

The DAWN

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

PART 1

A NEW EARTH

"We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

II Peter 3:13

AS WE APPROACH the year 2000, or the beginning of the third millennium since Jesus was on earth, we can expect many speculations concerning what will happen at that time. A *Newsweek* article published September 8, 1997 briefly reviewed the setting of dates. The article said:

"If you are making plans for the year 2000, here are some predictions that you may want to factor in. Followers of New Age prophet Edgar Cayce believe that the North and South Poles will flop, causing worldwide floods and earthquakes. In his best seller '*The Bible Code*', former *Wall Street Journal* reporter Michael Drosnin uses computer analysis of the Torah to divine that World War III may start in that year. Or maybe in 2006—he's not sure. In a trailer park in Eula, Texas, 500 or so members of a doomsday sect called the House of Yahweh are hunkering down for the last, grim years

of life on earth. Their 'overseer', a onetime Abilene cop and rockabilly musician named Yisrayl Hawkins, preaches that the last days started with the satanically inspired Middle East peace accords of 1993. The finale will arrive on October 13, 2000, 'when nuclear bombs will block out the sun, and life as we know it will end'."

"Hawkin's followers probably shouldn't stop their car payments. The end, much predicted throughout history, has never turned out to be quite so nigh as our soothsayers had hoped or feared. This has not, however, discouraged the soothsayers. Between the Woman in the Wilderness cult in 1694, whose members deployed rooftop telescopes to scan the heavens for signs of Christ's second coming, and this year's Heaven's Gaters, whose telescopes were set on the comet Hale-Bopp, American prophets alone have set dozens of dates for doomsday."

END OF THE WORLD

Another well-known incident was reported in depth—namely the Miller Movement, starting in 1836. Although the editors of *Newsweek* are incorrect in some of their statements and time-framing, the general division between the beliefs of some of the Adventist churches and other Christian churches consists in understanding the end of the world. Most Christian churches believe that the end of the world will be a complete destruction of planet Earth. Some of the Adventist churches say that it is the *kosmos* (Greek word for 'world') or social order upon planet Earth which will perish.

As the Miller movement ended with the 'great disappointment', several groups sprang into exist-

ence, and are classified as Adventist churches. These various groups had different interpretations of the Scriptures concerning this event. Only one group looks at the end of the world as not being disastrous, but as the end of this present evil order. The end of the present social order must come before the new order of God's kingdom can begin. The realization of promised blessings for all the nations of the earth will fulfill the Abrahamic promise.—Gen. 22:17,18

THREE WORLDS

In II Peter, chapter 3, we are told of three 'worlds'. In this prophecy the apostle uses the Greek word *kosmos*, meaning 'an order of things'. The first of these, he tells us, came to an end at the time of the Flood (vs. 6); the second ends with the return of Christ (vss. 7-12); while the third (vs. 13), which is God's world, is "without end."—Eph. 3:21

In keeping with the modern use of language we might speak of these three worlds as 'the world of yesterday', 'the world of today', and 'the world of tomorrow'. The Bible uses the word 'world' in the same way we do, not as referring to the planet upon which we live, but to an order of things among men, and sometimes as an age, or period of time. Much of the misunderstanding of God's purpose for the sinful race of mankind has been occasioned by a failure to recognize this fact. For example, the biblical 'end of the world' has been misunderstood to denote the literal burning up of the literal earth and all things upon it. This has deterred many from an investigation of the subject.

Due to this misunderstanding of what is meant by the 'end of the world', many have feared

its approach and therefore have endeavored to project it far into the future. Others have looked upon it as a mere superstition of the Dark Ages, unworthy of being given any serious consideration. But when we realize that the Bible speaks of 'the end' of the present world, it means what we now see taking place. Since thinking people of our time refer to this as the 'ending of a world', the subject should take on an important meaning—a vital meaning—to all who are interested in what the world of tomorrow will be.

SYMBOLS IN THE BIBLE

The Bible uses the terms 'fire', 'earthquakes', and 'storms' in the same pictorial manner in which they are used in current language to describe the catastrophic trouble that has come upon men and nations of this generation. Just as the LORD uses 'wheat' and 'tares' and 'sheep' and 'goats' to illustrate those who serve, pretend to serve, or oppose him, so he uses the terms "earth" (Jer. 22:29) and 'heaven' to illustrate phases of organized society called 'worlds'.

Peter speaks of the heavens and the earth which were before the Flood, indicating that they made up the "world that then was"—the world of yesterday. (II Pet. 3:6) That world came to an end at the time of the Flood, but the earth itself was not destroyed. Of the literal earth we read that it "abideth for ever." (Eccles. 1:4) In Isaiah 45:18 we are told that God did not create the earth in vain, but "formed it to be inhabited." This is a basic fact of truth which should be kept in mind as we trace through the Scriptures—the outline of the Divine plan. God's plan does not involve the transfer of the

human race to another sphere of life, but its restoration to everlasting life upon the earth, man's designed and original home.—Ps. 115:16; Isa. 65:21; Jer. 31:17; Deut. 11:21; Matt. 5:5

The 'first world' began at the time of Creation and ended at the Flood. The 'second world', according to the Apostle Peter, began after the Flood and will come to an end in the destruction wrought in the final phase of the great time of trouble (Matt. 24:21,22), or Day of the LORD. (II Pet. 3:10) This Day of Jehovah follows the return of Jesus Christ, when conditions in this present evil world will be similar to what they were in the days of Noah.—Luke 17:26,27; Gen. 6:11; II Pet. 3:6,7,10

In the days of Noah we are told that the people were 'eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage . . . and knew not' of the impending Flood that was to destroy the 'world that then was'. (Matt. 24:38,39) The Scriptures also explain, "the day of the LORD" comes as a "thief in the night"—the people not being aware of the significance of events until the destructive troubles of that day bring about the overthrow of this "present evil world."—Gal. 1:4; I Thess. 5:2; Luke 21:35

The end of the present 'world' will not mean the end of the human race. It will mean the beginning of a new world—God's world of tomorrow. One of the chief characteristics of the world of yesterday and the world of today is that they have been based upon selfishness, and Satan, the archenemy of God, has been their ruler. But with the ending of the world of today and the beginning of the world of tomorrow, Satan will be bound, and that new world will come under a new, a Divine rulership.—Rev. 20:1-4; 21:1-5; II Pet. 3:13; Isa. 65:17; Obad. 21

SELFISHNESS VS LOVE

Under the leadership of Satan, the spirit of selfishness—self-interest—became dominant at the very beginning of the world of yesterday. Sin and selfishness continued to dominate that first world, with the result that just before it ended the earth “was filled with violence.” (Gen 6:11) The same has been true of the world of today. We are already, in fact, witnessing the dissolution of the present world, and its destruction is being brought about by the violence of the great time of trouble foretold by the prophets. (Dan. 12:1) The type of violence that has erupted in Rwanda, Liberia, and Angola on the continent of Africa, and in Yugoslavia in Europe, is typical of events which will lead to the end of the world—the evil order upon earth.

God’s world of tomorrow will be under the leadership of a new ruler, Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. (Ps. 72:1-20) His rulership will be upon the basis of love, rather than selfishness. This is the reason the apostle speaks of that world as one “wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (II Pet. 3:13) The satanic misrule of sin and selfishness has brought death, because the “wages of sin is death.” (Rom. 6:23) The messianic reign of righteousness and love will bring life, for he must reign until all enemies are put under his feet, the “last enemy” to be destroyed being “death.”—I Cor. 15:25,26

When we keep before us the fact of these three worlds and their varying characteristics, we can readily see that whatever the Bible might say about them would seem to be contradictory unless we apply its various statements to the period of time to which they belong. Of the present time the prophet says. “Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that

work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." But of the world of tomorrow we read that "then shall the righteous flourish," and "all the wicked will he [God] destroy."—Mal. 3:15; Ps. 72:7; Acts 3:23; Ps. 145:20

The method of studying the Bible dispensationally seems, in part, what the Apostle Paul refers to when he instructs Timothy to be studious in applying himself toward "rightly dividing the Word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15) If in our study of the Bible we endeavor to apply its various prophecies and promises to the world, or age, in which they belong, we will find a simplicity, harmony, and beauty in its teaching which we did not realize existed. The Bible itself is harmonious, and all that remains in order to understand it is for us to get in harmony with it.—John 7:17; Luke 11:9,10; Jer. 29:13 ■

—*To Be Continued*

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

FEBRUARY 5—"This is the will of God [concerning you], even your sanctification."—I Thessalonians 4:3 (Z. '99-4 Hymn 198)

FEBRUARY 12—"Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."—James 1:4 (Z. '93-295 Hymn 95)

FEBRUARY 19—"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unfaithful nothing is pure; but both their mind and conscience are defiled: they profess to have known God, but by their works they renounce him, being abominable and disobedient, and as to every good work worthless."—Titus 1:15,16, (*Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) (Z. '99-214 Hymn 130)

FEBRUARY 26—"Rejoice in the LORD alway: and again I say, Rejoice."—Philippians 4:4 (Z. '03-7 Hymn 235)

IN MEM'RY OF the Saviour's love
We keep this simple feast,
Where every consecrated heart
Is made a welcome guest.

