

The Dawn

Volume LVI, Number 1
(USPS 149-380), January 1988

Second-class postage paid at Rutherford, NJ. Published monthly by The Dawn Bible Students Association, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073 \$1.00 a year; Great Britain 60p. Write to foreign addresses for other prices.

Canada: P.O. Box 175, Postal Station F, Winnipeg, Man. R2L 2A5

British Isles: 26 Rands Meadow, Holwell-Hitchen, Herts. SG5 3SH

Australia: Berean Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, Victoria 3101

France: Association des Etudiants de la Bible-Publications Aurore, B.P. 3066, 88062 Mulhouse CEDEX

Germany: Tagesanbruch Bibelstudien-Vereinigung, Postfach 4 D8567, Neunkirchen am Sand

Greece: He Haravgi (The Dawn), Odos K. Eslin 4, Ampeloklapi T.T. 602, Athens

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

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Highlights of Dawn

A poet once wrote:

*"We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time;
Age on ages telling—
To be living is sublime!"*

As we focus our sights on the New Year, without God and the Bible the prospects seem dark and foreboding—so well expressed by the poet in the word "awful." But if we view the days ahead in the light of Biblical prophecy, there appears a bright silver lining which reflects a glow of "sublimity" over the whole troubled scene.

How do we look at . . .

The Year Before Us

*"Behold, their valiant ones [margin, 'messengers']
shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall
weep bitterly."—Isaiah 33:7*

THE world is no nearer to finding solutions for its many problems than it was twelve months ago. The festering trouble spots of war continuing to threaten local areas of the Near East, Africa, and Central America, are a constant reminder of the very uneasy peace of the world as a whole. Some of these trouble zones have become more critical of late, as, for example, the escalating open warfare between Iran and Iraq; the swelling crisis in the Persian Gulf which has now drawn in the navies of major world powers; the growing cry of the revolutionary forces in South Africa; and, closer to home, the stubborn dilemma of a bloody war in Central America.

Economic disorders continue to plague the world. The highly unstable conditions of world finance, as reflected in 1987's unique, near "melt-downs" of major stock markets, are a serious

worry for governments as well as people in general. Pollution continues to rear its ugly head, as a threat to human life and health. New viruses which cannot now be eliminated, menace innocent as well as not so innocent victims. And, as always, as a dark cloud of foreboding, there hangs over the world the possibility of nuclear war. Despite all the continuing talk of disarmament, never is there any inkling that all of the weapons of earth shall be destroyed, and so the cloud becomes ever thicker, blacker, and more threatening.

Despite their best efforts and continuing advancement in scientific and medical technology, the continued deterioration in establishing a world society based upon justice, and governed by the principles of righteousness, although disheartening to the world in general, is not disappointing to truth-enlightened Christians. These know that the only solution to the basic problem of human selfishness, which is the underlying cause of all the world's ills, is the establishment of the kingdom of Christ. Besides, through information derived from the "sure Word of prophecy" (II Pet. 1:10), they know that all the imperfect institutions of men will crumble and fall during this time of trouble before the coming of God's new world in which universal and lasting peace will be guaranteed, not through fear of nuclear destruction, but by the righteous authority of God implemented through the agencies of the messianic kingdom.

What to Expect

The Scriptures do not furnish us with exact details of just how the old world will come to its final and complete end. For example, many of the world's trouble spots are not specifically mentioned in the prophecies. They are, however, part of a general worldwide "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." —Dan. 12:1

The variety of upheavals in the religious world which have thrust themselves on the world scene during 1987, have in-

deed been indicated in the Bible, which prophetically reveals that there would be strenuous efforts made in the ecclesiastical heavens to assure the survival of religious institutions in a crumbling world. The trips of the present Pope to many countries in the world to reestablish control and to reaffirm and uphold the ancient doctrines, have met with very little success, and in fact in every city to which he traveled he found that, within the religious institution itself, there comes the demand for reform and change, to come down to the level of the people and to satisfy their wishes.

To attempt to forecast in detail what might happen in any particular place or situation in the world during 1988, or beyond, would be to assume the role of prophet instead of being prophetic students. No student of prophecy could have forecast in the beginning of 1987 that the long war between Iraq and Iran would involve world powers to the point of bombing ships, oil-

1988 Memorial Supper Date

THE proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 p.m., on Thursday, March 31st.

We have a complete Memorial Service available for isolated brethren, or for any who care to have it, on both audio and video cassette. The audio cassette service can be purchased for \$3.00, or is available on loan from The Dawn, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

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drilling platforms, and even port cities along the Persian Gulf; nor could we foresee the long drawn-out investigation by the U.S. Senate into the "Arms Deal" with Iran to release hostages, nor how it would affect other trouble spots in the world, such as Central America. Nor can we now further foresee specific details of other events in advance of their occurrence. It is for the LORD's people to remain alert to what is taking place, and to realize that in these events, and in developments as a whole, a certain prophetic pattern can be discerned which, when recognized, causes us to look up, and lift up our heads, knowing that our deliverance draweth nigh!—Luke 21:28

Increase of Knowledge

One of the things which is very evident in the fulfillment of prophecies in the "time of the end," is the great increase of knowledge. (Dan. 12:4) While Daniel's prophecy forecasts this development in literal language, it is symbolically mentioned in other prophecies. Jesus, for example, foretold that his second presence would be as the 'lightning', or bright-shining, which would shine from the east even unto the west. (Matt. 24:27; Ps. 77:18) Here we have a symbolic description of a general increase of knowledge throughout the earth.

We are not to suppose, however, that this increase of knowledge is to be limited to increasing information in the field of science and other aspects of human learning. Eventually it will, under the directions of Messiah's kingdom, include the knowledge of the LORD. This will be a bright shining of the "Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2), a prophecy which we have just quoted, which will shine from the east to the west, for the promise is that the knowledge of the LORD will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.—Isa. 11:9

Meanwhile, however, we can expect to see the increase of knowledge continue through the divinely overruled efforts of man. The general education of the masses will continue and in-

crease, especially in the third world countries of the earth. Science and invention will continue to make progress. One of the results of this is the tremendous increase of "running to and fro" in the earth (Dan. 12:4) Along this line, speed and comfort of travel continue to increase. When we see these advancements we should rejoice to realize the accuracy with which the prophecies of the Bible are being fulfilled in this, our day.

Knowledge Contributes to Trouble

One would naturally think that the increase of knowledge and the convenience and speed of travel resulting from it, would mean only blessings for the human race. And this would be the case if it were not for human greed. But with selfishness the motivating influence in so much of human endeavor and accomplishment, the great advantages of knowledge are all too frequently utilized to gain the advantage over others. This led to trouble and, in the worldwide picture, to the foretold time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.

Another prophecy outlines this sequence of events. We quote: "The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the LORD of the whole earth."—Ps. 97:1-5

This is a symbolic description of the foretold time of trouble which would be associated with the overthrow of Satan's world, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom. It is summed up by the statement that his lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled, just quoted. Remember that Jesus said his presence would be as the lightning, or bright-shining, and in the prophetic psalm quoted above, this lightning is shown to be the enlightenment, or, the increase of knowledge, understanding.

General Convention Bulletin

THE General Convention Committee is announcing a change of location for the 1988 General Convention. This was brought about by an extremely steep increase in the cost of Albion College, both in housing and convention facilities.

Several colleges meeting our calendar requirements were looked into, and after due consideration, the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga was selected for the week of July 23rd through 28th. It offers for everyone apartment-type living accommodations, with each unit containing a living room, kitchenette, two twin-bedded bedrooms, and a bath—all air-conditioned.

A theater with capacity of up to 700 seats, many study rooms, and a group dining room are contained in a nearby building, which is also totally air-conditioned.

Contract details are now being worked out, and more information will be given in subsequent issues of The Dawn magazine.

But, as the psalmist reminds us, the first result of this is to cause the earth to 'tremble'.

Trembling is an evidence of fear, and today we are living in a fear-filled world, the cause of which has been the increase of knowledge leading to a situation where man in his foolishness and selfishness is in danger of bringing destruction upon the entire race. We know that this will *not occur*, for we believe the assurance given to us by Jesus, that this time of "great tribulation" will be *brought to a close* before all flesh is destroyed. (Matt. 24:21,22) And how glad we are for this assurance!

Trouble to Increase

Because of fear, mankind will continue to attempt the accomplishment of that which can be brought about only by love. 'Messengers' and 'ambassadors of peace' will continue to negotiate. They will fly 'hither and yon', around and across the world.

They will announce that progress is being made. They may even cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." They may claim that security has been established through parity, yet eventually destruction shall come upon them "as travail upon a woman with child."—I Thess. 5:2-4; Jer. 6:14; 8:11

We are to expect the world governments to continue their noble, but futile, human efforts to try to establish peace and to prevent Armageddon—which has become a household word in our day. They are not only foretold in the Bible, but are the natural result of man's inherent desire to preserve himself. So 1987 has been characterized by strong efforts to set up a date for negotiations at the summit level between Russia and the United States regarding a degree of nuclear disarmament. This finally materialized in December. We envision that 1988 will also be marked by conferences on various issues and problems which only the kingdom of Christ and the spirit of love can actually settle. We are to look forward to these efforts continuing, nevertheless. We do not know how much longer these hair-trigger situations will last throughout the world before they erupt into Armageddon. This will be the event—and particularly God's intervention which saves the world from certain destruction—which will give the people of all nations an opportunity to realize the futility of their own efforts leading to their unquestionable annihilation unless Jehovah had called a halt. Thus, and only thus, will they be ready to accept the authority of Christ's kingdom, which will be established immediately following.

The Religious World

In this arena we are to expect Catholicism and Protestantism to continue their efforts for adjusting to the changed situations which confront religion in this chaotic world. There will continue to be ecumenical efforts, and some of these will, on the surface, be successful. Many of the dogmas of the Catholic Church are receiving more scrutiny and pressure from the priests

as well as the laity, to see what can be done to make their doctrines more palatable to the world as a whole. Issues include such considerations as allowing priests to marry; permitting abortion; and giving women the right to become priests. Back of this lies the hope that if sufficient changes can be made, perhaps members of the Protestant churches will look more favorably upon their 'brethren' of the Catholic Church. These issues are causing upset and divisions in the Catholic Church: there are those who demand further reform; there are those who think reform has gone far enough and the status quo is advisable; and there are those who wish to return to the past, firm dogmas of Catholicism. The present pope is numbered among the last category.

