

The Dawn

Herald of Christ's Presence



The DAWN

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How God Answers Prayer

*“After this manner
therefore pray ye:
Our Father which
art in heaven,
Hallowed be
thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done
in earth, as it is
in heaven.”*
—Matthew 6:9,10

IN THIS SECOND PART OF

our consideration of this important subject, we will examine further many of the important details contained in The Lord’s Prayer. In particular, we will look at how this prayer will be answered in God’s coming kingdom on earth. The earthly kingdom of God, according to the Scriptures, will bless all people and provide answers to millions of heartfelt prayers which have been uttered down through the centuries.

“NO MORE DEATH”

Sickness and death have resulted from the sin of our first parents, and are among the evils which God has promised to destroy. Shall we, then, pray for health, and ask the Lord to save the lives of those near and dear to us who may have been stricken with serious illness? It is proper to humbly

petition God for such things, but it should always be with the understanding that we want the Lord's will to be done. It should also be with the knowledge that it may not be his will to grant health and life to all those for whom we pray.

These blessings, for which so many have prayed, will be made available for all during the period of Christ's kingdom. The Scriptures tell us that then all sicknesses and diseases will be cured. In that day, "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick," wrote Isaiah. (Isa. 33:24) Describing some of the blessings of the coming kingdom, Paul wrote that Christ will 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) When in vision the Apostle John saw the kingdom of God established on the earth, he discerned that as a result there would be "no more death, ... neither shall there be any more pain."—Rev. 21:4

When we pray for health and life, let us try to grasp the meaning of this much grander provision the Creator has made. It is his plan to grant these blessings, not merely to us and to our loved ones, but to all of mankind who will seek them through humility and obedience during the thousand years of Christ's reign. This is what is embodied in the prayer made by millions over the past two thousand years, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6:10

"FROM THE DISTANT LAND OF THE ENEMY"

God's ways, and the provisions he has made for his creatures, are always much better than those conceived by human wisdom. We pray for health,

protection, and peace, but who has ever thought of praying that their beloved dead be restored to them? God, in his plan, has gone beyond what most have presumed to pray for. He has promised to bring back the dead and reunite them with their families, friends and loved ones!

Death, the great enemy of all mankind, has been especially on the minds and hearts of people in this country recently. No doubt every reader of this article is aware of, and has in his own way, mourned concerning the recent tragedy in Texas, in which at least 135 people, including more than 35 young children, were swept away and killed as a result of the floods that occurred on July 4th, with some people still missing. Such tragedies beg lots of questions, perhaps the most-repeated being, "Why did God permit this"?

Not only is there this recent calamitous event, but down through the ages, how many parents have been heartbroken over the loss of a precious little one. Just such a tragedy is referred to in the Bible by the Prophet Jeremiah. It involved a devoted mother named Rachel. Jeremiah wrote, "A cry is heard in Ramah—deep anguish and bitter weeping. Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted—for her children are gone;" but the Lord then says, "Do not weep any longer, for I will reward you, ... Your children will come back to you from the distant land of the enemy."—Jer. 31:15,16, *New Living Translation*

These poetic words of the prophet paint two distinctly different pictures. First is portrayed the fact that death is mankind's greatest enemy, and beginning with Adam and every generation since,

all people have entered the “distant land” of death, that greatest of all enemies. The second picture painted by the prophet clearly shows what God intends to do for his beloved creation. It is his plan, assured and guaranteed by his Holy Word, to restore to life all who are in the “distant land” of death. This certain promise is implied in our petition, “Thy kingdom come,” for during Christ’s kingdom all who are in their graves, in the condition of death, shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth.—John 5:28,29

The raising of mankind back to life is described by the Apostle Peter as “restitution,” which means “restoration.” He tells us that following the Second Coming of Christ there shall be “times of restitution of all things,” promised by all God’s holy prophets since the world began.—Acts 3:20,21

UNDER VINE AND FIG TREE

Many pray for wealth, or at least for economic security. There is often a measure of fear and uncertainty on the part of nearly everyone as they face their later years. Will we be financially secure when we reach the age when it is no longer possible for us to earn a living? It is understandable that anyone who believes in God and thinks of him as one who loves and cares, should look to him in prayer respecting the need of financial security.

We know, of course, that there are millions of people in the world who are not financially secure. There are also millions who are literally starving and without proper food, clothing, and shelter. God loves all of his human creation, and while we would appreciate it if he blessed us and others with a

more favorable situation in life, is it not better to rejoice in the loving provision he has made to care for all the poor and needy in his own due time and way? This is what he has promised to do!

In God's promises the thought of economic security is symbolized by the idea of dwelling under one's own "vine" and "fig tree." The prophet declares that everyone shall thus be blessed, and God's provision will be so complete that in his kingdom fear will be removed because "none shall make them afraid."—Micah 4:4

In the prophecy of Isaiah, a similar assurance is given us concerning God's blessings for the world in the age to come. This prophet of God tells us that then they shall not build houses for others to inhabit, and they will not plant and another eat, but the people shall long enjoy the works of their hands. They will enjoy the fruit of their labor forever if they continue to obey the righteous laws of the kingdom, which then will be ruling the world.—Isa. 65:21-25

This chapter of Isaiah's prophecy indicates that the blessings of God in that kingdom age will be poured out upon the people in answer to their prayers. "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." (vs. 24) This has not been the experience of the vast majority so far, because God's due time has not yet come to extend the favors for which they have asked, and because he knows their experiences with adversity will help them to appreciate the blessings he will provide for them throughout the eternal years.

When God's kingdom is established, how different it will be. The blessings the dying race longs for

will then become available even before they think of praying for them. “Before they call, I will answer.” When they do learn to ask him for his bounties, the answers to their prayers will be so real and immediate that it will seem as though they came before the petitioner had finished his prayer. “While they are yet speaking, I will hear.”

“OUR DAILY BREAD”

The answer to the prayer, “Thy kingdom come,” includes many material blessings for which devout people of the world customarily pray, but so often fail to receive. We rejoice that the time is coming when these legitimate material blessings will begin to flow to “all the families of the earth,” as God promised Abraham. (Gen. 12:3) Meanwhile, it is well to consider how God answers the prayers of his consecrated people now, those who have the privilege of addressing him as “Our Father which art in heaven.”—Matt. 6:9

These, more earnestly than any others, have continued to pray for God’s kingdom to come. At the same time they have had the privilege of asking God for their own immediate daily needs, since Jesus taught them to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.”—vs. 11

This is a very moderate request, and when made in the proper spirit, is acknowledgment that the Lord knows best what our daily needs may be, and that we will be satisfied with whatever provision he considers wise to make. Furthermore, for those who are walking in the sacrificial footsteps of Jesus, it is important to recognize that our spiritual needs are more important by far than the

material. Bread is used in the Scriptures to symbolize Truth—the Truth of the Gospel, of God’s Word, and of his wonderful plan. God has promised to feed us abundantly with this “bread of life.” (John 6:35) Thus we can pray with full assurance, knowing that our petitions are primarily for the spiritual food which he has promised, and therefore in harmony with his will.

