

The DAWN

VOLUME NO. LXIV, NUMBER 7
(USPS 149-380), JULY 1996

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Second-class postage paid at Rutherford, N.J. Published monthly by The Dawn Bible Students Association, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. \$3.00 a year; Great Britain £2. Write to foreign addresses for other prices.

CANADA: P.O. Box 175, Elmwood Postal Outlet, Winnipeg, Man. R2L 1M0

BRITISH ISLES: Associated Bible Students, P.O. Box 136, Chesham, Bucks. HP5 3EB

AUSTRALIA: Berean Bible Institute, 1 Springfield Street, Briar Hill, Victoria 3088

FRANCE: Association des Etudiants de la Bible-Publications Aurore, B.P. 3066, 68062 Mulhouse CEDEX

GERMANY: Tagesanbruch Bibelstudien-Vereinigung, Eisenstrasse 9, 91231 Neunkirchen am Sand

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Padre Bruzzone 1166, Espeleta 1882, Buenos Aires, Argentina

SPAIN: El Alba, Via S. Leonardo 21, Ottaviano 80044 Napoli, Italy.

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NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

II Peter 3:13

AS PEOPLE IN the world see the present millennium coming to a close and the new millennium approaching, they are also conjecturing about the future. Last year a book was published, entitled, “Future in Sight,” by Barry H. Minkin, a business consultant and writer who enlisted the opinions of prominent business men to predict trends in technology, finances, management, resources, politics, and marketing. Excerpts from the book were recently published in the news media, focusing on three areas:

1. The role China will play in the future.
2. The shift in population in the USA to the Sunbelt.
3. The Urban explosion.

The predictions in each case pose more problems than solutions to those already in existence, and which Bible students know can only be solved by the blessings of Christ’s kingdom.

Here are some of the points made:

1. "China is the fastest growing economy in the world. The United States has possessed the world's largest economy for over a century, but at the current rate, China will displace it in the first half of the next century, and become the number one economy in the world." Thus, although predicting such rapid growth in China, the prediction also states, "The quality of life will remain poor due to inadequate housing, transportation, parks, museums, and home energy availability."

2. "As the United States approaches the third millennium, its demographic center will gravitate increasingly toward the South and West. Sunbelt states will be crammed by increased population in the first decade of the next century. Growth will be due to changes in births, slowing death rates, migration, and the fertility of a fast-rising immigrant population that continues to move into the Sunbelt states. The United States is the only nation that accepts hundreds of thousands of immigrants each year."

The predictions go on to forecast what will happen to the USA, saying, "Despite recent restrictions, liberal US immigration policies will change American society dramatically. Sunbelt states like California, Florida, and Texas will become Third World states, with huge immigrant and black inner-city populations divided from white America by poverty, violence, education, and racial tension. Finding the right level of welfare support that will provide a safety net without undermining im-

migrant incentive to succeed will be particularly difficult.”

“By 2088, minority populations will become the US majority. California will have twice as many people in 2040 as it does now. No racial group will be able to claim majority status, but Hispanics will account for almost fifty percent of California’s population.” The prediction is made that “the loss of the traditional ‘American’ way of life, coupled with political impotence to reverse the trend, will spawn a conservative backlash over the next decade.”

3. Since population is expected to continue increasing, the prediction for the future is an “urban explosion.” Concerning this, the article says, “Big is the megatheme when you think about tomorrow’s cities. Urban centers suffering the consequences of the unadulterated pursuit of wealth—traffic congestion, air pollution, and inadequate sanitation and infrastructure—are being stretched to the breaking point by rapid growth. Moreover, there is an obvious spreading and melding of the rural, suburban and urban landscape over vast areas and, thus, the growth of ‘rurubania’ will continue.”

What are the implications? “The World Bank recently reported that many of Asia’s cities are degrading faster than the region’s robust economies are growing. Problems in the cities will slow economic development throughout the world.” “Unemployment will persist in the underclass areas of most cities in the world.”

It is not surprising, therefore, that this article, “A More Shocking Future,” as it looks into the future and reviews Minikin’s book, sees only

Satan's kingdom of selfishness continuing. A better life for anyone cannot be seen, and the problems of today are predicted as multiplying and becoming more insoluble in the tomorrow to come.

Bible students have access to a book that has been written about the future; and they, too, can write about what it portends. That future is in sight as well, and concerning its message it has been said that "the world's hope for the future is as bright as the promises of God," and those promises are very bright indeed. One of them is referred to in our text—a promise that God will establish a 'new heavens' and a 'new earth', in which righteousness instead of evil will prevail. This, of course, is highly symbolic language, but, in brief, it means that by divine authority Christ will set up a new and righteous government on this planet through which the Bible's promise, "On earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14), will be gloriously fulfilled.

