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The DAWN

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The King James Bible: 400th Anniversary

***“All scripture is
given by
inspiration of God,
and is profitable
for doctrine, for
reproof, for
correction, for
instruction in
righteousness:
That the man of
God may be
perfect, thoroughly
furnished unto all
good works.”
—II Timothy 3:16,
17***

Lord.”—II Tim. 1:1,2

A GUIDING LIGHT

The year 2011 marks the four hundredth anniversary of the first edition of the “Authorized

THIS TEXT OF SCRIPTURE

is taken from one of the updated editions of the *King James Bible* (Authorized Version) in which the great Apostle Paul was writing to his beloved Timothy. We read, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our

Version” of the English Bible, also fondly known as the *King James Bible*. It was commissioned by King James and the Church of England and published by the King’s Printer, Robert Barker, in 1611.

The *King James Bible* is a late Middle Age literary treasure of the English language. It has been widely accepted as being one of the most popular and important books ever published. It has been estimated that more than six billion copies have now been printed, and during these four hundred years it has brought peace, joy, and hope to millions of people throughout the English-speaking world.

Many sincere Christians have literally given their lives for its preparation and preservation. Its message of truth has been a guiding light and source of inspiration to devout men and women who have been blessed by the wonderful words of Holy Scripture. All have been guided by its divine principles of truth and righteousness, and it has often been described as the book that changed the world.

JAMES VI OF SCOTLAND

James Stuart (1566-1625) was the only child of Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-1587). He became King James VI of Scotland at the age of 13 months, being formally crowned at the Church of the Holy Rood, Stirling, in 1567. His father was Henry Stuart, 1st Duke of Albany (Lord Darnley) who was killed in 1567. James’ father was also a first cousin and second husband to James’ mother, Mary.

Because of his mother’s faith, James was baptized as a Catholic, but was brought up under the

influence of a reformed Protestant Scotland. He was educated by several tutors and became well-known for his broad knowledge. He is considered to have been one of the most intellectual and learned individuals ever to sit on any English or Scottish throne. During his lifetime, he wrote several books on a wide variety of subjects, and also wrote and published many poems. He was also proficient in translating various French works. James instigated several religious changes known as the “Five Articles of Perth.” Although the Church of Scotland hesitated at first to accept his “Articles,” they later adopted them.

James married Anne of Denmark (1574-1619) in 1589, and they had eight children, some of whom did not survive infancy. However, their second son will be remembered as Charles I (1600-1649), king of England, Scotland, and Ireland. During England’s Second Civil War in 1649, he was convicted of high treason and beheaded.

QUEEN ELIZABETH DIES

King James VI had already ruled over Scotland for 37 years when his mother’s cousin, Queen Elizabeth I, died in March, 1603. He then inherited the thrones of England and Ireland and was crowned the new king, thus uniting Scotland with the other two powers.

In January, 1604, England’s new king began to make extensive plans to produce a new “Authorized Version” of the English Bible. In the century leading up to 1604, there had been three major English Bibles produced—the *Great Bible*, the *Geneva Bible* and the *Bishops’ Bible*. James decided

that all three of them should be replaced with one new and greatly improved edition.

The *Great Bible* made its appearance in 1539 and was England's first "Authorized Version." Although it had been prepared by Myles Coverdale, he had used the Latin Vulgate in his translation of the Old Testament rather than using the original Hebrew text. This was believed by most scholars to be a serious flaw which rendered the edition deficient.

The *Geneva Bible*, which appeared in 1560 had not been approved as an "Authorized Version," but it was very popular and had been widely accepted by scholars and writers. It contained extensive marginal notes that had been written by John Calvin, John Knox, Myles Coverdale, and others. Some found the notations of these reformers offensive because they did not accept Calvin's interpretations, and believed that the comments were biased. King James despised them, and considered the notes on key political texts to be seditious, and a threat to his royal authority. He believed that it was time to replace the *Geneva Bible* with a new version of the English Bible done under his personal supervision.

The *Bishops' Bible* was the second official "Authorized Version." It was first published in 1568, but substantially revised in 1572. The translators of the King James project were instructed to use the latest edition of the *Bishops' Bible* which was published in 1602 as their basis, although several other translations were taken into account. After it was published in 1611, the *Authorized King James Bible* soon took the *Bishops' Bible's* place as the de facto standard of the Church of England.

A DARK AGE

When completed, the *King James Bible* was to be the third official “Authorized Version” in the English language. Its preparation would take into account the dramatic cultural changes that had taken place since the early medieval period in England. During that time, there had been major obstacles that prevented any consideration of translating or producing a Bible written in the English language.

The main obstacle during that time was the fact that English was not readily accepted as a language. French was used as the official language of the English King, the Royal Court, the Legal System, and the Church until the end of the 14th century. Anglo-Norman was also used in England until its decline, and English was accepted with “The Provisions of Oxford” in 1258. This was the first English government document published in the English language since the Norman Conquest in 1066. In 1362, Edward III became the first king to address Parliament in English. By the end of that century, the royal court had switched to English, and Anglo-Norman remained in use in limited circles for a short while longer, but it had ceased to be a living language.

Latin and French continued to be the dominant and exclusive languages used in official documents until the beginning of the 18th century. The English church was governed by the Pope from Rome and all church services were conducted in Latin. Latin was not a spoken language, and most people, therefore, were not able to understand the Latin church services. The Catholic Church acted as the

mediator between God and the people, with the priests interpreting the Bible on behalf of their congregations. The church strictly forbade the translating of the Scriptures into the common tongue, and any attempt to translate the Bible into English was punishable by death.

RENAISSANCE AWAKENING

The Renaissance period constituted a major transition from medieval culture to that of the early modern age. The movement began in Italy in the 14th century and gradually spread its influence to the northern areas of Europe. It was a time of rebirth and a renewed interest in the study of the ancient classical cultures, including the study of classical languages, especially those of Greece and Rome. There was an increasing interest in returning to the study of the Holy Scriptures and the restoration of early Christian teachings. Attention began to focus on Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek, which were the languages used in the Bible. Renaissance scholars turned to the study of ancient manuscripts that had long been neglected or forgotten.

An important factor during the Renaissance was cultural and educational reform, which was engaged in by scholars, writers, and civic leaders. This was accomplished through the study of the humanities, which include grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy. Those who studied these disciplines were called humanists. Their aim was to create an improved society for those who were able to speak and write with eloquence and clarity.

Some humanists were avid collectors of antique manuscripts, while others worked for the organized church and were in Holy Orders. Many were lawyers or chancellors who would have the advantage of access to book copying facilities.

One of the most influential humanists who lived during the Renaissance period was Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), who became known as the “prince of the humanists.” Erasmus was a classical scholar and wrote in pure Latin style. Using humanist techniques and his broad scholarship, he prepared new Latin and Greek editions of the New Testament. These were based on four Greek manuscripts that were available to him. With the help of the printing press, he published the first printed Greek text of the New Testament in 1516. The ability to study the Bible in its original languages encouraged a more accurate comparison of the church of his time with that of the Early Church of the New Testament. There arose a growing realization that some of the teachings and methods of the organized church were not supported by scripture.

THE GREAT REVOLT

Renaissance scholars all over Europe were able to share many of the same interests including a return to the study of the Bible in its original languages. This renewed interest—in the study of the Scriptures and the Hebrew and Greek languages of the Bible—was a powerful factor that contributed to the Protestant Reformation. Biblical humanists also pointed out the discrepancies in the organized church of their day and began calling for internal reform.

