

The Dawn

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Table of Contents

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN	
God and Creation Series, Part 5 —Temptation, Fall, and Sentence	2
INTERNATIONAL	
BIBLE STUDY LESSONS	
The Preeminent Christ	12
The Sufficient Christ	14
Life in Christ	16
Christ Unites	18
CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE	
The Just Shall Live	20
A Mighty Hand and An Out- stretched Arm	39
Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts	11
YOUNG ADULTS' BIBLE STUDIES	
The Golden Thread Series, Part 40—Peter, the Powerful Preacher	52
TALKING THINGS OVER	
A Visit to India	58
A Letter from Bulgaria	60
ENCOURAGING LETTERS	62
"FRANK & ERNEST"	
Radio Schedule	34
THE BIBLE ANSWERS	
TV Schedule	36
OBITUARIES	64
SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS	64

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

GOD AND CREATION SERIES, Part 5

Temptation, Fall, and Sentence

*“The LORD God commanded the man, saying,
Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:
but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,
thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou
eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”*

Genesis 2:16,17

THE CREATOR HAD endowed man with the ability to know right from wrong. Having created our first parents perfect, they possessed the necessary moral strength to resist temptation to do wrong. But they did not, intuitively, know what was right and what was wrong. This knowledge had to be communicated to them by their Creator, who, in so doing, became their lawgiver. The laws which God communicated to them were simple and understandable, quite within range of full comprehension, even by the inexperienced Adam and Eve.

Certain things were expected of them. They were to multiply and fill the earth. They were to subdue the earth. God's law provided that they could freely eat of all the trees in Eden, with one exception, which was “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” The Scriptures do not indicate what sort of tree this was. Perhaps it was not greatly unlike many of the other trees in the garden. Nor are we to suppose that the fruit of this tree contained a mysterious element, which, if eaten, would give one understanding that he did not previously possess. It was the act of disobedience in partaking of this tree, and the sequence of circumstances to follow, that would lead to a full knowledge of good and evil.

God's love had made wonderfully full and rich provision for our first parents. They were themselves perfect. They had been given dominion over earth's animal kingdom. A marvelous home had been furnished for them, and they were bountifully provided with life-sustaining food. Their loving Creator had a just right to ask that they obey him. From every standpoint it might be reasoned, they were under obligation to render the obedience he demanded.

The restrictive commandment, or law, which God gave to our first parents was simple and understandable. Man-made laws are usually complicated, and therefore obscure in meaning. In most cases one feels a measure of insecurity as to the intent of certain laws unless a lawyer is consulted, and these professional interpreters sometimes disagree. Even in the Supreme Court of the United States there are frequently split decisions over the meaning of laws, and this despite the fact that the Supreme Court judges are the most highly trained men in the country in the interpretation of the law.

But Adam and Eve did not need a lawyer to interpret the plainly stated law concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not to eat of this tree—that was all. There were no obscurely stated circumstances under which they were to have the privilege of deciding whether or not they could properly eat of the forbidden fruit. There were no exceptions of any kind—"Thou shalt not eat of it," was the law, "for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

This law was given to Adam before Eve was created, but he fully informed her concerning it. This is revealed in the first three verses of the next chapter. We quote: "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."—Gen. 3:1-3

Temptation

The general average of human reactions today indicates that when something is forbidden there is an increased desire to indulge. This may well have been so even from the beginning, when our first parents were perfect. Of mother Eve it is written, "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."—Gen. 3:6

Even the forbidden tree was "pleasant to the eye," as well as good for food. This was true of the garden as a whole. Normally, all nature is pleasant to the eye, and it is evident that God planned it so for the legitimate joy of his human creation. It is a false notion that one must close his eyes to the beauty with which he is surrounded, and make himself melancholy and miserable in order to live close to the LORD.

Delectable and nourishing food has also been provided by the LORD for man's enjoyment and sustenance. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that God wants his people to eat poorly prepared and unpalatable food, and thus deprive their natural senses of enjoyment, in order to live closer to him. These are among the distorted notions pertaining to the worship of God which have been handed down to us from the Dark Ages. The forbidden fruit in Eden was not forbidden **because** it was pleasant to the eye and good for food.

It was wrong to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil simply because God had forbidden it. This was the supreme test of obedience which God placed upon our first parents. It was, in reality, a test of their faith and confidence in him. It was a legitimate test, because God's thoughts and ways are so much higher than man's that of necessity they must frequently—indeed, almost always—be beyond human understanding. So, if man were to obey God's laws only when he decided they were proper, we can see what chaos would have prevailed on earth.

There is a modern saying that we should trust God even where we cannot trace him. This is true. God does ask us to reason with him, and to the extent that it is possible to understand the whys and wherefores of his laws, this information is revealed to us. God does not arbitrarily withhold from his people an understanding of his will, but he does expect them to obey even though in his wisdom he does not always give the reason. The one in whom we live and move and have our being, and whose thoughts are as high above ours as the heavens are higher than the earth, has the right to expect our obedience, even though many times it must of necessity be a blind obedience. Yea, we should love to obey him under these conditions. The poet has well said: "I would rather walk in the dark with God, Than go alone in the light. I would rather walk by faith with him, Than go alone by sight."

This was the opportunity which confronted Eve, and later Adam. There was nothing wrong with the forbidden tree—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But the reason God had forbidden it was withheld. Consequently, the question of whether they would obey or disobey was a test of faith, a test of confidence in their Creator. How appropriate that such a test should be placed upon them! All the inanimate creations of God obey him, not by chance, but by force. The sun rises and sets in obedience to a split-second timetable arranged by the Creator. Should not his intelligent creations also obey him?

But, coupled with an intelligence which reflected many of the principles by which the Creator himself is governed, man was given a free will. A part of the image of God in man was his freedom of choice. God desired his obedience, but only if man, because of his trust in his Creator, desired to obey. If such an objective could not be attained, man would have to lose his life—"In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

Eve yielded to the temptation. She offered the fruit of the forbidden tree to Adam, and he also partook. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." (I Tim. 2:14) Eve's decep-

tion was apparently in believing the "serpent's" assurance that death would not result from her disobedience—"Ye shall not surely die." (Gen. 3:4) Adam was not deceived by this falsehood, nevertheless he joined his wife in the transgression.

One of the motives which induced Eve to disobey her Creator is stated in Genesis 3:6. It was a tree to be desired because it would make one wise. There is nothing wrong with this motive, not if the wisdom one craves is along right lines, and there is nothing in the record to indicate that Eve desired a knowledge of sinful things. Had she exercised proper trust in her Maker, she would have reasoned that in his own due time, and under circumstances which would be best for her, she would be given wisdom. But she lacked such faith.

Being deceived into believing that the threatened penalty of death would not be exacted, Eve no doubt felt that she had nothing to lose, and probably much to gain by disobedience. In this another important viewpoint is revealed, that true obedience to God must spring from the heart, motivated by a sincere desire to please him. But Eve was willing to disobey, since, as she was deceived into believing, she would not be punished.

Nothing is said to reveal Adam's motive for joining his wife in disobedience. The record states merely that Eve "gave also to her husband with her; and he did eat." (vs. 6) It has been conjectured—and we believe reasonably so—that Adam, realizing he would lose his wife in death because of her disobedience, decided that he did not want to live without her, so deliberately and willfully partook of the forbidden fruit, knowing full well what the consequences would be.

But in this Adam also revealed a lack of faith and confidence in God. He should have known that if he obeyed, especially under such trying circumstances, the LORD would surely compensate him, and that he would not be left permanently alone. But he did not take this viewpoint. The tragic fact that his wife must die took possession of his reasoning, and in reckless abandon, he joined her in transgressing the divine law.

Seized with Fear

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

Adding to their shame, our first parents, because of their disobedience, came under a spell of fear. This unhappy reaction to sin has been the experience of wrongdoers throughout the ages since. Adam and Eve had good reason to fear. Having been created perfect, they could have resisted the temptation placed before them. Eve, of course, was deceived. But even so, she too readily disbelieved her Maker. The 'serpent' was merely the mouthpiece of Satan the Devil. Just how the reported conversation with Eve was conducted the account does not say, nor is it important for us to know. But the arguments presented by Satan were effective, and now that both Eve and Adam had disobeyed, we find them cringing in fear before their Maker and true benefactor.

The Penalty Falls

Adam and Eve were soon to learn that God meant it when he said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:17) Their sentence reads, "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam

he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”—Gen. 3:16-19

A further affirmation of this sentence of death is given in verses 22-24 of the chapter. These verses read, “The LORD God said, Behold, . . . now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

In the **Marginal Translation** of Genesis 2:17 God’s warning of the death penalty reads, “In the day that thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die.” This suggests, not an instantaneous snuffing out of life, but a gradual process of dying, and that is the way it worked out. Adam and Eve were driven out of their garden home, and prevented from having access to the trees of life, with the result that they began to die. Adam, starting on the downward course from the top of perfection’s scale, lived 930 years before he returned to the dust from whence he had been taken. When he died the full penalty for his sin had been exacted. Adam had not been deceived by God as to the nature of the penalty.

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

What is death? **Webster's Dictionary** defines death as "the state of being dead." Webster also used the word "extinction." These definitions are fully in harmony with the teachings of the Bible. In Ecclesiastes 9:10 we read, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

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

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

Here Job is explaining that those who suffer much, and can get no relief, are glad when they realize that death is near, that they 'found the grave'. As he explains, those who are dead are "still" and "quiet." They "sleep" and are "at rest." (vs. 13) This is in agreement with Ecclesiastes 9:5,6, which read, "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, is now perished." Clearly, then, death is a state of

oblivion. The “dead know not anything.” Their former loves, their hatreds, and their envy, all perish in death.

