

The DAWN

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

***“Study to shew
thyself approved
unto God, a
workman that
needeth not to be
ashamed, rightly
dividing the word
of truth.”***

—II Timothy 2:15

THE WORDS OF OUR OPEN-

ing scripture should be of great importance to sincere students of the Bible. According to *Strong's Concordance*, the Greek word here translated “study” means “to make effort, be prompt or earnest.” The thought con-

tained in this definition is that such “study” is for the purpose of showing ourselves approved unto God, and that this can only be done through “rightly dividing the word of truth.” Thus Paul recognized the need for diligence in Bible study.

In this text, Paul indicates the proper motive for Bible study—that we might know the will of God, show ourselves approved unto him, and be fervent in our spirit of serving as his “workman.” Bible study is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, which is to know and to do God’s will. As Paul points out, we show ourselves approved unto God in proportion to our rightly dividing the Word of

truth, and working in harmony with the instructions thus revealed to us.

What is meant by “rightly dividing the word of truth?” Paul’s use of this expression is found in a very interesting and revealing context. The preceding verse reads, “Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.” (II Tim. 2:14) The three verses following the admonition to rightly divide the Word of truth read, “Shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”—vss. 16-18

From these verses, we learn that striving about words and vain babblings does not constitute profitable Bible study. Additionally, those who were teaching that the resurrection of the dead had already taken place were not “rightly dividing the word of truth.” It might well have been the teaching of this error in the Early Church that prompted Paul to use the particular expression, “rightly dividing the word of truth.” The Bible does teach the resurrection of the dead, but the error at that time was the claim that it was a feature of God’s plan which was in the past, rather than in the future.

The lesson here emphasized is the importance of recognizing the time element in God’s arrangements. Failure to understand this has led many to conclude that the Bible is contradictory and unreliable. The Scriptures identify three main time divisions in

the plan of God. In a very general way we might speak of these as “the world of yesterday,” “the world of today,” and “the world of tomorrow.” The Bible uses the expressions, “The world that then was,” “this present evil world,” and “the world to come.”—II Pet. 3:6; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 2:5

The first two of these worlds are predominantly evil. The third is described by Peter as a “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (II Pet. 3:13) Concerning the “present evil world,” we read, “Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.” (Mal. 3:15) Failure to recognize that God is now permitting evil to flourish, and that his time for the establishment of righteousness in the earth is in “the world to come,” has led to various erroneous concepts of the divine arrangement, and of God’s will for his people at the present time.

FOUR AGES

Within these larger divisions of time there are shorter periods, which we usually refer to as “ages”. There was the Patriarchal Age, which began at the time of the Flood, and ended with the death of Jacob. During that age, God was dealing with the patriarchs Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His promises were to them, particularly beginning with Abraham. He did not try to convert the world at that time.

Then, beginning with the death of Jacob, came the Jewish Age, so titled because during that period God’s dealings were exclusively with the nation of Israel. Through the Prophet Amos, God

said to Israel, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” (Amos 3:2) He gave this nation his Law, and sent his prophets to them. He promised to send the Messiah to this nation, the great Deliverer who would be of the tribe of Judah, and of the royal house of David. It was not God’s purpose to convert the world during this period of his exclusive dealings with Israel. By means of the Law and other measures, God held the nation together until the Messiah did come. However, they rejected Christ, their Messiah, and lost the great privilege of any longer being God’s exclusive people. A new age then began, during which the divine purpose in the earth has been carried out through the preaching of the Gospel—hence we call it the Gospel Age.

The Gospel Age also has not been a time for the conversion of the world in general, but for reaching a particular group of people. God has been calling out from the world a “little flock” to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, that in the “world to come” they might live and reign with him in his kingdom. To understand this has a tremendously important bearing on our understanding of what constitutes the will of God for his people during this present age.

The first thousand years in the world to come we refer to as the Messianic Age. This is the age of Christ’s kingdom. It is the period during which the world will be converted, and all the willing and obedient will be restored to perfection of human life, and have an opportunity of living forever on a perfected earth. Many are the promises of God relating to this glorious climax of his plan. If we

are to know the will of God for us at the present time, it is essential to recognize when these promises apply and to whom. Only thus we can be “rightly dividing” the time features of his glorious plan.

DIFFERENT REWARDS

Paul’s use of the expression, “rightly dividing the word of truth,” not only relates to the time features of God’s plan, but also can properly be applied to other important facts in connection with his divine purposes. For example, there are both earthly and heavenly promises in the Bible. There are promises of earthly blessings in the Old Testament which speak of building houses and planting vineyards. (Isa. 65:21,22) Some, not understanding the plan of God, and therefore not “rightly dividing the word of truth,” have endeavored to spiritualize promises like this, and imagine some type of dwellings being built in heaven, and of spiritual vines and fig trees growing there as well.

On the other hand, Jesus said to his disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2,3) This is a most precious promise for all true followers of the Master, but many have supposed that it applies to all who will be saved in every age. Failing to rightly divide the Word of truth along this line takes away the vital meaning of such admonitions as, “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth,” hence the true incentive for this effort is more or less nullified.—Col. 3:2

SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE

To be able to distinguish the difference between the symbolic and the literal language of the Bible is also important in rightly dividing the Word of truth. Failure in this has led many to suppose that God intends to destroy the earth with literal fire, and to torment forever all those who do not accept Christ before they die. This distorts the wisdom, justice, love, and power of God, and their chief motive for serving him is fear rather than love. It is true that many try to love God in spite of their gross misconceptions concerning him.

How beautiful is the symbolic language of the Bible as it is used in his promises to his people, and also in connection with the outworking of his plan of the ages. The psalmist wrote, "I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."—Ps. 91:2-4

TO WHOM ADDRESSED

In rightly dividing the Word of truth, it is also important to note to whom any particular text of scripture is addressed. We have an outstanding example of this in the epistles of the New Testament. Well-meaning people often quote from these epistles when referring to matters of the world, such as politics, social issues, and other secular matters. However, these epistles are addressed exclusively to the earnest footstep followers of Jesus, and are designed to guide, strengthen, and comfort them.

For example, the Epistle to the Romans is addressed to “all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.”—Rom. 1:7

What is true of the New Testament epistles is also true of other portions of Scripture. Indeed, the Bible was not written to guide the political and social activities of the nations, but as a light for the guidance of those who have dedicated themselves wholly to the doing of God’s will. To recognize this makes the entire Word of God more precious, giving an assurance that in it is a personal message to us from our loving Heavenly Father.

This particular principle in Bible study is of even greater value to us when fully applied in our life. For example, the Prophet Isaiah spoke of the bread and water of the Lord’s people being sure. (Isa. 33:15,16) Many followers of the Master have taken this to mean that the Lord will never permit them to go hungry, when as a matter of fact, many have experienced hunger. The Apostle Paul himself, writing to the brethren at Philippi, said, “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”—Phil. 4:12

There can be no question concerning Paul’s faithfulness to the Lord. He was not permitted to go “hungry” as a punishment for unfaithfulness. It was simply that God saw that it would be appropriate for Paul, as a New Creature in Christ Jesus, to have his flesh suffer the pangs of hunger. What, then, did the Prophet Isaiah mean by the promise that bread and water would be sure to the righteous?

This particular promise pertained to God's faithful people of a different age, a people who were being dealt with by God under the terms of the Law Covenant. Under that covenant, God had promised to bless his faithful people in basket and in store. (Deut. 28:5) It was not a covenant of sacrifice, but a covenant which promised earthly blessings of health and life for those who were faithful. Nevertheless, the people of Israel disobeyed God repeatedly and as a consequence, were chastised accordingly.

However, the situation with the Lord's people of the Gospel Age is different. We have covenanted to lay down our lives in sacrifice. (Ps. 50:5) Jesus, our Head and Exemplar, laid down his life. There was no other way for him to be faithful to his Heavenly Father but to sacrifice his all, as a man, which he did. We have been invited to suffer and to die with him. The providences of God in our lives must be interpreted from this standpoint, else there is a possibility that we might become discouraged by our failure to receive the blessings which we may have supposed God had promised.

Jesus said to his true followers of this Gospel Age, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father [his knowledge]. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Matt. 10:29,30) Surely this denotes a very careful and loving watchcare by the Heavenly Father over the affairs of his children. Note that Jesus did not say sparrows never fall, and that nothing ever happens to the hairs of our head. It is simply that even unimportant things in our experiences are known to the

Heavenly Father, and are taken into consideration in his dealings with us.

