

The DAWN

VOLUME No. LXXXI, Number 7
(USPS 149-380), July 2013

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First-class postage paid at Rutherford, NJ. Published monthly by The Dawn Bible Students Association, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. \$12.00 a year.

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And God Rested— Why?

“On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.”

—Genesis 2:2

OUR OPENING TEXT SAYS

that God rested on the “seventh day” of creation. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul says that God is still resting. (Heb. 4:3-11) As our title asks—Why? Why is God resting when the world is so much in need of his help?

Why does the Bible paint such a picture of God in the midst of a world that seems to have removed itself so far away from its original created state? Logical reasoning would tell us that, now more than ever, if there is a loving God who is interested in the earth and his created beings which dwell here, he should be working to resolve the myriad problems of this present world—not resting.

It is likely unnecessary to remind our readers of the problems rampant in today’s world—problems from which one would suppose that an Almighty, loving God would not be “resting.” However, lest we think differently, it is important to keep before our mind’s eye the abundant evidence which

unmistakably indicates that not only are the world's problems many, but that they have dramatically increased in recent decades. For one to assume otherwise—that man's problems are decreasing, or that they are no more than in past centuries or ages—is to be blind to information readily available and documented by many noted scholars.

HOW MANY PROBLEMS?

One such source of information concerning the world's problems is a monumental work begun more than forty years ago titled *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*, published by the Union of International Associations (UIA), under the direction of Anthony Judge. It is available as a three-volume, three-thousand page book, a CD-ROM, and also online. The *Encyclopedia* was started in 1972, with the first edition published in 1976. Since then, updated editions were published in 1986, 1991, 1994-95, and an online edition was published in 2000. A project involving redevelopment and redesign of the online *Encyclopedia* is planned to be launched later in 2013 under the direction of the UIA.

Of particular interest to us, as the various editions of the *Encyclopedia* have been published, is the tremendous increase in the number of identified and documented world problems that have been listed. In the original 1976 edition, 7,444 were identified. In the 2000 online edition, 56,564 world problems were listed—nearly an eight-fold increase in less than twenty-five years. One can only imagine what that number might be today, given the events in the world during the last thirteen years.

The problems listed in the *Encyclopedia* cover the entire gamut of man's current experiences here on earth. Just a mere sampling identifies problems related to war; social injustice; environmental degradation; human suffering; animal suffering; disease—human, animal, and plant; epidemics; viruses; crime; terrorism; threatened species; economy; free trade; weather; labor; nationalism; family; race and ethnic issues; religion; and many, many others. Within all of these are hundreds, if not thousands, of specifically identified problems currently affecting some portion of man's life in this world.

Whether the *Encyclopedia* provides a completely accurate representation, in numbers or by specific description, of the problems facing the world of the twenty-first century, we cannot be sure. Some may claim that these numbers are inflated, while others may claim they are understated. Regardless of the correctness of the numbers, or even the underlying validity of each problem identified, two points cited at the outset of this article are clearly reinforced by the above data. First, the problems in the world today are many and varied, touching nearly every aspect of human existence in some way, shape or form. Second, it is clearly evident that the world's problems are increasing, not decreasing.

Once again, we pose these thought-provoking questions: If we believe in a God who truly cares about the earth, and the human, animal, and plant creation that dwells here, and which the Bible says he created and considered "very good," why does the Bible also say that he has been "resting" for thousands of years? What is meant by these statements of Scripture which say that God is resting?

Does God care about the earth and its inhabitants? What is the earth's, and man's, ultimate fate? To the reasoning mind, these questions deserve answers. To those who desire to maintain their faith in a loving and all-wise God, we must look to his Word and "search the scriptures" to obtain reasonable and satisfactory explanations. It is our hope that sincere students of the Bible will be comforted by, and rejoice in, the discussion of this subject herein presented.

SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION

Not only do the Scriptures tell us that God ended his creative work on the sixth day—age, or space of time—but that, as already noted, he rested on the seventh day. We cannot conceive of God becoming weary and needing rest. In fact, the Bible declares that he does not: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" (Isa. 40:28) God's "rest" on the seventh creative day must therefore have some other significance than that of recuperating from weariness.

Hebrews 4:10 reads, "He that is entered into his [God's] rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." The obvious point of this verse and the surrounding context is that a Christian ceases from all endeavors to attain life through his own efforts and accepts instead the provision of life which has been made for him through Christ. This is God's provision, for he gave his Son to be man's Redeemer with the promise that "whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3:16

In Isaiah 45:18, we read that God created the earth not in vain but formed it to be inhabited. Plainly, it was not the Creator's purpose that the earth be inhabited by a dying race, but by a living one. Death came upon the race through disobedience to divine law, but this did not thwart the divine purpose in the creation of man. God ceased his own active participation in the creative plan and commissioned his beloved Son to carry it through to completion.

Thus, just as we depend upon Jesus for life, so God has confidently depended upon him to provide life. That is, God has authorized Jesus, his only begotten Son, to carry forward to a glorious morning of perfection his plan to have this planet filled with human beings in his image, worthy of living forever.

When Jesus was on earth, his enemies condemned and persecuted him because he healed the sick on the Sabbath Day. He pointed out to them that works of mercy on the Sabbath Day were allowed under the Law given to the Israelites by God. Concerning this type of work, Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John 5:17) While the task of restoring the human race was assigned to Jesus by the Creator, nevertheless he is still interested in, and responsible for, the undertaking. Regarding this, Jesus said, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (John 14:10) This, however, is not out of harmony with the declaration that God rested on the seventh day. His work on behalf of man, which is being accomplished through Jesus, is a work of mercy. His whole plan for the recovery of the human race reflects his love and mercy. It is, therefore, a work of mercy by God,

but not one of creation, from which he ceased, or rested.

OBEDIENCE DEVELOPED

The Scriptures note the upward, progressive sequence of the creative work during the six days, or ages, and it is but natural to expect that the work of the seventh should be more marvelous than that of its predecessors. The work of the first six days related largely to the creation of material things and earthly beings, while that of the seventh is characterized chiefly by the fact that it represents a development of mind and conscience through a process of education of human beings already created.

Behind every material thing, and responsible for it, is thought and mental vision. Our automobile represents the thoughts of its designer—the universe represents the thoughts of God. The constant obedience of the stars to divine law is the result of God's thoughts which designed the mechanisms and processes that enforce his law.

In the mind of the Creator was the thought to have this earth filled with a race of beings who would obey his law by intelligent choice. These human beings were to be created in his image. They were to have the ability to think matters out for themselves and to reach definite, satisfactory conclusions.

However, reason poses this question. How could the Creator be sure that beings endowed with these powers would reach decisions in keeping with his will unless he arbitrarily controlled their thinking? He knew that this could be accomplished by giving them knowledge—not merely informing them of good and evil, but allowing them to learn by experience,

and by free choice, that his laws are right and just and good.

God foresaw that for a whole race to be thus educated would require the entire period of the seventh creative day. Hence, after creating the first perfect pair, and giving them his law, he rested, while his beloved Son, his appointed representative, was empowered to carry out the divine plan of education through the trial, redemption, and restoration of the fallen race.

THE SEVENTH DAY PLAN

Concerning the six creative days, the Scriptures inform us that it was the Spirit or power of God which operated to accomplish the divine intention concerning them. The same is true of the seventh day. The difference is that during the other six days it was largely the mechanical power of God, while during the seventh day the principal objective is attained by the power or influence of God's thoughts and plans which reflect his will. During the seventh creative day, the plans of God are executed through his Son, Christ Jesus.

The sum total of God's thoughts pertaining to the creation of the human race may properly be called the divine plan. Because that plan involves redemption and also recovery from death, it is a plan of salvation. Thus, after assuring us that the earth was not created in vain, but to be inhabited, God declares, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." (Isa. 45:18,22) God then outlines the conditions upon which salvation from death can be obtained, saying, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness,

and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.”—vs. 23

Here we have emphasized the thought of obedience to God and that the earth is to be inhabited by those who have learned to bow the knee in absolute fidelity to him. It is also made plain that this is achieved by way of salvation—being saved or recovered, from death. While God simply declares that it is his Word which will accomplish his intention, the Apostle Paul, quoting from this passage, shows that his Word will be accomplished through Christ.—Phil. 2:10,11

Only a few verses in the first chapter of Genesis are devoted to the work of the first six days of creation, but the entire Bible, beginning with the second chapter, is devoted to the work of the seventh creative day. In it is outlined the whole plan of God, and, as a background of its every phase, is the expression of divine law. Certain members of the fallen race are invited to cooperate in implementing the plan, but only upon the condition of absolute surrender of their wills to do the will of God.

