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The Lamb of God

*“Behold the Lamb
of God, which
taketh away the
sin of the world.”*

—*John 1:29*

FOR ALMOST ONE YEAR

much publicity has been given to a new movie produced by Mel Gibson, “The Passion of the Christ.” Since this is a religious movie, the promotional methods used were unusual. Gibson sent 250,000 promotional DVDs to pastors of churches. A web site supplied churches with hundreds of postcards and posters for their congregations. About 15,000 religious leaders were invited to advance screenings. The main topic being discussed was did the movie blame the Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus, and was this anti-Semitic? The movie opened at 3,000 theaters on Ash Wednesday and the first day’s gross was \$26.5 million, making it the third biggest opening in history.

MOVIE REVIEW

A feature article appeared in the periodical, *The US News and World Report* dated March 8, 2004, and entitled, “The Real Jesus.” It was written to review this movie. On the front cover a caption to the title read, “Searching for the truth between Mel Gibson and the Gospels.” The caption to the article said, “How a Jewish reformer lost his Jewish identity.”

The article said, “The audience gathering for Mel Gibson’s ‘The Passion of the Christ’ last week had few apprehensions about the film they were about to see. Most belonged to a large evangelical church. And even before the lights were dimmed, many who had waited eagerly for the showing in the Arlington, Virginia, theater said they were expecting an ‘accurate’ and ‘truthful’ version of the Passion story. Many also admitted to being puzzled, and even skeptical, about the allegations of anti-Semitism that had been swirling around the film for months.

“The lobby chatter afterward suggested that the film lived up to their expectations. ‘I could see it 10 more times,’ raved Sandra Correa, a mortgage banker, as she left the theater. She didn’t find it anti-Semitic at all, and even the sometimes brutally graphic violence seemed justified to her. ‘It’s hardly more graphic than the junk many adults allow their kids to see on TV. And this violence,’ she said, ‘has a purpose.’

“As months of carefully stoked controversy have made clear, not all viewers give the movie such an unqualified thumbs up. Prominent Jewish leaders, while not accusing Gibson or his film of being deliberately anti-Semitic, feel that it will fuel or reinforce the anti-Jewish sentiments that appear to be on the rise around the world. And Jews are not the only ones who think Gibson’s portrayal of the events leading up to, and including, Christ’s Crucifixion is an exploitative and sensationalistic distortion of the story. So also said James Carroll, a former Catholic priest, a novelist, and the author of *Constantine’s Sword: The Church and the Jews*.

QUESTIONS RAISED

“At the very least, the film raises big questions—even for faithful Christians—about how people are to read, interpret, and understand the Scriptures on which Gibson has selectively based his film. Gibson himself came close to saying as much in his remarks to Diane Sawyer during an ABC interview two weeks ago. ‘You know, critics who have a problem with me don’t really have a problem with me and this film. They have a problem with the four Gospels.’

“Gibson might more accurately have said that people—Christians, Jews, even the unchurched—have long had a problem with the way Jesus’ life and teachings have been represented and interpreted. And not just in the four Gospels but in the rest of the New Testament, as well as in the subsequent teachings of the many sects of Christianity. For many devout Christians, in fact, struggling with those matters is a major part of their religious lives.

“And little wonder, given that there are few other religions in which the claims of historical and theological truth are more confusingly mixed. Specifically, Christians have always had to deal with the fact that Jesus of Nazareth—the founder of their religion, their Messiah, and the second part of the Trinitarian God—was himself not a Christian but, indisputably, a Jew. From the earliest years of the Christian movement, followers of Jesus had tended to handle this fact in various ways. Particularly in the first centuries after the Crucifixion, many Christians simply saw themselves as a branch of Judaism. As time went on, however, Christians tended to ignore, or minimize,

Jesus's Jewishness, and many denied that he was Jewish at all.

"To be sure, since the Reformation, a growing number of clerics, theologians, and scholars have worked hard to recover the historical Jesus. To Protestants, this effort was part of the struggle to throw off the 'corrupted' misreadings of the Roman Catholic Church and return to the real Jesus. Yet even in the midst of such attempts, a combination of church politics, deeply ingrained prejudice, and limited evidence impeded a full or fair examination of Jesus's Jewishness well into the 20th century.

CORRECTIVE SCHOLARSHIP

"That has changed during the past fifty years. Aided by finds like the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars have made great strides in reconstructing the centuries surrounding the Crucifixion. In addition to restoring the fully Jewish context of Jesus's career, they have also shown how some early Christians attempted to distance their founder and his movement from their Jewish roots."

The authors of the article then cited the work done by Geza Vermes, emeritus professor of Jewish studies at Oxford University and the book he wrote entitled, *Jesus, the Jew*. His goal was to establish the harmony between Jewish teachings and those of Christianity, and in particular to demonstrate that the willful disregard of the Jewishness of Jesus and his teachings has led to Christian anti-Semitism.

Also featured by the authors was the corrective scholarship done by Christians, as well as Jews, to

explain why a religion starting in Judaism moved away from it. The highlights of this corrective scholarship included reviewing the history of the political maneuvering taking place prior to, and during, the ministry of Jesus. The new scholarship also emphasized the theological variety within Judaism at the time of Jesus, and the opposition which Jesus had to the traditions of men. In spite of this, the harmony of Jews and believing Gentiles was emphasized.

A reason arose for Christians to distance themselves from Judaism when the Jews revolted against Rome in the years A.D. 66 to 74 leading to the dispersion of the Jews from their land and the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. But as the article says:

“Even so, it would be wrong to think that the close ties between Christians and Jews were instantly or fully severed. For centuries, many Christians from Asia Minor to Africa continued to attend synagogue services and observe Jewish high holidays. ‘Fourth-century gentile Christians,’ writes Fredriksen, ‘despite the anti-Jewish ideology of their own bishops, kept Saturdays as their day of rest, accepted gifts of matzo from Jewish friends at Passover, indeed still celebrated Easter according to when Jews kept Passover.’”

THE INFLUENCE OF ROME

When Constantine became converted to Christianity (A.D. 312) changes took place and as the Roman empire became Christian, the fact that Jesus was born a Jew was de-emphasized. By the time of the 11th century, with the first crusade being called

by Pope Urban, crusaders enroute to liberate the holy land stopped in the Rhineland and left a third of northern Europe's Jews dead. From the 12th century and on, anti-Jewish violence continued to surface and, in spite of periods of enlightenment, the relationship between Christians and Jews improved only slightly. By the second half of the 19th century the resulting picture of Jesus as a Jewish teacher of his day was troublesome for many Christian theologians, especially in Germany. Eventually it led to the anti-Semitism of Nazi Germany under Hitler, and the holocaust in which 6 million Jews died. The article ended by saying of the film, and Gibson's comment, 'My job is to make a film as well as I can make it.' Maybe so. But at the very least, Gibson has helped to perpetuate some of the same misunderstandings that have plagued Christian-Jewish relations for nearly 2000 years."

There have been several attempts since the moving picture industry came into existence, in the early part of the 20th century, to depict the life of Jesus. All have fallen short of being accurate because of the producers and writers lack of knowledge about the Biblical message. Even those who write about the movie lack this knowledge. In this article, reviewing Mel Gibson's attempt to make another movie of this type, it is said, "Christians have always had to deal with the fact that Jesus of Nazareth—the founder of their religion, their Messiah, and the second part of the Trinitarian God—was himself not a Christian, but indisputably a Jew." Jesus was never a second part of a trinitarian God. This was an error brought into church teachings during the fourth century. Jesus plainly said,

“My Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28) The Apostle Paul confirmed that there is only one God (not a trinity) when he wrote, “To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”—I Cor. 8:6

PREHUMAN EXISTENCE OF JESUS

Jesus in his prehuman experience was known as the Logos, or “Word” of God. (John 1:1) He was the first direct creation of God the Father. (Rev. 3:14; Col. 1:15) As the only begotten Son of God, he worked with his Father in the creation of all things. God’s plan involved having a place to test his Son in order to find him worthy to receive a Divine nature. Thus the Bible tells of preparing the earth for habitation and bringing forth Adam and his family. Everything that followed, the fall into sin and condemnation to death, the permission of evil, and all the Biblical prophecies concerning salvation were to lead to the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. This was the role that God had for his Son to play. As the Apostle John wrote of it, “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”—John 1:14

God’s plan of salvation was woven into the fabric of the Gospel message. It was demonstrated early in mankind’s experiences when Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice to God. He was a keeper of sheep and offered the firstling of his flock, or a lamb. (Gen. 4:4; Heb. 11:4) How the sacrifice of a lamb would bring salvation was unknown except

as God elaborated upon it by preaching the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, “In thee shall all nations be blessed.” (Gal. 3:8) The Gospel (good news) preached unto Abraham was that “in thy seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 22:18) The blessing would come through the ‘seed’ of Abraham. As the Apostle Paul said, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” (Rom. 9:7) He further defines this promised seed when he said, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”—Gal. 3:16

THE SON OF DAVID AND MESSIAH

It becomes clear from these scriptures that Jesus had to be born into Abraham’s family through Isaac. Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, had purchased the birthright from Esau, and became the proper channel. A further definition was that Christ would be a son of King David. In this manner it became necessary that Jesus should be born a Jew, and he was. His mother, Mary, came from David’s lineage, and David descended from Judah. All the promises made to Israel were to find their fulfillment through Christ. The Old and New Testaments are in perfect harmony. As the saying goes, “God’s promises are in the old concealed, and in the new revealed.”

