

The Dawn

A Herald of Christ's Presence

AUGUST 2021





People of the Bible

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

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Quietness and Confidence

“Thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.”
—Isaiah 30:15

THE WORLD IN WHICH WE

live today is full of noise. It is not necessarily the audible noise of that which surrounds us. Rather, the noise we are referring to is that of discontent, clamor, political rhetoric, social upheaval, moral degradation, and general divisive-

ness among the people. There is little quietness presently in the affairs of mankind.

Likewise, confidence is also lacking in today's world. People are rapidly losing faith in their political, religious and economic leaders. As a result, many are fearful and perplexed, believing that the world's present condition is beyond hope. They cry peace, and there is no peace. They long for safety and security, but there only seems to be more trouble.
—Ezek. 13:10; I Thess. 5:3

In the pages of this magazine, we often speak of the fact that the troubles of the present world, though many and foreboding, are allowed by God

in preparation for the total dissolution of Satan's rule of sin and death over mankind. The Bible promises that this present order will soon pass away, and the kingdom of God, under the righteous rule of Christ, will bring about the "restitution," or restoration, of mankind back to the condition of perfection our first parents enjoyed in Eden prior to their falling into sin.—Acts 3:20,21; I Cor. 15:21-26; II Pet. 3:12,13; Rev. 21:3-5

However, despite the many promises of God pertaining to the future, just a few of which are cited above, the Christian today may encounter much difficulty in maintaining spiritual "quietness" and "confidence." The negative impacts of all the noise and clamor we are made aware of each day by events in the world, or even in our own experiences, can easily cause us to lose the peace of God, which is designed especially for our benefit.

Indeed, one of the secrets of a happy Christian life is to have confidence and trust in God, a faith in him that is so unfailing and all-comprehensive that no matter what experiences may come, we will be able from the heart to say with the Prophet Job, "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10) It is not a case, however, of blindly trusting the Lord in the sense of not knowing the ultimate purpose of the experiences which he permits to come into our lives. To the Christian he has revealed that purpose through the Scriptures, so that the image of the Master may be developed in us in preparation for the blessed privilege of living and reigning with him during the thousand years of his kingdom, and of being associated with him in divine

glory throughout the endless ages of eternity.—
Rev. 3:21; 20:6

However, even though we rejoice in this knowledge of the divine purpose which is being worked out in our lives and are assured beyond doubt that to this end all things are working together for our good, we still are not walking by sight. Faith and trust are essential, because with our limited comprehension and our short-sighted viewpoints, it is impossible to understand just how every experience, whether of joy or of sorrow, may be best at the time. If we were masters of our own destinies so far as our day by day walk in life is concerned, we would probably change a lot of things, but in so doing we would be quite liable to create circumstances and conditions which would be detrimental to ourselves as devoted followers of Christ Jesus.

How essential it is to develop complete confidence in the Heavenly Father's care and to learn that his will is best. Although our way is often difficult, the end will be glorious, because in every experience his wisdom is choosing that which will be the very best for us. Happy are we, then, if by learning this, we can always leave the choice with him. If we can do this, we will not think "strange" the fiery trials which our loving Heavenly Father permits. (I Pet. 4:12) Rather, we will accept them in quietness and confidence, knowing that he is too wise to err and too loving to be unkind.

LESSONS FROM THE PAST

We can learn many helpful lessons pertaining to God's care over his people by noting the manner in which he dealt with his servants of old. One of these

is brought to our attention in Exodus 14:14, when Moses encouraged the Israelites with the words, “The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” In this text the fact that God is the strength of his people is emphasized, and that our part is largely that of implicitly trusting in him and letting him fight for us. This does not mean that we should assume a listless, indifferent attitude toward the Lord, his service, and the good fight of faith in which we are engaged. While he fights for us, the Lord has given us a part to perform. In doing our part faithfully, however, it should be with a peace of heart and mind, and a tranquility of soul born of the assurance that victory is not based upon what we can do, but what he has promised to do, and will do, if we but let him fight for us.

When Moses spoke the foregoing words to the Israelites, they were in a very precarious situation from the standpoint of human ability. In their march from Egypt they had reached the Red Sea. The way before them was blocked, or so it seemed. The Egyptian army had closed in on them from the rear. Losing faith in the ability of their God to care for them, they became “sore afraid.” They chided Moses for leading them out of Egypt. Apparently, even before they left the land of bondage, many of them had argued with Moses, claiming that it would be an ill-fated effort. Seeing Pharaoh’s armies, they assumed the well-recognized attitude that so many have done since, “I told you so.”—Exod. 14:10-12

However, Moses was not disturbed. He said to the people, “Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.” (vs. 13) The expression “stand still” simply meant that they were to quietly rest in the Lord.

Their faith was weak. They had become fearful, nervous, and agitated, and in that condition could not properly cooperate with the leading of the Lord. Centuries later, Israel again was failing to place their confidence in God, and as a result they were failing to enjoy the richness of his blessings. The Prophet Isaiah spoke to them the words of our opening text, in which he stated that their “strength” would be found in “quietness and confidence” in God.

It was just as true in Isaiah’s time as it was when Moses spoke to the Israelites that if they were to see the salvation of God it was necessary for them to “stand still,” to be at peace, and to rest quietly in him and in his ability to deliver and bless. The same is true with the Lord’s people today. As individuals and as a people we are constantly being faced with experiences which try our faith, and which may tempt us to respond with loud clamor or complaint. If in these we are to be victorious, however, we must learn to quietly put our full confidence in the Lord. Never should we complain to the Heavenly Father, nor question his wisdom. Likewise, we should not take matters into our own hands; such a course would likely be disastrous. Rather, we should always wait on the Lord for a clear indication of his will. Those who do so will “renew their strength” and be better prepared for whatever future experiences God may choose for them.—Isa. 40:31

“GO FORWARD”

The Lord instructed Moses to tell the Israelites at the Red Sea that they should “go forward.” (Exod. 14:15) From the human standpoint it seemed utterly impossible to obey this command, yet this was God’s

will. When they quietly obeyed, the sea opened up before them and they crossed in safety—and apparently in confidence also. In this instance, as always, the deliverance of the Lord’s people depended upon their trusting God and obeying his instructions. Thus, they were enabled to quietly and confidently “go forward” in order to “see the salvation of the LORD.”

The same is true in the life of the Christian. We must confidently trust God regardless of the apparently insurmountable difficulties with which we may at times be confronted, and no matter how fiercely the storms of life may be raging around us. At the same time, the life of the Christian is not one of listlessness, nor of inactivity. There is work to be done. There are loads to lift, seas to be crossed, and burdens to bear. True faith will find expression in our obedience in going forward in the Christian way as the Lord directs, and in putting our hands energetically to the tasks which he assigns.

We should not expect that the Lord will always clear the way of all difficulties before we enter it, for he does not always overrule in this manner. There are certain things which we know from God’s Word that he wants us to do. We are to be light-bearers, in the world. He wants us to love our enemies and to do good to those who despitefully use us and persecute us. He wants us to study his Word that we may show ourselves approved unto him. He wants us to assemble with his people when it is at all possible. (Matt. 5:14,44; II Tim. 2:15; Heb. 10:25) The Lord may permit many obstacles to stand in the way of our doing these things, removing them only when, by confidently obeying him, we “go forward” to do his will.

GRACE SUFFICIENT

Often, we may wish to change the circumstances of our lives, thinking that by doing so we could serve God so much better. Even the Apostle Paul had thoughts along this line, but he learned that the Lord's way for him was best. At the time of his conversion he was blinded by the light which shone "above the brightness of the sun." (Acts 9:3; 26:13) Later, when visited by Ananias, his sight was partially restored, but he apparently did not regain his normal vision, and was afflicted with this handicap for the remainder of his life. Paul refers to this as a "thorn in the flesh."—II Cor. 12:7

It was natural for Paul to reason that he could serve the Lord more effectively if he had better eyesight, so he made it a matter of special prayer. He prayed to God three times to have this thorn in the flesh removed, but the answer to the apostle was, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul's heart responded to this answer, and he wrote, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."—vss. 8,9

In reasoning this matter out, Paul concluded that if he did not have this affliction, he might be "exalted above measure," and therefore be inclined to trust in his own strength and abilities rather than in the Lord's. Herein is the reason for many of the experiences and circumstances which the Heavenly Father permits to come into our lives. He wants us always to realize that our every victory of faith is really his victory, and that our every success and accomplishment should be accredited to him. It is often easy to forget that it is God who is fighting

our battles for us and clearing the paths through the “Red Seas” which block our progress in the narrow way. In his wisdom and mercy, then, he allows conditions to be such that we are continually reminded of our need of him.

The “thorn in the flesh” which buffets us may be one or more of a number of things which our faulty judgment might think should be changed. For example, we may be the only one in our family that is rejoicing in the light of God’s Word and running in the narrow way toward the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Matt. 7:14; Phil. 3:14) We may think, “If I could only enjoy the fellowship of someone right in my own home, how wonderful that would be, and how much better progress I could make in developing the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit!”