BY faith we take the bread of life
Which this doth symbolize;
This cup in token of his blood,
Our costly sacrifice

THIS cup shall e'er recall the hour
When thou didst set us free;
Soon with new joy in Kingdom pow'r
We'll drink it, Lord, with thee.

—*Hymns of Dawn*, #122

1998 Memorial Supper Date

THE PROPER TIME for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 p.m., on Thursday, April 9th, 1998.

We have a complete Memorial Service available for isolated brethren, or for any who care to have it, on both audio and video cassettes. The audio cassette can be purchased for \$3.00 per copy, or is available free of charge on loan from:

***Dawn Recorded Lecture Service
199 Railroad Avenue
East Rutherford, NJ 07073***

The video cassette can be purchased for \$6.00. It is available free on loan. Send your request to:

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INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 1

KEEPING YOUR BALANCE

KEY VERSE: *"Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."*—II Peter 1:10

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: II Peter 1:3-11

THE APOSTLE PETER'S words in the beginning of his second epistle are well-known by God's people everywhere. They describe a progression that must take place in the Christian life. Not only can we maintain a spiritual balance by heeding his words, but they assure us of an abundant entrance "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—vs. 11

In Peter's first epistle, he describes the recipients of his letter as being the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." (I Pet. 1:2) This is

also true in this second letter, because he mentions that these should be eager to make "their calling and election sure." (II Pet. 1:10) To do so demands faithfulness. Therefore, to have the privilege of being with Jesus as rulers in his kingdom indicates that we must meet the requirements of being "called, and chosen [elect], and faithful."—Rev. 17:14

When God called us and drew us to Jesus (John 6:44), we realized that he was showing us the way to attain life and godliness. (II Pet. 1:3) Our minds were enlightened further

to see that by consecrating our lives to God—wherein his will became our will—we could become “partakers of the Divine nature.” —II Pet. 1:4

This was a goal that could be reached, although it was beyond our comprehension. The first grace of character which God seeks is that of faith. “Without faith it is impossible to please him [God].” (Heb. 11:6) To faith we add virtue. Strength of character must be manifested to endure opposition from foes of the Christian.

As the Apostle Paul said, “Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (I Cor. 15:58) To this fortitude we must add knowledge of God, of his character, and of his will. All this wisdom is found in God’s Word. Jesus said, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”—John 17:17

With these foundation principles as a start, we are then to add to knowledge, temperance or self-control. The flesh is ever present

with us, and though we were admonished to ‘crucify’ the flesh, it continually comes to life and can cause us problems. As the wise man has said, “He that ruleth his spirit” is greater than he “that taketh a city.” (Prov. 16:32) To this self-control we must add patience or cheerful endurance, preparing ourselves for the long battle against our opposition. After patience comes godliness. By this time others will see God’s likeness manifest in us, as we continue the work of developing his character through devout attention to his Word. This is followed by brotherly kindness or love for our brethren—those endeavoring to climb this Christian ladder.

Finally, we are to achieve the love of God, called charity—a translation of the Greek word ‘*agape*’ denoting God’s love, and described by the Apostle John: “God is love.” (I John 4:8) Peter wanted all of us to know this necessary progression so that we could enter the kingdom with ‘plenty of room to spare’. ■

LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 8

REJECT FALSE TEACHINGS

KEY VERSE: *"There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."*— II Peter 2:1

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: II Peter 2:1-10, 12-19

ALL THE APOSTLES knew that false teachers would arise in the church endeavoring to lead the followers of Christ astray. They had a good foundation for knowing of such events from the teaching of Jesus, and also of events recorded in the Old Testament. Jesus taught the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:24-30, 37-43), in which the Devil sowed seeds of tares—not the children of the kingdom, but rather children of the wicked one. Tares, or imitation Christians, would come upon the

scene through false teachings.

The Apostle Paul wrote a warning concerning false teachers in his farewell words to the elders of Ephesus, saying, "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." —Acts 20:29-31

Again, to the Thessalonian brethren, he also wrote of a "falling away" that had to come. (II Thess. 2:3) The Apostle Peter uses events of the Old Testament to bolster his prediction, calling attention to conditions in Noah's day when the preaching of Noah had no effect upon the people. The angels who had left their first estate were the false teachers and the consequence of failure to reject their errors led to the great Deluge and the end of that world.—II Pet. 2:4,5

Another event in the Old Testament, mentioned by Peter is that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Righteous Lot, Abraham's nephew, dwelling in Sodom was vexed by the principles of unrighteousness, both by word and example.

The judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah reached a climax in their destruction, when fire and brimstone rained down upon these cities. (II Pet. 2:6-8) In these two examples, the unrighteous conduct of the people was plainly seen and taught.

Peter calls attention to the example of Balaam, a

prophet of the LORD who was enticed by Balak, the king of Moab, to receive monetary compensation if he would curse Israel. He mentions how the dumb ass carrying the prophet to curse Israel tried to stop Balaam by speaking with a man's voice. (II Pet. 2:15, 16) In the account given in Numbers—chapters 22 to 24—it appears that Israel was blessed and not cursed.

Balaam was the mastermind of the events recorded in Numbers 25, which led to Israel's curse, wherein the men of Israel were enticed by the daughters of Moab and Midian to accept their idolatrous practices, causing a plague to come as a punishment upon Israel.

When God had Moses avenge this tragedy, as recorded in Numbers, chapter 31, we read that Balaam was slain along with the kings of Midian, because it was his counsel that caused the women of Midian to entice the men of Israel.—Num. 31:16

We see how the failure to reject false teachers always ends in tragedy. ■

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

KEY VERSE: *"We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."*—II Peter 3:13

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: II Peter 3:1-13

IT IS A blessing to know the meaning of the Apostle Peter's words in this third chapter of his second epistle. The majority of mankind are unaware of this part of God's plan, and those who hear about it react to it like the scoffers mentioned by the apostle in II Peter 3:3,4.

As we call attention to the events in the world as being unprecedented, the rebuttal is that history is merely repeating itself, and nothing unusual is to happen. Peter calls attention to the first world (*cosmos*, or 'order' upon the earth, and of which the literal earth is a symbol), which ended with the great De-luge with

only Noah and his family surviving.

This epistle calls attention to the prophesied destruction by symbolic 'fire', of the present spiritual ruling powers and the present social order. The end of this second world will usher in the "Day of Judgment" (vs. 7), which will be one thousand years long and introduces the new heavens and new earth which comprise the third world."—vs. 8

This is no less than the 'kingdom' of God that Christians have been praying for when uttering the prayer taught by Jesus (Matt. 6:10), and which is described so aptly by the Apostle Peter in our Key Verse as 'new heavens and

a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness'. For centuries the Christian world has dreaded the events described by all the apostles and the holy prophets. (vs. 2) Many expect the literal earth to be burned up, whereas the Scriptures say, "The earth abideth forever."—Eccles. 1:4

How glad mankind will be when the present evil order is destroyed. In its place a new spiritual ruling power—the new heavens, or Christ and his church—and a new social order—the new earth, God's kingdom on earth—will be installed. A remarkable future awaits all the willing and obedient of mankind!

Those who do know of this wonderful plan of God should be inspired to live godly lives in preparation for these kingdom blessings. The apostle states the matter so well: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [conduct] and godliness."—II Pet. 3:11

God has given us many signs telling of the proximity of his kingdom, and that

"the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." (Luke 21:31) Yet, in spite of these signs which tell us that these events are so close to complete fulfillment, the apostle says, "The Day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night," quietly, unexpectedly, with no forewarning. —II Pet. 3:10

Those being selected in this age to be rulers in that kingdom prepare themselves by living godly lives. The rest of mankind, being unaware of the meaning of the signs of the impending end of the present evil world, will have an opportunity to learn righteousness during the Day of Judgment of one thousand years. The Prophet Isaiah foresaw and stated the matter well so many centuries ago, saying: "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."—Isa. 26:9

John wrote: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."—Rev. 21:1



KEEPING THE FAITH

KEY VERSE: *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”—Jude 3*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Jude 3-5, 7, 13, 17-25*

THE MESSAGE OF Jude to the Early Church is similar to the one given by the Apostle Peter in II Peter, chapter two and part of chapter three. The lesson from Peter's epistle was entitled, “Reject False Teachings.”

We do so by heeding the admonition of Jude to keep the faith. This is the faith given to the Early Church, ‘the saints’, by Jesus and the apostles. It is the true message, the good news in all its purity, especially before it became contaminated by the injection of error by false teachers. These errors have persisted to our day.