The Protestant Reformation officially began on October 31, 1517 when Martin Luther (1483-1546) nailed his famous “Ninety-five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences” to the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg, Saxony. Luther’s theses criticized Pope Leo X, the Catholic Church, its doctrinal policies concerning purgatory, and its clerical abuses, especially the sale of indulgences.

The religious revolt that soon erupted was one of the greatest revolutions in the history of the world. The stormy, often brutal conflict separated the Christians of Western Europe into two separate groups, Catholic and Protestant, and established Protestantism as a major branch of the Christian world.

So far-reaching were the results of the separation, that the Reformation has been called a turning point in history because it ushered in the Modern Age. Once the people’s religious unity had been destroyed, they began to think and study the Scriptures for themselves. However, from the diversity of the various interests involved, new political, social, and economic problems arose.

JOHN WYCLIFFE

Many courageous Biblical scholars have contributed to the preparation of the English Bible throughout the centuries, but John Wycliffe (c. 1328-1384) will be remembered as the man who produced the first complete copy of the English Bible in the 1380’s. Wycliffe was an Oxford University professor, renowned scholar and theologian. He used the only source text that was available to him at that time, the Latin Vulgate. His handwritten

Bible predated by about 70 years the invention of moveable type and the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the 1450's.

Copying manuscripts by hand was a tedious and time-consuming task, but the printing press would revolutionize the way Bibles were made in the future. The very first book ever to be printed on Gutenberg's printing press was the Latin Bible which was published in Mainz, Germany, in 1457. This marvelous invention would prove to be essential to the success of the Protestant Reformation.

Wycliffe was well-known throughout Europe for his opposition to the teachings of the organized church, which he believed were contrary to the Word of God. As a precursor to the Protestant Reformation, he became known as "The Morning Star of the Reformation." He founded the "Lollard" movement, and, with the help of his followers and his assistant Purvey, together with many other faithful scribes, produced many copies of the Scriptures in English. His first Bible appeared during the period of 1382-1384. Updated versions were done by Purvey and others in 1388 and 1395. Wycliffe believed that all Christian people should have access to the Scriptures in their own language.

WILLIAM TYNDALE

William Tyndale (1492-1536) was an English scholar and translator who was the first to translate the original Hebrew and Greek into an English Bible. As a gifted linguist, he became fluent in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, German, and Italian in addition to his native English.

In 1522, he acquired a copy of Martin Luther's New Testament, which was printed in German. He was inspired to translate it into English because of his belief that ordinary people should be able to read the Bible for themselves. He went to Cuthbert Tunstall, who was the Bishop of London, to discuss his intentions with him. However, Tunstall refused Tyndale permission to make Luther's New Testament available to the English-speaking people. Tyndale was forced to move to Hamburg, Germany, where he completed his translation in 1524.

After Tunstall's rejection, Tyndale wrote, "Church authorities banned translations of the Bible in order to keep the world still in darkness, to the intent they might sit in the consciences of the people through vain superstition and false doctrine, and to exalt their own honor even above God himself."

His translation of Luther's Bible was strictly illegal, and all of Tyndale's other translation work was banned by Royal Proclamation in 1530. He was not permitted to publish a complete Bible in English. He had finished the entire New Testament; but only about half of the Old Testament, which included a revised version of Genesis, the Pentateuch and Jonah, was published during his own lifetime. Tyndale was the first to translate the Scriptures from the original Greek into English. In 1535, he was arrested and jailed in the castle of Vilvoorde near Brussels for over a year. In 1536, he was tried and executed for heresy, his offense being that he had translated the Holy Scriptures from their original Greek into English, and for being the first man to do so. The Tyndale New Testament

would go on to influence the *Geneva Bible*, and later the *King James Version* of 1611, which contains about 84% of his work.

THE FIRST AUTHORIZED VERSION

The first royally approved printed edition in the English language was called the *Great Bible*. It was commissioned by the Church of England during the reign of King Henry VIII and completed in 1539. Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury, hired Myles Coverdale at the king's bequest to publish the new Bible. It included much from Tyndale's work, who was martyred before his Bible could be completed. However, Coverdale translated the unfinished portions of the Old Testament from the Latin Vulgate and German translations rather than from the original Hebrew text.

The *Great Bible* was the first to be authorized for public use, and it was distributed to every church in England. It was chained to the pulpit to prevent its removal from the church, and a reader was provided so that the illiterate could hear the Word of God in their own English language.

It was called the *Great Bible* because of its large size, which was a large pulpit folio which measured more than 14 inches tall. It is also known by several other names. These included the "Cromwell Bible," since Thomas Cromwell directed its publication. It was known as the "Whitchurch Bible," after its first English printer. It was called the "Chained Bible," because it was chained to the pulpit, and it has also been termed less accurately, the "Cranmer Bible," since Thomas Cranmer's preface appeared in the second edition. Seven editions of

this version were printed between the years 1539 and 1541.

THE GENEVA BIBLE

Mary Tudor (1516-1558) was the only child born to Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon who survived infancy. She became Queen Mary I of England and Ireland in 1553. She soon induced the English Parliament to reestablish Papal authority in England. This met with much resistance from Protestant reformers, and bitter persecution followed. The era is known as the “Marian Exile,” during which time great numbers of English scholars were driven to the Continent. A number of English Protestant divines also settled in Geneva, Switzerland, including Miles Coverdale, John Foxe and Anthony Gilby.

Geneva was then ruled as a republic in which John Calvin and Theodore Beza provided the main theological leadership. One of the scholars was William Whittingham, who supervised the translation of the *Geneva Bible* in collaboration with Myles Coverdale and others. He was directly responsible for the New Testament, which was published in 1557, while Gilby oversaw the Old Testament. The first edition of the *Geneva Bible*, with a further revision of the New Testament, appeared in 1560. The New Testament was printed in England in 1575, and the complete Bible in 1576. There were over 150 editions issued, the last one in 1644. It had the distinction of being the first Bible printed in Scotland in 1579, when a law was passed requiring every household of sufficient means to purchase a copy.

The *Geneva Bible* was the most widely read and influential English Bible before the *King James Bible* became available. It was a product of superior translation by the best Protestant scholars of its day, and it became the Bible of choice for many of the greatest writers, thinkers, and historical figures.

THE SECOND AUTHORIZED EDITION

The second royally commissioned version, known as the *Bishops' Bible*, was produced in 1568, under the authority of the established Church of England. The bishops believed that the *Great Bible* was severely deficient and needed to be revised because the Latin Vulgate had been used in translating most of the Old Testament, instead of the original Hebrew. It contained notes that were decidedly Calvinistic in tone, and an attempt to replace it with a new translation was authorized by the Anglican bishops. Therefore, this revision came to be known as the *Bishops' Bible*.

The first edition was exceptionally large and included 124 full-page illustrations. It was substantially revised in 1572, and was prescribed as a base text for the "Authorized Version," which would appear in 1611, and which would become the standard for the Church of England. Along with the *Great Bible*, the *Bishops' Bible* was to be read in church. The text of the revised 1572 edition carefully excluded the offending Calvinistic notes and cross references. The wisdom of the common people is evident from the fact that the *Bishops' Bible* went through more than fifty revisions, while the *Geneva Bible* was reprinted intact more than 150 times.