“My God shall supply all your need,” wrote Paul, “according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:19) We can depend upon this promise, but we must be willing to allow the Lord to decide what our needs may be. These are the needs of the New Creature, not necessarily the needs of the flesh, although the flesh is closely related to the New Creature. Indeed, while still this side of the veil, the flesh is the dwelling place of the New Creature—the only body the New Creature possesses.

God has certain purposes to accomplish in and through his people. For this reason, he might preserve the health of our “earthen vessel” for a while, and see to it that we have necessary food and raiment. He does not do this to interfere with the carrying out of our covenant of sacrifice, but to keep us “fit” while we are laying down our lives in his service. These are matters which are in the Father’s hands. The point we are to remember is that his promises to us are spiritual, not earthly. The blessings which we can be sure of receiving unstintingly from him are those which pertain to our spiritual, not our human, existence.

If we rightly divide the Word of truth we will recognize this difference, and will be prepared to accept with gratitude and praise whatever experiences the Lord, in his wisdom and love, sees best for us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. He may permit us to have bread and water in abundance, yet our stomachs may not be in a sufficiently healthy state to digest food, and our bodies might starve for the need of nourishment. On the other

hand, he might permit us to have healthy stomachs, but not give us all the food we may think we need. The result would be much the same in both cases. Our Heavenly Father knows best. We are laying down our lives, and if God wishes to accept our final offering on an altar of hunger, we should rejoice. However, we can be sure that this will not occur until the Lord sees that it is the due time, both from the standpoint of his plan, and our own readiness to complete our earthly course.

We have stressed the point of food as an illustration. This principle applies to all of God's dealings with us. As fleshly beings we would like to think that he is so overruling in our affairs that nothing can happen to us of an unpleasant nature—that every detail of life will work out smoothly and happily. This, however, is not the will of God for us. He may permit us to be sorely tried along some lines—through illness, or hardships of other kinds. If so, it is because he sees that such experiences are best to prepare us for the place he has for us in the kingdom. Let us recognize this, thankfully accept God's providences, and thus show ourselves approved by him through rightly dividing the Word of truth with regard to this aspect of our Christian lives.

THE HOUSES OF ISRAEL

Noting to whom the promises and the prophecies of the Bible apply is also a great help in our understanding of the plan of God as a whole. During the Gospel Age, those who claim to be followers of Jesus look to him as their Head—their Lord and Master. The promises of God to these are

wonderful and precious. However, this body of professed believers in Christ, while still in the flesh, is made up of both “Israelites indeed” and nominal believers—that is, believers in name only. Both of these groups are addressed in the Scriptures.

A good example of this is found in the messages to the seven churches as recorded in chapters 2 and 3 of the Book of Revelation. While complimenting the church at Pergamos, the Lord added, “I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”—Rev. 2:14-16

The promises of a crown of life, of sitting on the throne with Jesus, of being given a white stone, and being made a pillar in the temple of God, as contained in other portions of these messages to the churches, were not made to those who followed the example of Balaam. These were warnings of punishments from the Lord, and yet they are all classed as being in “the church.” These messages to the seven churches reveal that God has permitted the true Christians—Israelites indeed—and the nominal Christians—those in name only—to exist together throughout the age. The world has seen little or no difference. Only the Lord, who knows the heart, has discerned this difference, and he rewards and punishes in keeping with his justice and love. It is important for us to recognize that

there are these two classes, and on this point to rightly divide the Word of truth.

The same thing is true with respect to natural Israel. We read of Moses that he “was faithful in all his house.” (Heb. 3:2) Just as in the house of sons during its course of development some have been faithful and some have not, even so was it with the house of servants over which Moses was the head. Here, also, the promises of God to the faithful are quite different from those to the unfaithful, which in many instances are more in the nature of warnings than of promises.

Moses wrote, “The LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.” (Deut. 18:17-19) The Apostle Peter quoted this promise, and indicated that it would be fulfilled following the Second Coming of Christ in the kingdom.—Acts 3:19-23

This warning was made, not to the faithful of Israel, but to the faithless and unbelieving. The Israelites had entered into the Law Covenant, but many were already displaying a lack of faith concerning it, and were rebellious against the providences of the Lord. Throughout the entire Jewish Age there was this group within Israel. God loved them and was merciful to them. He will eventually show his mercy to them through sending them “that Prophet” who will richly bless them in

the Messianic kingdom with restitution to human perfection—that is, as many of them as then hear and obey that great Prophet. Those who do not hear and obey will be destroyed from among the people.—Acts 3:23

During that same period of time—indeed, going all the way back to righteous Abel—there was another class, a faithful class. Perhaps, at times, it could hardly be called a class, but just individuals who displayed their faith in God and in his promises in spite of the trials and difficulties this fidelity entailed. Paul speaks of these in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. He explained that they endured their afflictions in order to obtain “a better resurrection.” (vs. 35) They evidently understood that if faithful to God, even unto death, he would have something better for them in the resurrection.

This is indicated in Paul’s speech to the Roman governor, Felix, in which he said, “This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow [await], that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” (Acts 24:14,15) This “Ancient Worthy” class evidently knew about the resurrection of the just. It was this that they looked upon as the “better resurrection,” and their desire was to be faithful to the Lord in order to be found worthy of being brought forth in that resurrection.

Doubtless all of that “Ancient Worthy” class who lived following the giving of the Law to Israel were greatly inspired by the promise in which God assured

the faithful that they would be “a peculiar treasure” and “an holy nation.” (Exod. 19:5,6) While the nation as such did not qualify under the terms of this promise—being largely ignored by the “nominal” Israelites—it served as an incentive to those who sought earnestly to know and to do God’s will.

The fact that these two classes existed prior to the First Advent of Jesus means that some portions of the Scriptures refer to one class and some to the other. To discern the correct lessons which the Lord is teaching us through the Scriptures, we need to take note of which class it is that is being discussed, or to which class the promises or warnings are being given. Thus we will have no difficulty in discerning the position of the Ancient Worthies, and of Israel as a whole, in the plan of God.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING KINGDOM PROMISES

The word “kingdom” is one of the prominent words in the Bible. There was, of course, the kingdom of Israel, and there are the kingdoms of this world. However, we have in mind, in particular, the kingdom of the Lord. In many of the prophecies of the Old Testament, the Lord’s kingdom is referred to, but the word itself is not used. In Isaiah 25:6-9, the kingdom is symbolized by a “mountain” in which the Lord makes unto all people a “feast of fat things,” and in which he “swallow[s] up death in victory.” In Isaiah 9:6,7, the kingdom is described as a “government.”

While in a general way all these, and many other references in the Bible, apply to the same kingdom, they do not always refer to the same aspect of the kingdom. For example, when Jesus admonished

his disciples to seek first the kingdom of heaven, his reference was to a position of rulership in the Lord's kingdom. When, in Luke 12:32, we read Jesus' words, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," the same thing is true.

In contrast to this, most of the kingdom promises of the Old Testament describe blessings which will be received by the subjects of the Lord's kingdom. It is important, in rightly dividing the Word of truth concerning the kingdom, to note this distinction if we are to get the full force of what is meant. It is also important to note that some of the passages of the Bible in which the word "kingdom" is used, refer to the future rulers in that kingdom while they are being prepared for that high position. Only by noting these distinctions will we be able to see and to appreciate the full harmony of the Word of God with respect to its teachings on the subject of the kingdom of the Lord.

OURSELVES APPROVED

Let us ever remember that the main purpose of Bible study is that we might know the will of God for ourselves, and receive inspiration to faithfulness in the doing of his will. One important aspect of the divine will for his people during the present age is that we may be coworkers with him, bearing testimony to the Gospel of Christ—the great and precious truths of God's plan. Indeed, our opening text says we are to be workmen who need not to be ashamed because we have rightly divided the Word of truth.

To bear witness to the truths of God's glorious plan, we should know those truths and how they

are set forth in the Word of God. Thus, every truth in the Bible is related to our knowing and doing God's will. It is important, then, that we rightly divide the Word of truth from the standpoint of time, noting its earthly and heavenly promises, and its use of literal and symbolic language.

Let us note also to whom the various promises of God are directed, and what those promises mean which apply directly to his faithful "little flock" of the Gospel Age. Let us remember that we are seeking a place as kings and priests with Jesus in his kingdom, and rejoice that it is the Father's good pleasure for us to attain such a position. Let us also rejoice in the blessings which will come to mankind in general as subjects of the kingdom. May we be faithful in proclaiming these glorious truths far and wide, to all who will hear! ■

2014 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 13, 2014.

A complete Memorial Service is available for isolated brethren, or for any who wish to have it.