God declares that this Word has gone forth “in righteousness.” That is true. Every requirement of his is righteous and designed to instill in those who obey not only the principle of obedience, but also the glorious qualities of character possessed by the Almighty Creator whom they obey. This leads the obedient ones to the viewpoint of love in contrast with selfishness. They learn that the secret of true happiness is that of obedience to divine law and that true obedience leads to selflessness, in that the glory of God and the well-being of others come before their own interests.

THE BIBLE HARMONIOUS

The scriptural outline of God's plan for the seventh creative day is consistent and harmonious from first to last. In the opening chapters of the Bible, we are told of the original creation of man, his disobedience to divine law, and the consequent loss of his life. In the closing chapters, we are told of man's recovery upon the basis of obedience to God's law, as symbolized by the open books of Revelation 20:12. Following a reassuring promise that there shall then be no more death, we read, "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."—Rev. 21:4,5

The work of making "all things new" mentioned by John the Revelator is described by Jesus as "regeneration" (Matt. 19:28), and by Peter as "restitution." (Acts 3:19-21) Regardless of the term used, this work will bring about the completion of God's original plan of creation as well as the completion of the work of the seventh creative day.

With few exceptions, people in general have not as yet realized the meaning of the experiences through which they have passed, and will not understand until enlightened during the daylight morning hours of this final creative day. As with the other creative days, the seventh also began with an "evening," dark and obscure, so dark that the prophet refers to it as "night," saying that while "weeping may endure for a night, . . . joy cometh in the morning." (Ps. 30:5) We thank God that there is to be a morning, the completion of the seventh creative day, which will find man fully enlightened concerning the meaning of the long night of weeping through which he has passed.

Death came through Adam, and life comes through Christ, upon the basis of his sacrificial death. Modern critics have scorned the idea of a substitutional—or ransom—sacrifice as being necessary to salvation, but only the lack of careful thought could cause anyone to take this viewpoint. The human mind, which, even in its fallen condition, contains some remnant of the original godlikeness, considers that the greatest example of true nobility of character and of genuine love is willingness to lay down one's life for another.

We glorify those who give their lives for their country. We sing the praises of one who is willing to dive into the ocean, or face other danger, to save a friend at the risk of his own life. We honor those who unselfishly use their time and strength for the betterment of the human race in the fields of science and medicine. Why, then, should we shy away from the greatest exhibition of love of all time and call it bloody and revolting?

Indeed, to give one's life for another exhibits the godlike quality of love. In the divine plan, the Creator gave his Son the opportunity of dying sacrificially, not to save one person alone, but in saving the one to save the whole race. Jesus accepted that opportunity, voluntarily taking upon himself the penalty of death which fell upon Adam. In the scales of divine justice, love thus balances the account, making it possible for all who have died because of Adamic sin to be restored to life through Christ, the "last Adam."—I Cor. 15:45

Consequently, in the "morning" of the seventh creative day, when the darksome shades of the previous "evening" time shall be dispelled, the world

will learn that God, their Creator, loves them, and that he gave his Son to die for them. They will learn also that God's Son willingly sacrificed his life because he, too, loved them.

Of that time, the prophet declares that the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14) When Adam was created, he knew something of the glory of God. Lacking personal experience, however, he did not possess the depth of knowledge that all mankind will obtain during the morning of the seventh creative day, and the lessons of their six-thousand-year experience with sin and its results. That ocean-deep knowledge of God's plans and purposes will enable all individuals of the human race to make decisions more wisely than did Adam. Then, awakened from the sleep of death, Adam himself will be much better equipped to face the issue of obedience or disobedience.

Peter declares (Acts 3:23) that it will then come to pass that those who will not hear, or obey, will be destroyed from among the people. The reverse is just as true. Those who do obey will not be destroyed, but will continue to live forever. Jesus establishes this fact even more convincingly, declaring that those who then obey divine law shall obtain everlasting life, and also that they shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.—Matt. 25:34,46

Then the divine purpose concerning man will be fully accomplished. Not one man alone, but the whole race created in Adam will be in the image of God and will be kings of the earth. The earth will have been subdued as God directed, and will be a

veritable garden like the sample prepared for man in Eden. If there should be a minority who, in the light of full knowledge, choose to disobey God's law, they will be destroyed—for the earth will be inhabited only by the obedient.

These will be free from sickness and death. All tears will have been wiped away, and unbounded joy will spring forth everywhere. The thousands upon thousands of world problems faced today will be resolved through the perfect administration of Christ's kingdom, and the entire arrangement of man's salvation and recovery will be seen as having been authored by the great God of the universe. Truly, man will then realize that God has not been weary, nor has he been uninterested in his creation, but that he has been "resting" in confident assurance that his divine plan for man's salvation will be completed in glorious perfection. Then it can be recorded in the eternal record book of God's creative works that "the evening and the morning were the seventh day." ■

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 Meg Rosswick, Columbus, OH—May 21.
Age, 104

Brother Richard Lally, New Brunswick, NJ—June
5. Age, 82

Brother Ted Marcis, Mosinee, WI—June 9. Age,
90

Temple Restored

Key Verse: “They sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.”
—Ezra 3:11

Selected Scripture:
Ezra 3:8-13

stunning proclamation—made, in fact, according to God’s will. The king said, “The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem.” He went on to explain that any of the Israelites who desired were free to go to Judah to engage in this work. As Cyrus encouraged them to go and “build the house of the LORD God of Israel,” he even offered to help the efforts of the people

THE EVENTS OF THIS LESSON

took place at the close of the seventy years of desolation of the land of Israel and the captivity of the people in Babylon. They had fallen into idolatry, and had neglected to be obedient to the arrangements that God had enjoined upon them. So great was their lapse in following God’s commandments that they had failed to keep some of the typical feasts, and had even polluted the house of the Lord. Their Temple now lay in ruins, and it appeared that it would stay that way without God’s intervention.

The impetus to now rebuild the long-ruined Temple came from a seemingly unlikely source. Cyrus, king of Persia, issued a

who would go—“help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God.”—Ezra 1:2-4

As these events continued to unfold, we read that God’s Spirit raised up leaders of the people, such as the chief of the fathers, the priests, and the Levites. (vs. 5) The amount of gold, silver, and other precious materials that were gathered was very great. King Cyrus also ordered that all of the vessels from the original Temple, that Nebuchadnezzar had stolen seventy years earlier and brought to Babylon, should be returned to Jerusalem.—vss. 6-11

We see that a remnant of the people, who had evidently now learned the lesson that idolatry was an abomination to God, were ready to return to Jerusalem and no more practice the worship of other gods. After completing their long journey, the people first built the “altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God.” (Ezra 3:1,2) Their first desire was to approach God with thanksgiving for giving them the opportunity to return to their land. They also desired to establish again the feasts and ceremonies that had for so many years been such an important part of their covenant relationship with God. While they were rejoicing, at the same time “fear was upon them.” (vs. 3) They had returned to a land which many of them did not really know, and in which now dwelled new enemies. It was a land that had lain waste, for they saw ruins, desolation, and disorder which would try their faith and zeal.

