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Falling Off the Fiscal Cliff?

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”
—*Hebrews 12:28*

A NEWLY COINED PHRASE

which has come about only in the past year is the term “Fiscal Cliff.” It refers to the effect of a number of United States federal laws which, if unchanged, could result in tax increases, spending cuts, and a corresponding reduction in the budget deficit beginning in 2013. Among other things, these laws include tax increases that will occur due to the expiration of the so-called “Bush tax cuts” and automatic spending cuts resulting from the Budget Control Act legislation passed by Congress in 2011. It is projected that the effect of these actions would be to reduce the federal deficit for 2013 by roughly half, with the cumulative deficit over the next ten years to be lowered by as much as \$7.1 trillion, or about 70%.

The above scenario, in which there would be a drastic, sudden reduction in the federal deficit in 2013,

has caused widespread concern. The Congressional Budget Office, as well as other numerous so-called experts, have warned that such a sudden reduction in the deficit poses an increased risk of another severe recession in the United States—a so-called “fiscal cliff” of federal spending cuts and tax increases—which they say could have a significant negative impact to the country’s economy in general, which is still slowly recovering from the “great recession” of 2007-2009. Many of these same experts also agree, however, that lowering deficits now as well as over time will improve long-term economic growth prospects.

FEARS OVERBLOWN?

Some economic analysts and commentators say that the entire “fiscal cliff” talk is overblown. Paul R. La Monica, a writer for CNN Money, recently wrote: “Some experts are starting to compare the fiscal cliff fright-fest to the hyperbolic warnings about the Y2K computer bug back in 1999. In case you forgot, there were many reputable economic and tech experts in the late 1990s who feared a chaotic meltdown once January 1, 2000 rolled around because lots of computers were supposed to be unable to figure out how to register a four-digit date. We were going to regress all the way back to 1900! You wouldn’t be able to get money out of ATMs! Power grids would shut off! While that didn’t exactly happen, people should not glibly dismiss the fiscal cliff worries as another case of Chicken Little-ism though. Sure, the sky isn’t falling right now. And it won’t fall [even] if Congress and the White House fail to reach a deal to avoid the cliff by the end of the year.”

Mr. La Monica further said that the fiscal cliff pales in comparison to the liquidity crisis the world went through in the fall of 2008 after Lehman Brothers went bankrupt. Growth may slow if the fiscal cliff comes to pass, he stated, but nothing to the extent of what happened four years ago. Others have expressed similar thoughts. Berkshire Hathaway's Warren Buffett recently told a CNN reporter that the United States would not slip into another recession in 2013 even if we "fall over" the cliff. Tim Hathaway, a portfolio manager with Brown Advisory in Baltimore, recently stated that "The dire outcome from falling over the fiscal cliff is unlikely to happen. We don't believe a major recession is coming." One reason for some of these more "optimistic" views is that many believe the government will not allow the automatic spending cuts and tax increases to take effect, because the political ramifications are too significant. Nobody wants to be accused of causing another economic downturn. Liz Ann Sonders, chief investment strategist with Charles Schwab in New York, recently summed up the feelings of many this way: "I hope there is enough intelligence in Washington for lawmakers to realize that neither side wants to be seen as having their hands on the wheel if we go over the cliff."

PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCES

The deep philosophical differences between Republicans and Democrats heighten the uncertainty of what may happen as we begin 2013. The Republicans control the House of Representatives, while the Democrats control the Senate and White House. Republicans generally feel that the Bush tax cuts

should be made permanent, and that spending cuts should primarily target social programs. Democrats, on the other hand, favor letting the Bush tax cuts expire, and aiming spending reductions toward defense, but not toward social programs. The merits and potential effects of going in either direction are at the core of the political debate in Washington. President Obama has, in fact, promised to veto any legislation that attempts to bypass the fiscal cliff that does not also include the expiration of the Bush tax cuts.

The question of the long-term benefits resulting from tax cuts, or tax hikes, is widely debated. On one hand, those who believe the rich should pay more in taxes state that the increased federal revenues which they say will occur as a result can be used to stimulate the economy, increase jobs, and help raise the overall economic level of the lower and middle classes. These say that leaving the Bush tax cuts in place will not stimulate anything positive for these classes, will only cause the rich to get richer, and will result in the national debt's continued spiral out of control.

Those, on the other hand, who believe the Bush tax cuts should remain, or even be made permanent, claim that if the cuts expire, businesses and entrepreneurs will cut back on spending, expansion, and hiring, and an economic slowdown, or even a severe recession, will result. They believe that, consequently, the lower and middle classes will ultimately be hurt by tax increases on the rich. They further say that by leaving taxes on this same group at current rates, or perhaps even lowering them further, new growth will be stimulated

through increased corporate spending, expansion, and hiring. All of this, it is claimed, will be of long-term benefit to the lower and middle classes and, over time, will also bring about reductions in the federal deficit because of higher business and corporate profits and the resulting increase in taxes paid from those profits.

WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

We ask then: How is the common person to make sense of all this? What does it all mean? Which arguments are correct? What plans will win out as we enter 2013? Will the President and Congress come to some compromise agreement on taxes and spending? Will the country's out-of-control deficit be reduced and, if so, when and to what extent? Will we go into another recession? Will the fiscal cliff prove to have been blown out of proportion as to its consequences, or will it result in a major shaking of our country's economic system? The ordinary person desires, and deserves, answers to these questions.

Although we lay no claim to knowing the immediate answers to any of these questions, the Scriptures bring to our attention that we should expect various troubles and perplexities, some more severe, some less so, to assail the world in which we live today. These, the Bible says, are for the purpose of preparing man's hearts for God's coming kingdom of righteousness upon the earth, to be administered by his Son, Christ Jesus, and his faithful "little flock" of footstep followers. Even as we see the present economic, political, religious, and social systems being shaken to the core, God's Word promises that an "unmovable" kingdom will replace

the current tottering systems. This kingdom will be the long-term, permanent, answer to the questions concerning the many perplexing troubles of our day.

The fiscal cliff, and its potential impact, is just one example of many great challenges that face mankind today. Yet it is not, by any means, a new phenomenon for the world to be embroiled with such troublesome and worrisome issues. For the past century, in fact, there has been a general leveling of human society, resulting in instability among nations, peoples, and the world in general. These conditions are prophetically described in symbolic language in Isaiah 24:1-4. We quote: “Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with the master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.”

ALL CLASSES AFFECTED

In this foretold turning of the earth “upside down” we see that all classes and aspects of the present systems are affected. We note particularly the words of this prophecy which foretell economic distress—“buyer” and “seller,” “lender” and “borrower,” “taker of usury” and “giver of usury.” It is clear from these words that God knew long in

advance that troubles in the world's economic systems would play a major role in the fulfillment of prophecy in our day. Additionally, we are told in this prophecy that "the haughty people of the earth do languish." Whether it be the haughtiness engendered by riches, by power, or by pride, no perceived earthly advantage will help one escape the upsetting experiences of this prophetic day of chaos through which the world is now passing. There is no reason, then, to expect that in 2013 the persistent erosion of what was once a somewhat orderly world society will cease.

It would be unwise to forecast the details of events which will contribute to the world's continuing experiences in its present "time of trouble." Those aspects of chaos, trouble, and confusion which today make front-page news may very well change, either in character or in location. Whatever the case, these experiences will represent the continuation of the "melting" process described by the psalmist when he wrote, "The [nations] raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted."—Ps. 46:6

Another highly symbolic prophecy descriptive of this day of chaos and trouble in which we are living is recorded in Isaiah 13:6-8: "Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames." The Apostle Paul, writing of this same "day of the LORD," also

mentions the “travail.” He informs us that “sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child.”—I Thess. 5:2,3

PEACE DESIRED

As we enter 2013, the desire for peace continues to be expressed. The vast majority of mankind want peace in the world. Efforts will continue to be made to “put out fires” of trouble wherever possible, but these will not lead to the stable and lasting peace for which many people of all nations so earnestly yearn. Whatever apparent successes to bring peace to the many volatile places in the world occur in 2013, they will almost certainly be short-lived and disappointing. It will be as foretold by the Prophet Amos, when he wrote, “As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.” (Amos 5:19) Because of this, Amos inquired, “Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?”—vs. 20

Thus we may expect that in the year ahead the hearts of many people will continue to be filled with fear. The poverty of millions in third world countries will continue to foment tension and strife. The conflicting ideologies, both political and religious, of many nations will add to the chaos, leading to wars of words and weapons. Even the deep, political divisions within our own country, not only in Washington, but among the people in general, will lead to more unrest, dissatisfaction, and strife, as our leaders continue to tackle issues related to the economy, foreign policy, and other areas of national and global concern.