The Scriptures are plain in stating that God especially blessed the nation of Israel. As one of their prophets wrote, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” (Amos 3:2) This blessing brought a responsibility that they could not live up to. We are not surprised that they should be blinded

and not be able to recognize Jesus as the Messiah (see Matt. 13:10-17; Isa. 6:9; Rom. 11:25), for so it was prophesied to happen. Therefore, trying to fix the blame upon the Jews, or Romans, for the crucifixion of Jesus is immaterial. He had been sent to earth to die as man's Redeemer and Jesus knew this. He said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:17,18) It was God, the Father, who "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) But it was Jesus who voluntarily cooperated with the Father and was willing to lay down his life.

Still, circumstances had to develop to have someone be the guilty party. The Adversary used the scribes, Pharisees, and priests of Israel quite well. As Jesus said unto them. "Ye are of your father the devil." (John 8:44) Early in the ministry of Jesus they plotted to destroy him. (See Matt. 12:14; Mark 3:6; Luke 6:11; John 5:18) There were a number of times when the people accused Jesus of blasphemy and sought to stone him. (John 8:59) Jesus evaded them each time. Finally, Israel's rulers spread the word around that anyone knowing of his whereabouts should inform them so that they could take him. (John 11:57) Judas complied. Even though the writers of this article cited an expert opinion that the charge could not be blasphemy because the Jews could have stoned him based on their own law, yet that was unmistakably the charge that was

made when an attempt to get false witnesses failed.—Matt. 26:59-66

PILATE TRIES TO SET JESUS FREE

Pilate did everything he could to release Jesus saying, “I find no fault in him.” (John 19:4,6) but the chief priests rallied the people to crucify him. (John 19:1-16) Thus, Jesus was crucified at the insistence of the Jews. Later, Peter would testify of these events saying to the people of Israel, upon the occasion of healing a lame man outside of the temple, “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.”—Acts 3:13-18

WORTHY IS THE LAMB

Peter truly said that they did this in ‘ignorance.’ This rebellious and idolatrous people have been learning a lesson. God plans to save them as the Apostle Paul has written, “so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion

the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” (Rom. 11:26; Isa. 59:20) “They shall look upon [him] . . . whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.” (Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7) The wonderful humility and love of our Lord Jesus has earned for him an exaltation above every name that has been named. As so well expressed by the Apostle Paul, in urging his followers to have the same mind as Jesus had, he said, “who, though being in God’s form, yet did not meditate a usurpation to be like God, but divested himself, taking a bondman’s form, having been made in the likeness of men; and being in condition as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And therefore God supremely exalted him, and freely granted to him that name which is above every name; in order that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those beneath; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:6-11, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*) Jesus, although being a mighty spiritual being before being made of flesh and coming to earth, did not seek to usurp the Father’s authority but humbled himself and has earned the Divine nature. It will be a glorious day when every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus.

This is the real Jesus. What a great privilege it is for us to know the real Jesus. We are reminded of the voices in heaven that were heard when it was known that the Lamb, which had been slain, was worthy to open the sealed book in God’s hand. All the angelic host proclaimed, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and

wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”(Rev. 5:12) What follows is a preview of the time when every creature will join in the same refrain, or when every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus. We read further in this proclamation: “Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”—vs. 13

Jesus, as the Logos in his prehuman existence, was not worthy to open the book (or to execute God’s wonderful plan). It wasn’t until he became flesh and was slain that as the ‘Lamb that was slain’ did he become worthy. As the account continues it says, “The four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped.”—vs. 14

Likewise we say ‘Amen’ and worship both God the Father, and the Lamb that was slain, his ‘only begotten Son’—the real Jesus. ■

The Precious Blood

*Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace, or wash
away the stain.*

*But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, takes all our sins
away—*

*A sacrifice of nobler name, and richer blood than they.
My soul looks back to see the burden he did bear,
While pouring out his life for me; and sees her
ransom there.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

The Reason to be Faithful

Key Verse: “He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

—Hebrews 1:3 New American Standard

Selected Scripture: Hebrews 1:1-9, 2:4

indicating that he was with the Father before the worlds were made (Heb. 1:2; Prov. 8:22-31), and was the instrument used in Creation. (I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9) He was the Father’s “only begotten.” (John 1:14) God sent his Son, born of a virgin, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” to give his perfect human life for Adam

ALTHOUGH THE AUTHOR-ship of the book of Hebrews has been disputed, we believe the writer was the Apostle Paul because there are many phrases throughout the letter that are strictly Pauline in content.

– In verse one, the apostle reminds us that in the beginning God spoke to his people through the fathers [patriarchs], and through the prophets sent to Israel. These were imperfect, fallen human beings, but rich in faith. Now, at the end of the Gospel Age, we are taught God’s Word through the resurrected Lord Jesus.

The Apostle Paul gives us a detailed view of our Lord saying, “he made the worlds,”

and all mankind, dead in Adam.—Heb. 7:26; I Tim. 2:5-6

The Apostle Paul next tells us that since Jesus' resurrection, he is the "brightness of his glory" and the "express image" of his character, and that Jesus upholds "all things by the word of his [God's] power," sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Heb. 1:3) What a marvelous Divine being we now have to bring, and explain, God's Word to us.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to prove that a totally new dispensation of grace, and not of works, had been ushered in through Jesus at Pentecost. Jesus was now higher than the angels in nature and office. He had obtained a "more excellent name" than the angels—more distinguished—"KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."—vs. 4; Rev. 19:16

"Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" (vs. 5) None. (Ps. 2:7; Col. 1:15) Jesus was the first begotten Son. Paul thus says, "Let all the angels of God worship him." (vs. 6) Let all of God's holy ones reverence him.—Ps. 97:7

The throne of Jesus will be a righteous throne. His reign will be a righteous reign; righteousness will be a scepter of his kingdom. (Ps. 45:6,7) This is the kingdom we have been taught to pray for. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth."—Luke 11:2

God is to make Jesus' enemies his "footstool." (Ps. 110:1; Heb. 1:13) God's angels are sent to "minister" to those who are to be the "heirs of salvation."—Heb. 1:14; Ps. 103:20

"Therefore [because of what we have heard] we ought to give the more earnest heed [careful attention, *New International Version*], lest at any time we should let them slip." (Heb. 2:1) In the past, when God spoke and the people failed to hear, they were chastised. Now we must pay attention because our Lord is speaking to us. We must be faithful. ■

Partners in Suffering

Key Verse: *“In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”*
—*Hebrews 2:17*

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 2:5-18

It had been written in Psalm 8:4-9 and now in our lesson in Hebrews. “What is man [Adam], that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man [mankind], that thou visitest him [will visit during the kingdom]? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels [in intelligence and capacity]; thou crownedst him with glory and honour [perfection of manhood, to be attained during Christ’s thousand year kingdom], and didst set him over the works of thy hands.” (Heb. 2:6,7) This was the original plan of the God of the universe.

AT THE CONCLUSION OF our last lesson, we were admonished to listen and heed God’s Word. Today’s lesson begins where we are told that in the age to come, God will not place angels in charge. (Heb. 2:5) Apparently, before the flood, some angels were allowed to help Adam and Eve after they were expelled from the garden. The result was disastrous, causing God to destroy all mankind and beasts, save eight souls.—Gen. 6-7; I Pet. 3:20

Even before the fall, God had in mind the redemption of Adam and his yet unborn race.