However, they persevered and, in the second year after coming back to Jerusalem, they “appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD.” The first work was to build the foundation. When it was completed, so great was their joy that the priests dressed in their robes and blew trumpets, played cymbals, and praised the Lord, “because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.”—vss. 8-13 ■

Dedication of the Temple

Key Verse: *“The children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy.”*
—*Ezra 6:16*

Selected Scripture:
Ezra 6:13-22

of Israel’s Temple, which had been so long in ruins, was finished. “This house was finished on the third day of the month Adar [February-March on our calendar], which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.”—Ezra 6:15

The completion of the Temple is spoken of in the words: “The elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.” (vs. 14) The prophet Haggai also testified: “The LORD stirred up . . . the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came

AS WE CONTINUE OUR

study of the restoration of Israel’s Temple in Jerusalem, we note that the events concerning its dedication took place about five years after the start of construction, except for the foundation, which had been completed about twenty years earlier—the work having ceased for the intervening fifteen-year period before being started again. Now, however, the rebuild-

and did work in the house of the LORD.”—Hag. 1:14

Let us draw special attention to this rebuilt “house of the LORD.” The rebuilding was done according to the specifications given years earlier by King Cyrus. He had decreed that the new Temple was to be sixty cubits high, and sixty cubits broad. (Ezra 6:3) We understand that a cubit was equal to about eighteen inches. With this in mind, we can better comprehend the scope of this undertaking, and the size of the new Temple. With respect to these dimensions, we know that it was much larger than Solomon’s Temple, although it was likely greatly inferior to it in ornamentation.—I Kings 6:2-38

The dedication of the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem was a very important event, since no one who had returned from captivity had probably ever seen Solomon’s Temple—it having been destroyed some ninety years earlier. In verses 17-22 of Ezra 6, we are given a description of the elaborate ceremony with which the new Temple was dedicated. Although the people now were likely not of as much financial means as had been the case when the original Temple was built and dedicated, they nevertheless rejoiced in its completion. We are told in our Key Verse that the priests, Levites, and all the rest of the children of Israel who had returned from captivity, dedicated the Temple “with joy.” As part of the ceremony, they offered “an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.” (vs. 17) These last words indicate that all of the twelve tribes were represented among the returned captives.

The “rest of the children of the captivity” rejoiced at the completed Temple, bringing many offerings to its dedication. Spiritual Israelites today are also to offer themselves and be built as “living stones” for the spiritual temple. “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices.”—I Pet. 2:5

■

Fasting and Praying

Key Verse: “So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.”
—Ezra 8:23

Selected Scripture:
Ezra 8:21-23

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE the important role that Ezra played in helping the people who had returned from captivity to Jerusalem to revitalize their faith and nation. Although he was not of the original number who had returned to Judah, he led a new group to Jerusalem

about eighty years after Cyrus’ original decree. This was all done according to God’s will and his providential direction, as found in the meaning of Ezra’s name. He was a scribe, of the genealogy of Aaron, hence of the tribe of Levi, and his name according to *Strong’s Concordance* means “help” or “helper.”—Ezra 7:1-10

Some Jews had become very prosperous in Babylon. However, for others, their time in exile had become a period of study of the Law and the Prophets. These faithful ones, led by Ezra, were disturbed by the reports they had received concerning the spiritual poverty of the people who had returned to Jerusalem. It had become apparent from reports they were receiving that religious matters and the keeping of the Law were not being followed as they should be. This was especially disturbing, since so much effort had been put into the rebuilding of the Temple. These circumstances compelled Ezra, under the guidance of the Heavenly Father, to take his concerns to representatives in Babylon and before Artaxerxes, the Persian king.

The result of Ezra's inquiry came in the form of a decree made by the king "to all the treasurers which are beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily." (Ezra 7:21) In subsequent verses, we see that the king promised to give protection to the people who would be making the journey to Jerusalem—not charging them any toll, tribute, or custom. A great amount of gold and silver that "thou canst find in all the province of Babylon" was to also be given to those taking this journey, to be used for purchasing things needed for the reinstating of the "service of the house of thy God." (vss. 16-19) The actions of the king, as directed by God, moved Ezra to say, "Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem."—vs. 27

Before the journey to Jerusalem began, a fast was proclaimed by Ezra. "I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance." (chap. 8:21) This was exactly in line with the character of Ezra, who sought to know and do the divine will in all things, "according to the hand of the LORD his God." (chap. 7:6) The lesson to be found in the fast Ezra proclaimed did not relate primarily to the denial of food or sustenance. Rather, it was a way of preparing themselves to look to the Lord for guidance and direction on the long journey that they would soon be undertaking.

Thus, trust in God was placed at the forefront of their minds. They were awakened to know that their entire journey and the things they would be doing were to be based upon faith in God, and in his promises. Likewise, we also should desire to remember the words, "Giving thanks always for all things," knowing that "all things work together for good."—Eph. 5:20; Rom. 8:28 ■

Gifts for the Temple

Key Verse: *“I said unto them, Ye are holy unto the LORD; the vessels are holy also; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers.”*
—Ezra 8:28

Selected Scripture:
Ezra 8:24-30

what each of them had received. They would be held accountable for faithfully delivering what they had been given to the designated representatives of the Jews once they arrived in Jerusalem.—Ezra 8:24-29

This offering included: “The silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering of the house of our God: . . . I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, and of gold an hundred talents; Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold.” (vss. 25-27) It is estimated that the value of these precious metals and objects in today’s market would be in the millions of dollars.

It is of a certainty that a great responsibility rested upon these twelve men, and their ten helpers, for they

OUR LESSON BEGINS WITH a consideration of how Ezra divided the gold and silver contributed by “the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel” as a freewill offering, prior to journeying to Jerusalem. He selected twelve of the chief priests, and ten others with them, carefully weighing to each of them a portion of all the gold and silver of the offering. A strict and detailed count was completed and recorded of

had been entrusted with a very important task. They were further instructed by Ezra, in verse 29 of the account, “Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD.”

Through the guidance and providential care of the Heavenly Father, they successfully completed their long journey. “The hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.” (vs. 31) These sentiments remind us of the words of the psalmist, “I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.” (Ps. 91:2,3) On the fourth day after completing their journey, all of the gold, silver, and vessels were weighed in the Temple by several of the priests and Levites—“by number and by weight of every one: and all the weight was written at that time.”—Ezra 8:34

A lesson for the footstep followers of Jesus can be found in the realization that he is the Captain of our Christian journey. He desires to bring us to his heavenly kingdom, and gives each of us valuable “pounds” and “talents” for which we are responsible. As faithful stewards, we must diligently watch over and keep these spiritual gifts and treasures which have been committed to us. (I Cor. 4:1,2; 12:1-12) We read in James 1:17, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” God desires that we faithfully use all of these precious spiritual things, for we will ultimately be required to give an account of them. “Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.” (Luke 12:48) Our “freewill offering” can be summed up in the words, “By the mercies of God, . . . present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”—Rom. 12:1 ■

Putting on Christ

“As those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other.”

—Colossians 3:12,13
(NASB)

THE KING JAMES VERSION

renders these verses: “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.”

From the outset, we note that these words are addressed to the chosen, or elect, of God. He has chosen a select group from the world of mankind during the present Gospel Age who desire to serve him and to seek for glory, honor, and immortality. These have responded to the call, “My son, give me thine heart.”—Prov. 23:26

PUT OFF THE OLD—PUT ON THE NEW

The foundation for our discussion is given earlier in Colossians, chapter 3. We are admonished to “Seek those things which are above. . . . Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.” (vss. 1,2) Before we can “put on” the things mentioned in our theme text, we must first adjust

our heart affections heavenward. We also must “put off the old man with his deeds.” (vs. 9) In another place, Paul gives us similar words: “Put off . . . the old man, which is corrupt; . . . And . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”—Eph. 4:22,24

To put on Christ requires that we each transform our minds. This transformation requires nothing short of full consecration and service to the Heavenly Father. Only a heart which is daily fully dedicated to him will prove to be acceptable in his sight, and such faithfulness will require the sacrifice of our earthly interests, aims, and ambitions.