To keep the faith given to the saints it is necessary

to have a clear vision of their belief and to be established in the faith. We might ask, “Did the apostles believe man has an immortal soul?” If so, how could the Apostle Paul teach, saying, “This mortal must put on immortality”? (I Cor. 15:53) Or how could the Apostle Peter say, “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away”? (I Pet. 1:24) Likewise, the Apostle John wrote: “He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” (I John 3:14) Did the apostles believe in eternal torment? Not at all. Instead, they wrote as did Jude in his

epistle (vs. 5), using the expressions: "The LORD . . . destroyed them that believed not"; and "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."—vs. 13

On the two occasions where Jude mentions 'fire', one involves the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. These cities have not revived, even to our day. (vs. 7) The other mention of fire also uses it symbolically, saying: "pulling them out of the fire." (vs. 23) This illustration involves those who are not keeping the faith and are walking in the wrong direction, thus 'spotting their robes'. The usual—erroneous—view is that sinners are headed for eternal torment of their souls. Whereas, Jude says these can be snatched from God's judgmental 'fire' which represents destruction. This is a symbolic fire that affects a certain class in the present time.

The world is not being described in verses 20 to 25; rather, these verses are addressed to those who have been called and chosen, and are endeavoring to walk in the footsteps of

Jesus. Such are fully enlightened by the Holy Spirit and, by persisting in their wrong course, it will result in their going into *Gehenah*, 'second death', symbolized by fire. These are not the "mockers" walking after ungodly lusts, because they have "not the Spirit."—vss. 18, 19

How can we avoid the tragedy of walking into the fire of God's judgment? We do so by building ourselves up "on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit." (vs. 20) Also we are to keep ourselves "in the love of God." (vs. 21) To accomplish this we must study the Word of God daily, and put into practice at every opportunity the love of God we have learned; and, above all, we must pray to God for grace to help. Without his assistance we cannot achieve our goal. Jude explains this as "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (vs. 21), and also as God presenting us "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." (vs. 24) Only God can keep us from falling.—vs. 25 ■

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

THE PLAN OF GOD IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS— PART 8

A VISIT BY ANGELS

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

VERSES 1-5 “And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

“And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

“And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

“Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

“And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.”

Mamre was a confederate of Abraham on the occasion when he rescued Lot. (Gen. 14:13) The expression, “plains of Mamre” evidently means the

plains which belonged to Mamre, for Abraham was merely a sojourner in the land. However, he was on friendly terms with many of the Canaanites.

‘The LORD appeared’ unto Abraham, the text states, yet later this appearance turns out to be the visit of three ‘men’ who served as messengers of the LORD. This manner of expression is employed quite frequently in the Bible when it speaks of the LORD’s dealings with members of the human race. Actually no human being could see God and live. (Exod. 33:20) However, when he sends his messengers he expects those visited to treat them with dignity, and to give consideration to the message they deliver.

These ‘men’ who visited Abraham were actually angels; that is, spirit beings. They had materialized in order to be able to converse freely with the patriarch. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul refers to them as such, and tacitly cites Abraham’s hospitality as an example worthy of emulation: “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers,” he writes, “for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” —Heb. 13:2

VERSES 6-8 “And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.

“And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.

“And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.”

It is necessary to put ourselves in Abraham’s position in order to understand his great desire to

make his unexpected visitors 'feel at home'. It was not as though he lived on a busy city thoroughfare where thousands of people would be passing every day. Instead he was living on the plains, and in a tent. It is quite possible that days might go by when not a single stranger passed his tent, and here were three of them who gave every indication that they were men of considerable importance.

As Abraham saw it, this was to be a special event and he was desirous of making as much as possible out of it. Abraham was an important man in that part of the world, and was accustomed to giving orders when he wanted things done. He did not ask Sarah if it would be convenient for her to help prepare a meal for these exceptional visitors. He simply gave directions that it should be done. The same is true with respect to the young man whom he directed to dress a young calf and prepare it for a meal.

Abraham revealed just a bit of excitement over the visit of the three men, for the account says that he "ran unto the herd" and made a personal selection of a calf which he knew would be tender for eating. Visits from the LORD through his accredited messengers were not new to Abraham. While the Apostle Paul explains that he entertained angels unawares, it is quite possible that he perceived that these three men were something more than they were disclosing. In any event, he proved himself to be a kind and gracious host; and Sarah seems to have cooperated very willingly with him.

VERSES 9-15 "And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

“And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.

“Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

“Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

“And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?

“Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

“Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.”

Abraham stood while his guests ate, thus assuming the role of a servant, and as they ate, they inquired concerning the whereabouts of Sarah. While Sarah had helped with the preparation of the meal, up to this point she had evidently kept herself out of sight. Then the spokesman for these visitors said to Abraham, ‘I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son’.

Evidently the tent was not very far from where the trio was eating, for Sarah heard this announcement and, like Abraham, she laughed—the text says, ‘within herself’, or we might say ‘laughed to herself’. But the angel knew it, and when he re-

ferred to it later Sarah denied that she had laughed, and the angel said, 'Nay; but thou didst laugh'.

'Is anything too hard for the LORD?'—this is the practical lesson in the account for us. This is of great importance with respect to the outworking of the plan of God. Perhaps one reason the LORD permitted Abraham and Sarah to get so old before Isaac was born was for the very purpose of demonstrating that he is responsible for the fulfillment of all his promises.

Many sincere Christians today, and for centuries past, have erroneously imagined that the success of God's purposes in the earth depends upon the efforts of puny man. We should all be glad that this is not so, and that his plan to bless all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham is sure to be accomplished—sure, despite all the circumstances which seem to be to the contrary.

VERSES 16-22 "And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

"And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

"Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

"And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

"I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

"And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD."

The LORD takes his servants into his confidence in matters which pertain to them and to those in whom they are particularly interested. Broadly speaking, the truth-enlightened people of God should be interested in all mankind. They should have the spirit of Abraham and manifest enthusiasm for the plan of God which was revealed to him, the plan that through the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

The LORD had decided to destroy Sodom because of the gross wickedness of the city, but he used the occasion to test Abraham's interest in the people of the city, and particularly his concern for his own kinsmen—Lot and his family, who dwelt there. 'Shall I hide from Abraham', the LORD inquired, 'that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?'

In this passage we are furnished with an interesting example of how God makes allowance for the mental limitations of his servants in order that they might understand his viewpoint. To paraphrase God's statement to Abraham it implies that he had heard a report that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were very wicked, so he had come down to investigate, and if they were as wicked as the report indicated, he would surely destroy them. Actually, the Creator of the universe and God of heaven and

earth did not need to visit the earth personally to obtain information he needed. This was his way of speaking on Abraham's level of understanding.

VERSES 23-33 "And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

"Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?

"That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

"And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

"And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which am but dust and ashes:

"Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

"And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

"And he said unto him, Oh let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

"And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD: Peradventure there

shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

“And he said, Oh let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

“And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.”

Abraham petitioned the LORD earnestly to save the city, especially if there proved to be a few righteous souls therein. Abraham at first asked whether the city would be spared if there were fifty souls found to be righteous. When he continued to lower the number it is possible that he had Lot and his family in mind.

The LORD displayed both his patience with Abraham and his willingness to show mercy by complying with his entreaty so many times, as he kept lowering the number. As it turned out, there were not even the required ten who were righteous; so the city was destroyed.

This raises an interesting question in view of God's promise to bless all the nations of the earth, for Jesus indicates that no particular effort was put forth to bring about the repentance of Sodom and Gomorrah. If there had been, Jesus explained, they would have remained and not been destroyed. (Matt. 11:23,24) Jesus also explained, however that in the Judgment Day, they will be given an opportunity; so we see that, after all, they will be remembered, in keeping with the promise made to Abraham that through his seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. ■

HOLY CONVERSATION AND GODLINESS

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?”

—II Peter 3:11

THE SECOND COMING of Christ and the establishment of the kingdom was one of the chief sources of inspiration for the Early Church. While the Apostle Peter did not look for these blessed events in the Divine plan to occur prior to his death, yet it was his hope that they were near at hand. The establishment of Christ's kingdom—the ‘new heavens and a new earth’—meant, of necessity, that the heavens and the earth over which Satan is the prince would have to be dissolved.

This vital truth was emphasized by Peter to impress upon the LORD's people the worthlessness of all hopes, ambitions, and joys which have their foundations and their associations in the things of

this world. The fact that these things were to be dissolved, and that the followers of Christ were looking forward to having part in the new heavens and the new earth, should have been a great incentive to them in giving all diligence to make their calling and election sure.

“What manner of persons ought ye to be,” Peter inquires, “in all holy conversation and godliness?” If this question was a serious consideration in his day, how much more weighty it is now when we stand at the very threshold of the new dispensation, and are in the very midst of the disintegrating influences bringing to an end a decadent world.

IMPORTANT TO OUR DAY

A few more years, and Satan's world will be fully ended, and the people of earth will stand face to face with the actual conditions of the established kingdom of God! Within a comparatively short time, the true church is to finish her earthly course. How important it is that we properly ‘redeem the time’, zealously carrying out in our hearts and lives the Divine will for us in these evil days.

And it is not merely a fanciful notion, a pleasing illusion of the mind—what the world calls ‘wishful thinking’—that we are living in the Day of the LORD, the “day of his preparation” (Nahum 2:3), when the old order is actually passing away. Indeed, the more we study the prophecies of the Word pertaining to this time, the more vividly do we realize the importance of the days in which we are living. Truly, we stand all astonished with wonder when we realize that it is the blessed privilege of the saints today to see the mighty events of prophecy,

long awaited by the faithful throughout the centuries, actually transpiring.

