

The Dawn

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

WE tend to become somewhat calloused to all the trouble that is in the world. Every day the news is filled with tragedy and heartache, but generally it is quite far removed, involving people in other lands, and other cities, with whom we have no personal acquaintance. We expect news to be bad, and as such it becomes rather matter-of-fact.

Then, suddenly, tragedy strikes close to home; a special bulletin informs us that an airliner has crashed in Pittsburgh, and all passengers and crew were lost. We are shocked by the realization that this could well have happened to us, or to someone close to us. We think of the sadness and sorrow brought to the family and friends of those who are suddenly gone.

We find ourselves asking the question, "Why did God allow this terrible thing to happen?"

DOES GOD REALLY SEE OR CARE?

THIS QUESTION IS not a new one; it has been asked by thinking men and women throughout the ages. Thousands of years ago a faithful servant of God named Job became personally concerned with discovering the meaning of his own suffering. The record of this is found in the book of the Bible which bears Job's name. The first verse of this book informs us that Job was an upright man who feared God and shunned sin

To begin with, Job was a prosperous man, abundantly blessed by the LORD along material lines. The record is that "his substance . . . was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east." (Job 1:3) Job was also blessed with a large family, and he desired that they, too, should be blessed by the LORD. Job prayed for his family, and offered sacrifice, because, as he said, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." (vss. 4,5) Job felt, apparently, that in the event his sons had sinned, his prayers on their behalf would be heard and favorably answered.

But experiences were ahead for Job for which he was not wholly prepared. Satan, the great Adversary of God and men, charged that this servant of the LORD was loyal to God only because his loyalty had been bought by the abundance of good things with which the LORD had blessed him. In answer to this charge, God permitted Satan to inflict calamities upon Job to test his fidelity. God had no doubt about the outcome of this trial, and in his wisdom knew that any temporary suffering he permitted to come into Job's life would, in the end, prove to be a great blessing to him.

And Job did experience terrible trouble. The record states: "There was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them; and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

"While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away. yea. and slain the servants with

the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

“While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house: and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.”—Job 1:13-19

Job’s reaction to these evil tidings was: “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” We read that “in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” (vss. 21,22) Then God permitted further trouble to come upon Job. His health was taken away. He was smitten with “boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.” Then Job’s wife turned against him and said, “Curse God, and die.” To this Job replied, “Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?”—Job 2:9,10

Job did not turn away from God when trouble came upon him, as so many throughout the ages have done. His chief concern was to know why God permitted him to be afflicted with such bitter experiences, and throughout his book we find evidences of his search for this understanding. After Job was stricken down with disease, three of his friends visited him for the purpose of giving comfort. Later in the book we are informed that these three did not speak the truth concerning God, implying that the viewpoints they expressed to Job were not correct.—Job 42:7

There is chapter after chapter of philosophizing on the part of Job and his three friends. But what it all amounts to is that according to Job’s friends he was suffering because he had committed some gross sins which he was hiding from them, and for which he had not repented and sought God’s forgiveness. Job, of course, knew that he was not perfect.

but he also knew that he had not willfully transgressed God's laws, so he was not willing to accept this explanation.

EVIL MEN PROSPER

Job knew that while, as a servant of God, he was now suffering, frequently evil men prospered, and apparently escaped the evils that come upon so many. So, in answer to his friends he said: "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth [*Margin*, 'in mirth'], and in a moment go down to the grave [without suffering a long, painful illness]."—Job 21:7-13

While Job knew that the explanation offered by his friends was not the true one, yet he did not understand why God was allowing him to suffer so severely. In a beautiful, poetic manner he describes his search for an understanding of God in the light of his own experiences, saying, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him; but he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."—Job 23:8-10

Job realized that there was a divine purpose for his being tried so severely, but he had not yet discovered that purpose. He also knew that if he maintained his integrity before God he would pass the test successfully, and would 'come forth as gold.' Job's wife wanted him to curse God, but he knew this would be foolish. In all ages there have been those professed believers who, when affliction came upon them, have wondered where God was, and what he was doing to protect their interests. Many such have even turned against
God

The world is filled with evil. It is not for us to lose faith in God because of this, or even to criticize him. Our proper attitude should be one of humility, and of earnestly seeking the answer to our questions from the only proper source, which is the Word of God.

God's questions continued, and eventually Job spoke again, and said, "I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee."—Job 42:2-5

Job finally learned the meaning of his severe trial. He learned that its loving purpose was to give him a clearer understanding of God, that he might serve him more faithfully and with greater appreciation. He speaks of this clearer understanding as 'seeing' the LORD, instead of merely having heard about him. Since he had gained such wealth of understanding, Job's brief period of suffering must have seemed to him to have been a most valuable experience.

Besides restoring Job's health, we read that "the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. . . . And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren."—vss. 12-15

JOB—A PICTURE OF MANKIND

For more than six thousand years the human race, having come under condemnation to death because of sin, has been exposed to evil, and by experience has been learning the terrible results of disobedience. The seeds of death have manifested their presence in humans, young and old, and by myriads of infirmities and diseases of both mind and body. Neither the young nor the old have escaped the plague of

death, infants often falling before the enemy at a tender age with no understanding of what is taking place in and around them. Perchance, some live to 'a ripe old age', only to succumb finally to the ravages of death which prey upon all.

And not only by disease are the people brought down to the grave, but upheavals of nature in an unfinished earth contribute to the process, as do accidents, and men's own cruelties to one another in war and in crime.

Throughout all the ages God has not interfered with the great enemy, Death. Paul informs us concerning the people as a whole that "God gave them over to a mind void of judgment." (Rom. 1:28, *Margin*) This implies that he has not restrained the human race from taking its own course, selfish and sinful though that course has been. Neither has he interfered with the carrying out of the death sentence, in the sense of protecting some, and not protecting others.

But God's great design does not end with the human race prostrate in death, for through Jesus, the Redeemer, he has made a provision for all to be awakened from death and to be restored to perfection of life. Paul wrote, "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Cor. 15:21,22) This provision of life through Christ is based on Jesus' own death and resurrection. He said, "My flesh . . . I will give for the life of the world."—John 6:51

The fact presents itself that few in all the ages have as yet profited by their experience with evil; indeed many, as noted, have been turned to unbelief by it. This is understandable, and if we were to base our conclusions on man's limited abilities and his restricted viewpoint, there would be no satisfactory answer as to why God permits evil. In the limited viewpoint of many, death is the end of existence; to others it is the end of all opportunity to learn and to profit from past experiences. But these viewpoints are not supported in the Bible.

As we have seen, according to the Bible, those who are asleep in death will be awakened from that sleep and given an opportunity to profit from the experiences of the present

life. Just as it often happens now, the difficulties and distresses of a certain day are often understood and appreciated at a later day. So it will be, on a grander scale, as those who are now sleeping in death are awakened, and they enter another term, as it were, in their school of experience.

In Job's case, while he could not understand at the time why God allowed him to suffer, yet when the experience was over he could say, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." And so it will be with the world of mankind. When the experience of suffering and death is over, and they are awakened from death, their faulty vision or understanding of God will be corrected, and they will rejoice to learn of the gracious and loving provision the Creator has made for them through Christ the Redeemer, to ransom them from death, and to restore them to perfection of life, if in the light of this true knowledge of God they obey him by conforming their lives to his standards of right and wrong.

JOY IN THE MORNING

The psalmist wrote, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (Ps. 30:5) This nighttime of sin, sorrow, and death began with the disobedience of our first parents. And it has, indeed, been a night of weeping. The sorrow that has borne down upon the human race has been bitter, and many in their distresses have wondered whether or not God has any pity.

But there is to be a morning of joy for the human race! That morning of joy will be ushered in by what the Scriptures refer to as the rising of "the Sun of righteousness," who will have "healing in his wings." (Mal. 4:2) Jesus is this glorious Sun of righteousness. The new day of blessing he will cause to dawn will be brought about through the establishment of his kingdom, which is a government of righteousness foretold by all God's holy prophets since the world began.—Acts 3: 19-21

It will be during the reign of Christ that Adam and his children will receive their first real experience with 'good'. It will be this that will complete their education with respect to

the validity and importance of the standards of right and wrong established by God. Though perfect when created, Adam did not then have sufficient knowledge to prevent his transgression. Job maintained his integrity before God under test, yet he also needed to experience evil and to be delivered from it in order to 'see' God. Adam and his race will likewise 'see' God as a result of their experiences.

And the God they will then 'see' will be the one they have longed to know and to serve. They will recognize the value of the experiences through which they have passed. Understanding real values, they will realize that the few short years of hardship through which they passed while experiencing suffering and death as a result of Adam's transgression were everlastingly valuable. It will be the time when Adam's children are being made alive through Christ. Killing calamities will no longer be permitted. The peaceful and prosperous conditions which men and women today would like to see throughout the earth will then exist, because "the knowledge of the LORD will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea."—Isa. 11:9

The LORD assures us further that he "will swallow up death in victory," and that he will "wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa. 25:8) What blessed assurances these are! Paul wrote that Christ would reign until all enemies are put under his feet, and that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (I Cor. 15:25,26) The result of this is described in Revelation 21:4, which reads: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Of this same time of Christ's kingdom we read, "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."—Isa. 11:9

Having had real experience with both good and evil, each individual will be able to decide intelligently whether or not he wishes to choose the good and live forever; or choose evil and again be sentenced to death—a death from

which there will be no resurrection. Christ will then be King supreme in his kingdom, and he will be Judge supreme. Peter also refers to him as a great "Prophet," and informs us that it shall come to pass "that every soul which will not hear [or obey] that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."—Acts 3:22,23

During the present nighttime of sin and death, all die—believers and unbelievers, the innocent and the guilty, the righteous and the unrighteous. But as a result of the reign of Christ, only those who willfully disobey the laws of God will be destroyed. All others will continue to live and to mature toward perfection. If these continue faithful, they will enter as perfect humans into the everlasting future ages of happiness and life "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Isa. 35:10 ■

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OBITUARIES

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

Sister Flora Marrison, Victoria, B.C.—August 13. Age, 88.

Sister Wanda Gadey, Detroit, MI—August 14. Age, 80.

Brother Victor Stevens, Victoria, B.C.—August 18. Age, 82.

