

The DAWN

VOLUME No. LXXXIV, Number 9
(USPS 149-380), September 2016

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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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God's Program of Election

***“Put on therefore,
as God’s elect
... a heart of
compassion,
kindness, humility,
meekness,
longsuffering;
Forbearing one
another, and
forgiving each
other, ... And
above all these
things put on love.”
—Colossians 3:12-14,
Revised Version***

IT IS NOW A LITTLE MORE than two months until the United States presidential election. It has been evident throughout the campaign process, which for some candidates started nearly four years ago, that the environment surrounding this year’s election is unique in many ways. Unfortunately, this uniqueness is considered by most to be along negative lines. This has resulted in much fear and trepidation among the electorate, regardless of the outcome in November. For many, it is perhaps the most confusing and fearful election in their lifetime.

There are many factors contributing to the uniqueness of the 2016 election. First, there are the issues themselves, which have become more and more difficult, if not impossible, for leaders of

the world to get their hands around. In addition, it is clear that these problems are now coming closer to home, often affecting the lives of citizens living within our own borders, rather than taking place only in far off places.

Consider this sampling of recent events within our own country: The mass murder in June of forty-nine people at an Orlando nightclub by a single gunman, who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State; the ongoing morality issues and controversy which surround the alleged rights of the LGBT community; the unknown potential fallout economically to the United States from the United Kingdom's recent vote to exit the European Union; the decline in race relations within the country, as shown by the killing of blacks by white police officers, and in apparent retaliation, the killing of five Dallas police officers in early July; and the ever-growing problem of immigration, in which it is estimated at the present time that some 11 million people are living in the United States illegally.

This unique and daunting array of problems does not even take into account the scores of other troubles, many at crisis proportions, in the rest of the world. Indeed, it is impossible to describe in words the terrible things happening on a daily basis in this present sin-sick and dying world in which we live.

If the problems facing the country and the world are unique to today, so are the remedies proposed by the presidential candidates. Additionally, in most cases, the solutions offered by one candidate are the complete opposite of those offered by the other. One says we should build a wall to keep illegal immigrants

out—another says we should be inclusive of all who enter our borders. One says that the mass killings we have witnessed in recent months should result in stricter gun controls—another says that law-abiding citizens need easier access to guns for their own protection. One says that most of our country’s international trade agreements should be stopped because they have taken jobs away from Americans—another says these agreements are necessary and vital to the global economy in which we live.

Another obviously unique quality to this year’s election is the candidates themselves. Hillary Clinton is the first woman to be nominated from her party for president of the United States. Donald Trump, on the other hand, is a businessman and real estate mogul, who has no political experience. He also has a habit of speaking in very scathing and sarcastic language to any who disagree with him, regardless of their party affiliation. As a result, although he is running as a Republican, he has not been endorsed by some of the most politically powerful individuals in that party.

NEGATIVITY ABOUNDS

Perhaps the most telling commentary on the unique character of this year’s election is that the “negative” ratings of both candidates are historically high. In one recent poll, a majority ranging from 51% to 60% expressed a lack of confidence in both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump on the critical issues of the United States’ economy, immigration, and terrorism. Many also expressed the opinion that foreign leaders have either little respect for, or a negative view towards, the two candidates.

To the sincere Bible student, neither the Democratic nor Republican candidate in this year's presidential election seems to be guided by God's principles of righteousness and justice as set forth in the Scriptures. The qualities cited in our opening text—compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, forgiveness, and love—which Paul says are required of “God's elect”—are sorely lacking in today's political environment.

Furthermore, Jesus' words that “the poor in spirit,” “the meek,” “the merciful,” “the pure in heart,” and “the peacemakers,” are considered “blessed” in God's sight is unfathomable in the context of modern politics. (Matt. 5:3-9) Even if this were not so, human wisdom of potential leaders is quite incapable of removing selfishness from the hearts of those over whom they might rule. Indeed, the electorate themselves are marred by the same lack of godlike principles as the candidates running for office. This is why even where there is a semblance of a plan for human betterment, it is almost inevitably marked by failure.

GOD HAS A PLAN

God has a plan, however, which includes the necessary wisdom and power to implement it. When his due time arrives to put it into operation for the world of mankind, the problems of the sin-cursed and dying human race will be solved, not according to man's fallen ability, but by the divine power of the Almighty Creator. Jesus will be God's chief representative in the execution of his plan, and concerning him the Scriptures state: “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a

Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit [power] of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.”—Isa. 11:1-4

The expression, “he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked,” is simply a symbolic manner of stating the fact that this divine ruler’s word and authority will have to be obeyed by all those who want to continue living—the “rod of his mouth” and the “breath of his lips” symbolizing his authoritative commands. This authority and the power to enforce it will be very essential parts of a rulership which will actually succeed. Simply to argue for the poor and to render righteous judgment among the people would not be enough to accomplish the work designed by the Creator for his representative to accomplish.

GOD’S ELECTION

Interestingly enough, Christ Jesus, the chief executor in God’s great plan for the solving of human problems, is an elected official, but his election was not by man, nor by the preferences of men. He was elected, or chosen, by his Heavenly Father, the Creator. Concerning this, God said,

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.”—Isa. 42:1-4

Jesus will not be the only “elect” ruler in that wonderful future government, although he will be the chief leader—“the government shall be upon his shoulder.” (Isa. 9:6) He will have associates, whom the Bible calls “kings and priests” who will reign with Christ. (Rev. 5:10; 20:4,6) The Scriptures also speak of these as being “joint-heirs” with Jesus. (Rom. 8:17) The Prophet Isaiah speaks of that future governmental arrangement as “Zion.” We quote: “Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.”—Isa. 28:16,17

In Revelation 14:1 we have a symbolic illustration of Jesus and his kingdom associates together on “mount Sion.” Jesus is here pictured as a “Lamb,” because he gave himself in sacrifice for the sins of the world. The text reads, “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.”

Concerning those who are with the Lamb on “mount Sion,” verse 4 reads, “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” One of the interesting points here mentioned is that those who are with the Lamb on “mount Sion,” are there because they follow him “whithersoever he goeth.” This means that in following him, they became like him.

ELECTION FOREKNOWN BY GOD

We have another reference concerning this same class, that they are “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” (I Pet. 1:2) Here we have a definite statement that those associated with Jesus as his joint-heirs are elected, or chosen, to this position by God the Father. Peter explains that this is according to the operation of God’s foreknowledge. Paul also speaks of this foreknowledge, saying, “Whom he [God] did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.”—Rom. 8:29

God’s foreknowledge or predestination spoken of by Peter and Paul in the foregoing Scriptures is not to be thought of as applying to the individuals themselves, but rather to the terms of their election. They must be “conformed to the image of his Son.” Only those who seek to meet this predetermined qualification will have part in the election of God, and if faithful, attain the exalted position of living and reigning with Christ. It is, in fact, God who “draws” these to himself, and extends to them the invitation to run for this high position. They are not self-declared candidates for rulership in the

Messianic kingdom, but are “partakers of the heavenly calling.”—John 6:44; Heb. 3:1

The “calling” of God is not enough, nor sufficient, to win his election. Peter wrote, “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (II Pet. 1:10,11) “These things” which Peter says we must do to make our “election sure” are the development of the various graces of character described in the previous verses—“moral excellence, knowledge, . . . self-control, perseverance, . . . godliness, brotherly kindness, . . . and love.”—vss. 5-7, *New American Standard Bible*

It is clear from this that we do not make our “election sure” by seeking the votes, or approval, of the people. Through faithfulness to the will of God, and seeking his approval, however, we may, by his grace, hear his words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many.” (Matt. 25:21) Each one who lives and reigns with Christ will do so only because he has made his “calling and election sure.” In Revelation 17:14, this class is again pictured with the Lamb, and the statement concerning them is that they are “called, and chosen, and faithful.”

DAYS SHORTENED “THROUGH” ELECT

The divinely elected rulers of God’s coming kingdom are referred to in our Lord’s great prophecy. Here Jesus speaks concerning a time of “great

tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matt. 24:21) This is a quote, in part, from the Prophet Daniel, who spoke of a great “time of trouble” resulting from the standing up of “Michael.”—Dan. 12:1

The name Michael means one “who is like God.” That is, he is one who God uses to speak and act on his behalf, to carry out his purposes. Jesus is that one. What Daniel refers to as a “time of trouble” Jesus describes as a time of “great tribulation.” Daniel’s prophecy declares that it would be a time of trouble “such as never was since there was a nation,” and to this Jesus adds, “no, nor ever shall be” again. Thus, Jesus locates the fulfillment of this prophecy as being just prior to the establishment of his glorious Messianic kingdom, which will make an end of all trouble.