“But now we see not yet all things put under him [Adam]. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels [a perfect human being] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” We thank God for his mercy and grace.—vss. 8,9; Heb. 7:26

Now we see the further plans of God in bringing others of earth, making them his sons, unto glory, and “to make the captain of their salvation perfect [mature] through sufferings.”—Heb. 2:10

In chapter five, verse eight, we read of Jesus, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” Even though he was a perfect human being he learned how to be a “merciful and faithful high priest.”—Heb. 2:17

We understand that it was in God’s plans to call out “a people for his name,” to be associated with Jesus in the bringing back from death the groaning creation. (Acts 15:14; Rom. 8:22) How joyous it is for us to know that we can be associated with our Lord in the blessing of all the families of earth. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” (Rev. 2:10) “If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.”—II Tim. 2:11

The apostle explains that the very one who brought on the death sentence—Satan—will be destroyed by Jesus. (Heb. 2:14) Then all mankind will be delivered from the death sentence.—vs. 15

Jesus did not take on the nature of angels but became the “seed” of Abraham (Gen. 22:18); and we are Abraham’s ‘seed’ and heirs of the promise.—Gal. 3:16,29

We have a merciful High Priest in all things that pertain to God, one who made reconciliation for the sins of the people. Jesus is this great High Priest and we have the privilege to be associated with him, partners in suffering. ■

Be Faithful: Obey

Key Verse: “*We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.*”
—**Hebrews 3:14**

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 3:1-4:13

hold fast the “confidence” of hope we have “unto the end.” As Moses was faithful over his house, the Jewish house, so we too must be faithful as members of the spiritual house.—vs. 6

The house that Moses was chief over, was found unfaithful. God tested them forty years in the wilderness. Through all this they did not obey him and were never able to enter into the rest that God had promised.—vs. 11

Now, we are the spiritual house, (the house of sons) under the antitypical Moses, our Lord Jesus. We are warned not to have a “heart of unbelief” as did the nation of Israel but to “exhort one another daily [pray or entreat].” (vss. 12,13) What a privilege to be able to pray for one another daily. We are to build up one another.—Eph. 3:16-19; James 5:16

IN OUR LESSON FOR TODAY we are reminded to “consider” Jesus, our High Priest, his obedience and faithfulness. (Heb. 3:1) Jesus’ house is spiritual, higher than any earthly one. Moses was faithful and obedient over the house of servants, and his was an earthly house.—vs. 5

Jesus is building a spiritual house in the heavens. We are admonished to be faithful, to

The word sabbath (*Shabbat*) from the Hebrew, means ‘rest, an intermission.’ Antitypically, the word sabbath—rest—is a rest of faith and obedience in Christ Jesus. What were to be the benefits of this rest? Had the nation of Israel been faithful to the Word of God they would have entered into the same rest, but they failed through “unbelief.”—Heb. 3:19

One of the benefits of rest—sabbath—would be the study of God’s Word. The nation of Israel was to discuss the Word with others, and especially teach it to their children. “These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.”—Deut. 6:6-8

The apostle admonishes the Hebrew brethren, and us, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you [or us] be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” (Heb. 3:12,13) How easy it is to be led away from our belief and trust, and in obeying our God. Our adversary, the Devil, wants our attention. “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”—II Cor. 4:4

In chapter four of Hebrews, the apostle tells us that we should fear lest we “come short” of entering into God’s rest. (vs. 1) If we have believed the Gospel message and entered this rest through faith and obedience, there yet remains “a rest to the people of God,” in the eternal home promised in heaven. (vs. 9) We then must be faithful. ■

Approach in Boldness

Key Verse: *“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.”*

—*Hebrews 4:14*

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 4:14-5:10

are given information regarding the compassionate nature of Jesus. Our Lord was tested along the same lines as a fallen human being, “yet without sin.”—vs. 15

We might ask, how can this be? He was perfect, “holy, harmless, undefiled, [and] separate from sinners.” (Heb. 7:26) What lesson do we find concerning this great High Priest? It is said, that “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” (Heb. 5:8) Jesus, by his faithfulness in ministering to his people, demonstrated the lessons of obedience, compassion, and mercy. Through all this, we may come “Boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy.”—Heb. 4:16

There may be times when we are overcharged or neglectful of some spiritual privilege. Yet it is here that we

ISRAEL, IN THEIR TABER-
nacle arrangements, had a high priest and under priests. In this arrangement, Aaron was the high priest and the spokesman for God. Aaron’s sons were the under priests. (Exod. 40:12-15) In our lesson, the apostle tells us that, antitypically, Jesus Christ is our High Priest.—Heb. 4:14

In chapter three, we are given information about this great High Priest, and are told to consider him. In today’s lesson, we

may come 'boldly' (confidently, courageously), in times of need. Those of Israel could approach the high priest and bring an offering for their mistakes and ask for mercy. In return, they would receive grace. Let us learn to be merciful and compassionate in our dealings with others.

The apostle goes on to say that those of the priesthood of Christ may, like the high priest of old, be able to offer acceptable "gifts and sacrifices" for the sins of mankind. (Heb. 5:1) We might ask what are these 'gifts and sacrifices'? One is the gift of grace (Eph. 2:8), another the gift of salvation. We may also offer the sacrifice of material assistance. (Phil. 4:18) We may offer the sacrifice of praise with our lips, by communication. (Heb. 13:15,16) May we use these gifts and sacrifices on a daily basis.

Like our great High Priest, we must develop "compassion on the ignorant [uninformed], and on them that are out of the way." (Heb. 5:2) Like Aaron, who was appointed by God, we must be appointed. We cannot take this honor unto ourselves (vs. 4) yet, going beyond this, we must be "called, and chosen, and faithful."—Rev. 17:14

This spiritual priesthood will be after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was both king of Salem and a priest. Abraham paid tithes to him. (Gen. 14:18,20) During the kingdom, Jesus and his church will be the antitypical Melchizedek. These will fulfill both aspects of a priest and king. During the next age we will be both priests and kings over the world.

Jesus was called of God, and became our High Priest and "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:9,10) How wonderful to know that we can approach God in faith and obedience.

In our key verse of Hebrews 4:14 we are told to 'Hold fast our profession.' This has the meaning to acknowledge our covenant. Our profession is our acknowledgement of our covenant of sacrifice. ■

Adam Condemned to Die

*“In the sweat of thy
face shalt thou eat
bread, till thou
return unto the
ground; for out of
it wast thou taken:
for dust thou art,
and unto dust
shalt thou return.”
—Genesis 3:19*

WHEN EVE TRANS-
gressed, being beguiled by
the serpent, and Adam also
transgressed eating of the
forbidden fruit, they set in
motion the penalty of death.
The sentence that befell them
had been spelled out clearly
to Adam by God. He had put
Adam into the Garden of

Eden to dress and keep it. There was an abundance of food in the garden and God had told Adam, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”—Gen. 2:16,17

SEIZED WITH FEAR

After Adam and Eve had transgressed God’s law (Gen. 3:6), we read, “The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves

aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”—vss. 7-13

God, in his foreknowledge, knew the downward course in which sin would continue to lead the human race, now that his law had been broken. Knowing this, he realized that the procreative abilities with which he endowed our first parents, through the separation of Eve from Adam, would be prostituted. For this reason, and seemingly almost immediately after they disobeyed, he caused Adam and Eve to feel a sense of shame because of their nakedness. This led to their making of coverings, and throughout the ages since, clothing has helped the race to keep the God-given powers of reproduction under control.

Adding to their shame, our first parents, because of their disobedience, came under a spell of fear. This unhappy reaction to sin has been the experience of wrongdoers throughout the ages since. Adam and Eve had good reason to fear. Having been created perfect, they could have resisted the

temptation placed before them. Eve, of course, was deceived. But even so, she too readily disbelieved her Maker. The 'serpent' was merely the mouth-piece of Satan, the Devil. Just how the reported conversation with Eve was conducted the account does not say, nor is it important for us to know. But the arguments presented by Satan were effective, and now that both Eve and Adam had disobeyed, we find them cringing in fear before their Maker and true benefactor.