The audio cassette tape or CD can be purchased for \$3.00, and the DVD for \$5.00. All are also available free on loan, from:

Dawn Recorded Lecture Service
199 Railroad Avenue
East Rutherford, NJ 07073

Please place your order by April 6, if possible.

Hear and Do the Word

Key Verse: *“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”*

—James 1:22

Selected Scripture:
James 1:19-27

from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”—James 1:17

James continues to emphasize in this chapter that New Creatures in Christ, begotten by the Holy Spirit, must adhere to the teachings contained in God’s Word and, as a consequence, will manifest in their actions the effects of a sanctified life style. Believers who internalize such godly counsel would ponder their words carefully and be less prone to exhibiting rashness of speech. (Prov. 10:19) Additionally, the moderating influence of the Holy Spirit upon the characters of such devoted individuals leads towards righteousness, as opposed to being quick tempered.—James 1:18-20

The high standards of conduct acceptable to God by those who follow the Master are brought to our attention by James as he stresses the need to disavow all vices that are commonly observed in the actions of the unregenerate. Such impurities in thought, word or deed he states are contrary to Christlikeness.—vs. 21

Our Key Verse underscores the need for us to put into

IN THIS EPISTLE, JAMES

provides many practical admonitions for consecrated Christians who appreciate his counsel as being divinely inspired by the Heavenly Father. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down

practice the principles of truth and righteousness as contained in God's Word. To ignore this admonition would be an act of self-deception and make us unacceptable to the Heavenly Father. James continues: "If any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."—vss. 23,24 On the contrary, the individual who meditates upon the Scriptures and puts their precepts into practice finds true freedom from human traditions, and through obedience to godly counsel, receives commensurate blessings from above.—vs. 25

After our consecration is accepted we are to begin putting off characteristics such as anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, evil speaking, and other works of the flesh. This cleansing involves not merely a mental appreciation of the Scriptures, but also the deep heart-searching self-examination to be guided by godly principles. Having the treasure of the New Creature in an earthen vessel, we will be assailed from time to time with a transitory wrong thought. However, we must put this thought away from consideration so that it does not take root in the heart and choke out righteousness and proper sentiments.

If someone claims to love the Lord, yet spews forth words that tear down another, that bitter speech certainly challenges the genuineness of his profession of being a believer who is earnestly striving to manifest Christ-likeness. If daily we render up our accounts to God and seek his grace to help in time of need, we shall be acquitted in judgment and stand approved before God, through Christ, assured that we will be more than conquerors. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."—vss. 26,27 ■

Treat Everyone Equally

Key Verse:
“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?”
—James 2:5

Selected Scripture:
James 2:1-13

AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE

to be appreciated by believers in Christ is that true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can never be associated with the practice of treating others with the spirit of partiality. The Heavenly Father does not manifest this quality and neither should those who profess to be children of God.—Acts 10:34; James 2:1-3

Our Key Verse continues to emphasize that the concept of oneness in Christ requires believers to manifest a genuine and heartfelt acceptance of all who have embarked upon the narrow way. The harboring of artificial class distinctions violates the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves.

As a rule, throughout the Gospel Age those who have been attracted to embrace the offer of discipleship in following Christ have recognized their undone condition and need for salvation, whereas those who felt self-sufficient generally have lacked the needed humility to submit themselves to the transforming influence of the Holy Spirit.—I Cor. 1:26-28; James 2:5-9

James addresses the comprehensive nature of the divine law not only with respect to showing favoritism, but he also notes that we are to follow God's requirements as they pertain to such matters as liberty, judgment, and mercy. We may not pick and choose certain portions of God's commandments and ignore others, because any failure to observe all that God demands of us still would leave us short of being in conformity with his righteousness. Thankfully, our Lord kept the divine law perfectly, and his righteousness is imputed to consecrated believers to cover our deficiencies. As long as we acknowledge our shortcomings, repent, and strive to be more diligent in our Christian walk, we will continue to abide in Christ.—vss. 10-13

Aspects of today's lesson find certain parallels in the teachings of Christ Jesus during his earthly ministry. The prohibition against being judgmental, which is a form of partiality, is clearly set forth by the Master. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."—Matt. 7:1,2

The need to remove one's own faults to the greatest extent possible is a prerequisite for being used as an instrument to assist others with their own deficiencies. To be just in dealing with the world of mankind as well as our brethren would certainly be a basic requirement for all who profess to follow Christ.—vss. 3-5,12

A true test of discipleship, however, is embodied in a new commandment that Jesus gave for his followers to love one another, thus evidencing to him that we have imbibed his spirit. This attitude also should be evident to others who observe our conduct, as we interact with those with whom we come in contact. (John 13:34,35) Let us each strive to make this quality a genuine reality in our lives. ■

Show Your Faith by Your Works

Key Verse: *“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”*
—James 2:26

Selected Scripture:
James 2:14-26
of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”—
Eph. 2:8,9

JAMES ASSERTS IT IS NOT possible for anyone to simply have a faith that is not accompanied with works of obedience and still be pleasing to God. Neither does he contradict the words of Paul. “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”—

On the contrary, Paul understood the necessity of works in order to prove the character of faith, saying, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (Phil. 2:12) James also does not limit faith merely to spiritual matters, but indicates that a believer who would fail to aid a brother who had a temporal need would give evidence of having a dead faith, one that is not matched by deeds of compassion.—James 2:14-17

The essence of James’ emphasis in this lesson is that a living faith cannot be separated from doing appropriate deeds in God’s service. In a hypothetical scenario, he speaks of two individuals who debate the relative importance of faith versus works. “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"—vss. 18-20

Referring to two Old Testament characters, James first recalls how Abraham demonstrated his life of faith by offering up his son Isaac as a sacrifice in obedience to God's instruction. This demonstrated that Abraham trusted God even though he did not know exactly how the matter would turn out. Writing about this same incident, Paul even indicated that Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead in order to accomplish his intended purpose of blessing all the families of the earth through his seed. (Heb. 11:17-19) This demonstration of faith by Abraham's obedience in carrying out God's command was the means by which Abraham was counted as being justified, or righteous, in God's estimation.—James 2:21-24

Another example of faithful obedience was noted in that Rahab, the Canaanite harlot, was also justified by her works. She learned that an army was advancing towards the city of Jericho, where she resided, and then determined to identify herself with the God of Israel by hiding two spies and sending them away in safety when their lives were threatened. (Josh. 2:1-24) James declares that Rahab's actions in this matter gave evidence of her faith in God by accompanying good works, and she also was considered to be righteous from God's standpoint. "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?"—James 2:25

Our Key Verse stresses the necessity of manifesting faith through activity in God's service. May this principle serve to motivate all true believers in Christ to do with their might what their hands find to do, as evidence that we have a living faith. ■

Control Your Speech

Key Verse: *“Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.”*
—James 3:10

Selected Scripture:
James 3:1-12

James cautions against having a hasty desire to become a teacher of God’s Word before carefully weighing the responsibility and privilege of such service. He considers a believer’s pattern of conversation, noting the tongue is the most difficult member of the body to control. However, and of even greater importance, Jesus said the tongue is merely an instrument, or index, of the heart condition. (Matt. 12:34) Only Christ, who was perfect, reflected truth, righteousness, and holiness in all his utterances. Nevertheless, as New Creatures, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, we must increasingly gain ascendancy over our fallen tendencies and speak helpful, wholesome words that will be edifying and beneficial to those who hear them.—James 3:1,2

In one illustration, James compares the responsibility of the new mind to control the power of the tongue to governing a horse’s motions by pulling the reins connected to a bit in the animal’s mouth. Though the bit is

TODAY’S LESSON FURNISHES practical applications relative to the power of speech, particularly by those who are recognized as teachers in the church. As such, these leaders must take special accountability for their words and actions.—Luke 12:48

a very small piece of steel, it can be used to control the horse's entire behavior. (vs. 3) Without this restraint, an unruly horse could easily run away with, or overthrow, its rider. Similarly, without exerting watchfulness over our words, the believer's spiritual growth can be seriously hampered.