Time prophecies of the Bible show clearly that we are now very close to God's kingdom, wherein the world shall find rest and peace, health and life. The 1335 days of Daniel 12:12 have been fulfilled, and the 'blessedness' which was then due to come to God's people is being abundantly realized by those whose "lamps" are properly "trimmed and burning."—*Hymns of Dawn*, #230

The foretold increase of knowledge and running to and fro which would precede the climax of a great time of trouble, as prophesied by Daniel and Jesus, would mark the time of our Lord's second presence. (Dan. 12:1-4; Matt. 24:21,22; Luke 21:25-28) In this event we see fulfilled Jesus' prophecy of the distress of nations and the roaring of the sea and waves, with men's hearts failing them for fear, accompanied by cries of "peace, peace," are all signs which the watchers in these days have been, and are, privileged to behold.—Jer. 6:14; 8:11

The foretold shaking of the powers of the symbolic heavens (Matt. 24:29), and the mourning of the tribes of the earth because of Christ's presence, are also events marking the end of the age. The successive spasms of "travail" (I Thess. 5:3), and the "clouds" (Matt. 24:30) of trouble amidst which Christ was to come, together with the 'melting' (Ps. 46:6) of the elements of the earth and heavens as the result of the uttering of his "voice," are also being fulfilled before our enraptured vision.

The Apostle Paul prophesied that Christ would descend from heaven with a "shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."

(I Thess. 4:16) This 'shout' has gone forth, and is still going forth. The 'voice of the archangel' is still being heard, and the 'trump' of God is sounding.

While in Paul's day he explained that the development of the Antichrist must needs intervene before the return of the Lord, and the establishment of his kingdom, the bright shining of Christ's presence at this time has now revealed to the faithful watchers that the great Antichrist system has been developed, and soon this "mystery of iniquity" will be consumed "with the spirit of his mouth," and will be destroyed "with the brightness of his coming [presence]."—II Thess. 2:7,8

The prophecies also clearly point out the revival of Jewish hopes through the establishment of the nation of Israel, and the return of God's typical people to their homeland. The experiences of this new nation and its people have been dovetailing with all the other events to give us the complete and unquestionable testimony that Christ has come, and that Satan's kingdom has but a short time to remain.

Best of all, to those who have been blessed with present truth, has been the fulfillment of Jesus' own words that when he returned he would gird himself, and serve his people with meat in due season. (Luke 12:36,37) We are now rejoicing in the fulfillment of this promise. The truths of the Divine plan in all their glorious brilliancy are bringing to our attention not only the meaning of the times in which we are living, but also the glorious hope of restitution for the world and the privilege which we now have of suffering with Christ that we may reign with him.—Rom. 8:17; II Tim. 2:11,12

COMFORT ONE ANOTHER

In seeking an answer to Peter's question, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (II Pet. 3:11) we are reminded of Paul's practical application of dispensational truth: "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (I Thess. 4:18) 'These words', which the apostle suggests be used for the comforting of the brethren, are the ones immediately preceding which tell of the coming of the Lord, his descending from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; also that the dead in Christ rise first, and that those who are alive and remain are to be exalted together with him in the 'air'—the spiritual phase of the kingdom.

To those unacquainted with present truth, the dark age conception of Christ descending from heaven with a shout and with a trumpet surely would not be very comforting. But to those who understand the real meaning of these symbolic expressions, and the glorious truths which they set forth for the enlightenment and encouragement of the saints at this time, they are indeed comforting. In fact, all the truths pertaining to the end of the age are of vital importance to the people of God now, because we are living in the Day of the LORD, in the day when the prophecies pertaining to the time of Christ's presence are being fulfilled in a glorious panorama of events unfolding before us day by day.

Our life of holy conversation and godliness should, therefore, be one filled with thoughts, words, and activities in keeping with the glorious fact of Christ's presence and the end of the age. We are to comfort one another with these thoughts. We are not merely to learn about them and then keep

them to ourselves. We are not to be ashamed of our knowledge of Christ's presence, nor think it unimportant and therefore relegate it to an obscure place in our belief and ministry.

As the glorious truths pertaining to Christ's return and the establishment of his kingdom constituted the inspiration of the Early Church, still more should it be the basis of our rejoicing now, when we see so many evidences all around us that the elements of this world are in the process of 'melting with fervent heat', and that soon the new heavens and the new earth will be established.

LOVE THE FINAL TEST

Examining ourselves with the thought that no promise of the LORD, nor any requirement of his, should be overlooked in view of the importance of the times in which we are living, we are reminded of the apostle's lesson in I Corinthians 13 on the importance of love. Paul reminds us that even though we may have faith sufficient to remove mountains, and have not love, it profiteth us nothing. It would be of no avail for us to be aware of Christ's presence, and the imminence of his kingdom, and by faith accept these fundamental truths, if they did not inspire within us that burning love for God and his people which will cause us to devote our all to the Divine service, laying down our lives for the brethren.

The Apostle John reminds us of the vital test of love, saying, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren . . . and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (I John 3:14-16) In the light of this inspired testimony, we can see that love is not to be viewed

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The listing of Dawn publications, five-cent booklets and ten-cent booklets, usually printed on pages 32 and 33 of *The Dawn* magazine, will be omitted every other month including this month.

Listing of the "*Frank and Ernest*" worldwide radio broadcasts, and of "*The Bible Answers*" TV programs, generally given on pages 33-39, likewise will be omitted every other month including this month.

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(Continued from Page 31)

as merely a negative goodness. We are not to suppose that the true love of God is really in our hearts simply because we have no animosity toward others, hence would not knowingly do them injury. The love which is the true motive of 'holy conversation and godliness' is a principle that will move us to lay down our lives for others. The practice of justice will keep us from injuring our brethren and our fellow men, but love will prompt us to serve them.

Our love for the brethren should include all. While the Apostle Paul says, "The Lord knoweth them that are his," our knowledge is not so complete and comprehensive as his. (II Tim. 2:19) Our knowledge of them is limited. (Matt. 7:16,20; John 13:35) Our service for the brethren, therefore, should not be limited to those few with whom we may be immediately associated, but should reach out in an effort to acquaint all who may have a hearing ear with the glorious truths that have been such a comfort and encouragement to us.

LABOR OF LOVE

The LORD could have made it easy for us to serve the brethren had he so desired. He could in his own way let us know exactly who the individual brethren are in our territory, and arrange matters so that all we would need to do is to call upon them with the truth. They, in turn, would accept and we would rejoice in the privilege of thus being used of the LORD to communicate his message to his people.

But the LORD, in his wisdom, and as a test of the genuineness of our love, arranged that it should be done the hard way—the way which calls for self-sacrifice and labor and reproach and persecution. That is why the apostle, in Hebrews 6:10,

refers to our ministry on behalf of the saints as a "labour of love."

Unless we are willing, yea, rejoice in the privilege of laboring on behalf of the brethren for the Lord, we can seriously question just how much true love of God has filled our hearts. In response to this labor there may be little apparent results. We may spend weeks or months, or even years in ministering the truth to others, yet seldom if ever be rewarded with a certain knowledge that our efforts have really borne fruit in the enrichment of other hearts and lives.

But thereby God tests our faith, as well as our love. After all, the principal result of what we do is the preparation of ourselves for joint-heirship with the Master. If faithful we will later have the privilege of sharing with him in the enlightenment and blessing of all mankind. How profitable, indeed, will be our efforts for a few fleeting years this side of the veil, if thereby we are found faithful unto death, receive the crown of life, and are privileged to share in bestowing God's blessings to all the sin-cursed and dying race!

After all, we should learn to view matters from God's standpoint. The apostle says that "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love." (Heb. 6:10) What does it matter whether men hear, or whether they forbear, whether they appreciate our efforts or are indifferent to them? What does matter is that God does not forget. Because God does not forget we enjoy the rich blessings of faith and hope now, and will be rewarded with all the superlative joys of the kingdom in his glorious presence by and by. What more could we ask?

Despite the fact that in these last days we have witnessed outstanding fulfillments of prophecy to reassure us of the verities of present truth, it seems more difficult than ever to maintain a burning zeal for the truth and the brethren. There are various reasons, no doubt, which contribute to this, not the least of which is the fact that today our zeal for God and his service has become more than ever before an individual responsibility. Undoubtedly, in the former days the zeal of many was quickened by the momentum of being associated in a group movement. It is always easier to go along with the crowd than to walk alone.