Sister Eugenia Czapla, Detroit, MI—September 2. Age, 62.

Sister Louise M. Frey, Staten Island, NY—September 4. Age 99.

Sister Beth Davis, Los Angeles, CA—September 29. Age, 91.



“**STABLISHED** in the Faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

—Colossians 2:7

“**LET** us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make

a joyful noise unto Him with psalms.”

—Psalm 95:2

“**O** give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.”

—I Chronicles 16:8



INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 6

DAVID CLAIMS GOD'S PROMISES

KEY VERSE: "O LORD God: the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said."—II Samuel 7:25

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: II Samuel 7:18-29

REFERENCE IS MADE in Psalm 89 to God's covenant with David. Verses 2-4 read: "I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever; thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations." "My mercy will I keep for him forevermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven."—vss. 8,9

The full understanding of this covenant with David is possible only through recognition of the fact that David's throne was typical of the Messianic kingdom, the throne on which Jesus

sits as king. However, God's providences in protecting the typical throne in the hands of David's natural descendants are remarkable, as will be seen by a study of the experiences of the Davidic kings down to the overthrow of the last one, Zedekiah, when the nation was taken captive to Babylon.

This was in the year B.C. 606. It was then that the Prophet Ezekiel wrote concerning Zedekiah: "Thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the LORD God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, creating, creating, it, and it

shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him."—Ezek. 21:25-27

Here the typical kingdom of David ceased, but God's covenant was not broken. Ezekiel did not say merely that the kingdom should be 'no more', for this would have implied a broken covenant. Instead he explained that it would be no more **"until he come** whose right it is." In other words, the active operation of the covenant was merely suspended until the rightful king appeared.

Note the prophecy of the birth of this one 'whose right it is' to occupy the throne of David: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder. . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:6,7

In the annunciation to Mary, the angel said concerning the child who would be miraculously conceived: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the LORD God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever: and

of his kingdom there shall be no end."—Luke 1:32,33

We see that Jesus came as the rightful king to sit on the antitypical throne of David. However, Jesus' enemies put him to death, and the antitypical ruling house of David seemed doomed, even as had the typical throne on many occasions. But just as in the past, so again, God intervened. He raised the king—his chosen king—from the dead.

Paul associates the miracle of Jesus' resurrection with the "sure mercies of David." (Acts 13:34) In a synagogue in Antioch he said: "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he hath raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."—Acts 13:32-34

We see that David was very honorably used by the LORD in being constituted a type of the King of Glory. Through this antitypical house of David it will be that God's promised blessings will flow to "all the families of the earth."

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 13

DAVID SINS AGAINST GOD

KEY VERSE: *“David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.”—II Samuel 12:13*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *II Samuel 12:1-10, 13*

DAVID IS SPOKEN of by the LORD as a man after his own heart. (I Sam. 13:14; Ps. 89:20,21; Acts 13:22) This does not mean that he had no faults, but it does mean that his heart was right before God. However, he committed a gross sin in arranging for the death of Uriah, and taking his wife to be his own wife.

When this matter was called forcibly to his attention by the Prophet Nathan, he did not recognize himself in the picture the prophet had drawn, and expressed great indignation against the sinner therein portrayed.

How stunned he must have been when Nathan said to him, “Thou art the man.” Then, speaking for the LORD, Nathan reminded David of the bountiful provision which had been made for him. The LORD had

clutches of Saul, “and I [God] gave thee thy master’s house, and thy master’s wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.”

As part of David’s punishment for this great sin, he was told that his reign as king of Israel would be characterized by war. This prophecy came tragically true. Besides, his first son by Bathsheba, Uriah’s former wife, sickened and died. This was further punishment upon David for his great sin.

Nevertheless, God’s tender mercy was also displayed toward David in that he spared his life. Under the Law, David’s sin called for the death sentence, but he was not destroyed.

fact that David was so quick to acknowledge his sin when it was pointed out to him. He said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."—vs. 13

The first seven verses of Psalm 32 seem to be an expression of David's feelings toward the LORD in connection with his sin and its forgiveness. He wrote, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. For thus shall everyone that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him."

In this sixth verse David suggests that his experience could be of benefit to others, and he advises all who have sinned before the LORD to be

prompt in acknowledging their iniquity and asking for his forgiveness. This, indeed, is one of the practical lessons to be learned from David's experience.

When David's son, Solomon, was born, he was referred to as Jedidiah, meaning 'beloved of the LORD'. (vss. 24,25, *Margin*) This additional name seems to have been suggested by Nathan, the LORD's prophet, and it would be an assurance to David that he had truly been forgiven, and that the LORD's blessing would continue with him.

In David's life we have a good example of how God deals with repentant sinners. We are constantly reminded of the law of heredity which is operating in human experience because of sin. By heredity Adam's transgression brought death to all his children, and all, by nature, are looked upon as sinners.

But God does appreciate those who at heart endeavor to keep his commandments. This is why he loved David, and showed mercy toward him when he was quick to repent and to acknowledge his sin. God does not deal with any of his people upon the basis of their actual accomplishments, but according to the desires of their hearts. ■

SOLOMON'S GLORIOUS REIGN

KEY VERSE: *"King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom."*

—1 Kings 10:23

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *1 Kings 9:1-3; 10:1-7, 23, 24*

DAVID HAD A very great desire to build a 'house' for the LORD, but was not permitted to do so, although he gathered much of the material for it. The construction of the Temple was under the jurisdiction of Solomon. It required seven years to complete the undertaking. When it was completed we are given an intimate look into Solomon's heart of reverence for Jehovah and also of his great wisdom.

This is clearly revealed in his appraisal of the Temple as it stood in all its glory. With all the immense wealth that was represented in it, both of material and of labor, one less wise than Solomon might have reasoned that God would be under obligation to those who had built it for him, and would actually condescend to live in it. But Solomon knew better. He had a much higher appreci-

ation of the great God of Israel than probably many of his day had attained.

Solomon's prayer of dedication begins with 1 Kings 8:22. Beginning with verse 26, we quote: "Now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father. But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"

Our lesson for today is, in part, the LORD's reply to Solomon's prayer of dedication. The LORD said to him, "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever: and mine eyes and mine

heart shall be there perpetually."—I Kings 9:3

Solomon's wisdom was displayed in his organizational ability and in his peaceful foreign policy. I Kings 4 tells about his many 'princes' and 'officers', and their duties. The daily supply of food was furnished by "twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision." (vs. 7) Each of these officers would thus have eleven months to plan and assemble the food supply for Solomon's table for one month. Verse 29 reads, "God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore."

God gave Solomon 'largeness of heart', meaning that he had a desire to bless his subjects. He was hospitable and enjoyed having as many eat at his table as possible. Under his rulership, "Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merrily."—vs. 20

The typical nature of the kingdom of Israel continued under Solomon, for we read that he "sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father." David was so well respected and honored

as king that the nation gladly accepted the choice of Solomon as his successor, and "all Israel obeyed him. And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of King David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king."—I Chron. 29:19-24

Even more important, the LORD's blessing was upon Solomon. The record is that "the LORD magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel." (vs. 25) Jesus used the expression, "Solomon in all his glory." (Luke 12:27) The Queen of Sheba, hearing of the wisdom, riches, and glory of Solomon, decided that she would journey to Israel and see for herself. Her report was that the half had not been told!—I Kings 10:1-13

Solomon's peaceful rule foreshadowed the reign of Christ. We read concerning the period of his reign that "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan [in the north] even to Beersheba [in the south]." (I Kings 4:25) The 'vine and fig tree' symbolism of security and prosperity is later used in the prophecy of Micah 4:1-4, outlining some of the blessings to reach all nations during the reign of Christ. ■

SOLOMON TURNS FROM GOD

KEY VERSE: "Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father."—I Kings 11:6

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: I Kings 11:1-13

WHILE KING SOLOMON "exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart" (I Kings 10:23,24), Solomon did not maintain this high reputation. One of the evidences of the Bible's authenticity is the very candid manner in which it relates all the facts concerning its important characters. Solomon would have been held in much higher regard had the truth concerning the closing years of his life not been recorded. But they were, and we find the record in I Kings, chapter 11. The narrative begins with the statement, "King Solomon loved many strange women." These were heathen women, with whom the Israelites were forbidden to intermarry. This was his first

Verse 4 reads: "It came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father." He went so far as to join in the heathen worship of his many wives, and even built "an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem; and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods."—vss. 7,8

Most of the LORD's promises are conditional, the conditions being loyalty to him and the doing of his will. In Solomon's day, and in fact through most of Israel's national existence, the greatest temptation of the people seemed to be to worship false gods, and Solo-

mon was warned particularly against this.

Because of this sin, the LORD told Solomon that the kingdom would be taken from him, explaining, however, that he would not do this in his day, "but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen."—vss. 12,13

Solomon's glory waned from this pronouncement until the time of his death. The LORD indicated to one named Jeroboam that after Solomon's death he would become ruler over ten tribes of Israel. Solomon heard of this and sought to have Jeroboam killed, but he failed. Jeroboam escaped to Egypt. It was under these unhappy circumstances that Solomon, after reigning forty years, "slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father."—vss. 42,43

In I Kings 4:32 we read concerning Solomon, "He spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five." A few of these were recorded and have come down to us in the Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles—The Song of Solomon. These

books are a valuable part of the Old Testament writings. In them are furnished very important truths. The Book of Proverbs is a collection of profound yet practical axioms of truth, which are both enlightening and inspiring.

Here are a few: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Prov. 1:7) "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." (Prov. 3:5) "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4:23) "The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."—Prov. 10:22

Solomon furnishes an excellent definition of the Hebrew word *sheol*, translated "grave", but in many places in the Old Testament translated "hell." Solomon had written that there was "no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave [*sheol*, "hell"], whither thou goest." (Eccles. 9:10) Evidently he knew of the heathen teaching that man has an immortal soul. So he asked the question, 'Who can prove that the spirit of man goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast goeth downward at death.' His answer was that they both go to the same place. See Ecclesiastes 3:19-21. ■

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

LET US GIVE THANKS

“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the LORD. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

—Colossians 3:15-17

THROUGHOUT THE UNITED States, Thursday, November 24th, is set aside by presidential proclamation as Thanksgiving Day. It will be a holiday for most workers, and services of thanksgiving to the LORD will be held in many churches. It will also be a day of feasting for those who can afford to feast. While many will observe the day with a true spirit of thanksgiving to God, with millions it will simply be looked upon as another holiday, and a time to get together with friends and family, but with little thought of the LORD, the Giver of all the blessings for which all those who truly reverence him are whole-heartedly thankful.