Another simile for the tongue is a fire. When insinuations or evil speaking are carelessly dropped into the minds of others, the effect is like dropping a lighted match into combustible material. It can result in a conflagration that leaves behind a charred mass of devastating ruins. James says many beasts, winged creatures, reptiles, and sea creatures can be tamed or trained, given sufficient time and perseverance. However, man's success in subduing wild animals does not extend to the control of his tongue. Because words can inject untold evil into the lives of others, the apostle describes the tongue as an instrument "full of deadly poison."—vss. 5-8

Our Key Verse reminds us that, in addition to rendering praises to God, on occasion we also may be guilty of expressing words that are hurtful to others. To be more than overcomers, however, our new minds must dominate the tongue, since we will be judged by the degree to which we gain mastery over this instrument. It would be an act of hypocrisy to render praises to the Heavenly Father while in worship with the Lord's people, but outside of that setting to vilify the character of someone else with slanderous words. The contradictions James alludes to—a fountain yielding both fresh and salt water, or fig trees bringing forth olive berries or the reverse—simply do not exist in nature.—vss. 11,12

Our constant attitude should be such as reflected in this text: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."—Ps. 19:14 ■

Liberty in Christ

“Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”
—Galatians 5:13,14

PUTTING ON THE “MIND of Christ,” the title of this continuing series of articles, necessitates that we first be made free from the mind we have inherited from Adam. That is a mind which suffers from the many besetments of sin and fallen tendencies passed down to us from our first parents. Thankfully, through the mercy and grace of our loving Heavenly Father, he has made possible the means whereby his consecrated people can both attain, as well as maintain, this freedom. It is this provision, which we have titled “Liberty in Christ,” that is the focus of our present lesson, an understanding of which we believe can greatly assist us in developing the “mind of Christ.”

For thousands of years, countries and individuals have debated the meaning and value of liberty. Some have claimed liberty grants complete freedom of thoughts, words, and actions to each individual without regard to others. However, throughout history we have seen most countries restrain liberty

through laws and customs designed to balance individual liberty with the needs and peace of all. This restraint of individual liberty for the greater good of all may have been most famously stated in the second sentence of the United States Declaration of Independence:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

FREEDOM FROM THE LAW

When considering liberty in Christ, we find similar restraints on individuals which are intended to benefit the body in general. The Apostle Paul never suggested the saints were to consider themselves to have total liberty without regard to others. His epistle to the Galatian church was a proclamation that they had been freed from the bondage of the Law in order to gain the liberty which was in Christ. Upon seeing some Jews failing to let go of the demands of the Law in favor of this liberty in Christ, Paul expressed his disappointment in them with these words: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.”—Gal. 1:6,7

In the third chapter, we read an even more stern condemnation of this distortion of the Gospel of Christ. The *J. B. Phillips* translation entitles the words of Galatians 3:1-8: “What has happened to your life of faith?” Note the apostle’s harsh words

as translated by *Phillips* in these verses: "O you dear idiots of Galatia, who saw Jesus Christ the crucified so plainly, who has been casting a spell over you? I will ask you one simple question: did you receive the Spirit of God by trying to keep the Law or by believing the message of the Gospel? Surely you can't be so idiotic as to think that a man begins his spiritual life in the Spirit and then completes it by reverting to outward observances? Has all your painful experience brought you nowhere? I simply cannot believe it of you! Does God, who gives you his Spirit and works miracles among you, do these things because you have obeyed the Law or because you have believed the Gospel? Ask yourselves that. You can go right back to Abraham to see the principle of faith in God. He, we are told, 'believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' Can you not see, then, that all those who 'believe God' are the real 'sons of Abraham'? The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles 'by faith', really proclaimed the Gospel centuries ago in the words spoken to Abraham, 'In you all the nations shall be blessed.'"

Continuing this powerful lesson about liberty, Paul reminds these early Jewish converts of God's purpose concerning the Law in verses 24-26, saying, "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." Paul clearly instructs them that the Law kept them in bondage through the imperfection of the flesh. This made it impossible to keep the Law perfectly. The Gospel of Christ,

however, is based on faith, needing no perfection of the flesh. So Paul continues, saying, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”—vss. 28,29

This is true freedom—this is meaningful liberty, for Jews and Gentiles alike! The detailed rules, customs, and ceremonies of the Law no longer need to be followed. Rather, a full dedication to do God’s will and complete faith in the shed blood of Christ result in our being justified in God’s sight. If we are thus justified by faith in Christ, we will be, Paul says, Abraham’s seed and heirs according to God’s promise. This was the liberty Paul explained to the Galatian brethren and to us.

LIBERTY—NOT LICENSE

A closer examination of liberty in Christ makes it clear that our liberty is not without some restraints. The word translated “liberty” in our opening scripture comes from the Greek word *eleutheria*, meaning “freedom (either legitimate or licentious)—liberty.” The word “license” is similar to “liberty,” but with one very distinct difference. One of the definitions of “license” states that it is “freedom that allows, or is used with, irresponsibility and disregard for standards of personal conduct.” Clearly this definition has no part in our liberty in Christ.

Paul emphasized this very point when using the Greek word *eleutheria*, saying that it was not to be used “for an occasion to the flesh [licentiously], but by love serve one another.” Thus he established a

vitality important principle in his words to the Early Church and to all the footstep followers of Christ throughout the entire Gospel Age. Indeed, we have been granted liberty, but this great gift must be used properly and responsibly.

FREE MORAL AGENTS

To understand liberty in Christ requires understanding free moral agency—that is, free will to make choices. The Bible is filled with individuals who were granted gifts by God, along with the liberty to exercise them in accordance with his great plans and purposes. Their choices, made through the exercise of free moral agency, help us better understand the importance of rightly exercising liberty.

Let us consider and compare the *Logos* [Jesus in his pre-human condition] and Lucifer. Both were created perfect spirit beings by God and were his great delight. However, they responded much differently to God's love for them, and exercised their liberty of action in opposite directions. Here is the account of Jesus exercising his liberty: "Then said I, 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

Compare that account with the record of Lucifer's use of the same liberty. Of him it is said, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the

sides of the north.” (Isa. 14:12,13) Both Jesus and Lucifer had liberty, but they exercised it in very different ways.

Let us also consider Adam, who was created a perfect human being, in the image of God, with the liberty to make his own decisions. After Eve ate of the tree forbidden by God, which carried the penalty of death, we read how Adam exercised his choice: “The man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” (Gen. 3:12) God gave Adam the liberty to make his own choice, and Adam chose to disobey. As New Creatures, we have now been given the liberty which comes through Christ. Will we exercise it properly, in accordance with our consecration vows, or will we follow some other course of action?

LIBERTY TOWARD BRETHREN

Paul lays down the principle of exercising liberty toward our brethren in our theme text, quoting again: “Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”—Gal. 5:13,14

By moving away from the same fallen fleshly nature which led to Israel’s bondage under the Law, Paul instructs us to use our new-found liberty in Christ to serve one another. We are thus to use the power of love in action—“by love serve one another”—to displace our prior bondage to the weaknesses of the flesh, which tended toward serving self and self-interest.

There is good reason why liberty in Christ should create in us a desire to serve our brethren, rather than serving selfish interests. We must remember that we have not chosen one another, but God has chosen each of us. "Now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. If they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; or again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another."—I Cor. 12:18-25, *New American Standard Bible*

Understanding that God loves each member of the body of Christ even as he loves our Lord should make us exercise our love toward one another in a pure and genuine way. (John 17:23) Paul speaks to this point, saying, "Let us have no imitation Christian love. Let us have a genuine break with evil and a real devotion to good. Let us have real warm affection for one another as between brothers, and a willingness to let the other man have the credit."—Rom. 12:9,10, *Phillips*

Faithfulness demands that we exercise Christian love for one another unconditionally. This is one of the basic requirements of exercising our liberty in Christ which cannot be ignored. There are many more scriptures which describe how we should exercise liberty toward our brethren. However, we will quote just one more which summarizes this point: “Now if your experience of Christ’s encouragement and love means anything to you, if you have known something of the fellowship of his Spirit, and all that it means in kindness and deep sympathy, do make my best hope for you come true! Live together in harmony, live together in love, as though you had only one mind and one spirit between you. Never act from motives of rivalry or personal vanity, but in humility think more of each other than you do of yourselves. None of you should think only of his own affairs, but should learn to see things from other people’s point of view.”—Phil. 2:1-4, *Phillips*

RESTRAINTS ON LIBERTY TOWARD BRETHREN

As we consider how we should restrain exercising our liberty toward brethren, we must first remember that we are not free to criticize one another’s convictions. “Welcome a man whose faith is weak, but not with the idea of arguing over his scruples. One man believes that he may eat anything, another man, without this strong conviction, is a vegetarian. The meat-eater should not despise the vegetarian, nor should the vegetarian condemn the meat-eater—they should reflect that God has accepted them both. After all, who are you to criticize the servant of somebody else, especially

when that somebody else is God? It is to his own master that he gives, or fails to give, satisfactory service. And don't doubt that satisfaction, for God is well able to transform men into servants who are satisfactory."—Rom. 14:1-4, *Phillips*

Second, we are instructed to not exercise our liberty to remain at odds with our brethren. "If, while you are offering your gift at the altar, you should remember that your brother has something against you, you must leave your gift there before the altar and go away. Make your peace with your brother first, then come and offer your gift." (Matt. 5:23,24, *Phillips*) With these words, Jesus makes it clear that peace with our brethren is a requirement that must be met, even before sacrifice, if we are to rightly exercise our Christian liberty.