Protestantism itself has been dealt a hard blow in 1987. The revelation and admission of corruption and immorality among TV evangelists in America has not helped to establish the credibility of religion in today's world. The threat that he would be taken away from the earth by God unless a certain financial goal was met by a particular date, has made people think about another TV evangelist, and wonder if his methods for raising support for his ministry are sound. As a result, the power and influence of Protestantism has been shaken, and many TV evangelists and churches find themselves in dire financial straits and have lost the respect of many God-fearing people. The United States Government has made plans to make more thorough check of the financial status of nonprofit organizations, due to their recent shenanigans.

All these symptoms of trouble in the ecclesiastical world, also, we may continue to expect in 1988, and, as we see them we should realize they are part of the prophetic pattern of this Day of the LORD's Vengeance upon all institutions of earth which do not measure up to his standards of truth and righteousness.

With the forces of atheism rampant throughout the earth, and with the increase of knowledge exposing the superstitions of

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the Dark Ages as mere myths, having no foundation in fact, the churches of all denominations are realizing their vulnerability to attack, and so are scurrying to get together for mutual protection. What the results of these efforts may be, the Bible does not reveal in detail, but we know that ultimately, all elements of this present evil world, including false religious elements, will be destroyed, and the authority of Christ's kingdom established throughout the whole earth.

Israel Fulfilling Prophecy

The prophecies of the Bible clearly reveal that in these "last days" (James 5:4) there would be a regathering of the natural descendants of Abraham, and their establishment in the ancient Land of Promise. We have watched for the fulfillment of these prophecies, lo, these many years, even before any tangible signs were evident. After the regathering was well under way following the First World War, the doors of Palestine were closed to the Jews. But this did not disturb the faith of those who had confidence in the promises of God. They knew that the doors would again be opened, and so they were. After the Second World War, hundreds of thousands of Jews settled in Palestine, and now the

State of Israel is forty years old!

But still there is much in the prophecies concerning Israel which has not yet been fulfilled. For example, only a portion of the Promised Land is now possessed by the Jews. The prophecies seem to indicate that they were to have it all. The little nation of Israel is ringed by the hostile Arab nations who continually let their feelings be known by attack and harrassment. They would like nothing better than to see the Israelites dispossessed of the portion of the land which they do now occupy. But this does not disturb those who have complete confidence in the promises of God.

The prophecies indicate, and therefore it seems evident, that much trouble still lies ahead for the Jews. Students of prophecy speak of this in the scriptural term, "Jacob's trouble." But 'Jacob', that is, the people of Israel, "shall be saved out of it." (Jer. 30:7) This we know to be a fact, because God has promised it! Just how the details will shape up to bring about this salvation, the Bible does not clearly reveal.

There is a prophecy which shows that before Israel receives the blessings of Messiah's kingdom, an aggressive attack will be mounted against this historic people from the "north" (Ezek. 38:1-9) But, as the prophecy reveals, this will fail because the LORD will turn back the enemy, and destroy them. As a result of this, the eyes of Israel, and of all other nations, will be opened to behold the glory of the LORD! We know that this prophecy will be fulfilled, but how the details will shape up we do not know; but we do know that 1988 will include additional events which will bring us closer and closer to that prophetic point in time. Evidently the LORD wants us to exercise faith in his promises and prophecies without understanding too many of the details. But as the steps in the fulfillment of prophecies occur, we are expected to recognize, to note and to appreciate them, because they were given specifically for our understanding and encouragement as they take place.

So in 1988 we will continue to keep our eyes on the Promised Land, and upon God's ancient people gathered there. There is a segment of Jews still behind the Iron Curtain who wish earnestly to emigrate to Israel. Their prospects are now somewhat better for the accomplishing of their dream. But not many Jews in America at the present time are interested in settling there, and many who went to Israel in hope of a better life, are even returning to the countries they left behind. We will need to watch the events as they develop from day to day to see how the LORD will solve these apparent difficulties standing in the way of the fulfillment of his prophecies.

Meanwhile we have many reasons to maintain our faith in the ultimate, complete fulfillment of all God's promises as they relate to his typical people. One of these reads: "When I have brought them again from the people, and have gathered them out of their enemies' lands; then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them into their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the LORD God."—Ezek. 39:27-29

Another 'final' fulfillment of these prophecies, reads: "The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of Hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of Hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."—Zech 8:21-23

The fulfillment of this prophecy will begin to take place *after* "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7), and the Israelites, regathered in their land, have accepted Jesus as their Messiah, their Re-

deemer, and their king, and are obeying the laws of his kingdom. The New Covenant will be made with them, and rich will be their blessings of peace, security, health, and life, as through its terms they are brought into harmony with their God. These blessings will be so manifest and outstanding that the people of all nations will want to follow the same course Israel followed, in order to obtain them also. "We will go with you," they will say, "for we have heard that God is with you!"

In reality, God is even now overruling in the affairs of Israel, and when the right time comes, he will fight for them as he did in the days of old. But Israel does not recognize this, and certainly the rest of the world does not realize it. How favored are we, that through the sure Word of prophecy we can understand the meaning of this particular aspect of the world situation today, and can watch the developments pertaining to it, and be encouraged by what we see.

But even in this area we do not know just what escalations of events will occur in 1988. We know the final outcome will be glorious! We know the final outcome of this, and all other troublesome situations in the world, will be the establishment of Christ's kingdom—that kingdom in which Christ and his faithful church will be the spiritual rulers, represented by those "princes in all the earth"—the Ancient Worthies.—Ps. 45:16; Heb. 11

In that kingdom, as the Prophet Ezekiel foretold, the LORD will pour out his Spirit upon his ancient people there in the Promised Land. Eventually, the prophecies show, his Spirit will be poured out on all flesh. (Ezek. 39:29; Joel 2:28) It will be the influence of this Spirit that will engender love and understanding in the hearts of the people. Thus will lasting peace and goodwill be established and enjoyed forever by the redeemed and restored world of mankind. It is the assurance of this final outcome of the divine plan that enables the LORD's people to view with patience the lofty, but futile, efforts of the world to work out its own salvation.

And speaking of the final outcome, that will include the awakening of the dead, and the giving to all an opportunity to enjoy the blessings of Messiah's kingdom; on the conditions, of course, of belief and obedience. Without the promises of God to restore the dead to life, how incomplete and unsatisfactory the outlook would be. Thinking of the Jewish situation alone, millions of these suffering people were murdered during the holocaust, within the span of many of our lifetimes. How thankful we are that God has blessings for these—that he will awaken them from the sleep of death in order that they, together with all other Israelites, might receive and enjoy the blessings of the kingdom.

In the even larger picture, there are all the countless millions—even billions—who have suffered and died since sin entered the world. These will not fail to have a favorable chance to enjoy the blessings of Christ's kingdom, for they are among the "all" in their graves who will be called forth, enlightened, and given an opportunity to live forever upon the perfected earth. How all-inclusive, indeed, is the plan of God! And how thankful we should be that the LORD, in his goodness, has opened the eyes of our understanding to know these mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.—John 5:28,29; Matt. 13:11

Because the LORD has taken us into his confidence, and assured us of the ultimate, glorious triumph of righteousness throughout the earth, we can face the new year, 1988, with confidence—even with rejoicing! And our rejoicing should overflow in the telling out of the blessed Gospel of the kingdom, that perhaps others may share our confidence and joy. There is nothing we can do to change the shape of the world in which we live, but it is our privilege to testify to those who will hear concerning the changes which the LORD will bring about through the establishment of his long-promised kingdom under Christ.

We are the ambassadors of the new government so soon to take control in the affairs of men. May the year 1988 see us alert to use faithfully every opportunity which presents itself to

represent the new king of earth, and to explain the glories of his kingdom. The world around us is dark. The storm clouds become more threatening every day. But we are the children of the light, and may we continue to let our light shine in order that those to whom the LORD gives ears to hear may be reached and blessed.

If we enter the new year resolved that we will be faithful ambassadors of Christ, we can expect that the LORD will guide and bless us, and that our own hearts will rejoice the more as we endeavor to share our blessings with others. We can expect, of course, that the world in general will be indifferent, perhaps even scornful at times. But in this we will be able to rejoice also, knowing that thus we are sharing in a small way some of the difficult experiences of our Lord Jesus.

But, compensating for the cold indifference and antagonism of the world, will be the warmth of our Heavenly Father's love, and the smile of his countenance. So, for us the prospect is indeed bright and glorious as we continue on to know and serve the LORD; and as we look forward eventually to obtaining an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.—II Pet. 1:10:11 □

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

January 7—"Speak evil of no man."—Titus 3:2 (Z. '03-425 Hymn 344)

January 14—"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air."—I Corinthians 9:26 (Z. '03-421 Hymn 266)

January 21—"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."—Matthew 16:24 (Z. '00-118 Hymn 261)

January 28—"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."—Revelation 3:5 (Z. '91-161 Hymn 308)

International Bible Study Lessons

LESSON FOR JANUARY 3

Finding True Happiness

KEY VERSE: *"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*—Matthew 5:16

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Matthew 5:1-16*

THE truth which the Heavenly Father has given us to witness to mankind is a "light within" us—not our own light, but the knowledge of Jesus, our Redeemer and Savior; it is this knowledge that glorifies our Heavenly Father. Paul wrote, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."—II Cor. 4:5-7

From this it is apparent that when Jesus said, Let "your" light shine before men, he referred to the light that would be given to us concerning him. This is our light in the sense that we make it our own by our wholehearted acceptance of it, and

our complete yielding to its influence in our lives. In proclaiming this light we are not our own representatives, but Christ's, his ambassadors, holding forth the "Word of life" received from the Lord.—Phil. 2:15,16

One of the elements of Christ-likeness is self-sacrificing zeal in the proclamation of the truth concerning the divine plan. We have a beautiful example of this in the case of Peter and John, who so faithfully proclaimed the glad tidings in the face of much opposition. We read concerning them, "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."—Acts 4:13

In our text, Jesus reminds us that men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel. Thus he implies that

we might not make the proper use of the truth, therefore would fail to be among those who are the light of the world. Negligence of our opportunities is undoubtedly one of the 'bushels' under which we could hide the light of truth. Erroneous views as to the LORD's purpose in giving us the truth also serve as ready excuses for unfaithfulness.

The LORD's will for us is to proclaim the message. This is our vocation, and we are to give all diligence in the ordering of our lives along the lines of righteousness that we may be fit ambassadors of the kingdom message, and then we are to lay down our lives proclaiming it.