“AS WE FORGIVE”

“Forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.” (Matt. 6:12, *NLT*) This portion of The Lord’s Prayer can be uttered sincerely only by those whose hearts are filled with the same spirit of love which prompted our Heavenly Father to send his Son into the world to be the Redeemer and Savior of mankind. This love provides for the forgiveness of sinners, who have trespassed against God by disobeying his laws. He is willing to forgive us, but only on the condition that we have the proper heart attitude toward those who sin against us. Certainly this is a searching test of our sincerity.

God forgives his people because he considers that their Adamic imperfections are covered by the merit of the redeeming blood of Christ. (Isa. 61:10; Rom. 4:7,8) This means that the one who prays is a wholehearted believer in Christ, whose acceptance of their Redeemer is so unreserved that he has given up all else to follow his Master. Only such can go to God in prayer, asking forgiveness in Christ’s name.

“DELIVER US FROM EVIL”

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” (Matt. 6:13) The first temptation mentioned in the Bible was that of mother Eve. She

was tempted by the fallen Lucifer, through the serpent, to disobey the law of God. The Scriptures designate the transgression of God's law as sin, and the word temptation is used to describe any effort, allurements, or enticement to sin. The Devil is the greatest of all tempters, and he uses many and various agencies by which to present his sinful appeals to those he endeavors to lure away from God and into the paths of unrighteousness.—I Pet. 5:8,9

In total contrast, "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man," wrote James. (James 1:13) This means that we can depend upon God that he will never lead us into temptation to do evil. Thus in our prayers we can claim this assurance.

How hope-inspiring is the distinction to this: "Deliver us from evil." The Devil, the arch-deceiver, has throughout the centuries exerted his influence upon man, and especially upon the people of God, to alienate them from their Creator. The result has been tragic—a world largely controlled by sin and selfishness, "this present evil world." (Gal. 1:4) However, God has promised deliverance from "the snare of the fowler," and from the evil which the fowler has engendered in the world.—Ps. 91:3

God's promises of deliverance are of personal concern to all who are following in the footsteps of Jesus, for they assure such that Satan will not be able to ensnare nor entrap them. As individuals, God delivers us daily from Satan's pitfalls of error and sin. "The angel of the LORD," wrote the psalmist, "encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Ps. 34:7) What a reassuring promise, and how glad we are to claim it as our own when we pray, "Deliver us from evil."

There is a still larger deliverance for the people of God, for the entire church of Christ in the “first resurrection” is to reign with Christ. (Rev. 20:4,6) Jesus said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his true church. (Matt. 16:18) In fulfillment of this promise, the gates of hell—the death condition—will be opened wide, and all who have suffered and died with Christ will be released from death, and will be exalted to glory to reign with him throughout the thousand years of his kingdom.

The true disciples of Christ have known that this deliverance would not come until he returned. Paul understood this and wrote that a “crown of righteousness” had been laid up for him, and to all who love Christ’s appearing, to be received at “that day.” The Apostle John also wrote of those who would be “faithful unto death” and then receive a “crown of life.”—II Tim. 4:8; Rev. 2:10

In Jesus’ great prophecy concerning this end of the age, in which he identifies many of the conditions in the world today, he said to his disciples, “When ye see these things,” ... “then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption [Greek: deliverance] draweth nigh.” (Luke 21:31,28) The fact that “these things” foretold by the Master signaling the near approach of the church’s deliverance from this present evil world are now discernible in the daily parade of news, gives us confidence that very soon the last remaining ones of Christ’s true followers will be delivered, exalted to “glory and honour and immortality” with him.—Rom. 2:7

Then the blessings of God’s much prayed for kingdom will begin to flow out to a suffering and

dying humanity. Revelation 1:18 states that Christ has “the keys of hell and of death,” and he will use those keys to unlock the prison house of death in his Father’s kingdom.—Ps. 146:5-7; Isa. 42:6,7

Thus we pray, “Deliver us from evil,” not only because we are longing to be free from an evil world, but also because we know the answer to this petition will mean the answer to our other petition, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” Even that part of Christians’ prayers which mean most to them is at the same time unselfish in outlook, since it also contemplates rich blessings for all mankind.

These are the prayers God is pleased with; that is, unselfish prayers. While God is pleased when his people seek individual guidance, forgiveness, and spiritual strength from him, he also wants them to be interested in all whom he loves, namely the entire world of mankind. We show our interest in his plan for blessing the people when we pray, “Thy kingdom come,” for it will be through that kingdom that he will provide a “feast of fat things” for all people. It will be in that kingdom also that death will be swallowed up in victory, and tears wiped from off all faces.—Isa. 25:6-8; Rev. 21:1-5

Above all, let us continuously thank God for his love that made provision for the eternal joy of all. Let us not only praise him individually in our prayers, but also tell the whole world about his love. Tell them that through Christ provision has been made for them to live, and that soon his kingdom will provide peace through “The Prince of Peace,” and health and life for all through the Redeemer and Savior of the world.—Isa. 9:6,7 ■

“Here Am I; Send Me”

Key Verse: *“I heard
the voice of the
Lord, saying,
Whom shall I send,
and who will go for
us? Then said I,
Here am I;
send me.”
—Isaiah 6:8*

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 6:1-8

THE PROPHET ISAIAH WAS given an extraordinary vision and received a glimpse into the heavenly throne scene. He saw Almighty God seated in glory, surrounded by the seraphim and other angelic beings who cried out continually, “Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.” (Isa. 6:3) This emphasizes the infinite purity and sep-

arateness of God. He is unlike any other—set apart, beyond compare, and morally perfect. The earth, though fallen, still bears witness to his transcendence.

Continuing to describe his vision, Isaiah said, “The posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”—vss. 4-7

Our Key Verse asserts Isaiah’s positive response to God’s inquiry. The prophet willingly declared that he would proclaim a judgment message against the rebellious

Israelites, who as a covenanted people failed to render obedience in their conduct to the Heavenly Father. In applying this principle to our lives today, devoted believers will surely volunteer to use their talents in sharing the good news that a kingdom of righteousness will soon bring hope, joy, and peace to all.

In considering the overall lessons from this study here are a few. A reverential attitude toward the Creator and his arrangements should always be manifested. Believers should not be casual in their approach to worship. Promptness in attending spiritual gatherings, preparation of the heart to attain the appropriate meditative state, listening attentively to the services instead of allowing the mind to wander to other subjects, and even singing hymns of praise in a hearty and thank-worthy manner, all contribute to the type of decorum that should be in evidence when approaching the Heavenly Father.

Perhaps rather than to give a set of rules for conduct in terms of reverencing God, let us consider the following: “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. ... Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many.”—I Cor. 10:23,31,33

There are many more specific illustrations which demonstrate what reverence for God would entail. We should seek “first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,” and we can do this by our obedience to all the admonitions set forth in Scripture by Christ and the New Testament writers. (Matt. 6:33) Let our epitaph reflect the fact that we heeded the counsel of James 1:22,25 and were “doers of the word, and not hearers only, ... being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work.” ■

Hezekiah's Passover Proclamation

Key Verse:

“Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel.”