THE KINGDOM HOPE

From the standpoint of human wisdom and ability, the outlook for 2013 is not bright. It is only as we view the situation from the standpoint of the prophecies and promises contained in the Word of God that we can rejoice with a genuine hope for the future. In Hebrews 12:26,27, Paul speaks of the great “shaking” that occurred at the time when the Law was given to Moses at Mount Sinai. He indicates that it was typical of the symbolic shaking that would take place among the elements of human society just prior to the establishment of the long-promised Messianic kingdom. He says, “Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

The expression used by Paul, “Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven,” is taken from Haggai 2:6,7. Verse 7 reads, “I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.” The word “nations” really means peoples. Most of the world’s people desire peace. They desire freedom from fear. They desire economic security. They would like to see poverty, hunger, and injustice abolished. First, however, they must go through the “shaking” period now upon all mankind. The people must learn that they do not possess the capability, by their own wisdom and strength, or by the abilities of their imperfect human leaders, of attaining what they desire. They must learn that fallen human efforts will not guarantee peace and

the many other blessings for which the whole world continues to long.

Both Haggai and Paul assert that the “shaking” of this day of the Lord would affect the “heaven” also. This is a reference, symbolically, to the religious elements of the world. The various religions of earth are indeed being shaken. This also is in preparation for Messiah’s kingdom. The many false teachings of most religious systems of today, Christian and non-Christian, will have no place in the Lord’s kingdom. Then, all will learn the truth about God and his perfectly-balanced character attributes of wisdom, justice, love, and power.—Isa. 11:9; Zeph. 3:9

ALL EVIL REMOVED

In the great “shaking” time through which we are passing, everything that is “made” will be removed, as Paul wrote in Hebrews 12:27. The reference here is to man-made ideas and institutions. These are all tainted with sin and selfishness, and will be of no use in Christ’s kingdom.

The only things which will remain will be those that are fully in harmony with the Word of God. The only hope that will endure through the chaos of a disintegrating world society will be that hope which is based upon the promises of God—promises of his kingdom. There are not many throughout the earth today who are rejoicing in this hope. A few are, however, and it is these to whom Paul refers in our text as “we” who are “receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved.”

In Psalm 46:2,3, we are given another prophetic picture of the shaking and removal of man-made institutions during this “day of the LORD.” The

symbolic earth is removed, and the “mountains” are carried into the midst of the sea of human passions. The “waters” “roar” and are “troubled,” and “the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.” In other words, this is a picture of the removal—the shaking—of all selfish human institutions.

RECEIVING THE KINGDOM

In this prophecy, the Lord’s people who are “receiving” the Lord’s kingdom are spoken of as “the city of God,” that kingdom in the making, as pictured in “the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.” “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, when the morning appeareth.” (Ps. 46:4,5, *Marginal Translation*) Here again we have the assurance that while all things out of harmony with the divine will are destined for removal, yet, as this prophecy shows, “she [the faithful followers of Christ] shall not be moved.”

Thus is confirmed Paul’s promise that we are receiving a kingdom which “cannot be moved.” We do not yet possess this kingdom, but we are in the process of being prepared to receive it. This will be the rulership phase of the Messianic kingdom—that aspect of the kingdom mentioned by Jesus, when he said, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32) Our share in the kingdom, to live and reign with Christ a thousand years, is a gift, but we must prove worthy of receiving it.

The Apostle Peter refers to some of the conditions which must be met if we are to receive this gift. We are to “add” to our faith “virtue; and to

virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity [love].” Continuing, Peter wrote, “If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:5-11

The unmovable kingdom referred to in our text is a certainty. It is part of God’s great plan for the blessing of all the families of the earth. Whether we as individuals will participate with Christ in the ruling phase of that kingdom depends upon our faithfulness—a faithfulness that involves the laying down of life itself, suffering and dying with Jesus. If we want to wear a “crown” in that kingdom we must bear the “cross” now. If we are to have a share in the rulership phase of Christ’s kingdom we must, as our theme text declares, “Hold fast [margin] the grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” Paul described acceptable service to the Lord, when he wrote, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”—Rom. 12:1

HUMAN REPRESENTATIVES

Jesus and his faithful followers who will live and reign with him a thousand years will possess the divine nature, and therefore will be invisible to human eyes. Because of this, the Lord has arranged that they will have visible human representatives. Many of these are referred to in Hebrews, chapter 11—those men and women of faith and valor who laid down their lives in the service of God during the ages in the divine plan preceding the present Gospel Age. These will be brought forth from the dead in what Paul describes as “a better resurrection.” They will be given life by divine power, and as perfect humans will be in the visible ruling phase of the kingdom.—Heb. 11:35,40; Ps. 45:16; Isa. 32:1; Luke 13:28,29

THE SUBJECTS BLESSED

With the rulers in the kingdom established in power and authorized to function, the promised blessings of the kingdom will quickly begin to flow out to all the peoples of the earth, beginning with the restored Israelites. The final phase of world tribulation and “shaking” will be that which is referred to in prophecy as “Jacob’s trouble.” At that time, the Israelites will have their “eyes” opened to recognize the workings of God in their midst. This will also be true of Gentile nations.—Jer. 30:7; Ezek. 38:23; 39:7

The enlightenment of all mankind will be one of the important functions of the kingdom agencies. The knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:9) The present “shaking” of Satan’s world is described in Zephaniah 3:8 as the “devouring” of the “earth” by the fire of

God's zeal. When this is accomplished, then the Lord will turn to the people "a pure language," or message, and unitedly they will call upon the Lord and serve him.—vs. 9

The enlightenment of the people concerning the true God and their desire to serve and obey him will prepare the way for them to receive other blessings of the kingdom. Through the atoning blood of Christ the penalty of death will be lifted, and this will lead to restoration of health and life for all who pass through the present time of great trouble into the kingdom period. Likewise, all those who have died will be awakened from the sleep of death. These also will be given an opportunity to believe and obey and be restored to perfection of human life and live forever.—Acts 24:15; I Cor. 15:21,22; Rev. 21:3-5

The signs of the times indicate beyond any question of a doubt that we are now living in the end of the present age of sin and selfishness, when the work of selecting those who will live and reign with Christ in his unmovable kingdom will soon be complete. This means that the "Sweet By and By" (Hymns of Dawn #66) of the world's golden age of blessing is now near, that soon the world's dark night of weeping will give way to the divinely promised morning of joy, when God "turneth the shadow of death into the morning."—Ps. 30:5; Amos 5:8

Let us, then, as we begin this new year, and in the short time we have for "receiving" joint-heirship with Jesus in his unmovable kingdom, give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. The time is indeed short, and in this "short time" may we zealously continue to serve the Lord as our opening text admonishes—with "reverence and godly fear." ■

Proclaiming Christ

Key Verse:
*“What then?
notwithstanding,
every way, whether
in pretence, or in
truth, Christ is
preached; and I
therein do rejoice,
yea, and will
rejoice.”*
—*Philippians 1:18*

Selected Scripture:
Philippians 1:15-26

THESE WORDS WERE written by Paul while he was a prisoner in Rome, and they reflect the special dedication that he gave to preaching the Word of God. He was able to rejoice in the preaching of Christ, for he recalled the words of Jesus, when he said, “Let your light so shine.” (Matt. 5:16) Paul knew that this was the commission given to all of the Lord’s disciples.