In symbolic language, Solomon indicates the possibility of seeking excuses for not sowing the precious seeds of truth. He wrote, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."—Eccles. 11:4-6

Observing the winds and the clouds, as mentioned by Solomon,

suggests looking for excuses not to sow and reap because conditions are not favorable. This is not the proper attitude, he explains; for, after all, we do not understand how the LORD accomplishes his purposes through the truth which we proclaim. This is the LORD's province, and our responsibility is to sow the seed in the morning and in the evening, whenever and wherever we have the opportunity knowing that the LORD will prosper the message according to the good purposes of his own will. It is God that gives the increase.

As we observe the LORD's people throughout the world, we are impressed with their great zeal for the truth and its proclamation. The brethren of Christ, his zealous followers and ambassadors, have always been small in number, a 'little flock'. (Luke 12:32) This is more applicable today than it was earlier in the harvest period, yet these few are holding forth the light to a degree that makes them as a 'city set on an hill'!

Faithfulness in our service as ambassadors, serving in the manner outlined in his Word for an approved ministry, is one of the ways in which we will make our calling and election sure to a place with Jesus in his kingdom, to live and reign with him a thousand years.

Loving Those You Do Not Like

KEY VERSE: *"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."*—Matthew 5:43,44

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:21-26, 38-45

THERE is no other divinely approved way for the Christian except the way of love, or charity, as the Apostle Paul expressed it in I Corinthians, chapter 13. Charity is the act of giving where there is no expectation of receiving payment in return. It is giving for the joy received from the thought of having done something for the blessing of others—even those who might be considered enemies. In the Creator himself, we have the greatest of all examples of this expression of love.

The entire human race, born in sin and misshapen in iniquity, were and are objects of His love. They were undone, disbelievers, many even blasphemers of His name and righteous ways and all were hopelessly dying. God, recognizing the need, made a gift—a gift of love—he gave his Son in order that the people might live.

While it is the privilege of each

one of the race, when learning of God's great love, to dedicate himself to the service of the Lord, there is nothing any of us can do in return for God's gift that will enrich him. God's gift was purely one of love, and in it we have a perfect example of what it means to walk in the way of love. Jesus, as the living expression of God while on earth, taught his disciples that their lives would have to be lived by these same guidelines.

The Apostle John wrote: "Love not the world, neither the things in the world." (I John 2:15-17) The world is in darkness, one of the contributing causes of which is the fact that it does not follow the way of love. Light is used in the Scriptures to symbolize that which is in harmony with God, while darkness represents that which is contrary to the will of God. The divine plan is "light," because it is God's plan,

while all teachings out of harmony with the divine plan are darkness. The same is true of practices based upon truth or upon error. The world is in darkness because it follows the way of selfishness.

The true followers of Jesus, enlightened by the divine plan and walking in the way of love as revealed in that plan, are said to be walking in the "light." These find themselves out of harmony with the world and its spirit of selfishness and have no love for it. However they must love the people in the world just as God does, and they are happy to lay down their lives with Jesus in order that they might later reign with him for the blessing of the people; but they are out of harmony with the selfish ways of the world. They are glad that the selfish world will pass away—come to an end.

As Jesus delves deeper into the subject of love, he uncovers another heart-searching fact concerning it, in the question, "If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" (Matt. 5:46) At first glance it might appear that Jesus is here discounting somewhat the importance of his own new commandment to love our brethren, indicating that there is no sacrifice involved in loving those who love us.

But does the commandment to

love one another, which Jesus gave us, imply that we love only those who love us? Surely not! Note, for example, his added explanation, "as I have loved you." Our love for one another is to be the same kind of love, and to operate under similar conditions, as Jesus' love for us. When we take this into consideration the whole viewpoint of that new commandment is broadened considerably, for divine love through Christ was exercised on our behalf "while we were yet sinners," that is, long before we were in a position to love him.—Rom. 5:8

The divine plan for the followers of Jesus whereby they would have the privilege of exercising love for one another upon the same basis as Jesus loved them, is outlined by the Master himself in his command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, for the purpose of making disciples. These disciples which are to be made through the ministry of the truth are our prospective brethren. They are brethren for whom we have the privilege of sacrificing while they are still sinners and sometimes enemies and persecutors, even as Jesus thus laid down his life for us.

"He that loveth not his brother abideth in death," John wrote. The way of love is truly the way of life, both now and forever.

Relating to God and Others

KEY VERSE: *"All things whatsoever you would that man should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the prophets."*—Matthew 7:12

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Matthew 7:1-12

THESE words of Jesus have since been designated the Golden Rule, and how much better off the whole world would be if this rule were observed by all! And it will be, eventually, when the work of restitution is complete at the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ.

But even the Golden Rule is not the full expression of God's will for the followers of Jesus. It outlines the operation of justice, whereas we are invited to walk in the way of love.

The Mosaic Law laid down the divine principle for the judges of Israel to follow: "an eye for and eye"—the exaction of strict justice. Generally this was applied improperly in their individual relationships, with the result that it cultivated hardness of heart, an exacting disposition which was pitiless, merciless. Our Lord's teachings showed the error of this and pointed to the more excellent way—love.

Although the Heavenly Father was the author of the Law, he had also planned to show mercy and did show it in sending his Son into the world to be the Redeemer of sinners, that they might not perish, but have eternal life through obedience to their Savior. (John 2:16,17; Acts 3:23) How much more proper it is that fellow-sufferers, both imperfect, should be lenient, tender-hearted toward each other. Mark the Lord's words paraphrased: "I say unto you that by requiring an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, in exacting justice of your imperfect fellows, you are encouraging an improper spirit in your own hearts."—Matthew 5:7, 20-26, 38-42

Jesus instructs his hearers to cultivate generosity. As the Heavenly Father is always giving and never asking, so all his children should have this disposition and be ready to give something to anyone in need. The desire to give, to help, should by all means be culti-

vated in the heart of every follower of Jesus. And from those who would borrow of them, with the proper motive, they should not turn away. On the contrary they should generously lend, hoping for no similar favor in return. The LORD's people might not thus amass as much money as others, but they would be pleasing and honoring their Heavenly Father, laying up treasure in heaven, and getting their own hearts into that condition which God could approve.

Tradition taught that neighbors should be loved and enemies hated; but the Great Teacher declared that enemies also should be loved and blessed, even though they returned persecution and injury. It was this new and high order of teaching which marked our Redeemer's utterances as different from all others.

Jesus said the Heavenly Father sends the sunshine on sinners and on saints; the rain comes down for the just and for the unjust. It is difficult to estimate the amount of harm done to our minds by the traditions of the Dark Ages respecting God's intention to torment his enemies eternally. Thank God that we have found that these teachings are not in the Bible! They made our forefathers heretic-burners.

And again, thank God that we have received such an impetus to our faith in the knowledge of the divine plan which we find in complete harmony with the sublime statement, "God is love!"

Admitting the possibility of his followers exercising this glorious and godlike quality, our Lord asks, and we paraphrase his words: "If love be extended only to those who love in return, how would it be worthy of any special reward? Do not all men, love after this fashion? And if we are courteous merely to those who are courteous to us, wherein are we superior to Gentiles and sinners?"

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Since the Lord's followers have fallen, imperfect bodies and brains, it is not possible for them to be perfect as God is perfect—except in heart, in intention.

The Jews had gradually lost sight of the divine standards and had filled their minds with certain traditions which were more or less contrary to the Law. Jesus was accused by the Rabbis of setting aside the Law, but he assured them, to the contrary, that he was merely setting aside human traditions, and seeking to establish the Law and have it understood more clearly.

Making People Whole

KEY VERSE: *"Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."*—Matthew 9:35

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Matthew 8:1-13*

IT WAS because of Jesus' faithfulness in bearing witness to the truth that he was "the light of the world." (John 9:5) Not only did he preach the Gospel, the good news, by word of mouth, but by his miracles as well. God's promised blessing of all the families of the earth will mean the destruction of sickness and death. The good news of the kingdom would lose its real meaning if it were robbed of this comforting fact. So, in order to give more weight to his oral message of glad tidings, Jesus used the power of God granted to him for this purpose to give practical demonstrations of what the Gospel really meant. True, he healed only a few of the people, but we know that when the promises of God are fulfilled, *all* the families of the earth are to be blessed in the same way.

The Holy Spirit's commission for service, as quoted by Jesus, is

that of Isaiah 61:1-3. There is a slight variation in the New Testament wording of this commission from that of the Old Testament account, but the meaning is the same. The account in Isaiah states, "The LORD hath anointed me to preach the good tidings unto the meek." Jesus spoke of this as preaching the Gospel to the poor. Both renderings indicate that the Gospel is not for the self-satisfied of this world, but only for those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. It is the sweet and consoling influence of the Gospel that binds up the brokenhearted.

The Holy Spirit's commission for service speaks of setting captives free and of opening prisons to them who are bound. It seems reasonable to suppose that one of these expressions refers to those who are bound by chains of darkness and superstition, and that we set them

free through the power of the truth; while the other is a reference to those who are held prisoners in the great prison-house of death.

Jesus was able literally to set some of these free, and we can all, even as Jesus did, proclaim to the people that the power of God is yet to be used for setting free all the captives of death—that Jesus has the ‘keys of hell’ and will unlock its gates and set its prisoners free. What a glorious message, and what a blessed privilege is ours of proclaiming it, of telling the whole world these wondrous tidings of great joy!

A point was added by Jesus to the Holy Spirit’s commission which does not appear in Isaiah’s outline of it—the recovering of sight to the blind. While the Prophet Isaiah, in chapter thirty-five, forecasts this, and our Lord carried it out literally, here it might well be merely an elaboration on the thought of preaching deliverance to the captives, that is, those who are bound by ignorance and superstition. To give these the light of truth and thus free them from the enslaving cords of darkness has much the same thought, symbolically speaking, as giving sight to the blind.

“To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord”—here is a dispensational truth, a reference to the plan

of God for the present Gospel Age. It is a reference to the work of sacrifice which began with Jesus and will be completed at the end of the Gospel Age, showing that this is the acceptable year, or time, for those sacrifices to be made.

Jesus did not quote the entire commission of the Holy Spirit as it is recorded in Isaiah 61:1-3. He omitted that part which speaks of the “Day of Vengeance of our God.” He recognized that the commission to proclaim a message of this kind could not apply until this end of the age, when the day of God’s vengeance would be upon the world, so he did not apply this to himself. However, this part of the divine commission for service has a special application to us at this end of the age.

And how should the Day of Vengeance be proclaimed? Does it mean that we are commissioned to pronounce vengeance upon the people? Certainly not! God’s judgments are already upon the world, and we stand merely as the interpreters of what it means. The expression, ‘to comfort all that mourn’, is associated with proclaiming the Day of Vengeance, and the thought we get from it is that by properly explaining to those who have an ear to hear the meaning of present world distress, we comfort them.