All Die

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

But we can thank God for the promise that this dreaded enemy is one day to be destroyed! When the loving purpose of God in Creation is fully accomplished, everything out of harmony with him and with his laws of righteousness will be routed from the earth, and, as Paul says, “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” (I Cor. 15:26) Paul’s declaration confirms the words of the Prophet Isaiah, who wrote, the LORD “will swallow up death in victory; and the LORD God will wipe away tears from off all faces.”—Isa. 25:8

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

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JULY 1—"Walk as children of light...proving what is acceptable unto the LORD."—Ephesians 5:8,10 (Z. '99-4 Hymn 154)

JULY 8—"The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."—I Timothy 3:15 (Z. '99-37 Hymn 225)

JULY 15—"Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, . . . and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."—I Corinthians 13:3 (Z. '99-77 Hymn 140)

JULY 22—"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all."—Psalm 34:18,19 (Z. '03-217 Hymn 276)

"A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again."—Proverbs 24:16 (Z. '03-217 Hymn 119)

JULY 29—"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us."—Daniel 3:17 (Z. '99-171 Hymn 63)



"Be not faithless, but believing."—John 20:27

Unbelief is a serious thing in the sight of God, for it places a barrier between him and those upon whom he would graciously bestow his blessings. Abraham became a friend of God upon the basis of his faith, or belief. This thought of friendship in relation to faith helps us to appreciate more fully just why faith is so important to God. Even in our relationships with one another there could be no friendship except upon the basis of faith, or confidence. There can be no friendship among nations except as they have faith or confidence in one another; and so it is in our relationship to God. If we wish to enjoy the blessings which he is so willing to bestow abundantly upon his friends, we must have confidence in him.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR JULY 4

The Preeminent Christ

KEY VERSE: "He is before all things, and by him all things consist."—Colossians 1:17

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Colossians 1:3-5, 11-23

IT WAS WHILE confined to his prison cell in Rome that Paul wrote his epistle to the faithful brethren at Colosse. (Col. 1:2) Epaphras, a fellow-laborer with the Apostle Paul, is believed to have founded the Colossian church, imparting "the word of the truth of the gospel," to them, and he was, even then, still serving as their faithful minister. (Col. 1:57) There is, however, no record of Paul ever having personally paid the church a visit. Upon receiving word, probably from Epaphras, that heresy had crept into that church, Paul felt his responsibility as one having "daily care of all the churches" to prevent the error from becoming epidemic.—II Cor 11:28

Still, much of the news brought to Paul was good: it spoke of the faith of those saints in Christ Jesus; their

love for all the saints; and the hope laid up for them in heaven, all of which had, according to the report, brought forth much fruit. The troublesome issue, however, centered directly on the teaching regarding the pre-eminence or supremacy of Jesus Christ. This error was brought on primarily by some of Jewish background who insisted on forcing their intellectual, worldly, Gnostic views and observance of certain now obsolete rituals of the Mosaic Law upon the church. In his epistle, Paul met this false line of reasoning with the statement that none were to be judged henceforth as in the past, in "meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days."—Col. 2:16

In responding to this question, Paul then directed his persuasive arguments to

three particular points of Christ's preeminence: 1) in creation; 2) in redemption; and 3) in the church.

He explained that Jesus, the **Logos**, the "Word" of God (John 1:1), was the very beginning of Creation, in fact, he was the only direct act of Creation personally performed by God. (Rev. 3:14) Paul asserted in Colossians 1:15-17 that our Lord "is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." Then, Paul said, "By him [Jesus, as God's representative] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth."

Continuing his remarkable testimony, Paul then described Christ's preeminence relating to the church and the wondrous work of reconciliation he will accomplish in his thousand-year kingdom. He said (vs. 18, **Weymouth Translation**), "Moreover he is the Head of his body, the church, he is the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead, in order that he himself may in all things occupy the foremost place. For it was the Father's gracious will that the whole of the divine perfec-

tions should dwell in him. And God purposed through him to reconcile the universe to himself, making peace through his [Christ's] blood, which was shed upon the Cross—to reconcile to himself through him, I say, things on earth and things in heaven."

Jesus was the firstborn from among the dead—a firstfruit of them that slept, that in all things he might have the preeminence. (I Cor. 15:20, **Wilson's Diaglott**) He was the first to be resurrected from the grave, but Paul assures us that the members of his body are also a "kind of firstfruits of his creatures."—James 1:18; Phil. 3:10

The apostle finally declared that he was made a minister of the church according to the stewardship bestowed on him from God, for their benefit, that he might fully carry out the preaching of the Word of God. In this Paul demonstrated his faithfulness. His words not only brought enlightenment on this subject to the church at Colosse, but, indeed, to all those called of God down throughout this Gospel Age. ■

LESSON FOR JULY 11

The Sufficient Christ

KEY VERSE: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him."—Colossians 2:6

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Colossians 2:5-19

IN TODAY'S LESSON, Paul sounds a warning to the church at Colosse, designed to guard those brethren from the seductive influence of false Greek philosophy, melded with distorted portions of the Jewish Law proclaimed by teachers, probably of Jewish origin, which tended to draw them away from the true Gospel of Christ.

Paul, in exhorting his brethren there, said, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." (vss. 6,7) If there is anything for which we ought to be thankful, it is for the knowledge of the great truths respecting our Lord and Savior.

In his opening comments Paul said he wanted them "to know how strenuously I am

exerting myself for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally." (vss. 1,2, **New International Version**) His object was, of course, to induce them to hold fast to the true faith and not to swerve from the faith they had in Christ when he was first made known to them.

When Paul said, "In him [Christ] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (vs. 3), one of his points was to liken our Lord to a great treasure-house where was to be found all the wisdom needful for man's salvation. Christ is able to instruct and lead us in all we need to know, so that it is not necessary for us to resort to philosophy or the teachings of men. Paul gave them this warning as a guide: "Beware lest any man spoil you (**Margin**, "makes prey of you") through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the

rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Just prior to this he had also given them strong warning, lest any man should beguile them with enticing words—persuasive arguments, sounding credible.

The Apostle (in verses 10-17) reassured the Colossians that Jesus' death on the cross had removed the legal demands of the Law which were against them. Paul said: "Ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who both raised him from the dead, and you . . . hath he quickened together with him having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, . . . and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." He spoke of the Law arrangement as 'shadows' of things to come, rather than the substance or reality, which is 'Christ'.

Those shadows merely prefigured, or represented, good things to come and having come, that which was designed to represent the good things were no longer binding.

Finally, Paul's letter advised the brethren at Colosse,

"Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow."—Col. 2:18,19, **NIV**

Paul gave a description of Christ and the Church under the figure of Head and body, "Henceforth, be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."—Eph. 4:14-16 ■

LESSON FOR JULY 18

Life in Christ

KEY VERSE: "Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."—*Colossians 3:10*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Colossians 3:1-17*

IN THE PREVIOUS chapter the apostle warned the Colossians against the dangers of false philosophy and the erroneous doctrines of teachers. In this chapter, he teaches them what those whose "life is hid with Christ in God" ought to pursue and to seek.—vs. 3

In Colossians 2:12 Paul had said, You have been "buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are also risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead." As the waters close over the Christian in baptism, it is as if he were buried in death; as he emerges from the waters, it is like being resurrected to a new life. Now, his thoughts must be set on things above—on heavenly things—giving him a new set of values which are set by God and not man. But it does not mean he must completely withdraw himself

from the activities of this world.

Paul wrote (vs. 4), "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Because our Lord died on the cross as a ransom for all (I Tim. 2:6), and as the Father has life in himself, so he has given to the Son to have life in himself. John explained, in I John 5:11: "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." It is through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus and the power of God's Holy Spirit that we have been provided the means whereby we may receive life as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. And our goal in this regard is that we "be conformed to the image of his Son."—Rom. 8:29

In our Key Verse Paul said, "You have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self,

which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." Then, he urged us that since "we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (vs. 10, **New International Version**; Gal. 5:25) However, this is not an instantaneous change, but it is gradual and progressive. In his letter to the Ephesians the apostle described it as the act of "growing up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."—Eph. 4:15

In writing to the Romans, Paul told of the problem he had of putting off the old man with his weaknesses. He said, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. . . . Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it."—Rom. 7:15-20, **NIV**

After "putting off the old man with his deeds," Paul gave a list of graces with which the Colossian brethren must clothe themselves: "As God's chosen people, holy

and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the LORD forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."—Col. 3:10-17, **NIV**

The bond of love which Paul describes, encircles all the graces. It well illustrates the intimate tie that binds true followers of the Master into one body in Christ. True Christian love is built upon the foundation of a clear understanding of God's great plan, and unquestionable faith in our part in it.

The Scriptures assure us that the body of Christ is composed of many members—by one Spirit the members are baptized into one body. It is God who sets the members, everyone, into the body as it pleases him. As recipients of such great honor, what more can we do than to strive earnestly to do his will, and in so doing, assist our brethren, building them up on our most holy faith. ■

LESSON FOR JULY 25

Christ Unites

KEY VERSE: "If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself."—*Philemon 17*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Philemon 4-21*

WHEN PAUL WAS in prison in Rome, he called himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the faith and preaching of the Gospel. While he was imprisoned he wrote the briefest of his epistles, which was to Philemon, a leader in the church at Colosse, and a beloved fellow worker.

Paul wrote to Philemon, commending him for his growth and steadfastness in Christ. He said, "Because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints." —Philem. 5-7, *New International Version*

Paul's aim in writing this letter was to help Onesimus, a slave owned by Philemon,

who was somewhat irresponsible. He had escaped to Rome, and upon coming in contact with Paul had become a Christian, forming a relationship between them that became as close as that of a father and son.—vs. 10

Legally, however, Onesimus still belonged to Philemon and, therefore, Paul did not have a right to keep him, as much as he would have liked to have Onesimus continue to minister to his needs in prison—he had made himself nearly indispensable to Paul.

Paul, however, appealed to Philemon to receive Onesimus back, not as a slave, but as a beloved brother in Christ. "As I send you this letter, I know you'll do what I ask—I believe, in fact, you'll do more." (vs. 20, *Phillips Translation*) Paul said, "Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you

and to me." (vss. 11, *NIV*) The name Onesimus means 'useful or profitable'. Since he had now become Paul's 'son' in the faith, Paul entreated Philemon to receive his slave as if he were bidding a welcome to Paul himself.—vss. 10,17

Paul well knew all followers of Christ are one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free men. This is such an important doctrine he repeated it in several of his letters. For example, in I Corinthians 12:13: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Again, he said, in Galatians 3:28, "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." Still later Paul wrote: "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."—Col. 3:11

When the possession of a slave was passed from one person to another, or when the slave was freed, it was customary for any debts or penalties to be assumed either by the slave himself, or by the new owner. Acting contrary to this established practice, Paul gladly volunteered to assume responsibility himself for any wrongs or debts Onesimus incurred when he was yet with his master and before fleeing to Rome. Paul, in effect said, "If he has done any damage or if he owes you anything, put it down to my account—I will repay it!"—vs. 19

He reminded Philemon of the greater spiritual debt which Philemon himself owed as a follower of Christ. (vs. 18,19) Paul's plea brings to mind the Apostle John's assertion, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen. . . . He who loveth God love[s] his brother also."—I John 4:20,21

We are not told the end of the story, but we can be quite sure that Philemon responded to the pleading of Paul. ■

The Just Shall Live

"The just shall live by his faith."