The LORD has permitted conditions to arise among his people which are calculated to test their individual loyalty to him. How are we meeting this test? Are the beauties of the truth still an inspiration to us, an inspiration that will carry us on to self-sacrifice in making known its glories to others? Or were we zealous in the past merely because others were zealous? The truth today is the same, and should be just as vital an influence in our lives as in the past. Jesus is still the Captain of our salvation, and the truth which he served to his people through "that servant" (Matt. 24:46) is still the Master's representative in our hearts and lives. We still should be singing today, even as in the past, "Send out thy light and truth, O Lord; Let them our leaders be."—*Hymns of Dawn*, #260

If our faith in present truth is what it should be, then it becomes a reality to us—something which actually leads us in the footsteps of the Lord, irrespective of how few or how many may similarly be walking in the same narrow way. We are to forget some things which are behind. Paul said he was

doing this. (Phil. 3:13) On the other hand, we can with profit look back to some of the former days, if thereby we can be inspired to return to our "first love" and enthusiasm for the LORD and his truth.—Rev. 2:4

In Hebrews 10:32, Paul admonished those to whom he was writing to do this very thing. According to this text and that which follows—and also chapter 6, verse 10—they were at one time zealously engaged in a ministry of love to the saints, but they had seemingly permitted a spiritual lethargy to creep over them. In his effort to revive that first love, Paul admonished them to "call to remembrance the former days." True, their zeal in the former days had led to a great fight of affliction; they had been "made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions," yet had taken the spoiling of their goods joyfully.—Heb. 10:33,34

Here is a lesson—a vitally important lesson—for any who for one reason or another may have permitted their 'first love' zeal to slacken. It is a mistaken notion that God wants his people to outgrow that wholehearted and irrepressible enthusiasm with which they responded to his love when he first shone into their hearts with the Gospel. What God particularly wants is to see that zeal continue until it consumes our lives even unto death in his service. May we not all, then, with profit, call to remembrance the 'former days', not merely as a pleasant memory, but with the view of having our zeal rekindled thereby, that we may continue our labor of love faithfully to the end.

Jesus sets forth signs in his 'great prophecy' that would indicate his second presence and the end of the age. He warns us that because iniquity would

abound, the love of many would wax cold. (Matt. 24:12) Here, then, is another reminder that we should especially be on guard that the conditions to which the Master refers should cause a cooling off of our love and zeal. Surely, if we are giving proper consideration to what manner of persons we ought to be, we will not only avoid iniquity in our own lives, but will not permit the iniquitous influences with which we are surrounded to turn us away from the course of sacrifice.

WHEN INIQUITY ABOUNDS

And what is this iniquity to which the Master referred? As a practical lesson we can think of it as applying to anything that may be out of harmony with the LORD and his truth. Iniquitous practices of false leaders in the church have contributed to the dampening of zeal on the part of many. This should not be so, because our relationship to God through his truth should be so independent of others that even if they turn aside from the narrow way it would not influence us.

Our belief in the truth should not rest upon our confidence in men!

Many are the tests today—fiery darts of the Adversary—which tend to dampen the zeal of the LORD's people if their eyes are not steadfastly fixed upon him and their hearts filled with his love. Ingenious, for example, are the arguments presented from various sources as to why the LORD's consecrated people should now hide their light under a bushel. Sometimes a personal grievance that a brother may have toward someone in the ecclesia is permitted to influence his reasoning, until he justifies his position of antagonism toward the en-

tire ecclesia and the activity of the ecclesia. Here is a case where iniquity is permitted to enter into a brother's own heart and his love waxes cool.

Let us seek to rise above petty personal things that have no real bearing on the truth and our relationship thereto. What does it matter if someone may say something which does not please us? What if something is said purposely to injure us? Isn't the LORD able to overrule and to cause such things to work together for our good? Let us not permit iniquity to enter our hearts and take us away from the LORD and the truth and the brethren.

As we give closer consideration to what manner of persons we ought to be, let us remember that first and foremost we should try to be like Christ. If we are truly endeavoring to follow his example, we should remember that he was tested in all points like as we are. He was reviled, he was persecuted, he was finally put to death, and yet in his dying moments, Jesus continued to be a faithful ambassador of the truth. Let us remember that the servant cannot expect to be above his Master, and that if we are true servants we will daily strive to be more like him.

"THINK ON THESE THINGS"

'Holy conversation and godliness', if genuine, is not something that we can wear merely as a veneer. True godlikeness springs from within, and is based upon our habits of thinking. Peter's question, 'What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness' will be answered according to the manner in which our thoughts are controlled. True Christian thinking is beautifully outlined by Paul in Philippians 4:8, where we read,

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

There are many good and praiseworthy things with which we are surrounded, and upon which our minds could profitably dwell. But we believe that, as Christians seeking to have our minds filled with the things which truly pertain to life and godliness, we will do well to give special thought, first, to our Heavenly Father and his beloved Son, then to the truth in all its resplendent glory, and finally, to the brethren. If our hearts and minds are filled with things pertaining to God, to his plan and to his people, these pure, noble, praiseworthy, and virtuous thoughts will be constantly overflowing for the blessing of others. By holy conversation and godliness we will be used of the LORD to comfort the brethren and be able ambassadors of the new kingdom. ■

OBITUARIES

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

Brother Fritz Burner, Lauf, Germany—November 26, 1997. Age, 83.

Brother John Kubic, San Francisco, CA—December 12, 1997. Age, 80.

Sister Myrtle Thompson, Olympia, WA—December 14, 1997. Age, 81.

Sister Cecilia Newcomer, St. Petersburg, FL—December 26, 1997. Age, 84.

A PILGRIM VISIT TO ITALY

BY BROTHER JOSEPH PANUCCI

IN SEPTEMBER OF last year I made a pilgrim trip to my native Italy, landing at the airport of Fiumicino, some 40 kilometers from Rome. During the rule of the Roman Empire the town of Tre Taverne was on the site of the present-day Fiumicino Airport. That was the very town where the Apostle Paul arrived after being shipwrecked during a long voyage as a prisoner from Judea. He and the other prisoners, all in chains, accompanied by Roman centurions, walked from this town along the Appian Way to the city of Rome to be judged by the court of Caesar. Modern trains follow the route defined by the Appian Way into the city of Rome. As I was on the train I thought about the Apostle Paul—his faith, courage, zeal for the LORD, and love of the LORD's people, as well as the message of the Gospel. I took comfort in those thoughts as I began my pilgrim journey.

From Rome I went to Florence, and that evening some of the brethren met me at the home of Sister Benvenuti. We discussed fundamental truths and I was pleased to learn that, in addition to the fundamentals, they also have a clear understanding of the truth of the Lord's presence.

The following evening we had another study meeting. We also discussed their desire to get involved in witness work in the cities of Florence and Tuscany. They need Italian literature to do this, and I gave them the names and addresses of people in Tuscany who receive the Italian *Dawn* magazine. They decided to call on these people and invite them to their meetings. On the last day of my visit, a beloved brother and sister returned early from their vacation to meet with me in Florence. We had a beautiful evening of spiritual refreshment. One of the brothers in Florence is a physician and a writer. He expressed his desire to revise some of our Italian literature with more modern language. This will be explored further.

From Florence I traveled to Naples, and then to the city of Ottaviano. In that city there resides a family whose zeal for the LORD can scarcely be expressed in words. Their love for the LORD and the truth makes it a privilege and joy beyond description to be with them. They open their homes and hearts to the LORD's people in such a way as to bring us to tears.

The next city visited was Agrigento on the Island of Sicily. It was a long trip, taking about three and one-half hours to put the train on a ferry and to cross the Strait of Messina. I arrived in Agrigento about 11:30 p.m. The brethren were waiting for me at the train station, and it was a good feeling to see them after such a difficult journey.

The following day all the brethren came to a meeting for discussion on spiritual matters, followed by sweet fellowship. We discussed arrangements for the mini-convention which was to take

place on Saturday. During the convention, four discourses were given; all were uplifting and encouraging. Although my plans were to leave after the convention, the brethren insisted that I stay another week to hold another mini-convention on the following Sunday. I nearly said no, but when they told me a brother and a sister would be coming all the way from Trieste, near the Yugoslavian border, I felt it was my duty to stay. I was glad that I did. During the week we visited some people in Montebello who had just left their former religious organization, and we had a profitable discussion.

The second mini-convention was indeed a blessed one, both in terms of the discourses, and also because of a desire expressed by the brethren to get involved in witness work. Most of them are young, hospitable, and very zealous for the truth. They requested that we send them more Italian *Dawns*. Now they receive twenty copies each month of *El Alba*; they request 100 per month.

From Sicily I went to the continent and did follow-up work in Calabria among subscribers to *El Alba*—the Italian *Dawn*. I then spent a little time with members of my own family living in Italy who have recently lost two family members, and so I had the opportunity to give them the comfort of the wonderful hope we have in the Word of God.

This pilgrim trip was a success insofar as I was able to provide encouragement to like-minded brethren, and to help them with ideas for the promulgation of the truth. The trip was a labor of love, and I thank my Heavenly Father for the strength to have accomplished it. ■

LOVE AND GOOD WORKS

*"Let us consider one another to provoke
unto love and to good works."*

Hebrews 10:24

THERE IS NO bond of unity as strong or as precious as that between fellow members of the body of Christ. Where this unity exists there is a blessed community of interest in which each follower of the Master is truly solicitous for the welfare of his brethren. He is interested in their spiritual progress, and seeks ways and means of encouraging them to greater love and devotion to the LORD and to his service. He is as interested in seeing them make their calling and election sure to joint-heirship with Christ as he is to gain the victory himself. No true Christian would knowingly jeopardize the spiritual well-being of his brethren in order to gain for himself an advantage.