Jesus had declared of himself, “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12) He knew, however, that he would not personally remain in the world, and that the work of God entrusted to him would be continued by his representatives—his ambassadors. In Revelation 20:4, they are referred to as those who are “beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.” This language describes the giving up, or sacrificing, of the earthly things of this life in the service of Jesus and the message of truth he proclaimed, which came from God. During the Gospel Age, faithfulness as witnesses of Jesus leads to sacrificial death, and we are encouraged by the promise, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10

In the beginning of the Gospel Age, miracles were employed which demonstrated the glory of God. Jesus

healed the sick and raised the dead. The apostles did the same, but they themselves died. After the apostles fell asleep in death, the Lord's people throughout the age since have been called upon to walk entirely by faith, without the need of the performing of great miracles to prove their "witness of Jesus." They have been witnesses of him through their faithfulness in living and proclaiming the "gospel of Christ" under adverse conditions, which, as Paul asserts, is "the power of God unto salvation."—Rom. 1:16

The commission given to the disciples by Jesus was that they should be his witnesses in all the world by preaching the Gospel. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19; Acts 1:8) Even now, in the harvest of the Gospel Age, those who witness for Jesus do so by proclaiming the marvelous plan for human salvation which Jesus was sent into the world to execute. In proclaiming this message, these tell not only of the miracle of Jesus' resurrection by the mighty power of God, but also of the resurrection of Christ's body members, who will live and reign with him in heavenly glory. (Eph. 1:18-23) They proclaim also that blessed feature of the Gospel message which promises a resurrection of all the dead and the restoration of the willing and obedient to perfection of life as human beings on the earth.

As "witnesses of Jesus, and for the word of God," let us go forth with a song of praise upon our lips—praise to God for his love in sending Jesus to be the Redeemer and Savior of the world. Let us praise and honor God for his divine wisdom which designed such a loving plan of salvation (John 5:23), and for his divine justice which made provision to wash away Adamic sin by the blood of the Redeemer. Finally, let us rejoice that the Spirit of God has commissioned us to be witnesses of Jesus, just as Paul was, and to proclaim the glorious hopes, heavenly and earthly, promised in his Word.—Col. 1:25-27; Acts 3:19-21 ■

Jesus' Humility and Exaltation

Key Verse: “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*”
—*Philippians 2:5*

Selected Scripture:
Philippians 2:5-11

TRUE HUMILITY IS THAT condition of mind or heart which causes a person to have a proper appreciation of his own worth and that of others. To the true follower of Jesus, humility includes the realization of the value and necessity of the robe of Christ's righteousness. Such a realization requires in each of us a condition of mind which causes us to always keep our Lord in full view, and to keep “self” out of sight to the greatest extent possible. To have the mind of Christ, hence the mind of God, means that we must allow God to work within our minds and in our hearts. This, in turn, means we must be teachable, another important aspect of humility. Our Lord has invited us to “learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” (Matt. 11:29) As a child of God, it is required that we be “of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”—I Pet. 3:4

The mind of Christ, and the humility associated with that mind, also points us toward the making of an unreserved consecration to do the will of our Heavenly Father. Such a dedication of ourselves to God, through Christ, sets in motion another all-important work—the transformation of our character from its former condition to that which befits a follower of the Master.

Consider the words of Paul: “If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt; . . . And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” (Eph. 4:21-23) These verses sum up the work of the transformation of our character by speaking of two important features of that work. First, we are to “put off” our former walk, which was according to the flesh. Second, we are to be “renewed in the spirit,” that is, by God’s Holy Spirit working in and through our minds and hearts.

As our Lord Jesus was obedient, even unto the death of the cross, we are to be crucified with him, baptized into his death, having offered our all in consecration. “If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.” (II Tim. 2:11,12) The way that we do this is by following our Lord’s example in all things. He was perfect and could fully live up to the instructions that he received from the Father. The Scriptures testify that he was “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14), and that “all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. (Luke 4:22) To follow in his footsteps means that we have much to accomplish in the way of transformation of character. This is emphasized by the words, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—Rom. 12:2

Only a handful of those to whom Paul wrote were actually eyewitnesses of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. However, they believed and proclaimed the testimony of Paul that when Jesus was raised from the dead he was highly exalted to the right hand of God. (Eph. 1:18-23) With joy we also, accept and preach the message of Paul, declaring that ultimately “every knee should bow, . . . every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:10,11 ■

Gaining in Christ Jesus

Key Verse: “*What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*”
—*Philippians 3:7*

Selected Scripture:
Philippians 3:7-11

THIS HEART-FELT EXPRESSION made by the Apostle Paul in our Key Verse takes on greater meaning when we investigate his background. It has been recorded that Paul’s parents were probably wealthy, that they were both Jewish, and that they most likely named him Saul after Israel’s first king. His family was very religious, being devout followers of the Mosaic Law, as shown by Paul’s own words: “Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee.” (Acts 23:6) At a young age, he was sent to Jerusalem to attend the school of Gamaliel, a renowned doctor of the Law. In addition, through his early association with educated Greeks, he gained the important ability to debate others and to use persuasive techniques in his speech. This would later help him when he addressed people from all walks of life. Paul’s high level of education is revealed to us in his words: “I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers.”—Acts 22:3

It has been surmised that Paul’s conversion to be a follower of Christ perhaps isolated him from his home and family, and that it also deprived him of the income

that he had previously enjoyed. (Rom. 9:1-8) He was, however, very willing to give up all things for Christ's sake. We recall that he, perhaps at some early point in his life, had learned a trade—that of tent-making. This was not out of the ordinary for the time. Even among the wealthy, it was customary for them to have their sons learn trades. It is interesting to note that Paul had to turn to his tent-making trade at times, and would seem to imply that financial support from his family had stopped. We see from his experiences with Aquila and Priscilla when he visited them in Corinth that this was true. "Because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers." (Acts 18:1-3) Yet, in spite of the physical work that he had to do at times in order to provide for his temporal needs, he never forgot that his chief mission in life was to preach the Gospel.

Paul was faithful in adhering to the words that our Lord Jesus spoke to his disciples, when he said, "Seek, and ye shall find." (Luke 11:9) He was led by his faith in God, and he knew that this would be the key to gain the prize that he so desired. "Without faith it is impossible to please him." (Heb. 11:6) He further knew that it was necessary to apply these words in his life, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." (Matt. 6:33) In giving this admonition, Jesus was contrasting our proper interest as New Creatures in eternal heavenly things with the interests of most in the world, whose primary focus is on the temporal earthly things of life.

As we endeavor to make our calling and election sure, let us have the same single-mindedness of Paul, expressed in these words, "Brethren, I count not myself not to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. 3:13,14 ■

Stand Firm

Key Verse: **THE APOSTLE PAUL IN**
“Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”
—*Philippians 3:16*

Selected Scripture: *Philippians 3:12-16*
today’s lesson urges all of the followers of Christ to unity of faith and purpose. Since we are being led by the same Holy Spirit under the direction of the Captain of our salvation, all the truly sanctified in Christ are closely united by our mutual faith, hope, and love. (I Cor. 13:13) Indeed, we have been taught in the Scriptures that the mark of character development that we are to seek after is that of perfect love—that is, love in the most complete and selfless sense. With this in view, we recall these words from our lesson: “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 3:14

The bride of Christ is called to a high station. However, as prospective members of this class, we first must suffer with him, that we may in due time reign with him. We have the assurance that in every trial, and in every experience, whether it is joyous or sorrowful, and whether it seems heavy or light, the hand of our Heavenly Father is there to guide and direct. We know also that he will not permit us to be tested above that which we are able to bear. This makes it possible for us to say, even as David did, “I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.”—Psa. 91:2

We are to strive to resist the things that would harm our spiritual growth, and to “hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.” (Heb. 3:14) The tools of the Adversary are many and powerful. Sometimes he comes as a roaring lion. This type of attack may be easier to spot and thwart in advance. Many times, however, he is more subtle, wily, and deceptive in his assault. Often he uses the weaknesses of our fallen flesh as the primary weapons of attack—tendencies such as envy, strife, hatred, pride, doubt, and even discouragement. We should dispel these with love, humility, righteousness, and faith.