LIBERTY TOWARD THE WORLD

When considering how we should exercise our liberty toward the world, let us remember that we are representatives of our Heavenly Father. Consider the consistent scriptural testimony along this line. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." "I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ."—Matt. 5:16; I Cor. 4:9; II Cor. 5:20

As representatives of God, we should exercise our liberty toward the world with love and compassion, because we know their fallen condition in Adam. God sent his son to die for all while they

were yet in their sins, and we need to show similar sympathy and love. Paul provides these words which instruct us to treat the world with love and respect: “Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”—Rom. 12:14-18

The Scriptures further testify that our liberty in Christ should cause us to seek to do good to those in the world. “Let us not be weary in well doing. . . . As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”—Gal. 6:9,10; Matt. 5:44

Remembering that mankind is currently in a broken condition because of Adam’s disobedience, our Christian liberty should incite us to humbly preach the Gospel, as directed by God’s Holy Spirit. We are not to do this as if it is our gospel. Rather, we are to give credit always to God for the great privilege we have been granted of sharing with others the truth of his Holy Word. It is only through the gift of God’s enlightening spirit that we know the beauty of his plan. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by

his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”—I Cor. 2:9,10

Therefore, when we have the opportunity to give witness to the Gospel of Christ, we should give credit to the Heavenly Father—the author of that Gospel—by quoting scripture. This means we should further exercise our liberty by diligently studying the Scriptures, in order to gain a better understanding of them and how they fit into God’s great plan of salvation. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”—II Tim. 2:15

RESTRAINTS ON LIBERTY TOWARD THE WORLD

While remembering that we are representatives of God, and that we are to show love and compassion to all, Christian liberty also requires that we separate ourselves from the things of the world. While we are in the world, we cannot partake of its fallen spirit. Paul makes this very clear with these words: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—Rom. 12:1,2

LIBERTY TOWARD GOVERNMENTS

As students of the Bible, we are aware that governments and their leaders are just as much in a broken condition as is the world itself. However, we are to remember that the governments in power today exist as part of God’s plan. When interpreting

the dream of an impressive image seen by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, the Prophet Daniel said that God gave him a kingdom, power, strength, and glory, which was represented by the image's head of gold. Daniel then said that three subsequent kingdoms would arise in succession following Babylon, through the appointment of God. (Dan. 2:37-45) This succession of kingdoms, though fallen and imperfect, would nevertheless provide a period of order during the present evil world, until the time came when God would set up a kingdom that will last forever. This is the same kingdom for which Jesus taught his disciples to pray in Matthew 6:10—"Thy kingdom come."

The foregoing shows us that God has permitted fallen kingdoms and governments of men to exist continuously until the establishment of his kingdom. This being the case, our liberty toward them should be exercised in harmony with the instructions of Jesus, on the occasion when the Pharisees tried to entice him into speaking against the rule of the Roman Empire. Instead of criticizing this ruthless government, which had been allowed to rule according to God's arrangement, Jesus took a Roman coin and answered with these words: "Whose is this image and superscription [on the coin]? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."—Matt. 22:20,21

Jesus did not criticize the government or leaders who would eventually consent to his being put to death. Paul followed this same pattern and actually took advantage of his Roman citizenship to fulfil

his mission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. Exercising our liberty toward today's governments and leaders should follow the example and pattern of our Master, Jesus, and of the Apostle Paul.

RESTRAINTS ON LIBERTY TOWARD GOVERNMENTS

The Apostle Paul summarizes how our liberty towards governments and political leaders should both be exercised and restrained in his epistle to the Romans. He says, "Every Christian ought to obey the civil authorities, for all legitimate authority is derived from God's authority, and the existing authority is appointed under God. To oppose authority then is to oppose God, and such opposition is bound to be punished. The honest citizen has no need to fear the keepers of law and order, but the dishonest man will always be nervous of them. If you want to avoid this anxiety just lead a law-abiding life, and all that can come your way is a word of approval. The officer is God's servant for your protection. But if you are leading a wicked life you have reason to be alarmed. The 'power of the law' which is vested in every legitimate officer, is no empty phrase. He is, in fact, divinely appointed to inflict God's punishment upon evil-doers. You should, therefore, obey the authorities, not simply because it is the safest, but because it is the right thing to do. It is right, too, for you to pay taxes for the civil authorities are appointed by God for the good purposes of public order and well-being. Give everyone his legitimate due, whether it be rates, or taxes, or reverence, or respect!"—Rom. 13:1-7, *Phillips*

Let us not waste consecrated time criticizing governments and people we know are merely part of the broken, fallen systems of this present evil world. Instead, let us follow Paul's advice and give respect to those appointed of God. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."—I Tim. 2:1-3

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND FORGIVENESS

No discussion of liberty in Christ would be complete without examining the principle of forgiveness. When Paul told early Jewish converts that the bondage of the Law had been replaced by liberty in Christ, he emphasized the fact that God's unlimited love toward the human family should also become their new pattern of conduct. As all liberty requires some restraint for the sake of the greater good of all, Paul stressed that Christ's followers must be restrained only by the character of Christ, not by fallen human thinking. Jesus was in full harmony with his Heavenly Father, and the standard which he set for us to follow was intended to develop in us the very character of God himself. (Matt. 5:48) Key to God's character is his unrestricted love for his human creation, to the extent of providing his "only begotten son" to die to be the ransom price for Adam. If God can forgive fallen man for his sins, we also must forgive just as freely.

While this requirement seems impossible to the flesh, we have examples of those who fulfilled it. Consider what Stephen said as he was being stoned for Jesus' sake: "They stoned Stephen, [who was] calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."—Acts 7:59,60

Paul gives us instructive words concerning the importance forgiveness plays in exercising our liberty in Christ. "As, therefore, God's picked representatives . . . purified and beloved of God himself, be merciful in action, kindly in heart, humble in mind. Accept life, and be most patient and tolerant with one another, always ready to forgive if you have a difference with anyone. Forgive as freely as the Lord has forgiven you. And, above everything else, be truly loving, for love is the golden chain of all the virtues."—Col. 3:12-14, *Phillips*

Nowhere is the principle of forgiveness, as part of our liberty in Christ, expressed so clearly as in these words spoken by Jesus himself: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6:14,15) Liberty in Christ requires that we forgive others—not just our friends, but even our enemies. Doing so teaches us to be more humble, and more like our blessed Master.

In summary, liberty in Christ does not make us better than others, nor does it give us the right to act in a superior manner. Exercised properly, it will not help us accumulate momentary treasures upon

earth, but will instead help us accumulate eternal treasures in heaven. Those striving for heavenly riches bear a great responsibility toward others as well as to themselves with regard to properly enjoying the gift of liberty in Christ. May we ever recognize and faithfully seek to carry out the important tasks associated with this great privilege, and thus be assisted in the development of the “mind of Christ.” ■

“The man who simply hears and does nothing about it is like a man catching the reflection of his natural face in a mirror. He sees himself, it is true, but he goes off without the slightest recollection of what sort of person he saw in the mirror.

“But the man who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and makes a habit of so doing, is not the man who hears and forgets. He puts that law into practice and he wins true happiness.”

—James 1:23-25, Phillips

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

FEBRUARY 6—“Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.”—Psalm 75:6,7 (Z. ’95-11 Hymn 331)

FEBRUARY 13—“Love thinketh no evil.”—I Corinthians 13:5 (Z. ’98-84 Hymn 143A)

FEBRUARY 20—“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, . . . this man’s religion is vain.”—James 1:26 (Z. ’99-215 Hymn 267)

FEBRUARY 27—“Let your moderation be known unto all men.”—Philippians 4:5 (Z. ’03-7 Hymn 95)

Meditations of Sion

***“Blessed is the man
whom thou
choosest, and
causest to
approach unto
thee, that he may
dwell in thy courts:
we shall be
satisfied with the
goodness of thy
house, even of thy
holy temple.”
—Psalm 65:4***

THE PSALMS HAS SOME-times been called the song-book of the church. Many of these, including Psalm 65, are dedicated to the “Chief Musician,” for him to set to music, whom we may identify today as our Lord Jesus, the Chief Musician of God’s spiritual temple. By his teachings and example, he has revealed the harmony of these exquisite melodies, these spiritual songs composed by David, the sweet singer of Israel, and others of his line.