THE THIRD AUTHORIZED BIBLE

In January, 1604, King James summoned England's bishops, clergymen, and professors to the Hampton Court Conference. Along with these distinguished men were four Puritan leaders who were there to discuss ecclesiastical grievances and to settle the issue of a new translation of the Bible. The proposal for the new translation was submitted by Puritan president John Reynolds, of Corpus Christi College. Although the proposal did not meet with unanimous acceptance, it did meet with the king's approval.

James then brought together some of the best-known and most qualified Biblical scholars and linguists in Europe to work on the project. Although fifty-four men were nominated, forty-seven are known to have taken part in the actual work of translation. The translators were organized into six groups, and met respectively at Westminster, Cambridge, and Oxford. Ten translators at Westminster were assigned to work on Genesis through II Kings, while seven others were given Romans through Jude. At Cambridge, eight worked on I Chronicles through Ecclesiastes, and seven were responsible for the Apocrypha. The Oxford group employed seven to translate Isaiah through Malachi, and eight others worked on the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation. Four years were spent on the preliminary translation by the six groups.

The translators used many sources from which to draw information, including various translators' notes and commentaries. Also, the Greek editions of Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza were available, as were the Complutensian and Antwerp Polyglots,

and the Latin translations of Pagninus, Termellius and Beza. King James directed that they use the second edition of the *Rabbinic Bible*, prepared by Jacob ben Chayim in 1525, and published by Daniel Bromberg in Vienna. Beza's Greek New Testament of 1565 was to be the underlying text for the New Testament. The 1611 King James translation became known as the "Textus Receptus" or the Received Text. James also laid out detailed instructions for the translation work.

When the translation work of each of the six groups ended after seven years, they met at Stationers' Hall in London for review and revision of the entire work. Two men each from the Westminster, Cambridge, and Oxford companies made the final revision. It was then completed by Myles Smith and Thomas Bilson, with a preface supplied by Smith.

The original *King James Bible* contained two prefaces, the first being a short "Dedication to King James," which is still included in most editions. The second entitled, "The Translators to the Reader" contained eleven pages explaining the reasons for a new version, and the translators intention to prepare the best Bible possible for the English people. The second preface is rarely found in modern editions.

The Apocrypha was included in the first edition of the *King James Bible*, being placed between the Old and New Testaments. It first appeared in Luther's Bible in 1534, who cited St. Jerome as an authority, and who applied the term to all quasi-scriptural books that lay outside the canon of the Bible.

When the “Authorized Version” first appeared, it included many marginal notes which were intended to explain the Hebrew or Greek words. In the Old Testament, there were about 6,500 notes that in some instances provided a more literal meaning of the Hebrew text. The New Testament had nearly 800 notes. On a few occasions they indicated textual variants.

The “Authorized Version” has gone through several editions and revisions. Two notable editions, both printed at Cambridge, appeared in 1629 and 1638. Both were supervised by John Bois and Samuel Ward, two of the original translators. Two other important editions appeared in 1762, by Thomas Paris, and 1769, by Benjamin Blayney.

The latest revision was published in 1983 as the *New King James Version*, replacing archaic terms with their modern counterparts, and reflecting the more extensive manuscript evidence.

THE BIBLE: GOD’S WORD

During the 400 years since the “Authorized Version” was published, it soon replaced all previous translations. Although many new and superior versions have been published since that time, the familiar *King James Bible* remains the preferred Bible of English-speaking people. For the labors of the many scholars who prepared this edition of God’s Word, we truly give thanks.

The precious Word of God has been a source of truth and a guiding light for the consecrated child of God during the difficult times of this present Gospel Age. Led by the Holy Spirit of God, the psalmist wrote, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,

and a light unto my path.”—Ps. 119:105

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”—II Tim. 3:16,17 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

SEPTEMBER 1—“The Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”—Acts 9:15 (Z. ’03-206 Hymn 229)

SEPTEMBER 8—“Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”—James 4:4 (Z. ’99-70 Hymn 299)

SEPTEMBER 15—“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”—II Corinthians 6:17 (Z. ’99-203 Hymn 312)

SEPTEMBER 22—“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”—Psalm 23:6 (Z. ’03-413 Hymn 170)

SEPTEMBER 29—“Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD.”—Proverbs 16:5 (Z. ’03-329 Hymn 312A)

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Righteousness and Wisdom

Key Verse: *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.”*
—Proverbs 3:5

Selected Scripture:
Proverbs 3:1-35

NO SCRIPTURE TELLS US that we can be independent of our Lord. The perfect work of our Heavenly Father through Christ Jesus should be the basis of our understanding. A faith that we will be saved in our sins no matter what type of daily life we lead, is a misplaced faith. In order to “trust in the

LORD,” we must have a knowledge of God’s Word and plan of salvation, and not in our “own understanding.” (Prov. 3:5) We are reminded of what our Father has done for us in verses 4 and 5, from Titus 3, “After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.”

It is the Father’s desire that we may obtain the prize of salvation through his mercy and grace. “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.” (Eph. 2:4) His mercy makes possible a transformation from the human nature to the divine nature if one proves faithful unto death. Our salvation is of grace, and it required a ransom price, which then provided a salvation from death to life, and a salvation from sin to righteousness. The Apostle Paul refers to it as, “so great

salvation.” (Heb. 2:3) God’s love also makes it possible to forgive our past sins, cleanse us from our past condemnation, and cover our unintentional blemishes. He also encourages us to do the best that we can each day through all of the blessings that he so richly provides for us. He also gives us words of encouragement from his Holy Word, “I can do all things through Christ which stengtheneth me.”—Phil. 4:13

The Lord is always faithful to those who put their trust in him and look for his leading. Our attitude of heart and mind should be that of looking to God to receive instruction from him that we might profit by it spiritually. “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. (James 3:17) For us to appreciate what God provides for us, we must be able to have an understanding of his plans and purposes. He assures us that he will do this for us in this scripture, “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” (Eph. 1:18) This verse is actually referring to our heart condition, and walking by the eyes of faith. If our eyes are opened to appreciate the light, then we will be leaning more and more on our Father, and less on self.

God has placed us in the school of Christ until “we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” (chap. 4:13) We are told in Isaiah 54:13, “All thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.” The message of God received by faith is accepted to be the Truth, and leads to understanding and full confidence in his Word. “The LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”—Prov. 2:6 ■

From Generation to Generation

Key Verse: *“Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.”*
—Proverbs 4:13

Selected Scripture:
Proverbs 4:1-27

IT SHOULD BE EVIDENT

from our Key Verse that it is not enough that we hear the Lord’s Word, and even that we receive it into our hearts. It is necessary that we take hold of it, and that we do not waiver from it. It is along these lines that the Apostle Paul urges the

church, saying, “We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” (Heb. 2:1) We are to study the doctrine and get a clear understanding of every element of the Truth, so that they become rooted and established.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”—II Tim. 3:16

It follows then that we should act upon God’s Word, and incorporate it into every aspect of our lives. By doing this, the Spirit of Truth becomes the spirit of all of the children of God. The Holy Spirit acting in them is then in harmony and in full accord with the Heavenly Father’s mind, disposition, and will. James reminds us, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and

not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”—James 1:22-24

The hearing of the Word of the Lord brings with it much responsibility. God has called his children to walk the narrow way of self-denial, self-sacrifice, and character development. Each should then seek the doctrines and principles of the divine Word, and build their faith structure upon the foundation of divine promises. These divine words of truth are so important to us. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63) Our Lord Jesus spoke about the importance of the words of the Father, when he said, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matt. 4:4) This shows us that every admonition, every encouragement, every promise, is necessary for the development of those called to eternal life.