THE PENALTY FALLS

Adam and Eve were soon to learn that God meant it when he said, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' Their sentence reads, "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."—Gen. 3:16-19

A further affirmation of this sentence of death is given in verses twenty-two through twenty-four of the chapter. These verses read, "The LORD God said, Behold, . . . now, lest he put forth his hand,

and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

In the *Marginal Translation* of Genesis 2:17, God’s warning of the death penalty reads, “In the day that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die.” This suggests not an instantaneous snuffing out of life, but a gradual process of dying, and that is the way it transpired. Adam and Eve were driven out of their garden home, and prevented from having access to the trees of life, with the result that they began to die. Adam, starting on the downward course from the top of perfection’s scale, lived nine hundred thirty years before he returned to the dust from whence he had been taken. When he died, the full penalty for his sin had been exacted. Adam had not been deceived by God as to the nature of the penalty.

Nor has there since been any change in the Divine penalty for sin. More than four thousand years after the decree was issued, ‘Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,’ the Apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, affirmed, “The wages of sin is death.” (Rom. 6:23) As we have seen, Adam was made a “living soul” (Gen. 2:7), and in Ezekiel 18:4 we read, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

THE MEANING OF DEATH

What is death? *Webster’s Dictionary* defines death as ‘the state of being dead.’ Webster also uses

the word 'extinction.' These definitions are fully in harmony with the teachings of the Bible. In Ecclesiastes 9:10 we read, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

Such severe calamity came upon the Prophet Job that he thought it would have been better for him had he died as an infant. In giving expression to this sentiment, he reveals clearly that death is a condition in which the 'wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest.' We quote:

"Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck? For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves; Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light. There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?"—Job 3:11-22

Here Job is explaining that those who suffer much, and can get no relief, are glad when they

realize that death is near, that they found the grave. As he explains, those who are dead are 'still and . . . quiet.' They sleep and are 'at rest.' This is in agreement with Ecclesiastes 9:5,6 which reads, "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished." Clearly then, death is a state of oblivion. The 'dead know not any thing.' Their former loves, their hatreds, and their envy, all perish in death.

ALL DIE

Adam's transgression of Divine law brought death not only to himself, but also to his offspring. The Apostle Paul expresses it thus, "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." (Rom. 5:18) And again, "As in Adam all die." (I Cor. 15:22) Since Adam's transgression, all of the human race have been imperfect, afflicted more or less by diseases of various sorts. Yet withal, under normal circumstances, no one wants to die. The expression, 'natural death,' is often used in contrast to accidental death, or death by violence. Actually, however, there is no such thing as natural death. To humans, death is always unnatural. That is why we never become accustomed to it. Whether it strikes in infancy, in childhood, in middle or old age, it is always an unwelcome visitor.

But we can thank God for the promise that this dreaded enemy is one day to be destroyed! When the loving purpose of God in Creation is fully accomplished, everything out of harmony with him and with his laws of righteousness will be routed

from the earth and, as Paul says, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (I Cor. 15:26) Paul's declaration confirms the words of the Prophet Isaiah, who wrote, "He [the LORD] will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."—Isa. 25:8

This glorious consummation of the Divine plan will be brought about through Christ. When Paul wrote that 'judgment came upon all men' through Adam, he added, "Even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Rom. 5:18) And in I Corinthians 15:22 he wrote, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." So, while a tinge of sadness enters our hearts as we think of the joys and blessings that were forfeited as a result of original sin, we can rejoice in the hope that, as a result of the redemptive work of Christ, that which might have been is yet to be. Paradise will be restored! ■

Coming By and By

*A better day is coming, a morning promised long,
when truth and right, with holy might, shall
overthrow the wrong;*

*When Christ the Lord will listen to every plaintive
sigh, and stretch His hand o'er sea and land,
with justice by and by.*

*O! for that glorious dawning we watch and wait
and pray, till o'er the height the morning light
shall drive the gloom away;*

*And when the heavenly glory shall flood the earth
and sky, we'll bless the Lord for all His works
and praise Him by and by.*

—*Poems of Dawn*

Lost Keys of Knowledge

“Pilate therefore said unto him, Art Thou a king then?”

Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?”

—John 18:37,38

THE QUESTION, “WHAT IS truth?” which Pilate asked Jesus has been in the minds of many throughout all the ages. Today the word ‘truth’ is often used rather loosely, and applied to ideas, viewpoints, and philosophies that in reality are far from the truth. Even in the fields of science much is accepted as truth, which is not really true; and religiously the situation is even more confusing.

Since Pilate addressed his question to a religious leader, he doubtless had religion in mind—What is religious truth? Jesus did not answer

Pilate; but the night before, he said in prayer to his Heavenly Father, “Thy word is truth.” (John 17:17) The written Word of God at that time consisted of the Old Testament Scriptures. In God’s providence

there has since been added the New Testament Scriptures; and now we may consider the entire Bible as the 'Word' of God, which is the Truth.

There is much in the Bible upon which all of its adherents agree, such as its historical, ethical, and devotional teachings. All rejoice in its many assurances of God's love and care for his people. But, to most Bible readers, the precious Word seems to be thought of as nothing more than a book of ancient historical records where are found many good and wholesome precepts which, if we allow ourselves to be guided by them, will make us better men and women. It is a good book by which to live, but few realize that also contained in the blessed Bible is God's wonderful and harmonious plan for the recovery of the human race from sin and death. Most Christians believe that the majority of mankind is lost forever because they have not accepted Jesus as their Redeemer.

What has been lost is the great Truth that those whom Jesus is now taking from the world are to live and reign with him for the purpose of extending the opportunity of salvation to the remainder of mankind, the living and the dead. This Truth is a key of knowledge which, if properly used, will help reveal the glorious harmony of the Bible, which tells of the fullness of God's love for the whole world of mankind, demonstrated when he sent his Son to be their Redeemer.—John 3:16

Mankind will be restored to life on the earth; so all the promises of God pertaining to this wider aspect of the Divine plan are descriptive of earthly blessings. Peter uses the expression, "times of restitution of all things," and adds, "which God hath

spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19-21) This is a great truth of the Bible, which is to be found in the writings of all the prophets, yet it is completely ignored by many Christian churches. It is a lost key of knowledge to the vast majority who read the Bible, so they endeavor to spiritualize its earthly promises, and thus they become more and more confused.

THE KINGDOM HOPE

The kingdom of Christ is also the kingdom of God and is prominently taught in the Bible, in both the Old and the New Testaments. The prophecies of the Bible associate this kingdom with the promised Messiah, or Christ—“The government shall be upon his shoulder,” and “of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” (Isa. 9:6,7) Daniel wrote, “In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom.”—Dan. 2:44

When Jesus came, John the Baptist announced, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 3:1-3) Practically all of Jesus’ teachings were associated directly or indirectly with the ‘kingdom.’ His parables related to the kingdom and to its preparation—some of them pertaining to a counterfeit kingdom which the Devil would set up to deceive the people. He encouraged his disciples with the hope of reigning with him in his kingdom, saying, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”—Luke 12:32

In the last three chapters of the Bible, we are furnished with a symbolic description of the establishment and work of the kingdom. The followers of Jesus are shown coming *(Continued on page 33)*



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(Continued from page 31) forth in the “first resurrection” to live and “reign with him a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:6) A holy city comes down from heaven and the tabernacle of God is with men, and there is no more death. We see “the throne of God and of the Lamb,” and from that throne there flows “a pure river of water of life,” and the people are invited to “come . . . and . . . take the water of life freely.”—Rev. 22:1,2,17

This wonderful kingdom teaching has also been lost to the vast majority of professed Christians. Indeed, the modernist Christian world is inclined to make light of it. A mistranslation of Luke 17:21 makes Jesus appear to say, “The kingdom of God is within you,” but it should read, “God’s Royal Majesty is among you.” (*Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*) All the marvelous kingdom promises and prophecies of the Bible have been made to mean nothing more than righteous desires of the heart, which it is vainly hoped may one day control the lives of the majority of mankind.

To the extent that churchmen can enter into and control politics, it is hoped that the righteous desires of the people may become implemented by civil laws that will more effectively control evil, and to this arrangement is often applied the name kingdom of God. However, the hope of the real kingdom of promise has been lost, with the result that the only hope held out for a better world is based on nothing more than the vain wish that fallen man can, in some way or other, raise himself up through his own efforts.

How meaningful are the Bible’s promises of the kingdom when we take God at his word! After

assuring us that “of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,” the Prophet Isaiah added, “The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” (Isa. 9:6,7) As followers of the Master, called to suffer and die with him that we might live and reign with him, we have the privilege, through faithfulness and the Lord’s assisting help in time of need, to make our calling and election sure in order that we may reign with Christ. But the setting up of the kingdom, and its successful functioning for the blessing of all the families of the earth, does not depend upon human efforts. ‘The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.’