While it is appropriate to have a day specially set apart for thanksgiving to the LORD, those who are genuinely dedicated to him and his service think of every day as being one of thanksgiving. Certainly the blessings provided by the LORD, which we value so highly and cherish so fondly, are showered upon us daily, and our thanksgiving for these

blessings should not wait even one day, but be expressed to the LORD before the close of the day in which they are received. The LORD's "compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." (Lam. 3:22,23) Since the LORD's mercy is manifested toward us daily, as indeed are all his blessings, it is our privilege to express our thanks daily.

For those who do not know the divine plan, it has been a disconcerting year. Many nations have been experiencing civil wars; upheaval due to revolutions; starvation; hunger; disease; crime of all kinds has increased; riots for and against abortion have plagued many of our nation's cities, small and large; and there have been so many other disheartening circumstances that it is difficult to list them all. But for the truth-enlightened Christian these manifestations of man's inhumanity to man are seen to be part of a pattern of trouble with which the present age is ending, and by which the world is being prepared to welcome the rulership of Messiah's kingdom which is now nearing. So these stormy conditions in the world do not dampen our spirit of thanksgiving, but rather increase it.

Indeed, one of the great causes of our thanksgiving is that the LORD has opened the eyes of our understanding to know the significance of what is taking place around us. We are thankful that we are living at such a time, and that in a small way, as we have opportunity, we can witness to our friends and neighbors concerning the fast-approaching kingdom of Christ. David wrote, "All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom."—Ps. 145:10-12

In addition to being thankful that the LORD has given us the truth, we can be thankful also that in his mercy and love, and by the power of his Spirit, he has kept us from falling away from the truth. The same conditions in the world which are producing atheists and agnostics by the millions are increasing the faith of the LORD's people in the great

verities of his Word. If we have been living up to our privileges, Thanksgiving Day this year should find us standing more firmly in the truth than ever before. Truly this is cause for thanksgiving to God!

It is through the truth of the divine plan that we have come to know and appreciate some of the glories of God's character—his love, his wisdom, his justice, and his power. How precious indeed is this knowledge. Jeremiah 9:23,24 reads, "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."

It is our understanding of present truth that assures us that God delights to 'exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth'. The chaos and suffering throughout the earth today do not suggest that God delights to display his love and his justice toward his human creation; but the truth of the divine plan gives us this assurance despite so much that seems to indicate otherwise. Through our knowledge of the truth, we know that God displayed his love toward the human race by sending his only begotten Son to be the Redeemer and Savior of the people. We know that ultimately this will lead to restoration of life to all who will accept the provisions of divine love, and obey the laws of the Messianic kingdom, now so near.



The Apostle Paul wrote concerning Jesus, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." (II Cor. 9:15) We are thankful for Jesus, both because of what his ministry means to us who are following in his footsteps of sacrifice, and also because of what his ministry will mean for the whole world of mankind in God's due time. He will be the King in the kingdom soon to manifest itself in power and great glory. Under his rulership all the enemies of God and of man will be destroyed, even death. (I Cor. 15:15,26) The destruction of death necessitates the restoration to life of all who have died. The Bible describes this great and loving work as the "restitution of all things."—Acts 3:19-21

As the world of mankind are awakened from the sleep of death and, in keeping with the divine plan, given the opportunity of being restored to perfection and living forever, then they also will understand that while temporarily they suffered as a result of the reign of sin and death, the plan of God through Jesus was moving forward for their ultimate and everlasting joy. They will learn then, as we know now, that God delights to exercise lovingkindness in the earth.

And think of what Jesus, the "unspeakable gift" of God, means today to us who are walking in his steps, assured that if we suffer and die with him we shall also live and reign with him. (II Tim. 2:11,12) He is our Advocate with the Father. He is our sympathetic and loving High Priest who was touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He is our Good Shepherd who tenderly leads us beside "still waters" and makes us to "lie down in green pastures." Even though we walk "through the valley of the shadow of death," we "fear no evil," for his "rod" and his "staff" comfort us.—Ps. 23

Jesus is also our 'Head', and we are members of his body. As our Head, he directs us in the way in which we should go, and in the manner in which we should serve. To the extent that we are subservient to him, we will not exercise our own wills; neither will we seek to walk in our own ways. We will know that, if we do his will as the called of God, all things will work together for our good. Thus we will have peace of mind and heart. And what a blessing this is in this

world of chaos and fear! It is the “peace of God” which rules “in the heart” of all those who, through Christ—and trusting in the merit of his sacrifice as a “robe of righteousness”—yield themselves fully to doing the Father’s will as expressed through his “unspeakable gift.”—II Cor. 9:15; Phil. 4:7; Isa. 61:10

Jesus is also the “Captain of our salvation.” (Heb. 2:10) This reminds us of the fact that we are ‘good soldiers’ of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” (II Tim. 2:3,4) As soldiers under Jesus, our Captain, we will not only strive to avoid the entanglements of the world, but we will endeavor to “put on the whole armor of God,” that we “may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.”—Eph. 6:11-18

How thankful we are to have Jesus as Captain of the great salvation to which we have been called! It has been by following his leadership, and keeping on the whole armor of God that we have been kept from falling, and that we are still rejoicing in the glorious hope that is set before us in the Gospel. The chief aspect of that hope is that, in “due time,” if we are faithful unto death, we will be associated with Jesus — he as our heavenly bridegroom, and we as his “bride.” If faithful, we will have the blessed privilege, through the kingdom, of inviting the people to partake of the water of life freely. (Rev. 22:17) How thankful we are for such a glorious prospect!

Thanksgiving and praise are closely associated in the Bible. We can think of thanksgiving as an expression of appreciation to God for all the rich blessings which he showers upon us from day to day. Peter wrote, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises [*Margin*, “virtues”] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”— I Pet. 2:9 We do not show forth the LORD’s virtues simply by saying, “Praise the LORD!” No! We praise him by telling of his wondrous works as represented in the precious doctrines of the divine plan. ■

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

THE SEED SERIES—PART 8

ISRAELITES INDEED

*“Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him,
and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed,
in whom is no guile.”*

—John 1:47

JESUS' REFERENCE TO Nathanael as “an Israelite indeed” implies that, at the time of our LORD's First Advent, there were those who were Israelites in name only. Jesus identified some of these when he said to the Pharisees and others of the Jews: “Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do”! (John 8:44) The Apostle Paul supported this viewpoint when, in writing to the brethren at Rome, he said, “They are not all Israel, which are of Israel.”—Rom. 9:6

A number of instances are recorded in the Bible in which God changed the names of his servants in order to teach certain lessons pertaining to the outworking of his plan of the ages. Abram's name was changed to Abraham; Sarai's to Sarah. (Gen. 17:5,15) Strictly speaking, the name Israel is not the family name of the descendants of Abraham, but a new name given to Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, indicating certain important characteristics he had demonstrated.

According to Professor Strong, the name Israel in the Hebrew language means, ‘He will rule as God’. Other scholars suggest the definition, ‘To prevail with God’, or, as the **Margin**

after he had “wrestled” with an angel, who explained, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”
—Gen. 32:28

The over-all thought seems to be that the name Israel symbolically describes one who, through faithfulness, secures God’s favor and is given the honor of being associated with him in the accomplishment of his purposes. To be a true Israelite one must ‘prevail’ with God, and all who do prevail will, in one category or another, rule with him.

Seemingly, the LORD gave this name to Jacob to further emphasize the complete and ultimate meaning of the promise to Abraham that through his ‘seed’ all the families of the earth would be blessed. Actually that promise does mean that all who ultimately come within its gracious provisions will have prevailed with God by their faithfulness, and will be as princes, or kings, ruling with God.

First of all we see Jesus as the Messianic seed of Abraham. (Gal. 3:16) At what great cost did he prevail with God to prove his worthiness to be “king of kings and Lord of lords”! (Rev. 19:16) Then there are those who, beginning with Jesus and Pentecost, likewise have proved worthy of God’s favor. In the divine arrangement, these are made “priests of God and of Christ” and reign with Christ a thousand years.—Rev. 20:6; II Tim. 2:12,13

And then, throughout the ages preceding our Lord’s First Advent, earthly princes, or rulers, were being tested and trained to be the human representatives of the divine Christ. These also prevailed with God by their faithfulness, in many instances even unto death. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, Paul mentions many of these, and informs us that they received the testimony that they pleased God. Because of their faithfulness, they were found worthy of “a better resurrection” than mankind in general, in the sense that they will be awakened to human perfection and thus qualified to cope with the problems of humanity which they will immediately face.—

We should not suppose that this group of ancient, faithful and worthy servants of God consisted merely, or even chiefly, of those named by Paul in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. He explains that time did not permit him to identify them all, and how right he was! (Heb. 11:32) Paul mentions many of the outstanding personalities of the Old Testament, but in Romans 11:2-4, quoting from the Old Testament, he indicates that in the generation of Elijah's day there were more than seven thousand whom the LORD had reserved unto himself, obviously because they had prevailed with him.

Historians do not attempt to mention individually all who are involved in the events which they narrate. We have a good example of this in The Book of Acts. Comparatively speaking, only a few names are mentioned in this book, yet we know that in the Early Church there were many thousands of earnest followers of the Master.

So far as we are aware, the Scriptures do not positively indicate the exact number of those who will be "princes in all the earth." (Ps. 45:16) We know, however, that there will be a sufficient number to properly function as the earthly ruling phase of the Messianic kingdom. And, on a lower plane than the divine Christ, they will be as though ruling with God, because they will be authorized and empowered by him.

All the families of the earth are to be blessed through the seed of Abraham. God said to Abraham, "Behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee." (Gen. 17:4,5) Paul quotes this promise, and indicates that it has a partial fulfillment in the fact that the spiritual Israelites of the Gospel Age are selected from among all nations. (Rom. 4:8-25) But we believe it has a larger fulfillment in that all the families of the earth who are blessed by the seed of Abraham also become his children—his seed.