Another important aspect of being doers of his Word is that we do not learn all of our lessons at once, but learn them gradually, for “precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” (Isa. 28:10) We need to study God’s plan, and have his words of truth repeated over and over again to us. This will serve as reinforcement to us of his precious message of truth, for even the most devoted of the Lord’s people need constant replenishment from his fountain of truth. The key to this can be found in the words, “Every man . . . that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” (John 6:45) This is the object of seeking God’s truth, that we understand that the “path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18) May the Spirit of God shine in our hearts, “to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”—II Cor. 4:6 ■

Teaching Values

Key Verse: *“He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.”*
—Proverbs 15:32

Selected Scripture
Proverbs 10:1-15:33

these proverbs appear to be plain, they are certainly worthy of careful and prayerful consideration. They would suggest to us a series of questions that each child of God should use for self-examination. The words “despiseth his own soul,” are actually referring to our being, or person. So with this in mind each person should ask of himself, or herself, Do I love instruction and knowledge? Am I seeking for it daily along the lines of God’s Word and providence? Are the purposes of my heart pure and upright, bringing with them a constant sense of the Lord’s favor?

To help us answer these questions, we need to look at the scripture, “Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge.” (Prov. 12:1) This refers to having a desire for everything that pertains to our loving Heavenly Father’s love and mercy. We know that, “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” (Ps. 34:18) This sincere sorrow for sin is the type of condition of heart that God requires in those who he calls to be of his household of faith. It points out that we must understand that we need God, and that we look to him to help us rise above our fallen fleshly tendencies. Those called according

to God's purpose know that their lowly estate in the present life is necessary. This discipline will help to prepare them for the glory and service awaiting them in the time to come. It will also lead the faithful away from the path of sin and ungodliness, to righteousness, faith, and trust in God.

No one can measure up to the glorious image of God as it was first represented in father Adam. We are told, "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10) All have come short of God's standard and need divine mercy. We do also realize that those whom the Lord is calling, and who make an acceptable consecration, are covered under his "robe of righteousness." (Isa. 61:10) In this manner, our unwilling imperfections are covered, and God can perform his perfect work in us.

Since values can refer to those things that are desirable, useful, and important for us to use as the basis for our lives, we should look to God for the most treasured things. We have the promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." (chap. 26:3) The word "stayed" has many definitions, but the one that is most fitting is "to remain through" or "during." It implies the ability to overcome, or to endure—that our minds are being kept full of the precious promises of God. A mind full of his Word then causes us to ask if we are doing all that we can do to have it stay there. "The memory of the just is blessed." (Prov. 10:7) "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life." (vs. 11) "He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction." (vs. 17) This keeps God's truth in our memory, and then uses that instruction to serve God, and the cause of truth and righteousness. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath." (II Cor. 8:12) This desire is reflected in the words, "Whatsoever things are true, . . . honest, . . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely, . . . of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."—Phil. 4:8 ■

Wisdom and Discernment

***Key Verse: “Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another.”
—Proverbs 25:9***

***Selected Scripture:
Proverbs 25:1-28***

FOR US TO UNDERSTAND

the meaning of these words, we must first realize that tradition had long taught that neighbors should be loved and enemies hated. This all changed during the First Advent of our Lord. The Great Teacher said that enemies should be loved and

blessed, even though they may cause us persecution and even injury. Our Lord Jesus instructed those who would be his followers to “love thy neighbour.” (Matt. 5:43; 22:39) This does not merely refer to the people who dwell around us in our community, although we are to live our lives in harmony with others.

Remember that we are told to “live peaceably with all men.” (Rom. 12:18) A neighbor, as used here, is one who is near to us, and who shares our sympathies, sentiments, and our faith. We have been admonished to live according to the lines marked out by the Holy Spirit through the words of Jesus and the apostles. “Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” (Gal. 6:10) We should then desire with our whole heart to do this without limitation in word and in deed. We are to be kind and considerate of others in all of the affairs of life. If we are doing this

daily we have the Master's spirit in us. It is not enough to start out with making a full consecration, but we should continue faithful, and "be not weary in well doing."—II Thess. 3:13

If anyone can dispel the darkness of ignorance and let in light, he will surely do great good. No other work could be so important as to make known to others God's character, plan, and will concerning us. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:14,16) For this cause, or purpose, we were appointed by our Father to "preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:15) All who we come in contact with should recognize that we are children of God, desiring to show love, kindness, and a sincere consideration for the welfare of others. In so doing, we will then be copying our Heavenly Father's character. This disposition will compel us to do good to everybody. It also implies that we are not to be negligent of those in our own households. We will then give a kind word to those who need it, and display a good character in both the small and great matters of life.

However, while we are "to do good to all men," we are to think especially of those who God has called out of darkness into his wonderful family. This involves all those who have been invited to become members of the household of faith, and have the opportunity of serving the body of Christ at this time, for "the body is not one member, but many." (I Cor. 12:14) They should always be first in our thoughts and prayers. Every service gladly and lovingly rendered to the saints is rendered unto God's glory. We should then be ready to lay down our very lives for the brethren. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—John 15:13 ■

The Prerequisites of Justification

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”

—*Romans 8:33*

JUSTIFICATION IS ONE OF

the most important doctrinal studies in the Bible. It helps us to understand the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ and how our relationship with God is attained. Our loving Heavenly Father, wishing to have some of his creatures share in blessing all the families of the earth under the administration of Christ’s future kingdom, has provided the important prerequisites necessary to justify those whom he has called from the world during this present Gospel Age.

DEFINING JUSTIFICATION

In our English Bible, the words “justification” and “righteousness” both come from the same Greek root which means “to be made right.” The Bible states in many places that it is God who justifies us. Therefore, the thought behind the word justification is to be made right with our Heavenly Father. Justification, as it pertains to the called in Christ Jesus during this present Gospel Age, is the

arrangement by which God recognizes us as being made right even though we are not actually righteous. Thus, having been made acceptable, God begets us to a spiritual life that permits us to have fellowship and communion with him.

One of the qualifications of justification must be the removal of any estrangement and discord that may exist between God and the one justified. Someone may ask how this is possible since we were all born sinners, and how can righteousness be conferred upon anyone born imperfect? How does the Bible answer this question?

A FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE

Each of the following scriptures presents a prerequisite of our justification. These are taken from the Apostle Paul's letter to the brethren at Rome, and all apply to the justification of the church class during this present Gospel Age. We must keep in mind the statement of our theme text that, "It is God that justifieth."—Rom. 8:33

We are justified by God's grace.—Rom. 3:24

We are justified by the blood of Christ.—Rom. 5:9

Christ was raised again for our justification.—Rom. 4:25

We are justified by faith.—Rom. 5:1

BY GOD'S GRACE

With this brief introduction we will consider some of the prerequisites of our justification. In his letter to the church at Rome, Paul explained, "Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by

faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”—Rom. 3:21-24

The last phrase is especially important, “being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” This introduces to us a righteousness that is set apart from the Law of Moses, and is not dependent upon the deeds of the Law. The Jewish people tried to attain righteousness through keeping the Law, but they failed. This scripture points us to a righteousness, or justification, that is obtained by faith in Jesus Christ. Both Jews and Gentiles need to be made right with God, as Paul proclaimed, “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”(vs. 20) Thus, justification is made manifest, “even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.” God accepts us only because we have faith in Christ Jesus.