Jesus also explains how severe that trouble will be, saying, “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.” (Matt. 24:22) This is familiar language today, when the total destruction of the human race is threatened, whether by nuclear weapons, environmental pollution, or other catastrophic events. There seems to be little doubt that Jesus is referring to the very time in which we are living.

Thankfully, Jesus does not leave us with a hopeless picture of this situation. Having said that unless these days of tribulation should be shortened, all flesh would be destroyed, he continues in the same verse by saying, “But for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” The phrase “for the elect’s sake” as found in the *King James Version* is better translated “through the elect,” as suggested

by both *Strong's Greek Dictionary* and *Thayer's Greek Definitions*. Thus, the entire phrase would be better rendered, "Through the elect those days shall be shortened."

GOD'S ELECTION—NOT MAN'S

We are glad that God will not depend upon the votes of the people to elect his rulers of the world to come. How thankful we are that he who reads the hearts, and is able to give strength and ability even to the weak, is making his own selection. Finally, when all those whom he has called and chosen have made their calling and election sure through faithfulness to God and to his eternal principles of righteousness, the long-promised kingdom of peace and happiness will come to mankind.

There is much trepidation and uncertainty as we approach this year's presidential election, and little cause for anticipation of positive change in the world, regardless of who is elected in November. How different that will be, however, when God's kingdom is established in the earth, and fulfills the prayer uttered by countless millions for the past two thousand years, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6:10 ■

*"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom
and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his
judgments, and his ways past finding out!
For who hath known the mind of the Lord? . . .
For of him, and through him, and to him, are all
things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."
—Romans 11:33-36*

The Peaceful Kingdom

Key Verse: *“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”*
—Isaiah 11:9

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 11:1-9

THE PEACEFUL KINGDOM.

The Golden Age. The Millennium. These names have been used in reference to the beautiful vision of our Key Verse—God’s kingdom on earth. In Scripture, a “mountain” often symbolizes a kingdom. Imagine a worldwide kingdom where no one seeks to hurt anyone else and the destructive forces unleashed by human conflict are extinct. Imagine a world in which all mankind are fully enlightened by the knowledge of the Lord, and where love, wisdom, and justice guide every motive and action.

Obviously, such peace and enlightenment are not what we see in the world today. Competing ideologies—religious, political, social, and economic—trigger perilous conflict the world over. Reports of factions hurting and destroying each other are a staple of the daily news. There is no common agreement on what values should govern society. There is no consensus on who God really is, what his standards are, or if he even exists. All these conditions grieve those who love God and his righteousness. They continue to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10) This prayer, taught to us by Jesus, is fitting in that he is the one of whom Isaiah testifies who will bring lasting peace

and righteousness to the earth. He will establish God's kingdom, and assure that his will shall be done "in earth."

Jesus' resume is impressive. "The spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And he will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked."—Isa. 11:2-4, *New American Standard Bible*

When Jesus judges the earth in righteousness, it is not an occasion for dread or fear. His judging will not be as a criminal case, in which we are the "defendant," but as a civil case, in which we are the "plaintiff"—seeking deliverance. His rule over earth is not for the purpose of hurting, destroying, or oppressing. It is to bring peace and liberty. Jesus' noble character is above reproach. In the peaceable kingdom, his words will be irresistible and powerful. They will "strike the earth"—that is, society—causing real change for the betterment and blessing of all. His words will cause mankind to repent, and cease from evil. In this sense, the wicked will be "slain" in that they leave behind sinful ways and no longer practice evil.

"For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:9-11, *NASB*) As consecrated believers, we presently have a ministry of reconciliation to the world. Therefore, let us not hurt nor destroy others by our words and actions. Rather, let them be in harmony with the coming kingdom on earth. ■

The Mountain of God

Key Verse: *“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.”*
—Isaiah 25:8

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 25:6-9

preserved by God, will cheer men’s hearts. “Give . . . wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.” (Prov. 31:6,7) In God’s kingdom, after centuries of suffering and groaning, mankind will finally put the “poverty” of their sinful state, and the “misery” of the dying condition, behind them.

Isaiah’s prophecy exemplifies the same lesson as Jesus’ parable of the lost sheep. (Matt. 18:12-14) As a shepherd would not be satisfied with accepting the loss of even one sheep, so God is “not willing that any should perish.” (II Pet. 3:9) He makes his “feast of fat things” available to “all people.” This is in harmony with the

THE “MOUNTAIN” OR KING-
dom of God is again the theme of our Scripture lesson. A great feast is being prepared by God, and all people will be invited to attend. It is a “feast of fat things, . . . of wines on the lees.” (Isa. 25:6) This figurative language portrays the richness of God’s blessings that he will pour out on all mankind. Hearty and nurturing truths will be made plain to all. Like wines on the lees—well preserved—the exhilarating doctrines of the peaceable kingdom, which have been forever

teaching of Paul regarding Jesus Christ's dying as "a ransom for all"—not merely for some.—I Tim. 2:6

In God's kingdom, the "covering cast over all people" will be removed. (Isa. 25:7) This is the covering of ignorance that prevails over the world today. It will be pulled out of the way, revealing a loving God to men. This will be one of the most epic events in human history. At that moment there will not be terror, but amazement. When the true nature of God is made plain, the reaction of mankind will be as expressed in verse 9: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." This is to be man's reaction—already foreknown and prophesied—when at long last God is revealed to them. They will discover the God that they had yearned for, and realize that he is not cruel, arbitrary, or vindictive toward them. Rather, he is loving, just, merciful, and kind.

God's kindness, mercy, justice, and love are expressed in verse 8 of Isaiah's vision. God will apply the justice-satisfying redemption of Christ's sacrifice to the benefit of our dying race. As a result, "he will swallow up death in victory." In his kindness, God will tenderly "wipe away tears from off all faces"—none will be neglected. His mercy will be expressed in taking away the "rebuke of his people . . . from off all the earth."

Jesus will accomplish the work of bringing the fallen human race back into harmony with their Creator. The result will be that "God . . . will dwell among them [restored mankind], and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." (Rev. 21:3,4, *New American Standard Bible*) Let us take encouragement from this vision and its hope of mankind's eternal deliverance in God's kingdom. ■

Foundations of the Earth

Key Verse: “*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? there is no searching of his understanding.*”
—Isaiah 40:28

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 40:21-31

The idolaters invested a great deal of their time and money to have their gods crafted. More time and money were wasted in service to these gods. However, such gods were lifeless and therefore useless. They were merely objects of stone or wood that could do nothing for those who worshipped them. “We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.”—I Cor. 8:4

Israel’s idolatry was a misguided use of their resources. The Lord speaks to them, seeking to encourage

OUR KEY VERSE REPEATS

the opening questions posed in Isaiah 40:21. The questions beckon to those Israelites who had given themselves over to idolatry. The vanity of idolatry is identified earlier in this chapter: “As for the idol, a craftsman casts it, A goldsmith plates it with gold, And a silversmith fashions chains of silver. He who is too impoverished for such an offering selects a tree that does not rot; He seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman to prepare an idol that will not totter.” (vss. 19,20, *New American Standard Bible*)

heart-searching reflection. “Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.” (Isa. 40:21-23) In essence God is saying to them, “Leave your idols behind, because they are all for naught!”

Thus God expresses his omnipotence. He is the Creator who laid the foundation of the earth—a feat beyond the power of any idol. He is the Lord who sits far above the earth, its people, rulers, and concerns. He is tireless and never grows weary. His understanding of all things is unfathomable. He is the living God who can bless mankind with true riches, peace, and life abundant. No idol of wood or stone can provide these things.

