unload its freight, Paul and his companions took advantage of the opportunity to meet with the disciples who lived in that city. When they learned that the apostle was travelling to Jerusalem, they tried to dissuade him from going there because they feared what would happen to him. The church in that city was composed mainly of Jews, many of whom had fled from Judea because of persecution, and they were keenly aware of the hazards that awaited them there.

STOPOVER AT TYRE

At the end of the seven-day stopover at Tyre, the entire congregation gathered to bid the apostle farewell. “When we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.” (vs. 5) The whole group knelt down on the shore before the ship, praying, and embracing the travelers before returning sadly to their homes. It was truly a scene of loving concern, tender care, and the deep faith in our Lord. They had developed much in the fruits of the Holy Spirit and in the Truth.

VISITS AT PTOLEMAIS AND CAESAREA

Paul and his traveling companions traveled on to Ptolemais and stayed one day with the brethren there. The next day the apostle and his companions left for Caesarea where the group stayed with Philip. Several years earlier Philip had been selected by the church at Jerusalem to be one of seven deacons. (Acts 6:5) From the scriptural record, we learn that he was now married and the father of four daughters, all of whom were consecrated to the Lord and in active service for the Truth.

The congregation at Caesarea was originally composed of Jews only, but after God's exclusive favor to Israel ended, Cornelius and his family, as well as other Gentiles, were brought into the family of God. The account tells us that Cornelius lived in Caesarea (Acts 10:24), but no mention is made of him during this final visit of Paul. It is believed that Philip also made Caesarea his home.—Acts 8:39

AGABUS' MESSAGE

Paul and his companions stayed in Caesarea for several days, "As we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus." (Acts 21:10) God used a prophet who delivered a clear message to Paul and the others as to what they might expect at Jerusalem. "And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that

place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.”—Acts 21:11,12

The reaction to Agabus’ proclamation was very emotional. The brethren of Caesarea, and those traveling with Paul, pleaded with him that he should not go to Jerusalem. They wept because of the difficult trials that lay ahead for the apostle. However, Paul knew that the Lord was arranging circumstances for his faithful servant. Those who were traveling with him now understood that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things.

“Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” (vs. 13) His companions realized they could not change Paul’s plans. “And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done. And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem. There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.”—vss. 14-16

AT JERUSALEM

Paul and his traveling companions were warmly greeted by the brethren when they came to Jerusalem. Soon after their arrival Paul went to see James and the other apostles and elders in the local ecclesia. He presented his firsthand report in connection with the Lord’s blessing upon his ministry and extending the message of the heavenly call. The brethren glorified God when they heard this report. However, some Christians living in Jerusalem had

heard rumors about the apostle and that he was teaching that Jews should not observe the Law. Although the rumor was not true it had to be settled.—Acts 21:15-21

RUMORS ABOUND

Since the time of Pentecost, the church at Jerusalem had grown very much in size. The great majority were Jews who had been raised to observe the Law and to give it great respect. The apostles were concerned that the faith of many of these might be affected if they believed these false rumors about Paul's view concerning the Law. They suggested that Paul demonstrate his regard for the Law of Moses by joining with four brethren who had taken a Nazarite vow. "Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law."—vs. 24

The ceremony took seven days and was concluded by shaving the head and offering appropriate sacrifices. Near the end of the days of purification, some Jews from Asia came to the Temple to worship. "When the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place."—vss. 27,28

RESCUED BY ROMAN SOLDIERS

They incited still other Jews to seize Paul and charged that he was preaching against the Law. They said that he had defiled the Temple by bringing Gentiles into it, a charge based on erroneous conclusions that Paul had been seen with a Gentile. As the mob increased they began to beat him. Except for the intervention of the Roman commander and his soldiers, Paul might have been killed.