—II Chronicles 30:1

Selected Scripture:
II Chronicles 30:1-27

the people. (II Chron. 30:2-17) Thus, according to the Law, the Israelites were purified in order that they might properly keep the feast.—Exod. 12:15-20

“Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD. And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled

KING HEZEKIAH BEGAN

his reign in Judah at the age of twenty-five. Early in his reign, and as affirmed in our Key Verse, he invited all the Israelites to Jerusalem for the purpose of commemorating the Passover, which had long been neglected.

The general religious disorder was such that this required annual celebration had not been observed in the nation according to the Law's instructions for a long period of time. Thus, King Hezekiah indicated that it should be reinaugurated, with the proper arrangements carried out respecting the cleansing of

the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites. For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified: therefore, the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the LORD.”—II Chron. 30:15-17

These generous actions from King Hezekiah reflect his own faith in God and his desire to ensure that the offerings made were plentiful and pleasing to the Lord. The Levites and priests praised the people for their willingness to seek the Lord and participate in the feasting and sacrifices. (vss. 25-27) This recognition from the religious leaders further reinforces the idea of unity and collaboration in worship. The revival of true religion inaugurated by Hezekiah did not end with the Passover. Additionally, it filled the people with zeal for the true worship of the Lord, to give liberally for the support of the priests as well as Levites, leading to a strong movement against every form of idolatry throughout Judah.—II Chron. 31:1-6

As a consequence, there was a general destruction of idols out of the land, and a cutting down of the high places, which had been devoted to the licentious worship of Baal. The result of this proper turning of the people to the Lord brought to them and to their king great earthly blessings, in harmony with God’s covenant made with that nation. The king became very rich, and the people also, so that their tithes and offerings to the Lord were not only sufficient for the supply of the priests and Levites, but far in excess of this, so that storehouses had to be built to receive the increase.—II Chron. 32:27-30

The themes of repentance, restoration, and revival in this narrative are found throughout the Bible and allude to the blessings mankind will experience during the coming kingdom of righteousness. How grateful we should be for the work to be accomplished during the “times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”—Acts 3:19-25 ■

The Arm of the LORD

***Key Verse: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?”
—Isaiah 53:1***

***Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 53:1-12***

THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

53 identifies in our Key Verse God’s willingness to forgive sin. It shows this by his intention to effect reconciliation to divine favor to Adam and his progeny through the “arm of the LORD”, Jesus Christ, even though the Master was rejected and crucified at the behest of

Israel’s leaders.

“For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”—Isa. 53:2-4

Jesus was a man of sorrows not because of any deficiency in his being. However, because of his perfection he could sympathize deeply with fallen humanity that he observed. His perfect sensibilities enabled him to enter deeply into the sorrows of the groaning and dying world of mankind. On many occasions during his ministry, he gave of his own vitality to heal those who were afflicted, thereby refreshing and restoring them at the

cost of his own personal strength, such as the healing of those who came to him for relief from disease or the casting out of unclean spirits.—Luke 6:17-19

Christ Jesus had an intimate relationship with his Heavenly Father and the affirmation of how much the Father loved him. (John 17:25,26) Thus it would seem logical to inquire why the Creator permitted his Son to undergo such tribulation in the flesh, especially since his death as a perfect man would provide the ransom price to bring back Adam and all of his race from the grave. During a walk on the road to Emmaus with two of his disciples the risen Lord commented on this very matter. He reminded them concerning the writings of Moses and all the prophets of the Old Testament. “He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”—Luke 24:25-27

Let us more fully appreciate the unfathomable love of God in giving his son to be a ransom for all, as well as the magnificent sacrifice Christ made in faithfully pouring out his soul unto death for the whole world of mankind. Another feature of this plan is the selection, training and final exaltation of a faithful few from among the redeemed race to become “partakers of the divine nature,” and “joint-heirs with Christ” in his kingdom and glory. (II Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:17) Thus, “he shall divide the spoil [the great reward] with the strong.”—Isa. 53:12

For his faithful bride, in accordance with this privilege granted him by the Heavenly Father, Christ left this gracious promise. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”—Rev. 3:21 ■

The Book of the Law Found

Key Verse: *“The king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.”*
—II Chronicles 34:31

Selected Scripture:
II Chronicles 34:15-33

JOSIAH BECAME THE king of Judah at the young age of eight. His grandfather, Manasseh, and his father, Amon, were both wicked rulers, and he ascended to the throne after Amon was assassinated by his own servants.—II Kings 21:19-24

As a godly individual, in the eighteenth year of his reign, Josiah raised money to repair the Temple, and during this period, the high priest found the Book of the Law. “Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan,

and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king’s, saying, Go, enquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is

found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.”—II Chron. 34:18-21

Promptly, Josiah sent commissioners to inquire of the Lord for himself as well as for others in Israel and Judah concerning the words of the book, since divine displeasure was upon them because their fathers failed to obey the Lord. Through the Prophetess Huldah, the king learned that many evils and curses, declared in the book as the punishment for such sin, would surely come upon the people because they had forsaken God’s law. The punishments must be inflicted, but the king, who had shown such a loyalty to God, would be preserved from the trouble in that it would not come at such a time and manner as to involve him.—vss. 22-30

Our Key Verse reveals that Josiah then made a covenant to keep God’s commandments as were recorded in the Mosaic Law. In addition, “he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.”—vs. 32

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.” (Ps. 19:7,8) These scriptural declarations may be understood only by those who have learned to appreciate the Word of God. His instructions deter from sin, encourage toward righteousness, give consolation in trouble, and provide strength as well as courage during this time of general fear. Surely, the result is that the people of God have much advantage every way respecting the present life. There is also the hope, the encouragement, and the prospect we have of the joys that await us if we remain faithful until the end of our course.—Rev. 2:10 ■

An Unction of the Spirit

“Thou anointest my head with oil.” **POURING OIL ON THE** head seems a far cry from

—*Psalm 23:5*

shepherding sheep, yet in reality it is not. It has been a common custom of shepherds for centuries to pour oil on the heads of their sheep, particularly at the close of the day or when they are weary from travel. To the sheep it is a welcome and refreshing service rendered them by the shepherd. In this custom we find a beautiful illustration of our Great Shepherd's care for us and the blessings which he bestows on our behalf.

Oil is used in the Scriptures as a symbol of the Holy Spirit—the invisible power and influence of God. (Acts 10:38) The anointing oil poured upon the heads of Israel's high priests pointed forward to the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit. The apostle says of him that he was anointed “with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Heb. 1:9) Paul also speaks of the anointing which we have received of God, while John refers to it as an “unction from the Holy One.” (II Cor. 1:21; I John 2:20) The term “unction”—derived from a Greek root word meaning

to smear or rub with oil, to consecrate—suggests lubrication and smoothness, so in this also there is an allusion to oil as symbolizing the Holy Spirit and what it accomplishes in our lives.

In this lesson recorded in Psalm 23 we might think of David as representing the entire Christ class, in which case his head would represent Jesus, our Head. (Col. 1:13,18) The statement, “Thou anointest my head with oil,” indicates what is elsewhere clearly taught in the Bible; namely, that the anointing of the Holy Spirit came first upon the Head of the Christ class, and since Pentecost has been received by the various body members only by virtue of the fact that they are counted as members of his body. We can therefore truly say to Jehovah, our Great Shepherd, “Thou anointest my head,” Christ Jesus. From Jesus, who is now our “good shepherd,” that anointing has reached us. (John 10:11,14) Thus we rejoice in the blessings which accrue through the anointing of the Holy Spirit we have received.