We, like the Israelites in our lesson, may be tempted to covet things made by a modern “craftsman,” “goldsmith,” and “silversmith” in the hope that they will bring us happiness. In this manner, the things of this earth can become idols to us. Yet, the joys obtained through material goods are often short-lived. The things that we may idolize quickly lose their luster. How wise and apropos is the Apostle John’s benedictory counsel in his first epistle, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”—I John 5:21

As Christians, we realize that God alone can bless. Nothing in this world even comes close to the comfort we receive from communion with God in prayer and study of his Word. Let us not waste our time and resources on earthly vanities. The final verse of our lesson is one of the most precious promises in the Bible. “They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isa. 40:31) May our faith thus rest only upon foundations laid by God. ■

Everlasting Covenant

Key Verse: ***"I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them."***
—Isaiah 61:8

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11
before You."—Ps. 89:14, *NASB*

WE GAIN A VITAL GLIMPSE

into the mind of God in our Key Verse. He loves judgment. The word translated from the Hebrew for "judgment" may also be rendered "justice," as found in Exodus 23:6, *New American Standard Bible*: "You shall not pervert the justice due to your needy brother in his dispute." The psalmist similarly uses the word in this manner, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go

Thus, when we read that God loves judgment we should properly think that he loves justice. He loves what is right, good, and fair. The emphasis is not that he loves to condemn. Rather, he loves to deliver from oppression and uphold what is right and holy. In addition to loving justice, God also hates iniquity in the burnt offering. Specifically, he hates fraud in that which is offered to him. His wrath smolders when hypocrisy taints man's worship of him. Under Israel's Law Covenant arrangement, it was expected that offerings to the Lord would be from the best of the flocks and the firstfruits of the field.

The Prophet Malachi gives us an insight as to why this was required. Someday God would make his name

and character known to all the nations of the earth. The best possible sacrifices should be given—worthy of God’s greatness, mercy, and love. Lesser offerings would diminish him in the eyes of men. We read, “From the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts. But you are profaning it, . . . and you bring what was taken by robbery and what is lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I receive that from your hand? says the LORD. But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, for I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and My name is feared among the nations.”—Mal. 1:11-14, *NASB*

The Lord’s true, consecrated people will offer him their best. They are one in purpose with him because his Holy Spirit rests upon them. They, as Jesus did, may claim the many privileges of having God’s Spirit, and its effect is profound. As stated in the verses of our lesson, God’s Spirit will cause them to “preach good tidings.” They will desire to “bind up the brokenhearted.” Proclamations of God’s liberty will fill their mouths. It is their privilege to give “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” These who do this are God’s children, “the seed which the LORD hath blessed.”—Isa. 61:1,3,9

These faithful followers of the Master are also referred to in the Bible as “Abraham’s seed.” (Gal. 3:29) While their work for the Lord at the present time is important, it is also preparatory for greater things. These shall ultimately reign with Christ in God’s kingdom to bless “all the kindreds of the earth.” (Acts 3:25) They will promulgate the “everlasting covenant” of blessing, by which “the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”—Isa. 61:11 ■

Seven Principles of Righteousness

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

—*Romans 3:23*

THE DIVINE STANDARD OF

righteousness embodies the thought of being just, perfect, and pure in every sense of the word. “All unrighteousness is sin,” the Apostle John says. (I John 5:17) Following the fall of Adam and Eve back in Eden, there have been no human examples of absolute righteousness with the exception of Christ Jesus. After the deliverance of Israel from Pharaoh’s bondage, God established a covenant relationship with that nation which required the people to manifest holy conduct. (Lev. 20:26) As descendants of Abraham, the Jews did not fully appreciate his example of obedience, and therefore, violated their covenant with God repeatedly. There are, however, many principles illustrated in God’s dealings with Israel as well as various individuals whose lives are recorded in the Old Testament that may be instructive for consecrated believers in Christ to emulate during this Gospel Age. We will look at seven such principles in our subject under consideration.

GOD'S FAVOR

Principle #1—Failure to obey God's righteous counsel results in the loss of special favor. Although Abraham, like the rest of Adam's children, was born "in sin" and "shapen in iniquity," he was declared righteous because he demonstrated faith and works of obedience. (Ps. 51:5; Heb. 11:8-10,17-19) At the time of the giving of the Law Covenant at Sinai, God dealt with the nation of Israel as one people under a theocratic arrangement, and they would be a special "treasure" to him if they obeyed his laws. When informed by Moses that this was what God had in store for them, the people declared, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do." (Exod. 19:5-8) Moses instructed the people in righteous behavior. Additionally, a system of sacrifices was instituted to sensitize the nation concerning the divine requirements, and to bring to their attention their moral failures and general waywardness. Nevertheless, the nation of Israel repeatedly practiced idolatry and embraced customs of their heathen neighbors. As a result, they were punished by God, eventually going into captivity to Gentile nations for a long period of time.—Lev. 26:14-39

Since Christ Jesus opened a new and living way for his consecrated followers during this Gospel Age, let us through obedience achieve what Israel after the flesh failed to do. "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (I Pet. 1:14-16) Paul also reminds us that we need to sow to the spirit rather than to the flesh. We

should be able to clearly discern whether we are striving to keep our bodies under restraint and are focused upon doing things which promote our spirituality, rather than catering to sinful desires and fleshly interests. With many stimuli surrounding us that might tend to divert us from serving Christ faithfully, we must keep our covenant to mortify the deeds of the flesh and to walk in newness of life diligently, so as to fulfil our vows of consecration.—Gal. 6:7,8; Col 3:1-3; Rom. 6:3,4

LOVING CORRECTION

Principle #2—Chastisement for instruction in righteousness is an evidence of God's love. Moses prophesized that in due time a great Prophet would be raised up to speak in God's name. (Deut. 18:15-19) The coming of a Messiah became well established in Jewish thought and expectations. During Jewish captivity under Gentile powers, the people had the hope of a deliverer who would restore them to great prominence. In fact, Messiah's appearance generally was predicted around the time of Jesus' birth. (Dan. 9:24-27; Luke 3:15) However, it was not then understood that the full impact of Moses' prophecy would occur at the Lord's Second Advent, to be fulfilled in the Christ, Head and Body. When Israel rejected Christ as their Savior, they lost their homeland and received much hostility at the hands of their enemies. With the completion of the bride of Christ, Israel's blindness will be removed. (Rom. 11:25-27) This acknowledges God's love for them, as they then will be restored to his full favor.

The psalmist said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word." (Ps. 119:67)

As consecrated believers, if we can ever keep this thought in mind, then during our difficulties we can take comfort that our loving Father has lessons for us to learn so we may be purified and rely upon him more closely. Such chastening is designed to assist us in yielding the “peaceable fruit of righteousness.” (Heb. 12:5-11) The Apostle Paul recounts in Galatians 2:11-21 an occasion when it was necessary for him to rebuke the Apostle Peter. When Peter first came to Antioch, he freely ate with Christian converts who formerly were Gentiles. Subsequently, Peter ceased to fellowship with them while in the presence of Jewish Christians for fear that news of his conduct would get back to Jerusalem. Peter well knew, in connection with the conversion of Cornelius, that God was not a respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34) Therefore, he erred by refusing to eat with uncircumcised believers, implying that the Mosaic law afforded a higher level of sanctification than the righteousness of faith. Paul, appropriately, accused Peter of hypocrisy by pointing out that Jewish Christians had a new standing on the basis of faith in the redemptive sacrifice of Christ, and that they were “dead to the law.” May we avoid the need for God’s rebuke resulting from our exercise of partiality when dealing with others.

ADVERSITY AN AID TO CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Principle #3—Personal adversity may be permitted for the crystallization of a righteous character. The deep fatherly love bestowed by Jacob upon Joseph evidently was reciprocated by this righteous, faithful, obedient and loving son. While feeding the

flocks in the fields with his brethren, Joseph observed their conduct. Upon returning home, he gave his father, Jacob, a report concerning their evil activities. (Gen. 37:2) If that were not enough to incur his brethren's hatred, Joseph's receipt of a "coat of many colours" from Jacob made them envious. (vss. 3,4) Additionally, his dreams which he shared with his brothers that seemed to imply some future exaltation over them intensified their anger towards him. Their animosity towards him was so strong that when he sought his brethren in the fields, they put him in a pit and subsequently sold him to Midianite traders who brought him to Egypt.—vss. 18-36

In Egypt, Joseph was sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, serving him faithfully until Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce him. As a righteous and loyal servant, he resisted her but was falsely accused and put into prison. During that period, he served the prison keeper's interests and also correctly interpreted the dreams of two of Pharaoh's former servants who had fallen into disfavor with the king. Later, Joseph properly interpreted two troublesome dreams of the king, which resulted in his release from prison and exaltation to the right hand of Pharaoh. Under his wise leadership, Joseph oversaw Egypt's prosperity during a time of famine that affected all the surrounding areas as well.—Gen. 41:39-41