The scriptural account describes the scene. "All the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done."—Acts 21:30-33

When Paul had been put in chains, the commander tried to learn who he was and what he had done. As the crowd cried "away with him" the apostle was taken to the castle in the custody of the soldiers to protect him. (vs. 36,37) As he was about to be taken into the castle, he spoke to the commander in Greek. He assured him he was not to be confused with a notorious rebel leader, but that he was a law-abiding citizen of Tarsus. He requested and was granted permission to speak to the people.—vs. 39

A MARVELOUS TESTIMONY

Paul appealed to the people as he stood on the castle steps. The mob grew quiet as he began to speak to them in Hebrew. He gave them a brief account of his background, emphasizing his zeal for the Law and his persecution of the first Christians. Then he proceeded to give a detailed description of his encounter with the glorified Jesus and how this had completely changed his life. He told how he had gone to Jerusalem, desiring to tell everyone of the great change that had taken place in his life.

A ROMAN CITIZEN

In spite of his bonds, the apostle had accomplished what he had never been able to do when he was free. He had been given the opportunity of witnessing to a multitude of Jews in Jerusalem. Whether any that heard him changed their course of life as he had done we are not told, but it is possible that a few may have been among the Lord's people who heard Paul speak on that day.

“They gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?” (Acts 22:22-25) When the chief captain heard this he asked Paul how he had acquired his

citizenship, and Paul answered him that he was “free born.” (vs. 28) The commander became fearful when he learned this. His earlier order to bind Paul was not lawful if he were a Roman, so he was set free.

However, the Apostle Paul was kept in custody for his own protection by the Roman governor for two years. As a Roman citizen, Paul had made an appeal for an audience before the Caesar in Rome, and it was necessary that he remain in custody until his case had been presented to Caesar and arrangements could be made for his departure from Jerusalem. It is interesting that he had earlier spoken of his intention to go to Rome after his visit at Jerusalem. (Acts 19:21) It is doubtful that he could have ever foreseen the circumstances that would make this journey possible.

JOURNEY TO ROME

Luke recorded the occasion, “When it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus’ band. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. And the next day we touched at Sidon.” (Acts 27:1-3) God’s wonderful providence was surely manifest to Paul and his companions when they arrived at Sidon. The centurion who was in charge of Paul and the other prisoners graciously allowed the apostle and his fellow travelers to visit a group of brethren who resided in Sidon. “Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty

to go unto his friends to refresh himself.” (vs. 3) The apostle had been held in custody for two years, and it surely must have been a source of much joy to share fellowship again with the brethren at Sidon.

When it came time to continue on their way toward Rome it was getting too late in the season for travel in that part of the world. After a windy journey they arrived at the port city of Lycia where they boarded a ship that was headed for Italy. When they had made their way to Crete they took refuge at Fair Havens where they waited for the storms to cease. Paul warned the ship’s owner that it was too dangerous to continue, but they set sail again. The strong winds blew them off course, and it became necessary to toss cargo overboard to help lighten the vessel.

GOD’S ANGEL ASSURED PAUL

As the situation grew more desperate, the apostle spoke to those who were on board the ship. “After long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship.”—vss. 21,22

The Heavenly Father had sent his angel to reassure the apostle that he would be delivered safely to Caesar, and that there would be no loss of life on the vessel. “There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar:

and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.”—Acts 27:23-26

The situation grew increasingly desperate, and the ship ran aground, crashed into the rocks and broke up. However, all who were on board the stricken vessel made their way safely to shore even as the angel of God had said. They found themselves on the island of Melita, and they were treated very kindly by the local inhabitants. (chap. 28:1,2) Paul and his companions wintered on the island, during which time the apostle healed many who were sick and had a variety of diseases.

ARRIVAL IN ITALY

We learn about the final portion of the voyage from Melita to Italy from the scriptural record. We read, “After three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux. And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli.”—vss. 11-13

Having arrived at Puteoli they were greeted by a group of brethren with whom they stayed for seven days of fellowship. They later traveled on to Rome where other brethren also came to meet him. The centurion then delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard. (vs. 16) Soon after his imprisonment, Paul got in touch with Jewish religious leaders in the city and explained why he had

been brought to Rome. He also told them that he had been falsely accused by the Jews at Jerusalem.