If we ignore this great Truth we are setting aside another important key to a proper understanding of the Bible, for without it much of the Word of God has no vital meaning. By using this key, God’s kingdom promises come to life, and we are given a glorious and comforting hope of coming peace, joy, health, and life for all the willing and obedient of mankind. In a word, the kingdom teachings of the Bible reveal that in the promised kingdom there will be both rulers and the ruled, the kings and their subjects. Jesus will be the King of kings, and his faithful followers of this age will be associated with him. All mankind will be the subjects of the kingdom, and those who obey its laws will live in peace and joy forever.

THE WORLD’S CONVERSION

Another key of knowledge that helps to give a harmonious understanding of God’s Word is the fact that the present Gospel Age is not the time in the plan of God for the conversion of the world.

True, Jesus commissioned his disciples to go into all the world to preach the Gospel, but he did not encourage them to believe that this would result in the world's conversion. The real purpose of this worldwide witness work is explained in Acts 15:14. Here James informs us that Peter (Simeon) "hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."

This 'people for his name' are the sons of God who are to live and reign with Christ. At the beginning of the age, a few of these were selected from among the Israelites and to these were given the "power [right, or privilege, *Marginal Translation*] to become the sons of God." (John 1:12) There were not enough of these to make up God's foreordained number, so the message went to the Gentiles, and throughout the age its power has been drawing from among them a people for his name.

This is only preparatory to the great objective of the Divine plan. "After this," James continues, the Lord will "build again the tabernacle [or house] of David, which is fallen down." (Acts 15:16) God's kingdom promises were first made to the natural descendants of Abraham. Later, they were narrowed down to the tribe of Judah. (Gen. 49:10) After this, they were still further restricted to the family, or house of David.—II Sam. 7:16

Jesus became the heir of this promise. It is for this reason that the Prophet Isaiah associated the 'government' of the Prince of Peace with the "throne of David, . . . to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." (Isa. 9:7) It is at his Second Advent that Jesus reestablishes the throne of David, when

he and his glorified church will be the spiritual rulers in that new world government. It is this which is referred to by James as building again ‘the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down.’

James explains that following this the “residue of men” will seek after the Lord, and “all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.” (Acts 15:17) This will be the work of the Millennial Age. It will be then that the world will be converted—gloriously converted—“for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isa. 11:9) There has been no lag and no failure in the plan of God. James concluded, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” (Acts. 15:18) What confidence this should give us in the promises of God, and what courage to continue on in our own efforts to know and to do his will!

Today the world’s needs are great. Fear fills the hearts of the people. Those who tell them that their fears are unfounded, and offer the people the hope of immediate success, health, and happiness, are sure to get a following. But a harmonious understanding of the Word of God offers no such temporal advantages—not yet. The time will come when blind eyes will be opened, deaf ears unstopped, and when the lame shall “leap as an hart.” (Isa. 35:5,6) But that time is not now. The followers of the Master today have the same privilege as did their brethren in the Early Church, which is to proclaim unpopular Truth and to be looked upon as out of step with the world and the worldly church.

The way of the present Gospel Age is a “narrow” way, and “few there be that find it.” (Matt. 7:14)

Many, even when they ‘find it,’ do not wish to walk therein because it is so ‘narrow,’ so difficult. But rich and full are the compensating joys of the narrow way, among them being the great privilege of telling the world of the kingdom blessings soon to come, when a highway will be opened upon which the world of mankind may return to God, and to health and life everlasting. It is to the proclamation of this message that a little company of people the world over is dedicated, and we rejoice to know that the comforting power of the kingdom Gospel is even now bringing joy to many, enabling them to pray with understanding, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”—Matt. 6:10 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JUNE 3—“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech, there are no words, their voice is not heard; but their melody extendeth through all the earth, and to the end of the world their words.”—Psalm 19:1-4 (*Leeser*) (Z. ’95-121 Hymn 358)

JUNE 10—“Lord, teach us to pray.”—Luke 11:1 (Z. ’95-213 Hymn 241)

JUNE 17—“Who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner’s fire, . . . and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.”—Malachi 3:2,3 (Z. ’96-45 Hymn 200)

JUNE 24—“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.”—Romans 8:17 (Z. ’96-151 Hymn 193)

The Blood of Atonement

“It pleased the Father that in him [Christ] should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

—*Colossians 1:19,20*

BLOOD IS USED IN THE Scriptures as a symbol of life, particularly life poured out as an atonement for sin. The Scriptures say, “The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”—Lev. 17:11

God’s arrangement with typical Israel, through the priesthood and Tabernacle services, called for much shedding of blood. While a degree of blessing accrued to the Israelites from these sacrifices, their main purpose was to point forward to Jesus’ sacrifice and the fact that he would shed his blood to make an atonement for the sins of both the church and the world—for ‘things in earth’ as well as ‘things in heaven’—that is, for mankind as well as for

those who are partakers of the “heavenly calling.”—Heb. 3:1

A similar thought to atonement is expressed by the word propitiation, both meaning to expiate, or make satisfaction. In Romans 3:25 Paul, speaking of Jesus, says, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” In I John 2:2 we read, “He [Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

It was the love of God that made the provision for atonement through the blood of Christ. The need for atonement arose when Adam transgressed the Divine law and brought the penalty of death upon himself and his progeny. Not until satisfaction, or propitiation, had been made for his sin could he, or any of his condemned race, be released from the penalty of death. Atonement for sin provided through the blood of Christ, therefore, leads to life for those who accept this gift of God’s grace.

TYPICAL ATONEMENT

In the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, where the typical work of sacrifice is described, the word atonement appears seventy-three times. In the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, a yearly Atonement Day and its sacrifices are described. Apparently the nation of Israel received a measure of blessing from these yearly services, but they did not provide satisfaction for the sin and its penalty, death, which they inherited from father Adam, so

they remained under Adamic condemnation and continued to die.

Paul explains this matter, “The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” (Heb. 10:1) Only by being made perfect, free from Adamic condemnation, can one escape the penalty of death. The yearly Atonement Day sacrifices offered by Israel’s typical priesthood did not result in perfection to those who sought benefit from them.

“The law made nothing perfect,” Paul writes, “but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.” (Heb. 7:19) This ‘better hope’ is based upon the atoning efficacy of the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is efficacious to assure perfection, and therefore life, because his life, the life that he poured out, as symbolized by his shed blood, was an exact equivalent of the perfect life of Adam—the life that he forfeited when he sinned against his Creator. Paul emphasizes this basic aspect of the atoning work of Christ by the use of the word ransom, saying that the man Christ Jesus gave himself “a ransom for all.”—I Tim. 2:3-6

RECEIVED BY FAITH

God’s love provided atonement for sin through Christ, which in turn, opens the way to life. But the mere fact that Jesus died as the Redeemer and Savior of the world does not in itself give life to Adam and his race for whom the sacrifice was made. Each one of the condemned race who receives life

through this provision must believe therein, and individually accept the gift. John 3:16 makes this clear, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Jesus again said, “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [Greek, judgment]; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24) This is a most comprehensive statement, and can be properly understood only in the light of Jesus’ further explanation. In the next verse he reminds us of the hope of the resurrection—“the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” (The words “and now is” are not in the old manuscripts.)—vs. 25

Then, after explaining that he had been given authority to execute judgment, and that it had been given him to have life in himself, Jesus again speaks of the resurrection, explaining that those who have “done good,” the believers, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, and those who have “done evil,” who have not believed, shall come forth unto a resurrection of judgment. (vss. 28,29, *Revised Standard Version*) As explained in verse twenty-four, the believers do not enter into judgment.

So when Jesus said that believers ‘have everlasting life,’ it is obvious he meant that they have it upon the basis of faith, which means that God no longer looks upon them as sinners under condemnation to death, but as perfect in the righteousness of Christ, and having a right to live. However, from the human standpoint, these seem to die like

everyone else; or, as the thought is expressed in Psalm 82:7, they “die like men.” Actually, however, as is further explained in this prophecy of the church’s part in the plan of God, they “fall [in death] like one of the princes.”

The Hebrew word here translated ‘princes’ literally means head, and is used in the Old Testament to describe captains and generals in armies, or chief persons in any association. Its literal meaning, head, lends itself to the fact that in this particular text the princes referred to are the head of the fallen human race, Adam, and Jesus who will be the head of the regenerated race.