Bringing about this transformation will require much in the way of special testing. At times, fiery trials may be permitted by God to test our faith and the depth of our consecration. In these, our goal should be the realization that there is nothing of this earth which we should desire. If we have made this precious vow of consecration, we are reckoned as being dead with Christ to the things of this earth, and that our new life is “hid with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:3) Our life is hid with Christ in the sense that the Heavenly Father’s plan is being accomplished through Christ. It is he who has redeemed us, and through whose blood we are justified. We see this expressed in the words: “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”—Col. 1:27

If we are putting on Christ, and his character likeness is growing in us, our efforts along the lines of letting our light shine, and giving ourselves in service to the Lord, the Truth, and the brethren should be seen by others. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,

and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:16) Indeed, the desire of our heart and mind should be to serve the true and living God. Apostle Paul expresses the matter in these words, “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.” “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men.” (I Thess. 1:3,4; II Cor. 3:2) To this Peter adds, concerning the footstep followers of Christ, that they are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” (I Pet. 1:2) Having these words before our minds, we are able to claim the promise: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”—Phil. 4:13

BELOVED OF GOD

Let us now consider these words: “Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” “He [God] hath made us accepted in the beloved.” (Mark 1:11; Eph. 1:6) The term “beloved” is used in these texts with reference to God’s love for his son Jesus. It is also used many times by the Apostles as an expression of endearment with regard to Christ’s followers. For example, we read these words from John, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”—I John 3:2

To be counted “beloved” in God’s sight entails our becoming more Christlike in character—more

loving, gentle, compassionate, and merciful, as indicated in our theme text. These character traits are to have special significance to us at this present time as we strive to be obedient to our vows of consecration. The development of these graces mentioned by Paul will have a purifying effect upon us, assisting in the cleansing of our hearts from any wrong intentions and motives. Thus we will be refreshed through the Holy Spirit to continue on, though we walk through the “dry and thirsty land” of this world as pilgrims and strangers, until we hear the words, “enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”—Matt. 25:21

At the present time, “There is none righteous, no, not one.” (Rom. 3:10) However, we have the assurance, through faith in his blood, that we are covered under Christ’s robe of righteousness. In “the beloved,” our consecration and resulting sacrifice is deemed acceptable. By him we have a standing before God, who can now also look upon us as objects of his love, giving us the opportunity of also being sons—brethren of his only begotten Son. Paul describes this relationship, “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”—Rom. 8:17

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” (II Cor. 5:17) It is as New Creatures that we are beloved in God’s sight, having been made acceptable through the merit of our Redeemer, and prospective members of his bride. We have entered “a new and living way” (Heb. 10:20), which Christ opened for us. Faithfully walking in this way, Paul says, is our “reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1), requiring daily obedience to the divine will. Truly, our

sentiments should be, “We love him, because he first loved us.” (I John 4:19) God’s love for his people is expressed well in these words, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.”—Jer. 31:3

THE CONDITION OF OUR HEART

To follow the way of the cross requires that we daily examine the condition of our heart. Its condition will go a long way in determining our success in cultivating the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, and love, which is “the fulfilling of the law.” (Rom. 13:10) If we develop these things to the best of our ability, in a good and honest heart, we will have part in this promise: “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:6) Notice only those who are both “blessed and holy” in character will have part in this reigning company.

To be one that “hath part” in the first resurrection, and to receive the divine nature, requires faithfulness in progressing toward the various attainments of development along the narrow way. These way-marks or mileposts, and our attainment of them, give us evidence and assurance that we are progressing toward the ultimate mark set before us—“the mark for the prize of the high calling.” (Phil. 3:14) Paul, in another place, speaks of the desired goal of our progress, “That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”—Col. 4:12

“Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but

with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.” (II Cor. 3:3) A heart of flesh is pliable, able to feel and understand the needs of others, and to show forth sincere love and sympathy to them. As “the epistle of Christ,” we must seek to develop our hearts, and conduct our lives, in harmony with these words. These are words of truth, and are part of that which washes us “with pure water.”—Heb. 10:22

We should also desire this: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” (Eph. 3:17) If Christ and the spirit of Christ dwell in our heart, we will be properly motivated as a true believer, and find ourselves “doing the will of God from the heart.” (Eph. 6:6) We should think of this process as the writing, or tracing, of the character likeness of the Master in our hearts. Thus, we desire to serve God, not with a heart of stone, hardened by sin and coldness of character, but with a heart that has been cleansed, washed “white as snow” (Isa. 1:18), pliable and usable in the hand of the Lord.

EARNESTNESS AND FAITH

As we seek to put on Christ, we should be continually aware of the earnestness, seriousness, and sincere determination by which we should be giving our all to the Lord. Much is required of those who would make up the bride class—the called, chosen, and faithful. The importance of earnestness is shown in these words of personal testimony from Paul: “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life,

or by death.” (Phil. 1:20) The earnestness Paul spoke of, and which we must emulate, highlights the importance of our pledge of fidelity to God in each and all circumstances, whether “by life” or “by death.” We can have such earnestness because of the assurance that daily we will be recipients of enlightenment through the Holy Spirit. God has also given us a foretaste, through his precious promises, of good things to come in the fulfillment of his plan. This knowledge also assists us in maintaining an earnest desire to be faithful. It is surely with seriousness that we “should earnestly contend [struggle] for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”—Jude 3

Earnestness goes hand in hand with faith. We must have a faith that fully comprehends and appreciates the depth of our Redeemer’s sacrifice. Likewise, our faith must be unwavering in the justification he has provided us, and in our standing as sons before God. We must, by faith, claim the promise, “Ye are washed, . . . sanctified, . . . justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” (I Cor. 6:11) Although this scripture applies to each one individually as a follower of Christ, it also should help us, collectively as brethren, to maintain our hold on the Truth and to have our feet be swift to serve one another along the narrow way.

As brethren, we are part of the “household of faith.” (Gal. 6:10) In the natural family arrangement, each member has faith and trust toward those who are part of the household. So it should also be in the household of faith. We must develop an attitude of heart and mind in which we have

faith in, and trust, our brethren's similar desires to be faithful. This requires that we learn to overlook the weaknesses of the flesh in our brethren, which most certainly will arise from time to time in our dealings with one another. It takes patience, love, faith, and trust to make this all work together in the brotherhood. Prayer, self-examination, and humility are also necessary in order that we place our viewpoints and our feelings in their proper perspective, when it involves matters of mere preference. In all things, however, we are to put the Lord first, and all other matters in our life will fit into their proper place. Let us remember the words, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."—Josh. 24:15

PUT ON CHARITY/LOVE

The Master stated, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. . . . These things I command you, that ye love one another." (John 15:12-14,17) Jesus certainly was the epitome of this, because he was both willing and able to lay down his life for his friends—his footstep followers of the present age. In Christ's kingdom, all of the world of mankind who are willing and prove obedient to God's righteous laws, will also become friends of Jesus, having developed a Christlike character. This love, whether developed now in Christ's footstep followers, or by and by in his kingdom by the world of mankind, is "the bond of perfectness"—or completeness.—Col. 3:14

It is evident that our love for the brethren has been, and continues to be, a special test to all of the Lord's footstep followers during the present Harvest time in which we are now living. Indeed, it has always been of great importance. However, conditions in the earth are such that today, more than ever before, selfishness, pride, and a general lack of love and brotherly kindness pervade much of the spirit of the world. This knowledge should raise the level of importance we place on the development of love, making it one of our chief priorities. It may be the final test in our desire to reach the mark of the prize of our calling.

BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER

To bear with one another implies several things. First, it can be viewed as a way of conducting ourselves—our manner—toward others, especially our brethren. It also includes the thought of endurance. It implies awareness and recognition of our brethren's individual circumstances or situations which may call for our "bearing" with them.

The *King James* translation of our theme text uses the word "forbearing." This has the thought of patient restraint, and requires much in the way of self control. We must keep self in check and examine closely our motives, words, and actions when dealing with others along the lines of forbearing. Paul often took note concerning what he had heard of or witnessed in his brethren. Although he certainly had to be forbearing toward them in their weaknesses, yet he went to great lengths to be positive in his assessment of their progress: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it

is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth.”—II Thess. 1:3

FRUIT-BEARING

Proper fruit-bearing is required in order to prove our acceptance to the Lord, and to maintain our standing as branches of the true vine. In John 15:5, Jesus states, “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.” Each consecrated member of the household of faith is a branch in this vine, and is to seek the development of the same fruitage, and to run for the same prize—the one hope of our calling. As branches together in this vine, we are yokefellows with each other and with our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. Together we are being fed, watered, shaped, and pruned in order that we produce fruitage unto the character likeness of our dear Lord.

The Apostle Paul lists the various fruits which we are to produce as we abide in the true vine. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance. (Gal. 5:22,23) To develop these fruits requires that we separate ourselves from earthly ambition, as it is out of harmony with our consecration unto death and with the Holy Spirit which engenders these Christlike qualities. Thus separated, the Spirit of the Lord extends an even greater influence over our lives, allowing more and more production of fruitage.

To make fruit-bearing possible requires first an output of effort and energy. In the natural sense, fruitage must be preceded by proper growth of the plant, which is provided *(Continued on page 36)*

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(Continued from page 31) by nutrients from the soil, energy from the sun, and sufficient watering. Pruning is also needed to yield the sweetest and largest fruit. In the spiritual sense, our fruit-bearing must be preceded by an ample supply of nutrients from the good soil of our heart, life-giving rays from the Sun of righteousness, the water of the word of truth from the Scriptures, and the pruning trials and experiences of life. All of this must be accompanied with a zeal and fervor to be pleasing to God.