—Habakkuk 2:4

FAITH IS THE ability to believe as true that which cannot be demonstrated to the physical senses. Faith in the existence of God is a good example of this ability. We cannot see God nor hear his voice. We cannot touch him. Nevertheless, when we think of the vast universe around us, our reason tells us that there must be a supreme Intelligent Creator. We accept the testimony of our reason and believe that God exists.

This is faith in its simplest form. But true Christian faith goes beyond this. We not only believe that God exists, but we have faith *in* God, in his integrity, his justice, his love, his wisdom, his power. And we have faith in the rightness of the divine plan as it pertains to ourselves individually and to his people collectively. We also have faith in the divine plan for the world in general. This is the minimum of faith which one must possess in order to approach God and receive blessings from him. Paul wrote, "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."—Heb. 11:6

We do not need to exercise faith in the existence of our next door neighbor, because we can see him. But if we are to enjoy a friendly relationship with our neighbor we must have faith in him, and he in us. We would have to know that he is truthful, honest, upright, and dependable; and he would have to be assured of the same concerning us. So if we are to enjoy a friendly relationship with the great God of the universe we must believe not only that "he is," but also that we can depend upon him to fulfill all his gracious promises. Or as Paul stated it, that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Adam was created in the image of God, and was physically and mentally perfect. Despite this, when temptation was presented to him he disobeyed God's command. Adam knew that Eve had sinned and would doubtless die. He probably felt that he could not live without her. However, if he had exercised full faith in his Creator, he would have known that in some manner this tragedy would be overruled for his good, and he would have remained obedient. Thus, while various adverse influences were at work, basically it was Adam's lack of faith that led him into sin.

Since Adam became a sinner, his children were born in sin, with resultant condemnation to death passing on to his entire progeny. Because of this the Bible tells us that there is none righteous, no not one, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. However, among the fallen race there have been some who exercised faith in God despite their physical and mental imperfections. To some of these God has spoken and invited their cooperation. This has given them an opportunity to demonstrate their faith.

Abraham was one of these. The first record of this is found in Genesis 12:1-3. Abraham was asked by God to leave his own people and to go into a land that he would show him. Paul observes that when Abraham received this call he "obeyed, and went out not knowing whither he went." (Heb. 11:8) A wonderful promise was associated with this call, the promise that through Abraham's seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. Abraham believed this promise, and he demonstrated his belief his faith by his obedience.

And Abraham was richly rewarded for his faith. We read in Genesis 15:6, "He believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Paul quotes this in Romans 4:3, and in the 22nd verse adds, "It was imputed to him for righteousness." Clearly, it was because of Abraham's faith that righteousness was reckoned, or imputed to him. Abraham, like all other members of the fallen and condemned race, was imperfect. It was impossible for him to live up to the divine standard of righteousness, yet he had strong faith in God and in the promises of God. His faith was so strong that had he been in

the Garden of Eden and faced with the same test that came upon Adam, it is doubtful if he would have disobeyed God. So now God was willing to, and did, "count" or consider Abraham's faith as an evidence of his integrity. He knew that Abraham would serve him perfectly if he could.

Because of Abraham's faith, God accepted him as a friend. Here was a genuine basis for friendship. Abraham believed God, and because he did, God had confidence in him. Thus a beautiful friendship was established and maintained which continued throughout Abraham's lifetime. On various occasions God spoke to Abraham, reiterating and enlarging upon the promise he made to him on the "plains of Mamre" that through his seed he would bless all the families of the earth.—Gen. 13:18, *Margin*; 14:13; 35:27

Abraham's faith in these promises caused him to look for a "city," a government, which would have foundations, whose builder and maker would be God. When put to the final test, Abraham's faith was such that he believed God would raise his son, Isaac, from the dead. And willingly giving up the boy as a sacrifice, Abraham did receive him in a figure from the dead.—Heb. 11:10,17-19

"Faith Cometh by Hearing"

In Romans 10:17 we read: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." The reference here is to an active, demonstrated faith which God is pleased to 'count' as righteousness. There are doubtless millions who have the ability to exercise faith in God, and these do believe that he exists. But only when God reveals himself through his Word, and invites cooperation in his plan of salvation, is the opportunity given to demonstrate faith by obedience.

In the antediluvian world there were only a few whom God thus highly honored. Those mentioned in the Bible are Abel, Enoch, Noah and his family. Following the Deluge, in the Patriarchal Age, there were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their wives; Melchisedec, and probably Job. These were the called, or chosen, during that age.

Beginning with the death of Jacob, God chose his twelve sons and their families as a nation. To these in due time he gave his Law. To these he sent his prophets, and through the prophets gave them an opportunity to know his plan as it was then due to be understood, and to cooperate therein. Only a few responded in obedience, and this was because they believed God.

The faith of these was so strong that it reached beyond their immediate surroundings and experiences. Some, of course, received marvelous evidences of God's favor. In Hebrews 11:32-35, Paul speaks of these, saying that they "subdued kingdoms," "wrought righteousness," "obtained promises," "stopped the mouths of lions," "quenched the violence of fire," "escaped the edge of the sword," "out of weakness were made strong," were "valiant in fight," "turned to flight the armies of the aliens," and "women received their dead raised to life again."

Strong faith was essential in these victorious experiences, and it enabled them to see the overruling providences of God in connection with them. Take the three Hebrews, for example, who "quenched the violence of fire" through their faith. They defied Nebuchadnezzar, saying that their God whom they served was able to deliver them. But they also told the king that if their God did not deliver them, they would not bow down to the image which he had set up. Their faith was not that God would deliver them, but *in* God. They believed that whatever he did would be right. It is this sort of faith that God counts for righteousness.

In verses 36-38 Paul writes: "Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

To pass through experiences such as these required a faith that could trust God even though there was no visible evidence of his care and protection. It was faith in the promises of God pertaining to the future that sustained them. They endured these things in order that they might obtain a "better resurrection." (vs. 35) Their concern was in the fulfillment of God's promises pertaining to the future. Like Abraham with respect to Isaac, they believed that God was able, and would raise them from the dead in his own due time. This was the faith that was counted to them for righteousness.

While the whole nation of Israel was called and chosen by God, only these few—the Ancient Worthies—made their calling and election sure to the position designed for them in the divine plan. They did this by their faith. It was a faith that was demonstrated by their obedience under the most trying circumstances. Because they thus proved their worthiness, their "spirits," their heart intentions, will, in the resurrection, be given perfect human bodies through which they will be able to express their praises to God, and to serve him perfectly as "the princes in all the earth." Ps. 45:16

Faith in the Gospel Age

The quality of faith is unchanged from age to age in the plan of God. It was true in the past and is true now that "without faith it is impossible to please God." No one can enjoy God's friendship without having faith in him. Those who are able to exercise faith are rewarded with whatever blessings the LORD may be dispensing at the time.

The woman mentioned in Matthew 9:20-22 was cured of an "issue of blood" because of her great faith. Jesus said to her, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." The blind referred to in Matthew 9:29, were told by Jesus, "According to your faith be it unto you." They exercised faith and received their sight.

The Bible reveals that there are degrees of faith. The disciples had faith to believe that Jesus was their Messiah. But on the storm-tossed Sea of Galilee they became fearful. (Mark 4:40) After Jesus rescued Peter from the sea, he said to him: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matt.

14:31) On another occasion the disciples said to Jesus, "Increase our faith."—Luke 17:5

In Romans 1:16,17 we read "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; . . . for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." The Gospel of Christ is received by faith, but not instantaneously. It is revealed gradually as faith is able to receive and act upon it.

The apostles are good illustrations of this "faith to faith" revelation and receiving of the Gospel. Even before they heard of Jesus they knew something of the messianic promises and had faith in them. When they came into contact with Jesus and his wonderful ministry they believed that he was the Messiah, and left all to follow him. Thus upon the basis of their faith God was dealing with them.

In his prayer Jesus said to his Father concerning his apostles, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy Word." (John 17:6) These men were completely dedicated to God. They had faith in his Word, and were obedient to it. Prior to Pentecost they did not clearly understand the divine plan, but they believed and obeyed that which they did understand. Because of this God looked upon them as his people. "Thine they were," said Jesus. Like Abraham, they were God's friends. How richly their faith was rewarded!

Knowledge Necessary

The faith that opens the door to friendship with God is not a blind belief. It is faith in the plans and purposes of God to the extent that it is his will to reveal them. It was Abraham's faith in the promises that constituted the basis for his friendship with God. This was true of the apostles. It is still true today.

During the Gospel Age, God reveals his plans and purposes through his written Word. The purpose of this revelation, even as in the past, is to invite cooperation in the outworking of the divine plan. During the Gospel Age this cooperation can be only through association with Jesus, and

under his headship. But Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John 6:44) This shows that there is a certain selection on God's part. He is not at the present time drawing the whole world, but only those whom he chooses.

God chooses those whom he knows are able to exercise faith in him and in his promises. In addition to their ability to exercise faith, these are also humble of heart and willing to learn. The first evidence of God's drawing power in their lives may well be in an experience, or series of experiences, which cause them to realize the futility and worthlessness of the material values so highly esteemed by the world in general.

Their hearts prepared, they are brought into contact with the truth of the Word. This also is by the providence of God in the exercise of his drawing power. When they hear the Word, or read it, and their minds and hearts begin to respond to it, God is pleased, for this was the object of the exercise of his drawing power in their lives.

One of the first things learned from the Word of truth is the fact that all are sinners, members of a sin-cursed and dying race. If faith lays hold upon this fact, and the heart properly responds, the result will be repentance. Like the publican who went up to the Temple to pray, those who repent will cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner."—Luke 18:13

And the LORD is indeed merciful, for his providences have been working to bring about this very state of repentance. If God loved the whole world of sinners so much that he sent his Son to be the Redeemer, surely his love goes out much more to those who, when learning of his gracious provision through Christ, begin to respond to his drawing power and demonstrate their faith by repenting of their sins, and asking for forgiveness.