While the original anointing of the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus, each member of his symbolic body receives of the same anointing, as this emblematic “oil of gladness” runs down from the Head and covers the entire body. In conjunction with this, one of the primary scriptural lessons associated with the anointing of the Spirit is the divine commission to serve. The prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-3 relates to this, and it indicates that the entire Christ company is anointed to “preach good tidings,” and thus to “bind up the brokenhearted.”

With this divine authority to represent God in the earth comes also a wonderful assurance of divine

acceptance and approval. From this standpoint the anointing of the Holy Spirit illustrates the thought of comfort. Indeed, Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as a “Comforter” that the Father would give, “the Spirit of truth,” which would guide his footstep followers “into all the truth.”—John 14:16, 17,26; 15:26; 16:7,13, *Revised Version Improved and Corrected*

The Holy Spirit was a great comfort to Jesus, our Head. When it came upon him at the time of his baptism he heard the voice of his Heavenly Father from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:17) What greater comfort could be given to anyone than to be assured of divine sonship? This assurance afforded the Master strength for the trials through which he was called to pass. Forty days later, when Satan challenged the Master’s sonship, Jesus could and did resist him, for there was no doubt in his mind as to where he stood with his Heavenly Father. Additionally, when the anointing of the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus it enlightened him concerning his Father’s purposes and the part he was to have in them. The “heavens were opened unto him.”—vs. 16

Through the Holy Spirit Jesus was guided and strengthened for every step of the narrow way in which he walked. Since he is our Head the same comforting blessings of the Holy Spirit that filled him with joy will also be our daily portion. Jesus promised, in fact, that he would give his peace to his faithful followers. (John 14:27) This peace is an important part of the comfort which comes to us through the Holy Spirit. Many are the assurances of the Bible which give us confidence, courage, and

peace, despite the difficulties of the way as we walk in the steps of the Master.—Eph. 3:11,12; Ps. 31:24; Phil. 4:7

A very interesting summary of the blessings which accrue to us as Spirit-anointed followers of Jesus is presented in the 8th chapter of Romans. Opening the subject the apostle writes, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, ... who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (vss. 1,4) Notice that Paul is here speaking of those who are “in Christ Jesus.” This means that Christ Jesus is their Head, the one upon whom was poured the anointing of the Holy Spirit. To such as have him as their Head, there is no condemnation from the Heavenly Father if, as Paul says, they “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Here, as in practically every case of God’s promises, there is a condition attached to its fulfilment, which must be acted upon by faithful obedience in order that the assurance of the promise may properly belong to us. Indeed, to be assured that we stand approved before our Heavenly Father, that for us there is no condemnation, is indeed a rare blessing. We have learned by experience, observation, and from the testimony of the Scriptures, that “there is none righteous, no, not one.” (Rom. 3:10) We have learned also that God cannot look upon unrighteousness with any degree of tolerance. How wondrous, though, is the grace that is provided through Christ Jesus, that those who are in him, and are following the leadings of the Holy Spirit which has reached them through him, are not under condemnation!

Later in the eighth chapter of the Book of Romans the apostle emphasizes this thought with even greater force, saying, "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (vss. 33,34) How precious the thought that from God's standpoint there is no condemnation to the true Christian. It is the Heavenly Father, through the redemptive work of Christ, who has justified us freely from all sin. What difference, then, does it make as to who else may assume to condemn us, whether the Devil or his agents?

However, this condition of "no condemnation" is also dependent upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—that is, being filled and guided by God's holy influence and power. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God," writes Paul. Then he explains that we are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell" in us. (vss. 8,9) This means that we can please God if we have complied with the conditions. Those conditions are the full surrender of our own wills—a symbolic beheading of ourselves—and the acceptance of Christ as our Head, and then walking after the Spirit which we receive as a result of being in Christ.—Rev. 20:4

MORTAL BODIES QUICKENED

Paul writes further that "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:11) This quickening of our mortal bodies is an energizing of them for the service of

the Lord. The fallen flesh by nature does not incline toward spiritual things and shrinks from being sacrificed in the service of the Lord and of his people. However, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, received through our Head, Christ Jesus, our bodies are “quickened,” or stirred up, to serve the interests of God’s divine purpose and plan. The flesh may become “weary in well doing,” but if we continue to walk after the Spirit it will be revived, even as the sheep, when weary at the close of the day, were refreshed when the shepherd anointed their heads with oil.—Gal. 6:9

The apostle continues, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:14) It was when Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit that he heard the reassuring message from his Heavenly Father, “This is my beloved Son.” Likewise, now, if we are “in Christ Jesus,” and walk after the Spirit by which he was anointed, we have the assurance that we also are “sons of God.” This Spirit which we have received, Paul explains, is not one of “bondage again to fear,” but a Spirit that enables us to address our God as “Abba, Father.”—vs. 15

The Spirit itself,” continues Paul, “beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (vss. 16,17) How precious is this testimony, this “witness” of the Holy Spirit that we are the children of God. Yet note again the condition. This blessed witness of the Spirit is ours only “if so be that we suffer with him.”

The scriptural viewpoint of this can be readily understood. The Apostle Peter explains that the operation of the Holy Spirit in the minds of the Old Testament prophets caused them to testify concerning "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (I Pet. 1:11) Throughout his epistle Peter makes it plain that these foretold sufferings of Christ are participated in by his body members. It was this, then, that Paul had in mind when he wrote that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, "if so be that we suffer with him." That is to say, if we are in Christ Jesus, and partaking of his sufferings as a result of our laying down our lives in divine service, then the testimony of the Holy Spirit through the prophetic writings of the Old Testament applies to us. Thus we are assured that, like Jesus, we are the children of God, and if faithful, joint-heirs with him in the glorious coming kingdom of blessings.—Matt. 6:10

Peter reminds us that the Holy Spirit, through the prophets, not only testified concerning the sufferings of Christ, but also of the "glory that should follow." In keeping with this testimony, Paul writes, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"—that is, the promised "glory that should follow" the suffering.—Rom. 8:18

"For the creation," Paul further explains, "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God." (vs. 19, *Revised Standard Version*) We need only to reflect upon the many prophecies of kingdom glory that are to be found in the Old Testament, and to note the many promises of how that

glory is to be manifested for the blessing of all the families of the earth, to make us long for the time to come when, together with all the divine sons of God, it will be our privilege to manifest the glory of God to the eternal joy of all nations.

“ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER”

Those who, through consecration and the acceptance by God, have come into Christ, and are walking in accordance with the Holy Spirit by which they were anointed, have the assurance that they have been “called according to his purpose.” Of those thus called Paul writes, “We know that all things work together for good.” (Rom. 8:28) However, it requires a strong faith to be assured of this at all times and under all circumstances.