We may make this a matter of prayer, perhaps even more than the three times that Paul prayed for better eyesight, only to get the same answer, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” The Lord may be saying to us: “I want you to appreciate my fellowship more, and to lean more confidently upon me. If you can learn to do this, I will be to you as the choicest of friends, and as one that keepeth closer than a brother or a mother; or any other human association you could possibly possess. I will be a friend who will overlook your shortcomings and give you strength in your weakness. I will be an ever-present help in your every trial and will share your every joy. So rest quietly in me, and I will give you peace and will be your shield and exceeding great reward.”—Gen. 15:1

We may not only be without the fellowship of others, but some may even oppose us in our service

to the Lord. From the natural standpoint, this could lead to turmoil of heart, and to anxiety and sorrow. How our flesh would like to change a situation of this kind. Let us remember, though, that this is but another circumstance in which the Lord will fight for us, and that we can hold our peace. We will realize that in this, as in every other circumstance of life, strength will be found in quietness and in confidence—not confidence in our own ability to respond to the opposing gales, but confidence that God is able to make his grace abound toward us at all times and in all things.—II Cor. 9:8

Seldom does a footstep follower of Christ enjoy the peace which results from tranquility of circumstances and surroundings. Usually, various storms of life are raging, and the tempests which come sweeping down over the soul may stem from one or more of many causes. The tempest of ill health may disturb our peace of heart. In such an event the fleshly mind may be quick to think that the Lord has forgotten us. The human mind is ever ready to fill the role as “Job’s comforter,” trying to persuade us that God has turned his back upon us. However, faithful Job said to his accusers concerning God, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”—Job 13:15

Our trust in God under such circumstances is not a blind one. We know that we have entered into a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice. (Ps. 50:5) Therefore, our outward man must perish before we can enter into and enjoy our house from heaven. Faith in God and in this part of his will and plan, therefore, should give us peace. Indeed, whether it be the trial of sickness, or one which is bearing down upon us in some other way, we should accept it as evidence

of God's love. Such an attitude will result from depending on his promise to supply all our needs, and rejoicing in his blessed assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

SECURE IN CHRIST

As followers of the Master, New Creatures in Christ Jesus, we should never lose sight of the fact that the Heavenly Father's care, his protection, his strength that is made perfect in our weakness, and the final victory which he has promised to give us through Christ, are all of a spiritual character. It is as New Creatures that he keeps us from falling. It is the renewed mind that dwells in the secret place of his love. He is a rock and fortress to the inner man which, because of the bounties of his grace, is being renewed day by day.—II Cor. 5:17; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 3:16; II Cor. 4:16

This being true, we should not become anxious as to how our flesh may fare, or toward the natural circumstances of our lives. All that should really concern us is that the Heavenly Father is able to hold us in the hollow of his hand as his spiritual children regardless of the opposing forces with which we may be surrounded—and in this we can always rejoice. God can open the "Red Sea" before us that we may "go forward" safely in the doing of his will. With his love and the love of his Son, Christ Jesus, overshadowing us, nothing can pluck us out of his hand. Paul was persuaded of this "in quietness and in confidence." We can be also, and in this assurance we can have the "peace of God" ruling in our hearts.—Col. 3:15

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” asks Paul in Romans 8:35. “Shall tribulation?” No, divine wisdom has decreed that we need tribulation to prove and develop us. “Or distress?” No also. We do not expect to be at ease while walking in the narrow way. “Or persecution?” Again the answer is no, for we will remember the Master’s words telling of the blessedness of those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, and the promise that theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. 5:10

“Or famine?” Paul learned to suffer need, and therein to be content, and so should we. “Or nakedness?” There may be times when we could wish for better clothes to wear but will remember that to be adorned with a meek and quiet spirit is far better. We might possess the richest of material things and yet not enjoy peace and quietness of heart and soul.—I Pet. 3:3,4

“Or peril?” No, for regardless of how perilous the storms of life may be, we will rest quietly in the Lord. As the little bird that builds its nest on the slender branch overhanging a chasm does not fear, so we will remember that underneath us as followers of Christ Jesus are the everlasting arms of divine care which will ever hold us in the love of God.

“Or sword?” We know that the enemies of the New Creature are fighting desperately to overthrow us, to break down our courage and confidence, to take us away from our Heavenly Father’s love, but we will not fear. Instead, with the protection of the “armor of light” on the right hand and on the left, we will “go forward” in the strife, following the commands of the Captain of our salvation. Doing this, no matter how fiercely the battle may rage

about us, we will remain at peace, knowing that victory is assured.—Rom. 8:37; 13:12

“KILLED ALL THE DAY LONG”

Quoting from Psalm 44:22, Paul continues, “For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” (Rom. 8:36) How much in keeping this is with our covenant of sacrifice. Our Master, in whose footsteps we are walking, was also “led as a lamb to the slaughter,” and how honored we are to share this experience with him. (Isa. 53:7) This being true, the sufferings which result from following in the Master’s footsteps should but increase our faith and confidence, and our peace should abound as our sufferings increase. As Paul expresses it, “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”—Rom. 8:37

“For I am persuaded,” the apostle continues in verse 38. He was not persuaded that the Lord would protect him from trial, nor prevent his enemies from attacking him. On the contrary, he expected tribulation. He knew that he must endure difficult trials as a follower of Christ. He knew that Satan would buffet him, and that he would be at enmity with the world. He knew that he would need to struggle constantly to keep his own fallen flesh in “subjection.” (I Cor. 9:27) However, he was persuaded that in all these things the Lord would be to him an ever-present source of strength, and in this assurance he enjoyed the “peace of God, which passeth all understanding.”—Phil. 4:7

In Romans 8:38 Paul identifies many of the things which from the human standpoint might

seem to pluck us out of the loving hand of God, such, for example, as "death." Death is the world's greatest enemy, one which disturbs the peace of every family. We are assured of victory over death, however, and certainly it cannot separate us from the love of God. It is not that we are spared from death, for in fact our covenant with the Lord calls for our death. We are dying with Christ sacrificially. Indeed, "dying, and, behold, we live." (II Cor. 6:9) We have been raised up to walk in newness of life in Christ, and from this vantage point of divine love we see that no evil can befall us as New Creatures.

"Nor life," Paul says. One of the greatest dangers to the New Creature is an abundance of material good things, such as health, prosperity and friends. To the natural man these constitute the joys of "life," as the apostle puts it. Let us remember, however, that as children of God our life does not consist of the abundance of the things which we possess. Remembering this, we must keep close to the Lord, looking to him for strength lest the allurements of ease and plenty pluck us out of his hand, and we fall from our steadfastness.

"Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers." These are the powers and "rulers of the darkness of this world," under the leadership of Satan, the god of this world. The evil influences and selfish spirit of this world are among our most formidable enemies. It is against these that we "wrestle." Yet we need not fear, for the Lord fights for us in that he has provided an armor which, if we put it on and keep it on, the "wiles of the devil" will not be able to harm us.—Eph. 6:11,12

“Nor things present, nor things to come.” The Lord, through Moses, promised his people of old that as their days, so should their strength be. (Deut. 33:25) We know that God is fighting for us today, and that he is not permitting any of our enemies to overwhelm us. We should also trust him for the future, for the apostle assures us that just as things “present” cannot separate us from the love of God, neither will “things to come” be permitted to do so. What a promise this is, and how sweet is the peace which results when in confidence we lay hold upon it!

“Nor height, nor depth,” the apostle adds—that is, neither exaltation nor humiliation. Either of these extremes might easily separate us from divine love. Exaltation, either in the Lord’s service, in business, or among our friends could be dangerous to the New Creature, but not if we humbly remember who we are, and that our standing before God is only by his grace. His protection against this danger might well be in permitting us, for a time, to experience the “depth,” and to be humbled through reverses of one sort or another. In this, too, however, we must remember that regardless of our experiences in life, they are by his permission, and nothing which is good for us as New Creatures will he withhold.

“Nor any other creature.” Paul gives us a very complete cross section of Christian experience. However, in case he overlooked one or more of the influences, or “creatures,” which war against our new minds in an effort to separate us from the Lord and to destroy our peace in him, he makes this blanket statement to assure us that nothing whatever is too

small or too great for God to notice as he spreads over us the protection of his mighty power. Certainly, then, we can be assured, as the apostle states, that nothing will be able to “separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Being assured of this, we can have peace “in quietness and in confidence.”

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31) Is God for his devoted spiritual children? He most certainly is! As Paul says in another place, “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (I Cor. 15:57) He is fighting for us, and with us, that we can have the peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, and that keeps our hearts and minds centered upon him and his will.—Phil. 4:7

The peace of God that we desire to have is the same peace which he possesses. It is the peace that results from his knowledge that nothing can happen in his whole vast universe except as he wills or permits it. He is neither anxious about the present nor fearful of the future. He knows that no portion of his plans and purposes will ever fail. Thus, our God is continually at peace. It is this same peace that we can have, for as members of his family he has assured us that all the glorious attributes of his character are enlisted for our eternal protection and care.