We need this wonderful grace because, “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Adam in his perfection was crowned with glory and honor, but none of his children have enjoyed the glory of human perfection. All have sinned and all are imperfect. Paul points out that we are “being justified freely by his grace.” God’s grace is his unmerited favor resulting from his love and loving-kindness. It is because of his great love for us that he arranged for our justification. Therefore, the first prerequisite of our standing before God in righteousness is our Heavenly Father’s love for us.

Had it not been for his loving grace and his great goodness and kindness toward us, there would be no opportunity for us to be other than sinners in the sight of God. This is true of every one of us with none excepted. This realization brings to our minds the words of a very familiar scripture, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) He gave, and we are justified freely by his grace. The gift of his Son was not without cost to God. It cost him much in that it required the death of his beloved Son. It was also not without cost to our Lord Jesus. It cost him crucifixion and death, condemned unjustly as a blasphemer of God. This great love was freely given and without cost to us, and it opened up a new and living way for us to come back into fellowship and communion with God.

Let us pause and think for a moment of God's love for us. The Heavenly Father was the one who was sinned against. It was his instructions that were dishonored in the Garden of Eden. It was Adam and Eve who owed so much to him and who sinned against him. Yet, it was our loving Father in heaven who made the first overture toward reconciliation, and at great cost. He arranged the first step so that those under condemnation could be brought back into fellowship with him. This was a wonderful expression of his grace and loving-kindness. This was the first requirement in providing the way for our justification. Through his great love he provided the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

(Continued on page 35)

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Paul speaks of another prerequisite to our being justified. We read, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (Rom. 5:9) We are justified by the blood of Christ, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."—Rom. 3:25

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul wrote, "Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:13) These scriptures explain that the blood of Christ is a fundamental prerequisite to our standing of justification before God. The "sins that are past" refer to Adamic sins. The "wrath" of God speaks of the condemnation of Adam under which all mankind is born.

The "blood of Christ" has primary reference to his death. The "life of the flesh is in the blood." (Lev. 17:11) Shed blood results in the death of the life that existed in the body. Thus we understand the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This principle is, "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."—I Cor. 15:21,22

It is written, "Take heed therefore . . . to feed the church of God, which he [Jesus] hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28) When we are purchased with Jesus' precious blood, then our relationship with God is dependent upon that purchase price. We cannot separate Christ's sacrifice from salvation. Our salvation depends upon it. The

Apostle Peter wrote, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."—I Pet. 1:18,19

The sacrifice of the Passover lamb illustrated this point. The lamb died, its shed blood was applied, and the firstborn received life as a result. The offering of a life to God is the essential matter in sacrifice and therefore, blood becomes a symbol of sacrificial death. The blood of Christ is a gift to us because he sacrificed his life for us.

The expression "being justified by Jesus' blood" emphasizes the fact that the ransom is a prerequisite of our justification, and it plays a very important part in our relationship with God. The philosophy of the ransom, and the part it plays in our deliverance from God's condemnation of our race to death because of sin, is an important and fundamental truth that clearly teaches that our redemption, which is from God, is made possible through Christ Jesus and his shed blood.

BY JESUS' RESURRECTION

Another prerequisite is found in Paul's letter to the brethren at Rome. When speaking of "The Christ," he said, "For us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."—Rom. 4:24,25

Christ was "delivered" up in death for our offences. Had he remained dead, none of the human race could ever be accounted righteous in the sight of God. Therefore, he was raised from death that

we might be justified. Justification thus depends upon a change from our being at enmity with God to being reconciled to him, and from being under condemnation to being freed from that condemnation of death because of sin.

Paul referred to the Tabernacle and the typical applications of better sacrifices which they were designed to illustrate. "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." (Heb. 9:23) Then he explained, "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. (vs. 24) When Christ entered into the presence of God for us, he did not take the blood of a bull or the blood of a goat as was done in the typical application. He presented the merit, or value, of his own sacrificed life "for us" and, subsequently, for all mankind, to be manifest under the provisions of his future kingdom over the earth.

If Jesus had not been resurrected and had not appeared in God's presence for us, we would not be justified. John recorded Jesus' words, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."—John 10:17,18

It was indispensable that Jesus take up that life again in order to accomplish the fruition of his death. He said, "No man taketh it from me," which

was not true of Adam whose life had been taken from him because of his disobedience to God's law. Jesus was always obedient to his Father's will and voluntarily laid down his life in sacrifice. Because he was perfect, his life was his own to either keep or to give. He chose to give it, but also proclaimed, "I have power to take it again."

This is not to suggest that Jesus raised himself from death. He was raised from the dead by the mighty power of his Heavenly Father, as clearly taught in the Scriptures. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (Acts 2:24) Jesus was raised from the grave to the highest of all spirit planes, and appeared in the presence of God on behalf of his faithful consecrated followers who are being called in Christ Jesus during this present Gospel Age. In his letter to the Hebrew brethren, Paul told them, "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." This was a necessary step before anyone could be released from Adamic condemnation and be justified through the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

BY FAITH

The next prerequisite is also found in Paul's letter to the Romans, where he said, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:1,2) God's love and grace in providing a way through

the gift of his Son was the first step toward our justification. Christ's faithfulness even unto death, his resurrection, and his appearing in the presence of God for us was a further step toward our justification.

We recognize the importance of God's part as well as the importance of our Lord Jesus' part in this providential arrangement of grace on our behalf. Our part is the full exercise of our faith, which is an active principle in the life of every child of God. Our faith must be active. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."—James 2:17

Faith moves us to offer ourselves to God in full consecration, which is another step in our justification. We are justified by Jesus' blood which provides the merit of his ransom sacrifice. During this present Gospel Age, the merit of his blood is applied only for those who have truly consecrated themselves to God. If we have made a consecration to God, through the imputation of Christ's merit, we are covered with the robe of his righteousness and are thus made acceptable to God as a living sacrifice. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Rom. 12:1

The statement, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God" does not refer to the peace of a tranquil life, but rather that we have peace with God and are no longer at enmity and in opposition to him. This peace of reconciliation is possible only because we have had imputed to us the merit of Christ's blood. The Heavenly Father sees us as being righteous and clean before him only

because we are covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness. Thus, we are justified in God's sight. Only those consecrated to God may receive this redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Of them, Paul said, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."—Rom. 8:1

One of the connotations of the word "peace" is reconciliation. It is the same word used by Luke when he recorded, "and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14) It brings us joy in the realization that the time is coming when there will be reconciliation and peace between God and man. Because of that reconciliation, there will be "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—vss. 10,11

Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son. We are justified by Jesus' blood and by the imputation of its merit. We thus exercise faith in that precious blood, and offer ourselves in complete consecration to the Heavenly Father. This is another important step in partaking of the merit of Jesus' sacrifice, and is therefore a prerequisite of our justification.

One of the most beautiful texts that the Apostle Paul has written in explanation of justification is found in his letter to the church at Rome. "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. 3:26) Our Heavenly Father was just in sentencing man to death. However, if the sentence was just, how could he remove

that sentence and still be just? He can do so only because of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who died the just for the unjust, because the merit of the ransom is extended to those who have full faith in our Lord Jesus. This scripture emphasizes God's justice, even as his grace emphasizes his great love. It also affirms his eternal consistency. He provides the way whereby we may come to him and be justified, the way that enables him to be just and yet the justifier. He provides his Son that he can be just and yet be the justifier of the ones made acceptable through faith in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

GOD IS FOR US

When emphasizing God's special care over his people who he justifies during this present Gospel Age, the inspired Apostle Paul wrote, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."—Rom. 8:31-34

The subject of justification is a wonderful doctrine as it is presented to us in the Word of God. We rejoice in the knowledge that the elect, by virtue of the merit of Christ's precious blood being imputed to them, are made righteous and acceptable to our loving Heavenly Father. Justification is not the process of being made right, but the righteous con-

dition that is attained by the fully consecrated child of God.