A lesson for the church at this time is that we not react with anger when permitted to receive hostile treatment at the hands of others. Rather, we are to remember that such experiences are vital to our Christian development in righteousness.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” (I Pet. 4:12,13) As New Creatures in Christ, we must rid ourselves of the works of the flesh if we are to be more than overcomers and associates of the Master in his kingdom. Our serious endeavors to identify our weaknesses and rectify them should be of paramount importance in our lives. Joseph will not be the recipient of the divine nature, but he has been set forth as an example of devotion and fidelity to God. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and with the prospect of reigning with Christ and helping to bless the world in the kingdom, let us redouble our efforts to heed this admonition. “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.”—Eph. 4:31

NON-RETALIATION AGAINST EVILDOERS

Principle #4—The execution of vengeance is solely God’s prerogative. There is a bumper sticker which is sometimes found on cars that reads, “I don’t get mad, I get even.” As recorded in Genesis, chapters 42-45, that was surely not the spirit shown by Joseph after being raised to power in Egypt, and then meeting his brethren, who came to purchase grain during seven years of famine. When they approached Joseph, he recognized them, but they knew him not. Joseph accused them of being spies, and put them in prison. He then demanded that they return to their home and bring Benjamin back

to see him, while keeping Simeon as a hostage. If Joseph were of a different sort, he could have inflicted a great amount of punishment upon his brethren for the manner in which they treated him previously. When they returned to Egypt, he had a banquet prepared and ate with them while observing his beloved brother Benjamin, who accompanied them on this occasion. As a means of determining whether they had changed from their harsh ways, he had a silver cup secretly placed in Benjamin's sack of grain, and after they had started journeying to their home, he sent servants after them and accused Benjamin of stealing the cup. As punishment, Benjamin was to become Joseph's slave in Egypt. This proved to be a test to his brothers as to whether they were willing to lose Benjamin and save themselves. Here are the words of Judah in response to the situation they now faced. "How shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father." (Gen. 44: 34) Moved by this seeming change of heart by his brothers, as they now were concerned for Jacob's feelings, Joseph revealed his true identity to them.

Some years later, after Jacob came to live in Egypt and following his death, Joseph's brethren thought that he would now hate them and take vengeance upon them because of how they treated him many years ago, prior to his exaltation in Egypt. Thus, they fell before him and declared they would be his servants. (Gen. 50:15-18) Here is how Joseph responded: "Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto

good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.” (vss. 19-21) What a marvelous spirit this faithful member of the house of servants demonstrated.

As footstep followers of Christ, there are no circumstances wherein we should retaliate or demonstrate vindictiveness towards anyone who has mistreated us, especially our brethren. We should always be solicitous of their well-being, and seek to recover them from their wrongful actions, hoping for a change in their behavior. God will never allow anything to harm our spiritual interests if we wait upon his leading for direction. (Rom 8:28) One of the challenges to the followers of Christ is to endure opposition from others in an uncomplaining manner. Our lives are being transformed, and we are not to be in harmony with the general practices of the world along this line. Since we are striving to walk in Christ’s footsteps, we should not be surprised to find that we may be evil spoken of just as was our dear Redeemer, who opened not his mouth when he was being led “as a lamb to the slaughter.” (Isa. 53:7) If we put on the whole armor of God, it will assist us in enduring the scorn and disapproval of others as we observe the following exhortation being fulfilled in our lives: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”—II Tim. 3:12

WATCHFULNESS AND PRAYER

Principle #5—God answers the prayers of the righteous in his own manner and time. The Prophet

Habakkuk was a God-fearing, righteous individual who was deeply troubled with the state of ungodliness that existed among the people of Israel. He wanted to know how long God would allow this condition of things to continue. The people sinned with seeming impunity and injustice was prevalent. God informed Habakkuk that a terrible and mighty army would rise up to punish Israel, swiftly, violently and most thoroughly. (Hab. 1:1-10) In response to his questions concerning the duration of evil before righteousness would prevail, God gave Habakkuk a vision as a response. "The LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."—Hab. 2:2,3

Throughout the Christian era, God's children have been disturbed with the evil that surrounds them, as they await the long-promised kingdom of righteousness that will end earth's weary night. We might even question how much longer present conditions in society can endure without worldwide catastrophic consequences, or how we may overcome some of our personal weaknesses which seem to hamper our spiritual growth. We are living at a time where the foregoing answer to Habakkuk's query appears to have been penned for our admonition and encouragement today. Let us appreciate Habakkuk's model of communicating with our Heavenly Father with prayer and watchfulness, as we realize our deliverance from earth's sinful condition is nearer than when we first believed. (Rom. 13:11) "Watch

and pray,” the Master said, “that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”—Matt. 26:41

NEED FOR STEADFASTNESS

Principle #6—God expects the righteous to remain steadfast regardless of the environment which surrounds them. “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” (Heb. 11:7) Noah was an exception to the rule of evil, which predominated before the flood. At the time that the ark was completed, only Noah and his immediate family were saved from destruction.—Gen. 7:1-7

Noah lived for a period of 950 years, and probably endured hundreds of years of violence and demonic activity prior to the flood. Yet, as a member of the house of servants, he patiently did the will of God in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation. Noah endured faithfully during the first dispensation, through a period of evil which required the ending of one world order by means of a flood and the commencement of a new one.—II Pet. 2:5; 3:6

As Spirit-begotten members of the body of Christ, and watchers during the present Gospel Age harvest, we have observed many signs which suggest God’s kingdom is near. The “desire of all nations” shall soon come, even though we do not know the precise moment when this time of blessing will commence. (Hag. 2:7) Since we are admonished to be faithful unto death, if we are walking in the ways of righteousness, it really should not matter

to us that we do not know the exact date when God will culminate this evil order which presently exists. Let us continue to immerse our minds towards diligence with regard to personal study of the Scriptures, regular attendance at meetings and conventions, and living a life of sacrifice, by seeking strength and direction from the throne of heavenly grace. Paul knew that the brethren at this time of the age would need encouragement and therefore penned this admonition for our strengthening: “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”—Heb. 10:35,36

BASIS FOR FORGIVENESS

Principle #7—Repentance and confession of sin precede forgiveness from God. David is described as a man after God’s own heart. (Acts 13:22) Yet, because he was a member of the fallen human race, he committed sin. Two unrelated incidents in which he was involved demonstrate the principle under consideration. David engaged in adultery by taking to his bed a beautiful married woman named Bathsheba. He not only committed sin with Bathsheba, but in an attempt to cover this up, he also arranged for the death of her husband, Uriah the Hittite, who was one of his bravest and most faithful officers.—II Sam. 11:2-24

Ultimately, however, David repented and confessed these most grievous sins which he had committed. His words have been recorded in the Scriptures for our instruction as he prayed to the Heavenly Father. “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,

and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”—Ps. 51:2-4

Another example of David sinning was when he directed Joab to number the Israelites, presumably because he was beginning to rely upon the number of people available for battle, rather than continuing to trust in the Lord for victory. Joab had warned David against doing this, and God was displeased with David’s actions. He subsequently recognized this transgression and confessed his sin upon realizing the error of his ways. “God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel. And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.”—I Chron. 21:1-8

In contrasting David’s sin with Bathsheba and the taking of a census, we might tend to overlook the seriousness of this second matter. In the case of consecrated believers, Paul speaks about some gross sins, that if committed, would be a barrier towards entering into the kingdom honors. (I Cor. 6:9-11) Many of the Lord’s people may have committed some of those sins prior to consecration, but now, having been washed and among the sanctified, no longer engage in such practices. Nevertheless, if we harbor unrighteous thoughts, engage in evil surmising or speaking, all of which might seem to us as being less serious sins, we would not be manifesting purity of heart which is *(Continued on page 36)*

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(Continued from page 31) essential if we are going to receive God's approval. (Matt. 5:8) When we discover we have fallen short in any of these or related areas, even when we may feel they are relatively minor sins, let us promptly repent of the error of our ways. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—I John 1:9

LESSON SUMMARY

We have considered the highly important matter of righteous conduct and avoiding sin, by reviewing seven principles exemplified in the nation of Israel and four godly individuals listed in the Old Testament, including Joseph, Habakkuk, Noah and David. As consecrated, Spirit-begotten believers who presently are seeking to be a part of the body of Christ, our conduct should reflect the highest standards of righteousness in our thought, speech, and actions. We sometimes may stumble into sin unintentionally, but if this should occur, may we immediately repent of our conduct, expressing to the Heavenly Father deep regret for our failure to be more watchful. Any attempt to justify our actions would further compound the matter and be most displeasing to God.