As followers of Christ, we should have a keen desire, as Paul did, to attain to and stand as nearly as possible at the perfect mark of love. “And having done all, to stand,” Paul states. (Eph. 6:13) We cannot “stand” if we walk after the flesh, but can only do so by walking in the Spirit, and by having the pure law of love fully operating in us. “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts [desires], we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for . . . the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”—Tit. 2:11-13

We are to keep in mind that we have an advocate, Jesus Christ, through whom we can approach the Heavenly Father in prayer, seeking his grace and help in time of need. These and many other special favors designed to help us “stand firm” come from God, through “Jesus Christ the righteous.” (I John 2:1) Our future Bridegroom desires to have us walk in his footsteps, and keep ourselves separate from the world. He told his disciples, “Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world.” (John 15:19) Let us therefore seek to stand before the Lord with sincerity, honesty, and humility of character, and as we stand, to fully display the fruits of the Spirit—“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance.”—Gal. 5:22,23 ■

Christ—Our Wisdom and Righteousness

“Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”
—I Corinthians 1:30

BEGINNING WITH THIS issue of *The Dawn*, each month during 2013 we will be examining various aspects of the subject, “The Mind of Christ.” This phrase is taken from the words of Paul in I Corinthians 2:16, which reads, “Who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” Paul, in another place, says, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 2:5) Indeed, it is only as we develop a mind and mindset similar to that of our Master, that we will be faithful to our Heavenly Father.

An honest and humble appraisal of ourselves must lead to the inevitable conclusion that, as members of the fallen and sinful race of mankind, we have nothing of virtue or character by which we

can commend ourselves to God with any hope of being acceptable to him on the basis of our own righteousness. This means that our sonship privileges in his family are only possible through the abundance of his grace in providing a way whereby he could be “just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. 3:26) Salvation, and all the divine blessings incidental thereto, are ours not because of our own merit, but because of the Heavenly Father’s love in giving his son to be our Redeemer. Well has the apostle put it, saying, “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”—Eph. 2:8

The value of salvation is appreciated most by those who, having a proper evaluation of their own undone condition, realize their great need for it. Indeed, the riches of divine favor are represented in the provision the Heavenly Father has made through Christ. Those who come to God in simple faith and full devotion, may not only enjoy peace with him, but have access to the inner chambers of his grace, and therein rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. (Rom. 5:1,2) This “great salvation,” the apostle explains, began to be spoken by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.—Heb. 2:3

The First Advent of Christ marked the opening of the age during which the high, or heavenly, calling of those who were to reign with him in glory was to operate. Not until he came and shed his blood as the Redeemer of mankind would it have been possible for anyone, no matter how earnestly he may have tried, to meet the conditions laid down for those who are called to glory, honor and immortality.

CHRIST—OUR WISDOM

Not only was Christ the first one to walk in the narrow way that leads to immortality, but only through his merit, and by virtue of his counsel and example, is it possible for others to walk acceptably in the same narrow way. One of the very fundamental ways in which we are to follow after his example is to seek the same quality of heavenly wisdom that he possessed. As our opening text emphasizes, Christ is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption, or deliverance. In other words, he is all and everything to us that is necessary in order that we may be heirs of God and joint-heirs with him in the heavenly reward offered to the saints during this age. He is our ultimate example and standard in all things, and it is necessary that our mind be patterned after him.

One of the titles the Scriptures give to Jesus is that of Counselor. (Isa. 9:6) If we are to be truly wise it is essential that we follow the instructions and counsel of Christ. The wise man Solomon said, "The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." (Psa. 111:10; Prov. 9:10) To reverence God implies respect for his words of enlightenment and instruction, a respect that will lead us to fully obey his divine will.

The quality of reverence for God is necessary from the very beginning of our approach to him, for it means that we recognize his greatness and our own nothingness—his perfection of holiness, and our own depravity and unrighteousness. To recognize this is the true foundation of wisdom's structure, for it implies a willingness and desire to put aside our own imperfect viewpoints and ways

and to accept instead the counsel and will of the Heavenly Father.

As we first approach God in this wise attitude of humility, desiring to be taught of him, one of the first lessons we learn is his wondrous provision through Christ. It is this provision, despite our imperfections, whereby we are able to enjoy the blessings which his grace promises to all who long to be in harmony with him—those who “pant” after him “as the hart panteth after the water brooks.”—Ps. 42:1

An honest recognition of our own imperfections, hence the need of Christ as our Redeemer, is the first step in wisdom’s way, but we need also to recognize the wisdom of making a full consecration of ourselves to do the Father’s will. The recognition of our own lack of wisdom would be largely in vain should we fail to devote ourselves fully to him who has promised to give to his own that wisdom which is from above. (James 1:5; 3:17) While the Word of God is filled with all the necessary counsel to make us truly wise, its instructions become the guiding star of our lives only when we give ourselves unreservedly in consecration to the doing of the will of God represented therein.

Christ is our wisdom in this fuller sense also because he is to us the living Word of God. That is, in the perfect example of his life, we have patterned for us the manner in which God’s instructions apply in the lives of the consecrated. He is the Captain of our salvation, the Forerunner, the Head of the body, who, being guided by the words of God himself, has shown us the true meaning of those instructions as they affect the lives of those who are following in his footsteps.

WISDOM FROM ABOVE

The Apostle James gives us an overall picture of heavenly wisdom, saying that it is “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” (James 3:17) In Christ we have a revealing example of the manner in which these various elements of heavenly wisdom operate in one who is fully devoted to the doing of God’s will. Earthly wisdom functions along lines quite contrary to the principles mentioned by James. It is selfish, therefore its objective is to promote self, frequently at the expense of purity, and often by strife, arrogance, and stubbornness. Where selfishness reigns supreme, it resorts even to cruelty to attain its ends, while personal favoritisms and hypocrisy are considered virtues if they can be used to attain the ends sought by the selfish heart.

How different, as the apostle has shown, is the heavenly wisdom which is in harmony with the divine character of love. How wonderfully did Christ display the love qualities of heavenly wisdom as he went about in the divine service doing good. Christ was first “pure.” He was this by nature, even as a child, having been born perfect. His moral and intellectual purity was sealed by his obedience to the Law Covenant. He was pure also in his wholehearted devotion to the divine will from the time of his consecration at Jordan until the very end of his earthly pilgrimage. With Jesus, it was not a case of doing some things for self and some things for God. He was all for the doing of his Father’s will only, and fully in harmony with the instructions of the written Word wherein that will was revealed.

Neither men nor devils could turn the Master aside from the purity of a wholehearted, absolute devotion to his Father's will. Satan, the prince of devils, tried it. Near the beginning of Jesus' ministry Satan brought pressure upon him in the form of subtle temptations to take a course of "halfway" devotion to his consecration vows. However, Jesus was wise and resisted the attack. He was wise in his own right as a perfect human being, but even more importantly, he was wise toward God in that he not only knew the divine will for him, but hesitated not a moment in his resolute determination to be wholly loyal thereto. Thus, his response to the Adversary was direct and decisive: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."—Matt. 4:10

"THEN PEACEABLE"

The Apostle Paul admonished, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." (Rom. 12:18) He knew, from his many experiences in the narrow way, and as had been exemplified in Jesus' life, that putting purity first in the consecrated life means that we will not always be able to dwell in peace in the world and with the worldly-minded. Had Christ not put purity first, and had he yielded to the Adversary's suggestions to compromise the divine will, he doubtless would have avoided much of the persecution that came upon him. Had he taken the course pleasing to "the god of this world," he could have dwelt peaceably with those who do the will of that god.—II Cor. 4:4

Jesus was not a promoter of strife. One of the prophetic titles descriptive of the spirit of his

mission to earth was that of the "Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6) In his sermon on the mount, Jesus said the peacemakers are considered blessed of God. (Matt. 5:9) The gracious words which fell from his consecrated lips were such as to promote peace and goodwill in the lives of those whose hearts were not calloused by selfishness, and whose minds were not blinded by the darkness of this world. Because the darkness hateth the light, however, the Master's words of peace and goodwill stirred up enmity against him from the world, an enmity that was not satisfied until the Prince of Peace hung limp and lifeless upon the cross.