A FINAL MESSAGE OF TRUTH

The Scriptures do not record the events as they unfolded in the final days of Paul's life. It is believed that he was brought before Nero and condemned to death. From his letter to Timothy, he wrote, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me."—II Tim. 4:6-9

We do know that Paul used his declining physical strength in proclaiming the wonderful message of Truth to those who had an ear to hear the Heavenly Father's invitation and heavenly calling in Christ Jesus. The apostle was one of the most powerful voices ever heard during the Early Church era. His tireless achievements during the many years of his extensive ministry were centered around his activity in establishing new classes of consecrated followers of Christ Jesus in many widespread places. He served a critical role in sending forth the message of Truth to a small but select class of believers in Christ Jesus often under very difficult circumstances. As we contemplate his zeal and faithfulness to this great cause, an often overlooked but equally important work was also being

accomplished in the spiritual growth and development of his own consecrated walk in newness of life, and as a faithful member in the body of Christ.

“Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”—Acts 28:30,31 ■

His Way is Best

*Just why I suffer loss I cannot know;
I only know my Father wills it so.
He leads in paths I cannot understand:
But all the way, I know, is wisely planned.*

*My life is only mine that I may use
The gifts He lendeth me as He may choose.
And, if in love some boon He doth recall,
I know that unto Him belongeth all.*

*I am His child, and I can safely trust;
He loves me, and I know that He is just;
Within His love I can securely rest,
Assured that what He does for me is best.*

—*Poems of Dawn*

The Rod and Staff of the Lord

“Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”
—*Psalm 23:4*

A ROD IS USED IN THE Bible to symbolize power and authority—destructive power, such as the “rod of iron”; the rod of discipline; and especially the rod of assistance and comfort as suggested in our theme text.

RODS AND STAFFS

According to the best authorities, the distinction between a rod and a staff in olden times is not clear. In the Old Testament, the two words are often translated from the same Hebrew word, and seem to be used interchangeably. It appears that the shepherds of Israel may have had two distinct implements that were used in connection with their occupation. This is indicated in this 23rd Psalm where each is mentioned. The two English words rod and staff apply to one and the same thing, simply a walking stick that was customary for people to use in olden times to assist them over the rough terrain as they traveled. In the New Testament, the English words rod and staff are used several

times and always translated from the same Greek word.

The Lord and his disciples each used such a rod, or staff, to assist them as they journeyed from place to place. This is referred to in Mark 6:8 when Jesus sent the twelve disciples out two by two, and instructed them to take nothing with them except their “staff.”

The 23rd Psalm, and our opening text, puts before our mind the sense in which our Heavenly Father has used the symbol of a rod or staff to illustrate his tender care, protection, guidance, and comfort over all of his people, particularly all those who are dwelling in the “house of the Lord.”

When Jesus sent his disciples out two by two he told them to take “nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse.” (Mark 6:8) The lesson seems to be that having entered upon the Christian way—and it is a narrow and rugged way—we must not depend upon the arm of flesh, or upon temporal things, but our sufficiency is in Christ. He has promised to be with us, to care, comfort, and guide us, helping us over the rough places, even unto the end of the way. The staff, or rod, of the Lord is indeed strong—a firm foundation—and it will never give way. It will carry us over the most difficult obstacles of our Christian journey, and help us through our most severe trials. Let us learn to lean fully upon it.

A SPECIAL ROD—THE ROD OF GOD

We note a very special rod that is mentioned in the Scriptures in connection with the exodus of Israel from Egypt. This rod is called the “rod of

Moses,” the “rod of Aaron,” the “rod of Levi,” and most significantly it is called the “rod of God.” This ‘Rod of the Lord,’ which was to play such an important role in the delivery of Israel from Egyptian bondage, had a very humble beginning. It was a simple shepherd’s rod which Moses used in tending the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law, in the land of Midian.