The Psalms are peculiarly one of the devotional parts of the Word of God. They indicate the manner in which we may address God with suitable language, and in a proper attitude of reverence. In the Psalms, we have revealed all aspects of the many and various experiences of the Christian life, and appropriate language suggested for every occasion. The 65th Psalm presently under consideration

expresses some of the sentiments of the Lord's people living at the close of the Gospel Age. These, in particular, have been blessed by the great outpouring of truth during this Harvest period, and hence are able to contemplate the outworking of the various features of God's great plan of salvation.

In the first verse of this psalm, David declares, "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion." Sion is one of the names representatively given to the Gospel Age footstep followers of Christ. This class, with Jesus as their head, will compose the heavenly phase of the kingdom. Israel as a nation was, in some respects, typical of the Gospel Age "Sion" class, but there were no sons of God, and no spiritual Sion during the days of the psalmist. While this psalm reflects much that was true of David and of Israel, yet primarily in it the psalmist is speaking prophetically of the time when the Sion class of the present age would be brought into being, and would begin to praise God by showing forth the excellencies of the Heavenly Father's character and plan.—Ps. 139:14-16

SION BEGINS HER WORK

In its application to the followers of Christ, the prophecy of Psalm 65 began to be fulfilled at Pentecost. There this class began to be developed, and it was then that a kind of praise began to ascend to God such as had never been heard from the typical Sion, the house of servants. This is even more forcefully suggested by the *Marginal Translation* of verse one: "Praise is silent for thee, O God, in Sion."

"Unto thee shall the vow be performed," continues David. This speaks of the vow or covenant entered

into by all the Sion class. In another psalm, David outlines this vow, saying, “Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” (Ps. 50:5) This is the vow of full consecration entered into and faithfully performed by all who qualify as members of the Christ, the Sion class of the Gospel Age.

“O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come,” continues the psalmist. (chap. 65:2) One of the things Jesus made plain to his disciples was that through him they were to have access to the Father in prayer. (John 14:13) We further learn that later, through the glorified Christ—the true temple of God—all flesh will approach God in prayer. That will be during the time of the kingdom, for Isaiah wrote, “Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”—Isa. 56:7

In the third verse of our lesson, the psalmist, speaking as if one of the spiritual Sion class, refers to the experiences of the consecrated in the narrow way, saying, “Iniquities prevail against me.” This reminds us of the words of our Master: “Men . . . shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.” (Matt. 5:11) These statements point out the truth that God’s people often appear as evildoers in the eyes of the world. However, in due time their characters will be vindicated. Although they are not perfect according to the flesh, David says, continuing in verse three, “As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away [cover them].”

The elect quality of the spiritual Sion class is brought to our attention in the fourth verse. These words, quoted in the opening text of this article, show that it is indeed a great blessing to be chosen

of God. When we think of the numbers who have not been called to be of this special class, as well as the hosts who have lived and died in ignorance of the glad tidings of salvation, we realize that we have been greatly favored to receive the invitation to the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Additionally, as we recall how much by nature we were in bondage to sin, and how earthly interests, temporal affairs, business, etc., held us in subjection, it is very apparent that the Lord has done much for us. He has helped to free us from the binding influences of these things, giving us, by his providences, the time and desire to investigate the truth. He has given us the grace to take the necessary steps of faith and obedience, that we may gain a relationship to him as spirit-begotten sons of God and dwell in his courts—the condition of full consecration to him.

David continues, in the words of our opening text, reminding us that this Sion class is satisfied with the goodness of God's house—his holy temple. In this harvest period of the Gospel Age, we have heard the Lord's knock, and have appreciated the proofs of his presence. We have opened the door of our heart for the Master to come in to sup with us, and are "satisfied" with these riches of his grace. Indeed, our heart's desire is to soon dwell with him in his "holy temple."

GOD'S PROVIDENCES AWE-INSPIRING

"By terrible things [by things to be revered] in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation." (vs. 5) The reference here seems to be the Lord's providences in connection with the affairs

of his people, and especially the manifestation of his power on their behalf in connection with the imminent establishment of the kingdom. "Who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that [at the present time] are afar off upon the sea"—that is, separated from the lawless masses of mankind.

There is to be a great demonstration of divine power in the day of trouble just preceding the setting up of the kingdom, when the governmental powers of the Messianic Age will be firmly established. The discontent of the lawless elements of mankind will then be stilled, and the blessings of restitution will satisfy the fondest hopes of the people. "The desire of all nations shall come," says the prophet. (Hag. 2:7) Now, however, the "earnest expectation" of humanity must await the "manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:19) It is this that the psalmist speaks of in verses six and seven: "Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power: Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people."

"Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice." (vs. 8) The outgoings of the morning and evening seem to have reference to man's days as they succeed one another. Understood symbolically, the text refers to the Gospel day of salvation, being followed by the millennial day of Christ's kingdom. The realization that we are approaching the time of this great change of dispensation causes special rejoicing among the Lord's people. "Sion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD."—Ps. 97:8

THE DAY OF VISITATION

Verse nine reads: “Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it.” Various visitations of God are brought to our attention in the Scriptures. One such, for instance, was at the close of the Jewish Age, when he sent Jesus to Israel and to the world. The Scriptures tell us concerning this that Israel knew not “the time of [their] visitation.”—Luke 19:44

At the close of the Gospel Age comes another day of visitation. Here too, the great mass of nominal spiritual Israelites are similarly unprepared for Christ’s coming, and are unable to recognize the signs of his invisible presence. Ere long, however, with the setting up of the kingdom, will come the great day of visitation to the world in general, when the long-promised blessings of life will be made available to all the families of the earth.—Gen. 12:3; 28:14; Acts 3:20,21

The river of truth, spoken of in verse nine as the “river of God,” will be full to overflowing in that day. Nourishing and strengthening “corn,”—both natural and spiritual food—will be the portion of all mankind, and will be provided as man’s experiences make him ready to receive them. The *Revised Version* reads: “Thou providest them corn, when thou hast so prepared the earth.”

Verse ten suggests how the wisdom, power, and love of God, the great Husbandman, will operate during the Millennial day, to the end that humanity will bring forth much fruit, and by fully responding to the blessings of the kingdom, attain to the complete restoration of all that was lost in Adam. We quote: “Thou waterest her furrows abundantly [giving special help to the depressed, sin-degraded

portions of humanity]; thou settlest [levelest] the ridges thereof [those classes who in that day will think themselves a little better than their fellows, will need some leveling-down experiences]: thou makest it [the hard-heartedness of man] soft with showers [the showers of God's grace and goodness]; thou blessest the springing thereof [every effort put forth to develop proper character and obey the laws of the kingdom].”—RV

“Thou has crowned the year of Thy goodness.” (Ps. 65:11—*Youngs Literal Translation*) Just as the literal year is frequently crowned with an abundant harvest, so we have every reason to expect that the work of the thousand years of Christ's kingdom will be crowned with an abundant harvest. This harvest will be that of a restored paradise, and a race of perfect human beings to inhabit it—only the few incorrigibly wicked having to be destroyed in second death. The psalmist continues, saying, “Thy paths drop fatness”—that is to say, rich blessings come to those who walk in the paths of the Lord. “All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.”—Ps. 25:10

“They [the rich blessings of the Lord] drop upon the pastures of the wilderness [the pastures provided for the Lord's sheep in the former wilderness of sin and death]: and the little hills [even the small nations of earth] rejoice on every side.” (Ps. 65:12) This kingdom picture of blessing is enlarged upon as the psalmist continues (vs. 13): “The pastures are clothed with flocks [the whole earth will become a pasture for the willing and obedient of humanity]; the valleys also are covered over

with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.” This is a beautiful picture of restored humanity, singing an eternal song of praise to God for all his loving-kindness. “Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD.”—Ps. 150:6 ■

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”—Ephesians 3:20

Let us gird up the loins of our minds and be sober-minded, and hope to the end for the grace that shall be brought unto us at the revelation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us look not at things that are seen, which at most are temporal, but let us look at the things that are unseen, at the eternal things. Let us look unto Jesus with the eye of faith, let us look unto the crown of life which he has promised, let us look unto the place that he is preparing for us in the many mansions of the Father’s house; let us look not with doubt and fear, but with full confidence that the grandest of our hopes will be much more than realized when he shall bid us come up higher and enter into the joys of our Lord. “Faith can firmly trust him, come what may.”