Just as no one can come to Jesus unless drawn by the Father, Jesus explained that only through him could anyone have access to the Father. (John 14:6) This means that the truth by which God "draws," points the way to Jesus and to the redeeming merit of his shed blood. During this Gospel

Age the only object of thus being drawn to God through Christ is to become disciples of Christ. To be a disciple of Christ means to follow in his footsteps of self-sacrifice. It means to deny self and to take up one's cross and follow Jesus into death. It means to be "planted together in the likeness of his death."—Rom. 6:3-5

The footstep followers of Jesus walk in a path that is difficult to tread. It is a "narrow way." To walk in this way means shame, ignominy, persecution, affliction, suffering, and death. In Revelation 20:4 it is described as being "beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God." And even though the word 'beheaded' is used symbolically, it denotes suffering and the loss of life.

These are some of the hard facts that are revealed to those whom the LORD is drawing. After repenting of their sins, they realize that they are now faced with the necessity of making a decision as to whether or not they will accept the invitation to become disciples of Christ and share in his sufferings. The LORD wants them to weigh this matter very carefully. This is indicated by Jesus in his parable concerning the man who was to build a tower. This man would be very foolish, the parable teaches, unless he first of all sat down and counted the cost.—Luke 14:28-30

So counting the cost of discipleship is the will of God for everyone who is drawn by his love to the point of repentance. Just as God is pleased with the attitude of true repentance, he is also pleased with those who sit down and count the cost of full surrender to do his will as it is now revealed in the terms of discipleship.

There is no set length of time during which one may 'count the cost'. The Bible tells us that when Abraham was called of God he obeyed. We need not suppose that Abraham obeyed without giving consideration to all that was involved. It seems reasonable to conclude that he took some time to count the cost.

Since those whom God draws are invited to lay down their lives in his service, we may suppose that while they are count-

ing the cost he encourages them, by his promises, to make the right decision. Counting the cost does not mean comparing the value of what is sacrificed with the worth of what God has promised in return. Those who have faith in the promises of God must realize at once that there is no comparison. There is nothing here that needs to be 'counted'.

The 'counting' is the giving of consideration to whether or not the trials of the narrow way will be more than can be borne. This counting must be in the light of God's promises of grace and strength to help in every time of need. Thus the measure of faith in God and in his promises will actually determine the decision that is made. Jesus asked James and John if they were "able" to drink of his cup and be baptized with his baptism. They replied, "We are able." So with all who count the cost. If they have an unfaltering faith in the promises of God their decision will also be, "We are able."

Understanding Increases

Even before Jesus died as the Redeemer, James and John and all the apostles—with the exceptions of Judas, and Paul—had reached the decision in their hearts, "We are able." Indeed, right from the beginning when they first became Jesus' disciples, they had given up all to follow him. There were many things which they did not understand, and could not understand until the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them at Pentecost. But their hearts responded in full obedience to the truths of the divine plan which they did understand.

No one who is drawn by God and responds through repentance and full consecration has, at first, a full understanding of the divine will. Just as the apostles needed the Holy Spirit to reveal the will of God more perfectly to them, so it is with all who dedicate their lives to the service of God. The only difference is that the apostles had to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit, whereas since Pentecost God has waited for the full surrender of those whom he has drawn, and his acceptance of their consecration, before blessing them

At this point in God's loving dealings a whole treasurehouse of riches is opened up as the reward of faith. From righteous Abel to John the Baptist, those who believed God and upon the basis of their faith were dedicated to the doing of his will were, symbolically speaking, taken into his bosom as friends. He loved them; he cared for them; he gave them a limited vision of his loving messianic purpose; he promised them a resurrection. But so far as the present life was concerned, they remained under the condemnation to death which, through Adam, had come upon the whole world.

This was a necessity, for the price of redemption from sin and death had not yet been provided. It is true, of course, that God's dealings with the Ancient Worthies were because of his great plan of redemption through Christ. He who speaks of things that are not as though they already were, was pleased to take to himself as friends those whom he knew would qualify to receive life through the blood of Christ, when raised from the dead and made "perfect" in the "better resurrection" for which they endeavored to prove worthy.—Heb. 11:35,40

But beginning with the Gospel Age a new feature of the divine plan began to operate. This is the age of sacrifice, the "better sacrifices" mentioned by Paul in Hebrews 9:23. Jesus was "made flesh," "crowned with glory and honor" of perfect human nature in order that he might give himself in death a "ransom for all." (I Tim. 2:3-6) And now his followers are invited to suffer and die with him. Their bodies also are presented in sacrifice.—Rom. 12:1

It is possible for these to offer an acceptable sacrifice to God only because they are made free from Adamic condemnation through the merit of the blood of Christ. Paul speaks of their bodies being offered as a "living sacrifice." (Rom. 12:1) This can be only because, through the merit of Christ's blood, they are no longer under death condemnation, but through faith have been made alive in Christ

What a glorious reward of faith! From God's standpoint it is as though, through accepting Jesus as our Redeemer, we had been restored to perfection of life such as the world will enjoy at the close of the "times of restitution." (Acts 3:19-21) Thus, through faith, we have a reckoned perfect life to offer in sacrifice, even as Jesus did. This is a reward of faith which the Ancient Worthies did not enjoy. But think of what it means to us! It means that we are co-sacrificers with Jesus, and, in a manner acceptable to God are laying down our lives both for the brethren and in the interest of the whole world of mankind.

No Condemnation

In II Corinthians 5:14,15 Paul reminds us of how we were constrained by the love of Christ to dedicate ourselves fully to the divine service. He speaks of those who have taken this step as being "in Christ," or members of his mystical body. (vs. 17) In Romans 8:1 he writes that to those who are "in Christ Jesus" there is "no condemnation." "No condemnation"—what a glorious reward of faith!

But to continue enjoying this 'no condemnation' standing before God, it is necessary also to walk "not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Paul adds that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:2) How wonderful to realize that we are no longer under "the law of sin and death."

In verses 14-17 Paul further explains, saying, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [or, of sonship], whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

How rich is the reward of sonship with our Heavenly Father! This also has come to us through faith. Abraham received the reward of friendship because he believed all the promises of God which were then revealed and due to be

understood. We receive the reward of sonship through our belief in the more complete revelation of the divine plan that has come to us.

In this further unfolding of God's plan, we see the truth concerning Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all. We see his death upon the cross as the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. We see him raised from the dead, giving evidence that the Heavenly Father was well pleased with his sacrifice, and proving also God's ability to fulfill his promises pertaining to the resurrection of the dead.

By faith we accept these advanced truths. We believe that Jesus was raised for our justification to life, and that he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Believing this, we go boldly to the "throne of grace" there to "obtain mercy" and to find "grace to help in time of need." This is another reward of faith.—Heb. 4:16

"Peace with God"

Again Paul wrote, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1) Abraham, and all the Ancient Worthies, had "peace" in the sense that they were God's friends. Their faith in God's promises removed fear and anxiety from their hearts. But to have the "peace with God" referred to by Paul implies separation from the condemned and dying family of Adam. It implies that 'peace with God' is the heritage of those who belong to the

(Continued on Page 37)



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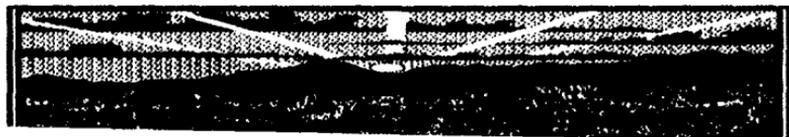
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MICHIGAN

Battle Creek WOLY 1500 1:45 p.m.
Fremont WSHN 100 FM 9:15 a.m.
Fremont WSHN 1550 AM 9:15 a.m.

MISSOURI

Excelsior Springs KEXS 1090 7:30 a.m.
Osage Beach KRMS 1150 FM 8:30 a.m.
Osage Beach KRMS 93.5 FM 8:30 a.m.
St. Louis (Sat.) KSTL 690 8:30 a.m.

NEW JERSEY

Camden (Tues.) WTMR; 800 9:30 p.m.
Salem WNNN FM 101.7 9:45 a.m.
Salem WJIC 1510 9:45 a.m.

NEW MEXICO

Los Alamos KRNS 1490 6:45 a.m.

NEW YORK

Buffalo WWKB 1520 11:00 a.m.
Buffalo WHLD 1270 12:00 noon
New York WOR 710 9:15 p.m.

OHIO

Cincinnati WLW 550 6:30 a.m.

OKLAHOMA

Muskogee KHJM 100.3 FM 5:00 p.m.

OREGON

Portland KKEY 1150 7:00 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown WHOL 1600 10:45 a.m.
Pittsburgh WPLW 1590 8:00 a.m.
Pottstown WPAZ 1370 12:45 p.m.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Beaufort (Sat.) WVGB 1490 1:00 p.m.
Charlestown WOKE 1340 7:06 p.m.
Lexington WLGO 1170 12:30 p.m.

TENNESSEE

Nashville WSM 650 7:45 p.m.

VIRGINIA

Richmond WGGM 820 7:45 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Spokane KUDY 1280 9:45 a.m.
Tacoma KAMT 1360 10:15 a.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

Wheeling WWVA 1170 6:30 p.m.

WISCONSIN

PLEASE NOTE CHANGES,
WHICH ARE MADE FREQUENTLY.

WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

Canada

ALBERTA

Banff	CFHC 1340	11:45 a.m.
Brooks	CIBQ 1340	9:00 a.m.
Canmore	CFNC 1450	11:45 a.m.
Stettler	CKFQ 1400 a.m.	7:45 a.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan	CKAY 1500	9:00 a.m.
Duncan	CKAY 1500	7:30 p.m.
Grand Forks	CKGF 1340	9:00 a.m.
Nanaimo	CHUB 1570	9:30 p.m.
Qualicum-Parksville	CHPQ 1370	9:30 p.m.

MANITOBA

Winnipeg	CKJS 810	9:00 a.m.
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ONTARIO

Leamington	CHYR 710	5:00 p.m.
St. Thomas	CHLO 1570	10:45 a.m.