One day, as Moses neared the age of 80, he led the flock of Jethro to the back side of Mount Horeb, which is in Sinai, and there the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire and spoke to him out of a burning bush. He said unto Moses, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.” (Exod. 3:7,10) The Lord told Moses that he intended to bring this people into Canaan, a land “flowing with milk and honey.”—vs. 8

MOSES CLAIMS INADEQUACY

Moses felt inadequate to this great task and questioned the Lord’s wisdom in choosing him to be the deliverer of Israel, at which God became a little angry with Moses. Beginning with the fourth chapter of Exodus, we read, “Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and

Moses fled from before it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand.”—Exod. 4:1-4

In all, there were three signs given to Moses to show that God was with him, but we will only consider the first one, which had to do with the rod. The rod here represents Divine power and authority which was to be exercised through Moses on behalf of the children of Israel.

A SIGN

In this sign, we see two conditions symbolically represented that have to do with the whole human family. We know that “the sting of death is sin” (I Cor. 15:56) and all have “come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23) The human race have all come under the effects of original sin, and thus come under the curse of God’s judgments. The time is coming, though, when the greater than Moses will ‘catch the serpent by the tail,’ bind and eventually destroy Satan and thus release the human family from his beguilement.

This concerns the Lord’s people inasmuch as the very purpose of their calling is that they may become part of this great antitypical Moses that will be charged with the responsibility of delivering mankind from the bondage of sin and death during Christ’s coming kingdom. These called-out ones have been begotten with God’s Holy Spirit, and thus have the great responsibility to properly use this power and authority as ambassadors of the heavenly kingdom. It is important to remember that while the Lord’s people are not expected to

deliver mankind or to convert the world at this present time, nevertheless we must be putting forth this message, preaching the “gospel of the kingdom in all the world for a witness.” (Matt. 24:14) As we ‘cast the rod down,’ telling the people about how that old serpent, Satan, is the god of this world, and telling them about the great time of trouble we are now in, let us be sure to ‘lift the serpent up again’ by the tail, and also tell the people about the time when their deliverance will actually take place; and sin, suffering and death will be eradicated from the face of the earth. Pointing out the ‘silver lining’ behind the dark clouds of trouble is indeed a most wonderful part of our ministry, especially as we know that day of deliverance is near at hand.

WHAT IS THAT IN THINE HAND?

The Lord is asking each one of us the question, as he asked Moses, ‘What is that in thine hand?’ If we have certain talents, abilities, if we have material possessions, if we have a knowledge of the Truth, let us remember that all of these things have been sanctified with the ‘rod’ of God’s authority through the begetting of the Holy Spirit, and we must use all to his praise and honor in faithful service to him. We feel inadequate at times, and so unworthy of this honor, just as Moses did. We know that in our own selves we come far short. The words of the Lord to Moses in Exodus 4:11,12 should also be a comfort to us, “The LORD said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and

I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.”

The Lord chose Aaron, Moses’ brother, to be his spokesman before the people, particularly at the time of their deliverance. “He [Aaron] shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.” (Exod. 4:16,17) In these verses, we see Moses representing God, and Aaron the Lord Jesus—the ‘Word’ of God. We, too, as the footstep followers of Jesus, have been charged with the responsibility of speaking the words of the Father as faithful ambassadors of the heavenly kingdom. In the 17th verse, the Lord particularly pointed out the fact that this rod had been sanctified for use by Moses and Aaron in giving signs related to the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt.

So now, this simple shepherd’s rod had become the “rod of God” as indicated in Exodus 4:20, “Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.” We notice in the 21st verse that Moses was to use this rod and perform certain signs before Pharaoh. “And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.”

SIGNS PRIMARILY FOR GOD’S PEOPLE

The primary purpose of these signs was to convince the children of Israel that Moses was appointed

by the Lord to be their deliverer. This is made plain in Exodus 4:5 where it says that Moses would perform these signs, “that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers” had sent Moses unto them. This is further emphasized in the last few verses of the chapter. “The LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.”—vss. 27-31

Our Lord Jesus, during his three-and-one-half year ministry, performed many signs and, as a result, many people believed and followed him. He always claimed that the words he spoke were not his words, but the words of the Father which sent him, that the power to perform miracles was not his power, but power from on high.