As our minds go back to the illustration of the shepherd and the sheep, we can imagine what difficulty the sheep would have—if they were capable of reasoning on the matter—to understand how some of the experiences of the day would be of benefit to them. If the shepherd was to lead them through a barren wilderness in order to reach green pastures beyond, or perhaps over rugged mountain passes to find refreshing waters, it would be difficult for the sheep to comprehend the necessity of the hardships thus imposed. Yet no matter how difficult the way, the shepherd would understand the necessity thereof; and, if the sheep could but grasp the thought, they would know that “all things” were working for their ultimate good.

Through faith we are able to understand what the sheep could not grasp; namely, that all the experiences through which our Good Shepherd is

leading us are for our very highest and eternal welfare. "We know" this, Paul wrote. The reason we know it is that we have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Under its blessed influence we have been enlightened to know something of the meaning of the trials of the narrow way. We may become bruised and weary from the hardships of the journey, but the anointing of our Head, which has reached us through him, soothes and comforts by making us realize that all things are working together for our eternal good.

Some of the "all things" are of course pleasant and refreshing. The Good Shepherd leads us beside "still waters," and he makes us to "lie down in green pastures." (Ps. 23:2) These blessed provisions are a delight to all the Lord's sheep. However, there are other experiences that are different. In these, too, our faith needs to see value, so that by them we are drawn closer to the Good Shepherd and made to realize more fully our dependence upon him. It is in this vein that Paul inquires, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ," our Good Shepherd? "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."—Rom. 8:35,36

Here the apostle has enumerated some of the truly trying experiences of the Lord's sheep, yet they should not be permitted to weaken our confidence in the wisdom and the tender loving care of our Good Shepherd. We may be "accounted as sheep for the slaughter," and if we were thinking according to the flesh we would likely decide under

such circumstances to cease following the Good Shepherd. Inasmuch, however, as we are walking “after the Spirit,” we should know that all the Lord’s sheep are to be engaged in sacrifice and service. Just as Jesus himself, our Head, was led by the Spirit to sacrifice, even unto death, so it is our privilege, now that he is exalted to glory and is our Good Shepherd, to follow in the footsteps of sacrifice and service which he so clearly outlined by his example.

Thus in all these things we are “more than conquerors,” gaining the victory through faith in Jehovah, the Great Shepherd; faith in God’s only begotten Son, Christ Jesus, the Good Shepherd; faith in the divine purpose and plan; and faith that if we carry out our consecration obediently, we shall ultimately “dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.” (Rom. 8:37; Ps. 23:6) Knowing this certain outcome of the “all things” which are working together for our good, we can say with the apostle that we too are, “persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”—Rom. 8:38,39

How thankful we are, then, for the anointing of our Head, and that as members of his body all the riches of divine grace involved in that anointing have come to us. “No good thing will he withhold” as long as we abide in him. (Ps. 84:11) All our needs will be supplied. Strength will be given through the Spirit of power. (II Tim. 1:7) We will be directed in the way in which we should walk. We will know

that “since God is for us,” nothing or no one can be successfully against us, for he is greater than all our enemies. (Rom. 8:31, *The Emphatic Diaglott*; I John 4:4) Truly, we can say with the psalmist that because our Great Shepherd has anointed our Head with oil, our “cup runneth over.”—Ps. 23:5 ■

Our Faithful Guide

*Holy spirit, faithful guide,
Ever near the Christian's side,
Gently lead us by the hand,
Pilgrims in a desert land.
Weary souls for aye rejoice,
While they hear the sweetest voice,
Whisp'ring softly Trav'ler come!
Follow me, I'll guide thee home.*

*Ever present, truest Friend,
Ever near thine aid to lend.
Leave us not to doubt and fear,
Groping on in darkness drear.
When the storms are raging sore,
Hearts grow faint, and hopes give o'er,
Ah, then whisper, Trav'ler come!
Follow me, I'll guide thee home.*

*When our days of toil shall cease,
Waiting still for sweet release,
Nothing left but time for prayer,
Waiting to be gathered there,
Wading deep the dismal flood,
Trusting still in Jesus' blood
Whisper sweetly, Trav'ler come!
Follow me, I'll guide thee home.*

—Hymns of Dawn

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“Over Against the Candlestick”

“The LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick.”
—Numbers 8:1,2

HOW OFTEN CHRISTIANS

find, as they study the Bible, that some apparently unimportant statement has attached to it a great depth of meaning. Such is the case with the words of our text. These instructions, given to Moses and Aaron concerning the Tabernacle arrangement, have a much deeper significance to us than they had to the people of Israel. “These things happened unto them for ensamples [Greek: *tupos*, or type]: and they are written for our admonition,” says the apostle. They are a great help as we endeavor to walk even as Jesus walked.—I Cor. 10:11

In Exodus 25:31-37, the candlestick, or lampstand, is described. It was a beautiful piece of work. The lamps were so arranged that each one would shed its light “over against”—that is, in front of—the candlestick shaft to show its beauty, and to provide

light for the activities taking place within the Holy compartment of the Tabernacle. The branches that held the lamps depended upon the central shaft of the lampstand for their support, and the light called attention to that importance.

Students of the Bible appreciate that the Tabernacle and its services were “a shadow of good things to come.” (Heb. 10:1) If the office of lighting the lamps is but a “shadow,” let us see if we can understand the larger lesson—the reality, as it were. We are informed by the Apostle Peter in I Peter 2:9, that we are to show forth God’s “marvelous light” of Truth. In Romans 14:8, the Apostle Paul further states, “Whether we live, we live unto the Lord.”

In Revelation 1:12,13,16,20, we read of a vision seen by John the Revelator: “I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot. ... And he had in his right hand seven stars.” The following explanation was given to John: “The seven stars are the angels [messengers] of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”

This is a beautiful picture of Christ and his church. Every true Christian is a “light bearer.” “Ye are the light of the world,” said Jesus. (Matt. 5:14) Only those who truly belong to Christ, and who are engaged as servants for the divine cause, are shown in the picture of the candlestick. The lamps were arranged that they were not to glorify themselves, but the shaft; so the Christian is not to live to

glorify himself but Christ. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves ... servants for Jesus' sake."—II Cor. 4:5

We see this illustrated in the life of the apostles. In Acts 3:1-17, we read of Peter and John healing the man born lame. "All the people" were inclined to worship Peter and John because of this miracle performed by Peter, but he denied that the healing was by their own power or holiness, saying it was on account of "the faith which is by" Christ, who had been crucified "through ignorance," on the part of the people.—vss. 12,16,17

Later, in Acts 14:8-18, after healing a man crippled in his feet, the people attempted to offer sacrifices to the Apostle Paul and Barnabas his companion, whom they thought to be gods come among them. However, Paul and Barnabas would accept none of their devotions. Instead they told the people of the great God who could do much greater things. Further on, in Acts 16:16-18, we read that Paul would not accept praise even from the devils. The apostles desired that their light should shine over against the candlestick only. They wanted Christ to be glorified.

Wherever the light of the true Christian shines it will give a testimonial to Christ. It never seeks to draw attention to itself, but always to their Lord and Savior. One of the finest evidences of followers of the Master is that always, in all that they are and do, they seek to glorify Christ. Like those lamps, they are ever showing forth the glory of the lampstand. They are careful to disclose that the light they are revealing is founded only on Christ, and is maintained by him.