SASKATCHEWAN

Rosetown	CJYM 1330	9:45 a.m.
Weyburn	CFSL 1190	8:45 a.m.
Estevan	CJSL 1280	8:45 a.m.

Angola and Zambia

Radio Africa #2	(Thurs.)	9:00 a.m.
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Argentina (Spanish)

Buenos Aires (Sat)	FM Malvinas 91.5 MHz	10:00 a.m.
		10:00 p.m.

Brazil (Portuguese)

uritiba	Radio Capital 1270 K117	8:45 a.m.
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British West Indies

Grand Cayman	Radio Cayman	9:30 a.m.
Trinidad	Radio Trinidad 610	10:30 p.m.

Chile (Spanish)

Concepcion	Unica FM 105.5	10:15 a.m.
antiago (Sat)	Radio Panamericana CB 142	10:00 a.m.

China

Hong Kong Radio Villa Verde (Fri.)	6:00 p.m.
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Kenya & Uganda

Radio East Africa	4:00 p.m.
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Mexico (Spanish)

Culiacán Ranchera XECQ	8:30 a.m.
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New Zealand

Whakatane IXX	8:10 a.m.
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Nigeria

Radio Africa (Thurs.)	7:45 p.m.
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Panama (Spanish)

Panama City (Fri.) HOQ 1250	6:15 p.m.
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Peru (Spanish)

Trujillo 105.7 FM	9:30 a.m. & 10:00 p.m.
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Philippines

Manila (Sat.) DZAM 1026 KHz	7:15 p.m.
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Russia (Russian)

Novgorod FM 71.3	10:00 a.m.
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South Africa

Joubert Park (Thurs.) SWAZI Music	Radio 1400 & shortwave 49 & 60 9:00 p.m.
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Sri Lanka

Columbo (Sat.) Radio Sri Lanka	7:15 p.m.
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Tonga

Nuku' Alofa (Mon.)	10:15 a.m.
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Uruguay (Spanish)

Montevideo Radio El Espectador 810	9:15 a.m.
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YE ARE THE LIGHT
OF THE WORLD!

THE BIBLE ANSWERS PROGRAMS

UNITED STATES: **New Jersey Cable TV**—Programs are shown every Sunday evening at 6:00 p.m. EST.

Nostalgia Network—Programs are shown every Wednesday morning at 6:00 a.m. EST.

Pittsburgh, PA, WNEV TV63—Programs are shown Sundays at 9:00 a.m. EST.

CANADA: Programs are shown every Sunday morning. Consult your local newspaper for the station in your area.

Atlantic Time—10:30 a.m.

Eastern Time—9:30 a.m.

Central Time—8:30 a.m.

Mountain Time—7:30 a.m.

Pacific Time—6:30 a.m.

Keystone Inspirational Network Every Sunday Morning

CALIFORNIA

Hemet TV 53
Palm Springs TV20
Sacramento TV62
Twenty-nine Palms TV25

DELAWARE

Wilmington TV14

FLORIDA

Pensacola TV12

GEORGIA

Rome TV56
Tifton TV5

IDAHO

Cottonwood TV39

LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge TV52
Crawley TV65
Lake Charles TV63

MARYLAND

Leonardtown TV52

OHIO

Bucyrus TV54
Findlay TV6
Marietta TV26

PENNSYLVANIA

Coudersport Cable 66
Lancaster TV49
Williamsport TV5
York TV49

SOUTH CAROLINA

Monks Corner Cable 6

SOUTH DAKOTA

Sioux Falls TV48

TENNESSEE

Union City TV9

TEXAS

Corpus Christi TV55
Falfurrias TV7

NEWFOUNDLAND

Harbour Grace TV25

Eastern Time—11:30 a.m.

Central Time—10:30 a.m.

Mountain Time—9:30 a.m.

Pacific Time—8:30 a.m.

family of God. And now, through faith in Christ which is demonstrated by 'works' of full consecration, we may enjoy this rich reward of faith.

"By whom also," Paul continues, "we have access by faith into this [further] grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (vs. 2) Yes, faith has opened the door into this glorious hope of the divine nature, and of sharing the glory of God. "And not only so," Paul adds, "but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us."—vss. 3-5

Since without faith it is impossible to please God, the reverse is also true. Through the exercise of faith in God and in his promises, the flood gates of his love and favor are opened wide for consecrated believers. In our text we read that "the just shall live by his faith." In the New Testament this is quoted in various contexts, revealing that through faith we receive justification to life; and also that through faith in the promises we receive strength to continue on in the way of sacrifice.

Paul quotes this statement in Hebrews 10:38, saying, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Living by faith, as mentioned here, means that faith in God and in his promises is a way of life. It is the only way that a Christian can live day by day rejoicingly, at peace with God, and enjoying the peace of God.

Living by faith, the abundant mercy and love of God are our daily portion. Living by faith is to live free from condemnation. Living by faith is to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Living by faith we triumph in tribulation. Living by faith we are led by the Spirit of God and enjoy the blessings belonging to the sons of God.

Living by faith we can go boldly to the throne of grace to receive strength for our every time of need. By faith we know

that all things work together for our good because we love God and are called according to his purpose. By faith we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God, or the love of Christ, that since he is for us, nothing can be successfully against us.—Rom 8:31,35-39

By faith we dwell in the “secret place of the Most High” (Ps. 91:1), and by faith we are sheltered under the “wings,” of the Almighty. (vs. 4) Truly the just do live by faith, and the LORD finds pleasure in them as they lay hold more and more firmly upon his promises, zealously devoting themselves to the doing of his will. ■



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A Mighty Hand and An Outstretched Arm

“It is I, who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth.”

—Jeremiah 27:5

THE FACT THAT the mighty hand and outstretched arm of the great Creator was spoken of over and over again in the Scriptures, indicates that our Heavenly Father wanted us to be completely certain—thoroughly convinced—of his almighty power, and that it was available on behalf of his children in ages past, today, and in the ages to come. A few scriptures which give assurance of this, besides our theme text cited above, are quoted here:

“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened that it cannot save, or his ear dull that it cannot hear.”—Isaiah 59:1

“Your [Jehovah’s] arm is endued with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted.”—Psalm 89:13, ***New International Version***

“These all wait upon thee. . . . When thou openest thy [the LORD’s] hand, they are filled with good things.”—Psalm 104:27,28, ***Scofield’s Translation***

Exodus 15:6,12 shows God’s ‘mighty hand’ to be an expression of his power, or dominion, over earth, and his control of his enemies. It tells us, “Thy right hand O LORD, glorious in power; thy right hand O LORD, shatters the enemy. . . . Thou didst stretch out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.” The ‘outstretched arm’ of God represents his support and strength, or his omnipotence exercised on behalf of those who trust in him. Since the human arm supports

the hand and gives it direction, and through it power is transferred to accomplish particular actions, a wonderful symbolism is established, helping us to get the picture God desires us to understand—the arm of Jehovah shall give strength to any on whose behalf it is used.

“I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him. My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him,” are the emphatic words of David concerning God’s protection and guidance over him, as recorded in Ps. 89:20,21, **NIV**

This study of God’s great power used on behalf of his people will cover various aspects. The first will be God’s use of his hand and arm as he applies them to protect his people and to perform miracles. Then we will consider how Jesus represents the hand and arm of God. Lastly we will consider Jesus’ position of power at God’s right hand.

First let us review some scriptures which indicate how God’s mighty hand, and outstretched arm, were used to perform miracles, and to protect his people. Let us use Deuteronomy 4:34,35 as our theme text of this section of the study. We read: “Hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto you it was showed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him.”

The LORD performed many miracles as signs of his love and favor toward the children of Israel throughout the entire period of time that he dealt with them as his peculiar people. This was true particularly when he led them out of Egypt and through the wilderness to the Promised Land. These wonders were performed so they might know that the LORD is the true and only God—that there is no other beside him. He is the omnipotent God!

A familiar story is told as an example of God’s ‘wonders’, beginning in Exodus 13:17 through the end of chapter 14.

This account tells how God delivered the Israelites out of Egypt, and out from under the control of the evil Pharaoh. After nine plagues were let loose upon the Egyptians, the king had almost been brought to the point of letting the Israelites escape their bondage. But, finally, after the tenth and final plague—the death of all the firstborn among the Egyptians, both men and beasts—Pharaoh hastily dispatched the Israelites out of his land. However, with a sudden change of mind, and despite the forceful lessons God had sent to him, Pharaoh stubbornly pursued Moses, who, as directed by God, was leading the Hebrews out of Egypt.

Moses guided God's people right up to the banks of the Red Sea. Nothing was between them and the Egyptians to their rear but a few miles distance, and the cloud and fiery pillar of God which hid them from Pharaoh's view. What were they to do? Despite this seemingly desperate situation, God had everything in control. He told Moses to lift up his rod, and to stretch it out over the waters. When this was done, God divided the waters of the Red Sea for his people to cross over. After all the Israelites were safely across on the other side, then the LORD let the waters close over the pursuing Egyptians, sending them to a watery grave! None escaped!

Through the writings of the prophets, God reminded Israel of this outstanding miracle, once with the words of our theme text for this segment of our study. But this same reminder was given to the Israelites many times. It is reiterated in Deuteronomy 5:15; and again in 9:29. In Deuteronomy 7:18,19 we read: "Thou shalt . . . well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; the great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid."

God recalled this marvelous event in Deuteronomy 11:1-5: "Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway. And know ye this day: for I speak not

with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched out arm, and his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land; and what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red Sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the LORD hath destroyed them unto this day; and what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place.”

Later, after their miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea, on their way to Mount Sinai the Israelites were refreshed when their tongues were parched, by water gushing from a rock, at the valley Rephidim. This pictured the stream of favor which continued with them throughout their wilderness journey. And it further foreshadowed the much greater refreshing which will ultimately come to them, and to all the world, through the sacrifice of Christ.

This stream of cool, refreshing water now refreshes Christ's disciples throughout their wilderness journey, and eventually will refresh the whole world of mankind, including the Israelites. By Christ's sacrificial death as the ransom of Adam and his children, 'the water of life' will in due time be provided for all those who desire to be the people of God.