In following the Master's example, we may not be confronted with similar large and dramatic issues to test the purity and wholeheartedness of our devotion to God. Even so, his loyalty to the principles of righteousness in the big as well as in the little things of life, constitutes a perfect guide for us irrespective of the manner in which we may be tested.

Putting purity first in the carrying out of our consecration vows will cause us the loss of worldly friendships. It may even test the depth of our devotion as it applies to our association with some who profess to be followers of the Master. Where issues of the Truth and its service are concerned, a peace-at-any-price attitude is not wise. It does not conform to the example of Christ who, by the appointment of our Heavenly Father, has been made unto us the embodiment of heavenly wisdom. Worldly wisdom often compromises principle in order to avoid suffering, but Jesus did not do this. He was guided by his knowledge of the divine will, even though it

meant travail and sorrow, and thereby proved himself worthy to be the Savior of the world.—Isa. 53:11

“GENTLE, . . . EASY TO BE ENTREATED”

Following the course of heavenly wisdom must lead to gentleness of demeanor and character. The coarse, rough ways of the flesh and the world should give place, as we make progress in the narrow way, to genuine refinement and gentleness of heart and disposition. Christ was pleasingly gentle and so “easy to be entreated” that even the children were completely at ease in his presence. Those who sought for the blessings he could bestow were given audience and consideration even though, in some cases, they succeeded only in touching the hem of his garment. The Master’s gentleness was in keeping with his purity. He was gentle to those deserving gentleness, but stern in his rebuttal of the hypocritical Pharisees.

In our desire for peace, and in our disposition to promote it, we, like the Master, should be gentle. We should have an open heart toward those who cross our pathway, and for whom, in God’s providence, we may have blessings of comfort to share, if they would but receive them. Yet, as with Jesus, so with us, we will not be easily entreated to walk contrary to the will of God, or to lend our support by sympathy, word, or deed to anything that is out of harmony with the spirit of heavenly wisdom.

“MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS”

Heavenly wisdom rejoices in mercy. How beautifully Jesus exemplified this quality of the divine character, both in his

(Continued on page 36)

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(Continued from page 31) teaching and manner of life. When he was asked how far one should go in forgiving, he gave that “seventy times seven” formula of divine mercy. Such mercy, when manifested in the Christian life, serves to bypass nearly all friction and disputes that otherwise rob followers of the Master of the fullness of joy in the Lord that should be theirs. Whether in our individual lives as followers of Christ, in our homes, or in our fellowship with one another, the mercy element of heavenly wisdom serves to sweeten all of our experiences and to make us more like our Father in heaven.

The “good fruits” associated with heavenly wisdom are the fruits of the Spirit. The growth of such fruit, and its proper ripening, will inevitably take place in the heart which is illuminated with the wisdom from above. Here again the fullness of our devotion to God will be the measure of the fruitage developed in our lives. If we are to be full of good fruits we must be empty of self. The selfish heart of the flesh is barren. However, to the extent that self and self-will is renounced, and the will of God in Christ becomes the possessing power of our lives, there is certain to be an abundant crop of good fruit.

“WITHOUT PARTIALITY”

The Scriptures explain that “ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:28) Therefore, to show partiality in our dealings with fellow-members of the body of Christ would display a lack of wisdom from above. Just as God is no respecter of persons, we who are trying to be like him must ever maintain his viewpoint, which is one of love that seeks to bestow blessings upon all—without partiality.

To be partial in our dealings with each other, or even with the world, would imply a measure of injustice. This would be contrary to the course of heavenly wisdom, and contrary to the example set by Christ. It is true that some of the disciples seemed to be more appreciated by Jesus than others, and these were granted some additional privileges. In doing this, however, the Master did not work any injustice upon the others. His nearness to Peter, James, and John was doubtless because of their greater love and understanding of him. God is not unjustly a respecter of persons, yet he makes it plain in his Word that he draws especially near to those who draw near to him.—James 4:8

“WITHOUT HYPOCRISY”

The heavenly wisdom which we see exemplified in Christ is also “without hypocrisy.” It is so pure, so peaceable, so gentle, and so merciful toward all, that there is no necessity for hypocrisy where it is in control. Those guided by heavenly wisdom must, of necessity, be out of harmony and sympathy with all that is sinful—not merely outwardly, but in their hearts. To be truly a follower of Christ, who is our wisdom, we must indeed “practice what we preach.” We are not only to outwardly support and be in sympathy with that which is pure, peaceable and gentle, but these divine qualities of heavenly wisdom must also be the adornment of our heart and inward character.

From whatever viewpoint we analyze the wisdom which is from above, we find that in the life of Christ we have a perfect example of how it should control those who are following him in the narrow

way. Not only, therefore, does the beginning of wisdom lead us to Christ as the Redeemer, but we find wisdom's perfection manifested in his every word and deed, which, by God's grace, we are trying to copy in our own lives.

CHRIST—OUR JUSTIFICATION

In addition to being our wisdom, the apostle explains that Christ is also our righteousness. In explaining this point, Paul used the Greek word *dikaiosune*, which, according to Professor Strong, literally means "equity," and specifically, "justification." Various forms of this same Greek word are used in the New Testament, and are translated as "justified," "justification," and "righteousness." As used in our text, the word could properly be translated justification.

Considering the literal meaning of the word *dikaiosune* as being equity, we have presented to us a comprehensive view of what Christ means to us in connection with our relationship to the Heavenly Father and our hope of life. He is our "equity." That is, the merit of Christ's ransom sacrifice is the thing of value which gives us a standing—equity—in the sight of God, and permits us to enjoy the privileges of fellowship with the Father and his Son. The merit of Christ's righteousness is imputed to us upon the basis of our faith, giving us a standing of righteousness, or justification, before God.

No matter how perfect our heart's intentions may be toward God and righteousness—no matter how determined we are to lay down our lives in his divine service—no matter how much we appreciate the invitation to suffer with Christ, that we may

reign with him—that which makes possible the carrying out of our desires, and enables us to render acceptable sacrifice, is the equity of Christ’s righteousness imputed to us by divine grace.

The fact that Christ’s righteousness makes up for our deficiencies does not mean, as the apostle explains, that we can “continue in sin that grace may abound.” (Rom. 6:1) We cannot hope to reach the high standard of perfection displayed in the holy and undefiled Jesus, yet we should strive toward this end. He is our example of righteousness, our pattern and guide, to show us the righteous way in all the experiences of life. We should daily wage an aggressive struggle to control our thoughts, words, and deeds, and bring them into captivity to the will of God, as expressed by the teachings and example of Christ.

It is important to us as Christians that we always keep in mind the fact that Christ is our righteousness, our justification. To remember this will help to keep us humble. The recognition of our own sinful condition, and of the wondrous provision made for us through Christ, should be indelibly impressed upon our hearts and minds each and every day of our walk in the narrow way.

This recognition is something that should serve as a touchstone of our relationship to God throughout our entire earthly pilgrimage. If at any time we feel that victories over sin and imperfection have been attained to the point where we have somewhat of our own righteousness wherewith to commend ourselves to God, we should call to mind the pit of sin and death from which we have been rescued by divine grace, and the solid rock, Christ Jesus, upon

which we have been granted the privilege of standing. (Ps. 40:2) Our continued standing with the Heavenly Father as his children depends upon Christ's righteousness to the very end of the way. Only thus will we be victorious.—Isa. 51:1; I Cor. 15:57

In the next issue of *The Dawn*, we will examine the remaining portion of our opening text, and consider how that “in Christ Jesus,” and by having his mind in us, we also receive “sanctification” and “redemption,” or deliverance. ■



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JANUARY 3—“Pray without ceasing.”—I Thessalonians 5:17 (Z. '96-162 Hymn 162)

JANUARY 10—“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.”—James 5:10 (Z. '95-3 Hymn 322)

JANUARY 17—“Keep yourselves in the love of God.”—Jude 21 (Z. '02-173 Hymn 166)

JANUARY 24—“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart.”—Proverbs 3:3 (Z. '02-171 Hymn 143A)

JANUARY 31—“The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way.”—Psalm 25:9 (Z. '00-68 Hymn 71)

Idolatry

“Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.”