Both these princes died as condemned sinners; the second died sacrificially on behalf of the first prince and his race. He died to provide a way for mankind to escape the penalty for sin, which was death. The prophecy states that the “children of the most High” to whom it applies, while from the human standpoint, ‘die like men,’ actually fall in death ‘like one of the princes.’—vs. 6

They do not fall like prince Adam, that is, because of being sentenced to death. Through their faith acceptance of the atoning merit of Christ’s blood, they have passed from death unto life, and are no longer under condemnation. They die, therefore, as Prince Jesus died, that is, sacrificially. Their life is not taken away from them because of sin. Rather, they lay it down by denying themselves and taking up their cross and following Jesus into death. They “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth” and thereby are led into death, even as he was “brought as a lamb to the slaughter.”—Rev. 14:4; Isa. 53:7

A LIVING SACRIFICE

There is much said in the New Testament to indicate that the followers of Jesus are his followers because they are cosacrificers with him. Paul wrote, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1) It is a 'holy' sacrifice, and therefore 'acceptable' to God. It is holy because faith in the atoning blood of Christ results in perfection, not actual, but reckoned.

Paul speaks of being "crucified" together with Christ. In Romans 6:3-11 he reasons the matter out for us in detail, and shows why we are given the privilege of laying down our lives in acceptable sacrifice to God. First he speaks of it as a baptism, or burial, into Christ's death—a sacrificial death. He says we are "buried with him" by baptism into death; also, that we have been "planted together in the likeness of his death"—dying, that is, like one of the princes.

Paul further explains (vs. 6) that our "old man is crucified with him," that is, with Christ, "That the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; For he that is dead is freed from sin"—the *Marginal Translation* says, "justified from sin." These bodies that are 'freed from sin' are not, therefore, the 'body of sin' that is destroyed, but our own justified bodies that are willingly sacrificed.

What then, is the body of sin that is destroyed? *Strong's Bible Concordance* defines the Greek word translated body as 'body (as a sound whole) used in a very wide application, literal or figurative.' The body of sin mentioned by Paul is a symbolic body—

the sinful aspects which have been blighting humanity ever since Eden. The atoning work of Jesus opens the way for the destruction of this body of sin, and our being crucified with him—our death baptism with him—is a further aspect of the Divine arrangement whereby the evil reign of sin will be overthrown and destroyed.

Paul substantiates this in verse ten. Speaking of the death of Jesus, he says, “He died unto sin once.” In verse eleven he continues, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.” There are two key words in this statement—‘likewise’ and ‘reckon.’ We are planted together in the likeness of Jesus’ death, and Paul tells us that Jesus died unto sin. Jesus was not himself a sinner, and did not die unto sin in his own body. He died unto sin as a sin offering.

Likewise, or in the likeness of his death, we die unto sin. With our imperfect bodies we could offer nothing to the Lord in the way of an acceptable sacrifice. In order to be partners with Jesus in the Divine plan of reconciling a world to God, we are authorized to reckon ourselves to be so doing. We can thus reckon because God reckons us as having passed from death unto life. If we be dead with Christ, our bodies, Paul says, are freed, or justified, from sin’s condemnation. On the authority of God’s Word, we are privileged to reckon ourselves as participating in the “better sacrifices” of this age, and in the great sin-offering work.—Heb. 9:23

RANSOM AND SIN OFFERING

There is a distinct difference of meaning between the words ransom and sin offering. The word

ransom as used in the Bible means ‘a corresponding price.’ Thus Paul explains that the “man Christ Jesus; . . . gave himself a ransom for all.” (I Tim. 2:5,6) None but a perfect man could do this, for it was the perfect man Adam who sinned and brought death condemnation upon himself and his offspring. Since the undefiled Jesus gave himself a ransom, nothing needs to be, nor can be, added thereto.

A sin offering is simply an offering for sin. A sin offering can be anything which the Lord indicates his willingness to accept, and for any purpose which the Lord may design. Thus, in connection with the typical Tabernacle services, bullocks and goats were offered for sins, and the Lord accepted them. By God’s design certain blessings accrued to Israel from these offerings. They did not make the offerer perfect, nor give him life. Only the perfect sin offering, the sin offering that was a corresponding price, as offered by the man Christ Jesus, could do this.

The ransom, a corresponding price, was provided by Jesus, and was the first step taken to give life to Adam and his race. The world must be given a knowledge of this provision, and have an opportunity to accept it. Even after they accept it, they will need sympathetic help and understanding in order to bring their lives into harmony with the righteous principles required of all those who will have the privilege of enjoying everlasting life.

It is in this connection that the church is invited to share in the work of reconciling the world to God, or of bringing the people into at-one-ment with the Creator that they might live. Paul writes,

“that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” Prior to making this statement, he said, “God, who hath reconciled us [the church] to himself by Jesus Christ,” has given unto us the “ministry of reconciliation.” Thus we represent Christ as his ambassadors, to carry to the world the “word of reconciliation.”—II Cor. 5:18-21

This cooperative plan in which the word of reconciliation is entrusted to the footstep followers of Jesus begins during the Gospel Age, and while we are still in the flesh. The condition is that we must share the death baptism with Jesus. If we are being planted together in the likeness of his death, and suffering with him, this suffering, must first of all be on behalf of Christ’s body members; and also for the world of mankind during the next age.

Paul wrote, “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.” (Col. 1:24) This is a very practical matter. All those who eventually become members in the body of Christ were at one time in the world. The Truth which enlightens and draws them to the Lord is not flashed across the sky, but taken to them by those previously enlightened. Because darkness hateth the light, this ministry of the Truth, the ministry of reconciliation, results in suffering.

Bitter, death-dealing persecution does not always result from bearing witness to the Truth. It often did in the beginning of the age. Now the hatred of the light is more refined, often taking the form of ostracism and cold indifference. But faithfulness in the ministry of the Truth will lead to weariness of

the flesh. The responsibilities of the ministry, if faithfully discharged, will mean a measure of mental concern for the interests of the Lord's people. No true saint of God can ever be content to take life easy when there are brethren to be served, or when the Truth can be proclaimed to reach those whom the Lord may be calling to become his brethren.

We have a wonderful example of this in the ministry of Paul. What a great deal of suffering was involved in his faithful ministry—"stripes," imprisonments, stonings, "perils in the sea" and "perils in the city," and even "perils among false brethren." All of this, he said, was for Christ's "body's sake, which is the church."—II Cor. 11:23-28; Col. 1:24

Paul's suffering was not alone for the church. In his masterful argument on the necessity of the resurrection, he again speaks of his suffering, and the suffering of all the body members. Why, he asks, are we thus "baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" (I Cor. 15:29) Here again Paul is referring to our death baptism, and he says that it is on behalf of the dead; that is, the dead world of mankind.

A SYMPATHETIC PRIESTHOOD

Jesus is the great antitypical high priest, and the church is clearly shown in the New Testament to be associated with him in the priesthood. (Heb. 3:1; I Pet. 2:5,9) One of the principal functions of Israel's priesthood was the offering of sacrifice. So the priesthood of this age, beginning with Jesus and continuing with his faithful followers, also offer sacrifices—not animal sacrifices, but themselves. Jesus set the example of faithful sacrifice, even unto death, and we are baptized into death with him.

Based upon the sacrifices offered, the priests of Israel extended blessings to the people. For example, at the close of the typical sacrificial service outlined in Leviticus, chapter nine, "Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them." (vs. 22) The antitypical priesthood, composed of Jesus and his church, will, in the Millennial Age, be the channel of blessing to all mankind. The blessing they will offer the people will be the opportunity to gain everlasting life made available through the ransoming blood of the Redeemer.

What wisdom and love are revealed in this arrangement! The antitypical priesthood are the Gospel Age sons of God, and we read that "it became him, for whom are all things, . . . in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:10) Jesus had never been imperfect. The thought of the text is that through suffering he was trained or perfected as the Captain of our salvation.

This training through suffering made Jesus a sympathetic high priest. Paul wrote, "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." (Heb. 2:18) Again, "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—Heb. 4:15,16

These references describe Jesus' relationship as High Priest to his church, but the same principle will hold true in the next age in the relationship of

the world of mankind to the Divine priesthood, made up of Jesus and his glorified church. The entire priesthood is perfected for that high office through suffering, so that when the due time comes, the world will be dealt with sympathetically, understandingly.