Rather, let us promptly avail ourselves of the merciful provision at the throne of grace. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—I John 2:1,2 ■

Joy that No Man Can Take

*“Your sorrow shall
be turned to joy. . . .*

*And your joy no
man taketh
from you.”*

—John 16:20,22

THE WORDS OF OUR OPEN-

ing Scripture were spoken by Jesus to his disciples the night before he was put to death. He told them that they would soon experience great sorrow because of his departure from their midst. Yet, he says that this sorrow would soon afterward be turned to joy. This joy came about in two ways. First, his resurrection on the “third day,” and the various appearances he made to the disciples in the forty days following, were “convincing proofs” that he lived again, with even greater power than he had prior to his death. This was a source of great joy to Jesus’ followers, and renewed their dedication to him.—Luke 9:22; 24:45,46; Acts 1:1-3, *New American Standard Bible*

Joy came to the disciples in an even greater degree on the Day of Pentecost when, through the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, they understood more fully the details of God’s plan. Peter immediately was moved to expound this joyful message to the

multitudes gathered. (Acts 2:1-38) Many believed Peter's words, and were "pricked in their heart." As a result, "about three thousand" were added to their number. (vss. 37-41) The great joy of that day is testified to in the chapter's closing verses, which state that they all continued "daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house," and "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God." (vss. 46,47) Indeed, the disciples' sorrow, as well as perplexity and uncertainty, had been "turned to joy."

We live in a world today that is likewise full of sorrow, perplexity, uncertainty, and fear. Jesus prophesied of our day that it would be so, saying that men's hearts would fail them for fear, as they look at the things happening on the earth. (Luke 21:25,26) Yet, in spite of the religious, moral, political, and economic turmoil which surrounds us, the Lord's people are counseled in the Scriptures to always "Rejoice in the Lord." (Phil. 4:4) We today, as consecrated believers, must take the many sorrows which encompass our lives, whether personally or in the world around us, and "turn them" into a joy that "no man" can take from us. This is a mighty endeavor, and can only be accomplished by looking to the Scriptures to see what the basis must be for such joy.

JOYOUS CONDITIONS—PRIOR TO SIN

That brief period of time in which Adam and Eve lived in Eden, before the entrance of sin into their lives, must certainly have been joyous. This was so because all of God's intelligent creatures were formed with the capability of experiencing joy, of which their Creator was the source. The various orders of

angelic beings that existed before man was created were not sad, dismayed, depressed, or morose. These expressions were probably not in the vocabulary of God's creatures at that time.

God asked Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38:4) Job, of course, had not been born yet. God continued speaking with Job, describing the great work of preparing the earth for human habitation and telling of the reactions of his angelic creatures, "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." (vs. 7) Similar conditions are described in Proverbs, chapter 8. There, Jesus in his prehuman existence is personified as wisdom, accomplishing the Heavenly Father's will. Reference is made in this passage to the creation of this blessed one before the "earth was." (vs. 23) Also described is the work he did in assisting the Father and the joy that the Father had in him. "Then I was beside Him, as a master workman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him, Rejoicing in the world, His earth, And having my delight in the sons of men." (vss. 30,31, *NASB*) We note the words "delight" and "rejoicing" as descriptive of that time.

WHAT IS JOY?

Joy may be defined as a sentiment or thought process brought about by the expectation or experiencing of good. By contrast, sadness can be thought of as a sentiment or thought process resulting from the expectation or experiencing of that which is evil. Thus, prior to sin entering into the picture, sadness was never present among God's creation, and only its opposite, joy, was experienced.

Although joy can be thought of as synonymous with happiness, it should never be happiness at the expense of others. There is also a false and a true happiness. The wicked, as well as the good, can be happy. However, the difference in the happiness of the two is that they rejoice in opposite events and conditions. In Proverbs 6:16-19, there is given a list of things which God hates: "A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." The wicked may be happy and take joy in doing these things, whereas the righteous would have sorrow in merely seeing such happenings. The prophet confirms this, saying, "Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered."—Mal. 3:15

We should not conclude from these words that the righteous cannot be happy in this present evil world. There are many ways in which the Scriptures say they can be happy. A few examples taken from the Book of Proverbs are: "**Happy** is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding." "He that hath mercy on the poor, **happy** is he." "Whoso trusteth in the LORD, **happy** is he." "He that keepeth the law, **happy** is he."—Prov. 3:13; 14:21; 16:20; 29:18

All these ways in which the righteous can be happy may be summarized in the words of Jesus spoken at the time when he washed the feet of his disciples. In impressing upon them the lesson of humility, he said, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have

washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John 13:13-17) Note the sharp contrast to Malachi's statement, "Now we call the proud happy."—Mal. 3:15

The lesson of humility is of great importance when considering this subject, for the closer we come to attaining true humility, the more likely we are to be truly happy. Closely related to humility, and a further requirement for true happiness, is the recognition of the Heavenly Father as the supreme being of the universe. Jesus said, "My Father is greater than I," and is "greater than all." (John 14:28; 10:29) Satan refused to recognize this all-important fact of God's supremacy, and as a consequence of his rebellion against God he caused sin and death to enter the world. Thus it happened that the joy which was everywhere in heaven and in earth became scarce in the earth. The earth became a place of sorrow, suffering, sighing, and dying, instead of being the joyous place God intended it to be. (Gen. 3:14-19) It became a place of weeping, as described by the psalmist: "Weeping may endure for a night." (Ps. 30:5) The night pictures the time of this present evil world, during which joy has been as difficult to find as have other fruits of the spirit—love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. (Gal. 5:22,23) These holy qualities are scarce and can be developed by God's people only with the help of his Holy Spirit. However, man was originally formed in the moral image of God, and

we are glad that these elements of character will, in God's coming kingdom, be reestablished in man's heart. Indeed, as the psalmist continues in the above verse, "Joy cometh in the morning."

JESUS ENTERED INTO MAN'S SORROW

As members of the Adamic family, we were born "in sin." (Ps. 51:5) As such, we have learned to accept grief and sorrow as a part of our lot. This was not so with Jesus. In his prehuman existence, he was daily the Father's delight. God rejoiced in his wonderful Son, and he, in turn, rejoiced in his glorious and loving Father.

Hence, when Jesus came to earth, it meant entering into mankind's experiences, and thus it was that he became "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isa. 53:3) Isaiah's prophecy was intended to highlight a contrast. Previous to the above statement, Jesus is called "the arm of the LORD"—figuratively "the arm," or force, of Jehovah. (vs. 1) Israel looked for a great, powerful, and mighty king who would come to reestablish their kingdom in great glory. That was their expectation of God's mighty "arm." Instead, Jesus came to them as a "man of sorrows," healing the sick, sympathizing with their infirmities, and becoming "acquainted with" their grief, to the extent of finally dying on the cross. Thus, in becoming man's Redeemer, Jesus, who had never experienced grief in his prehuman existence, became familiar with these conditions, and went through them personally.

THE JOY SET BEFORE JESUS

Why was Jesus willing to do this? The answer involves "joy," as we are told by the Apostle Paul.

He urges us to look “unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.” (Heb. 12:2) Some may think that the “joy” set before Jesus was the divine nature. Yet Jesus was not thinking of this when, before he was to be crucified, he prayed to the Father, asking only that, if faithful, he be glorified to the same position as he had in his prehuman existence.—John 17:5

Rather, the “joy that was set before” Jesus was the knowledge of the eternal good that would come to God’s creatures if he were faithful. Joy is the emotion excited by the expectation of good, and it was this ultimate prospect for mankind which brought such joy to God’s faithful Son. We also rejoice in Jesus’ faithfulness, because we have been called to be his footstep followers and to live according to his example. This means that while we live in an environment of sickness, pain, and sorrow, we are to be joyful because of the prospects of the great good that will come to all in God’s coming kingdom, which is “near, even at the doors.”—Matt. 24:33

PROPER VIEW OF JOY AND SUFFERING

The Scriptures make clear the necessity that footstep followers of Christ must “suffer for righteousness’ sake.” (I Pet. 3:14) One way in which we do this is in feeling sorrow because of all the unrighteousness around us. Such suffering is the direct result of our espousal of the cause of Christ and righteousness. Jesus suffered in this way, too, except that he was far more keenly aware of unrighteousness than we are. He could see where sin was being hidden, as in the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees.