Carrying On Jesus' Work

KEY VERSE: "*As ye go, preach saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, freely ye have received, freely give.*"—Matthew 10:7,8

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Matthew 10:1, 5-20

WHEN the great men of earth die, their careers come to an end. But with Jesus, it was different. His sacrificial death was in reality but the beginning of other work. His death laid the foundation for the reconciliation and salvation of all who, when given a full opportunity, would believe on him. One of the comprehensive statements of Jesus' ministry is given by the Apostle Paul, who informs us that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." He then adds, "and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation." (II Cor. 5:19) This was first committed to Jesus' apostles.

So, while Jesus was with them, the apostles were given some first-hand experience witnessing in preparation for the time when he would leave them, and the full weight of responsibility for the

ministry would rest on their shoulders. Not only were the apostles sent forth to preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, but they were also commanded and empowered to perform works such as those which will be done on behalf of humanity during the kingdom when it is established. That is, they were to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." As opportunity afforded, they performed all these miracles much to the joy of those who benefited from them.

Just before his ascension, the disciples were instructed by Jesus not to embark on their worldwide ministry until they were enbued with the power of the Holy Spirit. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa,

and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) Should they undertake this ministry without the Holy Spirit, they would be entering the field of service without the presence of the Master; for his promise to be with them was to find fulfillment through the Holy Spirit which he would shed forth upon them.

Reaffirming that after a brief period of waiting at Jerusalem they would receive the promised power from on high, and that then they were to be his witnesses, his ambassadors, unto the uttermost parts of the earth, he left them, ascending into the heavens where a cloud received him out of their sight.

Earlier Jesus had given the disciples two very reassuring thoughts when outlining the commission of service for which they were to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. He said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” and then added, “Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [age].” To the extent the disciples could grasp the import of these words it must have made them realize that regardless of the hardships involved in the work of going into all the world to preach the Gospel, they would not lack for strength and guidance, for their Master was to be with them, and all power had been

given to him.

Jesus’ assurance that he would be with the disciples always, even to the end of the age, does not militate against the fact of his return at his second advent. Rather, by telling them that now he had all power in heaven and in earth, and that he would be with them, he was merely conveying to their minds that they should think of his presence with them during the age in the same sense as they were accustomed to thinking of the presence of Jehovah.

And what a wonderful opportunity for service the Master outlined for them! To teach all nations, baptizing the believers in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit! The commission to teach all nations must be understood in the light of a former commission Jesus had given to his disciples—the one in which he specifically told them not to go to the Gentiles, nor to any city of the Samaritans.—Matt. 10:5

Now he was telling them, in effect, that these restrictions were removed, and that they were free to go anywhere and to preach the Gospel to anyone who had a hearing ear. The intent of the new commission was not that they should expect to convert all nations, but that the whole world was to be their field of activity—beginning at Jerusalem.

Christian Life and Doctrine

Living Waters

"He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."—Revelation 22:1

WATER was critically important to the Israelites for their crops, their animals, and especially for themselves. It required planning and work to provide enough water to meet their needs. Because of the peculiar composition of the soil in the Holy Land, rainwater simply ran off without penetrating the ground. To catch and store this water, people dug cisterns in the rock.

On rare occasions someone would find evidence of water underneath the ground, and would dig a well. What a prize the fresh, pure well-water would be, particularly when compared to the stale and often polluted water in the cisterns. Because of the cherished nature of wells and springs, they became a favorite resting place for pilgrims. If the water supply of a well permitted, towns would be established and irrigation would make possible the raising of crops all around the year.

Because water was such an important part of the life of His people, we can see why God used it to illustrate and symbolize truth. He even pictures himself as the fountain of all truth. "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."—Jer. 2:13

God portrays himself as a fountain pouring forth waters of truth to his holy people. But because of their stiff necks and hard hearts, they refused his arrangements. They turned to their own devices, here represented by 'cisterns' which can, at best, hold only stale and stagnant water. When God spoke this condemnation

through Jeremiah, Israel's man-made arrangements were so poorly constructed they could hold no water at all. And so it is whenever man substitutes his own 'cisterns' for God's bountiful provisions.

The Laver

In the Tabernacle of Israel, God established a large copper bowl containing water, called a laver, at which the priests—and only the priests—were to wash. This was so important that when Moses conducted the consecration ceremony of Aaron and his sons, it began at this laver. "Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water." (Lev. 8:6) In all the subsequent ceremonies the priests had to wash at the laver under penalty of death. "When [Aaron and his sons] go into the Tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water that they die not."—Exod. 30:20

The Tabernacle and its arrangements are types or illustrations of God's relationship with spiritual Israel today. The water within the laver shows the cleansing power of the truth. All who are dedicated to the service of the LORD must be cleansed by the truth to be acceptable to him. "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the Word."—Eph. 5:25,26

It is not just the water of truth that cleanses and sanctifies the church. It is also the spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, operating in conjunction with the truth. "God saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration ["laver of regeneration," **Ferrar Fenton's Translation**] and renewal in the Holy Spirit which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior."—Titus 3:5,6, RSV

The Greek word translated "save" ("God saved us") means 'to heal', 'preserve', 'be made whole'. So washing at this laver conveys the thought of justification, of obtaining a standing with God. The Greek word translated "renewal" ("renewal in the Holy Spirit") means 'to restore to life, to vigor, and activity'. It is a word Paul used in his letter to the Romans: "Be not conformed to this

world but be ye transformed by the *renewing* of your mind.” (Rom. 12:2) The truth, operating in conjunction with the Holy Spirit, is represented in the Scriptures by ‘living waters’. It brings activity, purity, and eventually life, just as waters gushing from a spring.

The Samaritan Woman at Jacob's Well

Once when Jesus was returning to Galilee, he passed through Samaria. He stopped near the outskirts of a little town to rest at Jacob's well, which is quite large, averaging eight feet in width and nearly 100 feet deep. Digging such a well by hand must have been a major accomplishment in his day.

Soon a Samaritan woman approached to draw water. Jesus asked for a drink. She expressed surprised that he, a Jew, would want to have any contact with a Samaritan. Then Jesus said, “If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”—John 4:10,13,14

The Samaritan lady probably did not understand what Jesus was talking about! But we can see how Jesus used water as a symbol. Those with a spiritual thirst and who desire truth must turn to the Word of God to quence their thirst. In verse twenty-three of this account, Jesus said: “The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.”

The living water Jesus said he would supply resembles the Holy Spirit operating in conjunction with the truth. The truth cleanses and refreshes—and the Holy Spirit makes it possible for our human minds to comprehend something of God, seeing from a spiritual point of view how we must serve him.

Jesus indicated that the privilege to serve God is by individual invitation. The Father seeks those who are willing to

forget their own will and to worship him in Spirit and in truth. Only those comprising the church during this Gospel Age have received this living water. And each who has been blessed by it should in turn be a conduit to supply the fresh and living 'water' to others who are seeking after God.

A Bride for Isaac

The special selection of the church was illustrated in the selection of a bride for Isaac. Abraham sent his trusted steward to Mesopotamia, to his home country, to find a suitable bride for his son. The servant stopped at the well in the little town of Nahor. Because he did not know whom to select, he asked God to help him by sending someone who would offer drink to him and his camels. Rebekah, as we remember, arrived at the well, and did exactly that. See Genesis, chapter twenty-four.

When Abraham's representative had returned home with Rebekah, they met Isaac at the well called Lahai-roi, which name meant: "well of the Living One that seeth me." This seems to show that at the uniting of Jesus—typified by Isaac—and his church—typified by Rebekah—they will enter the presence of Jehovah, the Ever-living One.

The Feast of Tabernacles

During the Feast of Tabernacles, or booths, Jerusalem was teeming with people from far and near. On the last day of this feast a priest marched to the well of Siloam, filled a pitcher with water, and brought it back to the Temple. There it was poured on the burnt offering to the accompaniment of great shouts of rejoicing. It was traditional that certain psalms be recited. At the end of every phrase, the people would respond with "Hallelujah!" to praise the LORD.

It seems evident that it was during the Feast of Tabernacles, and at the end of this recitation of praise, that the events of John 7:37,38 took place. "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me as

the scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

This has been a troublesome text, because there is no Old Testament scripture that even implies that out of a believer's belly will flow rivers of living water! True, in their future work, the church will participate with their Lord to send the "river of life" (Rev. 22:1) to the world. But that is future—not at this time!

In fact, Jesus was not talking about believers; he was talking about himself. The separation of verses and punctuation supplied by the translators conceal the true meaning, in this instance, of the Master's words. The **Jerusalem Bible** renders the Greek more correctly: "If any man is thirsty, let him come to me! Let the man come and drink who believes in me! As scripture says: From his [Messiah's] breast shall flow fountains of living water." In a footnote associated with this verse, the Jerusalem Bible says: "Life-giving water for Zion was a theme of the readings from scripture on the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:8; Ezek. 47:12); the liturgy included prayers for rain and the commemoration of the miracle of Moses and the water, Exod. 17."

The Lord's appeal, then and now, is to those who thirst. Receiving his truth and his Spirit—drinking the living waters that flow from him—is the only way such can satisfy their thirst.

Ezekiel 47 describes waters coming forth from the house of the LORD, from the Temple. Wherever the water went, it brought vitality, refreshment, healing, life! This prefigures the grace of God during the Millennial Age, issuing forth from the church, which is the temple of God, to all the families of the earth, bringing healing and restoring them to human perfection.

This is the same river described in Revelation 22:1: "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

The opportunity to participate in this great future work to bring "water" to a thirsty world will be given to all who completely fill themselves now with the spiritual waters provided by our Lord. Let us make the most of our opportunities and drink deeply of these "living waters." ☐

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FLORIDA		
Miami	WRHC	8:30 a.m.

CANADIAN BROADCASTS

ALBERTA		
Bariff	CFHC-1340	11:45 a.m.
Canmore	CFHC-1450	11:45 a.m.
Lethbridge	CJOC-1220	7:15 a.m.
Wetaskwin	CJOI-1440	7:45 a.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA		
Castlegar	CKQR-760	8:45 a.m.
Duncan	CKAY-1500	9:00 a.m.
Duncan	CKAY-1500	7:30 p.m.
Grand Forks	CKGF-1340	9:00 a.m.
Langley	CJUP-800 AM	9:30 a.m.