There are many avenues along which it is our privilege to note the needs of our brethren, and to assist them. In our text the apostle sums these up

under the general heading of 'love and good works', indicating that in considering our brethren we can render them valuable aid by exhorting them to faithfulness along these two general lines. By referring to love **and** good works the apostle emphasizes that both are important, and that either one without the other would lead to an imbalance in Christian character, and a dwarfing of true Christian growth.

As a matter of fact, when Christian love fills the heart, one of the inevitable manifestations will be a consuming zeal leading to self-sacrifice in good works. In I Thessalonians 1:3, the Apostle Paul speaks of the "labour of love." The most striking example of the manner in which love labors for the benefit of others is that of our Heavenly Father himself.

"God is love," the Scriptures tell us, and the evidence of this is seen in all that he has planned and done for his creatures. He causes the rain to fall and the sun to shine upon the just and the unjust. It was because he loved the world that he gave his dearly beloved Son to be the Redeemer. He loves his people, and demonstrates it by the many ways in which he bestows his blessings upon them. He gives them of his Holy Spirit; he gives them wisdom, and courage, and strength. He comforts them in their sorrows, and befriends them in their lonely hours. Furthermore, he chastens us because of his love, and reproves us for our wrongdoing, forgiving us when we go to him in faith and repentance.

God is zealous in the interests of his people because 'he is love'. This means that when we exhort the brethren to love and good works we are encouraging them to be godlike in character. This

is emphasized in the case of Jesus. One of the briefest, yet most comprehensive testimonies concerning the earthly life and ministry of Jesus is the statement that he "went about doing good." (Acts 10:38) This was characteristic of his entire outlook and demeanor, and it was Jesus who said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."—John 14:9

In Jesus we see a practical example of Divine love in operation for the blessing of others. It inspired the Master to faithfulness in bearing the kingdom message to his own people, the Jewish nation. It led him to be solicitous for the welfare of his disciples, and to take a tender personal interest in them. Love also prompted the Master to declare hard, cutting truths concerning the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, and to expose the popular errors which they taught.

The spirit of Jesus' life of devotion to his Heavenly Father was prophetically described by David in the prayer of dedication, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Ps. 40:7,8) In carrying out the spirit of consecration reflected in this beautiful prayer Jesus recognized that his Heavenly Father's will for him was to bear witness to the lovingkindness of God as revealed in the Divine plan of salvation.

David's prophetic prayer concerning Jesus continues, "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation."—Ps. 40:9,10

Jesus was at one with his Father, and motivated by the same Divine love which actuates God in all that he does. We see in him a wonderful example of the 'labour of love'. (I Thess. 1:3) He was a faithful witness to the lovingkindness and the salvation of God. He did not hide the righteousness of God in his heart, but by word of mouth, by example, and by the marvelous miracles which he performed, set forth the plan of God for human salvation—that glorious plan which reveals the righteousness of God, his wisdom, justice, love, and power. We see, then, that in exhorting one another to love and to good works we are urging the development of Christ-likeness.

WORKS THAT ARE NOT GOOD

Love cannot fill the heart without manifesting itself in works of self-sacrifice for the blessing of others. It is equally true that works which are not the result of a filling of Divine love are not 'good' works. Jesus told of a class which would make professions of great activity in his name, claiming zeal in performing "many wonderful works." (Matt. 7:22) Evidently, however, these works are not the outgrowth of Divine love, because Jesus describes those who perform them as those who "work iniquity." (vs. 23) It is apparent from this that to be zealous in the work of the LORD is not in itself the evidence of true Christianity. The apostle speaks of a zeal which is "not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2), and it is also true that there can be a zeal which is not prompted by Divine love. In either case, the resultant works would not be acceptable to God. They would not be 'good' works.

In the apostle's masterful and comprehensive treatise on love (I Cor. 13), he goes into considerable detail in order to emphasize that even those works which are in themselves intrinsically good are not acceptable to God unless prompted by love. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (vs. 1), he writes.

Speaking with the 'tongues of men and of angels' is in itself a laudable accomplishment when the gift of speech is employed in magnifying the name of God by making known the truth of his glorious plan of salvation. But even this Divinely-provided means of serving the LORD would not be approved by him unless it is prompted by love. Should it be the result of selfish ambition rather than a labor of love, it would be 'as sounding brass'.

Paul speaks of the fundamentally important element of faith and the works which faith accomplishes—even so great a faith as to be able to remove mountains—and explains that those who have such faith and by it perform such works without love, are as nothing. Faith in itself is good. Without faith it is impossible to please God. (Heb. 11:6) But in order for even faith to be pleasing to God it must be accompanied by love.

"Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor" (I Cor. 13:3), Paul continued, "and have not charity [love], it profiteth me nothing." Here is a remarkable statement! It is quite possible that the reference is to what the Master himself had said to the rich young nobleman. When this young man asked the Master what good thing he could do to inherit eternal life, the answer was, "Go . . . sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and

thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.” (Mark 10:21) Here is Jesus’ own declaration of that which can properly be considered good works. It is that which every Christian is expected to do. Consecration to the LORD calls for giving up all that we have, with the LORD directing how it shall be used in his service.

When Paul referred to this viewpoint of good works, it was not with the thought of saying that what Jesus had set forth as a necessary condition of discipleship was not fundamentally important, but rather to emphasize that even in the bestowing of our goods to feed the poor, love must be the impelling motive, else our sacrifice will avail nothing. As Paul saw the matter, it is not a choice between love and bestowing our goods to feed the poor, for if we have true love we will be inspired to use all that we have for the blessing of others.

It would be possible to make sacrifices on behalf of others which would be prompted by self-interest of one sort or another. Vainglory or the desire to be well thought of by neighbors or brethren might motivate one to great sacrifice. But no lasting profit would accrue therefrom in such a case. Works which in themselves are good would become tainted with evil as a result of the wrong motive that prompted them.

BODIES TO BE BURNED

“Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [love], it profiteth me nothing” (I Cor. 13:3), Paul continues. Here is a reference to the good works of a Christian viewed from the standpoint of the lessons taught in the services of the typical Tabernacle. In Romans 12:1 Paul exhorts, “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." In the type, bodies of animals were sacrificed, and their bodies burned, but in the antitype we are to present our own bodies to be consumed in the performing of good works.

There is a beautiful reference to this in Hebrews 13:11-13. Here the apostle explains that in the type the bodies of those animals offered for sacrifice, whose blood was taken into the Most Holy for sin, were burned outside the camp. He tells us that in the fulfillment of this type, Jesus suffered and died "without [outside] the gate." He then urges us to follow in Jesus' footsteps that our bodies, symbolically speaking, might also be "burned."
—vs. 11

It is the Divine will that we give our bodies to be 'burned'. It is only on this basis of suffering with Christ that we may hope to reign with him. Paul's argument is, that unless love prompts the sacrifice, it will profit us nothing. If love does prompt us to faithfulness in giving our bodies to be burned, it will mean "glory and honour and immortality, eternal life."—Rom. 2:7

It is apparent, then, that just as there cannot be true Christian love without that love manifesting itself in good works, so from God's standpoint there can be no good works except those which are prompted by love. In performing the good works, love will be long-suffering and kind. It will not attempt to make a great display of what is being done, for humility is one of the components of love. Love will be patient with others, overlooking their unwilling imperfections. At the same time, love will

be unyielding in its stand for God, for truth, and for righteousness. For this reason, some of the good works of love may appear stern, perhaps even unkind, to those who do not understand.

TWO EXAMPLES OF LOVE

While the most quoted treatise in the Bible on Christian love is that of I Corinthians 13, written by the Apostle Paul, John is usually thought of as the apostle of love. Truly, John did write a great deal concerning love—the love of God, the love of Christ, and love among the brethren of Christ. It is John who tells us of the great love of God as exemplified in the gift of his Son to be man's Redeemer. (John 3:16) It is John who quotes Jesus' "new commandment" that we should love one another as he loved us.—John 13:34; I John 2:8-10; 4:11

John himself was activated by a consuming love for the brethren, yet he did not use love as a mask to cover wrongdoing among the brethren. In his second and third epistles we have two very notable examples of the manner in which love will seek to protect the best spiritual interests of the LORD's people when they are in danger of being ensnared by false doctrine or of following selfish leadership. In this we have a clear indication that true Christian love does not stand idly by when the LORD's people are in danger, that in such instances the work of love is to speak out to counsel and warn the brethren.

John's second epistle is addressed to "the elect lady and her children." (vs. 1) He writes that he "rejoiced greatly" (vs. 4) when he learned that this family continued "walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father." Then

he exhorts the elect lady and her family to love one another, "and this is love, that we walk after his commandments."—vs. 6

In this epistle John proceeds to show that walking in the truth involves great carefulness in the matter of those with whom we fellowship as well as those whom we assist. He writes, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."—vss. 10,11

Here is outlined a basic principle in the operation of Divine love; namely, that to the extent we lend our support to those whom we believe to be wrong, we are partakers of their wrongdoing. If we have a distorted conception of Divine love, and of how it should cause us to act, we might conclude that although we believe a brother is teaching wrong doctrines, we should consider his heart intentions and bid him Godspeed anyway, and recommend his services to the brethren. We might say that for ourselves we are holding to all the doctrines of the truth, but will continue to associate with, and thereby sponsor, those who are not, because love demands that we do this.