We also experience suffering as we, with great difficulty perhaps, fight against our own imperfections and the resulting tendency to be callous about unrighteousness. Whereas Jesus was perfect from the beginning, we have never known the complete absence of aches, pains, infirmities, and imperfection in general. For us, normalcy has consisted of existing in the presence of unrighteousness, both in ourselves and in others, as well as living with pain and suffering because of the death penalty.

In our Christian life, we must expect experiences of suffering and tribulation. (Acts 14:22) However, these do not exist constantly, and neither did our Lord suffer continuously. The mental picture that some may have of him as a “man of sorrows,” constantly in grief, is incorrect. Some even believe that Jesus never smiled. He plainly told us, however: “Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.” (Matt. 6:16) Notice that a feigned sad countenance is the mark of a hypocrite. Furthermore, we should not allow our burdens to be reflected in a sorrowful countenance. Jesus clearly indicated on this occasion that the reverse was to be the case. Continuing, he said, “But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”—Matt. 6:17,18

The erroneous idea concerning a sad countenance was carried forward into medieval times, when the Adversary suppressed truth and in its stead superstition and ignorance prevailed. Religious monks

believed a sad countenance was a necessary form of piety. Thus, to counteract their disposition to be joyful on some occasions, some wore clothing made of coarse, prickly material which irritated their flesh. This truly produced a sad countenance. In this case, their sadness was not a case of hypocrisy. Rather, it stemmed from the erroneous belief in eternal torment that became dominant in Christendom. This doctrinal error took such hold upon professed believers that sincere men considered self-affliction and physical pain a means of greater assurance that they would get to heaven.

They believed in a god of eternal torment, a teaching authored by Satan, even as Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees of his day that they were of their “father the devil.” (John 8:44) We rejoice, however, and are glad that our God and Heavenly Father is the loving and wise author of a great plan of the ages and, furthermore, that suffering, pain, sorrow, and grief are a part of a temporary experience, which is to be replaced by joy. (Rev. 21:3-5) We are glad that God, through his Word, makes it plain that it is good to be happy, even as an earthly father would tell his children in response to their expressions of happiness.

JOYS EVEN NOW

If joy is to be the predominating experience of the next age, as it most certainly will be, then it should be ours in this age. The hopes and prospects of the kingdom are a real and abundant joy to the Lord’s people. No matter how difficult the road ahead might be, or how many trials must yet be experienced, our attitude must be the same as the Apostle Paul

said of Jesus, “Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.” (Heb. 12:2) The emphasis in this verse is on joy. We know that it permeated the life of our Lord, so that his appearance was radiant and joyful. With him a typical expression of greeting was, “Be of good cheer.” (Matt. 9:2; 14:27; John 16:33) We cannot imagine Jesus saying these words with a sad face. Furthermore, whenever Jesus said, “Be of good cheer,” he had something in the way of a blessing to give, by word or deed. It was not an idle expression.

In Matthew 9:9-15, an incident is described wherein Matthew, the publican, was invited to follow Jesus. He then prepared a dinner for Jesus and his disciples and also invited his friends. In another instance, Jesus attended a wedding feast in Cana, performing a miracle while he was there. (John 2:1-11) No one should suppose that on these and other similar occasions Jesus merely graced the event by his presence, or that he sat with a sad countenance while others were happy. If this were so, Jesus would not have been criticized as he pointed out in Matthew 11:16-19: “Now, to what can I compare the people of this day? They are like children sitting in the marketplace. One group shouts to the other, ‘We played wedding music for you, but you wouldn’t dance! We sang funeral songs, but you wouldn’t cry!’ When John came, he fasted and drank no wine, and everyone said, ‘He has a demon in him!’ When the Son of Man came, he ate and drank, and everyone said, ‘Look at this man! He is a glutton and wine drinker, a friend of tax collectors and other outcasts!’ God’s wisdom, however, is shown to be true by its results.”—*Good News Bible*

Jesus, we believe, had many happy occasions. He had great compassion for the poor and afflicted and was very happy to bring them some joy. He was happy to lay down his life in service for mankind. It made him glad to know that sin and death would be vanquished through God's kingdom, and he taught his disciples to pray for that kingdom. (Matt. 6:10) All the joys that Jesus had—of service to men, of making others happy, of sacrifice to make possible the kingdom blessings—could be summarized as the joy of knowing that he was doing the Father's will.

Possibly the most joyful experience Jesus had on earth occurred at Jordan. After he was immersed by John the Baptist, the heavens were opened unto him, and a voice was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17) Jesus was joyful because he knew he was carrying out his Father's will. Once, when Jesus was being urged to eat, he said, "My meat [food] is to do the will of him that sent me." (John 4:34) He did not say this because the literal food was distasteful. When a person eats good food, he eats it joyfully, because it has a good taste. The Father's will for Jesus was as good-tasting food, which he ate joyfully.

If we have the joy of Jesus, we will be glad to suffer and to die with him. Peter said, "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye." (I Pet. 3:14) Jesus was even more emphatic, saying, "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven." (Luke 6:22,23) The world cannot understand the source

of our happiness, and no one can truly enter into this joy if he has not been begotten of God's Holy Spirit. Hence, any and every experience leads to joy, as we see God working in us and around us to accomplish his grand purpose.

JOY IN THE MORNING

The Lord's disciples are to learn these lessons well. The joy of their Lord must become their joy. Only this can permit them to endure all kinds of trials with rejoicing. Soon the difficult and trying experiences are to end for the consecrated followers of Christ. Shortly thereafter, they will end for the world also. The nighttime of sin and weeping will end, and joy will come for all in the morning of God's blessed kingdom.—Ps. 30:5

The Bible could be a sad manuscript if we did not know of God's plan. Instead, its words are most joyful and pleasant to our eyes and ears. The Old Testament opens with the account of God's great work of creation, to provide a happy home for all mankind. It closes with the prophecy of the "Sun of righteousness" arising with healing in his wings, to heal the world of all its misery and woe, after tragedy had struck on account of sin. (Gen. 1:1-31; Mal. 4:2) The New Testament begins with the birth of Jesus as man's Savior and the angelic cry—"glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." It ends with a description of the realities of God's wonderful kingdom, when there shall be "no more curse," and the earth is restored as a happy place again. (Luke 2:7-11; Rev. 22:1-3) Praise be to God, the Father, and to his Son, who will cause joy to last forevermore! ■

Vessels of the Great Potter

*“Arise, and go
down to the
potter’s house, and
there I will cause
thee to hear
my words.”*

—Jeremiah 18:2

JEREMIAH FOLLOWED THE

Lord’s directions found in our opening text. He said, “Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.”—vss. 3,4

One of the important lessons of this allegory is that God, who is pictured in this case as the potter, does not deal in an arbitrary manner with individuals or nations—the “vessels” he is creating. The responsibility rests upon them—the “clay” in this illustration—to allow themselves to become vessels fit for the Lord’s use. They must yield themselves under his masterful hand to work in harmony with his plans for mankind, including themselves. Their usefulness to God depends upon the heart attitude they allow to develop in themselves, and their responsiveness to his direction throughout their entire relationship with him.

The context of this chapter in Jeremiah clearly shows that God reserves the right to extend or withhold blessings, or to administer punishments and rewards, according to the behavior of the “clay” as it resides in his hands. That is, his actions are a direct result of the obedience or disobedience of those involved, according to their free will, and not based on a pre-determined outcome on the part of the Lord.

ELECTION AND FREE WILL

In the sixteenth century, the doctrine of “Election” came into common acceptance in Protestant Europe, primarily through the teachings of John Calvin. His viewpoint on this subject led to the teaching of predestination in the most complete sense. However, the Calvinistic view of election is not compatible with the Word of God, for our Heavenly Father does not interfere with the free will which he has given to each human being. From the very beginning, God had a design for his human family, and he is successfully carrying it out. Indeed, part of his design for man is that all, eventually, will have the opportunity, and great privilege, of cooperation with him, but each will have to do so willingly.

It was God’s will that all his intelligent creatures would become acquainted with him and his magnificent character, and each one be given an opportunity to serve him freely, from the heart. They would thereby receive inexpressible blessings such as only he can bestow upon them. Furthermore, it is the Heavenly Father’s desire that every creature in heaven or upon earth, created or yet to be created, worship and obey him and his righteous laws because they love them, and are in full heart-harmony with righteousness.