LABRADOR		
Churchill Falls	CFLC-FM 97.9	7:15 a.m.

MANITOBA		
Winnipeg	CKJS-810	9:00 a.m.

NEWFOUNDLAND		
Corn Brook	CFCB 570	7:15 a.m.
Deer Lake	CFDL-FM 97.9	7:15 a.m.
Goose Bay	CFLN 1230	7:15 a.m.
Port au Choix	CFNW 790	7:15 a.m.
Pl. aux Basques	CFGN 1230	7:15 a.m.
St. Andrews	CFCV-FM 97.7	7:15 a.m.
St. Anthony	CFNN-FM 97.9	7:15 a.m.
Stephenville	CFSX-910	7:15 a.m.
Wabush	CFLW-1340	7:15 a.m.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES		
Yellowknife	CJCD-1240	9:00 a.m.

ONTARIO		
Hamilton	CKOC-1150	7:00 a.m.
Leamington	CHYR-710	5:00 p.m.
St. Thomas	CHLO-1570	10:45 a.m.

QUEBEC		
Montreal	CFMB-1410	5:15 p.m.

SASKATCHEWAN		
Prince Albert	CKBI-900	7:30 a.m.
Weyburn-Estevan	CFSL-1190	8:45 a.m.

YUKON		
Whitehorse	CKRW-810	9:30 a.m.

OVERSEAS BROADCASTS

BRITISH ISLES		
Radio Caroline-Tues.	KHZ 982	8:45 p.m.

BRITISH WEST INDIES		
Grand Cayman	Radio Cayman	9:30 a.m.

CEYLON		
Columbo-Sat.	Radio Sri Lanka	7:15 p.m.

FRANCE (French)		
Lyon-Sat.	Radio Ciel	6:30 a.m.

HONG KONG		
Radio Villa Verde-Fri.		6:00 p.m.

ITALY (Italian)		
Europa Radio Milano	83.3-FM	11:30 a.m.
Euro Tele Radio Calabria-Fri.		
	MHZ 102	5:30 p.m.
Radio Corleone Centrale		
	FM-88-500 FM-92	11:00 a.m.

MEXICO (Spanish)		
Mazatlan	XECQ	8:30 a.m.

NEW ZEALAND		
Dunedin	4XD	11:15 a.m.
Whakatane	IXX	6:45 a.m.

NIGERIA		
Radio Africa-Wed.		8:00 p.m.

PANAMA		
Panama City	HOQ 1250	10:30 a.m.

PHILIPPINES		
Manila-Sat.	DZAM 1026 KHz	7:15 p.m.

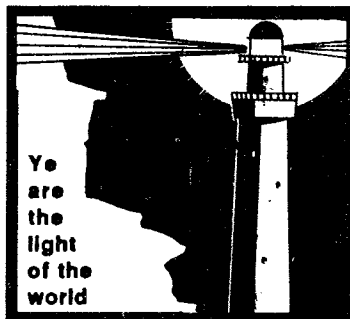
SOUTH AFRICA		
Joubert Park-Thurs.	SWAZI Music	
Radio 1400 & shortwave 49 & 60		9:00 p.m.

SPAIN (Spanish)		
Radio Gerona-Mon.		9:45 p.m.

TONGA		
Nuku' Alofa-Mon.		10:15 a.m.

URUGUAY (Spanish)		
Montevideo-Radio El Espectador	810	9:15 a.m.

VIRGIN ISLANDS		
St. Croix	WSTX 970	9:00 a.m.



The Bible Answers

Regular Television Broadcasts

WE REGRET that we are unable to furnish the day and time of many of the broadcasts for the following stations. Where they are known, they have been noted:

FLORIDA Miami Jacksonville	WKID Channel 17		MISSISSIPPI Jackson	WAPT
GEORGIA Atlanta	WATL		MISSOURI Springfield	KOLR
ILLINOIS Champaign- Springfield	WBHW		NEW MEXICO Roswell	KSWS
IOWA Cedar Rapids Mt. Vernon- Lisbon (every weekday)	KTS-13 WMVL Cable	7:00 a.m.	NORTH CAROLINA Hickory	WHKY
MICHIGAN Ann Arbor-Sun.	WIHT-31	12:00 noon	OHIO Dayton	WHIO
			TEXAS Lubbock	KCBD
			WEST VIRGINIA Logan-Mon.	Channel 12

Satellite Cable Broadcasts

EVERY Sunday morning, over four hundred cable stations air **The Bible Answers** TV programs in forty-three states and Puerto Rico, at 9:00 a.m. EST; 8:00 a.m. CST; 7:00 a.m. MST; and 6:00 a.m. PST.

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Christian Life and Doctrine

The Seven Messages to the Churches

*"Blessed are your eyes for they see,
and your ears, for they hear."—Matthew 13:16*

"HE THAT hath ears to hear, let him hear." These words, spoken by our Lord Jesus when he was here on earth, were recorded in seven scriptures. Whenever he wanted his disciples to realize they could understand his words only because God had opened their ears, he used this expression. Our Lord also used this phrase seven times after he had ascended to the Father. All seven instances are found in the second and third chapters of Revelation.

In these two chapters, the spotlight falls on one church after another, from Ephesus to Laodicea. Some of their actions are commended, others condemned. What does all this mean? Three explanations have been suggested:

1. These messages were directed at the seven named churches, and are meant for them individually and particularly. Or,

2. They represent seven distinct phases of the true church starting at Pentecost (the Ephesus phase) and extending to our day (the seventh and final phase). Or,

3. All the messages are meant to give insight to all members of the true church throughout the entire Gospel Age.

Let us examine each of these explanations.

The Named Churches

It is not surprising that some believe the messages are meant for the particular church named, "Because that's what the

scripture says; it needs no interpretation." However, in these chapters we read about removing a candlestick, giving someone a white stone, tolerating a woman named Jezebel, and inviting someone to open a door. That is also 'what the scriptures say', and such expressions do need interpretation.

Revelation 1:3 says: "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy." This was a prophecy, a revelation, to show God's faithful servants what must shortly come to pass. If it were meant for churches which disappeared soon after these words were written, it would not be a blessing to the readers and hearers of today.

Why were the messages only to these particular seven churches? We know something about the class at Ephesus, and there is an extremely brief mention of the brethren in Laodicea in Paul's letter to the Colossians. But the churches at Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia are not mentioned in any other place in the Bible. Were these churches so important they warranted special messages in John's time? Why was not Galatia, Philippi, Colossi, or Antioch mentioned? Why, in fact, not Jerusalem?

We suggest it is because these messages are to be seen in another context. What is said is not meant to be taken literally.

Phases During the Gospel Age

The seven named churches are all in Turkey. A traveling preacher might start at Ephesus on the seacoast, make a circuit to Smyrna and Pergamus to the north, then south to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Because these cities look like stopping places on a circular pilgrim journey, these messages could be viewed as a kind of road-map of the events of the Gospel Age.

One strong theme in these messages is Christ's promise to return to his true church. Note what is said to five of the first six churches: "I will come unto thee quickly; hold fast till I come;

I will come on thee as a thief; behold, I come quickly.”—Rev. 2:5,16, 25;3:3,11

But at the seventh and final church, the message changes: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.”—Rev. 3:30

Because the Lord is invisibly present—“knocking on the door” so to speak—our time may be considered as the Laodicean phase of the church’s experience. The lukewarm nature of Laodicea also sounds like some spurious Christians of today: “Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” (Rev. 3:17) This is the trial of prosperity, and, in general, the counterfeit church of Laodicea does not handle it well at all. To the true church at the end of this age, it is another temptation which *is* overcome. Because Satan could not destroy the true Christians in the Early Church with physical persecution, he is trying something different in our day: prosperity. And in some cases we can see that it does cause individuals to forget God as they enjoy the good things of this life.

Applying these messages to seven distinct phases of the Gospel Age does raise some questions. When did one phase end, and the next begin? Revelation experts have opinions, but they do not agree among themselves. Who were the seven messengers, or angels, to each of these churches or phases of the true church? It is equally hard to find agreement concerning the names of all of them.

The Gospel Age from Seven Viewpoints

Every message ends with the words, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches [plural].” Why doesn’t it say, “unto this particular church [singular]”? Because those with open ears are expected to hear *all* the messages, not just one. *All* the promises made to *all* the churches are important.

To the church at Ephesus he said, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life.”—Rev. 2:7

To the church at Smyrna, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."—vs 11

To the church at Pergamos was this promise made: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone."—vs. 17

To the church at Thyatira, "He that overcometh, to him will I give power over the nations."—vs 26

To the church at Sardis: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life."—Rev. 3:5

To the church of Philadelphia was written: "To him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; . . . and I will write upon him my new name."—vs 12

To the Laodiceans he said "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."—vs 21

It is inspiring to read about the things God has in store for us. Israel also loved to hear about the prospects God had prepared for them. What Israel often forgot was that God's promises were conditional, not automatic. We have consecrated our ALL to God and are carrying out the terms and conditions of our covenant of sacrifice. The good things promised to all the churches will be ours only if we overcome the world.

Now notice, in contrast to the blessings promised above to the faithful church of the Gospel Age—the overcomers—the words of warning and messages of condemnation also made to the churches. These conditions represent, not the Spirit of Christ—the Holy Spirit, but the spirit of the adversary. And those with his spirit are warned by these condemnations to reform, else they will continue to constitute the false church of Christ, also developed during the Gospel Age:

Ephesus: "Thou hast left thy first love."—Rev. 2:4

Pergamos: "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam."—2:14

Thyatira: "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel to teach and to seduce my servants."—vs. 20

Sardis: "I have not found thy works perfect before God."—Rev. 3:2

Philadelphia: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."—Rev. 3:11

Laodicea: "Because thou art lukewarm, I will spue thee out of my mouth."—Rev. 3:16

Christ loves his church, and gave himself for her. Does the church love Christ? Yes, of course, the true, overcoming church loves her lord supremely, and remains a faithful virgin until her marriage with her bridegroom. But these messages remind us of the danger ever lurking of becoming unfaithful, and of committing spiritual "adultery," in the manner common to the false church, and this is another theme in these messages.—Rev. 2:22

"You have left your first love." (Rev. 2:4) "Some there say they are Jews [Israelites indeed, John 1:41] but are the synagogue of Satan." (Rev. 2:9; 3:9) "Some hold the doctrine of Balaam," who caused Israel to commit fornication. (Rev. 2:14) "You permit Jezebel to seduce my servants to commit fornication." (v. 20) "Your works are not perfect before God; hold fast, repent." (Rev. 3:2,3) "You say you are rich, but you really are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17) What a pitiful state these words describe! This condition is hopeless, because those shown to be thus have deceived themselves into thinking they are enjoying God's rich favor. These words certainly are not descriptive of the pure, faithful church espoused to their Master, Christ Jesus!