ONLY JESUS' BLOOD

It is Jesus' blood alone that provides atonement for both the church and the world. It is his blood, his life, that constitutes the ransom, the corresponding price. But, as we have seen, those who suffer and die with him during the present age are reckoned as having a share in the great sin-offering work based upon the ransom. The sacrifice and suffering of the church contribute to the future blessing of the world. We are baptized for the dead. Because this offering is a part of the Divine arrangement for destroying the body of sin and releasing sin-cursed humanity from death, it is properly styled a sin offering. Or, as Paul explains, we, like Jesus, are dying "unto [or, for] sin."—Rom. 6:10,11

All the sin canceling merit is in the ransom. The church's share in the sin offering, or this wonderful plan of reconciliation and salvation, is merely in being the channel through which the merit of the ransom sacrifice is made available to the world. The sacrificial work of the church during this age is, as we have seen, designed to prepare us to be the kind of priesthood that will offer the life provided by the ransom under the most favorable circumstances. Thus every painful circumstance faithfully endured will result beneficially to the

world when the life-giving blessings of the ransom are being offered to them.

Through original sin, all mankind became blighted with the sting of death. There was only one person capable of removing the venom of sin, because to do this called for a corresponding price. Jesus gave himself a ransom for all and thus provided that price. But the Divine plan goes further. The merit of the ransom is of no use unless made available. It must be offered to every person, accepted, and used in harmony with the Divine arrangements.

So the entire Gospel Age is utilized in training a priesthood—an understanding, sympathetic priesthood—to carry the healing powers of the ransom to the world. These offer themselves to die with Jesus that they might share in ridding the world of sin and its blighting effects upon humanity. Their sacrifices and sufferings add nothing to the sin-canceling merit of the ransom. It is simply God’s way of making the merit of the ransom available to the dying race.

And what a wonderful way! God could have emblazoned the truth of the ransom across the sky, and said to mankind, Accept this provision, or else continue to die. But in his love he has provided this better way, a way in which members of the fallen race, touched with the feeling of the world’s infirmities and needs, may sympathetically bring the provisions of the ransom to the attention of mankind, and lovingly instruct the people in the ways of life.

Truly, “How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out” in all their glorious beauty!—Rom. 11:33 ■

Fellowship

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

—I John 1:3

THE FULLY CONSECRATED

children of God are privileged to realize the value and sacredness of this scripture. It was the Father who graciously brought us up “Out of the destroying pit, Out of the swampy mire, And set, upon a cliff, my feet, Making firm my steps: Then put he into my mouth a new song.”

(Ps. 40:2,3, *Rotherham Trans-*

lation) Although at one time we were “by nature the children of wrath, even as others, . . . God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, . . . and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”—Eph. 2:3-6

Those who truly belong to Christ have been called into a sacred and greatly privileged fellowship with their Lord and Redeemer. The Scriptures say, “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” (I Cor. 1:9) In verse twenty-six of the same chapter it is recorded, “Ye see your calling, brethren.”

We understand the call to joint-heirship with Jesus, and have responded by our full consecration.

Following our complete surrender to do God's will we receive the Holy Spirit, and are begotten, "not from corruptible, but from incorruptible seed, through the living and enduring Word of God." (I Pet. 1:23, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (James 1:18); having entered into sonship with God, we become "an heir of God through Christ."—Gal. 4:7

IN CHRIST

According to the good pleasure of our Father's will he has very graciously "made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1:6,7) Our fellowship with Jesus is indeed sweet and precious to the extent that we are fully sanctified in him. "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

To maintain this sublime fellowship, it is necessary to cultivate a good fruitage of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. (Gal. 5:22,23) Evidences of our love and devotion must be produced even as expressed by our Master in the parable of the vine. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth [cleanseth] it, that it may bring forth more fruit."—John 15:2

In this parable, we see Jesus as the true vine, and each of his fully consecrated followers as an

individual branch in him. “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. . . . If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”—John 15:5,7,8

Our sacred and blessed fellowship in Christ Jesus is also beautifully illustrated in these words: “As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized [immersed] into one body.” (I Cor. 12:12,13) Jesus is the Head, and the church, his body.—Eph. 1:22,23; 4:15; 5:23; I Cor. 12:27

No figure could teach us more convincingly that the true church is a part of the Christ. Its relationship to our Lord Jesus is very intimate, even as the relationship of the human body to the human head. Just as the various members of the human body serve one another in obedience to the head, so the various members of the true church serve one another in love, and in obedience to their Head, Christ Jesus.

HIS SUFFERINGS

Individually, we are to experience what the Apostle Paul has referred to as “the fellowship of his sufferings.” (Phil. 3:10) “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. 8:17) In view of this wonderful heavenly inheritance set before us, the opportunity to walk in the narrow way of self-denial and

self-sacrifice for the Truth's sake is the grandest privilege ever offered to any creature.

It is still true today that whoever will faithfully witness to the Truth, and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, will soon know something of the sufferings of Christ, and can say truly, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." (Ps. 69:9; Rom. 15:3) Our beloved Master said, after confronting Saul of Tarsus, "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9:16) I will test your desires, he says to us. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."—Matt. 5:12; John 15:18

The justified and sanctified church, following closely in the footsteps of Jesus, has always been a light in the world. Its light has not always had as much influence as desired. Thus it was also with our Lord, who realized that all who were of the spirit of darkness hated him the more because their spirit of darkness was reprov'd by his spirit of light. All the light-bearers who follow in his footsteps must be sharers also of his persecution and suffering.

THE GOSPEL

We also have a blessed and joyful fellowship with other true members of the body of Christ in connection with the Gospel. The Apostle Paul indicated this saying, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your

fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.” (Phil. 1:3-5) *Weymouth* translates the fifth and twenty-seventh verses of this chapter, “I thank my God, I say, for your cooperation in spreading the good news, from the time it first came to you even until now.” “Only let the lives you live be worthy of the good news of the Christ, in order that, whether I come and see you or, being absent, only hear of you, I may know that you are standing fast in one spirit and with one mind, fighting shoulder to shoulder for the faith of the good news.”

Our Father would have us always realize and appreciate that it is his Word that is being unfolded to us. The Apostle Paul stressed this point saying, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God.”—I Thess. 2:13

Those who have been called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light of Truth, and are faithful, rejoice in the knowledge that God’s Word is ‘truth’; that it is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (II Tim. 3:16) It is indeed a “lamp” to our feet, and a “light” to our path; and a means that God is using mightily in the completion of our sanctification.—Ps. 119:105

Our fellowship in the Gospel will of necessity also involve our proclaiming it in one way or another, in harmony with our Lord’s words. Jesus testified concerning himself that “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel” (Luke 4:18), so every true member of his

body has come under the same anointing, and is authorized to preach the Gospel. Indeed, if we are filled with that Holy Spirit, we must preach, being impelled to render that service by a burning zeal, so typical of our Lord and Head—"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."—Ps. 69:9; John 2:17

A DIVINE FAMILY

"Now are we the sons of God" by faith, hoping by God's grace, and our continued faithfulness to him, to become "partakers of the divine nature." (I John 3:2; II Pet. 1:4) Our Father in heaven, the great Divine, self-existing One, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto" (I Tim. 6:16), desires a family of beings like unto his own glorious nature. He is immortal, "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named."—Eph. 1:20,21

Ere long this Divine family, Christ and his glorified church, will be complete beyond the veil, and will shed forth the light of the knowledge of the glory of God for all people. Such is our glorious hope. Could there be a fellowship more precious? Could love, even Divine love, reach to greater heights? Jesus, through the Revelator, exhorts, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne."—Rev. 2:10; 3:21

As prospective members of that glorified Divine family, fully consecrated to God, giving diligence to make this precious calling and election sure, we rejoice to testify that 'truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.'

Additionally, we have a delightful fellowship with other members of the body of Christ, and say with the psalmist, “What is so good, or what so pleasant, as for brethren to dwell together? It is as ointment on the head, that ran down to the beard, even the beard of Aaron; that ran down to the fringe of his clothing. As the dew of Hermon, that comes down on the mountains of Sion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life forever.”—Ps. 133:1-3, *Septuagint Translation*

Here is a beautiful pen picture illustrating the anointing of the Holy Spirit; how it was all poured upon our Head (Christ Jesus) and must run down from him to each member of his body. The members of the church are the ‘brethren’ whose spirit impels them to ‘dwell together in unity.’ All who are one with the ‘head’ must be in sympathy with fellow members of his body, the church.