What a picture those lamps reveal to us. The shaft—Christ—sustains and supports the lamps. The priest, also representing Christ, supplies the oil, figurative of the Holy Spirit. The priest lights the lamps and removes the dross from the wicks that would hinder them from burning brightly. This is what Paul meant when he said, “For to me to live is Christ.” (Phil. 1:21) It is all of Christ, by the authority given him of the Heavenly Father, Jehovah.

The Christian’s life is one of service, but all service must be done to the glory of God and his Son. It is important to realize that some service claimed to be done in Christ’s name is not acceptable to him. Matthew 7:22 warns us: “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Those addressed with such words were claiming to do work in Christ’s name, and yet he says they were workers of unrighteousness. If our service is not done wholly to glorify Christ and our Heavenly Father, we may be sure that either it is our fallen flesh or the influence of the world asserting itself.

There may be much so-called service done, and seemingly great results accomplished, yet the motive may be to attract attention and the honor of others. There may be great accomplishments in the eyes of men and yet no light shining “over against” the candlestick. Why is this? It is because attention is called to the work or to those engaged in the work, and not to Christ. Personalities and

human teachings are stressed instead of Christ. The light is not produced by the oil which the hand of the great High Priest supplies, hence the lamp-stand is not illuminated.

This points out an important lesson. There can be no light if there is no oil. Therefore, there can be no true teaching or service for the Lord without the aid of the Holy Spirit. Any light that shines towards human glorification is not glorifying Christ and, hence, will not be considered as emanating from the candlestick. The seven lamps which shone forth were not lit to show how beautiful they were, but rather that they might illuminate the shaft and the Holy of the Tabernacle.

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

Does being a Christian mean how much gain we can get for ourselves out of following Christ? That might be commendable to the extent that it is the spiritual blessings we seek. If, therefore, we are following Christ, many spiritual blessings should be our portion. Hence we should expect to enjoy these fruits of our Christian experience—love, joy, hope, peace, and other pleasant consequences. However, the Christian life means more than being recipients of divine blessings.

We are not to ask for nor should we expect material things in exchange for our service to God. Being a Christian, it is not a question of how much we can get, but how much we can give. Neither is it how much we can do, but how much Christ can do in and through and with us. Our Lord revealed what life meant to him when he said, "I delight to do thy will, O my God;" "I come to do thy will;"

“I do always those things that please him,” the Heavenly Father. (Ps. 40:8; Heb. 10:9; John 8:29) When Jesus had nearly completed his earthly work, he “lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, ... I have glorified thee on the earth.” (John 17:1,4) He so glorified God that he could say, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”—John 14:9

As we study the life of the Master, we note how it was filled with those rare virtues which characterized him as different from all others. What caused these rare qualities to be so abundant in his life? It was because he had continual access to the great source of all divine virtues. All these merits were filled with the rich fragrance of perfect fellowship with God, from whom the divine character flowed.

We have access to the same source, and because of this, from our lives should flow the same virtues. They will not be in the same abundance of sweetness that they flowed from Christ because of our weak, imperfect vessels, but flow they should. So, as our beloved Master lived to the glory of the Father, we should live to the glory of Christ and the Father. This is the real objective of every true Christian.—Rom. 15:5-7; Phil. 2:11; Rev. 1:5,6

CHRISTIAN JOYS

It has been said of some who have been successful in their ventures, amassed considerable wealth, and attained much fame, that they got all there was out of life. To a certain extent, this may be commendable provided it is merited. However, Christians are not depending on earthly things for joy because their chief joy is in Christ Jesus their

Lord, their partnership and fellowship with him, and with others of like joy. They can truly sing, "What, though created streams run dry, I have the fountain, still."

Jesus said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:15) To get "all there is out of life," as the saying goes, we may be robbing someone else; but if we put something worthwhile into life, we not only enrich ourselves, but we bless other lives also, and thus bring honor and glory to God and his Son, Christ Jesus.

In Washington, DC, there is a beautiful memorial to Abraham Lincoln. The lights are so arranged and adjusted that the figure of Lincoln stands out in bold relief. Thus it should be with faithful Christians. Their lives should be so ordered that they will reveal the likeness of Christ very clearly. Let us consider this matter carefully, and see that our lives are devoted wholly to Christ, and being "changed [Greek: transformed] into the same image from glory to glory."—II Cor. 3:18

This truth is illustrated to us in another way. Jesus said that the terms of our discipleship are: first, self-denial; second, cross-bearing; and third, obediently following him. (Matt. 16:24) We cannot be followers of Christ until we come to the place from which he started. When, through faith in the blood of Jesus, demonstrated by full consecration, we have been justified or made righteous in God's sight, then we can truly follow him.—Rom. 5:1,2; 12:1

Let us recall how this is pictured in the Tabernacle. There were two curtains. The first was called the "door" of the Tabernacle, or Tent of meeting.

(Exod. 26:36) This entrance to the Holy compartment is a fitting picture of the death of the human will and the beginning of a new life in Christ. Passing through this door, figuratively speaking, we enter into a new experience. Everything is changed. The Apostle Paul states the matter this way: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”—II Cor. 5:17

If we have come into this condition, we cease any longer to trust in the mind of the flesh, but rather submit ourselves to the mind of Christ. (I Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5) From this new standpoint, as we look straight ahead, “looking unto Jesus,” we see the second curtain, or veil, with its beautiful embroidery. (Heb. 12:2; Exod. 26:31-33) Looking steadfastly at the veil, its beauty should influence us to realize it as the entrance to the symbolic divine dwelling place. Such beauty should inspire us to develop the “peaceable fruit of righteousness” in our life—to become more Christlike day by day. (Heb. 12:11) As the passing of the first curtain shows our entrance into this new life in Christ, based on our acceptance of the divine terms of discipleship—the passing of the second curtain will mean the fulfilling of those terms faithfully “unto death.” (Rev. 2:10) Indeed, even while dwelling symbolically in the Holy condition, our hope is “as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.”—Heb. 6:19

In the Holy of the Tabernacle, the lampstand was located on the south side of the compartment. North, in the Scriptures, often represents the heavenly perspective, and thus we might think of the south

as the earthly perspective. Because the lampstand is on the south side does not mean that that which it represents is earthly, but it might show it rather as recognized from the earthly viewpoint.

Every one of these lamps has a wick through which oil must flow in order to give light. Though the oil represents the Holy Spirit, which comes from God and is free from all impurities, the wick might well represent the humanity of the Christian which still exists even as they give forth light “over against the candlestick.”

In the process of giving light, carbon is sometimes produced that would interfere with the lamps’ bright shining, so the priest must trim the wicks. Thus we read that Aaron was to trim the lamps of the candlestick both in the morning and in the evening each day so that they would continue to shine brightly. (Exod. 30:7,8, *New American Standard Bible*) As we follow in the footsteps of Christ, there is evidence in our lives oftentimes of certain things that would hinder our being bright lights. Those experiences must be overruled by the High Priest of our profession to remove the carbon—the defects—by symbolically trimming the wicks of our lamps that they may shine in greater brilliance.