With this blessed assurance we can “go forward” in our march toward the heavenly Canaan with absolute confidence that if in each step of the way we seek fully to obey him, no seas of trouble can drown us, nor will God permit any of the storms of

life to overwhelm us. He has promised to guide us, to hold us in the palm of his hand, to keep us from falling, to fight for us in life's battles, and to give us strength for every experience.

What more can we ask? It remains only for us to wait on him "in quietness and in confidence," knowing that whatever our need may be he will bring it to pass in accordance with his will. All we must do is to "stand still," in the sense of not being fearful and agitated no matter what the circumstances may be, and when he gives the command to "go forward," obey knowing that he will lead the way and give victory to all who put their trust in him. ■



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

AUGUST 5—"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."—Romans 8:28 (Z. '00-22 Hymn 12)

AUGUST 12—"Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me. ... Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer."—Psalm 19:12-14 (Z. '98-22 Hymn 256)

AUGUST 19—"Abstain from every form of evil."—I Thessalonians 5:22 (*Revised Standard Version*) (Z. '03-26 Hymn 130)

AUGUST 26—"Love ... is kind."—I Corinthians 13:4 (Z '03-153 Hymn 267)

The Message of Salvation

Key Verse:
*“Whosoever shall
call upon the name
of the Lord shall
be saved.”*
—Romans 10:13

Selected Scripture:
Romans 10:5-17

LORD.” (Lev. 18:2,5) This was God’s message of salvation to Israel. However, in all the time since Moses delivered these words, none had succeeded in meriting life under these statutes. Jehovah’s Law was perfect, and it was impossible for imperfect man to live up to its requirements.

Paul’s message of salvation in today’s Key Verse meant a departure from the requirements of the Law of Moses to a reliance upon the meritorious value of Christ’s death. This new way to salvation was not hidden from those under the Law in Paul’s day, for he quotes from Deuteronomy 30:11-14 in today’s Selected Scripture passage. Paul made this same point to the Jews in Galatians 3:23-26, saying, “Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”

AFTER LEADING ISRAEL

out of Egyptian bondage, Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God ... Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the

In Romans 10:1-4 Paul sets the stage for today's lesson: "My brothers, from the bottom of my heart I long and pray to God that Israel may be saved! I know from experience what a passion for God they have, but alas, it is not a passion based on knowledge. They do not know God's righteousness, and all the time they are going about trying to prove their own righteousness they have the wrong attitude to receive his. For Christ means the end of the struggle for righteousness-by-the-Law for everyone who believes in him."—*J. B. Phillips New Testament*

Paul's message of salvation proclaimed that Christ was the end of the Mosaic Law for everyone that believes on him. Jesus' death settled the claims of the Law upon all Israelites who accept the value of his ransom, represented in his shed blood. A path to life was now achievable by accepting the redemption provided through Christ's sacrifice for our sins. This was the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which, according to God's own purpose and grace was given before the world began. Now, it was made manifest by the appearance of our Savior Jesus Christ, who "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."—II Tim. 1:7-10

This proclamation that faith in Christ is the condition of release from condemnation before God was not limited to natural Israelites. Their own prophets had declared this message included the opportunity for the salvation of all mankind. Isaiah had prophesied the principle of today's Key Verse, saying, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken." (Isa. 28:16, *New Living Translation*) The Prophet Joel gave a similar message in Joel 2:32: "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved." (*New International Version*) Let us be constant in proclaiming this message of salvation which is universally offered to everyone who will hear and obey.—Rom. 1:16 ■

By Faith

Key Verse: “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*”

—**Hebrews 11:1**

Selected Scripture:

Hebrews 11:1-16

IN OUR LAST LESSON WE

the message of salvation preached by the Apostle Paul and prophesied by the writers of the Old Testament. That message was the Gospel of Christ. Today we consider how redemption through the value of Christ's death is accomplished by faith.

In our Key Verse, the Apostle Paul tells us that faith is the substance, or basis, of our hope. There are two essential aspects of this faith. First, faith must be a matter based on an understanding of the truths contained in the Word of God, which abides forever. (I Pet. 1:23) For example, we read in the first chapter of the Bible a description of the creation of all things. Although no human was there to witness these things, through observation of the world around us, we see in the whole realm of nature the evidence of an intelligent Creator. Nature testifies that there is an intelligent, wise, and powerful God who formed the universe. The evidence is so palpable and irresistible that the Scriptures declare the man a fool who says there is no God.—Ps. 14:1

The second aspect of faith deals with its effect upon our heart, thoughts and actions. In last week's lesson we learned it is necessary for all to call upon the name of the Lord to receive salvation. (Rom. 10:13) It is also necessary that we profess belief through our heart and our words: “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your

faith and are saved.” (Rom. 10:10, *New International Version*) If the heart is not right toward God, human intellect is easily biased toward its own preferences. Therefore, without a proper condition of heart, our mind gropes in darkness concerning those things which pertain to eternal life and godliness. “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”—Rom. 8:7

The Bible states that “without faith it is impossible to please God.” (Heb. 11:6) Further, we are taught that “faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (James 2:17, *English Standard Version*) If faith without works is of no advantage, the inference is plain that without works it is equally impossible to please God. It is essential, therefore, that we not only have faith, but also produce works which are the outgrowth of proper faith. Being both a matter of mind and of heart, true faith brings about a conviction of things unseen, based on the foundation “substance” of the Scriptures.

Faith is described by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 13 while addressing the relationship between faith, hope and love. He states: “So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (I Cor. 13:13, *ESV*) Our faith today includes the yet unrealized hope which we have before us. Thus, both faith and hope are required at the present time. However, when this age ends and the promised kingdom is established, our hope will be realized, and faith will be turned to full knowledge. Love, however, will abide forever. Jesus attested to this when telling the scribes that the greatest commandment is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength,” and “love your neighbor as yourself.” The scribe correctly replied by saying that love was more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. Jesus then confirmed the scribe’s understanding of faith saying, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.”—Mark 12:28-34, *ESV* ■

The Profession of Our Faith

Key Verse: “*Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised).*”
—**Hebrews 10:23**

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 10:22-36

OUR LIFE AS A CHRISTIAN

is based on faith in the shed blood of Jesus as the ransom for father Adam. His is the only name by which we might be delivered from the curse of death. (Rom. 10:13) As noted in our previous lesson, the faith spoken of by Paul in Hebrews 11:1 is a matter of both the mind and the heart. Today’s lesson teaches the

necessity of keeping this faith active in our daily lives.

It is by God’s grace that we have been saved through faith. (Eph. 2:8) Such faith, however, does not imply merely a passive response. We recall that Jesus, after miraculously feeding 5,000 in the wilderness with only five loaves and two fishes, asked his disciples who the people thought that he was. He then asked the disciples directly who they believed that he was. It was Peter who immediately spoke up, answering, “God’s Messiah.” (Luke 9:10-20, *New International Version*) Jesus told his disciples not to say anything about this because he needed to suffer, die, and be resurrected on the third day. Then he laid out the requirements of an active faith in following him: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”—vs. 23, *NIV*

Faith requires that we carry our symbolic cross of sacrifice and service daily, not for a fixed time, but even until our death. God has promised a twofold reward for those who are successful in this life of faith. To those who faithfully lay down their lives daily in sacrifice, even unto death, is the promise of immortality. (Rom. 2:7; II Tim. 1:10) In addition, by following the example of divine love toward the human family, there will be the additional reward of sharing with Christ in blessing all the families of the earth in his coming kingdom.—Gal. 3:7,8; Rev. 20:6

With this tremendous opportunity before our mental vision, the Scriptures exhort us to stand firm in our calling, remembering that God is faithful toward us in that he cannot lie concerning his promises. (I Cor. 1:26-31; Tit. 1:1-3; Heb. 6:17-19) Indeed, temptations will surely come to those who have professed their faith in Christ, to those who have made a vow of sacrifice to the Lord, and the Adversary will look to take advantage of these to dishearten us.—I Pet. 5:7-9

The profession of our faith also requires that we let our light shine in a dark world. (Matt. 5:14-16) Jesus spoke of this light and the danger of not letting it shine, saying, “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”—Matt. 6:22-24

Let us keep our profession of faith strong, as Paul exhorts in the concluding verses of our lesson: “Don’t throw away your trust now—it carries with it a rich reward in the world to come. Patient endurance is what you need if, after doing God’s will, you are to receive what he has promised.”—Heb. 10:35,36, *J. B. Phillips New Testament* ■

God is Love

Key Verse: “*We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*”
—*I John 4:16*

Selected Scripture:
I John 4:8-17

THE BIBLE STATEMENT that “God is love” and its further teaching that he is wise, just and mighty is most generally accepted by Christian people. Our understanding of the great Creator of the universe should be that he is absolutely perfect in each of these respects. However, laying aside the Bible and its declarations as to God and his plans, what visible proofs have we of this character of love which

the Bible ascribes to him?