—*Joshua 24:19-21*

THE MERRIAM-WEBSTER

Online Dictionary defines idolatry as follows: “The worship of a physical object as a god; immoderate attachment or devotion to something.” In the New Testament, the Greek word translated idolatry, according to *Strong’s Concordance*, means: “Image worship (literally or figuratively).” Throughout the Bible, admonitions have been given to the people of God, both natural and spiritual Israelites, against the practice of idolatry.

As those striving to be footstep followers of Christ, it is appropriate to reflect

upon some of God’s dealings with the nation of Israel, to the intent that we might be edified concerning our own course of conduct, as we desire to be pleasing to the Heavenly Father. The first of the Ten Commandments reads: “Thou shalt have no

other gods before me.” (Exod. 20:3) The thought here is that our Heavenly Father, through Moses, gave instructions that the Israelites were to recognize that only he was their God, and he alone should be so acknowledged. Given his manifestations of mercy towards them, the Israelites should have been obedient to this directive as a sign of their reverence for the Creator.

THE GOLDEN CALF

When Moses went into the mountain to receive the Law Covenant and did not return to the Israelites promptly, the people came to his brother, Aaron, to ask that a god be made for them to worship. The account of the golden calf is a familiar one, and the degree of depravity to which the Israelites fell, as recorded in that experience, is a shameful part of their history. (Exod. 32:1-6) After their marvelous deliverance out of Egypt by the hand of God, with great rapidity the Israelites turned to idolatrous worship because Moses was out of their sight. When Moses came down from the mountain and discovered this apostasy, he broke the two tablets of the Law, destroyed the golden calf which had been erected, and called upon the Levites to slay the rebellious leaders of this sinful idolatry.—vss. 15-28

In the remainder of the book of Exodus and continuing through Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, much is written concerning the Israelites' history, and the Covenant which God made through Moses as Israel's mediator. These writings contain the various laws which the people were to obey in order to receive continued blessings at the hands of the Heavenly Father. They also contained the

listing of punishments which would befall them if they failed to hearken unto God's words.

JOSHUA'S COUNSEL

Following the death of Moses, Joshua, Israel's new leader, gave the Israelites righteous counsel. Here is a portion of what is known as Joshua's farewell address: "Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you."—Josh. 23:4,5

Joshua then cautioned the people to be careful to follow all of the instructions which were recorded in the laws of Moses, and not to deviate from them in any particular. Most of all, they were to remember it was the LORD their God who fought for them, and they should manifest a continual love for him by being obedient to his commands. (vss. 6-11) One might have supposed that with all of the Heavenly Father's promises and provisions in helping them to obtain the land of promise, they would have been faithful in obeying his commands. However, such was not the case.

The Israelites had remained faithful to God during Joshua's lifetime, as the aged men of his generation had seen the wondrous miracles which the LORD had wrought on behalf of the people. (Judg. 2:7) However, when they died out, a new generation came forth who did not worship God in the same

way. They also did not care about the miracles which he had performed for Israel in the past. Worse still, they practiced many things which were expressly forbidden, including the worship of heathen gods and idols. As a result, the anger of the LORD came upon Israel and left them to the mercy of their enemies.—vss. 9-14

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

One repeated theme characterized the period following the death of Joshua: “In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” (Judg. 17:6) In order to get a glimpse into the depths of religious decay among the people during that period we will consider some of the experiences of a man named Micah who was of the tribe of Ephraim.—vss. 1-5

These verses state that Micah stole eleven hundred shekels of silver from his mother. She, not knowing who had taken them, cursed the thief. Micah, apparently hearing this, may have feared the results of this curse, and returned the silver to her. She then lifted the curse and blessed her son for returning the silver, which she then decided would be used for an idolatrous purpose. She took two hundred shekels of silver and had two idols made from them. Micah put these idols in a shrine along with his household gods, or terraphim, and decided to establish a priesthood for his family. He made an ephod and consecrated one of his sons to be his priest. This arrangement was completely contrary to God’s law. No one from the tribe of Ephraim could be a priest, since God had established that order expressly through the tribe of Levi.

Thus, we see the state of decadence which existed at that time. The stolen money from one's parent was used for idols, and God's name was invoked to bless the thief. Additionally, individual shrines were erected to replace the proper Tabernacle worship, and Micah's son, who was not of the family of Aaron, was consecrated as a priest. Through all of this, Micah seemingly imagined that God would bless these arrangements.

One of the reasons it is important for the Lord's consecrated people today to reflect upon the experiences of natural Israel is for the purpose of avoiding some of the mistakes they as a covenanted nation made. These mistakes proved very costly, eventually causing them, as a nation, to lose out on the privilege of becoming the spiritual seed of Abraham. For spiritual Israelites, the New Testament also addresses in numerous places the sin of idolatry. One such example is this statement from the Apostle John: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." (I John 5:21) Spiritual idolatry would be the supplanting of God in our worship by giving some person or object a higher degree of reverence or affection than the Heavenly Father. Such a course is in direct opposition to our vows of consecration to God, in which we have covenanted to do his will only, and to put the worship of him first in our lives.

In seeking to extract lessons for our consideration, the idolatrous practices of natural Israel were illustrative of the various examples of similar worship manifested by many who have professed to be followers of Christ throughout the centuries since his First Advent. Even today, with the increased

light of truth available during the present harvest period of the Gospel Age, idolatry can affect those striving to follow in the footsteps of the Master. Although there are many possible situations wherein idolatry could become a problem in our lives, we will discuss just six examples which could befall us if we are not diligent in adhering to God's Word.

THE DESIRE FOR WEALTH

High on the list of potential idols in our lives might be a desire for wealth, or those things which money can buy. The Master speaks about the deceitfulness of riches, and we are told by the Apostle Paul that the love of money is the root of all evil. (Matt. 13:22; I Tim. 6:10) The temptation to pursue personal possessions is one which needs to be thwarted if we are truly committed to the service of the Heavenly Father. This, of course, is not to say that the possession of means would necessarily cause the Lord's people to stumble. The Scriptures admonish that we are required to provide things needful and decent for those who are dependent upon us, and to fail to provide for one's own would be tantamount to denying the faith, making one worse than an unbeliever. (I Tim. 5:8) Passages such as this are absolutely correct, and not out of harmony with other texts of Scripture which stress the importance of not seeking after increased riches to lavish upon ourselves. Therefore, if we find ourselves motivated with a desire to increase our goods for the sake of self-gratification and beyond "things needful," then surely such feelings should be a red flag, signaling possible danger.

One of Jesus' parables is especially pointed in this connection. "He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:16-21) We should recognize that we are stewards of all that the Lord has provided for us. In giving an account at the end of our course, we want to be able to manifest that we were faithful in using everything in the Master's service to the best of our ability. For the child of God, to "build greater" barns for the purpose of storing an abundance of temporal goods is not acceptable in his sight.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS AS IDOLS

There is the possibility of a danger in creating an idol out of leaders in the Gospel ministry. "I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19:10) It has been suggested that the Apostle John in this context represents, in particular, the members of the body of Christ living

at the end of the present Gospel Age. Applying this verse accordingly, we are thus admonished not to worship those used as messengers by God—those perhaps instrumental in nourishing us with God’s truth. We have appreciated the writings and labors of faithful brethren who have provided us with a clear understanding of the Bible. However, we should realize there may be a tendency—hence a danger—to worship the human instrumentalities more than the Creator who has used them in his service. We should value the faithful efforts of all who are engaged in the Lord’s service, but we should not exalt them as idols of worship.

The one worthy of our adoration and praise is the Heavenly Father, the Author of the plan of salvation. “In this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”—Isa. 25:6-9

IDOLIZING FAMILY MEMBERS

It is possible to idolize our families. From a human standpoint, it is very understandable that one should have a deep love for and an interest in the

well-being of his or her family. The institution of marriage which God ordained clearly proclaims the great love which a husband and wife should have for each other, and by extension, for the members of their family unit. In support of this, we read the following: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.”—Eph. 5:25-31

We have here the scripturally-given responsibility to love our family and provide for their needs. Nevertheless, our service to God and to Christ demands that we must put them first in our lives. In balancing these responsibilities, we must be obedient to the Scriptures which indicate what the proper course of discipleship should be for us as children of God. We are to obey the principles given to us by Jesus, when he said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [temporal necessities of self and family] shall be added unto you.” (Matt. 6:33) In approaching our responsibilities, there may at times appear to be a conflict between fulfilling our obligations to

God and that of meeting the needs of our family. In heeding the words of the Master, our reverence of the Heavenly Father, and obedience in putting him first, must be the determining factor regarding our activities, knowing that his providential care is over our temporal needs and those of our family.