Light is cast upon our subject of the vessels of the Great Potter by the words of the Apostle Paul. "Has not the potter rightful power over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel for more honourable and another for less honourable uses?" (Rom. 9:21, *Weymouth New Testament*) In other words, there are many vessels being produced by the Master Workman, some to great honor through their more important usage, and some to less honor comparatively, but still to some important purpose in his plan of the ages.

Once again, however, we must guard against the erroneous thought that human beings are under the control of a divine being which arbitrarily governs everything they do. If this were so, God's creatures would be like robots which have nothing to say about their destiny. This thought of predestination is not a correct premise, and is not taught in the Bible. On the contrary, the lesson of Jeremiah, chapter 18 shows that the attitude of the individual determines whether he will eventually be formed as a vessel of great honor, or one of lesser honor. Additionally, the particular use for which a vessel was designed very often determined whether it had special honor or not. In Old Testament times, some clay vessels were used for very menial tasks, while others were decorated with beautiful designs and colors, and used as splendid ornaments in the home.

VESSELS OF A POTTER

Potter's vessels are spoken of in the Scriptures on numerous occasions. They contain certain illustrations in connection with the professed people of God. In certain parts of the world men and women can

be seen gathered around a well or spring of water, drawing water for the needs of their family. The vessels which they use may hold several gallons of water. They must be sturdy and clean, and are often decorated with painted or embossed designs.

The keeping of these vessels clean would be of utmost importance. From them would be dispensed pure water for cooking and drinking, as well as for washing. For these functions—so essential for life—the containers must always remain pure and uncontaminated, lest life-threatening disease should result. Thus, to be designated as vessels of honor would require, at a minimum, that they be clean at all times.—Isa. 52:11

As one would walk down a pathway toward the well, even if a stranger, he could say to the person carrying a vessel of water, “Would you please give me a drink?” More often than not, the one bearing the vessel would gladly set it down, and allow the thirsty individual to take a drink. This vessel of honor dispensed a life-giving liquid, which aptly illustrates the people of God. First, they must be clean and pure, made so by the precious blood of Christ. (I John 1:7) They hold within themselves the pure water of life, which they freely share with all who desire to partake of it to quench their thirst. (John 4:14) The vessels holding this water are formed from clay—earthen vessels. (II Cor. 4:7) Nevertheless, they are vessels of honor because of the way they are used. Thus, footstep followers of Christ have been selected from material taken from the earth, and are being transformed into vessels fit for the Master’s use.

Continuing this illustration, when several vessels were made at one time, the potter did not make a

decision as to which would be a vessel of more honor or less honor from the outset. What determined their position of honor was the way they yielded to the potter's hand while being formed, and their intended use by those to whom they eventually belonged. Here is another distinctive lesson. We should examine ourselves as to whether we are striving earnestly with all of our ability to become a vessel of honor. We must scrutinize our character to see if we are endeavoring to exercise a generosity of spirit which would be willing under every circumstance to nourish and sustain any who might thirst for a sip of water from our vessel. There is no higher honor at the present time than to be used by God to dispense the water of life. The Lord's people are to continue, even today, to be engaged in doing just that, to the best of their abilities.

OLD TESTAMENT "VESSELS"

Near the close of the sixth creative day, or epoch, the Great Potter took some of the elements of the ground, and he formed it into the body of a man. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man, who God named Adam, became a "living soul," or being. (Gen. 1:26,27; 2:7) Adam was a beautiful vessel, described by the psalmist as "crowned . . . with glory and honour." (Ps. 8:4,5) He was a perfect human being. Sadly, however, Adam's disobedience and the resulting penalty pronounced upon him by God began to take effect, and the vessel which had been wrought in perfection became marred and imperfect.—Gen. 3:17-19

One of the first men chosen by God from the human family to become a vessel of honor, in a very

extraordinary and special way, was the patriarch Abraham. The call of Abraham to leave his home and his family to migrate into a land of God's choosing, known only to God, showed that the Great Potter's intention was to work with a very particular kind of clay. Here we find that faith was a necessary ingredient to be incorporated into the material God would select to use for the creation of his vessels.—Heb. 11:6,8

After Abraham's death, God dealt in turn with his seed—Isaac and Jacob—who were also part of the same original lump of clay from which God had formed Adam. They were his posterity. Later, the Lord made a further choice of Abraham's descendants, stating that the nation of Israel was to be his chosen people, selected for their "fathers' sakes." (Amos 3:1,2; Rom. 11:26-28) God gave them many experiences and lessons which were designed to prepare, fashion, and mold them for a particular service he had in mind. It was God's plan to produce from Abraham's seed a heavenly class, spoken of as "stars of the heaven."—Gen. 15:5; 22:17

The lump of clay from which the Potter desired to form this vessel, the nation of Israel, was composed of mixed materials. It had to be ground, and reground, time and again, through the leading and discipline of the Lord over the centuries, to make it more workable in his hands. However, because of a lack of faith, many times it proved not pliable enough for the Potter's purpose. Nevertheless, certain individual vessels among the nation of Israel were formed to God's great pleasure during the Jewish Age. The Apostle Paul gives a partial listing of these honorable vessels in Hebrews, chapter 11, a group we refer to as "Ancient Worthies."

NEW TESTAMENT “VESSELS” OF GREAT HONOR

Although the work of developing these Ancient Worthies was a great one, a still grander work began with our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Here was a vessel, perfect in every aspect, created as was Adam, in the image and likeness of God—the human likeness of the Creator. Then came the calling of the apostles, and other disciples of Jesus—a work that has proceeded throughout the entire Gospel Age. These would prove to be gloriously artistic vessels—of the very highest honor—called to glory, honor, and immortality!—Rom. 2:7

There are many illustrations in the Scriptures to depict the followers of Christ—his disciples. They are spoken of as: “the body of Christ;” “the Lamb’s wife;” “little flock;” “heirs of God;” “Abraham’s seed;” and the “more than conquerors.” (I Cor. 12:27; Rev. 21:9; Luke 12:32; Rom. 8:17,37; Gal. 3:29) These “vessels,” even in their preparatory stages, are additionally “called the sons of God. . . . Beloved, now are we the sons of God.”—I John 3:1,2

We remember the occasion when Saul of Tarsus was struck down on the Damascus road, and called to become a follower of Jesus. (Acts 9:1-6) Ananias was given the wonderful privilege of lending assistance and comfort to this former enemy of the Early Church, whose life had once been dedicated to wiping out the followers of Christ. It is understandable that initially Ananias was reluctant to accept Saul as one called of God. However, when the Lord said to him, “Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel,” Ananias was ready to follow the Master’s bidding.—vss. 13-17

“CHOSEN” VESSELS

In times past, when one desired a particular kind of vessel, he would often go to the potter's house and ask him to pick out a special vessel. Perhaps it would be for a gift, or for some other special occasion or use. Once the purchaser indicated the purpose of the vessel, the potter would then go look over his shelves where he stocked his inventory of completed wares. Because of his great expertise, the potter would nearly always be able to pick out a vessel which would specially suit the particular desires and requirements of the customer. This is what is meant by the thought of a “chosen vessel.”

An inexperienced purchaser of vessels might not be able to tell the difference between the value or usefulness of one vessel versus another, but not so with a craftsman such as the potter. Likewise, our Heavenly Father, the Great Potter, never makes mistakes. When Saul of Tarsus was selected by God as a chosen vessel, we can be certain that he was very special. This was not an arbitrary choice. God made this decision because he knew that Saul had qualities which could be used in his service, such as faith, loyalty, zeal, honesty, and love. Consequently, we have learned through the subsequent pages of the New Testament what a talented person he was, and how faithfully he laid down his life, using his abilities to the praise and honor of the Heavenly Father.

Thus it has been with the selection of all the kingdom vessels. This is the way it was with Saul of Tarsus, Simon Peter, and all the rest of the apostles. So it was with Mary Magdalene, Mary and Martha of Bethany, Lazarus and with each one who has been called to walk in Jesus' footsteps. We are chosen

vessels unto God, and we are speechless when it comes to offering our thanks and appreciation to him for that great honor and privilege.