The Scriptures reveal clearly that the blessing provided for all the families of the earth is restoration to life, and to the dominion forfeited through the sin of our first parents. Man was created in the image of God, and given dominion over

the earth. He was made king of earth, and therefore a part of the royal, or ruling, family of God.—Gen. 1:27,28

But when our first parents transgressed God's law, they lost both dominion and life. In the parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus assures us that "all nations"—all the families of the earth—are to come into judgment during the time of his reign, and that they will be divided as a shepherd "divideth his sheep from the goats." (Matt. 25:31-46) This is not an arbitrary division, but is based on qualification. Those who prevail by their faithfulness to the divine principles of righteousness then in force throughout the earth, become the 'sheep' of the parable.

To these sheep, or worthy ones, the glorious pronouncement is made, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (vs. 34) These also re-inherit the life which was lost by sin, and purchased for them by the blood of Christ. As restored humans, enjoying perfection of life, they will be 'kings' of earth, and on the human plane will be ruling with God, as members of his royal family, even as Adam did before he sinned.

Thus we see that the name Israel, as given to Jacob, comprehensively suggests the complete outworking of the divine purpose as set forth in the promise made to Abraham. It reminds us also that the blessing mentioned in the Abrahamic Covenant is obtained only by those who prevail with God by proving their faithfulness to him. This is true both of the earthly and spiritual ruling seeds, as well as the larger seed—the "many nations" who will, as subjects of the Messianic kingdom, be restored to human perfection and ultimately inherit the lost dominion of earth.

In Genesis 4:26 we read (*Marginal Translation*): "Then began men to call themselves by the name of the LORD." Man was endowed with the desire to worship his Creator and, despite the fact that he was now alienated from God because of sin, he wanted to be associated with him. This was true of at least some in those early days of the antediluvian world.

This desire to worship a higher power has manifested itself throughout all the ages since. Satan has taken advantage of human weakness and lack of judgment, and has led men and women into worshiping all sorts of false gods. In most instances these false gods have been pictured as vindictive and cruel, hence fear and dread have been powerful motivating influences in the religious concepts of the people.

But God, nevertheless, has listened to many who have earnestly sought him and desired to please him. This was true of some in the antediluvian world. Enoch, for example, "walked with God," and he was used by God to prophesy concerning the coming of the LORD with "ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment."—Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5; Jude 14,15

And, of course, there were Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses—in fact all the faithful men of ancient times, who thus became worthy of God's love and favor and who, as friends of God, were justified because of their works. Beginning with the death of Jacob, God began to deal with his twelve sons and their families as a people, or as a nation. These were his people, his nation. At Mt. Sinai, God entered into a covenant with this nation, Moses serving as Mediator. Thus Israel became God's covenant people, or nation.

The Law, as epitomized in the Ten Commandments, was the basis of this covenant. As a body, the people agreed to abide by the terms of the covenant, and God promised to bless them as a people in proportion to their faithfulness. The ultimate blessing promised for obedience to the Law was life. But to obtain life under the Law required perfect obedience, and no member of the fallen race was capable of rendering full obedience to God's perfect Law, so none gained life.

Concerning the Law, Paul wrote, "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." (Gal. 3:19) As we have seen, the 'seed' envisioned in the promise to Abraham was Christ, and associated with him his body members. (Gal. 3:16, 26-29) It was God's design that Jesus, the Head of the Christ company,

would be of the natural seed of Abraham, and that he should come from the nation of Israel.

But sin and selfishness, unbridled, would have disrupted the Israelites as a nation long before it was due time for the Messiah to come, so, as Paul explains, one of the purposes of the Law was to serve as a deterrent to sin. While the record of the nation from the giving of the Law to the birth of Jesus is not by any means an enviable one, it certainly would have been much worse had it not been for the restraining influences of God's Law, which as a nation the people had agreed to keep.

Paul also referred to the Law as a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." (Gal. 3:24) The thought here seems to be that the inability of fallen man to keep God's perfect Law taught the necessity of a Redeemer from sin. The Jewish nation was the first to have the opportunity of learning this lesson, but it will not be until they are raised from the dead that they will really benefit from their failure. Then they will learn that only through the redemptive work of Jesus is everlasting life available. Through the failure of the nation of Israel to gain life under the Law, Gentile nations also will learn the necessity of the shed blood—not of bulls and goats—but of Jesus Christ the righteous one, emphasized to them.

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

However, as we have seen, beginning with righteous Abel and continuing until John the Baptist, there were those who enjoyed the smile of God's favor upon the basis of their faith and heart-loyalty to him. This was true during the time when the Law Covenant was operative with the nation of Israel. Except during a few short periods, the majority of the nation paid little attention to the Law, and from time to time were enticed into idolatry and other gross sins.

But there were always the few who, like David, were at heart loyal to God. These were hindered from perfect obedience to the Law only by their inherited imperfections. These did not gain life under the Law, but they did receive the testimony that because of their faith and obedience they were

pleasing to God. These were 'Israelites indeed'. Through Moses, God said to the people of Israel, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." (Exod. 19:5,6) While, as we shall see, there is to be a spiritual 'holy nation', yet this promise of God had vital meaning to fleshly Israel, for there is also to be an earthly phase of the kingdom, a visible 'holy nation'.

The LORD knew that no single generation of the Israelites would qualify to be his 'holy nation' on earth. But he also knew that there would be a remnant of the Israelites in each generation who, through faith and heart obedience, would obtain a 'good report', and that in due time he would raise up these in the 'better resurrection' to be the visible 'holy nation' of promise.

A SPIRITUAL 'HOLY NATION'

At the close of the Jewish Age, when the Israelites as a nation proved unworthy of the kingdom blessings offered by the LORD, Jesus said to them, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21:43) The Head of this new nation to whom the kingdom was given is Jesus, and Peter identified the other members. He wrote, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, . . . which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God." —1 Pet. 2:9,10

Not all the members of this new, spiritual nation were living in Peter's day. It requires the entire Gospel Age to select these from the world. Even as with the Ancient Worthy class, who will be the visible part of this holy nation, it will be made up of a few from many generations who proved their worthiness of this exalted position in the plan of God by being faithful unto death during the ages before the high calling was open.

How important it is to take into consideration the resurrection feature of the divine plan if we are to comprehend

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Claremont KTSJ 1220 9:45 a.m.
Lancaster KVOY 1340 8:15 a.m.
Monterey KNRY 1240 8:30 a.m.
San Francisco KEST 1450 5:00 p.m.
Tehachapi KTPI FM 103.1 8:15 a.m.

FLORIDA

Jacksonville WXTL 1010 7:45 p.m.
Orlando WGTO 540 9:00 a.m.
St. Augustine WSOS FM 94.5 7:15 a.m.
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KENTUCKY

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MICHIGAN

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Wendell WETC 540 4:45 a.m.

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Portland KKEY 1150 7:00 a.m.

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Pittsburgh WPLW 1590 8:00 a.m.
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Spokane KAQQ 590 7:00 a.m.



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OF THE MANY
CHANGES IN THE
RADIO LISTINGS!

WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

Canada

ALBERTA

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

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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

MANITOBA

Winnipeg	CKJS 810	9:00 a.m.
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ONTARIO

St. Thomas	CHLO 1570	10:45 a.m.
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SASKATCHEWAN

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

Argentina (Spanish)

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

Trinidad	Radio Trinidad 610	10:30 p.m.
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Chile (Spanish)

Talcahuano	Radio Almirante Latorre	
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Costa Rica (Spanish)

San José	Radio Sonora 105.9 FM, 700 AM	6:15 a.m.
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Mexico (Spanish)

Culiacán Ranchera	XEQO	8:30 a.m.
Guadalajara	XEWK 1130	8:30 a.m.
Monterrey	XHSR FM	10:00 a.m.
Toneon	XETB 1350	8:15 a.m.
Tuxtla Gutierrez	XEON 720	7:30 a.m.

Nigeria

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

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

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

Manila (Sat.)	DZAM 1026 kHz	7:15 p.m.
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Portugal (Portuguese)

Vila Nova de Gaia	Radio Minute	8:45 a.m.
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Russia (Russian)

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

Swaziland	SWAZI Commercial Radio 1400 AM	
Shortwave	49m 6155 kHz	8:15 p.m.

Tonga

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

Radio Mundo	CX32 1170 KHz	9:00 a.m.
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THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV PROGRAMS

CANADA:

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

Atlantic Time—10:30 a.m.

Eastern Time—9:30 a.m.

Central Time—8:30 a.m.

Mountain Time—7:30 a.m.

Pacific Time—6:30 a.m.

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- 13-Not of this World
- 20-God So Loved the World
- 27-The Gospel of the Kingdom

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(Cont'd from page 31)

the full meaning of the promises of God! God makes his promises and carries forward his plan for the recovery of the human race from sin and death, knowing that the death of his people in no way interferes. It is as though they merely fall asleep at night and awaken 'in the morning' to enter into the rewards which our loving Heavenly Father promised to the faithful.

NOMINAL ISRAELITES

The Scriptures clearly establish the fact that many of the natural descendants of Abraham—who later were given the name Israelites—held this status only by reason of birth. They were not 'Israelites indeed' in whom there was no guile. There are also many wonderful promises made to these—promises which give assurance that they, too, are to be awakened from the sleep of death and given an opportunity to participate in the joys of the Messianic kingdom, not as its rulers and princes, but as its subjects.

Moses said to the Israelites of his day: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." (Deut. 18:15) Peter quoted this prophecy and explained that it would have its fulfillment following the second coming of Christ and during the "times of restitution of all things:" (Acts 3:19-23) Peter proffered this as a hope to the unbelieving Jews of his day, a hope that would be translated into reality upon the basis of their repentance and the blotting out of their sins.

Here, then, is a promise to those of Israel who did not 'obtain a good report through faith', and therefore did not qualify for the 'better resurrection'. This promise also depends for fulfillment upon the resurrection feature of the divine plan. How meaningless would be many of God's promises if we attempted to limit their application to the generation living at the time they were made!