Creation everywhere speaks of God’s divine power and wisdom. We look at distant worlds and note the harmony and beauty of the entire arrangement. (Ps. 19:1,2) The mountains and oceans repeat the story of God’s wisdom and power. From the tiny insect’s sense and skill, to man, even in his imperfect condition, we see evidence that God’s power and wisdom have perfectly adapted each creature to its habitat.

Regarding God’s attribute of justice, we have the illustration found in mankind itself. We recognize that we are sinners and see the justice of his law which declares the wages of sin to be death. (Rom. 6:23) We understand the legitimacy of our penalty, that the law which condemns us is holy, just and good. The fault is with us, and not with God, for he is “just and right.”

(Deut. 32:4) God's justice is so perfect and unalterable, that even he could not violate his own just law. To clear the guilty, he must make provision for a ransom. (I Cor. 15:20,21) Had not the justice of the Almighty been equaled by his wisdom and power in making such an arrangement, mankind would still be lost. However, a Redeemer was indeed provided, who gave himself a ransom for all.—I Tim. 2:5,6

Where in these arrangements are the proofs of God's love? Some might say that the rain, sunshine, warmth and cooling breeze, along with life, health and strength, are proofs of the love of God to men. Truly, these are wonderful blessings. However, God sends his rain upon the just as well as the unjust, and causes the sun to shine on both the evil and the good. (Matt. 5:45) Life, health, and strength alone are insufficient as proofs of God's love, for the healthiest and most prosperous are often the wicked, of whom it is declared: "God is angry with the wicked."—Ps. 7:11

We thank God that there is one paramount proof of God's love, and it is so grand as to be overwhelmingly convincing to those who have an ear to hear. That proof is Jesus. The fact that God sent his only begotten Son to be man's Redeemer is proof of his love beyond all question. (John 3:16) Here we have the conviction that was in the Apostle's mind when he wrote, "God is love," for he further declares: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation [Greek: satisfaction] for our sins."—I John 4:10

Only those who understand and accept the ransom as the expression of divine love can see this proof. Such confidence in God's love and in his daily care cannot be attained by others. It is by faith alone that we can accept the proof of God's love, when others may see just the opposite. Faith allows us to understand that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Rom. 8:28 ■

Our Heavenly Home

Key Verse: “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

—II Corinthians 5:1

Selected Scripture:
II Corinthians 5:1-10

(II Cor. 5:17) The Apostle Paul describes the process of dissolving our human bodies with these words: “Dear brothers, you have no obligations whatever to your old sinful nature to do what it begs you to do. For if you keep on following it you are lost and will perish, but if through the power of the Holy Spirit you crush it and its evil deeds, you shall live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”—Rom. 8:12-14, *The Living Bible*

While the prospect of inheriting an eternal house in the heavens is our greatest desire, our Selected Scripture passage makes it clear that we “groan” in our current condition for a purpose. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” (II Cor. 5:10, *New*

THE SENTIMENT OF today’s Key Verse is a blessed and comforting assurance to partakers of the heavenly calling. Such consecrated saints, in fulfilling their covenant of self-sacrifice realize daily that their “earthly house,” or “earthen vessel,” is dissolving. (II Cor. 4:7) To all who possess this assurance, the human body is regarded as a temporary dwelling place for the new mind, the spirit-begotten “new creature.”

American Standard Bible) The Apostle Paul implores those who hear God's calling: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1) The Apostle James also makes it clear that the testings which make us groan in our present "earthly house" are required to perfect the character needed to enter our future heavenly home. He states: "When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character." (James 1:2-4, *J. B. Phillips New Testament*) We are told that even Jesus, though a perfect man, "learned obedience" by the things which he suffered as a human being.—Heb. 5:8

Our goal is not to have the little spark of present life extinguished, but to have it consumed by experiences which will develop us as New Creatures. As such, we are no longer to live according to the flesh. (II Cor. 5:15,16) Paul says, "So long as we are clothed in this temporary dwelling we have a painful longing, not because we want just to get rid of these 'clothes' but because we want to know the full cover of the permanent house that will be ours. We want our transitory life to be absorbed into the life that is eternal." (vs. 4, *Phillips*) For this reason we presently strive as "strangers and pilgrims," that we may be acceptable to the Lord.—I Pet. 2:11

Let us consider daily these words of Paul: "You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." (Rom. 8:9, *New American Standard Bible*) Only through the Spirit of Christ can we find comfort in a heavenly home whose blueprints and building materials are not visible to the mere human mind and disposition. How thankful we should be for this! ■

The Privilege of Prayer

“He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.”

—Luke 18:1, New American Standard Bible

ONE OF THE GREAT privileges which the Word of God offers is that of personal communion with our Heavenly Father. When we consider how great and how exalted God

is, we are awed by the wonder that he regards our low estate. The psalmist wrote, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained; What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man, that You care for him?” (Ps. 8:3,4, *NASB*) We are also told, “The LORD is high above all nations; His glory is above the heavens,” and yet he “humbles Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.”—Ps. 113:4,6, *NASB*

In all his vast universal domain there is nothing hidden from God. He “does not become weary or tired” by its care. (Isa. 40:28, *NASB*) His eye never slumbers nor sleeps. The smallest thing does not escape his notice, not even a sparrow’s fall. The

very hairs of our head are all numbered.—Ps. 121:4; Luke 12:6,7

We are the creations of God's hand, "fearfully and wonderfully made," and under divine love and care. The psalmist writes, "O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?"—Ps. 139:1-7,14, *NASB*

Although we have fallen far from the human perfection which Adam had when he was created, God demonstrated "his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) It is because he loves us that, through Christ, he extends to us the gracious favor of coming to him as children to a father. (Ps. 103:13,14) How wonderful is the love and favor of God!

PRAY AT ALL TIMES AND DO NOT LOSE HEART

In coming to God we should have no fear that he is too busy with other matters of greater importance, nor that he is weary of our approaching him repeatedly with things which seem of small importance. To assure us of this, Jesus gave a parable which the writer Luke introduces with our opening verse: "At all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart." In the parable a widow was finally heard and answered by a judge in a certain city because

of her persistence. (Luke 18:2-7) The widow's perseverance is emphasized, the lesson for the Lord's followers being that we should pray at all times and never lose heart or become weary in approaching God.

In so doing we demonstrate the earnestness of our desires and faith, leaving all matters in the Father's hands. The answer to our prayers may be delayed because time is an important element in God's providences. For example, three times Paul asked the Lord that a "thorn in the flesh" might "depart" from him. Finally the reply came indicating that this "thorn" would remain with him, but with the assurance from the Lord: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."—II Cor. 12:7-10

Indeed, we can see how much our Heavenly Father, the Creator and Master of the universe, is to be revered! However, unlike earthly rulers, he allows us to come directly to him at any time, through his Son, Christ Jesus our Lord.

SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES FOR PRAYER

The Word of God provides explicit principles regarding how we should pray. Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) On another occasion Jesus gave an illustration of the manner in which we should pray to our Father in heaven, in what is commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer. (Matt. 6:9-13) It was not given as a prayer which must necessarily be memorized and repeated word-for-word each time we approach God. Instead, it is a model, or example, of the principles which should guide us when we pray.

The illustration Jesus gave teaches us several key points about our prayers to God:

1. As consecrated believers, through faith in Christ, we have been adopted as sons of God, and may therefore confidently address him as “Our Father.”—Rom. 8:15

2. We should have adoration for our Heavenly Father and profound reverence for his glorious character attributes: “Hallowed be thy name.”

3. We should express full sympathy with his plan for a coming kingdom of righteousness on earth which will be according to his will: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” This should also reflect our attitude of heart towards righteousness and our being fully submissive to God’s will and purpose.

4. We should express in plain and simple language our dependence upon God for our daily needs, both spiritual and temporal, with the same confidence that children have in their earthly fathers: “Give us this day our daily bread.”

5. We should acknowledge our specific daily sins and shortcomings, asking for God’s forgiveness, while also recognizing the obligation which we have to forgive those who sin against us: “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

6. We should have a humble craving for God’s guidance and protection, seeking to guard ourselves against temptations, and desiring to be fortified by the Father’s abounding grace against all the wiles of the Adversary: “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

We note that both the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts omit the words, “For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” from Matthew 6:13.

In short, for our prayers to be acceptable, they must express confident faith, loving esteem and reverence, and full sympathy with God’s eternal plan and purpose. Such are the principles which should guide our attitude of mind and heart when we pray to our Father in heaven.