The question may be asked whether God deals with anyone before they are consecrated, and there is no doubt that he does. The Scriptures are clear on this point, and the experiences of every child of God confirm that he does deal with those who are in the way of righteousness. Jesus exclaimed, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John 6:44) The expression, "the drawings of the Lord," most beautifully expresses the experience of our own lives prior to consecration. Our providences and our experiences, as we sought after the Lord, made us realize that the drawings of God through the power of his Holy Spirit were directing us into the way of truth and righteousness. They were directing us, through his providences, toward the act of consecration and to our justification.

When writing to the Colossian brethren, Paul made the following statement that harmonizes these thoughts. He said, "Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight."—Col. 1:20-22

This is a wonderful scripture with which to conclude this study. Justification is only the beginning of our heavenly calling in Christ Jesus, and leads us on to the subject and work of sanctification.

Even as justification changes our status before God at the beginning of our walk in newness of life, sanctification changes us daily as we grow in grace and in knowledge.

Thus we develop as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. We go on towards the completion of the good work that has begun in us. Let us consider the great privilege that we enjoy of being justified in God's sight, and appreciate the privilege that we have of daily sanctification through the power of the Truth. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17) If faithful unto death, at last our Christian walk will be finished and we will hear those longed-for words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."—Matt. 25:23

We also rejoice in the knowledge that the blood of the cross has a further dimension for the whole sin-sick world of mankind. The Scriptures testify that it will extend the redemption blessings to the entire world under the administration of Christ's future kingdom of life and peace. At the close of the thousand-year reign of our Lord and the faithful members of the church class, all the obedient of the human family will have been reconciled to our loving Heavenly Father, and their enmity will be removed. Paul said, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."—Eph. 1:10

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."—Rom. 8:33 ■

A Mighty Man of Valor

“Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, . . . And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.”
—Judges 6:11,12

FOLLOWING THE DEATH

of Joshua, who succeeded Moses as leader of the Israelites, there were more than four hundred years during which the people were without a central government. It was a time when, as the record states, “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” (Judg. 17:6) Some-

times, and on the part of certain individuals, that which seemed right was in harmony with the Lord, but more often it was not.

This long era in Israel’s national history is known as the period of the Judges. It is so-called because when the iniquities of the people became gross the Lord permitted their enemies to enslave them. When they cried to him for help, he raised up a deliverer for the occasion to give them a short respite from oppression. The Scriptures inform us that “the people served the LORD all the days of

Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel.” (chap. 2:7) Then there arose another generation who knew not Joshua, and these “did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim.”—vs.11

Idolatry was Israel’s greatest sin during this period as at other times, and the people were being oppressed by the Midianites. The situation was thus when God raised up Gideon. He was the fifth recorded judge whom the Lord used to deliver his people. Gideon served forty years as judge of Israel.

The people had cried unto the Lord for help. Through a prophet, he assured them that he would deliver them from the oppressive hand of the Midianites. Through this prophet, the Lord said, “I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land; And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.”—chap. 6:8-10

God had promised to bless and protect Israel when the people obeyed him, and had also made it plain that he would punish them when they were disobedient. They had given themselves over to idolatry, and, as punishment, the Lord had permitted the Midianites to oppress them. When they cried to him for help, he was compassionate and promised to send deliverance. The fulfillment of that promise came quickly.

We read in Judges 6:11,12, "There came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." Just why Gideon is referred to at this point as a "mighty man of valour" is not clear. Some scholars suggest that he had already bravely displayed his willingness to help deliver the Israelites from the Midianites. More likely, the expression is used prophetically, in view of what the Lord knew concerning Gideon's heart attitude, and that this humble man would be courageous in the doing of his will.

GIDEON IS PERPLEXED

Gideon was somewhat perplexed by being referred to as a "mighty man of valour." At the time, he was threshing wheat in a winepress, hoping that he would not be discovered by the Midianites. He replied to the angel, "Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."—vs.13

Up to this point, the angel had said nothing to Gideon about delivering Israel from the Midianites. Being addressed as he was, Gideon probably sensed that he was about to be called upon for some such task as this. His first reaction was to express his feelings concerning the manner in which he supposed the Lord had deserted his people. The

angel had said to him, “The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.” Gideon asked: If this be so, why isn’t the Lord doing something about helping his people?

In a very human-like manner, Gideon suggested that it might be well to talk about the miracles of the past, and how God had delivered his people from Egypt. Now, he wondered how that would help him and his people. Were the Midianites more powerful than the Egyptians—so much so that God could not do anything about it? Probably most of the Lord’s people have moments like this when trials are pressing down on them and they wonder why the Lord doesn’t come immediately to their rescue. We need such experiences to test our faith and reliance on the Lord.

THE LORD’S ASSURANCE

The Lord’s reply to Gideon’s concern was reassuring. He said to him, “Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?” (vs. 14) Here was the Lord’s direct commission to Gideon. The fact that he said to him, “Go in this thy might,” does not imply that Gideon could deliver the Israelites in his own strength, or by his own wisdom. It simply indicates that the Lord knew Gideon had capabilities which he could use; not the least of these was the recognition of his own weaknesses. Gideon was a modest man, and was aware of his own insignificance.

Gideon replied to the Lord, “Oh my Lord, where-with shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s

house.” (Judg. 6:15) Here we are reminded of Moses. When the Lord called upon him to deliver the Israelites from Egypt, his reaction was, “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?” (Exod. 3:11) Isaiah, when given a vision of the Lord and his greatness, responded, “I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.”—Isa. 6:5

None of the Lord’s people today are being called to do outstanding and dramatic things in his service, but we are all called to an exceeding “high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14) One of the first reactions to this call is to think that we are not worthy. For this reason, many hesitate for a while to make sure that this “heavenly calling” really belongs to them. When we accept it and dedicate ourselves to the doing of our Heavenly Father’s will, we should look upon every little service he may give us as being an exalted opportunity to be associated with him in the outworking of his great and glorious purpose of delivering the whole sinful world of mankind from their bondage to sin and death.

NOT EASILY CONVINCED

The Lord’s commission to Gideon was given to him by the angel. When this “mighty man of valour” expressed his feelings of inadequacy, the Lord replied to him through the angel, “Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.” (Judg. 6:16) Nothing can stand in the way of those with whom the Lord is present, to whom he gives his Spirit of guidance and strength. This is just as true today as it was in Gideon’s time.

No faithful servant of God to whom the assurance has been given, “Surely I will be with thee,” has ever been disappointed. The Lord does not always deliver us from trouble, but he does give us strength to endure our trials so that we are able to fight the good fight of faith against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and fight it victoriously. Even our formidable enemy—Satan the devil—will in God’s due time be completely routed and bruised under our feet.—Rom. 16:20

Gideon wanted a sign giving further assurance that he was really the one selected by the Lord to deliver Israel. He wanted to know that, if necessary, the Lord would use his miracle-working power on his behalf. He said to the angel, “Shew me a sign that thou [the Lord] talkest with me.” (Judg. 6:17) Gideon by now seemed convinced that the Lord could help him, but needed assurance that the voice speaking to him was the voice of the Lord. This was a commendable attitude on Gideon’s part.