“The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.” (I John 2:27) This holy anointing began to reach the body on the Day of Pentecost, and has flowed on down through the Gospel Age, even until today, anointing all who are truly baptized into Christ. When all the members shall have come into the body, and when the holy anointing shall have run down, figuratively speaking, ‘to the fringe of his clothing’ anointing every member, then will the completed Christ, Head and body, begin the great kingdom work of blessing mankind. ■

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

—I John 3:1, *New International Version*

The Ministry of Sorrow

SORROWS AND TROUBLES are not always necessary to the perfecting of holiness. Our Heavenly Father and the holy angels are perfect without sorrow and trouble. But we know that God's plan includes the permission of evil. Sorrows, disappointments, and perplexities have served valuable purposes in the ripening of Christian character during this Gospel Age. Also, these made all of God's Creation aware of the consequences of sin—mankind by experience and the angels by observation.

To enter the Lord's family it was necessary that we make a full surrender of our will to God, because on no other terms would the Savior become our Advocate with the Father—our surety—and thus enable us to be received as God's sons by the begetting of the Holy Spirit. But this was only the beginning of our sonship with God. As newborn babes we first needed the milk of the Word, the simpler truths; and then the stronger meat, to nourish and develop us. We need discipline, and training, in order to become qualified for the glorious position to which God has called the church.

We must demonstrate our loyalty to righteousness, truth, and virtue, by resistance of sin, selfishness, and other opposing influences.

As consecrated Christians, we find ourselves surrounded by well-meaning earthly friends who consider our course extreme, and attempt to dissuade us from our covenant of sacrifice. Similarly, the Apostle Peter, before Pentecost, endeavored to dissuade our Lord from his sacrifice, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." (Matt. 16:22) But Jesus rebuked Peter, and continued his sacrifice faithfully unto death.

We find great difficulty also in our own flesh, born in sin and misshapen in iniquity. The New Creature must battle with the old. These battles sometimes bring glorious victory, and sometimes inglorious defeat; but our sorrows, disappointments, heartaches, and difficulties are wisely permitted by our Lord to assist in the death of the old creature—to prepare us for the glorious resurrection change, when we shall have new bodies fully in accord with our new, and perfected, will and mind.

In times of trial and burdens, the Lord draws his people near to himself, because he alone can satisfy, comfort, forgive, and bless. His gracious provision for his children is the mercy seat—the throne of grace. In faith, with hearts bowed down, we approach the Lord in his appointed way—in the name of Jesus—and thus we receive consolation and blessings, and bear a song away. ■

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."

—*Psalms 118:29*

ENCOURAGING GUEST BOOK ENTRIES—from www.dawnbible.com

My grandfather was a member of the Bible Students prior to the break with the JW's. I am so glad to find your site and I hope to learn more about your beliefs. My father and I were JW's when I was young, but after studying the Bible, I left their religion. I was looking for the Truth, and have been going to several churches in order to find it. I will read your literature with a humble heart and an open mind praying for the Holy Spirit from God to guide my path. Love in Christ—PA

I loved your television production, *Evolution vs. Creation*. Finally, I truly feel that your film presents facts that simply prove the Truth about God, and that all of his Creation was created by him and only him.—NC

Hi, this website has been very useful in helping me witness to my friends. If I'm having trouble proving a point I use this site to get the information I need (booklets, etc.).—MI

Thanks for really informing me to the Truth of God's Word and the Truth about hell. I will make it my mission to help those who don't have an adequate understanding of God's Word, and to help the less fortunate, as well as to subscribe and read *The Dawn*, my new favorite magazine, on the state of the world and it's clearer picture and insight into God's Word. God bless.—FL

I have read a few of your booklets, and I find them interesting and educational. Thank you for printing such useful information.—CA

The website is very useful, especially for people like us who are in far away places. Regards.—INDIA

Peace! I love very much your books, and I'd like to read more.—MOLDOVA

I enjoy reading the articles you have posted. I enjoy the outline for *International Bible Study Lessons*. I am a one-year graduate of a seminary out of NC, and the information you offer is very informative. Thank you and I hope you keep the good works you're doing ongoing. God bless everyone involved.—VA

I have found your booklet section very informative, and have downloaded several for my own use to read at my leisure. Thank you.—UK

Many of us are waiting patiently for Christ's

Kingdom—waiting for that wonderful day when Jesus sits upon his throne with all of the nations assembled before him. What a truly wonderful day it will be when he uses his great power to begin pouring out the Heavenly Father's goodwill and blessings onto a hitherto unbelieving mankind. I am thankful to the Dawn Bible Students for promoting this glorious message of wonderful hope for all people.—IL

I listen to your broadcasting regularly, and I love it very much. God bless you abundantly.—ERITREA

I really love the Dawn *Bible Answers* television show. It has answered a lot of questions for me. Thank you!—TX

A blessed haven to us here.—FIJI ISLANDS

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

| J. Freer | | B. Keith | |
|--------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| Spokane, WA | June 28 | Spokane, WA | June 28 |
| Columbia Falls, MT | 29 | Columbia Falls, MT | 29 |
| Havre, MT | 30 | Havre, MT | 30 |

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

| A. Allers | | R. Goodman | |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Portland, OR | June 18,19,20 | Louisville, AL | June 6 |
| E. Blicharz | | R. Gorecki | |
| St. Petersburg, FL | June 6 | Portland, OR | June 18,19,20 |
| K. Fernets | | E. Kuenzli | |
| Portland, OR | June 18,19,20 | Atlanta, GA | June 20 |

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Dorathea Stewart, Cincinnati, OH—March 23.
Age, 91

Sister Mary Harold, Rochester, NY—April 3. Age, 74
Brother Robert Mottie, Greenfield, OH—May 4. Age, 77
Sister Ginger Brann, Seattle, WA—May 4. Age, 53

MOVING?



If you are moving, please let us know six weeks before you move so that we can change the address on your Dawn subscription.

CONVENTIONS

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

WATERBURY CONVENTION, June 5,6—Saturday held in Morris, CT. Sunday at the Litchfield Firehouse in Litchfield, CT. Contact Mrs. Anthony Tsimonis, Waterbury Bible Students, P. O. Box 1494, Waterbury, CT 06721.

PORTLAND CONVENTION, June 18,19,20—Ramada Inn, 6221 NE 82nd Avenue. Contact Jerry Black, 13012 SE Oatfield Road, Milwaukie, OR 97222. Phone: (503) 659-6930

ALLENTOWN CONVENTION, June 19,20—East Stroudsburg University, Beers Lecture Hall, East Stroudsburg, PA. Contact Sylvia Yanolko, 820 St. Paul Street, Whitehall, PA 18052.

DETROIT MONTH-END CONVENTION, June 20—Redford YWCA, Grand River at Beech Daly, Redford, MI. Contact Norm Zendler. Phone: (248) 399-8843

PRINCE ALBERT/SASKATOON CONVENTION, July 2,3,4—Siwak Farm. Contact Benjamin Siwak, RR#1, Prince Albert, SK. Phone: (306) 763-3170

OKANAGAN CONVENTION, July 9,10,11—Sandman Inn, 4201 - 32nd Street, Vernon, BC. Phone: (250) 542-4325. Contact Bernice Blencowe. Phone: (250) 545-0780

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 17-22—Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA. Contact Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

WETASKIWIN CONVENTION, August 6,7,8—Way-side Inn. Phone: (877) 358-6177. Mention Bible Students for special rate. Contact Janice Neumeier, Box 428, Fox Creek, AB, Canada T0H 1P0. Phone: (780) 622-3809

BIBLE STUDENTS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 8-13—Polanica Zdroj, Poland. Contact Tom Machacek, 7222 E. 106th Avenue, Crown Point, IN 46307. Phone: (219) 662-8107

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 4,5—Fa-Ho-Lo Camp & Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Unit 1, Grass Lake, MI. Contact Mrs. Ray Lumley, 2531 Ashton Road, Jackson, MI 49203. Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 4,5—Wellesley Inn, Two Bridges Road & Exit 52, Route 80, Fairfield, NJ. Contact Ann Truth Post, 24 Lexington Road, New City, NY 10956. Phone: (845) 634-5876

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 4,5,6—Bastyr University, 14500 Juanita Drive NE, Bothell, WA. Contact Laurie Flinn, P. O. Box 67, Pacific, WA 98047. Phone: (253) 939-9838

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 10,11,12—Holiday Inn Research Park, 5903 University Drive. Contact Philip Mosley, 1006 Mill Race Circle, Guntersville, AL 35976. Phone: (256) 582-3640