Refreshed in body and in faith, Israel journeyed onward through the wilderness, blindly following Moses' lead—the fiery pillar by night, and the cloud by day, which represented God's presence with them. However they continually encountered new obstacles. The Amalekites, a warlike people, who considered the coming of Israel an invasion of their country, fiercely attacked, and engaged them in battle. A people used to peaceful pursuits, such as the Israelites had been for centuries, were at a definite disadvantage in a conflict with such well-skilled and disciplined opponents. Yet God gave the victory to his people, Israel. He indicated, however, that it was not by their valor or their own skill, but by his grace and mighty power that their enemies were conquered.

At the time of the battle with the Amalekites, Moses, stationed upon a high hill, lifted up his hands in prayer to God for the people. While he did so, the battle was in their favor; but when he ceased to pray in this manner, the Amalekites won the battle. Perceiving this, Aaron and Hur assisted in holding up the hands of Moses, until the war ended in triumph for Israel. In this way God indicated that Moses was God's representative to Israel, because his full trust was in the LORD, and that without him they could not succeed.

Moses' raising his hands up toward heaven, seems to be the earliest indication we have of what God considered to be the proper posture in which to offer solemn prayer. Moses not only stretched his arms toward heaven, but he also raised his eyes toward heaven as if he would look upon his Creator. Other passages of the Old and New Testament inform us that this posture seems to have continued in the Christian Church until the time that the clergy, instead of praying from the heart, read formal, penned prayers out of a book. It would be difficult to lift up your hands and eyes toward heaven while reading them from a book.

We realize that as the antitype of ancient Israel, spiritual Israel has conflicts with her enemies also—those who are too mighty for them. Without the LORD's assistance, wisdom, strength, and power, we would fail, and our enemies would prevail against us. Figuratively, we need to keep our hands uplifted in prayer, our eyes fixed upon him and his will, that the mighty hand of God will be used on our behalf, to give us success in our warfare against the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Those who are followers of Jesus have success in their warfare, only as they have him as their Advocate and their General.

The Israelites had seen with their own eyes the great works of God. Therefore, the account of their witness of his works and power was to be passed on to their children. Not only was it passed to them by word of mouth, but this record has come down through the centuries to us through the written Word, and for this we are eternally grateful. Even those far from Israel—in every foreign land—have heard of the great deliver-

ance of God's people out of Egypt, and the subsequent miracles, such as the water brought from a rock, the Manna provided in the wilderness, and the conquering of the heathen nations so that the Promised Land finally became the possession of the Israelites. Many, even in the time of Israel's favor, came from distant lands because they had heard of the greatness of the God of Israel, and acknowledged him as their God.—I Kings 8:4-43

Solomon himself prayed that God would hear the foreigners' prayers and that God might be magnified by all the people of the earth. (II Chron. 6:32,33) It will be such inexpressible joy when all the entire world of mankind—past and present—shall know him, from the least to the greatest! This will be possible through the resurrection of all the dead, and particularly that of the church class, and the Ancient Worthies—God's faithful people of old—who will teach mankind righteousness.

One of the most persistently reiterated themes of Holy Writ is that of man's helplessness to direct his life wisely without God. In every turn of life, man should discover his great need for Jehovah—though it is but rarely that he either recognizes his need, or the extent of that need. The absoluteness of this need is not brought home to the heart or mind of man, because of the universal generosity of Almighty God. Only if God entirely withdrew his protection and control over this planet, would man come face to face with the full range of his needs. God is the source of unfailing abundance—providing all of man's necessities—and man is a creature of unending need.

The story of divine grace is the record of one who has been disposed to give, and give, and give again, because it pleases him to dispense of his fullness to man, and all his creatures. When man was condemned to oblivion—eternal death—at the time of his fall from divine grace, God displayed his forgiving love and generous bounty toward him, manifesting his boundless qualities of being a great giver and forgiver.

Man has but to acknowledge God as the great giver, and open his hand to receive of that bountiful fullness which God opens his hand to give. If God withheld not his well beloved

Son, shall he not also with him freely give us all things? (Rom. 8:32) Christian experience of this day, and knowledge of earlier days, shows without fail that they who are most developed in grace are the ones most conscious of their need. The more one has grown in the things of the LORD, and the more loving and appreciative the heart has become, the more such become persuaded of their need for God. The ultimate end of every quest of the mature heart, is not merely to accept the gifts of God, but to acknowledge with open heart the one who is the Giver.

Another example of use of the symbolisms, the 'hand' and 'arm' of God extended on behalf of Israel, is found in Ezekiel 20:33-38, where the record states: "As I live says the LORD God, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. And I will bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there I will plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead with you, saith the LORD God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: And you shall know that I am the LORD."

Israel's experiences, under the chastening rod, have been painful and humiliating, but her buffeting is almost over, and soon the blessings of the new, everlasting covenant will begin to be showered upon her and all mankind.—Jer. 31:31-34

Let us consider another aspect of this subject, and that is how Jesus is represented by the 'hand' and 'arm' of God. We have heard the expression: "He is my 'right arm', or my 'right hand man'". These expressions indicate how valuable this person is to us, and how necessary to accomplish the desired results—the person described in this way is an extension of ourselves to help carry out our plans. For instance, we know

that Jesus was the instrument through whom all things were made, as it tells us in John 1:1-4, where we find the words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

Again, in an even clearer passage, Paul said in Ephesians 8:6: "There is but one God, the Father, **OF** whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, **BY** whom are all things, and we by him." God is the ultimate source of all wisdom and all power, and thus all things are **OF** him—all Creation and all life. But Jesus, acting as his primary agent carries out all of God's plans and purposes—all things are **BY** him.

The Scriptures point out that the Heavenly Father was the author of a plan whereby his Son, our Lord Jesus, as the 'arm' of Jehovah, could reach down to free us from sin, sickness, pain, and trouble. He will deliver us from the prison house of death, restoring us to liberty, and to our privileges as sons of God. The psalmist wrote: "Your arm [Christ Jesus, in glory] is endued with power." (Ps. 89:13) Jesus himself said, "All power in heaven and earth has been given [by God] to me." (Matt. 28:18) Again, the Prophet David wrote concerning Jesus: "The LORD's right hand has done mighty things." (Ps. 118:15,16) The Apostle Paul wrote: "Jesus of Nazareth [was] a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you."—Acts 2:22

The martyr, Stephen, in his beautiful sermon, quoted the prophecy concerning Jesus written in Isaiah 66:1,2: "Hath not my hand made all these things?" (Acts 7:50) "Save us, and help us with your right hand [God's beloved Son, Jesus], that those you love may be delivered." (Ps. 60:5) Jesus himself said: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."—John 10:27,28

Jesus is pictured as the 'hand' of God—the instrument through which God operates in carrying out his will. As Jesus is shown to be God's hand, so also the Bride of Christ will actively carry out the will of God, as shown to her by her Heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

Hands, are the '**doing**' parts of our bodies. In the symbolism of the consecration of the High Priest of the ancient Aaronic Priesthood as described in detail in Leviticus, chapter 8, the blood of the ram of consecration was sprinkled on the right ear, right thumb, and right big toe of the High Priest. The blood placed on his right ear indicated that he had consecrated his ears to the hearing of the will of God. His hands were consecrated to do with their might what they found to do, illustrated by the blood placed on the right thumb. His feet would walk in the ways of the Father, shown by the blood being placed on his right toe.

In the human body, the hand is an array of levers, hinges, and power sources, all managed by a master computer—the brain. The control of the hand uses two of the largest compartments in the brain, known as the motor cortex. Thousands of messages from the brain are required just to rotate a thumb—ordering this muscle to contract, that one to relax, causing this tendon to pull another one to rest. The muscles that control the hand are in the forearm. Considering their remoteness, the strength of the hand is surprising. From birth to death, our hands are seldom still, except for rest during sleep. During a lifetime, we will extend, and flex finger joints, at least 25 trillion times. Legs, arms, shoulders, feet, and other joints, tire with sustained activity, but how often do we complain of tired hands?

In man's hands are identifying prints. No two person's fingerprints are alike. They identify the person. If truly of Christ's body, would not the hand members have the identifying features of Christ? These hand members in the body of Christ are, if emptied of self will, controlled completely by the mind of Christ. We touch things of this world physically, with our hands, but God touched us spiritually—with his hand, Jesus.

Our Lord Jesus is the mighty one upon whom the hope of the world is laid. He is indeed the Great Deliverer. But it has pleased God to have the church, selected during the Gospel Age, associated with him in this great work during the Millennial Age. All who hunger and thirst after righteousness, whose souls thirst after God as the hart for the waterbrook, who having searched for him have found him, and have consecrated themselves to him, have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with their spirits that they are the sons of God. As anointed sons of God, these must discover in themselves the worthy traits of true sons: love, loyalty, faithfulness, zeal, energy, courage, and discretion.

To this consecrated group, with whom the LORD has made an everlasting covenant, belongs the sure mercies of God. Psalm 89:21-25 reads: "With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him." All things, even the deep and wicked designs of the Adversary, shall be so overruled by God, as to work together for good, to the David class—picturing Jesus and the Christ complete.

Jesus was the only one God could count on to carry out his plan of salvation. There was no other righteous one, no not one, among the children of men. All had sinned and come short of the glory of God, therefore, no man could give a ransom for his brother. None could redeem his fellow man except the one whom God used as his arm: "Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." (Isa. 59:15,16) God spoke of being alone. Although he searched, there was no one to help except his own 'arm', Jesus, who brought God victory!

But who has seen and believed that Jesus was the 'arm' of Jehovah? Many have seen and not believed, as told in John 12:37-43, "Jesus said all these things, and then went away out of their sight. But though he had given so many signs, yet

they did not believe in him, so that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled when he said, LORD who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the LORD been revealed? Thus they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and he hardened their hearts; lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and should turn and I should heal them.

“Isaiah said these things because he saw the glory of Christ, and spoke about him. Nevertheless, many even of the authority did believe in him. But they would not admit it, for fear of the Pharisees, in case they should be excommunicated. They were more concerned to have the approval of men, than to have the approval of God.”—*Phillips Translation*

Throughout the centuries, the followers of our Lord have related the wonderful story of the Savior's love and sacrifice, even unto death. But in the true sense, few have heard or appreciated it—particularly not many great or many mighty. Very few comprehend that Jesus is the ‘arm’ of Jehovah, stretched down for the relief of Adam and his race from their penalty of sin and death. Only a handful, a saintly few, truly believe the message. “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?”—Isa. 53:1

The call of the church during the Gospel Age is to let their light concerning the plan of God shine out in this dark world. Thus they will attract persecution, and endure that persecution for righteousness' sake. These must be rightly exercised by tribulation, exhibiting patience, brotherly kindness, pity, and love toward their persecutors, and toward all men.