Fruit-bearing should be manifested in a variety of ways—toward our Heavenly Father, his son Christ Jesus our Lord, our brethren, and toward all mankind in proportion as we have contact with them. This is a lifelong work, and we are reminded to not become tired in its accomplishment: “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” (Gal. 6:9) Rather, let us always have close to our heart these sentiments: “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD.”—Ps. 19:14

FORGIVING EACH OTHER

We should, with everything pertaining to our spiritual lives, go back to the words and teachings of our Lord Jesus for guidance. When one of his disciples requested of him, “teach us to pray,” Jesus included these important words in the model prayer he provided: “When ye pray, say, . . . forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us [who trespass against us].” (Luke 11:1,2,4) It is important to note that Jesus was not

in need of speaking these words when he prayed to his Father, being “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” (Heb. 7:26) However, he knew that his footstep followers had need of praying for forgiveness. Similar words are recorded in Matt. 6:14,15: “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” What a serious thought this is! We will be forgiven only if we have the same spirit of forgiveness in our heart toward others. If we do, we have the promise that “he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.”—I John 1:9

We, and all others, are imperfect and cannot keep the divine law as we might desire. We should not expect perfection from any during this present time in which we are living. Perfection of thought, word, and deed is reserved for a future time. Rather, as our Lord told us when giving the Beatitudes, “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” (Matt. 5:7) If we are merciful, we have a blessedness because we have been both its recipient as well its giver. To continue faithfully in such an attitude will result in true pureness of heart, and permit us to “see God.”—vs. 8

The very essence of Christian principle is found in love, sympathy, and the spirit of forgiveness. In Matt. 18:21, when Peter inquired of the Lord concerning how many times he should forgive someone, he asked, “till seven times?” Peter perhaps thought that this was proper, since the number seven was a symbol of completeness and perfection. Our Lord, however, stated clearly, “I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.” (vs. 22)

In reality, Jesus meant that the spirit of forgiveness in our character and the desire to exercise it toward others should be without limit.

Let us then, as those chosen of God, holy and beloved, strive to fully put on Christ. Let us have a heart, thoughts, words, and actions developed into a fullness of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, daily bearing with our brethren, and forgiving one another. This is truly our reasonable service. ■

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

*—Romans 15:5,6,
New International Version*

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JULY 4—“Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?”—Isaiah 53:1 (Z. ’99-10,11 Hymn 79)

JULY 11—“Whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not, . . . but keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”—I John 5:18 (Z. ’99-58 Hymn 208)

JULY 18—“In the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be traitors, heady, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”—II Timothy 3:1,4 (Z. ’99-102 Hymn 306A)

JULY 25—“There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who are thou that judgest another?”—James 4:12 (Z. ’99-139 Hymn 136)

Knowledge That Edifies

“Knowledge puffeth up, but charity [love] edifieth.”

—*I Corinthians 8:1*

THE STATEMENT OF OUR opening text has been misunderstood by some to mean that knowledge of God’s plan has an adverse effect on the

Christian life, and that therefore the important goal for which to strive is to be filled and controlled by love. However, such an interpretation of Paul’s words is far from what he had in mind, as a brief study of the context quickly reveals.

In this chapter, Paul discusses the subject of eating meat which has been offered to idols. This custom was widely practiced in Paul’s time. Part of the worship of idols involved offering them sacrifices of meat. The idols could make no use of this meat, so in due course the offering was removed and sold in the open market—otherwise it would soon spoil and be wasted. Under these circumstances, evidently this meat could be purchased at a lower price than meat which had not been offered to idols.

It would seem from Paul’s discussion of the subject that there were Christians at that time who considered it a sin to eat this meat which had been

offered to idols. This is understandable, for when the apostolic conference was held in Jerusalem concerning Gentile converts who were coming into the Early Church, and what regulations should be placed upon them, a message was sent out, which read, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well."—Acts 15:28,29

There was good reason at the time for this admonition. It was addressed, as we have seen, to Gentiles who were accepting Christ and associating themselves with his followers, which at that early date was made up mostly of Jewish Christians. The Gentiles were chiefly worshipers of idols, and were in the habit of eating meat which had been offered to them. Every point mentioned in the admonition sent to these new converts was essentially a part of their pagan form of worship. To bring these customs into a group having a Jewish background would have been very disruptive indeed.

They were not asked, however, to keep the Mosaic Law. Peter and Paul were properly opposed to this, but these new converts were asked to abstain from their former habits. Fornication had always been forbidden by God's law, and is still contrary to the will of God. Eating meat offered to idols fell into a different category, as indicated by Paul's treatise of the subject in his letter to the brethren at Corinth.

Paul and Barnabas were among those sent out from the Jerusalem conference to distribute copies of this letter to the Gentile converts, and to explain

its purpose, and now we find him writing to the Corinthian brethren, “Meat [offered to idols] commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.”—I Cor. 8:8,9

KNOWLEDGE HAD PROGRESSED

Here we have the Apostle Paul explaining to the Corinthian brethren that they had the liberty not to obey the instructions concerning meat offered to idols, which he himself had helped to circulate. In verses 7, 10, and 11 of the chapter, Paul refers to the “knowledge” involved in the viewpoint he was expressing. Paul knew that God’s law had said nothing one way or the other about eating meat offered to idols. He knew, as expressed, that this meat was not defiled, and that if it was to the economic advantage of the Christian to eat it, he would be doing no wrong.

At the same time, however, the situation which the letter from Jerusalem sought to avert was still a possibility. There were brethren with a more limited knowledge of God and of his requirements who might well be stumbled by seeing one like Paul eating meat which had been offered to idols. They might well be tempted, against their conscience, to eat such meat themselves, not because of a better understanding as was enjoyed by Paul, but simply on the grounds that if Paul could do it they could also, thus going contrary to what they believed to be right.

Because of this, while Paul knew that there was nothing intrinsically wrong with eating meat which

had been offered to idols, yet if it should injure his brother to do so, he would eat no such meat as long as the world stood. (vs. 13) Paul indicates that his “knowledge” on this point exceeded that of his weaker brethren. However, if he allowed this knowledge to guide him in his relationship with them, being proud that he understood the situation better than they, it would mean that his knowledge had puffed him up, made him proud. Thus he would take the other course. He would be guided by love, the love that builds up and edifies.

KNOWLEDGE OF PLAN ESSENTIAL

Knowledge of the plan of God for the redemption and recovery of the world from sin and death is essential to build us up as New Creatures and to make us ready for joint-heirship with Jesus in his kingdom. For this reason, we are admonished by the Apostle Peter to grow both in grace and in knowledge. He wrote, “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 3:17,18

Peter also wrote, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” (II Pet. 1:3,4) Here the apostle is explaining that God’s divine power has provided all things for us which are necessary to life and godliness, and that

these provisions reach us through “the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”

Much of this “knowledge of him” comes to us through his “exceeding great and precious promises.” It is the inspiration provided by these promises that prepares us to receive the divine nature. These promises are contained in the Word of God, hence the more we study his Word and thereby increase our knowledge of God’s promises, the richer our lives will be as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. Indeed, without this knowledge we would die as New Creatures.

PROPHECY ALSO

Not only is it essential to have knowledge of God’s exceeding great and precious promises which assure us of the divine nature and joint-heirship with Christ in his kingdom, but it is also important to have at least a general understanding of the Bible’s prophecies which pertain to the times in which we are living. We need to know, for example, that the present age in God’s plan ends with a “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.” (Dan. 12:1) If we did not know this we would certainly be perplexed at what is happening throughout the world at the present time.

We may not know the exact meaning of each and every symbol which the Bible uses to picture this “great tribulation” which is now upon the earth. We may even have differences of thought as to the meaning of some of the details of these symbols. However, there is no mistaking the simple truth that the present world, or social order, does come to an end, and that it is in God’s new world, the Messianic

kingdom world, that God's promises to bless all the families of the earth are to be fulfilled.