In the Apostle Paul's speech before Felix, the apostle indicated that the "Law and the prophets" gave assurance of a resurrection of the dead, "both of the just and unjust." (Acts 24:14, 15) The resurrection of the 'just' of those ages preceded the resurrection of Christ, and will be the "better resurrection"

mentioned by Paul in Hebrews 11:35. The resurrection of the 'unjust' is also clearly pointed out in the Scriptures. In Daniel 12:1,2, where Daniel is assured of the deliverance of his people, we read: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting [or age-lasting] contempt." The just come forth to life, the unjust to 'contempt'.

The resurrection of the unjust is also foretold in Ezekiel 16: 55-63. Here the assurance of the resurrection is extended to the Gentiles also—even such wicked Gentiles as the Sodomites. The Israelites referred to in this promise are those who "despised the oath in breaking the covenant." (vs. 59) In other words, here is another of God's promises to 'nominal' Israelites, those who did not receive the testimony that they pleased God. There were many of these in each generation of Israel.

NATIONAL DEALINGS

As already noted, God dealt with the descendants of Jacob as a nation. This meant that both the just and the unjust shared in whatever experiences God permitted to come upon the nation. At times, when the leaders of the people were God-fearing, and did all in their power to direct them in paths of righteousness, the nation was blessed, and the just as well as the unjust enjoyed these blessings.

The reverse was also true. Note the time when the nation was taken into captivity in Babylon because of her sins. Not all in the nation at that time were of the unjust class. There were, for example, Daniel and his three young friends who demonstrated their loyalty to the true God of Israel even at the risk of their lives. Nevertheless, they were among the captives. No doubt there were many others among the captives who likewise were loyal to Jehovah.

Probably one of the divine purposes in this dealing with Israel as a nation was to demonstrate that no people could be expected *en masse* to be faithful and loyal to God. The test could have been made with any other nation, or people, and the result would have been much the same. From this demonstration we learn that qualification for a position.

either in the earthly or the spiritual ruling phase of the kingdom, must be on an individual basis. A nation was called—the nation of Israel; but, as a nation, Israel failed to make her calling and election sure.

This principle will carry over into the kingdom age, and will apply to those who become loyal subjects of the kingdom, and thereby qualify for everlasting life on the earth. Each, individually, will need to hear and obey 'that Prophet', or else be destroyed from among the people. No one will obtain everlasting life simply on the basis of being a natural descendant of Abraham, or of any other ancient servant of God.

'NOMINAL' SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

The Scriptures clearly establish the fact that throughout the Gospel Age there have been many people of God in 'name only'. And, as in past ages, these have been identified with the 'Israelites indeed'. The "wheat" and the "tares" have grown together. (Matt. 13:24-30,36-43) A separation takes place at the end of the age, when the true people of God are called to "come out of her [Babylon], my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."—Rev. 18:4

Just as in the Old Testament concerning fleshly Israel, there are warnings of impending punishments upon *nominal* Israelites, and also precious promises of rewards for the faithful, so the Scriptures contain both warnings and promises for the two classes of *spiritual* Israelites. A good example of this is found in the messages to the 'seven churches' recorded in chapters 2 and 3 of the Book of Revelation. Concerning the church at Pergamos we read, "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication."—Rev. 2:14

We read again, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." (Rev. 3:4) The implication here is that there were many in this stage of the church who were not faithful. To the faithful in all 'seven churches' wonderful promises are made; and to the unfaith-

ful, warnings of dire punishments and the withdrawal of divine favor unless there would come a genuine repentance.

But just as God's mercy will, in the resurrection, be extended to the unjust of Israel, so also nominal spiritual Israelites [those who during the Gospel Age are Christians in name only] will have the blessings of everlasting human life offered to them.

It is true that there were unbelieving Israelites of every generation who failed to prove worthy of the chief blessing envisioned in the Abrahamic promise. The 'kingdom' was taken away from this class by Jesus, thus forfeiting this aspect of their inheritance, selling their birthright to be a part of the ruling 'seed', either in the spiritual phase of the Messianic kingdom, or the earthly.

But, thank God, these have not forfeited the blessings of life which will be made available to them through God's mercy—for, with the kingdom established, they will be the first to be given an opportunity to "seek after the LORD." Upon their belief and obedience, they will become honored subjects of the new kingdom. Because of their past association with God, his laws, and his people, these will have much to contribute to the general work of blessing all the families of the earth which will then be in progress.

'INDEED', AND 'NOMINAL' RULERS AND SUBJECTS

By way of summing up, it seems evident from the Scriptures that in every preparatory age of the divine plan there have been the true and faithful people of God—the 'Israelites indeed'; and also those who have been associated with these, but actually the LORD's people in name only. While the promises and callings of God have gone out to all who have professed to be his people, only those who have been truly faithful and loyal to the conditions attached to the call have made their calling and election sure.

The faithful ones alone will comprise the heavenly and earthly ruling phases of Messiah's kingdom. With the close of the Gospel Age, when the door to the 'high' or 'heavenly calling' is closed and the last of the spiritual 'Israelites indeed'

have received their reward, the preparatory features of the divine plan will end. No more rulers for the kingdom, either 'princes' or 'kings', will then be developed.

But, thank God, this does not mean the end of divine grace! In reality, it will mark the outpouring of divine blessings of happiness and life upon all mankind. Then the entire world of mankind will be ruled over as happy and blessed subjects of the kingdom. Of the increase of that government and peace, there shall be no end, for it will continue to reach out and to control all things throughout the earth, to the everlasting joy of all mankind. ■

My Earliest Thought I Desire Shall Be:

"What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the LORD [for grace to help]. I will pay my vows unto the Most High."—Psalm 116:12-14

Remembering the Divine call, "Gather My saints together unto Me; those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice" (Psalm 50:5), I resolve that by the LORD's assisting grace I will today, as a saint of God, fulfill my vows, continuing the work of sacrificing the flesh and its interests, that I may attain unto the Heavenly inheritance in joint-heirship with my Redeemer. I will strive to be simple and sincere toward all. I will seek not to please and honor self, but the LORD. I will be careful to honor the LORD with my lips, that my words may be unctuous and blessed to all. I will seek to be faithful to the LORD, the Truth, the brethren, and all with whom I have to do, not only in great matters, but also in the little things of life. Trusting myself to Divine care and the providential overruling of all my interests for my highest welfare, I will seek not only to be pure in heart, but to repel all anxiety, all discontent, all discouragement. I will neither murmur nor repine at what the LORD's providence may permit, because:

"Faith can firmly trust Him, Come what may."

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

CRISES IN THE LIFE OF PETER

THE APOSTLE PETER, one of the most colorful and engaging characters in the New Testament, was among the earliest to become a disciple of Jesus after the latter's return from his forty days of temptation in the wilderness. The account of his introduction to Jesus by Peter's brother, Andrew, is given in the first chapter of John's Gospel.

To consider all of the experiences of Peter in his association with Jesus during the following three and one-half years would be to trace most of the recorded history of our Lord during that period. For Peter was not only one of the first called, but he also became one of the three special associates of Jesus, sharing that honor and privilege with James and John, who were brothers in the flesh as well as in the spirit.

These three, together with Peter's brother, Andrew, whose homes were evidently at Bethsaida or Capernaum, were fishermen and engaged in business on the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. (John 6:1; 21:1) It is supposed that these four continued in their fishing business for some months after they became Jesus' disciples, probably spending a considerable portion of their time with Jesus, and more or less associated with his ministry.

It was in connection with their fishing that the first experience occurred which we will consider. Two accounts are given, one in Matthew 4:18-22 and the other in Luke 5:1-11. This is the familiar story of Jesus preaching to the multitude upon the shore of the sea. Desiring a suitable place from which to give his message, he entered into the ship of Simon

Peter, which was moved out a little distance from the shore. There "he sat down and taught the people out of the ship."

When he had finished his discourse to the multitude, Jesus turned to his disciples to give them some special and deeper instruction. Suggesting to Peter that he move out into deep water and let down his net for a draught, Peter replied that they had toiled all night and taken nothing, but nevertheless at Jesus' word he would let down the net. The result was astonishing; they enclosed so great a multitude of fish that their net broke and they sought the assistance of their partners, James and John. Both ships were filled so full that they began to sink!

This miraculous demonstration of Jesus' power—together with the simplicity and sweetness of his disposition, his complete devotion to God, and the glorious message of the kingdom to which Peter and his associates had, no doubt, with the multitude, just listened—was too much for Peter. The account tells us that he cast himself down at Jesus' feet, and made a most surprising request—that Jesus would depart from him, because he (Peter) was a sinful man.

Here was one so conscious of his own imperfections, so impressed with the perfections of the Master, so doubtful of his own ability to measure up to the standards as a disciple of Jesus, that he felt unworthy to be associated with him. And here, too, was just the attitude of honesty and humility that it was necessary for Peter—and all other disciples—to attain before the Lord could safely and effectively use him in his work.

Jesus would reprove the Pharisee of the parable who thanked God that he was not as other men and had done that which he thought ought to commend him to God. A little later on, when these disciples exercising power conferred upon them by Jesus, had been able to heal the sick and even to cast out demons—Jesus could *warn* them against overconfidence; but now he could also *reassure* Peter and his associates saying, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."—Matt. 4:19

How sweet those words must have sounded to impetuous Peter! And how did they affect this disciple who had asked the Lord to 'depart' from him; and who, in his heart no doubt felt a deeper devotion to the Master than ever before, and a more earnest longing to be associated with him although this was completely at variance with the words he had uttered!

And that seems to have been the end of the fishing business for those four disciples, until a time years afterward which we shall treat later in our study of the many experiences of Peter. Now, we read that "when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him [Jesus]." Thereafter it would be no longer part-time association with the Master and his work, but such complete devotion that Peter could say years later (Matt. 19:27), "We have forsaken all, and followed thee."

Do we find some lessons for ourselves in this incident in the life of those early disciples? It is not necessary for us to find an exact correspondency, but has there been a period in our lives too, when, after becoming the Lord's disciples, we were still divided in our attention to this new vocation, not fully setting our minds on the things above but still pursuing to some extent our selfish and profitless worldly objectives?

We might wonder why, after his introduction to the Lord and being accepted as a follower, and having been renamed Peter [a Rock], it was possible for him to continue his fishing business; why he had not, before this miraculous demonstration, felt the Master's presence and his service to be so marvelous a privilege, as already to have left all and followed him.