ABIDING PRESENCE OF GOD

The meek and contrite in heart have the promise of the abiding presence of both the Father and of his Son, our Lord Jesus. Speaking to his disciples and to us, Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” (John 14:23) The word “abode” in this verse has the meaning of “staying” or “residence.” Thus, we are promised not merely an occasional hearing by the Father and his son Jesus, but rather the continual, abiding presence of both the Father and the Son, with their thought, care, and interest constantly upon us. Peter expresses the same idea, writing, “The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.”—I Pet. 3:12

We are urged to be “instant in prayer” and to “pray without ceasing.” (Rom. 12:12; I Thess. 5:17) That is, we are to be constantly in an attitude of prayer throughout each day, looking to the Lord for guidance in all the affairs of life. We should pray for strength to overcome our weak, imperfect flesh, to develop more and more of the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit, to use godly wisdom in dealing with ourselves and others, to apply the Word of God,

and to develop the spirit of the truth. We should pray that God's attitude, mind, and will, may be the same as our own to the greatest extent possible.

Concerning God's great mercy and lovingkindness, the psalmist writes: "As the heavens are exalted over the earth, His lovingkindness hath prevailed over them who revere him; As far as East from West, Hath he put far from us, our transgressions; Like the compassion of a father for his children, ... for them who revere him. For, he, knoweth how we are formed, He is mindful that dust, we are. ... His righteousness, [is] to children's children:—To such as keep his covenant, And remember his precepts, to do them."—Ps. 103:11-14,17,18, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*

SEEKING FORGIVENESS FOR SIN

Although we greatly desire to love God, keep his commandments, and recognize his only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus, as the only way of access to the Father, yet we fall short on many occasions. When we sin or are overtaken in a fault, whether in our thoughts, words or actions, if we repent—that is, if we resolve to think and act differently—and seek forgiveness, let us remember that we have an "advocate," or helper, in our relationship with the Father. Our advocate is "Jesus Christ the righteous," who is the satisfaction for our sins."—I John 2:1,2

The Apostle Paul urges us to stay faithful, despite our weaknesses, saying, "Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been

tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”—Heb. 4:14-16, *NASB*

Jesus was a perfect man, and we are redeemed with the “precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (I Pet. 1:18,19) As for us, we are imperfect and have sins and shortcomings. Yet the scriptures admonish us to be viewed by God “without spot, and blameless,” and we are told to keep his commandments “without spot, unrebukeable,” and to keep ourselves “unspotted from the world.”—II Pet. 3:14; I Tim. 6:14; James 1:27

How can we possibly be “without spot,” while being imperfect? The only way is by daily confessing our sins in prayer to our Heavenly Father and seeking forgiveness through the merit of Jesus’ shed blood. This requires both humility as well as a close self-examination of our thoughts, words and actions throughout each day. Thus, when we pray each day, we should acknowledge our specific sins and shortcomings, and ask forgiveness, based upon the atoning value of Jesus’ redemptive sacrifice.

“ONCE FOR ALL”

In so doing, we are not at all asking for an additional, fresh sacrifice of Jesus. The Scriptures clearly indicate that Christ was offered “once for all” and then entered “into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He would offer Himself often ... Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of

the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ... having been offered once to bear the sins of many,” and “He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.”—Heb. 9:12,24-28; 10:12, *NASB*

The Apostle John writes, “If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (I John 1:7-9, *NASB*) We confess our sins by acknowledging them in prayer to our Heavenly Father, and by asking for his forgiveness through the one offering of Jesus’ shed blood, which is all-sufficient to cover our shortcomings.

The Apostle Paul states that “Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised [from the dead], who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us,” by applying on our behalf a sufficiency of his own merit to cover all our sins and shortcomings.—Rom 8:34, *NASB*

With such urgent and loving invitations, let us not hesitate to come to God often and tarry long in communion and fellowship with him. It is our privilege to enter our “closet,” symbolically speaking, shut the door and pray to our Father who “seeth in secret.” (Matt. 6:6) At any instant during problems and perplexities, we may turn our prayerful thoughts to God for wisdom, strength, Christian fortitude, and for comfort and consolation. Although we hear no responding voice, if we are attentive to God’s

providences, we will eventually see the shaping of events and circumstances for our eternal spiritual good in answer to such prayers. All of the Lord's faithful followers have found this to be true, whether in perplexity, tribulation, affliction, persecution, bereavement, temptation or trial.

“EVERYTHING BY PRAYER”

The Apostle Paul writes, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” (Phil. 4:6, *NASB*) “In everything” signifies that our Heavenly Father is deeply interested in all things that relate to us. There is nothing too small for his notice because he is the one who numbers even the very hairs of our head. (Luke 12:7) Therefore, in the cares and concerns of today, whether we be at home, at work, or in any location or circumstance, we may aloud or in our thoughts, ask for his loving sympathy and help.

If a parent's counsel and wisdom seem inadequate to restrain and guide the wayward course of an impetuous and over-confident child, they may bring their concerns and issues to the Lord. When their children approach the threshold of adulthood and encounter temptations from the world, divine wisdom and providence may be called upon by asking for God's help. Thus, circumstances and surroundings may be permitted, according to the Lord's will, to show them the way that is sure and safe, and expose the foolishness of pursuing other courses.

When we have problems at work or at home which may perplex us, let us remember Jesus' instruction to not let our hearts be weighed down with the “cares

of this life.” (Luke 21:34) Let us call to mind the apostle’s admonition: “Godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ... pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called.” —I Tim. 6:6,7,11,12, *NASB*

As we remember these things we can come to God’s throne of heavenly grace in prayer, asking for wisdom and direction as to how we might adjust our earthly life, so as not to be overly burdened with its cares. It is right to be attentive regarding our temporal affairs, and also to be diligent that we “may be found of him in peace.” (I Tim. 5:8; Rom. 12:11; II Pet. 3:14) However, excessive concern is to be avoided because it may lead to worry or anxiety, which will interfere with our peace of mind and communion with God.

Does the possibility of financial loss cause us anxious thought? We can take that also to the Lord in prayer. Then, while diligently using all opportunities to provide things decent and honest, we should wait patiently and confidently, watching for the indications of God’s providence. Quoting in part from Luke 12:22-32, *NASB*, Jesus instructed his followers, saying, “Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!” Additionally, “If God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith!”

LIVING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

During all the trials and various experiences in our life, whether bereavements, disappointments, calamities, distresses, or our personal failures and shortcomings, we may take them all to God in prayer and receive the strength, sympathy, consolation and help which we so much need in those circumstances.

Let us live each day in the presence of the Father and the Son, who have promised to abide with us. It will sweeten our days, comfort our nights, ease our burdens, lighten our cares, brighten our hopes, and lift us up above the world into a higher, spiritual atmosphere. We can do this by appreciating and availing ourselves of the privilege of prayer.

We are assured that the “effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James 5:16) We are urged also to come to God in faith. Jesus said, “If you have faith and do not doubt, ... all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” (Matt. 21:21,22, *NASB*) On another occasion Jesus stated, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (John 15:7) Here Jesus stipulates two conditions which must be true regarding our prayers. First, we must “abide” in him, and second, his words, teachings and instructions, must “abide” in us. The Apostle John states that the one who keeps God’s “commandments abides in Him.” (I John 3:24, *NASB*) Since these words were addressed to Jesus’ footstep followers, we realize that our prayers are subject to God’s wisdom rather than our own. Therefore, the answer to our prayers might be in a way we do not expect, but it will always be for our eternal spiritual good.

PRAYERS WITH THE BRETHREN

While personal prayer is the blessed privilege of every child of God and one without which our spiritual life cannot be sustained, it is also the privilege of Christians to unite their petitions at the throne of grace. This feature of the privilege of prayer is especially commended by the Lord. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”—Matt. 18:20

What a blessed promise! If the number of brethren in the group with whom we meet is diminishing over time, let us not be discouraged or downcast. Instead, let us claim this precious promise, that even if the size of our assembly becomes only “two or three” who are gathered together, the Lord is in our midst. On the other hand, we should be careful not to be overly confident, simply because the number of brethren with whom we meet is large.

ANSWERS TO OUR PRAYERS

The Prophet Daniel wrote that while he was speaking and praying and confessing his sin and the sins of Israel before the Lord, the answer came by the hand of an angel who said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have now come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed.”—Dan. 9:20-23, *NASB*

On another occasion, after Daniel had mourned three weeks, fasting and praying because of his inability to understand, an angel of the Lord came and said, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were

heard, and I have come in response to your words.” (Dan. 10:2,3,12, *NASB*) Thus it is also with us. At the beginning of our prayers, God starts to set in operation influences and to shape the circumstances which are designed to work out the intended blessing for us.

We are encouraged by the parable which Jesus gave that “at all times” we ought to pray and not “lose heart.” The Heavenly Father knew how vital to our spiritual life this communion with him would be, and how much we need the care, comfort, and consolation which his presence and sympathy give.