This knowledge has an important bearing on our growth in grace. In Peter's second epistle, chapter three, he speaks of the ending of the present world, likening it in some respects to the ending of the "world that then was" at the time of the Flood. (vs. 6) He uses the symbols of fire and noise to describe the passing of the present social order. (vs. 10) Then he makes a practical application of this important prophetic truth. He says, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [conduct] and godliness."—vs. 11

MORE THAN ACADEMIC

The prophecies of the Bible were not given to furnish us with knowledge which is merely academic. They are intended to be a source of guidance and strength in our lives as New Creatures. Peter's admonition concerning our position during the time in which we are now living is a good illustration of this point. His lesson is that since we know that the present world is passing away, we should do something about it—not something to save the world, but to prepare ourselves for a position in the Messianic kingdom which follows.

If we know the meaning of the times in which we live, we should not, as followers of Christ, be unmoved by that knowledge, but strive more earnestly than ever to have our lives conformed to the will of God. "What manner of persons ought ye to be," Peter says. We are not left in doubt as to the "manner of persons" the Lord would like us to be,

for Peter outlines this for us in the first chapter of this same epistle.

After explaining that it is through the exceeding great and precious promises of God that we are made partakers of the divine nature, Peter continues, “Beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity [love].” (vss. 5-7) If we give all diligence to root out all selfishness from our minds and hearts, and to be governed by the principles of righteousness Peter here sets forth, we will surely be giving heed to the admonition, “What manner of persons ought ye to be,” for here is the manner of person the Lord undoubtedly is seeking after.

WILL NEVER FALL

We should endeavor to be the “manner of person” indicated by Peter because it is right that we should be, and because it is the Lord’s will. There is yet a further result from such a course of faithfulness. We quote: “If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”—II Pet. 1:8-10

When Peter says that “ye shall never fall,” he is not advocating the erroneous theory, “Once in grace,

always in grace.” His meaning is clear. If we make proper use of the knowledge the Lord has furnished us through his Word by conforming ourselves to the conditions attached to his promises, we will be guided and protected by him, and will not be permitted to fall away from our position of favor with him. If, however, we are not thus faithful to the Lord, there is no assurance in his Word that we will not fall.

“If these things be in you, and abound”—it is not enough that we make a half-hearted effort to live up to the conditions attached to the promises of God. We should “abound” in our efforts. If we do, we will not be “idle [*Marginal Translation*] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The knowledge supplied by the Lord through his Word is designed to bear fruit in the lives of Christ’s footstep followers—fruits of righteousness; fruits of activity in the Lord’s service of proclaiming the glad tidings of the kingdom; fruits of concern for our brethren and a joy in laying down our lives for them.

“He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off”—that is, he lacks spiritual vision. He does not discern clearly the will of the Lord, and the glorious things he has promised are no longer seen by the eye of faith. Hence they have lost their power to transform the life. Those thus afflicted, Peter further explains, have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins. In other words, they have lost touch with the truth concerning their relationship with God, provided through the purging of their Adamic sins through Christ. What is the cause? It is simply that they did not make proper and zealous use of the knowledge of

the Truth which the Heavenly Father so graciously gave to them.

DILIGENCE NEEDED

The safeguard against this unfortunate condition is to make diligent use of the Truth, and to be continually aware of our standing before God by grace. Peter continues, “So an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (II Pet. 1:11) “If these things be in you, and abound,” and if you “give diligence to make your calling and election sure,” wrote Peter, it assures an abundant entrance into the kingdom. If they do not abound, and if we do not give diligence, there will be no assurance of entrance into the heavenly kingdom.

Peter speaks of making our calling and election sure. Ours is a “high calling,” a “heavenly calling.” (Phil. 3:14; Heb. 3:1) It is a calling to joint-heirship with Jesus in his millennial kingdom, to live and reign with Christ for the blessing of all families of the earth by restoring them from death to life—ultimately to perfection of human life to live on the earth forever. What a joy it is to understand that we are called to all this! Our knowledge concerning these features of God’s plan is revealed in his Word. The same Word also reveals that if this calling, this invitation, is to become meaningful and valid with us as individuals, we must make it sure by our own faithfulness.

There is no question at all concerning God’s faithfulness to us. He is a promise-keeping God in whom we can put our full trust. However, there is also our part of the arrangement, and that part is

faithfulness to God and to all the conditions which he has attached to his promises. There are all the “ifs”—“If ye do these things,” Peter said. Paul also wrote, “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”—Rom. 8:17

OUR COVENANT OF SACRIFICE

How wonderful it is to have a knowledge of God’s great covenants. In his covenant with Abraham, God promised to bless all the families of the earth. Here again this knowledge is given to us for a special purpose. Paul explained that when God made this promise to Abraham, the “seed” he referred to was Christ. (Gal. 3:16) To this, he added, “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. . . . And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”—Gal. 3:27,29

To have the assurance that, together with Jesus, we are heirs of the promise made to Abraham and that, even as Jesus, we are part of the “seed” of Abraham, is truly wonderful. We thank God for this knowledge and the assurance it gives us. However, the realization of the hope thus engendered depends upon our being “baptized into Christ,” and as Paul explains, those who are baptized into Jesus Christ are baptized into his death. He says, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”—Rom. 6:3,4

To be buried by baptism into Jesus' death means sacrifice. It means the giving up of self, and a daily burial of our will into his will and into the will of the Heavenly Father. This is not a light thing, for it involves the denial of self, and the taking up of our cross and following the Master into sacrificial death. This is the condition upon which we can share with Jesus the honor and the joy of being the seed of Abraham. It is this seed that will give health and lasting life to all who, during the millennial reign of Christ, accept the provision of divine grace through Christ, and obey the laws of the Messianic kingdom. Paul writes later in this same epistle concerning our 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

SHARING IN THE SIN OFFERING

How blessed is the knowledge, revealed through God's Word, that the faithful followers of Christ have the privilege of sharing in the "better sacrifices" of this Gospel Age. These are the sin offering sacrifices. Jesus alone provided the ransom by which Adam and his entire progeny are redeemed from death. The sacrificial work of the antitypical priesthood, however, was not finished at Calvary, but requires the entire Gospel Age "Day of Atonement." As Paul explains, we are privileged to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ—the Christ, head and body.—Col. 1:24

This aspect of God's plan is brought to our attention in the 13th chapter of Hebrews, verses 1-16, where the apostle takes an illustration from the

typical sacrifices of the Tabernacle. On the typical Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) two animals were offered as a sin offering—a bullock and a goat. The fat of these animals was burnt on the copper altar in the court surrounding the Tabernacle. (vs. 25) Burning coals were taken from the altar in the court and brought into the Tabernacle proper, where incense was sprinkled upon them. The sweet odors of the burning incense permeated the Most Holy—“within the vail.” (vss. 12,13) The blood of the animals was then taken into the Most Holy and sprinkled on and before the mercy seat. (vss. 14,15) Finally, the carcasses of the animals were taken outside of the camp of Israel and burned.—vs. 27

It is this typical service that Paul draws on for lessons in the 13th chapter of Hebrews. He tells us that, antitypically, Jesus offered in complete sacrifice his human life, as illustrated by the burning of the carcass of the bullock without the camp, and admonishes us to join him in this sacrifice, suffering and dying with him.—Heb. 13:10-13

All of this could seem complicated, and we might ask what value this knowledge possibly has for us. However, before Paul finishes his lesson he makes a practical and understandable application of it all—one which every child of God can understand. He writes, “Therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” (vss. 15,16) We may not grasp every detail of the symbolisms of burning animals and burning incense, but we can understand what it means to offer praise, to do good, and to communicate. This

is the practical lesson for us typified by these sacrifices of the Tabernacle.

In Galatians 6:7-10, Paul enlarges upon the thought of doing good. We quote, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

It is clear from this that doing good to all—especially the household of faith—is the true expression of what it means to sow to the Spirit. This, as we have seen, is what our sacrifice is all about. It may be academic simply to say that we share in the sufferings of Christ, unless voluntarily, and with resolution, we actively and daily put ourselves in the way of sacrifice, and continue in that way faithfully even unto death.

We trust these few illustrations will help us to appreciate the real value of a knowledge of God’s wonderful plan, and of our share in that plan. It is by this knowledge that we are guided in the way of righteousness, for his Word is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. (Ps. 119:105) Through faithfulness to the doctrines of the Word we will learn to know God and his Son more fully. As we know them, and yield ourselves to doing the divine will, we will become more like them. Truly then, knowledge is important, but it is valueless to those who do not properly use it. ■

Visit to the Philippines

IN MARCH AND APRIL of this year, Bro. Ray and Sr. Sue Charlton of Australia had the blessing and privilege of travelling to the Philippines to visit the brethren there. We are pleased to have them provide this report to readers of *The Dawn*.