Such a course, however, is contrary to John's instructions to the 'elect lady'. He points out to her that to the extent she sponsors one who is wrong in doctrine, she is responsible for his spreading of error, just as responsible as though she herself became a minister of error. Here, then, is the true operation of love, the good work of love, in seeking to protect the brethren against the evil influence of those who would undermine the truth in their hearts and lives. In other words, love has compas-

sion for the scattered and frightened sheep, but no mercy for the wolves in sheep's clothing that may enter in among the sheep.

In John's third epistle, the good work of love is seen from still another standpoint. This epistle is addressed to "the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth." (III John, vs. 1) Again John tells of his rejoicing to learn that his brethren continue to walk in the truth. It seems that in the district where Gaius lived, faithful ministers of the truth had been working—missionaries, apparently, from another territory. Gaius appreciated the service of these and had taken them into his home and cared for them while they were in the district. Thus he enjoyed a share in their ministry, and was blessed accordingly. Just as the 'elect lady' would have been guilty of the *evil* deeds of those who were working against the truth had she mistakenly, and in the name of love, taken them into her home, Gaius became a partaker of the *good* works of these servants of the truth by entertaining them in his home.

In the same district where Gaius lived there was a man by the name of Diotrephes, who, while he professed to be a brother in the truth, was not so in reality. Evidently John had written to the brethren in this vicinity suggesting that he would be glad to come and visit them. When Diotrephes heard of this he began to oppose the idea. John explains that the reason for this was that Diotrephes "loveth to have the preeminence" among the brethren. (III John, vs. 9) Evidently he had been holding a whip hand over this ecclesia, encouraging the brethren to look up to him in all things, and he sensed that

if the Apostle John should put in an appearance, this spell would be broken.

That the brethren would be richly blessed by John's ministry, and led to new heights of grace and truth, did not concern this one who had become a 'lord' over God's heritage. (I Pet. 5:3) He was concerned only in protecting his own interests. And in his selfish spirit he did not hesitate to speak out against John "with malicious words" (III John, vs. 10), and threatened to expel from the ecclesia any who favored the proposed visit of the apostle. John, with his great heart of love, might have excused Diotrephes for this outburst of malice against him had he alone been concerned. But it had to do with the spiritual interests of the church, so love spoke out and exposed the wrongdoing in order that this ecclesia might be delivered from such an evil influence. This, indeed, was a work of love.

JUSTICE, LOVE, AND HUMILITY

In Micah 6:8, the principle of love is shown in its proper relationship to other elements of Christian character. Although this admonition was, in the first instance, addressed to fleshly Israel, the fundamental principles of God's requirements as here set forth are the same for his people in every age. "What doth the LORD require of thee," the prophet asks, "but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

To 'do justly' simply means to follow the Golden Rule—to be governed by the principle of justice in all dealings with our fellowmen. This, in itself, is a very exacting requirement. It would probably put a check on many of our words and deeds if always we would ask ourselves whether what we are about

to say or do is exactly what we would like others to say or do to us. Surely, though, the followers of the Master should endeavor always to be guided by this principle. But to follow the course of justice does not make one a Christian.

To 'love mercy' is the next requirement, and this goes far beyond the demands of justice. The word 'mercy' in this passage is a translation of a Hebrew word meaning 'loving-kindness', or 'love'. And when the prophet says that we should love loving-kindness, he uses a Hebrew word which means 'affectionate love'. We are, then, to be 'in love' with loving-kindness. In other words, our vision of the love of God, and our endeavor that his love motivate our every thought and word and deed, should be the all-absorbing theme of our lives. We are not to think of loving God and our brethren as a duty, but are to be in love with God's will for us. We are to be so in love with this great principle of godlikeness that we will gladly lay down our lives for others, even as Christ, activated by the same spirit, sacrificed his life for us. Thus love and good works will go hand in hand.

There is still another requirement mentioned by the Prophet Micah in chapter 6: we are to "walk humbly" with our God. (vs. 8) As far as the abstract principle of unselfishness is concerned, there are many in the world who are more or less influenced by it. Thousands of doctors, nurses, relief and charity workers, are wholehearted and self-sacrificing in their efforts to do good, to help the needy, and to relieve suffering. They will have their reward in the day of their visitation, or when the millennial kingdom begins.

Christians, however, should look to the LORD for guidance as to the manner in which their sacrifices are to be made. It is this that is involved in 'walking humbly' with God. Not only must the motive be right, but our zeal for good works must be directed by the Word of God if our works are actually to be good. In a general way, God has made his will plain for his people, and to walk humbly before him, it remains only to be guided by his will.

The Gospel Age is not the time for the world to be reformed and converted, so works calculated to bring about such an end would not be in harmony with God's will. One might lay down his life unselfishly in an attempt to reform the world through political, or other efforts, but in doing so, he would not be walking humbly before God.

God's work during this age is the call and development of the church, the body of Christ. This is done through the power of the truth, the Word of God. Hence, the truth is given to the brethren to circulate, to promote, to promulgate, in order that it might reach those who have a hearing ear, and that through its mighty power they may be drawn to the LORD, and prepared for joint-heirship in the kingdom. Thus we are commanded to hold forth the Word of life; to let our light shine; to preach the Word; to build one another up in the faith.

This Divine program for the people of God has been in operation since Pentecost; and it will continue in operation until the last member of the body of Christ has passed beyond the veil. At the beginning of the second presence of Christ there was a change from sowing to reaping; but the reaping, as well as the sowing, has been accomplished by the same method: namely, the proclamation of the

truth. Now, in addition to the general truth of the Gospel, there are the dispensational truths due at the end of the age. These also are to be promulgated; for they, as well as the general message of the Gospel, are essential today for the protection and building up of the brethren.

To walk humbly with God, therefore, means that our love-inspired hearts and minds and bodies will be devoted to this service of the brethren through the ministration of the truth. Beginning with evangelism, and continuing along all lines of activity by which we are able to assist one another in putting on the whole armor of God, our thought should be, first and foremost, directed toward the spiritual welfare of our brethren. In this way the 'bride' makes herself ready for union with her heavenly 'bridegroom' (Rev. 21:2,9; John 3:29); and in laying down our lives in good works of this nature we are walking humbly with our God.

Let us not, then, assume to decide for ourselves what the LORD wants us to do. He has no private plan for each of us as individuals. His plan and his will concerning the way of sacrifice is the same for all, and if we are walking humbly with our God we will endeavor, through prayer and the study of his Word, to understand his plan clearly, and humbly yield ourselves in obedience to it. The love of God, with its all-consuming power, will find expression in 'good works' which will have our Heavenly Father's approval. ■

Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."—Matthew 10:31

LOYALTY TO GOD

ONE OF THE foremost requisites of character which the LORD seeks in his people is faith. Faith is not easily defined but it must be based upon a sure foundation such as the teachings of Christ, because these precepts are the unchangeable principles of righteousness which emanate from God, the Father.—James 1:17,18

Man was created perfect and placed in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:7), but Adam and Eve lacked the experience to deal with deception and lies. Man was formed in God's image and therefore was loving, trusting, caring, and believing. This first pair had love for their Creator, love for each other, and love for the many good things he created. God had pronounced all which he created—all his works—as "good." (Gen. 1:25,31) Adam and Eve had no reason to suspect that one such 'good' creature would lead them astray. They were to care for God's creatures, and they learned to love and trust them. Their animal friends, in turn, loved and trusted them. This was the normal situation that existed then, and which will exist again when Isaiah 11:1-9 is fulfilled in God's kingdom.

Thus, when the serpent approached Eve and, most likely, ate of the forbidden fruit from the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' and did not experience any ill effects, Eve did not know that Satan was behind this deception. She ate of the

forbidden fruit. The Apostle Paul clearly states, "The woman *being deceived* was in the transgression." (I Tim. 2:14) Eve did not know the serpent was deceiving her. But when Eve gave the fruit to her husband "and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6), "Adam was *not* deceived." (I Tim. 2:14) Hence, Adam disobeyed God and brought the penalty of death upon himself and all his progeny.

UNKNOWN VICTIMS OF SATAN

So also today, there are many 'would be' teachers of God's Word who are sincere and can display all the loving, trustworthiness which the serpent displayed, but are unknown victims of Satan's deceptions. As the serpent did, they convey concepts by their actions. While many people are sincere in what they believe and teach, those who follow Christ are committed to following the principles of God's inspired Word. As Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—John 8:31,32

While there are many who do not deny the teachings of Christ, yet they believe that his teachings must be supplemented by new teachings. These are misled because they do not have complete faith in the inspired Word of God. No matter how sincere the propounders of these new teachings may be, false teachings have another source than God, and will be fully exposed when Christ's authority is manifested on earth. (II Thess. 2:8) The rule of Christ will be founded on righteousness and truth, and mankind will be blessed through this kingdom reign.