The more we exercise faith along these lines of his direction, the more are we pleasing in the sight of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light; and the more such faith we exercise the more we will have in us the power of God, which will work in us both to will and to do his good pleasure.

—*Songs in the Night*, February 5

Redeeming the Time

“Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

—*Psalms 90:12*

OUR LIVES ARE ASSOCI-

ated with substance, distance, color, heat, cold, and sound. Our five senses make contact with each of these elements.

We touch substance, and discover whether it is hot or cold; smooth or rough; hard or soft. We taste the substance we call food, and find it bitter, sweet, sour, or otherwise. Our sense of smell also helps us to appraise the nature of substances. We see color, and hear noise. With our five senses we learn to properly use these tangible elements.

Equally important to all of us, especially as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, is the element of time. Time is not tangible in the sense that we can feel, taste, see, hear, or smell it. However, we can use time to great advantage or disadvantage. We can utilize time wisely, or we can waste it. Paul indicates that we can “redeem” time. That is, through the sacrifice of certain less important interests, we can find more time to serve the Lord. He wrote,

“See . . . that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”—Eph. 5:15,16

In the rush and stress of the world we are living in today, many undertake to do more than one thing at a time. The world speaks of this as “multi-tasking.” Doing so may be necessary at times in order to accomplish the more mundane things of life, such as at our job. However, it is not a practical, nor a wise, way to conduct our life in general, particularly as it pertains to the accomplishment of our overall goals and objectives, whether they be of a spiritual or temporal kind. To use a simple illustration from daily life, one cannot simultaneously listen to the news on television, and to a conversation around the dinner table, and get very much out of either.

The wise man set forth the same viewpoint with respect to the use of time, when he wrote, “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.”—Eccles. 3:1-8

Here Solomon discusses the element of time as it affects the experiences of a natural man,

and also what is often referred to as “timing.” There is a proper time to speak and a proper time to refrain from speaking. However, one cannot speak and be silent at the same time, nor is it possible to gather and scatter at the same time. Thus, even the natural man, and much more so the Christian, if alert, will seek to use time wisely and effectively.

DEVOTED TO GOD

Those who have devoted themselves to the doing of God’s will are particularly concerned that every fleeting moment of their lives is used to his glory. Our feet, our hands, our tongues, our strength, our money, our all, are consecrated to the Heavenly Father. It requires time for our feet to run swiftly on errands for the great Creator. It takes time for our hands to render the services his providences entrust to us. The consuming of our strength in sweet service for God takes time. It takes time to acquire the means we devote to the furtherance of the Lord’s cause. Time is indeed involved in every aspect of our consecrated lives.

David, in a prayer to the Lord, requested: “My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.” (Ps. 31:15) We may properly take two thoughts from this expression. First, David had given over his entire life to God—his time, and everything he possessed. Second, and by contrast, on account of his full devotion, David was willing for God to deliver him from his enemies whenever it was his [God’s] due time.

As consecrated followers of the Master this should be our attitude. Have we placed our time in God's hands for him to use as may seem good? When in our prayer at the time of our consecration to the Father, we said, "I bring to thee my all," that surely included our time, and therefore he has made us stewards over our time. As stewards, we are responsible to use it wisely for him, even as he has done with respect to everything else that was included in our consecration. As to how long we will serve him this side of the veil, and the extent to which his providences make possible the use of our time directly in his service, we leave in his hands. Just as we are willing to go where he wants us to go; say what he wants us to say; do what he wants us to do; and be what he wants us to be—so we want to serve as long as he wants us to serve. In addition, the truly consecrated heart does not ask why the load is so heavy, neither is it concerned as to how long the burden must be borne.

When Jesus said, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved," he was speaking of time. (Matt. 24:13) James wrote, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." (James 5:7) This also refers to the element of time in carrying out our consecration. To patiently wait on the Lord is to leave our all in his hands, both from the standpoint of using it wisely in his service, and of being content to wait for his due time to finish our earthly course, that we may be forever with him.

THE WILL OF GOD

We have already quoted Paul's admonition to redeem the time "because the days are evil." In the next verse, he adds, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Eph. 5:16,17) From this it is evident that a proper redeeming of time requires an understanding of the will of the Heavenly Father and a wise, consecrated application of that comprehension. The thought of redeeming the time is to buy it back from other purposes for which it was formerly used. The word "buy" suggests that this is not done without cost. Indeed, it may well be very costly in terms of earthly pleasures and comforts. This, of course, is what we expected when we devoted our lives to the Lord. To present our bodies a living sacrifice is certain to be costly. (Rom. 12:1) To take up our cross and follow Jesus costs us our lives. (Matt. 16:24) To be "beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God" costs us everything we have, including life itself.—Rev. 20:4

The daily fulfillment of our consecration is a matter of determining, as stewards of the Lord, just how we will use that which we have devoted to him—including our time. Before we were drawn to the Father and dedicated ourselves to the doing of his will, we governed our lives with the thought foremost in mind of making the best provisions possible for the well-being of ourselves and our families. This is proper and good. Through the drawing power of the Truth we have come to realize that, having been bought with a price—even the precious blood of Jesus Christ—we no longer belong to ourselves. No more can we

properly do with our lives simply what might appeal to our fleshly mind—even if noble and honest. Instead, our lives belong totally to the Lord. It is this “answer of a good conscience” that leads us to devote our all to God and to the doing of his will, as step by step he reveals it to us.—I Pet. 3:21

We are to remember that we have consecrated only ourselves to the Lord—not our families. Indeed, prior to being drawn to God through the power of the Truth, many of the Lord’s people had already assumed family responsibilities of one kind or another. They may have had husbands or wives—they may have had children—or there might have been others properly dependent upon them. The Heavenly Father takes all of this into consideration, and has clearly revealed it to be his will that we continue to recognize these obligations with loving devotion.—I Tim. 5:8

The Heavenly Father is particularly interested in the heart devotion of his people. He needs nothing that we could give to him, not even our time. However, when we give our hearts to him, this includes everything else. We prove this dedication by the manner in which we use our substance and time in harmony with the spirit of our consecration.

In keeping with Paul’s admonition to redeem, or buy back, time, the Lord is interested in how serious a consideration we give to this aspect of our lives. Consecration requires change in our habits of living, or else it is in name only. True, there is an erroneous viewpoint of the Christian life which makes it a matter of merely believing on the Lord, and little else except the giving up of

sinful habits. However, to take up one's cross and follow the Master means much more than this.

BUYING BACK THE TIME

There is the need for time to study the Word of truth. Where can we buy time for this? What can we give up which we were doing before consecration that will give us time to study the Scriptures so that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord? The Christian also needs time to assemble with those of like precious faith, his brethren in Christ. We must buy time for this.

There is also the privilege of bearing witness to the Truth. Whether we do this by giving a personal testimony to our friends, or neighbors, or by some other means, it requires time. If we proclaim the kingdom message through the distribution of booklets, tracts, or other forms of the printed message, it takes time. Even the methods available to us today of spreading the Gospel message via the Internet, e-mail, or other electronic media, take time to formulate and implement. Here again, we must buy back time for these endeavors.

Prior to consecration our time was indeed fully consumed. Now, as the consecrated people of God, we have a new outlook on life, having found more important ways to use our time. The question naturally arises: Where can we find time to devote to the service of the Lord and to his people? It can only be found by "buying it" through the sacrifice of earthly interests. In this regard, we are to remember that it must be our own individual interests that are sacrificed, not the interests of those who properly depend upon us for care and attention.

How appropriate then, is the prayer of our opening text, “Teach us to number our days.” The thought here is not simply to count the days of our lives as they go fleeting by, but to consider them units of time in which we can seek to know and to do the Lord’s will. The thought in the Hebrew language is to “weigh out,” or to “allot.” There are twenty-four hours in each day. A certain number of these hours is necessary for rest and sleep, and there are other physical needs which also require time. With many of God’s people, a goodly portion of their waking hours is accounted for in meeting responsibilities which are properly theirs—those of family, home, and job—and which the Lord expects them willingly and gladly to assume.