GOD IS WORKING IN US

We read, “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:13) The Heavenly Father knows we have weaknesses and shortcomings. He knows that we have been born “in sin” and “shapen in iniquity.” (Ps. 51:5) With great patience and understanding he deals with our mind and will, and with the motivations and intentions of our heart. He works the clay of our being in his own skillful way, magnificently fitting, preparing, and shaping it for a special place as a chosen vessel in the glorious temple of God. Each of the members of the completed body of Christ will be unique and different, as “one star differeth from another star in glory.” (I Cor. 15:41) Each one who is “called, and chosen, and faithful” will be beings of extraordinary beauty, within and without.—Rev. 17:14

The choicest products of pottery, china, porcelain, or other forms of ceramic-type material receive special molding and shaping by their designer and creator—in the case of our lesson, the potter. After all the lines have been carefully studied and beautifully fashioned, there is still one more very necessary step that must be taken before the item is useful. The material making up the vessel is still soft and delicate. It can crumble very easily, or become marred and spoiled. Before it is valuable, it is necessary for it to be fired, or baked, in an extremely hot kiln.

In this all-important part of the process, the vessels are never exposed directly to the raw flame,

such as is produced by a bonfire. They are carefully placed in an oven where the heat is regulated to an ideal temperature for the purpose of hardening the clay. From this rather severe treatment, the pottery benefits a great deal. It becomes sealed and firm, less apt to crumble, and able to withstand its designed usage. Likewise, our Heavenly Father, after he has shaped and transformed us according to our perfect pattern—the Lord Jesus Christ—places us into the oven of affliction and tribulation, in order that we might be made strong and useful to him.

In this stage of development some of the vessels may crack under the extreme temperature. The potter does not discard them if this occurs. Too much work and love has gone into the design and creation of the piece for him to simply reject the vessel. There is a special cement, which we can liken to the healing balm of the Holy Spirit, with which cracks can be resealed. Then, it goes back into the kiln for another period of firing, after which it is examined again for flaws. More cement is used if another imperfection is discovered, and the process continues. Our Potter has great patience and skill, and he also has a particular end in view. Therefore, he is willing to work long and hard, lovingly and patiently, to make us into the vessel he desires.

VESSELS OF GOLD AND SILVER

The Apostle Paul told us, “In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour [that is, less honor].” (II Tim. 2:20) In this important lesson we think that the gold vessels could appropriately represent the “little flock,”

and the silver vessels might picture those less faithful, referred to in the Scriptures as a “great multitude.” (Rev. 7:9-14) In Romans 9:22, we read concerning some that God will show his displeasure, and “make his power known,” as he endures “with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.” Here the Scriptures evidence the fact that there will be some who do not submit to the correction or the craftsmanship of the Heavenly Father, even after they have been subjected to the tremendous heat more than one time. There is a sobering lesson in this for us.

In his words to Timothy, Paul continued, “If a man therefore purge himself from these [imperfections], he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” (II Tim. 2:21) Summing up, the apostle advises us to “follow righteousness, faith, charity [love], peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (vs. 22) We must be clean vessels if we will be used to serve the Lord, and then we are to be filled with the pure, living water of God’s precious truth, which we are to share with any and all who will thirst for and receive it.

A MEANINGFUL STORY

There is a story told concerning some clay that lay on the ground of a field, with no distinction from all the other dirt which surrounded it. It was coarse and commonplace. It was, however, resting high up on the bank of a river, and so it was very proud of its own importance. It listened as the trees spoke of their increasing glory when they leafed out in the Spring. It heard the flowers in

their bright colors congratulate each other on their loveliness, and the melody that the river made, as it rejoiced in its majesty. The clay then began to conclude that it was something special too.

One day, all of a sudden, the clay found itself being dug up out of the bank, placed in a cart, and transported to a small shed. There a potter placed it on a whirling wheel which spun it around until it nearly fell off. Finally, the potter pressed down hard and roughly until it began to think, "Surely this pain and misery will be worthwhile, because I will become a beautiful object of art." Soon, however, it was placed inside a very hot oven, and the clay gave up all hope. To its great surprise, this was not the end. The potter took the vessel out of the kiln and stood it alongside a pool of clear water. The vessel, now completed and ready for use, could hardly wait to see what would happen next.

It glanced curiously down into the water to see its reflection, and what it saw was a shock! It discovered that it was just an ordinary flowerpot. How disappointed it was. This, too, however, was not the end of the story. Soon a lady picked up the flowerpot and took it inside a greenhouse. She instructed the gardener to plant a beautiful scepter of regal lilies in the pot. Then she carried it into a great building, where many people were gathered together. All marveled at what a beautiful treasure had been formed.

How similar we are to the plain little flowerpot, as we are used to display the regal lilies of truth. Paul said, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure

in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”—II Cor. 4:6,7

Soon the vessels of the heavenly kingdom will be complete, and the kiln of fiery experiences will end. Perhaps just a small finishing stroke here, and a little polish there, will bring out the full beauty. Then one glorious day, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” we will be transformed into spiritual vessels, and taken into that marvelous temple, where we will hear our Father’s voice say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”—I Cor. 15:51,52; Matt. 25:21 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

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

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

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

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

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

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.

O. B. Elbert

Toronto, ON September 17,18

J. Freer

New York, NY September 3,4

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

R. Goodman

Jacksonville, FL September 18

P. Mora

Seattle, WA September 3-5

L. Griehs

Jackson, MI September 3,4

T. Ruggirello

Jackson, MI September 3,4

K. Humphreys

Seattle, WA September 3-5

R. Sconyers

Milwaukee, WI
September 24,25

T. Krupa

New York, NY September 3,4

T. Thomassen

Seattle, WA September 3-5

E. Kuenzli

Louisville, AL September 18

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 Marion Marcis, Stevens Point, WI—July 25.
Age, 96**

**Sister Margaret Willey, Castle Donington, England—
July 27.**

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.

JACKSON CONVENTION, September 3,4—FaHoLo Camp and Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Grass Lake, MI 49240. For information, contact B. Davis. Phone: (517) 788-6552 or Email: r2d2lad@comcast.net. For programs, contact V. Lumley. Phone: (517) 782-7252 or Email: raylumley2531@comcast.net

NEW YORK CONVENTION, September 3,4—Double-Tree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Contact G. Passios. Phone: (201) 939-3196 or Email: gpassios11@verizon.net

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3-5—Seabeck Conference Center, 13395 Lagoon Drive NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (206) 518-2678 or Email: laurie@flinn.us

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 10,11—[New Location] Comfort Inn, 4725 University Drive (Hwy. 72), Huntsville, AL 35806. Phone: (256) 562-2525. Mention "Huntsville Bible Students" when making reservations. Contact J. Cothren. Phone: (256) 852-8505 or Email: jimmycothren@att.net

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, September 24,25—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact S. Kuenzli. Phone: (414) 257-2672 or Email: song_of_hope@sbcglobal.net

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 1,2—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact G. Balko, 308 Burger Street, West Newton, PA 15089. Phone: (724) 771-0139

AGAWAM CONVENTION, October 2—Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. For

accommodations, contact M. Wardak. Phone: (413) 789-6198 or Email: mtwardack@verizon.net. For other information, contact A. Gonczewski. Email: aga49@yahoo.com

COLORADO CONVENTION, October 7-9—YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, CO. Phone: (888) 613-9622. Mention “Colorado Bible Students 2016” when making reservations. Contact D. Moss. Phone: (303) 238-4936

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 8,9—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact T. Malinowski, 5609 Buttrick Avenue SE, Alto, MI 49302. Phone: (616) 868-0313 or Email: malinowski.tjm@gmail.com

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 15,16—Masonic Hall, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. Contact M. Allard. Phone: (805) 773-2962 or Email: medlallard@juno.com

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 29,30—South Seminole Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Contact J. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 831-2098 or Email: jkuenzli@cfl.rr.com

DETROIT/METROPOLITAN DETROIT JOINT CONVENTION, October 30—Pleasant Ridge Community Center, 4 Ridge Road, Pleasant Ridge, MI. Contact G. Zendler. Phone: (248) 399-8843 or Email: ngzendler@wowway.com

NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 6—Westwoods Italian-American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact A. Suraci. Phone: (203) 248-3793 or Email: annasuraci@comcast.net

SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, November 25-27—Alpine Community Center, 1830 Alpine Boulevard, Alpine, CA 91901. For reservations, contact B. Bach. Phone: (619) 249-5238 or Email: bbach1@cox.net. For other information, contact K. Klepin. Phone: (619) 258-9169 or Email: kmklepin@cox.net