It is important for us today to make sure that the voice we hear is that of the Lord. Today, the Lord speaks to his people through his written Word. It is fundamentally essential that we be sure that the views to which we give heed, the views which guide and strengthen us as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, are based on a “thus saith the Lord.” The Lord’s voice to us is the gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation. Paul said that even if an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel to us, we should not give heed to it.—Gal. 1:8,9

Upon request by Gideon, the angel lingered while he “made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes

of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him [the angel] under the oak, and presented it.” (Judg. 6:19) Then the angel said to Gideon, “Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth.” Gideon did this, and “then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his [Gideon’s] sight.”—vss. 20,21

Gideon was convinced that it really was an angel of the Lord that had been communicating with him. At first he was afraid, but the Lord assured him that he would not die. Then he built an altar there unto the Lord. The Lord did not delay in giving Gideon instructions concerning how he was to proceed in delivering the Israelites from the hands of the Midianites. The root of Israel’s difficulties was idolatry. This sin had penetrated right into the home of Gideon’s father. He had erected an altar to Baal and had built a grove nearby. Gideon’s first commission was to destroy this altar and grove.—vss. 25, 26

We have in this an implied lesson which all the Lord’s people may well take to heart. In entering into the Lord’s service at the time of consecration, we may be inclined to look for something important to do farther afield. In doing so, we may be overlooking opportunities which may exist right in our own home, or within the circle of our own friends or relatives. Those of our own household

may not have an ear for the Truth, and they may even oppose the Truth. Regardless of this, we should, by our lives, bear witness to them.

WISE PROCEDURE

Gideon knew that his father was an idolater, and he knew that this was also true of the people in his own town. He decided to destroy his father's altar to Baal and his grove by night because he "feared his father's household." (vs. 27) We do not need to conclude from this that he was fearful of what harm might come to him. He was fearful, rather, of not succeeding in the undertaking if he attempted it in daylight, and was determined to destroy the altar and grove.

The next morning, after the mission was accomplished and Gideon had offered sacrifice to Israel's God, the men of the city were most displeased. When it was reported that Gideon had done this thing, they demanded that Joash, his father, deliver his son to them that they might kill him. Then there was a surprising development. Joash, who himself was an idolater, said to his son's accusers, "Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar."—vs. 31

However it might have been with others of his family, Gideon's father stood by him in valiant fashion when the storm of criticism broke. He must have surprised the crowd by his defense. They had no answer to his reasoning that if Baal was really a god he should be able to defend himself. The fact

that he had not been able to do so stood as a testimony that the Israelites had been worshipping a false god.

A FURTHER TEST

We are told that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon. He blew a trumpet and sent messengers throughout various regions. He began to assemble an army to defeat the Midianites, who by now had gathered in great numbers in a nearby valley. Perhaps the realization that he was embarking on such a tremendous project, and the fact that some of his potential army were already putting in an appearance, caused Gideon to ask for another test to be sure that the Lord would actually stand by him in his battle against Israel's enemies.

“Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.”—Judg. 6:36-38

To some, this would seem to have been a very convincing demonstration, and it was probably so with Gideon. However, the mission on which he was about to embark was a hazardous one, and great responsibility was involved. He wanted to be doubly convinced that it was actually the Lord's mission, and that he would have divine guidance and help in accomplishing it. After all, it could have

been more or less a natural thing for dew to settle on fleece rather than the ground. He again said to the Lord, “Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.”—vs. 39

Gideon then received the definitive answer for which he was seeking. In the morning, he discovered that “it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.” (vs. 40) Gideon was now satisfied. He “rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.”—chap. 7:1

ARMY TOO LARGE

The Lord then announced to Gideon that the army he had gathered was too large. The Lord wanted Gideon to realize that it would not be by his strength, or by the strength of the mighty army which he would raise, that the Midianites would be defeated. He instructed Gideon to announce to his soldiers that any who were at all fearful should return home. Twenty-two thousand took advantage of this opportunity, which left ten thousand to fight the hordes of the Midianites.

The Lord informed Gideon that the number was still too great. Another test was then imposed. Gideon brought the ten thousand soldiers down to the water. “The Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise everyone that boweth down upon his knees to

drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.”—vss. 3-6

Thus Gideon’s army was reduced to three hundred. This drastic reduction in the number of troops to go against the Midianites is a reminder to us that the Lord does not depend upon great numbers to accomplish his purposes. Many throughout the present age, as well as during past ages, have failed to learn this lesson. Even among certain professed Christians today, the display of great numbers is supposed to indicate the Lord’s favor and be, therefore, an evidence of success.

Those truly devoted to the Lord realize that it is not numbers that prove the presence and favor of the Lord, but a true spirit of devotion to him and trust in him. Those who truly trust in God are happy to be guided by his Word. If one such should find himself even standing alone, he would not be concerned so long as he had a deep conviction in his heart that he was doing the Lord’s will.

This does not mean that small numbers and minorities are always right, or that the Lord is specially blessing them. The first consideration for every true Christian is to make sure that he is right. Being right is being in harmony with the Lord’s written Word. When one has made sure of this and he finds his friends supporting him, or in harmony with him, he can rejoice. If he finds that they are opposed to him, he can thank God for the assurance of his guidance and help. Let us all realize that neither numbers, nor lack of numbers, in a group with which we may be as-

sociated, or are considering being associated with, is any evidence of the Lord's choice, one way or another.

A STRANGE DREAM

In Gideon's case, it was in following the instructions of the Lord that he found his army reduced to the inauspicious number of three hundred, compared to the tremendous hordes of the Midianites. While he knew that this was the Lord's will, he was favored by an experience that gave him even more confidence. He was instructed to slip down quietly by night into the camp of the Midianites. He arrived as one of the Midianites was relating a dream in which he saw a loaf of barley bread come tumbling into the hosts of Midian. It rolled into a tent and smote its occupants and killed them. This dream was interpreted by one of the Midianites in this way: "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host."—vs. 14

Gideon realized that the news of this dream would rapidly circulate among the Midianites and that its effect would be to more or less unnerve them. For him, it was further evidence that the Lord was leading him and would support him as he and his three hundred attacked that mighty host of Israel's oppressors.

STRANGE WEAPONS

The Lord had reduced the size of Gideon's army to three hundred. Additionally, they were apparently unarmed except for trumpets, water pitchers, and torches—a strange combination. Each

man had been given a trumpet, a pitcher, and a torch. He was to light his torch and then conceal it in his pitcher. At the giving of a certain signal, the trumpet was to be blown and the pitcher broken. This, of course, would reveal the light of the torch.

Gideon divided his three hundred into three groups and deployed them in a manner to approach the camp of the Midianites from three sides. Gideon's instructions were that when he, and those with him, blew on their trumpets and shouted, "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon" (Judg. 7:18), all the others were to do likewise, and also to break their pitchers, suddenly revealing the light of the torches. This gave the appearance that they were surrounded by a mighty army. In this way, the Midianites were frightened and confused. We are told that "the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled."—vs. 22

The main point of the story is that this was the method by which the Lord, through Gideon, defeated and routed the Midianites. Many other interesting lessons have also been drawn from the use of the trumpet, the pitcher, and the torch. In other places in the Bible, trumpets are used to symbolize messages. Torches give light, and we are commissioned to bear the light of the Gospel for the blessing of others. The Bible refers to our human bodies as earthen vessels. It is a nice thought that by the breaking of our vessels the light shines out. These are all reasonable thoughts and ones by which we can gain additional lessons.