We see in the broad sense how the people of Israel dwelling in the land of Goshen in Egypt picture the church, the spiritual Israelites, dwelling in the world—in ‘Egypt’—yet separate from the world, and awaiting their glorious deliverance in the first resurrection. As we look about us now, we are beholding the mighty hand of God and the exercising of his rod of supervision in world affairs.

We see prophecies being fulfilled. We see many signs, and believe that the kingdom is very near. The Lord in Matthew 24 spoke of the signs of his presence and of his coming kingdom.

We read, “The people believed and . . . they bowed their heads and worshipped.” (Exod. 4:31) Concerning spiritual Israel, the Lord said, when you see these signs—these things coming to pass—“lift up your heads, for your redemption [deliverance] draweth nigh.” (Luke 21:28) This is indeed a grand and glorious time to be living, and surely the Lord’s people do rejoice as they contemplate the nearness of the time for their deliverance and the establishment of his kingdom.

GOD’S MIGHTY HAND TODAY

The mighty hand of God that we see exercised in the earth today brings great rejoicing to his true people, realizing that it foreshadows their deliverance from ‘Egypt’—the world. We see that the same signs are being manifested to the pharaohs of our day—the kings, presidents, and dictators—the world leaders of the present time. Their reaction, though, is that of disbelief. Their hearts are hardened, and they refuse to believe that the Lord’s hand is being manifest in the affairs of men. This thought applies to all of Satan’s house, including the ecclesiastical rulers of Christendom.

“I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD. And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

And the LORD spake unto Moses saying, Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?" (Exod. 6:8-12) This reminds us of the statement of Jesus when he said, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matt. 24:24) The time is soon coming, however, when the rod of the Lord will utterly 'swallow up' the rods of authority of this present evil world—all of which receive their power from Satan, "the god of this world."—II Cor. 4:4

In Revelation 2:27, the Lord spoke of the "rod of iron" that would be used to bring about the total destruction of this present evil order of things. This overthrow of Satan was shown in the ten plagues of Egypt which were accomplished by the stretching forth of the hand of Moses with the rod of God.

ROD USED AT THE RED SEA

Let us now project our minds a little farther ahead where we see the children of Israel gathered at the Red Sea. The last plague—the death of the firstborn—was too much for Pharaoh to bear and he hastened to send the Israelites out of the land. However, no sooner had he let them go than he had a change of heart again and sent his armies in pursuit. This is the picture we have set before us in the 14th chapter of Exodus; Israel, about two and one

half million of them, with the Red Sea blocking their escape and Pharaoh's army about to overtake them. Once again the people complained against Moses. Here are the words of Moses, "Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me: speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea."—Exod. 14:13-16

There will be times in our lives when we will have severe trials and testings along this line. Satan will pursue and try to destroy us, but our guardian angels will intervene. When the world and its distractions, cares, and problems seem to press in about us and we become fearful and discouraged, let us bring to mind the words of Moses to the children of Israel, 'Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD,' and 'the LORD shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace.' The LORD will never leave nor forsake us, and he will be "a very present help in trouble."—Ps. 46:1

Moses lifted up the rod and stretched out his hand over the sea and the waters were divided and the people passed over. The rod of God's Spirit and power overruling in our lives will indeed also bring about our deliverance from every trial. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer

you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”—I Cor. 10:13

Sometimes, in order to bring us through a trial, perhaps one that we have brought on by our own bad judgment, the Lord has to use his rod of discipline and teaching. In Job 9:34, we have this spoken of, and Job asked that this “rod” be taken from him. We, however, should not resist this rod of discipline and teaching, as it is for our eternal good and is being administered by the hands of a loving God who is deeply concerned with our welfare. Let us have the faith of Job—“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”—Job 13:15

ROD USED TO OBTAIN WATER

In Exodus 17, we find Moses and the children of Israel have crossed over the Red Sea and are approaching unto Mount Horeb, which is Sinai, and near to the place where God first spoke to Moses out of the burning bush. We find that by now the Israelites had grown very rebellious against Moses because of the hardships they were faced with, in particular the shortage of water to drink.

“Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he

called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?”—Exod. 17:4-7

We do not believe that the Lord’s true people should be equated with these rebellious and unappreciative Israelites, and yet, there may be times in our lives when we murmur and complain, not placing our trust and confidence fully in the Lord. The Israelites seemed to forget so quickly how the Lord had blessed them and carried them through in every difficulty—their faith was very shallow. Let us never forget the manner in which the Lord has kept us and led us in the past, indeed, up to this very moment. He is a faithful God and will never forsake us, even though we sometimes forsake him. In this picture, we see that the rod of God has smitten the rock of Christ, and as a result of his sacrifice, living waters are pouring forth for our refreshing, for our nourishment and our salvation. Let us appropriate the water of Truth daily to our lives, always rejoicing and thanking God for this provision of his love.

HOLDING UP THE ROD OF TRUTH

We now see yet another experience of Israel related to the ‘rod of God’. In the next few verses of Exodus 17 is an account of one of the heathen kings who sought to make war with Israel as they passed near his land. “Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek:

and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”—vss. 8-13

The Christian warfare is indeed difficult, and we know that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. Our success in battle depends upon our faithful use of the “sword of the Spirit” holding it high, always having the banner of the word of Truth before us. If we do not hold the Truth high, it may soon drag the ground and we may even trample it underfoot, and we will surely lose the battle. We all have the individual battleground of our flesh, and daily we must bring it into subjection, using the rod of the Lord as our weapon against the flesh and its weaknesses. Let us hold the rod of Truth high and use it properly in our lives.

Additionally, just as Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses, so we all have the privilege of ‘holding up the hands’ of those more active in the ministry. We do this through prayer, temporal support, and particularly in the many little ways that may be opened to us to encourage others in the Lord’s vineyard. A word of encouragement, of thanks, an expression of love and appreciation could be far more important than we may at first realize. Let us not neglect this important service.

Also, let us not become weary in well doing, we must continue to hold up the rod of Truth even unto the 'going down of the sun', until the last member of the body of Christ passes beyond the veil.

THE ROD BUDS AND BLOSSOMS

The next significant use of the rod of Moses and Aaron is recorded in Numbers 17. The children of Israel had begun to complain because they felt Moses and Aaron had usurped too much authority. There was considerable jealousy on the part of the other tribal leaders so the Lord spoke to Moses and told him to have each tribe of Israel provide a rod, twelve rods in all. Aaron's rod was among them for the house of Levi, his tribe. Moses laid the rods before the Lord in the Tabernacle. The next day Moses went in and brought the rods out of the Tabernacle, and the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had budded, and blossomed, and brought forth almonds. This was a sign that God had chosen Aaron to administer the ecclesiastical affairs of the people as their High Priest. Then Aaron's rod was brought in again to the Tabernacle and placed in the ark of the covenant as an everlasting token against the rebels.

There is a lesson which applies to us and to all the church during this Gospel Age. If we are using the rod of the Lord properly in our Christian lives it will bring forth fruitage unto the glory of God. However, we should not expect to do great things all at once so far as our Christian development is concerned. First, there is only the small beginning of progress represented in the bud. Sometimes in our life that bud is quenched, pinched off and not

permitted to go on to blossom and fruition, but the Lord is not in a hurry in this work and he patiently works with each one of us, giving us experiences that are best calculated to provide fertile ground for bringing forth these little buds for a long time, and then gradually this new Christ-like character begins to blossom out in great beauty so that it is seen by others. These beautiful blossoms of character exude an odor of sweet incense that is a blessing to all others about them. Finally, these beautiful qualities of character are brought to fruition through 'good works.' This fruitage in our Christian life is treasure laid up in heaven where "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt."—Matt. 6:20