PARTY SPIRIT AS AN IDOL

We could create an idol in the sense of adopting a party spirit. We note that various denominations and creeds of professed followers of Christ are championed, and their members identify themselves, according to the platform of beliefs which they promote. The Apostle Paul speaks in opposition to this concept, saying, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"—I Cor. 1:10-13

The matter of divisions has been addressed on many occasions by the Lord's consecrated people. There are, in certain cases, legitimate reasons why a separation among the Lord's people is sometimes necessary. Nevertheless, to the extent we recognize one another as brethren under the headship of our Master, there should be no manifestation of a party spirit which would tend to prohibit the fellowship

of one member in the body of Christ with another. There should be ample room for all who can appreciate the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines, to meet together for the mutual edification of one another, even when minor points are not viewed identically. There is a possibility of exercising a party spirit if, on the other hand, man-made barriers are erected where it is believed some consecrated brethren are unworthy of fellowship because of differences of viewpoint. This is contrary to the doctrine of the unity of the body spoken of by Paul.

COVETOUSNESS AS AN IDOL

Another idol is covetousness. "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." (Eph. 5:5) The Mosaic Law addressed the fact that the natural Israelite should not covet his neighbor's house, his neighbor's wife, or anything that is his neighbor's. (Exod. 20:17) Implicit in that commandment is that we should not be jealous of others because of what they have that we may not have. New Creatures guided by the Holy Spirit of love cannot covet anything which belongs to another. Jesus' words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," emphasize the generous spirit which should be welling up in the hearts of all God's people.—Acts 20:35

Those seeking to follow in the Master's footsteps will see that the spirit of service is the spirit of discipleship. Their desires should be to develop the fruits and graces of the Spirit, rather than coveting anything that would lead to self-exaltation.

A covetous spirit may be manifested even if it does not relate to material goods. There was contention which broke out among the disciples on Jesus' final night here on earth as to who would be the greatest among them. If such envy or jealousy, a sure mark of covetousness, should enter into a believer's heart because of a desire for recognition which has been given to another, there needs to be a cleansing of the mind and heart so the proper spirit of love and humility will be regained. "Love worketh no ill," and "is kind; [love] envieth not." (Rom. 13:10; I Cor. 13:4) To the extent that we can appreciate both the temporal and spiritual prosperity of others, and rejoice in their being blessed and used of God, we will have evidence that the idol of covetousness has not been erected in our hearts.

SELF—THE GREATEST IDOL

A final idol for consideration is self. The sinful tendencies of our fallen flesh are easily entrenched in the mind, in imaginations, and in thoughts. Sometimes it is a little pride, or selfishness, or the adherence to superstitions or false doctrines, which have been handed down which need to be discarded. Only the Holy Spirit and the influence of God's Word can cast down imaginations, ignorance, unholy ambitions, speculations, and every form of thought which would be detrimental to the New Creature's growth and development. High mindedness, caused by a desire to be recognized by others, to shine out among fellow creatures, to be well thought of, to receive the empty honors of the earth, to have influence, or to be held in esteem, either by the

world or the brethren, is part and parcel of the fallen nature. These must be striven against as we hearken unto the Word of God. In considering the cost of discipleship and the need to deny self as footstep followers of the Master, it is important to emulate his course while he was here on earth. Jesus' faithfulness in doing his Father's will resulted in his humiliation, even unto death—the death of the cross. His footstep followers who are similarly faithful in “taking up their cross,” will also experience the world's disdain, but will ultimately prove acceptable in God's sight, and receive exaltation “in due time.”

Here is another Old Testament admonition that is relevant to the followers of Christ even today. “Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.” (Josh. 24:22,23) Joshua recognized it would take great resolve and determination for the Israelites to truly forsake all other gods and worship the LORD exclusively. This was despite the fact that they had gained many victories over their enemies. However, there still remained adversaries around them to be conquered. Even as Joshua spoke to the Israelites in the foregoing passage, it appeared there were lingering inclinations towards idolatry. As spiritual Israelites, whether we have been in the narrow way a long time or a short while, the Adversary, as a roaring lion, is seeking to devour us, and we must be watchful if we are to overcome the influence of any idols that

may invade our consecrated lives. It is, therefore, a lifelong battle to conquer every tendency towards spiritual idolatry.

There were many admonitions given to natural Israel to render service to the LORD alone, and not to any other gods. Seeing that these illustrations were given as examples for spiritual Israel, we are forewarned that there are potential snares which could entrap us if we are not vigilant. These include a desire for material things or wealth, idolizing leaders among our fellowship whose labor and service we value, and idolizing members of our family because of our personal love for them. Manifesting a sense of party spirit towards a particular group of the Lord's people, demonstrating covetousness which can lead to envy or jealousy, and worshipping self which seeks to be exalted in the eyes of others—these all are to be avoided. Rather, let us always reverence the Creator only, and not any other creature, earthly treasure, or association, bearing in mind the following admonition: “Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.”—Ps. 29:2 ■



2013 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 P.M. on Sunday, March 24, 2013.

Statistical Report

For the year ended September 30, 2012

THE DAWN IS pleased to provide this annual report to our readers. It is a pleasure to have continued the work in which so many have cooperated during the past year. During the fiscal year 2012, the Dawn was once again able to increase its witness work as compared to the prior year. Total revenues were 26% above budget for the year, and operating expenses were 8% above budget. Witnessing expenses for the year were 24% under budget, but 18% greater than the previous year. In total, we had a net loss, excluding bequests, of \$215,438. The table [next page] shows receipts and expenditures for the past year.

We have budgeted to increase witnessing work in 2013 by an aggregate of about 33%, but to limit to no more than \$350,000 any reduction in total cash and reserves during the year. Further increases in witnessing efforts will be considered if revenue or bequests exceed budgeted amounts.

The Truth which was preached by the apostles and others in the Early Church is still being declared today, as the harvest work continues to be done. The faith once delivered unto the saints is proclaimed by faithful children of God who are willing to sacrifice time and energy witnessing it far and wide. The Dawn utilizes various media to

Income	Receipts	Expenditures
All revenue, excluding bequests	<u>\$345,467</u>	
Expenses		
Radio (domestic and foreign)		\$ 89,982
TV (includes spots and recordings)		31,158
Other Media and Internet		64,444
Pilgrim Service (domestic and foreign)		3,468
Other Foreign Support		10,361
Shipping/Mailing (domestic and foreign)		65,182
Outside Printing		6,904
Shop Operating Expense		47,858
Plant Operating Expense		140,327
House Operating Expense		<u>101,221</u>
Total Expenses		\$560,905
Less Income	<u>345,467</u>	
Net Operating Loss, excluding bequests	<u>\$(215,438)</u>	

proclaim the message of truth, including television, radio, 30-second commercial spots, the Internet, streaming electronic media, and a variety of magazines, almanacs, and other printed media. The value of these efforts is attested to by the fact that many responses continue to be received. The Dawn processed over 5,500 literature orders during the past year from these responses.

The Dawn continued its overseas witness work during the past year. Efforts in the Philippines, Brazil, Columbia, Ukraine, and various countries in Europe saw increased activity in 2012. Translation of numerous booklets into the French language was done, and a few booklets are also available now in the Chinese language, as is Volume One of *Studies in the Scriptures*. The Dawn recorded lecture service and Dawn video service continue their work, and the Dawn web page brings in

many requests for literature from around the world. In the past twelve months the web page had 2.2 million “hits.”

Hope booklets continue to be provided to funeral directors in the United States, as well as to individual ecclesias, bringing a message of comfort to those who have lost their loved ones in death.

The *Dawn Devotional Radio* Internet radio station at *Live365* continues to provide witnessing and truth programs 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, around the world. Since its launch in November 2006, individuals have listened to the station for over 11,000 hours. The average listener tunes in about one hour per occasion.