And then, more profitably, we may turn the question upon ourselves, and remember how long it was after we had made a full consecration of our all to the LORD before we really began to understand and put into practice this life of complete devotion that such an agreement calls for. Or, going still further in our introspection, we may ask whether we have even now mastered the lesson that Peter and his companions learned that day in the boat with Jesus, and in our hearts and as fully as possible in our lives. are we reallu—

“All for Jesus, all for Jesus!
All my being's ransomed pow'rs';
All my thoughts and words and doings,
All my days and all my hours”?

Another suggestion that comes through consideration of this introduction to a 'full-time' ministry with Jesus, is that Peter had to become fully 'caught' himself before he could be a successful 'fisher of men'. The sharp barbs of truth must first reach his heart, revealing his helplessness and unworthiness; he must become truly "poor in spirit" before he could safely be used; he must really "mourn" before he could be "comforted" himself and share in the work of comforting others as one of the Lord's special representatives.—Matt. 5:3,4

It is no less true today. The one who would be used of the LORD must have opened his heart and mind fully to the LORD's instruction, as Paul indicated in his letter to Timothy: "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits." (II Tim. 2:6) Thank God, to those who have responded as did Peter, the same gracious Master offers his fellowship—the same comforting reassurance that he gave to Peter, and the promise that we may share in his ministry both here and in the future if faithful.

For the next event we will consider which seems to have been of unusual importance in the life of Peter, we move forward some months—perhaps as much as two years. The account, which is recorded in Matthew 16:13-25, records a conversation between Jesus and his disciples when, in their journeyings, they had reached the extreme limits of Israel in the north—the coasts of Caesarea Philippi." Jesus' ministry had now been in progress more than two years, and he asked his disciples what the results in those parts had been, inquiring, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"

Their reply was not encouraging: "Some say thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the [other] prophets." How remarkable that the disciples could not mention anyone as having discerned the fact that Jesus

was far greater than any of these noted servants of God—no less than the Son of God!

To instill a new idea in the mind of fallen, imperfect man has always been a difficult task; and it is well for us to recall the meager results evidenced in this confession of the disciples lest we be discouraged when our glorious message of the Lord's Second Presence and the kingdom at hand seems to fall on heedless ears, or to excite but a temporary or casual response tempered with incredulity. Rather, let us be encouraged; we are still in the age of faith and "all men have not faith." We are in the company of the Master and his disciples, and are to emulate their loving zeal, obedience, and faithfulness in carrying on the proclamation of truth in the end of the age as they did in its beginning.—II Thess. 3:2

In our narrative, Jesus then made his inquiry more personal, asking the disciples whom they recognized him to be. This was the occasion for the great confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The commendation Peter received in response to this declaration is familiar to all Bible students and indicates the importance of this great fact which Peter had grasped—namely, that Jesus was not merely a perfect man, the Son of man, but was the long-promised Messiah, the Son of God! Success had crowned Jesus' ministry: he had convinced these disciples of his true origin and office; and they were now prepared to witness to these tremendously important facts!

But this insight into the true character of their Master was only part of the instructions he had yet to give in the short time that remained for him to be with them in the flesh. And so we read that "from that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."—Matt. 16:21

Strange to say, this did not meet the idea of Peter as to the course marked out in the Scriptures for the Christ. And, never hesitant to express himself, we read that he went to Jesus and began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee,

Lord: [*Margin*, 'pity thyself'] this shall not be unto thee."—
Matt. 16:22

Jesus' reaction to this well-intentioned effort of the devoted Peter to dissuade him from the course he saw clearly marked out in the Scriptures, was instantaneous and emphatic. "He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense [a stumbling-block] unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."—vs. 23

What a trial those severe words of reproof must have been to Peter, what a test of his humility, his sincerity as a disciple, a 'learner'. Only a short time before this he received one of the highest commendations of the New Testament—the assurance that God had revealed the identity of Jesus to him and that he would be especially honored in using the keys of the kingdom of heaven. But now he was personified as Satan, the arch-enemy of God!

We may wonder why Jesus used such strong language, such stern reproof. As we ponder the circumstances and the conversation, we see that Peter's well-meant remark was the same, in effect, as Satan's effort in the wilderness—an effort to dissuade Jesus from his course of loyalty to God's plans, which definitely involved his surrender of human life as a voluntary sacrifice.

No progress whatever could be made as long as Peter believed Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and, at the same time, was assured that Jesus could, and should, avoid persecution, suffering, and death. It was necessary that this fundamental error—this concept that to be the Christ, or a follower of Christ, was possible without sacrifice unto death—should be denied and condemned by the Master in the most positive terms; not only for Peter's benefit, but for the protection and guidance of his followers ever since.

What was Peter's reaction to this reproof? It is not given in the record. But Peter's life afterward contains abundant evidence that he had humbly accepted the rebuke and absorbed the instruction. When, later, Jesus told them of his impending death, and added that it would be by crucifixion,

we read that they were "exceedingly sorrowful"; that they were "amazed" as they followed him on the last Passover journey to Jerusalem; that "they understood none of these things"—the why and wherefore, no doubt, of Jesus' determination to go among his enemies.—Mark 10:32; Luke 18:34

We find Peter, on the night of the betrayal, remonstrating with the Lord when the latter said all his apostles would desert him; and Peter assured him that though he lay down his life for Jesus, yet he would not deny him. We read, "Likewise also said they all." (Matt. 26:35; Mark 14:31) How happy we are to see that these dear apostles were learning this great lesson, even though not yet able to put it into practice until "endued with power from on high" through begetting of the Spirit—that they had determined to be faithful and loyal to their Master, even unto death! —Luke 24:49

Two other events on that fateful night were among the more important experiences of Peter. The one event was in the Garden of Gethsemane; the other one was in the High Priest's palace, to which Jesus was taken after his arrest. In Luke 22:35-38 we are told of Jesus' final instructions to the disciples as they left the upper room. Among other things they were to provide themselves with swords; "For," said he, "I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end." The disciples replied that there were two swords among the company; "And he said unto them, It is enough."

We pause to consider the remarkable statement of the Lord that he had now reached the climax of his earthly experience, and that but one prophecy remained to be fulfilled; namely, that he was to be 'reckoned among the transgressors'. What a glorious testimony of a life of perfect devotion, of faithfulness to every detail of the divine will for him as he had discerned it in the Scriptures! And it was for grace and strength to meet this final test that the Master agonized in prayer that night in Gethsemane.

After his trial there and the Father's answer, strengthening him by the ministry of an angelic messenger the multi-

tude, led by Judas, approached to apprehend Jesus. Peter no doubt had in mind the Lord's instructions regarding the swords. He now asked, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?"—and, not waiting for a reply, the impetuous disciple "smote the servant of the High Priest, and cut off his right ear."

But now Peter and his companions were to be given another important lesson, of far-reaching significance to them, to all the Lord's disciples throughout the Gospel Age, and to us at the end of that age. This lesson was that they might have the *means* to avoid suffering, to resist injustice and persecution, but they were not to use them! And why? Because it was God's will that they suffer. It was the Father who poured the cup for Jesus that night and gave it to him to drink. Accordingly we read in John's account of that night, "Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11) Jesus then healed the wound made by Peter's sword, with the observation, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."—Matt. 26:52

Again we have no record of Peter's response to the Lord's reproof. But we have the evidence of his later hearty acceptance of this new idea. After Pentecost, when he and John were arrested, imprisoned, and beaten by order of the Sanhedrin, they "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." (Acts 5:41) And this is abundantly confirmed in Peter's epistles. There we read his clear concept of the call to follow the non-resisting Master, and to heed the instructions which he gave and exemplified that night in the garden. Peter's exhortation to the brethren is to "arm yourselves likewise with the same mind"!—I Pet. 2:19-24; 4:1

We now come to what is perhaps the saddest sight in the history of our fallen race. The Son of God, the one fully controlled by, and perfectly manifesting the spirit of God—humility, simplicity, grace, love—on trial before members of the human family whom, as the agent of the Father, he had brought into being. There the representatives of our race, motivated by pride, jealousy, and hatred, brought false witness

against him and condemned him to death. And those who were guilty of that transcendent wrong were not the ignorant and godless elements of society, but the leaders of the most enlightened group of the chosen nation of Israel—the priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees!

Peter was there in the High Priest's palace that night. His love for his Master gave him the courage to follow him into the presence of his enemies. Then he was pointed out as a member of Jesus' company—and in the very presence of that Master whom he loved, Peter denied that he even knew him. What a remarkable a combination of qualities we find in Peter! Love and courage had brought him into danger; and now, for whatever reason, he denied with an oath the one whom but a few hours before he had assured, "though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee."—Matt. 26:33-35

Just then Jesus came into view, under guard of soldiers, and he looked at Peter. Poor Peter! How that look must have cut him to the heart. It doubtless was the most critical moment in all of his experiences with the Master thus far—the great climax of his life. Would he repent? Or would he, like Judas, make repudiation of his Master final? If we were there, how breathlessly we should have waited to see how Peter would react to that look—no doubt a look full of pity and infinite yearning for his sorely pressed disciple, in danger of being "sifted as wheat" by the Adversary, as Jesus had forewarned the previous evening in the upper room.

As the cock crowed, Peter remembered that Jesus had warned him that "before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice," and he went out. Thank God, he did not go out as Judas did, to hang himself. Thank God, that he did not go out to console himself with the thought that he had been under great strain and to make excuses for his denial of the Master. And thank God again, that Peter did go out as the record tells us, "and wept bitterly." (Matt. 26:75) Ah! Peter had passed this great climax successfully! The humbling process had begun; the final preparation for the great exaltation that was

soon to take place when the disciples were to be endued with power from on high.

This humbling and self-abasing process was continued a few days or weeks later when, not yet fully aware of the course they should pursue, Peter and others of the disciples again engaged in the fishing business. Again, as three years before, they toiled all night and caught nothing. A kindly stranger on the shore advised them to cast their net on the right side, assuring them that they would find fish there. And, again, a miraculous draught of fish was taken. Convinced that it was indeed the Lord on the shore, Peter could not wait for the boat to get to shore, but cast himself into the sea to swim to him!