With Aaron's rod there were buds, blossoms, and fruitage all at the same time. So it is with the Lord's people now, in the gradual development of the Christian character in all of its many elements. There will be the buds, the blossoms, and the fruitage all appearing, but as we progress along the Christian way the buds turn into blossoms and fruit, so that by the time we reach the end of our course there will not be so many buds, but an abundance of fruitage unto the praise and glory of our Lord. Let us also remember that the development of these glorious characters will not be because of our own ability, our own might or power, but only because of the rod of God's spirit that dwells with us. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."—Zech. 4:6

THE ROD OF GOD USED IMPROPERLY

There is another mention of this rod of God in the experiences of Israel, where we read, "The

LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.”—Num. 20:7-13

This smiting of the rock was near the end of the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, and God had led the children of Israel back to Sinai, to the spot where the first smiting of the rock took place when they had just crossed over the Red Sea. It seems that the people had not changed much, for they were still complaining against Moses and the Lord. Moses, being provoked to anger by the people, smote the rock twice, rather than speaking to it as God had instructed, and water came out abundantly. Because Moses and Aaron tempted the Lord by striking the rock twice in disobedience, they were

not permitted to lead the children of Israel into the land of Canaan.

This would seem to be a rather harsh punishment inflicted upon Moses and Aaron, and yet the Lord was giving a very important lesson to us, and to all those who have been in a relationship with him during this Gospel Age. Jesus, in his temptations in the wilderness, quoted a commandment of the Lord to the Devil, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” (Matt. 4:7) Surely there is no real danger of our tempting the Lord in any big or spectacular way, but there are innumerable ways we may tempt God unwittingly, or in little things, because we are not as careful as we should be in the application of the principles of Truth to our lives. Perhaps these are a few of the ways such tempting may be done: by arbitrarily staying away from meetings, assuming the Lord will overlook it; by not studying our lessons, expecting God to give us a blessing while not properly preparing ourselves for it; by foolish conduct before the world; by not using the means at hand for properly treating our physical illnesses, and tempting the Lord to help us but not willing to do what we can for ourselves.

To avoid the sin of tempting God it is important that we very diligently apply the principles of Truth to our daily lives, having our conscience properly instructed by the word of Truth, and allowing this conscience to judge carefully even in the very smallest matters as to our conduct and attitudes.

ROD AND STAFF IS ALL THAT IS NEEDED

The 9th verse of Numbers 20 indicates that Moses took the rod of God—Aaron’s rod, which was Moses’

own original rod—out of the ark of the covenant to smite the rock for water. It was later put back into the ark and was there when the children of Israel passed through the waters of the Jordan and into Canaan. Little did Moses know when he was shepherding the flocks of Jethro down in Midian that this rod would play such an important and honorable role in the great work of delivering the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and bringing them safely to the land that flowed with milk and honey.

Now we understand what our Lord Jesus meant when he said to his disciples, take “no scrip, no bread, no money,” only your staff. (Mark 6:8) We can take nothing of this world into the kingdom, but the proper use of the rod and staff of the Lord can and will get us there. The rod of God must go with us all the way into the kingdom. ■

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 Elsie Hurd, Clinton, CT—June 2. Age, 93

Sister Emmy Cole, Sun City, CA—June 16. Age,
87

Brother Walter Doctor, Chicago, IL—June 24. Age,
86

Our Privilege of Prayer

“Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”
—*Matthew 6:6*

ENTERING INTO PRAYER

with our loving Heavenly Father is a great blessing and the vital breath of every faithful consecrated child of God.

The psalmist wrote, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.”

(Ps. 111:10) When Jesus died, he made possible a direct access to the Heavenly Father through the merit of his shed blood on behalf of all who believed in him.

THE MODEL PRAYER

Jesus taught the disciples how to pray, and gave them a model that is known as the “Lord’s Prayer.” (Matt. 6:9-13) It contains all of the necessary elements for successful communication with the Heavenly Father and a desire to know and do his

will. The wise will heed the Master's instructions and approach God with a reverent heart with the expression, "Hallowed be thy name."—vs. 9

Uppermost in the minds of all consecrated Christians should be the establishment of God's future kingdom for restoring righteousness and peace over all the earth. How truly wonderful it will be when God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven.—vs. 10

God has promised to supply all of our daily needs, and we should ever be in an attitude of forgiveness toward those who may trespass against us. (vss. 11,12) He will deliver us from evil and the wicked one if we remain faithful to him. The foes of the New Creation are ever well organized under the evil one Satan, and we as followers of Christ need God's continual help to successfully oppose his many schemes.—vs. 13

Through Jesus' model prayer we find all of the objectives of honoring and praising God, praying for his kingdom, thanking him for his goodness and mercy, and asking for his forgiveness and assisting grace whenever we need him.