UNTO THE LORD

What a happy thought it is to realize, as the Scriptures reveal, that the doing of those necessary things which devolve upon us as natural men and women is recognized by God as service rendered to him, if done in the right spirit. This is a wonderful provision of divine grace.—Eph. 6:5,7; Col. 3:22,23

We are admonished to work out our own salvation with the assurance that God works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. (Phil. 2:12,13) One way in which we can work out our own salvation is by numbering our days. We do this by profiting spiritually by the ordinary experiences which come to us in the daily routine of life. By seeking the Lord’s guidance and help, the very ordinary, perhaps even drab and monotonous, duties of life will help us to reach higher grounds of spiritual attainment. Such time is well spent if it

results in spiritual growth and development of Christian character.

We sometimes hear a person remark, "I didn't have a dull moment all day today," meaning that something interesting and exciting was happening all the time. Each day of our consecrated life should be like this, not in the sense that our experiences are in themselves necessarily unusual, but because we can see in them opportunities to grow in grace. Likewise, those unforeseen experiences which we encounter day by day should be viewed as opportunities for the exercise of faith and patience. "Dis-appointments" can, by faith, be viewed as "His-appointments." Thus, all our time should be counted as affording occasions for making our calling and election sure.

Our opening text says that the object of numbering our days is to apply our hearts unto wisdom. The *Marginal Translation* reads "cause to come," or "to attain" hearts of wisdom. Another translation reads "that we may obtain a heart endowed with wisdom." (*Leeser Translation*) The heart is the seat of affection, or emotion. By nature our emotions and affections are not especially wise, but David suggests that by numbering our days we can attain heart wisdom.

Our affections, by nature, are centered on earthly affairs. However, as New Creatures in Christ Jesus we are to set our affections on things above—spiritual or heavenly things. (Col. 3:1-3) This transfer of our affections does not come about naturally. It is accomplished at great cost to the flesh and its interests, particularly in connection with the use of our time, our talents, our strength, and our means.

While we rejoice that the Lord accepts all that we do as unto him, this does not relieve us of the responsibility of buying whatever time we can to devote directly to his service. The cost of this redemption of time will be the sacrifice of fleshly interests of one sort or another. As we progress in the narrow way, and our hearts become more in tune with the Heavenly Father and with the spiritual privileges which he holds out to us, these sacrifices will seem less costly. The joys of fellowship with the Lord and with his people, together with the opportunities of laying down our lives in his service, will more than compensate for every sacrifice we make.

NOT MUCH TIME

Nearly two thousand years ago the Apostle Paul wrote, "The time is short." (I Cor. 7:29) This is even more true today. In Paul's day, the time for each follower of the Master to make his calling and election sure was no longer than his natural span of life. This is also true now. However, today, because of the many demands upon our time, it might well be even shorter than then. Thus, to the fully consecrated, there is a degree of urgency in numbering the days, hours, and moments as they fly swiftly by.

The psalmist raised the question, "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?" His answer was, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people." (Ps. 116:12-14) Our vows of consecration encompass all that we have and are, including our time.

How well the psalmist emphasized the importance of time in the paying of our vows. This, he said, we should do "now." There have been many failures in every walk of life caused simply by putting off the doing of things which should have been done "now." Each present moment of life is the only one about which we can do anything. Yesterday has gone. We can, and should, rejoice if we used its moments wisely, and to the glory of God. If through negligence we failed to any extent, there is little or nothing we can do about it today, aside from striving to do better than we did yesterday.

We can resolutely determine that we will not waste the moments and hours which will make up tomorrow, and it is good to look ahead with such a determination to be faithful. However, today is when we are living. We should make sure we are faithful now. There is little use of singing, "Take my moments and my days; let them flow in constant praise," if we put off until tomorrow what we could have done today to praise the Lord and serve his people.

The idea that tomorrow may never come, need not be true. Indeed, it will not be true if we make faithful use of the privileges which are before us today. Doing this, tomorrow will not only come, but it will be a brighter tomorrow because we will be better prepared to meet its responsibilities and to rejoice in its blessings. If tomorrow finds us beyond the veil with our Lord, that also will be because we have been faithful today.

While there is, as Solomon wrote, a time to every purpose under heaven, to us who have taken up our cross to follow the Master there is, in reality,

time for only one thing. Paul wrote, "This one thing I do," and he could just as truly have added, "I do this one thing all the time." This "one thing" is pressing toward the mark for the greatest prize ever offered, the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:13,14) No runner in a race ever won a prize by taking time out to do other things. If it be our heart's desire truly to attain the "mark for the prize of the high calling," let us diligently do this "one thing," remembering to number our days and redeem our time in the wisest manner possible. ■

If We Had But A Day

*We should fill the hours with the sweetest things,
If we had but a day;
We should drink alone at the purest springs
On our upward way;
We should hold our wearied or wayward wills
To the clearest light;
We should keep our eyes on the heavenly hills,
If they lay in sight;
We should hush our murmurs of discontent
At a life's defeat;
We should take whatever a good God sent
With a rest complete.
We should waste no moment in weak regret,
If the days were but one,
If what we remember and what we forget
Went out with the sun;
We should be from our clamorous selves set free,
To work and to pray;
To be what the Father would have us be,
If we had but a day.*

—*Poems of Dawn*

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

A. Allers

Sacramento, CA
February 14-16

M. J. Balko

Sacramento, CA
February 14-16

C. Chandler

Sacramento, CA
February 14-16

D. Christiansen

Sacramento, CA
February 14-16

O. B. Elbert

Sacramento, CA
February 14-16

R. Goodman

Louisville, AL February 2
Sacramento, CA 14-16

B. Jakubowski

Sacramento, CA
February 14-16

S. Jeuck

St. Petersburg, FL February 16

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.

Brother Alois Crepinsek, Phoenix, AZ—December 14. Age, 95

Brother Sydney Greig, Saskatoon, SK, Canada—December 23. Age, 95

Brother Aaron Victor, Tumkur, KA, India—December 23. Age, 67

Brother Charles Albert Zufelt, Vancouver, BC, Canada—December 27. Age, 96

Brother Daniel McCoy, Greater New London Area, CT—December 29. Age, 64

Brother Kenneth O. Chatters, Sr., New Orleans, LA—December 31. Age, 81

CONVENTIONS

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

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 14-16—

Holiday Inn Express, 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821. Contact J. Freer, 8012 Vintage Way, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Phone: (916) 879-4655

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 1-3—

Howard Johnson Hotel, 230 West State Road 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. For room reservations, contact the hotel. Phone: (407) 862-4455. Specify "Florida Bible Students" for special rates, which expire on February 17, 2014. Other information, contact S. Jeuck. Phone: (407) 834-7592 or E-mail: sjeuck@aol.com

NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION, March 8,9—

Holiday Inn Gulfport/Airport, 9515 Highway 49, Gulfport, MS. Contact M. Costelli. Phone: (228) 861-2822 or E-mail: michael@simpkins-costelli.com

NEW YORK SPRING CONVENTION, March 23—

Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact A. Williams. Phone: (718) 261-3053 or E-mail: austin@osnetinc.com

GREATER NEW LONDON PRE-MEMORIAL CON-

VENTION, March 30—East Lyme Community Center, 37 Society Road, East Lyme, CT. Contact V. Grillo. Phone: (860) 823-7099 or E-mail: millennialview@sbcglobal.net

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April

5,6—Quality Inn-Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48083. Hotel Reservation, phone (248) 689-7500. Specify "Detroit Bible Students" for special rate. Contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588 or E-mail: nemeshfp@aol.com

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 18-20—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Blvd. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Group subsidized rate is \$69.00/room per night, up to four people in a room. This rate will apply if reservation is made by the Convention Secretary, S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 268-8170 or E-mail: srbt@juno.com

CHICAGO DECLARATION DAY CONVENTION, May 24-26—Additional information to follow. Contact: A. Schneider. E-mail: alys1874@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, May 24,25—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91504. Contact J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 982-7253 or E-mail: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com. Special room rate at Ramada Inn by contacting N. Nekora. Phone: (310) 454-5248. Deadline for special rate is April 24.

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, June 8—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA. Contact R. Eldridge. Phone: (215) 949-0652 or E-mail: rugeo@comcast.net

VANCOUVER CONVENTION, June 14,15—Aldergrove Kinsmen Community Center, 26770 29th Avenue, Aldergrove, BC, Canada V4W 3B8. Contact: B. Smith. Phone: (604) 576-6070 or E-mail: bas@telus.net

PRINCE ALBERT CONVENTION, June 28-30—Siwak Farm. Contact A. Siwak, RR 1 Stn Mpp, Prince Albert, SK, Canada S6V 5P8. Phone: (306) 764-7692 or E-mail: ahsiwak@inet2000.com

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 19-24—University of Pittsburgh, 450 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown, PA. Contact E. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com