What a blessed favor the disciples of Jesus have to be “instant in prayer.” Let us count it a privilege to pray always, and to lift our hearts and minds to God at any time and in any place, realizing that each day, even at every moment of the day, both the Heavenly Father and our dear Lord Jesus continually abide with us. When the active duties of the day have been performed under his all-wise eye and supervision, or at any time when we realize the necessity, how precious is the privilege of entering into our closets and there, alone with God, unburdening our hearts in prayer. ■

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 Stella Kazmer, Tucson, AZ—March 5. Age, 100

Brother Zdzislaw Jurus, Wroclaw, Poland—June 29.
Age, 81

Sister Tillie Jezuit, Chicago, IL—July 2. Age, 95

Sister Harriet Tsimonis, Hartford, CT—July 3. Age,
82

Joshua, a Leader of God's People

“Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.”
—Deuteronomy 31:7

THE NAME JOSHUA MEANS

“savior,” the same as its Greek equivalent, “Jesus.” The name Jesus is used twice in the New Testament with reference to Joshua, who was so prominent in the affairs of the Hebrew people during their wilderness journeys and later. (Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8) Joshua was nearly forty years old at the time of the Exodus and is first mentioned in Exodus 17:9, where we are

informed that Moses appointed him to lead an army of Israelites against Amalek in Rephidim. This choice by Moses and Joshua's later victories over Israel's enemies indicate that he had considerable knowledge of warfare as then conducted.

Later Joshua is mentioned as one of the twelve chiefs of the nation who were sent to spy out the land of Canaan. They spent forty days in this undertaking.

When they returned, the twelve spies were unanimous in their appraisal of the vast riches and great advantages of the country. However, all except Joshua and Caleb insisted that the Israelites would not be able to conquer the people of the land, many of whom, they reported, were giants.—Num. 13:1-33

Joshua and Caleb, in their minority report, gave evidence of great faith in the ability of the God of Israel to help them conquer the land, and they recommended that the Israelites cross over the Jordan River immediately, trusting the Lord to make good his promises to them. The Israelites, however, preferred to heed the majority report. Indeed, if not for the intervention of God, Joshua and Caleb would have been stoned by the rebellious congregation.—Num. 14:1-10

The Lord was greatly displeased with this lack of faith on the part of his people, especially since they claimed that he had led them into the land merely to let them die there by the sword and allow their wives and children to be a prey to the Canaanites. God said to Moses, "How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?"—vs. 11

The Lord then said to Moses, "I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they." (vs. 12) Moses prayed to God not to do this because it would give the surrounding nations the opportunity to say that Israel's God was not able to bring his people into the land which he promised to give them, "therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness."—vss. 13-16

The Lord replied to Moses, saying, “I have pardoned according to thy word.” (vs. 20) God modified the punishment for the faithlessness and rebellion of the people by decreeing that all the males who were twenty years old or more when they left Egypt would die in the wilderness and therefore would not be permitted to enter into the land of promise. That this might come about in a less precipitous manner than his first plan to destroy all the people by plagues, the Lord decreed that they would be compelled to wander in the wilderness for forty years, a year for each day that the twelve chiefs of the tribes were spying out the land.—vss. 21-34

In this way the ones most responsible for the spirit of rebellion would be punished, and at the same time God’s ability to care for his people would be more than ever demonstrated, because it would be the women, the young, and the children—those in need of greater help—that would be kept alive and finally enter into Canaan and possess it. There were to be exceptions to this sentence upon the males over twenty years of age, these being Joshua and Caleb, the two spies who brought back the favorable report. (vs. 38) Additionally, since Eleazar became high priest following Aaron’s death and was involved in apportioning the land, it is likely he, too, was another exception.—Num. 34:17-19

MEN OF FAITH

Joshua and Caleb are presented to us as men of faith in God, courageously confident of his ability to make good all his gracious promises to his people. The Bible gives little additional information concerning Caleb except to confirm the fact that he did

enter the land of promise, was given his portion of it, and fought valiantly to wrest it from the hands of Israel's enemies. (Josh. 14:6-15) Moses gave a wonderful testimony concerning Caleb, saying that he had "wholly followed the LORD."—Deut. 1:36

Caleb was faithful to the Lord, although apparently adopted into the tribe of Judah, being of the Kenezites by birth. (Josh. 14:6) Nevertheless, he loved the God of Israel, and was happy to be considered an Israelite. Possibly he did not possess outstanding talents as a leader and statesman, so he was not used widely along these lines.

Joshua, on the other hand, likewise faithful to God, possessed natural talents which could be used in the service of his people. So much was this the case, that the Lord commissioned Moses to appoint Joshua to be his successor as leader of the nation. The record of this is found in Numbers 27:18-20, and reads: "The LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient."

JOSHUA'S TASKS

In Deuteronomy 31:23 God, through Moses, gives Joshua these comforting words: "Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them: and I will be with thee." Joshua did not succeed Moses as lawgiver, or as a mediator between God and the

nation of Israel, but merely as leader. His tasks were to lead the people into the land of Canaan, direct them in the conquering of their enemies then dwelling in the land, and supervise the division of the land among the twelve tribes.

Soon after the death of Moses, this threefold task was undertaken by Joshua, and the account of his successes, and at times temporary failures, is recorded in the Book of Joshua. In the opening chapter we read God's commission to him: "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea [the Mediterranean] toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest."—Josh. 1:2-7

With a background of promise such as this, Joshua had every reason to be courageous in the undertaking assigned to him by the Lord, and he

was. Knowing that God's time had come for the nation to cross over Jordan and possess the land of promise, he did not delay. He summoned "the officers of the people" and instructed them to "pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it." —Josh. 1:10,11

A SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh—one of the sons of Joseph—had previously requested that they be permitted to remain on the east of the Jordan River in a strip of land favorable to the raising of cattle. Moses had agreed to this request, but only on the condition that the warriors of these tribes cross over Jordan with the remainder of the Israelites and assist in conquering the Canaanites, and this they agreed to do.—Num. 32:1-42; Josh. 18:7

Joshua knew of this arrangement and said to these tribes that they were to remember the words of Moses concerning them. This portion of the Israelites were already at rest in their inheritance and enjoying prosperity, so Joshua reminded them of their pledge to assist the others, and they readily agreed to keep it. The eligible fighting men of these tribes said to Joshua, "All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses." —Josh. 1:16,17

These are noble sentiments. The men of these two and one-half tribes promised to obey Joshua, not merely because they esteemed him as a great leader, but because they believed that the Lord was with him, as he had previously been with Moses. This is a sound principle for the guidance of God's people in every age. To the extent that we lend our help to others, it should always be on the basis of recognizing that the Heavenly Father is blessing their undertakings.

RAHAB AND THE SPIES

Joshua was not unaware of the difficulties that confronted the Israelites in crossing the Jordan and entering Canaan. Forty years before this he had served as a spy himself and had noted how potentially strong their enemies were. However, he believed then, and still believed, that the Lord would give his people victories over their enemies. Joshua knew also, nevertheless, that he was expected to use all the wisdom and skill he possessed, and that the Lord would help his people only when they had done all they could to help themselves.

Possessing considerable knowledge of military strategy, Joshua felt that it was essential, first of all, to secure what information he could concerning the current strength of their enemies, that he might have some knowledge of what to expect after they crossed the Jordan. Consequently, he sent two spies to "go view the land, even Jericho." (Josh. 2:1) Joshua knew that almost immediately after entering the land they would be confronted with the walled city of Jericho, and he was anxious to discover, if possible, the size of the army within that

city and other information that might be helpful in planning an attack.

Continuing in verse 1, when the two spies entered the city, they “came into an harlot’s house, named Rahab, and lodged there.” It was reported to the king of Jericho that these two Israelites had entered the city and were now in the house of Rahab. It was correctly assumed that they were spies. When Rahab was requested to bring them forth, she admitted that she had seen the two men, but said she did not know where they were. Actually she had taken them to the roof of her house and concealed them under stalks of flax.—Josh. 2:2-6

Rahab reported further that the men had left about dark. “Whither the men went I wot not,” she said. Then she told those seeking the spies, “Pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.” The searchers took her advice, unknowingly leaving the spies on the roof of Rahab’s house. Later she let them down over the wall of the city with a rope, this being possible because her house was on the wall. Following her instructions, they hid in the forest of the mountain until they could safely recross the Jordan River and report to Joshua.—vss. 5,15,16

The account is exceedingly brief, and there is nothing to indicate how much the spies learned except what had been reported to them by Rahab. The information she gave them was that the people were terrified at the thought of the Israelites entering the land. “Your terror is fallen upon us,” she said, and “all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.” Her own testimony was, “I know that the LORD hath given you the land.” The inhabitants of Jericho had heard of the miraculous crossing of the

Red Sea forty years prior to this, and they also knew, as Rahab said, “What ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.”—vss. 9,10