Down throughout the entire Gospel Age there have been two classes of Christians—one representing good elements: "Spiritual Israel"; the other, evil elements: "Nominal Spiritual Israel." Consider the twelve disciples. Even though all were with Jesus and walked with him, heard his words, ate with him, preached with him, lived with him—one was a traitor. The heart

of Judas became so hard, instead of reforming and resisting the adversary, he betrayed the Son of God. This certainly does not represent the spirit of the true church! It is, however, a warning to us to keep watch over the intents of our hearts, our motives, very carefully, lest we fall into this reprehensible attitude.

Again, consider the parable of the wheat and the tares. The master told his servants to ignore the tares and let them grow together in the wheat field until the harvest. Although the tares were the predominant plants in the field, it was **not** a tare field—it was a **wheat field**, and the crop which the Great Sower is interested in, is the wheat! The LORD had planted the wheat, and an *adversary* had crept in during the night and sown tares. And thus it has been a fact during the length of the Gospel Age, nearly two thousand years, there have been the true Christians, of God's planting, and the false Christians, of Satan's planting.

For these two millennia, the professed church of God has been endeavoring to convert the world to "Christianity." But this effort has been unsuccessful, since it is out of harmony with God's will for this age. The time for this work to be *successfully* completed, as we know, is the next age—the Millennial Age. Considering the spirit which controls the pseudo-church, it is not surprising to discover in the warnings to the churches in Revelation, that, instead of effectively converting the world, it finds itself in danger of *being converted* to the world! As the Apostle Paul put it: "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away."—II Tim. 3:1-5

When Babylon became a serious threat to Israel, they wept. After generations of disobedience, they expressed willingness to rend their hearts and to serve God acceptably. But it was too late. Their long-continued lack of concern with God's will and ways earned them banishment to Babylon—the great city which was the home of one of the seven wonders of the ancient

world. Its wealth and fame were known everywhere. There was considerable freedom of worship there—one could practice whatever religion he preferred. But none of these were acceptable to God for his people. When the time came that they were asked to leave Babylon, it appears that many were not interested in returning to their homeland, and so they remained in Babylon.

With such a confusing freedom of choice, Babylon aptly pictures 'confusion', which is what the original word means, in the religious world. "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils. . . . The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her. . . . Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."—Rev. 18:2-4

Babylon also pictures the dangers of spiritual "adultery," of being corrupted by prosperity, by "the abundance of delicacies," to use the expression in verse three. Israel succumbed to these temptations despite the fact that they had received the ten commandments, and had promised to obey them. The very first commandment said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." But in just a few days after they had agreed to live according to the Law, they violated it. "When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And [Aaron] made a molten calf."—Exod. 32:1,4

This principle echoes down the corridors of time—from Moses—throughout the Gospel Age, even to our day. The seven messages to the churches warn of the likelihood that the world, the flesh, and the devil, our deadly foes, will do their best to try to tempt us to replace God's will and ways and pure worship of him, with the worship of their will and ways.

Some examples of our falling in line with the temptations offered by our three mortal enemies could include, or be

pictured by, the following experiences: We could succumb to the temptation to leave our first love for the pure Gospel, for another that does not involve so much sacrifice or suffering, or which offers a present reward. As unlikely as it might seem, if our hearts are not pure before our Heavenly Father, we could be led astray by following a wicked leader such as Jezebel, who instituted the worship of a false God instead of the true God. There is another possibility, that we could lose our crowns through lack of attention to know and do God's will completely, or by becoming 'lukewarm'—which describes a lack of zeal and enthusiasm to serve God—because an abundance of earthly good things commands our attention.

This word lukewarm appears only once in the Bible. We find it in the message to Laodicea. Lukewarmness has very little use except for breadmaking. Leaven placed in a lump of dough multiplies very quickly in a lukewarm environment. Leaven will not reproduce when it is cold; it is killed by heat. In the Scriptures, leaven represents hypocrisy and sin. "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." (Luke 12:1) The word is of Greek origin, and means 'to play on a stage', 'to feign a belief', 'to pretend'. There is no place for hypocrisy in our fellowship—our zeal for truth and righteousness makes the very idea of hypocrisy repulsive, since it is incongruous with our love for doing God's will and for servicing the brethren and the truth.

How thankful we are that our eyes have been opened, and our ears unstopped! But having hearing ears is not enough. The words of Revelation remind us that blessed "are they that hear the words of this prophecy and *keep* those things which are written therein." Let us all make fresh resolves to resist Satan's temptations in order that we may eventually receive the good things promised to those who overcome. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."—Rev. 3:22 □

Christian Life and Doctrine

The Faithful Witness of the Apostle Paul—Part I

Paul's Faithful Ministry

THE achievements of the Apostle Paul during the first twenty-five years of his consecrated life were associated with the evangelistic work of finding a people for God's name. In his zeal and faithfulness to this cause, an equally important work was being done in his own personal development as a member in the body of Christ.

The search for God's people has been of primary importance during this Gospel Age. Many have been used in the cooperative effort of its accomplishment and have been considered, according to the Scriptures, "workers together with God." (I Cor. 3:9) It is a great privilege to have a part in this activity and all who come to a knowledge of God's plan are invited to participate in it. In the many ways through which the message of truth goes forward, the Heavenly Father has always used his consecrated people as the means of its promulgation.

Each one of God's people should realize that his sanctification is God's principal work in his life. As the Apostle Paul expresses it in I Thessalonians 4:3, "This is the will of God concerning you, even your sanctification." There should, then, be no separation between service for the LORD and our personal development within the body of Christ. Paul himself illustrates this truth. Preaching the glad tidings gave him valuable experiences which helped him to become more Christlike. We see his Christian growth reflected in the letters he wrote to the churches which he helped establish. Many of these were written after he had gone through much suffering for the cause of Christ—all Paul's experiences were especially directed by the LORD.

As Paul's work of searching for God's people drew to a close, the LORD began to prepare Paul for his last witness, one which would be under different circumstances than any he had previously encountered. The events that occurred, and the way in which he responded to them, would ultimately affect his maturation as a Christian and part of the body of Christ.

Paul learned he would soon make his last trip as a witness for the Lord. He said, "After I have been there [meaning Jerusalem], I must also see Rome." (Acts 19:21) After observing the Memorial of the Lord's death with the brethren in Philippi, Paul again set sail, this time for Troas, to meet those who would accompany him to Jerusalem. Sopater came with him when he left Berea; Luke joined them when they left Philippi. Timothy and Gaius of Derbe, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Ephesus and Collosse, had travelled ahead to Troas. Troas had been the port of embarkation for Paul's voyage to Macedonia some years before.

At this time, Paul, Sopater and Luke stayed seven days with the brethren of Troas. These people of God were undoubtedly converted to Christ through the preaching of Paul, and others, during previous visits. The brethren in that city must have greatly appreciated the opportunity to be with Paul and to learn more about the truth during those seven days. It was difficult for him to leave these dear Christians—he had so much to say to them. He continued speaking to them until midnight, when a young man in the audience had a frightening experience. He was sitting in a window, evidently due to the overcrowded room, and having gone to sleep, he fell out the window, plummeting three stories to the ground! Everyone thought he surely was dead! But Paul, embracing the young man, said he was still alive. The youth was brought back to the meeting room and, amid great rejoicing, their fellowship continued on until daybreak.—Acts 20: 7-12

The next day Paul left for Assos where others of his company were waiting to join him. Although there is no mention

that Christians resided in this or other cities along the way, it is possible that there were brethren in each of these places. Paul would have liked to have stopped at Ephesus before leaving the area, but he was pressed for time since he wanted to arrive in Jerusalem before Pentecost. So he sent word to the Ephesian elders to meet him at Miletus.

This meeting is one of the most touching scenes described by Luke. The church at Ephesus had been in existence for about three years. Paul knew they needed assistance which he would probably not be able to provide. His uncomplaining words to them were: "Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the LORD with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But 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 20:18-25

These words convey Paul's earnest concern for the brethren in Ephesus. He knew through the Holy Spirit that his witness in Jerusalem would lead to his arrest, many trials, and finally the end of his earthly life. They would never see his face again. What could he say that would benefit them after he no longer was with them? He knew, perhaps more deeply than any of the other apostles, that when all God's appointed leaders were

dead, the Adversary would create many problems. Ambitious leaders would arise within the church.

Paul's words in Acts 20:26-31 give excellent advice to forewarn the true church: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Luke's description of this meeting gives us great insight into the love which the elders of Ephesus had for Paul. After admonishing them, Paul kneeled in prayer with them all. They wept as they embraced and kissed him, sorrowing most of all that they would see him no more. The parting words of Paul must have been very sobering to the elders of Ephesus. The responsibility for this congregation of the LORD's people would now be theirs. They could not expect a future visit by Paul to resolve any of their problems. The only strength they could derive from Paul would be through his example and his teachings.

Having strengthened the brethren in Macedonia and Achaia, Paul boarded a ship which took him in the direction of Jerusalem. The elders accompanied Paul and his companions to the ship, then returned to Ephesus. Stopping in Coos, Rhodes, and Patara, Paul's group boarded another vessel bound for Phenicia. Luke's account mentions that while en route they caught sight of Cyprus—Barnabas' homeland. Seeing that island undoubtedly awakened many memories in the mind of Paul, stirring up a discussion of the events of the trip Paul and Barnabas had taken through Cyprus. The ministry of Barnabas had come to an

end there, when he was stoned by the Jews.

When the ship docked for a seven-day layover at Tyre to unload its freight, Paul and his companions met with the disciples in that city. They begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem because they feared what would happen to him. The church in this city was composed mainly of Jews, many of whom had fled from Judea because of persecution, and they were keenly aware of the hazards in Jerusalem. But Paul knew he had to go. So at the end of the seven days, the entire congregation, including wives and children, went out of the city to bid Paul farewell. They knelt on the shore before the ship, praying and embracing the travelers, and then returned sadly to their homes. How pleased the Heavenly Father must have been to see the loving concern, the tender care, and the deep faith of these brethren! Their progress in developing the fruits of the Spirit must have given him great joy.

Paul and his traveling companions went on to Ptolemais and stayed one day with the brethren there. The next stop was Caesarea where the group stayed with Philip, the evangelist. Some twenty-five years earlier Philip had been selected by the church at Jerusalem to be one of seven deacons. (Acts 6:5) Now he was married and the father of four daughters, all of whom were consecrated to the LORD and active in his service.