The Apostle Paul rejoiced to have such experiences. We, too, should “glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”—Rom. 5:3-5

The Bible will also serve to clear away the dross. It is sometimes likened to water that washes us

clean, the “washing of water by the word.” (Eph. 5:26) Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them through thy truth.” (John 17:17) Both by God’s Word and by the experiences of life we are made to shine more brightly that we may glorify God in our bodies. (I Cor. 6:20) This, then, is the purpose of our life as Christians, to so live that we may show forth the glory of God and of Christ and to thus shine “over against the candlestick.” ■

*“Your eye is like a lamp that provides light
for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole
body is filled with light. But when it is unhealthy,
your body is filled with darkness.*

*Make sure that the light you think you have
is not actually darkness.*

*If you are filled with light, with no dark corners,
then your whole life will be radiant,
as though a floodlight were filling you with light.”*

Luke 11:34-36, New Living Translation

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

SEPTEMBER 4—“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment.”—I John 4:18 (Z. ’03-329 Hymn 166)

SEPTEMBER 11—“Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”—Luke 14:27 (Z. ’03-345 Hymn 279)

SEPTEMBER 18—“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.”—Exodus 33:14 (Z. ’03-376 Hymn 108)

SEPTEMBER 25—“Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness [justification], and sanctification, and redemption [deliverance].”—I Corinthians 1:30 (Z. ’03-440 Hymn 168)

Reviving the Contrite

*“To this man will I
look, even to him
that is poor and of
a contrite spirit,
and trembleth
at my word.”
—Isaiah 66:2*

THE PROPHET ISAIAH

records the ultimate purpose our Heavenly Father has in establishing his kingdom of blessings to Israel and all nations, of which he speaks in Isaiah 66:10-12,22,23. In

our opening text, God also makes clear the type of individual he is looking for to be associated with his beloved Son, Christ Jesus, and sharing with him in the rulership of that righteous kingdom. These must first of all possess a disposition that is marked by having a “poor” and “contrite spirit.” God has been looking for those who could be molded and fashioned to his eternal will and purpose. They must also love and reverence his Holy Word of Truth. Reverence is the thought conveyed by the word “trembleth” in this verse.

THE BRUISED

The word “contrite” in our opening text is translated from a Hebrew word which means “stricken”

or “smitten.” It may thus fittingly point to individuals whose hearts are repentant in respect to their own shortcomings, and who acknowledge the lofty standards of the Most High God. Those who are contrite realize their own littleness, unworthiness, and imperfection, and are emptied of self-confidence and self-esteem. These specially called ones of God are thus more readily submissive to the direction of the divine will in their lives instead of their own. A heart that is contrite also has a quiet and deep sense of sorrow for that which is not in harmony with the standards of truth and righteousness. God’s promise is that he will revive the poor and contrite in both their spirit and their hearts. To such he is ever near to assist them in their walk in newness of life.

THE HUMBLE MINDED

The word “poor” in our Scripture relates to those who are humble-minded, lowly in spirit, and afflicted. Again, the prophet wrote, “Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”—Isa. 57:15

The great God of the universe inhabits eternity and is the one from whom all life has come and from whom all blessings flow. (Ps. 89:6-12; I Cor. 8:6) Yet, his ever watchful eye is directed toward those whom he has called from a sin-sick world and invited to share with our Lord Jesus in his future kingdom of truth and life for the benefit and blessing of his human creation. (Ps. 34:15; I Pet. 3:12)

They are the poor and contrite ones of this world. They love our Heavenly Father and eagerly search his wonderful “exceeding great and precious promises” as they have been recorded in his precious Word—the Bible.—II Pet. 1:4

REFRESHING

The word “revive” in Isaiah 57:15 indicates the giving of new breath and life to the Lord’s people. The Holy Spirit of God is designed to restore, refresh, and satisfy the very life of the true followers of Christ. It applies to those whose hearts are repentant, in total harmony with, and submissive to, the divine will.

The prophet wrote, “Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.” (Isa. 40:10,11) The Heavenly Father’s beloved Son, our Lord Jesus, is the “arm” of God in carrying out his will and purpose. He is also the Good Shepherd, who will feed his Father’s “little flock” with spiritual food and sustenance and guide them in the narrow way. Since the Day of Pentecost, Jesus has been gathering his sheep together into one fold and gently leading them in their Christian journey.—Luke 12:32; John 10:14,15

Isaiah also said that God would give strength to the faint of heart. “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”—Isa. 40:28-31

The promise that God would revive his poor and contrite people was also addressed by the Psalmist David. He wrote, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.” (Ps. 51:10-12) Exercising the “right spirit” within us begins in the mind. The renewing, or renovation, of our minds is a vital part of our Christian development as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.—Rom. 12:2; II Cor. 5:17

David then said, “O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.” (Ps. 51:15-19) Such “sacrifices of righteousness” are rich in holiness and fragrant in grace.

JESUS—THE ARM OF JEHOVAH

When our Lord Jesus humbly presented himself to his Heavenly Father in total consecration to the

doing of his will, he was baptized in the River Jordan by John the Baptist. In Matthew's record of the event, after Jesus had been lowered into the water, we read, "When he was baptized, [he] went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. 3:13-17

Having received the Holy Spirit from on high, and hearing his Father's wonderful words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Jesus was thus assured of his acceptance and the Father's loving care on his behalf. Afterward, he was in the wilderness where he fasted for forty days and nights and was tempted by Satan, the Devil. "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." (Matt. 4:1-11) Thus began the earthly portion of Jesus' work as God's holy arm.

A GREAT LIGHT

From the scriptural account, we read, "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."—Matt. 4:12-17

During our Lord's earthly sojourn, he taught his faithful disciples by way of symbols, parables, and prophetic language. Early in his ministry, and after an exhaustive day of ministering to the multitudes, Jesus retired with his disciples to a place where he could be alone with them. In his first message to them, he spoke of the lowly and contrite ones who would respond to his teachings.

WONDERFUL WORDS OF LIFE

We read in Matthew's Gospel account, "Seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:1-3) These wonderful words of life concerned the disciples' everlasting welfare. They were now prospective members of the future "kingdom of heaven," and Jesus emphasized the disposition that would help them make their calling and election sure. The "poor in spirit," the Master knew, will readily submit themselves to the divine will and discipline of an all-wise and loving Heavenly Father.

Jesus used the word "blessed" to point to the permanent comfort and joy that true Christians experience when they have attained a character that is in harmony with our loving Heavenly Father. It is the blessed hope of our high calling in Christ Jesus of which Paul spoke in his letter to Titus. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”—Tit. 2:11-13

HE COMFORTS THE MOURNERS

Jesus then told his disciples, “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” (Matt. 5:4) He was addressing those who are in sorrow and are especially grieved in spirit. To comfort suggests solace, to be consoled or encouraged. This blessedness applies to those who, because of their own difficult experiences, possess a sympathetic nature and who are touched with compassion for the sorrow and pain of others.