Let all then, who have been invited to run for this great prize—the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus—and who see the light of God's glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, be faithful to the Father's conditions, calling, and service. Let all such give attention to this ministry which we have received, and faint not; be not discouraged, whether men hear or whether they forbear; whether they think ill of us or whether they speak ill of us. Let us remember that our report at the end of the way is to be rendered to the LORD himself, when he is making up his jewels.

The most honored position to be enjoyed has invariably been at the right hand of a leader. We think of the right hand as being second in command, or the most favored position. Jesus proved worthy of the position of chief favor by his unyielding obedience to his Heavenly Father's will, and for his love and sacrifice even unto death. "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear. . . . When Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet. For by a single offering, he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified."—Heb. 10:12-14

God has a design which the Scriptures call the "plan of the ages." (Eph. 3:11, *Wilson's Diaglott*) God's plan shall be carried out! It cannot fail in any particular! We have assurance of this all throughout the Bible.

The Prophet Isaiah recorded many Scriptures which highlight God's mighty hand and outstretched arm, and how they picture the accomplishment of Jehovah's wonderful plan of the ages. One of these is Isaiah 40:10,11, which states: "Behold, the LORD God comes, with might, and his arm rules for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

Isaiah 52:10: "The LORD hath made bare his Holy Arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

What glorious, reassuring promises to the whole world of mankind! The contemplation of making bare his holy arm, suggests that the glory and saving power of this mighty representative of the Creator is to be revealed worldwide. All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation, of our God, and shall be satisfied!

Isaiah 62:6-9: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies, and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: but they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness."

Remembering these great and precious promises that our Heavenly Father has given to us, let us hearken to his call. Let us strive toward the mark of the prize of the high calling, knowing that the mighty hand and outstretched arm of our Heavenly Father, is always within our reach.

The Master's Touch

In the still lute, the music lies unheard;
In the rough marble, beauty hides unseen
To make the music and the beauty, needs
The Master's touch, the Sculptor's chisel keen.

Great Master, touch us with thy skillful hand
Let not the music that is to die!
Great Sculptor, hew and polish us; not let,
Hidden and lost, thy form within us lie.

Spare not the stroke! Do with us as thou wilt!
Let there be naught unfinished, broken, marred:
Complete thy purpose, that we may become
Thy perfect image, thou our God and LORD!



YOUNG ADULTS' BIBLE STUDIES

THE GOLDEN THREAD SERIES, Part 40

Peter, The Powerful Preacher

THERE ARE SEVERAL of Jesus' apostles who we know very little or nothing about. But many interesting stories that have to do with the lives of Peter, John, Philip, and especially Paul, are told in the New Testament, in the book, *The Acts of the Apostles*.

This story is about Peter, who was a leader among the apostles. He was an energetic person; he made quick decisions, and had the brave, strong character to carry them out. We remember that it was Peter who wasted no time, but quickly began to preach the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost. He had taken advantage of the interest shown by the great crowd gathered around them when they received the Holy Spirit. First he brought Jesus and his death and resurrection to their remembrance. After reminding them of the miracles Jesus performed in every city of Israel, three thousand believed Jesus was the Son of God, repented, and were baptized! Peter had a great talent for persuading people by his words.

Not long after Pentecost, Peter and John went together to the Temple to pray. As they went through the gate called "Beautiful," they saw a lame man who sat there every day, begging for coins from the people going in and out of the Temple. When he saw Peter and John coming toward the gate, he cried out to them, begging for money.

John and Peter looked steadily at him, and then Peter commanded him, saying, "Look on us!" Expecting to receive charity from the apostles, he did not hesitate—he did as they asked and watched them very carefully. Then Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have, give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."



Reaching down, he took him by the right hand and lifted him to his feet. Immediately, his bones became strengthened and he stood up, and walked, and entered with them into the Temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God!

All the people knew the crippled beggar; they had seen him every day sitting outside the Temple. He had been born lame, and in the forty years of his lifetime he had never walked a step! Everyone was filled with wonder and amazement when they saw he had been cured so that he could not only stand and walk, but he could leap around quite spryly! The man held onto Peter and John, and would not let them go. All the people in the Temple ran out onto Solomon's porch to see the astonishing miracle!

Once again, as the crowd gathered, Peter saw it as a chance to give a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Peter said, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate when he was determined to let him go. Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and killed the Prince of life,

whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." See Acts 3:9-16

As he had done on the Day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed to the gathering the opportunity they still had to repent, and to recognize all the many evidences given to them by Jesus that he was indeed the Son of God. When he brought his sermon to a climax, he announced to them in an encouraging way, that God sent Jesus to bless them, if they would show their faith in him. If they turned from their evil ways, God would forgive them the terrible sin of putting his son Jesus, to death. Their hearts were touched by his words, as they thought about how wicked they had been to allow the crucifixion of the gentle Jesus, the greatest prophet Jehovah had ever sent into the world! Five thousand men were called by God that day, moved by the stirring words of the Apostle Peter! See Acts 3:17-26

Meanwhile, when everyone dashed out of the Temple to see the miracle of the lame man walking and leaping, the priests and rulers of the Temple came out to see where everyone had gone! They, too, were listening to Peter's words, but their reaction was not like that of the Jews who had been brought to belief and repentance. Not at all! They were very disturbed that the name Jesus of Nazareth was still being preached. They thought they had successfully ridded themselves of Jesus by killing him.

Angrily, the priests took hold of Peter and John and locked them up overnight in a dungeon, to decide the following day what should be done with them. On the next morning, the priests had gathered together a large group of rulers of the Temple, elders, scribes, and even the high priest and some members of his family. They sent for the two apostles and placed them in the middle of the room while the important religious leaders sat surrounding John and Peter to examine them.

Their first question was, "By what power, or by what name, has this man been cured?" The man who had been healed of his lameness was also included among the company gathered there that morning. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter knew exactly the right words to say in answer to their question. "If you are examining us today to discover by what means the good deed has been done to this crippled man to cure him of his lameness, we are here to let you know that it was by the name of Jesus of Nazareth!" See Acts 4:7-10

Here was the lame man standing plainly in everyone's view—healed! They could not deny that fact. And here were John and Peter, boldly saying that the miracle had been accomplished through faith in Jesus as God's Son! The council sent the apostles out of the room while they discussed their perplexing problem, could come to a verdict and decide what to do with the two accused men. All Jerusalem had seen or heard of this notable miracle, and the facts could not be contradicted. Therefore, they decided it would be best simply to threaten them, and command them that they speak henceforth to no man of this name!

Peter and John were not alarmed by the threats. They courageously asked the council, "Is it right for us to do what you say we should, or is it better for us to do what God says we should? You judge which you think it would be best for us to do!" Ignoring the question, and its obvious answer, the council warned John and Peter again to stop preaching that Jesus had been raised from the dead. They could only threaten them, however, because if they punished them with beatings or by putting them in jail, they could expect to have an uprising of all the thousands of people in Jerusalem who now believed Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah!

After their release, the two apostles went joyfully back to meet with their friends, and tell of all their experiences. Together they lifted up their voices and praised God! They were willing to suffer and even die, as Jesus had, for following the Lord's instructions: "Be my witnesses in all the world." (Acts 1:8) They had proved by their actions that their faith was growing stronger all the time. See Acts 4:11-24

Everywhere the apostles went, they healed the sick through the special powers of the Holy Spirit given to them by God. They were following the example of their Master. Soon people brought sick friends and relatives into Jerusalem from all the surrounding towns. And every one of them was healed by Peter! See Acts 5:12-16

Once again, this infuriated the religious leaders and filled them with envy. Peter and the apostles were the center of everyone's attention, and the priests were being neglected. The high priest finally lost his patience, took Peter and the other apostles and threw them into prison. But in the middle of the night, the angel of the LORD opened the prison doors and said to them, "Go, stand and speak to the people in the Temple, all the words of life!"

In the morning, the high priest sent for them to be brought before the council again. They were gone! The doors were locked, the guards were on duty, but the apostles had vanished! Then someone came to tell the high priest, "The men you put in prison are now in the Temple, teaching the people!" Rushing out to get them and bring them before the council, the officers were careful not to be violent or to injure the apostles. The people loved their message and would not allow them to be harmed.

A prominent doctor of the Law was part of the council that day. Privately, he told the other members his thoughts on this matter of Jesus of Nazareth. Gamaliel said, "If this message and these miracles be of men, nothing will come of them—they will die out and everyone will forget about them. But if they are of God's power, they cannot be overthrown, and we will be found fighting against God!" The council agreed with him. They called the apostles to hear their decision, they beat them mercilessly, and again commanded they should not speak in the name of Jesus. Then they let them go. See Acts 5:17-40

They left the council room, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Jesus' name. And daily in the Temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus Christ! See Acts 5:41,42

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of person was the Apostle Peter and how do we know this?
2. Tell about the healing of the lame beggar.
3. What did Peter do when the crowd gathered to see the miracle he and John had performed by the power of the Holy Spirit?
4. What was the reaction of the people? of the scribes and priests?
5. Why didn't the rulers and priests punish the apostles? What did they warn them not to do?
6. What made them even more jealous of the apostles?
7. What did they do to them this time?
8. Who released them from prison? What did he tell them to do?
9. How did they escape from this situation? Did they receive any punishment?
10. How did they feel about being treated so badly? ■

The Message of the Kingdom

"This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations."—Matthew 24:14

WHOWER has never heard anything about the kingdom has never heard anything about the Gospel, for it is the "Gospel of the kingdom," as our LORD declared. Hence we see that much of the preaching of eternal torment and other things falsely called the Gospel of the kingdom are delusions which are not of God, not his Word, not the good seed that would bring forth good fruit. The false messages have brought forth tares in abundance. This good seed of the kingdom is that which if rightly received into a good heart cannot be easily choked with earthly hopes or ambitions—for the kingdom hope is above all grand, preeminent, soul-satisfying. The kingdom hope is as an anchor to the soul, and does not permit the cares of this life to seem large and to crush it out.