THURSDAY—MARCH 21ST

Sr. Sue and I departed Sydney for the Philippines via Singapore. Although this route was not direct and, hence, was longer, our arrival was at a much safer and easier time for the brethren to meet us than a direct flight.

We were met at the airport by Bro. Agripino, Bro. Kevin, and Bro. Mackenly, and made our way to the Shogun Motel. This would be our home for the next four nights.

FRIDAY—MARCH 22ND

Friday morning was spent getting the ingredients for the evening meal that we would share with the brethren before a testimony meeting that evening. The meal was cooked by Bro. Kevin. The brethren arrived and the children had a session in

Tagalog, the local language, after which I questioned them about what they had learned. The children love singing the hymns. The meal consisted of pancit canton noodles with chicken and vegetables. This was followed by the testimony meeting.

SATURDAY—MARCH 23RD

The morning was spent visiting the local shopping center and the markets. The afternoon was spent preparing the script for the evening radio program. That evening we joined Bro. Agripino, Bro. Kevin, Bro. Charlie, Sr. Miriam, Sr. Regina, and a newly interested person as we made our way to the radio station for the 10 P.M. one-hour program. The radio station broadcasts throughout Manila and the surrounding area. The program is titled “Ransom for All” and is run by Bro. Agripino each week. As it was the week before Easter, the discussion was about the difference between Easter and how the Bible Students remember our Lord’s sacrifice and resurrection.

SUNDAY—MARCH 24TH

Sunday morning was spent with some of the young adults as we prepared for the Memorial service that evening. The brethren make their own unleavened bread, as it is difficult to buy it in Manila. One reason is that there is only a very small Jewish community in the Philippines, less than 500 persons in total. The largest group, consisting of roughly seventy families and the country’s only synagogue, Beth Yaacov, is located in Makati City.

We first had a study in the afternoon, looking at the first Passover in Egypt and how the features of this ceremony are shown in the Lord’s Memorial. A light meal of soup was then enjoyed by all before

we followed our Lord's instructions, "Do this in remembrance of me." Sr. Elmar came from Dipolog so that she could share in the Memorial. In previous years she had celebrated alone. Sixteen brethren partook of the Memorial emblems. We had one newly interested person join us, but because of what he had been previously taught, he would not, through fear, take the emblems.

MONDAY—MARCH 25TH

Monday morning was spent preparing for our travels to visit the brethren scattered on five of the over seven thousand islands of the Philippines. That afternoon we, along with Bro. Agripino and Sr. Elmar, took the first of seven flights to visit the brethren in the time we had available. We first flew to Cebu and then to Iloilo to fellowship with two brethren there. Our time there was short, as this was an extra visit not originally planned. We arrived late afternoon and went to a small hotel, as the brethren lived about two hours by bus from the city, and we would not see them until the next morning.

TUESDAY—MARCH 26TH

The two brethren from Iloilo joined us for breakfast at the hotel, where we had "3 in 1" coffee—consisting of coffee, powdered milk, and sugar—and the local breakfast bread—pandesal. Our visit was short, but rich with blessed fellowship. We then flew from Iloilo to Cebu to prepare for our ferry ride to the island of Leyte. Sr. Elmar suggested that we book our tickets on arrival in Cebu. This was a wise move, because the ferries were very heavily booked as it was holiday time.

That evening we boarded the ferry, “Wonderful Star,” with what was called “standby tickets.” There was a very long prayer recited before our departure. We had been told to wait in the ferry’s restaurant until they found seats for us. We soon learned that there were no seats, most of the bunks had two people instead of one, and the restaurant and chapel were being used to seat passengers. The ferry, which was licensed to hold 800 passengers, actually had more than 1,050 passengers on board. It was so overloaded that the four-hour journey took seven hours. We were very grateful that our Heavenly Father provided glass-smooth seas, as otherwise the journey would have been extremely difficult.

WEDNESDAY—MARCH 27TH

Arriving safely in the morning at Ormoc, we waited for six brethren who were to join us from Inopacan. While having breakfast, they called to say they had arrived at Isabel, where we were to meet them. We left and met the six brethren at Isabel. There we were to all board a motorized canoe to take us to Buena Vista, where we would meet with a sizeable group. Before the ten of us departed Isabel, Sr. Elmar was able to negotiate a good price for an air-conditioned van upon our arrival in Buena Vista. Also, Sr. Sue and I were told to wait in the motorized canoe, because if the sellers in the Isabel market saw us, the price of the food would go up, and we would get the lowest quality. As we waited, Sr. Elmar purchased rice, noodles, chicken, fish and vegetables to take to Buena Vista, as there are no stores in the village.

That evening we held a service with twenty-five brethren and interested people in Buena Vista.

Bro. Lucian spoke on the fact that God did not create the Hell that is taught by most churches. Bro. Henio spoke on the differences between God and Jesus—that they are not the same person. As it was approaching Easter, I led a discussion on its true meaning. Many in the Philippines have the idea that Christ dies every year, rather than the correct scriptural teaching that he died “once for all.”

THURSDAY—MARCH 28TH

The prior evening Bro. Godofredo had brought with him a prescription from the doctor along with x-ray results that showed he had a bad case of pneumonia. However, he could not afford the medication. Thus, our first priority Thursday morning was to go to Isabel to try to get the prescription filled for Bro. Godofredo. With many children and elderly in the area, we did not want the illness to spread. In the Philippines, many die from infections caused by pneumonia. Unfortunately, the medicine was unavailable in Isabel, so we returned to Buena Vista.

The brethren came together for lunch, and then we had what was the highlight of our visit to Buena Vista—the wedding ceremony for two couples. I gave the wedding discourse, and spoke of the responsibilities of marriage for those who follow Christ. The couples were Bro. Godofredo (the brother with pneumonia) and Sr. Yolanda, and Bro. Margarito and Sr. Ana Corita. Sr. Elmar had brought back a wedding cake from Isabel, which was enjoyed by all. That evening we held a vesper service and testimony meeting, with the two newly wedded couples joining us.

FRIDAY—MARCH 29TH

It was an early start to get Bro. Agripino onto the back of a motorcycle to take him to Isabel, so that he could get an early bus to Ormoc. Next was a quick walk down to the bay to check if the tide was high enough for the canoe to take us back to Isabel. Fortunately the tide was in just enough for us to board and head to Isabel, about a thirty-minute trip along the coastline. We took Sr. Yolanda with us to see if we could get the medicine for her husband. With no medicine available in Isabel, Sr. Yolanda continued with us to Ormoc. During the journey, Bro. Agripino called to say that there were no buses to Tacloban, where he was to get a flight to Manila. The Lord graciously overruled, and on our arrival in Ormoc, we were able to get him a ride in a van. Being Good Friday, many of the buses were not running, which makes travel very hard in a country that depends mostly on public transport.

A visit to the largest chemist—or pharmacist—in Ormoc failed to get the medicine. Sr. Elmar then went to the hospital after the chemist had told her these were the most expensive drugs for treatment of pneumonia, and they did not stock it because people could not afford them. Fortunately, the doctor at the hospital was on duty, and we were able to get a prescription for the generic version of the medicine. It was much cheaper, but still equal to at least a month's salary for the people there.

With the problems of the medication and getting Bro. Agripino to the airport solved, by the Lord's grace, the next challenge was getting the brethren who had met us in Ormac to their homes in Inopacan, a distance of 78 kilometres. We hired a van to take

all of us there and to see how the chapel they are building was progressing.

We arrived in Inopacan with the brethren—Bro. Jose, Sr. Bebe, and their children, to inspect the chapel that Bro. Jose has started to build. We were met by Sr. Linda, who had been in Manila for the Memorial, and who had travelled from Manila to Inopacan by bus, a trip that takes more than 24 hours—852 kilometres. After inspecting the framework of the chapel and fellowshiping with the brethren, Sr. Sue, Sr. Elmar and I returned to spend the night in Ormoc, in order to get a very early start the next day on the fast ferry back to Cebu.