The congregation at Caesarea was large. Although originally composed only of Jews, in 36 A.D. God's exclusive favor to Israel ended and Cornelius, his family, and other Gentiles were inducted into the family of God. Although Cornelius lived in Caesarea (Acts 10:24), no mention is made of him during this final visit of Paul. Tradition says he had returned to Rome. Philip, however, had selected this city as his home. See Acts 8:39

Paul and his companions stayed in Caesarea for several days. During this time, Agabus, a prophet of the LORD, came from Judea. He took Paul's girdle and bound his hands and feet. He then 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.” (Acts 21:11) On prior occasions the Holy Spirit had told Paul in some symbolic manner that bonds and afflictions awaited him in Jerusalem and Rome. On this occasion God used a prophet who delivered a clear message to Paul and the others as to what the future held for him.

The reaction to Agabus’ proclamation was immediate, and highly emotional. The brethren of Caesarea and those traveling with Paul pleaded with him not to go to Jerusalem. They wept because of the difficult trials ahead for Paul. But Paul knew the LORD was arranging a special witness for his name. For the first time those travelling with Paul knew he **had** to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things. They wept and pleaded with him. But Paul said, “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.” (Acts 21:13) When they realized they could not persuade Paul to change his plans, they said, “The will of the LORD be done.”

From Caesarea, some of the brethren accompanied the missionary group to Jerusalem. They arranged for lodging with Mnason, an old Cypriot who may have come to that city with Barnabas shortly after the initial inception of the church on the day of Pentecost. This little band was greeted warmly by the brethren at Jerusalem. When they were settled, Paul went to see James and the other apostles and elders in Jerusalem. He presented his firsthand report of the LORD’s accomplishments in finding his people among the Gentiles through Paul’s and others’ efforts. Although they glorified God when they heard this report, some Christians in Jerusalem had heard rumors about Paul, that he was teaching Jews not to observe the Law. The rumor was, of course, not true, and the matter had to be cleared up.—Acts 21:15-21

Since the time of Pentecost, the church at Jerusalem had grown by several thousand. The great majority were Jews who had been raised to observe the Law and 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 of the Law. So they suggested that Paul demonstrate his regard for the Law of Moses by joining with four brethren who had taken a Nazarite vow and were about to conclude it with a purification rite in the Temple. Paul agreed to do so, and went with them. The ceremony took seven days and was concluded by shaving the head and offering appropriate sacrifices. See Numbers, chapter six.

Near the end of the days of purification, some Jews from Asia came to the Temple to worship. They recognized Paul and incited still other Jews to seize him. They charged that he was preaching against the Law, and had defiled the Temple by bringing Gentiles into it. This charge was based on the fact that earlier Paul had been seen with a Gentile, and their erroneous conclusion that those with him now were Gentiles. The news that Paul had been apprehended, spread like wildfire throughout the city. 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.

When Paul had been put in chains, the commander tried to learn who he was and what he had done. But due to the confusion, he learned nothing. Paul was taken to the castle in the custody of the soldiers, to protect him. "Away with him," cried the multitude. As Paul 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.

Paul beckoned to the people as he stood on the castle steps. The mob grew quiet. They became even more attentive 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 in his life, but that in vision he was told to leave. In this vision he reasoned with the Lord by saying that the people would listen because they knew he had consented to Stephen's death and had been actively bringing others into prison. Surely they would want to know what had changed him. But he quoted Jesus as saying, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."—Acts 22:21

Although the audience had been attentive, at the mention of Gentiles they began a noisy demonstration, clamoring for Paul's death. Orders were given to bring Paul into the castle. The truth would be brought out through scourging. But before the soldiers could administer the punishment, Paul revealed that he was a Roman citizen. Upon learning this information the commander questioned Paul personally. Telling Paul that he had purchased his Roman citizenship, he asked Paul how he had acquired his? Paul answered, through inheritance from his father. Tradition says his father was awarded Roman citizenship in recognition of special service performed for the Roman government. Because the commander now knew he was dealing with a Roman citizen, he was very fearful. His earlier order to bind Paul was unlawful if he were a Roman.

Paul's experiences were about to change. Earlier in Philippi he had been bound and released after he told the magistrates of his Roman citizenship. Now he was not released. Yet in spite of his bonds, he accomplished what he had never been able to do when he was free: he had the opportunity of witnessing to thousands of Jews in Jerusalem. Whether any that heard him changed their course of life as Paul had done, we are not told in the Scriptures. However, it is quite possible a few were indeed among the LORD's people for whom he was searching! □

Christian Life and Doctrine

Sons of God

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. . . . Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear [when it is disclosed, NEB], we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is."

—I John 3:1,2

IT IS difficult for us as human beings to truly appreciate this stupendous thought: "Now ARE we the sons of God!" How can this be possible? We are imperfect, in fleshly bodies. How can we be said to be sons of Jehovah God, the Creator of the universe? More than this, the apostle said that we shall be like God. Jesus, after voluntarily giving up his earthly life as a ransom for father Adam, was raised far above angels, principalities, and powers—taking his place at the right hand of the Father. He became a divine being, like God.—Heb. 1:3; II Pet. 1:3; I Cor. 15:54

As incredible a thought as this may be, it is true. God has predetermined that there will be 144,000 individuals selected from the human race who will collectively be joined to Christ on the divine plane of existence. It is only by the grace of Jehovah that humans, and not spirit beings, have been offered this opportunity.

Of course, there never was any obligation on God's part to offer such an opportunity to any of his sentient creation. The word *grace* implies doing something not demanded by justice. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8) But there is more to it than

simple grace. God has established a standard that must be met by all who will eventually receive this high reward.

Paul writes in Romans 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did *predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son*, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." The Greek word translated "conform" in this text means 'to be jointly formed', 'fashioned alike', 'to be similar'. The life of Jesus supplies the pattern for us to follow. We are to become as much like him as we can. "For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps."—I Pet. 2:21

According to Jewish custom the firstborn son was the family heir. The Apostle Paul used this arrangement to illustrate how we become receivers of glory from God. He wrote: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together."—Rom. 8:14,16,17

Since we are already God's sons, we shall be heirs only if we are faithful unto death—if we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together! The Greek word translated 'heir' means 'to get by appointment'. The prospect of being heirs is of considerable worth—we are heirs of the kingdom promise! All heirs will receive the same nature as the Lord, they shall see God face to face, have fellowship with all the spirit beings, and be united with God's only begotten Son, his firstborn, as joint-heirs!

The idea of the faithful receiving the kingdom is emphasized by James. He said: "Hearken my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James 2:4) Jesus said it brings pleasure to the Heavenly Father to do this for those who serve him: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—Luke 12:32

Who Is Selected?

The opportunity to become God's sons is not something we choose. It is still true that "no man can come to me [Jesus] except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John 6:44) And what do these individuals possess that causes God to select them? Generally it is a measure of faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."—Heb. 11:6

They must be willing to acknowledge that they are sinners, have need of a savior, and that Jesus Christ is that savior. If this awareness is coupled with faith in God, circumstances may be arranged so that God's call to become part of his heavenly family will be heard, and either accepted or rejected.

The call is stated in the Scriptures by these meaningful words: "My son give me thine heart and let thine eyes observe my ways." (Prov. 23:26) Accepting the call is completely voluntary, and there is no punishment for those who hear but do not accept. God does not coerce anyone. We will not hear God's call unless we possess the right heart attitude, "for if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."—II Cor. 8:12

Another word for 'willingness' is 'consecration', and a synonym for consecration is 'dedication', which means 'to set apart for a religious purpose', or 'devote to something sacred'. Consecration was required by Israel's priests before they could serve God in the Tabernacle. We read: "These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office."—Num. 3:3

In Romans we find another well-known 'consecration text', although the word itself does not appear. "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice [*i.e.*, dedicate your life], holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1) Those who

do this are said to have made a covenant by sacrifice. "Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."—Ps. 50:5

Among other definitions, **Webster's Dictionary** defines sacrifice as 'an act of offering to deity something precious, especially the killing of a victim on an altar; destruction or surrender of something for the sake of something else'. What, if anything, do we surrender in favor of something else? We surrender our restitution rights to perfect human life to be offered to all Adam's descendents in Christ's Millennial kingdom. We gain divine life as joint-heirs with Jesus.

J.B. Phillips, in his translation of the Bible, has beautifully rendered Paul's thought in this way: "With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him." We do not give *part* of ourselves; we give *all* of ourselves. Then we yield ourselves to God's transforming influences: "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."—Rom. 12:2

The Greek word translated "transform," is *metamorphoo*. **Webster's Dictionary** defines the word 'metamorphosis' as: 1) a change of physical form, structure, or substance, especially by supernatural means; 2) a marked and more or less abrupt change in the structure of an animal (as a butterfly or a frog) occurring subsequent to birth or hatching. The transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly is a beautiful metaphor for those who leave behind old ideas and bodies, and emerge in the glory and beauty of something new.

Paul wrote: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." (II Cor. 5:17) He also views this as a process of putting off the old and assuming the new: "Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceit-

ful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." (Eph. 4:22-24, RSV) "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."—II Cor. 4:16

It is not enough to *say* we will serve God. The Israelites at Sinai said they would serve him, but all too frequently they did not do so. Through their many experiences, God tested them. "The LORD your God proveth you to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deut. 13:3) And he will prove us through our experiences to see if we are worthy of the good things he has in reservation for those who love him. Those who become joint-heirs with Christ are first called, then chosen, and must finally be found faithful.—Rev. 17:14

Our commitment to the Heavenly Father must be total. No earthly soldier can succeed unless he is fully dedicated to his cause. And so it is with all soldiers of the cross. Paul said this about his commitment: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. 3:13,14

Do you want to be a son of God? Have you heard God's call? Have you dedicated your all to God, to be dead with Christ? Have you fully sacrificed your own will and accepted God's will? Are you laying down your life daily as a sacrifice for Christ, the truth, and the brethren? Are you searching for ways to use less time for life's pursuits and more for heavenly things? If you can answer, Yes, to these questions, then you will eventually be awarded THE crown of life, the divine nature!

How transporting is the love of the Father that we should be called the sons of God, for when it does appear what we shall be, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is!