We can communicate with the Heavenly Father at any time and ask for anything in accordance with his will. Let us use this privilege frequently and thus fulfill the admonition, "Pray without ceasing." (I Thess. 5:17) "This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."—I John 5:14,15 ■

Brethren at Medellin, Colombia



The Bible Students Ecclesia at Medellin, Colombia, South America
(Some brethren are not shown due to employment obligations)

This picture of some of our brethren in South America was submitted by Bro. Rafael E. Lopez, an elder in the class at Medellin, Colombia. The brethren testify to their love for the Truth, their appreciation for the Spanish Dawn magazine, and the great help they have received over the years from the Dawn Bible Students Association in America. They also speak of their many fond memories, and help they have received from Bro. Joe Panucci. He has served their class, as well as many other classes on his pilgrim trips throughout South America. They send their Christian love to all of the brethren. ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

K. Fernets

Delaware Valley, PA August 9

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

M. J. Balko

St. Petersburg, FL August 9

H. Montague

Milwaukee, WI August 15,16

O. B. Elbert

Milwaukee, WI August 15,16

D. Rice

Milwaukee, WI August 15,16

S. Jeuck

Louisville, AL August 2

B. Keith

Milwaukee, WI August 15,16

*“By love serve one another.”
—Galatians 5:13*

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CONVENTIONS

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

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, August 15,16—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact D. Farchione. Phone: (262) 895-4583

NIGERIA GENERAL CONVENTION, August 21-23—Emmanuel College Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. O. Egbu, #2 Darlington Street, Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Phone: 2348033339949

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 4-7—Seabeck Christian Conference Center, 15395 Seabeck Highway NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact D. Christiansen. Phone: (360) 440-3283

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 5,6—Fa-Ho-Lo Camp and Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Unit 1, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact: R. Lumley. Phone: (517) 782-7252

NORTHWEST MONTANA KALISPELL CONVENTION, September 18,19,20—Red Lion Hotel, 20 N. Main Street, Kalispell, MT 59901. Contact M. Burns. Phone: (406) 756-7789

CLAY CITY CONVENTION, September 25,26,27—Canyon Inn, McCormicks Creek State Park, 451 McCormick Creek Park Road, Spencer, IN 47460. Contact S. Clark, 7861 Clearwater Parkway, Indianapolis, IN 46240. Phone: (317) 578-2634

DETROIT MONTH-END CONVENTION, September 27—Mahany/Meininger Senior Community Center, 3500 Marias Avenue, Royal Oak, MI 48073. Contact N. Zandler, 20 Devonshire, Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069. Phone: (248) 399-8843

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 3,4—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15012. Contact J. Krasonic, Sr., 1106 State Route 136, Belle Vernon, PA 15012. Phone: (724) 872-6215

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 10,11—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact T. Malinowski, 5609 Buttrick Avenue SE, Alto, MI 49302. Phone: (616) 868-0313

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 17,18—Masonic Temple, 859 March Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. Contact M. Allard. Phone: (805) 773-2962

DETROIT/DETROIT METRO JOINT ECCLESIA MEETING, October 18—Pleasant Ridge Community Center, 4 Ridge Road, Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069. Contact N. Zandler, 20 Devonshire, Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069. Phone: (248) 399-8843

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 24,25—Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Drive (Corner of Hwy. 17-92), Sanford, FL. Contact: J. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 831-2098

*Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.*

*Blest are the sons of peace,
Whose hearts and hopes are one,
Whose kind designs to serve and please
Through all their actions run.*

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

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

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

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

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

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

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