This distinguishing mark of character especially identifies our Lord Jesus. “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”—Isa. 53:3-5

Jesus bore our grief and carried our sorrows. This endearing mark of character reminds us of the attitude of heart and mind that he displayed at the tomb of Lazarus. He wept on that occasion because of his deep and sympathetic character. (John 11:32-36) As we walk in newness of life, let us also strive to be more like him. May we be comforted, and ready to comfort others, by remembering these words of Paul: “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.”—II Cor. 1:3-6

PROMISES TO THE MEEK

Jesus also brought to his disciples’ attention the importance of possessing a meek spirit. He said, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matt. 5:5) This characteristic points to a mildness of disposition and the spirit of gentleness. It is not easily provoked or irritated, and forebears injury or annoyance. The Master is our best example, and we do well to be encouraged by him, who said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”—Matt. 11:29

A meek and gentle spirit is one that is more easily taught, and that readily submits to the will of God. The Apostle James wrote, “Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that God is passionate that the spirit he has placed within us should be faithful to him. And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, God opposes the proud but gives grace unto the humble. So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”—James 4:5-7, *New Living Translation*

Jesus said that the meek would “inherit the earth.” This promise will take place after the “present evil world” has ended, and Christ’s kingdom is established. (Gal. 1:4) The psalmist wrote, “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”—Ps. 2:1-8

THIRST AND HUNGER SATISFIED

Another of our Lord Jesus’ lessons is, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6) This suggests a humble disposition that longs for truth and righteousness, and to be taught of God. It is centered in a growing faith and a desire to please our loving Heavenly Father. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” “Early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.” (Ps. 42:1,2; 63:1) These will surely “be filled” as promised by the Master.

MERCY AND PURITY OF HEART

Another of the traits most desirable for the Lord's people to attain is mercy. Being merciful is a Christlike principle, and Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt. 5:7) This applies to those who recognize their own need of divine mercy in their lives. God will extend his mercy toward us in proportion to our willingness to be merciful and more generous to others. The heart that is more generous, loving, and merciful is therefore "blessed" because it is living closer to God and his standards of righteousness.

None of the Lord's people can ever hope to obtain absolute perfection of conduct, thought, or word, but our loving Father looks on the intention of the heart. Those who have honest and pure hearts filled with the spirit of holiness are especially desirable to the Heavenly Father. Thus our Lord Jesus taught, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."—vs. 8

The promise is that those who possess this mark of Christian character will see God. Thus do we read, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."—I John 3:1-3

CHILDREN OF GOD

Jesus was surely a man of peace, and at the beginning of his earthly ministry he taught his disciples,

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” (Matt. 5:9) At the conclusion of his Father’s work and as he was about to leave his disciples, he said to them, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”—John 14:27

The peacemakers will be called the “children of God.” They are called from a sin-sick world and led by the Holy Spirit of God for their perfecting in righteousness. “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:12-14) “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”—Heb. 12:14

TESTING NECESSARY

When Jesus was finishing his lesson he added these sobering words: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”—Matt. 5:10-12

Jesus was reviled that he might demonstrate his loyalty to God and the principles of righteousness. We should consider it a privilege to share in his sufferings. “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some

strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." —I Pet. 4:12-14

Much in the way of spiritual strength is required to rejoice in sufferings and reproaches. When writing to the brethren at Ephesus, the Apostle Paul encouraged them along this line. He said, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: ... Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."—Eph. 6:5-7,10

NOT MANY WISE OR NOBLE

The ultimate plan of reconciliation for the sin-sick human family appears foolish to the minds of most people. Paul said, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."—I Cor. 1:25,26

During this present time, God is seeking those who are insignificant from the world's standpoint—the meek, humble, and contrite—who can learn from him and have their minds transformed to the pattern of his beloved Son. James said, "Hath not

God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"—James 2:5

THE WEAK CONFOUND THE WISE

In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul further proclaimed, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption [or deliverance]: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."—I Cor. 1:27-31

The power of truth confounds the worldly-wise in the hands of God's weakest people. He thus hinders the pride and vainglory of men. "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised." (I Cor. 4:10) Thus we should not be surprised that God's consecrated children who are striving to make their calling and election sure are counted as "fools" by many in the world.

If we are of those who are contrite and of humble disposition, and are faithful unto death, we will share with our Lord Jesus in blessing all the families of the earth in Christ's future kingdom. (Rev. 2:10; Gen. 22:18; Acts 3:25) Therefore, let us strive to follow each day the sentiments of these words: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every

man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”—Rom. 12:3 ■

Wisdom ...

Wisdom is a tree that grows in the heart and whose fruits appear on the tongue.

Knowledge is proud that it knows so much, wisdom is humble because it has so much to know.

To know how to use knowledge properly is wisdom.

Wisdom is a collection of values gained by experiences.

The Bible is the fountain of Godly wisdom.

—Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Helena Kessler, Zabierzów, Poland—July 13.
Age, 78

Sister Wanda Szmigiel, Miechów, Poland—July 23.
Age, 78

Sister Janine Caillot, Metz, France—July 31. Age, 89

Sister Jean DeVos, New York, NY—July 31. Age, 96

Brother Bill Timms, Australia—August 1. Age, 83

Sister Charlene Holmolka, Cape Coral, FL—August 3. Age, 86

Brother Józef Kozak, Chrzanów, Poland—August 8.
Age, 86

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

SHARING THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

Dear Dawn: Thank you for sending the 15 enlargements of the article in the April *Dawn* on the "The Symbolic Bread and Cup." It was just what I wanted! I already placed 12 of the copies.—PA

FOR MY CHILDREN

Dear Dawn: Please send me 12 copies of the *Book of Books*. I need some for my children and some to share.

These books are so good, I can't wait to share them.—KY

GREETINGS FROM AFRICA

Dear Dawn: Greetings of love from the 2025 Pan African Convention to all the Dawn brethren.

Thank you so much for all your love and kindness towards Nigeria brethren. *The Dawn* magazine is a blessing to us here. God continue to bless you all. Yours in His Service.—Nigeria

MOTHER BLESSED

Dear Dawn: My mother couldn't wait fast enough to have the new monthly *Dawn* [magazine]. When she got it she would read it cover to cover without stopping. Now my dear Mom is gone. You have been most wonderful and helpful thru the years. God bless you.—WI

GOD'S WORD

Dear Dawn: I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate your program [*Frank & Ernest*]. I just recently started hearing it on Sunday mornings.

Thank you for spreading God's Word over the air waves and giving Biblical answers. May God continue to bless you and your ministry.—OH

BOOKLETS A BLESSING

Dear Dawn: Thank you so much for your booklets you've sent, they are so precious to me! Would you please also send me *God's Plan*. Be blessed!—AR

The Potter

*The potter worked at his task
With patience, love, and skill.
A vessel marred and broken
He altered again to his will.*

*It was blackened, bent, and old,
But with traces of beauty left.
So he worked, this mender of pottery,
To restore the charm bereft.*

*Till at last it stood transformed,
And he viewed it with tender eyes,
The work of his hands and love,
The potter patient and wise.*

*I know a mender of broken hearts
And of lives that are all undone,
He takes them all as they come to him
And he loves them, every one.*

*With patience, love and skill
That surpasses the knowledge of men,
This master potter gathers the lost
And restores to his image again.*

*A lover of folk with broken lives,
O wonderful potter divine,
I bring my soul for thy healing touch;
In me let thy beauty shine.*

—Songs of the Nightingale