And then occurred, after the meal at which their risen Lord was the host, that intimate conversation with Peter: "Do you really love me, Peter?" thrice repeated by our Lord. "Thou knowest all things (Peter). . . . Thou knowest that I love Thee!" Jesus: "Feed my sheep"; "feed my lambs," Peter. Paraphrasing his words, Jesus said: 'Peter, you have loved freedom; you have loved to gird yourself and go wherever you would; but Peter, when you have become old', "another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." The record of this incident in John 21 tells us that Jesus thus indicated to Peter the manner of his death—by crucifixion, it is supposed—by which he should glorify God. Peter's devotion was in no wise daunted now: God could now begin to honor him, since the humbling had been accomplished.

Years afterward Peter referred to this conversation at the side of the sea. He says the time is at hand when he must put off his earthly tabernacle, even as the Lord had shown him. But he was ready for that final test. In fact the account seems to indicate that it weighed little upon him, and his great concern was to complete faithfully his ministry among the Lord's followers to whom he wrote. He was not negligent in keeping them reminded of the true Gospel and the course which would insure their making their "calling and election sure," even though they knew the things of which he wrote and were "established in the present truth."

And beyond that, he felt it meet to continue to stir them up by reminding them of these things “as long as I am in this tabernacle.” Yes, and even beyond his ministry in the flesh, he wrote that “Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.”—II Pet. 1st chapter

Cephas, or Peter—‘a rock’—was the name Jesus gave Simon when he was first brought to him. (John 1:42, *Margin*) How little he seemed to deserve that name in some of the tests the Lord applied. But Jesus saw the true character, the animating principle of reverence for God. He loved Peter, and Peter loved his Master. Jesus could wait for Peter’s development with patience and hope and kindly helpfulness. He views and treats us likewise; and he gives us opportunities to discern the gold in the character of the brethren also, patiently to wait, and perchance have a little share in their encouragement as he brings them through the critical experiences of their lives until their characters are freed from all the dross of their fallen human natures.

In our Lord’s last message to his church, and especially directed to the members living at the end of the age, he instructed them, saying, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.” (Rev. 3:18) Looking back to the testimony of Peter in his epistles and the record in the Acts of the Apostles, we are assured that he followed that advice.

His was, perhaps, an unusually and contradictory set of human impulses and dispositions to begin with. But the Lord led him in such a way, overruling his experiences, instructing him through his Word and his providences, that he entirely overcame those conflicting dispositions as far as his heart was concerned; and the new set of impulses and godlike dispositions were gradually crystallized into a rock-like character—immovable, unchangeable, prepared as a “living stone” for the Temple of God.—I Pet. 2:4,5, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

Throughout the Gospel Age, not many—in all a ‘little flock’—have likewise, through the infinite love and grace

of God, 'bought' of him the gold of a divine character, 'tried in the fire'. As Jesus clearly indicated, the cost of such character is sacrifice, tribulation, death to the flesh and to its desires and ambitions. But the stupendous thought is that it is still possible for us to 'purchase' this greatest of all values!

May our consideration of these incidents in the life of Peter inspire and encourage us to press on in the same way until we too have made our calling and election sure, have bought our own full quota of the gold tried in the fire. ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

NOVEMBER 3—"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."—Matthew 26:41 (Z. '01-80 Hymn 166)

NOVEMBER 10—"Love . . . rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."—I Corinthians 13:6 (Z. '03-57 Hymn 1)

NOVEMBER 17—"He shall give his angels [messengers] charge concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways."—Psalm 91:11, *Leeser Translation* (Z. '04-75 Hymn 368)

NOVEMBER 24—"Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man."—Acts 24:16 (Z. '00-360 Hymn 136) ■

"O render thanks to God above, The fountain of eternal love, Whose mercy firm through ages past, Hath stood and shall forever last."

—Hymns of Dawn #219



CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

GOING ON TO PERFECTION

*“Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ,
let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the
foundation of repentance from dead works,
and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of
baptisms, and of laying on of hands,
and of resurrection of the dead,
and of eternal judgment.*

*And this will we do,
if God permit.”*

—Hebrews 6:1-3

PAUL'S LETTER TO the Hebrews evidently was prompted by a tendency on the part of those to whom it was written to waver in their faith and hope. They were not holding firmly to the truth, hence were failing to imbibe its richness of joy and peace in the LORD. This background of the epistle appears throughout nearly all of its thirteen chapters. Chapter 2, verse 1, reads: “We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. The opening verse of the 4th chapter exhorts: “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” It is necessary to keep this general theme of the epistle in mind in order to understand clearly what the apostle means in our text by leaving the principles [Greek—same Greek word as translated “first” in Heb. 5:12, meaning ‘chief’] of the doctrine of Christ and going on to perfection.

What are the ‘principles of the doctrine of Christ’ which the apostle refers to as the ‘foundation’ upon which we build as Christians? He mentions first, ‘repentance from dead

works'. As the epistle was written to Hebrew converts to Christianity, the 'dead works' mentioned are doubtless the efforts of the Jews to gain life by keeping the Law. These were dead works for the reason that they failed to give life. But repentance is the important consideration in this doctrine.

It is repentance from whatever may have been our past—repentance, and through faith, the acceptance of the shed blood of our Redeemer as a covering for our imperfections. This is a definite step in the life of all who become Christians, but it cannot be forgotten, or left behind. As Christians we should daily be in a repentant attitude of heart and mind. This fundamental teaching should serve continuously to keep us humble before the LORD, and in constant recognition of our need of divine grace and mercy through Christ.

The apostle mentions 'faith toward God' as another principle of the doctrine of Christ. Does a Christian ever reach the point where he does not need to exercise faith toward God? Surely not! Instead, we will want our faith to increase, knowing, as Paul explained, that "without faith it is impossible to please him [God]." (Heb 11:6) No matter what progress we make in the narrow way, we certainly cannot progress beyond the need of faith.

The 'doctrine of baptisms' is another one which Paul listed as among the chief principles. The fact that he uses the term in the plural indicates that he has reference to more than one baptism. In Paul's day there was John's baptism for the remission of sin, which applied to Jews only; and there was the doctrine of baptism as it has applied to all Gentile converts throughout the entire Gospel Age. This is our baptism into Christ's death—the burial of our will to do the will of God. Then there is the symbol of that baptism, which is immersion in water. When accepted as members of the Christ body, we come under the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which came upon the church at Pentecost.

All these baptisms are vital to the Christian from the beginning to the end of his walk in the narrow way. He does not need to symbolize his consecration over and over again, but the meaning of the symbol should be ever fresh in his

mind and heart. Daily we need to keep our wills buried in the will of God, and daily we need to yield ourselves to the sweet and mellowing influence of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit which pervades and fills all who are members of the body of Christ. No, we cannot with safety ignore, neglect, or progress beyond the implications of the doctrine of baptisms—it is indeed one of the chief fundamentals of truth by which we are to be guided.

‘The laying on of hands’ is another doctrine included among the apostle’s list of ‘principles’. The literal act of laying on of hands ceased with the death of the apostles, but its symbolic significance has continued with the church throughout the age, and is a vital factor in the Christian life today. As a symbol it designates acceptance and authority. Those upon whom the apostles laid their hands received the Holy Spirit. This outward sign of approval was of value in the Early Church because, for one reason, it helped to establish the authority of the apostles.

But the LORD’s people still need that which the laying on of hands indicated; namely, the approval and acceptance of God, which now is manifested by the witness of the Spirit. What peace and joy is ours in the knowledge that we have been set apart by God, given his Spirit, and have been accepted as probationary members of the royal priesthood! Surely we who are endeavoring to follow in the footsteps of the Master do not want to lose sight of this glorious significance of the truth.

The ‘resurrection of the dead’ is also included among the ‘principles’. There is to be “a resurrection of the dead,” says the apostle, “both of the just and the unjust.” (Acts 24:15) The resurrection of the ‘unjust’ will take place during the Millennial reign of Christ. The resurrection of the ‘just’ will consist of the “first resurrection” (Rev. 20:5,6) of those who “live and reign with Christ”; the resurrection of the Great Company (great multitude of Rev. 7:9); and the “better resurrection” (Heb. 11:35) of the Ancient Worthies—faithful men of past ages.

Are these unimportant facts which we can afford to ignore in our general fellowship? Surely not! The resurrection constitutes the inspiration of our hopes. In I Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul made it clear that our faith and hope are vain without the resurrection. The doctrine of the resurrection includes the fact of Jesus' resurrection and exaltation. In Ephesians 1, Paul said that he prayed for the opening of the eyes of our understanding in order that we might realize the mighty power being exercised on our behalf, explaining that it is the power that raised Jesus from the dead. Could anything be more inspirational, more ennobling, more faith-strengthening, than meditation upon the realities of the resurrection! Surely we cannot progress beyond our need of what this doctrine means to us as Christians!

The last doctrine mentioned in our text is 'eternal judgment'. That there is a future Judgment Day for the world, and that we as Christians are now passing through our judgment day, are vital doctrinal facts which we should cherish. Paul's use of the expression 'eternal judgment' would seem to refer to the rightness or justice of God's dealings both now and in the future. It is certainly important that we keep constantly before us the fact that our lives are an open book before God; and that while he is merciful and just, our trial will end favorably only if we keep our hearts pure, and render unto him the very best that we have. This doctrine of eternal judgment is therefore most important as a guide in the building of Christian character. Let us never deny this doctrine its proper place in the foundation of our faith.

If we are not to ignore, minimize, neglect, nor make commonplace the 'principles of the doctrine of Christ', what does the apostle mean by 'leaving' them? Certainly he does not mean their neglect, for in the preceding chapter he tells the Hebrews that their need was that these first principles should be taught to them again—*they had left them*—that was their difficulty!

For one to progress in the understanding of the truth to the point outlined in these 'principles', and to have experienced their verities in their life. and then neglect them, is

serious. To 'fall away' from them entirely would mean the loss of everything, as Paul clearly shows. It is manifest then that the apostle is not suggesting that these precious doctrines of truth are merely of temporary value, to be laid aside as we progress to higher things.