Then Rahab, revealing further the great fear of the people, confessed her faith in the God of Israel, saying, “As soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.” Rahab then asked that the spies arrange for the protection of her family when the city was captured, and they agreed to this.—vss. 11-14

Regardless of Rahab’s past, this eloquent confession of her faith in the true God indicates a genuine desire to be in harmony with him, and the Lord honored her faith. In Hebrews 11:31 she is referred to as one of the ancient heroes of faith. In James 2:25 her “works” of concealing the spies and sending “them out another way” is mentioned as evidence of her justifying faith. Though not an Israelite by birth, she later married Salmon. She became one of the outstanding mothers in Israel and part of the lineage of Jesus, according to the Jewish Law.—Matt. 1:5

CROSSING JORDAN

The spies reported to Joshua what they had learned, emphasizing the great fear of the people, which meant that they could easily be conquered. Evidently Joshua reached the same conclusion, for he at once began to move the people into position for the momentous crossing of the river, bringing

them from Shittim close to the banks of the Jordan.
—Josh. 3:1

The marching orders were set forth in Joshua chapter 3. They were to follow the Ark of the Covenant and were told that when the feet of the priests touched the water, “the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.” (vs. 13) Verse 16 explains that this backing up of the waters took place “very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan.” This indicates the water did not pile up as a perpendicular wall near the place where the priests touched it with their feet, but that the stoppage occurred at a point considerably upstream. The Hebrew word translated “heap” literally means “a piling up.” Today we would say the water backed up, which is what would have to occur to allow the water below to drain from the river bed. What caused the stoppage just at the right time the Bible does not say. To us it was a miracle, and faith accepts it without further explanation.

By this miracle Joshua’s faith was rewarded, and the people’s faith and confidence in him as God’s representative in their midst must have been greatly increased. The priests carrying the ark, when reaching the center of the river bed, stood there until all the Israelites had crossed over. Then the Lord instructed Joshua to command twelve men, one from each tribe, to take twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan and carry them upon their shoulder to where they lodged the first night in Canaan, and leave them there. These were to be a remembrance to later generations of Israelites of the miraculous manner in which the nation was brought over

Jordan. (Josh. 4:1-8) Joshua also took twelve stones and placed them in the river bed where the priests stood, “and they are there unto this day.”—vs. 9

Part 2 of this article will appear in next month’s issue of *The Dawn*. In it we will consider the experiences of Israel under the leadership of faithful Joshua which occurred following their entry into the land of promise. ■

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful.”—I Timothy 1:12

Ah, yes, what a blessed satisfaction it is to us to know that while the Lord knows of our every word and every deed he is pleased to count us something different, even from our words and our deeds—something better! Our words do not always represent the full sentiments of our hearts; our conduct does not come up to the standard: after the words have been spoken and after the deeds have been done—perhaps to the very best of our ability—we realize that they have come short of the glory of God, and short of our own ideals, desires, and efforts.

How consoling it is to us, then, to know that our imperfect work shall be acceptable through Christ to God; that the Lord counts us according to our intentions, according to our wills. Praise his name! We would have no hope of coming up to any standard of perfection which he would approve, were it not for his gracious arrangement by which our imperfections are covered by our Redeemer’s perfection and sacrifice, and our works accepted according to the intentions and desires of our hearts.—Songs in the Night, August 5

Jesus' Growth in Knowledge

*“By his knowledge
shall my righteous
servant justify
many; for he shall
bear their
iniquities.”
—Isaiah 53:11*

THE WORDS OF OUR opening Scripture are prophetic of Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, and they imply that his knowledge had a very important relationship to his work.

Without this knowledge, although he had fully dedicated himself to the doing of his Father's will, Jesus might not have been able to withstand the attacks of Satan, and the misinterpretations of the Scriptures which the Adversary used to try to turn him aside from full obedience. The knowledge which our Lord had at thirty years of age as a perfect man, was that of his miraculous birth, that Jehovah was his Father, and that in some manner he was to fulfill many of the Old Testament promises and prophecies. Following his consecration and symbolic baptism in the Jordan River, and the greater knowledge which subsequently came to him, tests were permitted by the Father to prove his Son's loyalty. From the beginning Jesus was devoted in

his intention and thought. However, we may infer from the Scriptures that there was, at least, a possibility that without the knowledge which came to him, he might not have been prepared to meet the besetments of the way.

This experience is similar to our own. When we dedicate, or consecrate, ourselves to the doing of God's will, we have a sufficiency of knowledge for that step. As we proceed, we are guided into further knowledge, which constitutes part of the grace of God to assist us in making our calling and election sure. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit "will guide you into all truth" and will show you "things to come." (John 16:13) Similarly, the Holy Spirit guided Jesus and revealed to him certain things relative to both the past and the future, making the purposes of God as plain to him as they now are made to us. He understood them better, however, because his mind was perfect, while our minds are imperfect.

LIFE PRINCIPLE TRANSFERRED TO THE HUMAN PLANE

When considering the question as to how and when the man Christ Jesus first came to an appreciation of his prehuman condition, we have no direct revelation. Of one thing we are assured, however, that during our Lord's ministry he had a clear knowledge of heavenly things, as his words indicate. He said to Nicodemus, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12) Later, he said to his disciples, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (John 6:62) On the night of his betrayal

he said to the Heavenly Father, "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," showing that he had knowledge of his prehuman existence.—John 17:5

In the New Testament, the Greek word *Logos* is used to refer to Jesus in his prehuman existence. In these instances, *Logos* is translated "Word." The record states that "the Word [*Logos*] was made flesh, and dwelt among us," and "the Word [*Logos*] of life ... was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." (John 1:14; I John 1:1,2) The Apostle Paul further tells us that the prehuman Son of God became the man Christ Jesus, that he humbled himself and took a bondman's form and was found in fashion as a man. (Phil. 2:5-8) The Bible says that he laid aside the dignity and honor which he once had, and that he "became poor" for our sakes. (II Cor. 8:9) The necessity of this procedure we see in the Bible arrangement that "since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." (I Cor. 15:21) Jesus came to be a corresponding price, or ransom, for the first perfect man's life and life-rights. He was "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death."—I Tim. 2:5,6; Heb. 2:9

From the foregoing Scriptures we are led to the understanding that the spark of life previously possessed by the *Logos* in the heavenly realm was transferred from the spirit plane to the human plane—"lower than the angels." This spark of life, or identity, was miraculously implanted by the power of God into the womb of Mary, who was a virgin. The child, Jesus, was born like other human children, except that he was perfect, because of the

perfect germ of life from which he was begotten as a human being by the power of God. He would certainly be a very peculiar boy, and wiser than other boys. We read that he not only grew in stature, but in wisdom and in favor with God and man. (Luke 2:52) Humanity no doubt perceived that he was different from others. The whole matter was pleasing to God, to whom Jesus grew closer as he neared maturity.

A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

When he was twelve years of age, Jesus had, apparently, substantial knowledge. He knew, probably from his mother, that he was miraculously born and that he was different from others. He no doubt had also his mother's explanation that he was to be the "Son of the Highest" and fulfill the predictions respecting the Messiah. (Luke 1:32,33) At this time Jesus perhaps began to inquire—not by way of showing his intelligence, but in sincerity and in truth—whether or not this was the time when he should begin his ministry. While accompanying Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem to keep one of the Jewish feasts, Jesus went to the Temple and sat in the midst of the religious leaders of the Jews, listening to them and asking questions. (Luke 2:46,47) They must have marveled that a child of twelve should think of such things. We may suppose that a dialogue took place, the result of which satisfied Jesus' mind that this was not the time when he should begin his ministry. He did not have this knowledge by any intuitive process, but obtained it by inquiry of the Scriptures and of those who were best versed in them. Thus, the decision was that

his ministry would not begin until he was thirty years of age.

Satisfied with this additional knowledge, Jesus returned home to Nazareth with his mother and her husband Joseph, and was subject to them. (vs. 51) This was his condition until he came to John at Jordan. There is not a suggestion anywhere that he had previously manifested any teaching powers. He was a learner, not a teacher. We may suppose that every Sabbath day he went to the synagogue in Nazareth to hear the Old Testament Scriptures read, to meditate upon them, and to know something of the divine requirements respecting Messiah and the wonderful things prophesied of him.

KNOWLEDGE AT THE AGE OF THIRTY

At thirty years of age our Lord must have had much knowledge which Adam did not possess when he was on trial. Jesus had a knowledge of what sin is and what the penalty for sin is. He knew of the fact that God arranged for the redemption of mankind, to be accomplished through the great Mediator of the New Covenant—a Savior, a Redeemer, a Deliverer. He knew of the divine law written in the Decalogue; of the inability of others to keep the Law, and of his ability to keep it. His mother had most surely told him of his miraculous birth, of the message that had come through Gabriel and of the prophecies of Anna and Simeon. This amount of knowledge would be very valuable to him.