SATURDAY—MARCH 30TH

After a quick breakfast, it was time to board the Weesam Express fast ferry to Cebu. The trip took just over two hours, compared to the seven hours on the earlier journey in our overladen slow ferry. We were also blessed that the special flight from Cebu to Siargao scheduled for Easter was two hours later than the normal flight. This meant we had just enough time to get off the ferry, into a taxi, and to the airport. On arrival at Siargao airport, we hired a “Tricycle” to take us to Port Dapa where we bought the rice, noodles, coffee and vegetables to share with the brethren in General Luna—our next stop.

In General Luna, we were met by the brethren at their chapel and discovered that the accommodations we had booked there were no longer available. Sr. Elmar volunteered to stay at the chapel, while another room was found for Sr. Sue and me during our stay there. That evening we held a testimony meeting and a study on the song of

Moses, taken from “Songs in the Night.” We then all enjoyed a meal together and sweet fellowship.

SUNDAY—MARCH 31ST

Sunday was very busy. First, we had a Baptismal service for newly consecrated brethren—Sr. Rochelyn, Sr. Roselyn, and Sr. Mary Anne. The actual baptism had to be delayed as the tide was out. We waited five hours for the tide to come in so that the water was deep enough to immerse the sisters. Later we had a meal of spaghetti, rice and chicken.

This was followed by a dedication service for four young children. The purpose of this service is to instruct the parents and the brethren in the ecclesia to bring the children up with Christian principles. It was stressed that this is not child baptism and that the children, when they reach maturity and accountability, can then make a decision on consecration. In the Philippines, for the children to attend public school, it is necessary that they have been baptized. However, the dedication service is considered an acceptable alternative. Sr. Genely’s son Ramjie, and Sr. Marife’s children Mark Anthony, Marvin, and Pia were the ones dedicated.

MONDAY—APRIL 1ST

After an early breakfast with the brethren, we departed for the airport. Several brethren came with us to the airport for an emotional farewell. A short flight brought us back to Cebu, where we arranged to meet Sr. Beth and her friend Jennifer at the SM Mall Cebu. They joined us for a meal, and then we retired to the traveller’s lounge where we discussed many scriptural subjects until it closed. We moved to seats outside and continued

our discussion until the whole area was closed for the day, then secured a taxi to take Sr. Beth home and us back to the hotel.

TUESDAY—APRIL 2ND

Our next flight, from Cebu to Dipolog, was delayed, and at one point, it looked as if we would not get a flight that day. After about ninety minutes we were allowed on the plane. A tire had burst on landing when it had arrived earlier, and it had to be replaced before we could take off. We arrived in Dipolog, checked into our hotel, and then walked to Sr. Elmar's restaurant where the children that she teaches were waiting to greet us. The restaurant "Morning Breeze" is also the place that the children meet for their Bible lessons.

WEDNESDAY—APRIL 3RD

We all met at the restaurant for breakfast before taking the children in two "tricycles" to meet at Sr. Lea's home with her family. After all the children sang hymns, we enjoyed a study in which we looked at the first Passover and how it was a picture of our Lord's death. We also discussed what the various signs and pictures symbolize in our Christian walk.

One member of Sr. Lea's family had been badly injured working in Malaysia and was unable to walk for three months, and now could only walk with the aid of two crutches. He really enjoyed the study and then said he had things to do. After lunch, I went out to see where he was, and found him sitting on the ground cutting wood to sell as firewood. This was very hard for him physically, but he was happy that he could do something to earn money to feed the family. His only sadness was that losing his work

in Malaysia meant that he could not afford to send his son to school. Sr. Elmar helped his son fill out an application form to see if he could win a scholarship to cover some of the cost of his schooling, as he knew that education was the only way to escape from poverty. That evening we met with the children that had not been able to come in the morning. The session was held at the restaurant with the children singing hymns with great enthusiasm and then reading the Bible and discussing the passages read.

THURSDAY—APRIL 4TH

We walked down to the restaurant for our last breakfast in the Philippines, then back to the hotel to catch our ride to the airport and begin our long journey home. The vehicle would not start, so we took the “tricycle” to the airport. We flew from Dipolog to Manila, where we were met by Bro. Agripino. He came to make sure that we got from one terminal to the other for our international flight, as well as to pick up the digital recorder I had promised him. We departed Manila in the early evening, flying via Singapore to Sydney, arriving late morning the next day—Friday.

We were very grateful to our Heavenly Father for his watch care over us as we flew on eleven different aircraft, a slow boat, a fast boat, two canoe rides, countless Jeepney’s, vans, and tricycle rides. Most of these are not roadworthy or seaworthy and would not be allowed on the roads or the seas in the USA or Australia. We ask that you remember your brethren in the Philippines in prayer as they, under very difficult conditions, strive to serve our Heavenly Father and Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. ■

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.

K. Fernets

Prince Albert, SK June 29-July 1

B. Keith

Spokane, WA	July 1
Vernon, BC	2
Calgary, AB	3
Saskatoon, SK	4
Sturgis, SK	5-7
Red Deer, AB	8
Vernon, BC	9,10

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

G. Balko

Sturgis, SK July 5-7

T. Krupa

Prince Albert, SK June 29-July 1

R. Charlton

Prince Albert, SK June 29-July 1

P. Mora

Prince Albert, SK June 29-July 1
Sturgis, SK 5-7

O. B. Elbert

Prince Albert, SK June 29-July 1
Sturgis, SK 5-7

B. Siwak

Sturgis, SK July 5-7

J. Freer

Sturgis, SK July 5-7

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

—Hebrews 10:23-25,
New American Standard Bible

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.

PRINCE ALBERT/SASKATOON CONVENTION, June 29-July 1—Siwak Farm. Contact A. Siwak, RR 1 Stn Mpp, Prince Albert, SK, Canada S6V 5P8. Phone: (306) 764-7692 or E-mail: ahsiwak@inet2000.com

EAST SASKATCHEWAN CONVENTION, July 5-7—Sturgis Community Hall, Highway #9, Sturgis, SK, Canada. Contact N. Paley, Box 1522, Canora, SK, Canada S0A 0L0. Phone: (306) 563-5441

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 20-25—University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Johnstown, PA. Contact E. Kuenzli (by Sunday, July 14). Phone: (407) 670-4189 or E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

NIGERIA MISSION GENERAL CONVENTION, August 23-25—Emmanuel College, Owerri Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. Egbu, #2 Darlington Street Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Phone: 2348033339949 or 2348082146621. E-mail: egbucaje@gmail.com

JACKSON CONVENTION, August 31-September 1—(New Location) Holiday Inn Jackson NW, 2696 Bob McClain Drive, Jackson, MI 49202. Contact V. Lumley, 2531 Ashton Road, Jackson, MI 49203. Phone: (517) 782-7252 or E-mail: lumley@aol.com

NEW YORK CONVENTION, August 31-September 1—Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Deadline for subsidized room rate is August 15. Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact A. Williams. Phone: (718) 261-3053 or E-mail: austin@osnetinc.com

SEATTLE CONVENTION, August 31-September 2—Seabeck Conference Center, 13395 Lagoon Drive NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact L. Flinn, 33020 10 Avenue SW,

#S-203, Federal Way, WA 98023. Phone: (253) 838-3822 or E-mail: laurie@flinn.us

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 6,7,8—Radisson Inn Huntsville Airport, 8721 Madison Blvd., Madison, AL 35758. Reservations: (800) 395-7046. Mention Huntsville Bible Students for special rate by August 31. Contact J. Cothren, 1300 Huntsville Hills Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802. Phone: (256) 852-8505 or E-mail: jimmycothren@att.net

COLORADO CONVENTION, September 27-29—Quality Inn Central Denver, 200 W 48th Avenue, Denver, CO 80216. Contact L. Turner. Phone: (303) 809-1957 or E-mail: twink94@comcast.net

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, September 28,29—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact D. Farchione. Phone: (262) 895-4583 or E-mail: debfarchione@aol.com

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, September 29—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91605. Contact: J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 438-1086 or E-mail: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 5,6—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact G. Balko. Phone: (724) 771-0139

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 12,13—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact J. Houlmont. Phone: (231) 972-4259 or E-mail: ljhoulmont@charter.net

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 26,27—South Seminole Masonic Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Contact J. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 831-2098 or E-mail: jkuenzli@cfl.rr.com

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 26,27—Masonic Hall, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA. Contact M. Allard, 637 Shamrock Lane, Pismo Beach, CA 93449. Phone: (805) 773-2962 or E-mail: medlallard@juno.com