TALKING THINGS OVER

A Visit to India

*by David Bruce and Michael Brann
of the India Committee*

Our brethren in India live in a completely different environment than any one of us in America. Over 90% of the Indians live in a religious atmosphere in which they worship many, many gods. They worship with incense, idols, loud music, and loud prayers. India has Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, plus, of course, some who have no faith at all other than to worship self, greed, and money.

The remaining small percent are those who call themselves Christians. This includes a tiny group of the LORD's people. We were amazed that the brethren in India can cope with such overwhelming surroundings and hold onto the truth. Except, of course, we know that the LORD is there to help his people.

Not only do they have this unfortunate spiritual environment to fight, but there is also poverty, noise pollution, environmental pollution, etc. All the physical senses are attacked in India. To the first time visitor it is a high wall to climb. After a few days the visitor can cope, but it brings us to have a very high respect and admiration for our brethren in India who must deal with this atmosphere each day of their life.

We encountered a few problems along the way, including an attempted hold-up at 2:00 a.m. which was avoided by a speedy taxi driver. We also missed connections with the brethren due to computer malfunction, and suffered two stolen cameras as well as several close calls on narrow mountain roads. But those few problems paled in comparison to the spiritual experience and joy of being with our Indian brethren.

Visit Plan

Our original plan called for us to visit with brethren in four major cities. By the time we arrived, the plan had been

changed to include eight cities plus house calls. Actually, we visited the following cities, towns, and villages: Coimbatore, Podonur, Erode, Mysore, Bangalore, Manaparal, Lingarajapuram, Dalmiapuram, and Trichy. Because of limited space, let us summarize the types of things that happened at almost every stop.

Everywhere the greetings were friendly, warm, and affectionate. The brethren were interested in what we do in America, and the conversations were always spiritual oriented. We traveled by bus, motorized rickshaw, train, and taxi. Because the rates are so reasonable by our standards, the taxi is often the vehicle of choice. We ate a great deal of rice and chicken, and drank a lot of coconut milk straight from the coconut, via straws. We served the brethren with discourses, conducted studies, and led question meetings. And we had hours of informal fellowship.

The children impressed us very favorably. They were able to sit for hours on concrete floors with very little moving about. Many of the sisters also sat on the floors. Evidently this is a common occurrence throughout India.

The taxi trip over the mountains—7,000 feet elevation—to Mysore passed through a state game preserve. It was beautiful to see wild bull elephants, deer, and hundreds of monkeys.

In addition to the usual evening meetings, we also made house calls during the day. They were a particular blessing, for in this way we saw the brethren as individuals, rather than just as a group. We recommend this method of service.

Finally, we were taken to a village to join one-hundred brethren at a wedding of a consecrated brother and sister. In India most of the marriages are arranged, and this was no different. The brother and sister met each other for the first time on their wedding day. We were asked to offer the prayer at the wedding. There was a marriage dinner, and this happy day was a pleasant ending to our trip.

The spiritual fellowship was absolutely outstanding. The brethren continue to work on translating material in their own language to be printed with our assistance. Now they are

beginning to work on a translation of "For this Cause"—a presentation of God's Plan on video cassettes. They certainly are hard-working, devoted, and zealous.

Again, we reiterate how difficult it must be for the brethren in India to cope with such an overwhelming environment of heathenism, and to hold onto the Truth. Our LORD is certainly to be praised for his guiding light and Spirit bestowed upon the called ones in India.

Those desiring more information concerning the activities of the brethren in India may send for a free, six-page folder. Write to the Northwest India Committee, Michael Brann, Secretary, c/o Dawn Publishers, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. ■



A Letter from Bulgaria

Introduction

Recently a letter was received at the Dawn from a Brother who lives in Bulgaria. He asked for some literature, and we sent him what we had available. Since this was the first letter that the Dawn has ever received from Bulgaria, we asked several questions about the brethren in that country. The reply follows:

The Letter:

"Dear ones in our Lord Jesus Christ: Greetings from Bulgaria. The following is in answer to your question about the situation in Bulgaria. My father arrived in America in 1913. In America he received the Truth. After returning to Bulgaria in 1923, and until 1949, he led a little group of about eight to nine Bible Students in our home. In 1949 the communist authority forbade meetings. My father died in 1961 at the age of 76 years. In 1963 I was exiled to the northern part of Bulgaria forever, but after a year I was made free. From then till now we have not had a meeting. A great quantity of literature was confiscated by the communist political police. There are

still living some brothers and a sister. I am 64 years old, though others are older than I.

“Before the war, my father had correspondence with Brother Pantel Hatgis; that is how I have your address. But now something concerning myself. In my youth I saw and loved very much the Truth, and began to study English to read the volumes of Pastor Russell. I have studied them two times. After my retirement I began translating Brother Russell’s works. Now I have translated into Bulgarian the following works: “Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices”; “Pastor Russell’s Sermons”; “The Photodrama of Creation”; “The Divine Plan of the Ages”; “The Time Is at Hand”; “Thy Kingdom Come”; “The Atonement between God and Man.” “The Battle of Armageddon” is not translated, and “The New Creation” is in process of translation. At the moment of writing this letter I have translated 370 pages of the volume.”

[The writer then explained that if the LORD gives him strength he hopes to carefully print in pen all the words of translation, since he does not have a typewriter. He provided a sample of his neat printing in the letter.]

“My dear brethren, you expressed a wish to help me print these books. This is most wonderful, and it would fulfill my dream since I am unable to do this because I am poor. I wish you and your family the best. God bless you. Yours sincerely in our Lord Jesus Christ.” ■



ENCOURAGING LETTERS

Easy to Understand

Dawn Publishers: Thank you for The Dawn magazine. It is so informative and enlightening. It makes God's Word and promises all so easy to see and understand when all the parts are put together, rightly dividing the word of truth.—NE

Knows About Kingdom

Dear Sirs: Renew my Dawn subscription for one year. Please accept the balance for the wonderful work that is being done. Without the Dawn Magazine I would never have known about the coming kingdom of our God and his Son Jesus Christ. Thank you.—NC

From Czechoslovakia

Dear brothers and sisters: I read an old **National Geographic** magazine from 1969 in which you offered the book "Archeology Proves the Bible." I know that is a long time ago and that probably it is impossible to get it, but perhaps it has since been reprinted. I'd like to ask you if it is possible to send it to me, or advise me

where I can ask for it. I am the pastor of a protestant church in Czechoslovakia and Moravia and I'd like to study how archeology proves facts written in the Bible and perhaps write about it to our church newspapers. Why am I interested in it? Usually our pastors and professors think that archeology does not prove the Bible and I need your book to help show that is not true. Thank you very much for everything you can do for me. God bless you!—Czechoslovakia

Videos Enjoyed at Care Center

Sirs: We at a care center had the opportunity to view one of your videos entitled, "God and Creation." The residents here very much enjoyed this video and so by their request we wish to order more for them to view. We would like to begin with "God and Science." Sincerely.—ID

Desires to Change Course of Life

Dear Sir: I listen to your inspired message regularly

and have finally gotten the courage to do something about the course of my life. I have all the comforts of this life but know that something is lacking. I desire to have you send me your booklet, "Why God Permits Evil." If there is anyway I could help you in your work, please let me know. God speed.—*Canada*

Response from Russia

Dear brethren: We would like to inform you that the Radio Station in Russia is bearing fruit. The listeners are very grateful to hear about God over the radio and are asking for literature in the Russian language as well as Bibles and New Testaments. Particularly, they are asking for a copy of the written script. We thought we could send them literature in the Ukrainian language but after inquiring about this we find that these responses are coming from the heart of Russia where Ukrainian is not known, so literature is needed.

In discussing this with the brethren we thought it would be good to send them a First Volume

[Studies in the Scriptures—"The Divine Plan of the Ages"] in Russian in addition to what literature we have already. We need to work fast as we are expecting many more responses. They appreciate this message very much and write that they have never heard such a message before. Their letters are very warm and filled with gratitude that they will be able to get some literature.

We send our Christian love to you wishing you the LORD's blessing in 1993 in the work of the harvest. We love you all. Your brother in Christ.—*Poland*

Questions Answered

Dear "Frank and Ernest": This is the first time I have listened to your broadcast and I really enjoyed it. It answered the questions I always was seeking to know about. You were talking about the booklet entitled, "Life after Death." I would like to receive a copy. Thank you very much and may God bless you.—
Canada ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

D. Holliday

Portland, OR	July 4
Los Angeles, CA	July 6-9
Sacramento, CA	July 10,11
Seattle, WA	July 12-16

L. Post

Clear Lake, CA	July 3
Sacramento, CA	July 4

Salt Lake City, UT	July 9
Denver, CO	July 11
Kansas City, MO	July 13
St. Louis, MO	July 14
Columbus, OH	July 15

E. Worfler

Middletown, NY	July 18
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OBITUARIES

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

Sister Delores Schuetze, Litchfield, MN—February 12. Age, 58.

Sister Pauline Vander Boegh, Grand Rapids, MI—April 22.

Sister Edna Divens, Montreal, Canada—May. Age, 93.

CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed at the request of the classes who sponsor them. In order to ensure your convention being accurately placed in these columns, please make your request IN WRITING and mail it to this address at least two or three months before the date of the convention: The Dawn, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

DETROIT, MI, July 25—Redford Y.W.C.A., 25940 Grand River, Redford Township, MI. Contact: Robert Gorecki, 6731 Scotch Lake Rd., West Bloomfield, MI 48324

JACKSON, MI, September 4,5,6—Holiday Inn, I-94 at US 127 North. Contact: Mrs. Ray Lumley, 2531 Ashton Rd., Jackson, MI 49203. Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3,4,5—Ramada Inn, Two Bridges Rd. and

Exit 52, Route 80, Fairfield, NJ 07006. Phone: (201) 575-1742. Contact: L.B. Post, 24 Lexington Rd., New City, NY 10956, Phone: (914) 634-5876, before August 25 for a meal count or to make reservations.

LOS ANGELES, CA, September 26—Masonic Auditorium, 248 E. Olive, Burbank. Contact: Burton Brown, 12223 Addison St., No. Hollywood, CA 91607. Phone: (818) 984-3221