What then does he mean by 'leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ' and going on 'to perfection'? The very next clause in the text explains. Paul says: "Not laying again the foundation." There is only one way a builder can properly leave the foundation of a building, and that is to build up from that foundation. But as he builds up from the foundation, if it is to stand, it must be kept in line with the foundation. To keep a building in line with the foundation, the builder must square the entire superstructure with that foundation. This means that the foundation is a constant guide to him. He cannot ignore it, nor lose sight of it, for it is the guide to the placing of every other piece of material in the entire building.

How then, in this building process, do we go on to 'perfection'? What is the state of perfection to which the apostle here alludes? These questions are clearly answered in the remaining verses of the chapter. Following his warning of the dangers involved through neglect of the truth—a neglect which could lead to a complete falling away—Paul continues: "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak."—Heb. 6:7-9

The thought of the apostle is apparent. As the rain upon the tilled soil causes life-giving food to spring from the earth, so the truth in the broken and contrite hearts of the LORD's people is likewise designed to 'bring forth fruit'—the fruit of the Spirit—the exemplification of godlikeness in our lives. Elaborating on the thought, the apostle continues: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward his name. in that ye have ministered

to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”
—Heb. 6:10-12

Making a proper use of the principles, in contrast to giving merely a temporary mental assent to them, is further stressed by Paul’s use of ‘milk’ and ‘strong meat’ as illustrations of progress in Christian knowledge and growth. The milk illustrates the doctrines, he indicates; and the strong meat the discerning of what is truth and what is error. We quote: “Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use [of the milk] have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.”—Heb. 5:14

The apostle is not here suggesting that the ‘strong meat’ represents complex and involved speculations, but rather a heart appreciation of the principles in such a full sense that they can be used to direct the Christian in the discernment of the LORD’s will. It is for this purpose that God gives us the doctrines. They are the outline of his plan for us as Christians. They are a guide to what is correct and what is incorrect, and it is the discerning of the meaning of these doctrines and their use in our lives that constitutes the ‘strong meat’.

Notice that Paul couples the need of endurance with the thought of fruit-bearing. James gives us the same lesson, saying, “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it. . . . Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts.”—James 5:7,8

To further clinch the lesson concerning the need of endurance and stability, Paul cites God’s dealings with faithful Abraham. He speaks of the time when God made a promise to Abraham and of the fact that subsequently this promise was confirmed by God’s oath. But the confirmation of the promise was not obtained by the patriarch until he had “patiently endured.”—Heb. 6:13-15

The full force of this lesson is lost in the **King James Version** by reason of the fact that the English word ‘promise’ is

used to translate two different Greek words. When Paul speaks of the original promise to Abraham, he uses a Greek word which simply means an announcement—a statement of fact. But when he says that after Abraham endured he “obtained the promise,” he uses a Greek word which, according to **Professor Strong**, means ‘a divine assurance’.

Here, then, we see what Paul means by building upon the foundation doctrines of the truth, and thereby going on to perfection. To start with, those truths, like the promise made to Abraham, are merely statements of God’s plans and intentions toward us. Like Abraham, we believe them, but if their full implications are to be realized in our lives we must demonstrate our ability to “hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering,” to endure under trial, as Abraham did. (Heb. 10:23) And, like Abraham, if we do not waver, but steadfastly remain firm in the faith, we, too, will receive the divine assurance of our standing before God, the advance witness or seal of the Spirit. This is the present goal of the Christian—the ‘perfection’, or ideal state for which we should strive.

Paul explains that by two immutable things we have a strong consolation “who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” in the Gospel. (Heb. 6:18,19) These two ‘things’ are (1) the promise of God to Abraham with the subsequent binding of that promise by his oath; and (2) the assurance of its future accomplishment by another oath concerning Melchisedek as a type of Jesus in his kingdom. (Heb. 7:20-22) We, in turn, believe the promise, and prove our worthiness to inherit it by enduring faithfully every test the LORD may permit to come upon us.

And what was that promise? Simply that through the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth are to be blessed. This promise and its confirmation is the very embodiment of our hope. Paul calls it the “Gospel,” and declares that if we have been baptized into Christ, we have become heirs of the promise as the ‘seed’ which is to bless all the families of the earth. —Gal. 3:8,27-29

And it is this hope which we “have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within

the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb. 6:19,20) How apparent, then, is the lesson the apostle is bringing to our attention.

The failure of the Hebrew brethren was not in the fact that they did not delve into allegedly deep and complex interpretations of the Scriptures; nor that they did not give sufficient attention to devotional truths. Rather, it was because they did not hold to the foundation truths of the divine plan, building upon them, endure the tests which the LORD permitted, and throughout it all remain steadfast and unmovable in their faith and practice.

The 'perfection' referred to by the apostle in his admonition to 'go on to perfection' is, therefore, manifestly that ideal Christian state of being established, of standing firm in the faith, in contrast to the condition of those who vacillate and who are blown about by every wind of doctrine. Those who thus waver, fail to attain the 'promise', that is, the assurance of their acceptance with God. They lay the foundation of their faith, but fail to build thereon, and sometimes may even spend their time and energy building that which is out of line with the foundation, and contrary to the truth of God's Word.

Paul indicated that these brethren had failed to take proper heed to the things which they had heard, and had let them slip. He admonished them to "call to remembrance the former days" when they were first enlightened, and when for a time they had endured a great fight of affliction. They had suffered for a while, but not long enough. So the apostle wrote, "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise [divine assurance]."—Heb. 10:32,36

As revealed in the 'principles of the doctrine of Christ', it was the will of God that they repent from dead works. It was the will of God that they have faith in him and in all his provisions for them. It was the will of God that they be baptized into Christ. It was the will of God that they receive the Holy Spirit in connection with the laying on of hands. It was the will of God that they rejoice in and be inspired by the hope of the resurrection. And it was the will of God that

they be cognizant of his eternal judgment by which the faithful would be rewarded and the unfaithful punished.

But having been enlightened concerning these doctrines, and having done the will of God by accepting them, it was necessary that they exercise proper patience, even as the husbandman in waiting for the fruit of the earth, if they were to have that full assurance of faith which is necessary in order not to be blown about by every wind of doctrine. This full assurance of faith centered in the oath-bound covenant with Abraham, was to be an anchor to their souls entering into that which is within the veil.

Springing forth from this oath-bound covenant come all the features of divine truth upon which a Christian feeds and grows strong in the LORD. But, as with Abraham, our faith in this promise must be strong and enduring. This covenant, and what it means to us, should be the all-absorbing theme of our lives. It is the only promise of God which he confirmed with his oath. The principles of the doctrine of Christ are in it, and only as we cherish these doctrines and use them as a foundation upon which to build, will the covenant itself become an anchor to our souls.

There is no way to live nearer to the LORD than by appreciating and living up to the terms of the Abrahamic Covenant. The blessing coming to mankind through the 'seed' promised in that covenant is the theme of all the holy prophets. The call and development of the 'seed' is the main theme of the New Testament. To actually 'leave' these things with the thought of centering our hearts and minds on something supposedly better, would be tantamount to leaving the Bible itself.

In that covenant God reveals his heart's desire to bless all the families of the earth. Nothing is nearer to God's heart than the plan he has made whereby these promised blessings may reach the people. If we want to be like God, we, too, will be interested in all the people. Jesus tells us that God sends the sunshine and the rain upon the evil and the good, and then admonishes us to be like our Father in heaven. We can be like him by being interested in his plan to bless all nations.■

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

From the Philippines:

Dear "Frank and Ernest": I kept switching on my radio when I chanced upon your program. When I tried to turn it to another station I was halted by my mom, who was listening by then. I became interested, and so was the whole family. That was the start of my waiting for your next broadcast. Now the family is among your countless admirers, and we are getting a lot of good from it. God bless, and thanks for a nice one. Yours sincerely,

—*Philippines*

God Bless Us All to Be Faithful

My dearest people: I am writing to thank you for your steadfastness and faithfulness in sending me The Dawn magazine. I write to assure you that I read the magazines, and that it has really opened my eyes to behold the love and mercy of God. I have decided to

follow Jesus, and to stand for the truth in the face of any opposition. May God help me, and help you, and help every true believer in Jesus Christ. Once again, it is many thanks and God bless. Your sister in Jesus.

—*Nigeria*

Must Write!

Dawn Subscription Department Friends: I must write to let you know how much I enjoy The Dawn book. It has been a great teacher for me. As I have understood more about the Bible than what I have heard preached. There are teachers and there are preachers. But we must understand what is preached to understand the Bible. Thank God for a friend that showed me her magazine. Don't want to miss my next issue! I'm sending for another year. Please also send a copy to my friend whose address I enclose.

—VA



SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

M. Balko

Huntsville, AL	November 2
Greenfield, OH	3
Columbus, OH	4
Detroit, MI	20

R. Gorecki

New Haven, Ct November 6

CONVENTIONS

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

MILWAUKEE, WI, November 5,6—Holiday Inn, 6331 South 13 Street, Milwaukee. For information, contact: Debi Moore, 2176 South 71 Street, West Allis, WI 53219, Phone: (414) 327-5679; or Debbie Farchione, Phone: (414) 529-3485

NEW HAVEN, CT, November 6—Italian-American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact: Cindy Mason. Phone: (203) 481-9935

JERSEY CITY PRE-THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 19,20—Masonic Temple, 1912 Morris Avenue, Union, NJ. Contact: Mrs. Charlotte Teklinski, 84 Arthur St., Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660 Phone: (201) 440-0925

SAN DIEGO THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, NOVEMBER 24-27—Radisson Hotel, 3299 Holiday Court, La Jolla, CA. *An accurate*

meal commitment must be received by October 31. Send to Teri Brand, 1851 Avenida Josefa, Encinitas, CA 92024. Phone: (619) 944-9534. *For reservations write or phone Radisson Hotel directly:*

Phone: (800) 333-3333 or
(619) 453-5500

PHOENIX, AZ, December 30-January 2—Wyndham Garden Hotel, 427 N. 44th St., Phoenix. Address all communications to: Mrs. Esther Bachorski, 13223 Palmwood Dr., Sun City West, AZ 85375 Phone: (602) 546-0430

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, January 8—Majestic Park Homes, 8300 Seminole Blvd. (Alt. 19), Seminole, FL. Contact: Stella Slavich, 3847 Tarpon Pointe Circle, Palm Harbor, FL 34684 Phone: (813) 786-3795 ■