Talking Things Over

Statistical Report

for the year ended September 30, 1987

	Receipts	Expenditures
General Fund	\$227,879.41	
Radio (Domestic Only)	18,861.17	\$119,285.81
Television	11,887.50	90,810.15
Traveling Speakers (U.S.A. and Overseas)	11,053.98	35,562.30
Overseas (Incl. Radio)	179.00	126,521.31
Recorded Lecture Service	2,603.15	6,690.96
Free Literature	1,427.00	1,427.00
Free Subscriptions	50.50	50.50
Sales of Dawn Publications	39,516.97	356,381.35
Advertising (Magazines & Newspapers)	15,410.00	118,406.06
Film Service	12,102.00	37,359.08
Other (Interest, Securities, etc.)	<u>15,615.68</u>	
TOTAL before bequests	\$356,586.36	\$892,494.52
Bequests Received	<u>\$350,852.06</u>	
	<u>\$707,438.42</u>	<u>\$892,494.52</u>

For the fiscal year reported, the Dawn had an operating loss, before bequests, of \$535,908.16. Bequests in the amount of \$350,852.06 reduced this to a total net loss of \$185,056.10.

Income from contributions other than bequests was down 8.3% from the prior year, while expenses showed an increase of 7.6%. It is apparent that the LORD is still making it possible for the Word of truth to go forth, and our desire is to make the media for its

promulgation—radio and TV, books, booklets, films, tapes, video-tapes and taped study courses—available to all at the lowest possible price. Much of it is free.

The brethren of the Dawn rejoice in sharing with you the privileges of doing this work, especially in these closing days of the Gospel Age, when our message of hope is so much needed by a troubled world. May the LORD continue to bless and direct us all!



Meaning of Truth's Vision

IS OUR faith able to reach out and grasp the immensity of the fact that the God of the universe is now actually working in the earth, and that through the truth he has invited us to be co-workers with him? Can we really grasp the full importance of what this means? Let us endeavor to grasp it so fully that the joys and the cares of this life will seem of trifling importance compared with the stupendous fact that we are Christians, and that as such God has given us the vision of truth—present truth—in order that we may intelligently lay down our lives in his service.

First, God wants us to be conformed to his will. As we become conformed to his will we will become like him in character, and like his beloved Son. In proportion as we are like God we will do as God does—we will seek to bless others. To the extent that we become like Christ, we will do as Christ did; which was to bless others—in God's way, by bearing witness to the truth.

It is God's will that we be ambassadors for Christ. If we are faithful ambassadors we will tell what we know about Christ and about his Heavenly Father, and ours—and about the messianic kingdom soon to be established. If we are truly thrilled with the hope of future participation with Christ in blessing the people, we will want to do everything we can now to scatter words of cheer and comfort to the distressed world, and especially to aid God's own people.

Talking Things Over

Brother Emile Herrscher, Phoenix, AZ

Report of German General Convention June, 1987

IN JUNE of last year, the twenty-sixth annual German General Convention was held at Hotel Sander in Bad Hersfeld, Germany. This gathering of German-speaking brethren is greatly anticipated each year, since our dear Christian family in Germany and surrounding countries are widely scattered. This convention is, for many of them, their only opportunity for fellowship with those of like precious faith.—II Pet. 1:1

With this fact in mind, the convention program provides some one-hour “kaffeepauses,” or coffee breaks, for Christian fellowship, and much-needed encouragement and building-up in our most holy faith. (Jude 20) The rejoicing to see each other again, and the warm fellowship that followed, was apparent throughout the convention, and was a blessing to all.

Discourses given by the elders covered many facets of God’s truth. The titles of the talks given indicate the diversity of subjects covered: “Behold, I Am at the Door,” “Baptized into Christ,” “Finally, Brethren,” “The Salvation We Have in Jesus Christ,” “If Sons, Also Heirs,” “The World,” “Without Jesus We Have Nothing,” and a symposium by three deacons on, “Faith, Hope and Love.”

Truly a rich feast of spiritual food from the LORD’s table was made available to all in attendance!

Speaking of food, the delicious temporal provisions were very abundantly and efficiently served by the congenial hotel proprietor, his lovely wife, and small staff. Never have we seen such

good-natured, courteous efficiency. The convention has been held at the Hotel Sander for more than a quarter century, and there is a fine, cooperative relationship between the convention delegates and their host.

There were meetings and activities also for the young people. At one such meeting, conditions in our troubled world were discussed and the young people, both consecrated and unconsecrated, were exhorted and encouraged to daily live in accordance with their Christian confession, seeking the peace and welfare of all, and thus to manifest the sincerity and genuineness of their religious convictions.

A business meeting was held during the convention by the German committee, at which the work of the LORD for the past year, and for the coming year, was discussed. Gratitude was expressed for the assistance and cooperation of the brethren at the Dawn in making German-language Scripture Study volumes available to them.

The interchange of brethren of this precious faith in foreign lands with those in America, and their sweet fellowship together, makes manifest and significant the truth of the Scriptures that God is "taking out of them a people for *his* name" (Acts 15:14); truly they are being redeemed by the blood of Christ "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev. 5:9) By the counsel of God's Word, the operation of the Holy Spirit in their lives, and the testing of their faith, they are being prepared, if faithful, to live and reign with Christ in God's promised kingdom for the blessing and assistance of all the nations of the earth.

The convention closed with a Love Feast, and as the brethren embraced and said their tearful, "Auf Wiedersehens," and waved "Goodbye" to each other, one could plainly see that precious memories of the LORD's blessings were going with them, and that they would be joyfully anticipating the blessings of the 1988 convention at Bad Hersfeld. Truly, "the love of Christ constraineth us." (II Cor. 5:14) "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Speakers' Appointments

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

These speakers are routed through the Pilgrim Department of the Dawn, or by classes associated with the Pilgrim Service. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

B. Brown		E.K. Penrose, Continued	
San Luis Obispo, CA	January 10	Los Angeles, CA	6,7
A. Olcese & J. Panucci		Sacramento, CA	10
Miami/Hialeah, FL	January 16-18	Upper Lake, CA	11
Mazatlan, Mexico	20,21	Arcata, CA	12
Eldorado, Mexico	22	Sacramento, CA	13
Culiacan, Mexico	23	Phoenix, AZ	17
Guamuchil, Mexico	24	Kansas City, MO	20
Angustura, Mexico	25	St. Louis, MO	21
Durango, Mexico	26,27	Columbus, OH	24
Guadalupe, Mexico	28	T. Passlos	
Canelas, Mexico	29	Phoenix, AZ	January 1-3
Caracas, Venez.	31, February 1,2	L.B. Post	
Georgetown, Guyana	3,4	Allentown, PA	January 17
E.K. Penrose		H. Snyder	
Phoenix, AZ	January 1-3	Phoenix, AZ	January 1-3
Victorville, CA	5	Middletown, NY	24

Obituaries

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

Sister Blanche Ellsworth, Formerly a member of Paterson, NJ Class—November. Age, 97.

Sister Helen B. Grimble, Fresno, CA—November 6. Age, 93.

Sister Agnes Lakin, Duquesne, PA—November 24. Age, 78.

Conventions

These conventions are listed at the request of the individual classes who are sponsoring the gatherings.

CHICAGO, IL, New Year's Convention, January 1-3, Elk Grove Village High School, 500 W. Elk Grove Blvd., Elk Grove Village. Contact: Mr. Joseph Megacz, 1431 S. Fairview, Park Ridge, IL 60068. Phone: (312) 692-3609

PHOENIX, AZ, January 1-3, 1988—Days Inn, 502 W. Camelback Road 85013. Contact: Mildred Enteman, 542 W. Southern Avenue 85041

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, January 10—Majestic Park Homes, Inc., 8300 Seminole Blvd. (Alt. 19) Contact Mrs. John Slavich, 3401 Rochelle Court, Clearwater 33519. Phone: (813) 786-3795

LOS ANGELES, CA, January 17—Burbank Masonic Auditorium, 248 E. Olive Ave., Burbank. Contact: Michael Nekora, Secy., 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades 90272. Phone: (213) 454-5248

PALO ALTO, CA, January 23, 24—San Jose Masonic Temple, 2500 Masonic Drive, San Jose. Contact: Irene Altuvilla. Phone: (408) 296-1913

CHICAGO, IL, January 24—Elmhurst Masonic Temple, York Rd. and Arthur St., Elmhurst. Contact: Joe Megacz, Secy., 1431 South Fairview Ave., Park Ridge, IL 60068

DETROIT, MI, January 31—Redford YWCA, 25940 Grand River, Detroit. Contact: Walter Blicharz, 19146 Bedford Rd., Birmingham, MI 48009. Phone: (313) 642-1553

SACRAMENTO, CA, February 12-14—Sierra Inn, 2600 Auburn Blvd. Contact: Mrs. E.F. Lankford, 600Q 19th Avenue 95820. Phone: (916) 457-0569

ALBUQUERQUE, NM, Pre-Memorial Convention, March 18-20—Contact: Roberta H. Buss, P.O. Box 9172, 87119

DETROIT, MI, Pre-Memorial Convention, March 25-27—Macomb Community College, 14500 12 Mile Road, Warren. Contact: Walter Blicharz, Secy., 19146 Bedford Rd., Birmingham, MI 48009. Phone: (313) 642-1553

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, Dalfsen, Holland, July 9-15—DeBron Conference Center. Write: International Convention of Bible Students, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (213) 454-5248

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, Chattanooga, Tennessee, July 23-28. Please note new location and new dates. Details will be given later.

Price Change Notice

BEGINNING with January 1988, due to increased production costs it is necessary to raise the price by \$1.00 on all vinyl, soft-covered books. Therefore all books presently listed at:

\$1.00 are now \$2.00

\$2.00 books are now \$3.00

The sets of "**Studies in the Scriptures**" will become \$12.00; and each individual book will cost \$2.00.

These new prices *will not* be reflected on the front or back inside covers of this magazine until a new printing of Dawn covers next June. Until then, this notice is intended to supersede the prices shown.

NEW OFFERINGS

A new edition of the children's book, "**God's Promises Come True**" will soon be available. It will be published with a hard cover, sewn spine, and will be somewhat larger than the previous edition. An announcement will be made in **The Dawn** magazine when this is actually ready for ordering, and what the new price will be.

The "**Daily Heavenly Manna**" is now available in a hard cover edition, with a sewn spine. Price—\$4.00 each.

"**Hymns of Dawn**" are now available in both vinyl, soft cover, with a sewn spine: Price—\$2.00 per book; and hard cover, sewn spine. Price—\$4.00 each.

"**Bread from Heaven**," a children's Manna, is obtainable for \$4.00, hardbound, sewn spine. Makes a lovely gift.