PASSOVER AS A TYPE

God foreshadowed the release of mankind from sin and death through the experiences of the nation of Israel. God had blessed Israel and given them exclusive favor (that came to an end in A.D. 36). "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2) He used them as 'actors' in a 'drama' showing forth the fulfillment of his wonderful plan. When Israel went into bondage in Egypt after Joseph died, this condition represented the bondage to sin and death of all mankind. After all the preceding plagues on Egypt had failed to gain deliverance for Israel, God instructed them to observe the Passover, a special feast. (Exodus 12th chapter) Only those in Israel who knew of God's instructions were spared the death of the firstborn that came on the 14th of Nisan. Pharaoh and his kingdom represented Satan and the kingdom of this present evil world, and these were not spared the visit of the angel of death. All the firstborn in Egypt died in any house where the blood of the Passover lamb was not sprinkled on the door posts and lintel of the house.

Each family in Israel had been instructed to select a lamb without blemish on the 10th day of Nisan, and to bring it into their homes. They were to slay the lamb on the 14th of Nisan, and to sprinkle its blood on the door posts and lintel of each house. They were to roast the lamb and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, while dressed for a journey. That night the death angel passed over the homes with the blood on the door posts, but slew the firstborn in Egypt where such blood was not found.

Jesus was represented by the slain Passover lamb. This is confirmed by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 5:7, and by the Apostle Peter in I Peter 1:19. The firstborn who were in jeopardy that night and were saved by the Passover lamb's blood, represented the Gospel Age church. (Heb. 12:23) But Jesus died, not alone for the church, but for the sins of the whole world. (I John 2:2) The nation of Israel represented the whole world of mankind who are ultimately delivered from sin and death and the influence of Satan.

This deliverance from bondage for all mankind does not mean that man will be free to live by his own rules, but rather that he will be free from the bondage of all false and oppressive rulers. As Israel was released from bondage to an oppressive ruler and through Moses received the Law to live by, so also all mankind, through Christ, will have God's Law written on their hearts when released from the oppressive bondage of Satan, sin and death.

DELIVERANCE FROM BONDAGE

There will be no more deception by Satan after he is bound "that he should deceive the nations no more." (Rev. 20:1-3) All will be accountable for every idle word. (Matt. 12:36) While faith will not be a prerequisite for man's opportunity to learn about and obey the Laws of God, it will be a prerequisite for those who are to attain life and perfection in God's kingdom.—Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:11,12

The deliverance of Israel was a manifestation of God's mercy and love to them. (Exod. 14:13) Likewise, the deliverance of mankind from sin and death, and from Satan's control, will be a manifestation of God's mercy and love to them. (John 3:16;

Psa. 46:8-11) The binding of Satan will bring an end to all false religions. The inheritance of this present evil world will perish with it.

In contrast, the heirs of salvation, as pictured in the firstborn of Israel will become priests and kings and reign with Christ a thousand years. (Rev. 20:6) They will have demonstrated their loyalty to God and his cause, by having faithfully followed in the footsteps of their Redeemer.—Rev. 20:4

As ‘firstborns’ they assume great responsibility in assisting Jesus in the kingdom work. They will have the satisfaction of sharing with their Lord Jesus in the crushing of evil once and for all, in fulfillment of the promise given by God in Genesis 3:15 in the presence of mother Eve, to bruise the serpent’s head in a fatal blow delivered through the ‘seed of the woman’. As the Apostle Paul wrote, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”—Rom. 16:20 ■

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

CANNOT MISS HER ‘DAWN’

Dawn Bible Students Association: Please send me a catalog listing the video cassette subjects you have available for purchase and loan. I am a reader of *The Dawn* magazine, and I am so glad that I got in touch with the Dawn. I have already

learned so much from it. I do not want to miss a single copy!—VA

HOW CAN WE ACCEPT NEW DOCTRINES NOT BASED ON SCRIPTURE?

Dear Dawn Brethren: I marvel at the work you people perform on behalf of the brethren and all who love him. I cher-

ish each issue of *The Dawn*. It is usually read completely within a couple of hours of receiving it. I am particularly enjoying the *Genesis* series. I was also so pleased to see the opening article for December describing the movement to deify Mary and make her part of the 'godhead'. When I first heard of it I thought that it was just a small movement, but apparently it is a movement with considerable depth.

One would think that any reasonable person, upon viewing this matter, would seriously reconsider their belief system when it can be shown at this very time in history that new doctrine would be established by Papal bull without a shred of Scriptural support!—
NJ

ORDERS MATERIAL FOR HOME SCHOOL

Dear Dawn Video Cassette Service: I would

like to borrow the video cassette, "*Creation or Evolution?*" to use in our Christian home-school. We are always looking for material to supplement our science program. Now we are studying Creation, evolution, and fossils, so this video sounds like something we can benefit from. Sincerely. —TN

TO UNDERSTAND EVIL'S PERMISSION

To Dawn Bible Students: I request the videos "*Why God Permits Evil*," and "*The Meaning and End of Suffering*." I do thank you for your extremely low prices on all your materials, and I enjoy your products over and over again. Is there a meeting place on the east side of Cincinnati that I could go to? Churches in general make me feel out of place. Sincerely.—
OH ■



SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

These speakers are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Department, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible:

Mike Balko		S. Jones	
Detroit, MI	February 22	Atlanta, GA	February 22
		Bath, NC	24
		Asheville, NC	26
		Huntsville, AL	27

The speakers listed below, in cooperation with the Dawn, are invited by individual classes, or their services have been arranged by their home classes:

A. Allers		R. Gorecki	
Sacramento, CA	February 13-15	Sacramento, CA	February 13-15
M.J. Balko		L. Post	
St. Petersburg, FL	February 8	Middletown, NY	February 8
W. Blicharz		L. Wesol	
Sacramento, CA	February 13-15	Louisville, AL	February 15
J. Dolan			
Claymont, DE	February 15		

CONVENTIONS

ROCKLAND CONVENTION, February 22—Comfort Inn, Nanuet, NY. Contact: Mrs. Russell Shallieu, 1040 Johnston Dr., Watchung, NJ 07060 Phone: (908) 756-4954

SACRAMENTO, CA, February 13-15—Beverly Garland Hotel, 1780 Tribute Rd. Sacramento, CA 95815. Reservations should be made directly with the Hotel. Phone: (800) 972-3976. Mention Sacramento Bible Stu-

dents for special rates. For other information, contact Betty Lankford, 6000 19th Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95820 Phone: (916) 457-0569

DETROIT MONTH-END CONVENTION, February 22—Redford YWCA, 25940 Grand River, Redford Twp. Contact: Frank Nemesh, 2183 Babcock Dr., Troy, MI 48084 Phone: (248) 649-6588

**NEW ORLEANS/PASS
CHRISTIAN BIBLE
STUDENTS CONVEN-
TION, March 7,8—**

Holiday Inn, Hwy. 90/
Pratt Ave., Gulfport, MS.
For hotel reservations:
Bonnie Moran (601) 864-
4310. Other information:
Mrs. Ward Buel, 214
Magnolia St., Pass Chris-
tian, MS 39571
Phone: (228) 452-4351

**FLORIDA CONVEN-
TION, March 7,8,9—**

Holiday Inn at the Or-
lando Arena, 304 West
Colonial Drive, Orlando,
FL 32801. Contact Bob
Goodman for meal count
and information, 426
Sundown Tr., Cassel-
berry, FL 32707

Phone: (407) 695-6815

**NEW YORK BIBLE
STUDENTS SPRING
CONVENTION, March**

22—Ramada Inn, Two
Bridges Road & Exit 52,
Route 80, Fairfield, NJ
07006. Contact: Ann-
Truth Lange.

Phone: (914) 948-5428

**FRESNO, CA, 45th
ANNUAL PRE-ME-
MORIAL CONVEN-
TION, March 27,28,**

29—Holiday Inn, Fresno
Airport, 5090 E. Clinton
Ave., Fresno, CA 93727.

Contact: Mrs. Robert Wil-
son, 2104 N. Price, #112,
Fresno, CA 93703 for res-
ervations *before March*
13th.

Phone: (209) 255-2214

**COLUMBUS, OH, BI-
BLE STUDENTS PRE-
MEMORIAL CONVEN-
TION, March 28, 29—**

Contact: Lisa Knapp,
1855 San Remo Dr., Co-
lumbus, OH 43204 for in-
formation.

Phone: (614) 486-0431

**GREATER NEW LON-
DON PRE-MEMORIAL
CONVENTION, March**

29—Bayview Lodge, So-
ciety Rd., East Lyme, CT.
Contact: Shaune Arm-
strong.

Phone: (860) 445-4295

**DETROIT PRE-ME-
MORIAL CONVEN-
TION, April 3-5—Ma-**

comb Community Col-
lege, Warren, MI. Con-
tact: Frank Nemesh.

Phone: (248) 649-6588

**ALBUQUERQUE, NM
CONVENTION, April**

10-12—Contact: R. Buss
Phone: (505) 266-0450

**BOISE, ID, April 24-
26—**Owyee Plaza Hotel,
Boise, ID. Contact: Don-
na Allers.

Phone: (208) 375-6873