In 2012, the Dawn continued its keyword advertising on Google and Microsoft for 35 booklets in English and 12 booklets in Spanish. The number of individuals responding by either reading a booklet online, downloading a PDF version of a booklet, or requesting a copy of a booklet be mailed to them, was 36,083 for English and 39,682 for Spanish. In total, this represents an increase in responses of 40% from the previous year. Recently, the Dawn began to advertise French-language booklets, and plans to add Portuguese and German-language booklets in the coming year.

During the past year, the Dawn completed a reprinting of *Daily Heavenly Manna and Songs in the Night* as a new combined book. Each day’s “Manna,” “Songs in the Night,” and lined area for recording birthdays and other special occasions, appear on facing pages throughout, so that the day’s morning and evening readings are conveniently located together. A sewn-in bookmark is

also provided as an easy method for locating each day's readings. This new edition has a hard, gold-lettered cover, with sewn bindings, matching the design and color of the new library edition of *Studies in the Scriptures* produced in 2011.

A number of additional new books and booklets were produced in 2012, including: *Our Lord's Teachings by Parables*, *The Holy City, Paradise*, and *Has Christianity Failed?* A revised edition of the booklet *Spiritualism—Its Claims* was also produced. For 2013, the Dawn plans to produce several more new items of literature, including the titles, *Searching the Scriptures*, *Activities of the Apostles*, and *The Earth Abideth Forever*.

Various improvements were made at the Dawn's facilities during the past year. At the Dawn home, a number of repairs were made, both inside and outside the house, as well as the replacement of two air conditioners. At the Dawn plant, the electrical system received a major upgrade, providing increased efficiency and safety to day-to-day operations. Repairs in the office area were also done; upgrades to the heating system were installed; and two air conditioners were replaced.

In summary, we are thankful for the many willing hands and hearts of brethren throughout the world which have assisted directly and indirectly with the work of the Dawn during the past year. Without this help, the work could not continue. Let us rejoice in whatever privilege of service our Heavenly Father may entrust to us, individually and collectively, and let us continue to look for his guidance and blessing as daily we seek to know and do his will. ■

General Convention Bulletin

July 20-25, 2013

THE 2013 GENERAL CONVENTION returns once again to the facilities of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Air conditioned hotel-like rooms with private bathrooms in the Living-Learning Center (LLC), family-style air conditioned apartments with private bathrooms (APTS), and housing with two rooms sharing one bathroom (not air conditioned) in other facilities will be available on campus. A child may sleep on a bedroom floor at no charge in his own sleeping bag if both beds are occupied. If a child is alone in a bedroom sharing the bathroom with other adults, the double occupancy rate will apply to all family members.

All room and meal costs for children 12 years old or younger will be paid by the convention. In addition, 100% of the cost of those from ages 13 through 17 will be refunded if the young person attends at least 75% of the studies for his or her age group. This subsidy does not cover meals paid in cash at the door.

The convention theme text is taken from the words of Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Additionally, a panel will consider "How to Handle Adversity in our Fellowship;" dialogues will be held on "Beloved, think it not strange . . ." (I Pet. 4:12,13), and "How God's

Attributes Work within the Church;” three short talks will be presented on “What doth the LORD require of thee, . . . to do justly, . . . to love mercy, . . . to walk humbly with thy God;” and a discussion will take place concerning what constitutes “strong meat” in Hebrews 5:12-14.

A complete pricing table and registration form is provided for your convenience immediately following this announcement. We encourage you to register early. Advance payment is not required. We hope that you will begin to make plans now to attend this year’s General Convention. ■

	Ages	18 & up	***13-17
Breakfast		\$7.00	\$6.00
Lunch		9.00	8.00
Dinner		12.00	11.00
Total, three meals		\$28.00	\$25.00
Lodging (per night)			
**dbl occ (LLC or APTS)		\$35.00	\$30.00
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)		\$30.00	\$28.00
**single occ (LLC)		\$65.00	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)		\$35.00	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
**dbl occ (LLC or APTS)		\$360*	\$325*
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)		\$230*	\$195*
**single occ (LLC)		\$520*	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)		\$270*	n/a
If no breakfasts, deduct—*\$35 **Air conditioned ***100% of these costs will be refunded if the young person attends 75% of the studies for his/her age group			

General Convention Registration

330 Jasmine Road—Casselberry, FL 32707

E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com (407) 670-4189

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 19, 2013				
Saturday, 20th				
Sunday, 21st				
Monday, 22nd				
Tuesday, 23rd				
Wednesday, 24th				
Thursday, 25th				
Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals				<input type="checkbox"/>
or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts)				<input type="checkbox"/>
Check: <input type="checkbox"/> private bath or <input type="checkbox"/> shared bath				
<input type="checkbox"/> double occupancy <input type="checkbox"/> single occupancy				
<input type="checkbox"/> interested in APTS				
Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)				
Address:				

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

M. J. Balko

Atlanta, GA January 20

K. Humphreys

Anglesea, Australia
January 25-28

E. Blicharz

Louisville, AL January 27

R. Goodman

Louisville, AL January 27

OBITUARIES

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

Brother Phillip Otaunu Kwale, Nigeria—November 16. Age, 94

Sister Iola Jackson, Vancouver, BC, Canada—November 20. Age, 85

Sister Audrey Dunn, San Luis Obispo, CA—November 30. Age, 93

Sister Joann Bieniak, Los Angeles, CA—December 7. Age, 76

Sister Lynn Murray, San Luis Obispo, CA—December 11. Age, 72

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

—Romans 14:19

CONVENTIONS

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

PHOENIX CONVENTION, January 19-21—La Quinta Inn Phoenix North, 2510 W. Greenway Road, Phoenix, AZ 85023. Phone: (602) 993-0800. Contact J. Zardja, PO Box 8123, Surprise, AZ 85374. Phone: (602) 363-2612

AUSTRALIA CONVENTION, January 25-28—Wilkin Baptist Camp, 57 Noble Street, Anglesea, Vic. 3230, Australia. Contact G. Smith. E-mail: graemedawn@gmail.com

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, January 27—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91504. Contact J. Wojcik, 12807 Elkwood Street, North Hollywood, CA 91605. Phone: (818) 872-6253

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 15-17—Holiday Inn Express, 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821. Contact J. Freer, 8012 Vintage Way, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Phone: (916) 879-4655

NIGERIAN SEMINAR, February 22-24—Obudi Agwa Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact: C. Egbu, #2 Darlington Street, Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. E-mail: egbucaje@gmail.com

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 2-4—Howard Johnson Hotel, 230 West State Road 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Hotel reservations, phone: (407) 862-4455. Specity "Florida Bible Students" for special rate. Deadline for special rate is February 18. Other information, contact E. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

FRESNO PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 8-10—(New Location) Holiday Inn Fresno Airport, 5090 East Clinton Way, Fresno, CA 93727. Contact R. Evans, 3084 Magnolia Avenue, Clovis, CA 93611. Phone: (559) 291-4710

GREATER NEW LONDON PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 10—Society Road, East Lyme, CT. Contact V. Grillo. Phone: (860) 823-7099 or E-mail: millennialview@sbcglobal.net

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 16,17—Quality Inn-Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48083. Hotel reservations, phone (248) 689-7500. Specify “Detroit Bible Students” for special rate. Other information, contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, March 29-31—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. For hotel reservations, contact S. Thomassen by March 18. Phone: (505) 268-8170 or Email: srbt@juno.com

AGWA CONVENTION, March 30—Obudi Agwa Owerrri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact B. Obiukwu. Email: abiblestudecc@yahoo.com

NEW YORK CONVENTION, April 14—Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact A. Williams. Phone: (718) 261-3053 or Email: austin@osnetinc.com

BOISE CONVENTION, April 26-28—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main Street, Boise, ID. Contact D. Allers, 7558 W. Hathaway Lane, Boise, ID 83714, by April 7. Phone: (208) 375-6873

*Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.*

*Blest are the sons of peace,
Whose hearts and hopes are one,
Whose kind designs to serve and please
Through all their actions run.*