AN UNHAPPY END

Following the rout of the Midianites from the valley, Gideon pursued them. His little army was joined by others in the “mopping up” aspect of the battle. In the end, he commanded quite an auspicious army. They wanted to make Gideon their king, but he said, “I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you.” (chap. 8:23) Here, again, this mighty man of valor displayed his humility and his loyalty to the Lord.

At this point, however, Gideon did make a request of “the men of Israel.” (vs. 22) I request, he said, “that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.)” (vs. 24) Gideon’s men gladly honored this request, with the result that Gideon was handed a tremendous quantity of gold—“a thousand and seven hundred shekels.” (vs. 26) With this gold, Gideon made an “ephod, . . . and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.” (vs. 27) There is no reason to suppose that Gideon intended to create an idol, or himself took part in this idolatry, although it was the golden ephod that enticed his people to begin their next falling away into this great sin. Let us think of this mighty man of valor as wanting to commemorate the wonderful manner in which the Lord had blessed him as he sought to be faithful in his service.

Gideon was a pleasing servant of the Lord and is mentioned as one of the Old Testament “heroes of faith” in Hebrews 11:32. May we look at his

example of faithfulness to the Lord and emulate the Godlike qualities he possessed. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses [such as Gideon], let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."—Heb. 12:1

"There came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour."—Judg. 6:11,12 ■



OBITUARIES

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

Sister Ruth Kuehmicel, Wisconsin—July 16. Age, 83

Brother Lawrence P. Davis, Jr., Los Angeles, CA—July 18. Age, 89

Brother Donnie Moody, Buffalo, NY—July 21. Age, 74

Sister Jane Henderson, Crothersville, IN—July 26.

Christian Fellowship

***“Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”
—Ephesians 4:32***

IN OUR FEATURED SCRIPTURE,

the Apostle Paul speaks of the kind and tenderhearted disposition that marks every Christian who has been called in Christ Jesus during this present Gospel Age. In the New Testament, the word “fellowship” has

been translated from a Greek word which means “partnership or participation,” and suggests a common communication in belief and practice.

This common goal is well expressed, as we read, “They continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42) All the teachings of the apostles pertained to Jesus, the Christ of promise. They relate to his part in the divine plan, and the Christian’s relationship to him. Thus, Paul confirms, “I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined

not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”—I Cor. 2:1,2

The fundamental truths of the Bible are centered in Jesus Christ and are therefore essential to true Christian fellowship. To whatever extent there may be disagreement on the basic teachings, there would in that proportion be a lack of full fellowship. The brethren enjoy sweet and blessed fellowship when they abide in the teachings that have been imparted to them by Jesus and his apostles.

A proper appreciation of the truths that pertain to the divine plan, and our Lord Jesus' part in that plan, will lead to godlikeness in our attitude and actions toward one another. The thought was expressed by Paul in our opening scripture as marked by kindness, tenderness, and the spirit of forgiveness toward others of like precious faith, and are essential elements of true Christian fellowship.

There must be a large measure of selflessness on the part of those who enjoy the true fellowship of the Lord's people. Paul wrote, “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.”—Rom 15:1-3

The apostle was quoting from an Old Testament prophecy concerning Jesus, which says, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.” (Ps. 69:9,10) In Paul's letter to the Romans, he then added, “Whatsoever

things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”—Rom. 15:4

The Apostle Peter explains that it was through the prophets that the Holy Spirit had been testified—“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”—I Pet. 1:11

An important aspect of Christian fellowship is to share in Christ’s sufferings. In this connection, we read, “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.”—Col. 1:23,24

Paul also explained, “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.” (Phil. 3:10) Again, he wrote, “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.”—chap. 1:29

The supreme objective of our Christian life is to glorify God. “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.”—Rom. 15:5-7 ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

M. Balko

Clay City, IN September 16-18

K. Fernets

Ukraine September 19-30
Mukachevo 23-25

J. Panucci

Italy September 3-16
Piatucco, Brescia 3
Prato, Florence 6
Rome 8
Salerno 10
Agrigento 12
Cenicatte 14
Agrigento 15

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

G. Balko, Jr.

Seattle, WA September 2-5
Clay City, IN 16-18

M. J. Balko

Clay City, IN September 16-18

D. Blencowe

Seattle, WA September 2-5

J. Brown

Clay City, IN September 16-18

R. Charlton

Seattle, WA September 2-5

O. B. Elbert

Seattle, WA September 2-5

A. Fernets

Seattle, WA September 2-5
Kalispell, MT 23-25

J. Freer

Seattle, WA September 2-5

R. Goodman

New York, NY September 3,4

L. Griehs

New York, NY September 3,4
Denver, CO 16-18

K. Humphreys

Seattle, WA September 2-5

T. Krupa

Kalispell, MT September 23-25

H. Montague

New York, NY September 3,4
Huntsville, AL 9-11

D. Rawson

Seattle, WA September 2-5

D. Rice

New York, NY September 3,4
Kalispell, MT 23-25

G. Tabac

New York, NY September 3,4

C. Willis

Clay City, IN September 16-18

CONVENTIONS

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

SEATTLE CONVENTION, September 2-5—Seabeck Conference Center, 15395 Seabeck Hwy NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Room reservations, contact L. Flinn. Phone: (253) 838-3822. Other information, contact D. Christiansen. Phone: (360) 440-3283

JACKSON CONVENTION, September 3,4—Fa-ho-lo Camp & Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Unit 1, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact V. Lumley. Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK CONVENTION, September 3,4—Doubletree Hotel, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ 07430. Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact G. Passios. Phone: (201) 939-3196

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 9-11—Radisson Inn Huntsville Airport, 8721 Madison Blvd., Madison, AL 35758. Contact J. Cothren, 1300 Huntsville Hills Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802. Phone: (256) 852-8505

CLAY CITY CONVENTION, September 16-18—Canyon Inn, McCormick's Creek State Park, 451 McCormick Creek Park Road, Spencer, IN 47460. Contact S. Clark, 7861 Clearwater Parkway, Indianapolis, IN 46240. Phone: (317) 578-2634

COLORADO CONVENTION, September 16-18—Red Lion Hotel-Denver Central, 4040 Quebec Street, Denver, CO 80216. Contact L. Turner, 1966 Mount Zion Drive, Golden, CO 80401. Phone: (303) 278-4091 or (303) 809-1957

KALISPELL CONVENTION, September 23-25—Hampton Inn, 1140 Hwy. 2 W, Kalispell, MT 59901.

Room reservations, contact hotel directly at (406) 755-7900. Other information, contact F. Blicharz. Phone: (406) 314-4945

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 1,2—Sewickley Grange Hall, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact G. Balko. Phone: (724) 771-0139 Or contact L. Mlinek. Phone: (724) 689-8733

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 8,9—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI. Contact J. Houlmont. Phone: (231) 972-4259

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 15,16—Masonic Temple, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. Contact M. Allard. Phone (805) 773-2962

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 29,30—NEW LOCATION—South Seminole Masonic Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Contact J. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 831-2098

JERSEY CITY PRE-THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 20—The Loyalty Lodge, 1912 Morris Avenue, Union, NJ 07083. Contact S. Koterba. Phone: (718) 961-4437 or (917) 554-2348

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

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

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

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

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

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

THAT THE HOPE FOR THE WORLD lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ’s millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35