What Jesus evidently lacked was the knowledge of the many details of the Scriptures. While he had not yet received the Holy Spirit, he was much better qualified to understand the Scriptures than

was the fallen race. However, the apostle says that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ... because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Cor. 2:14) It would not be until Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit that he could have a complete understanding of the prophecies and of the types of the Law.

Our Lord did not begin to teach until after he was anointed by the Holy Spirit. Shortly thereafter, he invited his disciples to join him. They were to proclaim the message with very limited understanding—that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and that Israel should try to get near to God, to be prepared for this kingdom when it should be revealed. The power of the Holy Spirit would not come to them until Pentecost. At that time, as it was with Jesus, their eyes would be opened to the many details of God’s plan contained in the Scriptures.

Similarly now, we see that no one is competent to be a teacher in the church of Christ as an elder except he be fully consecrated, and has come under the terms and conditions necessary to the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Apparently the people knew of our Lord’s consecration and dedication to God by his actions and demeanor. However, they evidently were not aware of his anointing by the Holy Spirit. When he was baptized at the River Jordan by John the Baptist, the record states that John “bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. ... And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.” (John 1:32,34) If the multitude had seen and heard these things, John would not have needed to “bear record” that Jesus was the anointed Son of God.

ILLUMINATION OF MIND AFTER SPIRIT-BEGETTAL

After his baptism Jesus became conscious of a great change in his relationship to the Father and in his own condition, especially as it related to spiritual things. We read that at the time when John saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus, “the heavens were opened unto him.” (Matt. 3:16) By “heavens” here is meant, not that Jesus was given a telescopic view of things beyond the sky, but that the higher things of God’s plan were opened to him—things which as a natural man he could not receive.

We assume that at the moment when our Lord received the Holy Spirit following his baptism, an impression was made upon his mind which would give him all the particular recollections of his pre-human condition which he did not have prior to spirit begetting. The Holy Spirit, as the invisible power and influence of God, evidently brought to the mind of Jesus a remembrance of the knowledge, thoughts and experiences which he had prior to his being made flesh. Thus was marked the time of our Lord’s spirit begetting, and the preparation necessary for his continued growth in knowledge of heavenly things.

Instead of immediately beginning the ministry for which he had prepared for thirty years, Jesus turned aside into the wilderness and studied the Scriptures for forty days. (Mark 1:12,13) He undoubtedly had many periods of time in his first thirty years of life to think over and meditate upon the Scriptures. However, if he had the same power of understanding before his consecration, baptism and spirit begetting, that he afterwards had, he would not have needed these forty days for study, but would have immediately begun his ministry. Very

evidently, then, all the years of his life on the human plane had brought him no such perception as he now had through the illumination of mind received through the power of the Holy Spirit. He began to have the full scope and appreciation of the mission upon which he had entered, and everything written in the Scriptures respecting the Messiah.

As he now studied the Law and the prophets, Jesus saw the terms of his covenant of sacrifice in the light of this illumination, and the previously hidden meaning of the various Old Testament types and shadows. He began to see that if Messiah would reign it would be by a manifestation of complete loyalty to God and to righteousness. As soon as he was illuminated, he also saw the things pertaining to the suffering through which he afterwards learned obedience in the fullest sense possible. (Heb. 5:8) Thus he received the enlightenment which was so powerful to him, just as it is a great illumination for us to see the terms and conditions of our calling—that we must walk in his steps if we would reign with him. How true it is, then, that the Scriptures act as an enlightening power to those who are taught of God, and only those begotten of the Spirit can understand the real depth of his Word of truth.—John 17:17

Our Lord also understood that the words of the psalmist applied to him: “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea thy law is within my heart.” (Ps. 40:7,8) He had already covenanted and pledged to do everything written in the “volume of the book.” Now, however, he was finding out what this really meant—sacrifice, suffering and death, even the death of the cross!

FURTHER ILLUMINATION AFTER SPIRIT BIRTH

We see that when Jesus was raised from the dead as a divine, spirit being, an equally miraculous work must have taken place. Again he experienced a change of nature. The one that was raised from the dead was the spirit-begotten New Creature, having now experienced spirit birth, and having a full record of all his previous experiences, on both the spirit and the human planes.

How, then, did the Father raise our Lord from the dead a spirit being? How also could this spirit being have knowledge of the things experienced in the flesh and also of the things of his previous existence before he was made flesh? We answer that this is impossible to understand, except that it was done by God's divine power. Whatever may have been the operation, after reaching the spirit plane, Jesus' mind must have been stamped by divine power with recollections of both his earthly and his prehuman experiences. Otherwise all of these would have had little eternal value.

We see this also respecting the church. Presently, we are embryo New Creatures, begotten by God's Holy Spirit. If faithful unto death, and raised in Jesus' likeness in the first resurrection, we will not have our limited fleshly minds for recollection. Rather, through divine power, we will be given perfect memory of all the experiences of the present time. We have this thought when we read, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." (I Cor. 15:42-44) Divine

power will impress the new spirit body with the knowledge of all the experiences of the present time, so that these shall not be fruitless, but profitable to us, making us better qualified and more able for the divine service, as well as for the carrying on of the work associated with the Messianic kingdom.

THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF GOD

If Jesus had not been found perfect, loyal, faithful, in his prehuman condition, he would never have had the privilege of becoming a man in order to redeem the fallen race. He never showed any defects of character to be rectified, therefore his experiences as a man were given to test his loyalty and obedience to the utmost, under the most extreme and adverse conditions.

Our Lord was faithful under all the favorable conditions of his prehuman condition. He was likewise faithful as a man under unfavorable conditions of suffering and trial. Having been glorified to the divine nature he is still faithful. We may conclude, therefore, that his experiences on these three planes have all cooperated to demonstrate his character to the very highest degree, as expressed in these words of the Apostle Paul. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."—Heb. 1:1-3 ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

H. Montague

Online Broadcast of Convention
Kampala, Uganda, Africa

August 27-29

Press Down on the Mark

Philippians 3:13-15, II Timothy 4:7,8

*Press down on the mark—beloved,
Press down on the mark each day,
Let nothing that comes upon you
Have power to move or sway;
For none but the overcomer
Shall share in the joys above,
So keep at the mark, beloved—
Press down on the mark of love.*

*When Father sends fiery trials,
When billows around you sweep,
If doubts of His loving kindness
Might over your spirit creep,
Beloved—press down the harder,
One purpose He has in view,
Each trial and test He sendeth
To perfect His love in you.*

*The world when it fails to win you
May hate you with cruel breath,
And hatred may take a cruel form
That only shall end in death;
But the worst they can do, beloved,
Is to change your cross for a crown:
So while you let God's will be done—
Press down on the mark—press down.*

CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed by request of classes who sponsor them. So your convention can be placed in these columns in time, make your request in writing three months before the date of the convention to Dawn Magazine, PO Box 521167, Longwood, FL 32752-1167

SEATTLE CONVENTION, September 3-6—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact J. Christiansen. Email: jrchristiansen@comcast.net

NEW YORK CONVENTION, September 4,5—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact G. Passios. Email: gpassios11@verizon.net

TENNESSEE VALLEY CONVENTION, September 10-12—IN PERSON AND WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE—Comfort Inn, 4725 University Drive (HWY 72), Huntsville, AL 35806. Phone: (256) 562-2525 Contact R. Armstrong. Phone: (256) 281-6807 or Email: robin@exzaktec.com

COLUMBUS, INDIANA HARVEST CONVENTION, September 18,19—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact E. Ledwinka. Phone: (812) 546-5311 or Email: eledwinka@outlook.com

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, September 25,26—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact T. Malinowski. Phone: (616) 304-7691 or Email: malinowski.tjm@gmail.com

WEST NEWTON CONVENTION, October 2,3—IN PERSON, NO ONLINE BROADCAST—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact L. Mlinek. Email: lmlinek@verizon.net

He Knows

*I know not what awaits me, God kindly veils mine
eyes,
And o'er each step of my onward way he makes new
scenes to rise;
And every joy he send me comes a sweet and glad
surprise.*

*One step I see before me, 'tis all I need to see,
The light of heaven more brightly shines, when
earth's illusions flee;
And sweetly through the silence comes his loving
"Follow Me."*

*O blissful lack of knowledge, 'tis blessed not to
know,
He holds me with his own right hand, and will not
let me go,
And lulls my troubled soul to rest in him who loves
me so.*

*So on I go not knowing, I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God than go alone
in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with him than go alone by
sight.*

*Where he may lead I'll follow, my trust in him
repose;
And every hour in perfect peace I'll sing, he knows
he knows;
And every hour in perfect peace I'll sing, he
knows, he knows.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach . . .

THAT THE CHURCH IS “THE TEMPLE” OF THE LIVING GOD

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

THAT MEANTIME THE CHISELING, SHAPING AND POLISHING

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

THAT THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

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

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

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

THAT THE HOPE FOR THE WORLD lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ’s millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 55