The opening word in our text is 'nevertheless'. It is very significant. It indicates that the new heavens and new earth which the LORD has promised are in contrast with what Peter had been discussing, and turning back to see why he used the word 'nevertheless', the reason becomes very apparent, for he had been portraying a time of destruction and trouble—a 'heavens' and 'earth' passing away, and the "elements" melting with "fervent heat."—vs. 10

But even this picture of destruction does not give us the full significance of Peter's use of the word 'nevertheless'. The full force of this word becomes apparent only when we read verses three and four, which are the introduction to the general lesson of the chapter. These two verses read,

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming [Greek, *parousia*, meaning ‘presence’]? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”

In Acts 3:19-22 this same Apostle Peter is quoted as saying that following the second coming of Christ there would be “times of restitution of all things,” and that this glorious work of restoration had been foretold to the “fathers” by the mouth of “all God’s holy prophets.” And now, in II Peter 3:3,4, he informs us that when the Lord returned and his second presence became a reality some would scoff and say, “There is no evidence of his presence; all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation’.

Through the testimony of the prophets, the ‘fathers’ of Israel were led to believe that the coming of the Messiah would result in rich and lasting blessings of peace and health and life. One of the proof texts of this, which Peter quoted in his sermon, was the promise made to Abraham that through his ‘seed’ ‘all the families of the earth’ would be blessed. Those, therefore, who believe these promises, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, have a right to expect that the return of Christ should result in these promised blessings flowing out to the world.

It is with this viewpoint that Peter agrees when he uses the word, ‘nevertheless’, for he continues, ‘We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness’. But before he gets to this point in his lesson, Peter reminds us that there are cataclysmic developments in world affairs which precede and are in preparation for the blessings to be

made available through the new heavens and new earth.

In presenting this information, Peter uses an illustration and language employed by Jesus in his great prophecy pertaining to the time of his return and the end of the present age. Jesus referred to the time of his second presence as the "days of the Son of man," and said that in those days it would be as it was in the "days of Noah," and in the "days of Lot."—Luke 17:26-30

Referring to this, Peter says that those who say, "Where is the promise of his presence," are "willingly ignorant," for they should take into account these illustrations of destruction which Jesus had used. According to the Word of God, Peter reminds us, "the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished."

Then the apostle follows up by giving us the meaning of this illustration which Jesus used, and informs us that in the "Day of the LORD [Jehovah]" the present "heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (vs. 10) Thus the overall lesson which Peter presents is evident. Christ does return to establish his kingdom and to bless all the families of the earth, but in order to accomplish this the first result of his return must be the destruction of Satan's world—"the heavens and earth, which are now."—vs. 7

PICTORIAL LANGUAGE

In our study of Peter's prophecy it is important to realize that he uses the terms 'heavens', 'earth', and 'elements' as symbols of the various

aspects of a social order. For example, he speaks of the world order—heavens and the earth—which passed away at the time of the Flood. The literal heavens and the literal earth did not then pass away. It was the social order that existed before the Flood which was destroyed in the Deluge. True, at that time, nearly all the people were also destroyed, but in the lesson Peter draws from that catastrophe, the important consideration is that “the world [*kosmos*, ‘order’] that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.”—vs. 6

Thousands of students of prophecy the world over are convinced that the present generation of the human race is witnessing the destruction of another ‘world’, or social order, and that what has been occurring throughout the earth for many years past is in fulfillment of the Bible’s prophecies pertaining to ‘the end of the world’. They believe the Bible’s testimony that the earth itself “abideth forever” (Eccles. 1:4), but see in the crumbling thrones of the old world, and in the chaos and general upheaval of society everywhere, the collapsing of what the Apostle Paul referred to as “this present evil world.”—Gal. 1:4

Jesus foretold that this would result in a time of “great tribulation,” so severe that unless terminated by divine intervention there would be “no flesh saved.” (Matt. 24:21,22) The Apostle Paul, identifying the same general period as the Day of the LORD, said that in this ‘day’ ‘sudden destruction’ would come upon the world “as travail upon a woman with child.”—I Thess. 5:1-3

These and other ‘end of the world’ prophecies aptly describe what students of the Bible discern taking place. The first spasm of destruction began in 1914, and resulted in the overthrow of nearly all of Europe’s hereditary rulers. The Second

World War resulted in a further weakening of the fabric of civilization. And now the nations are sitting, as it were, over a smoking volcano which threatens to erupt at any time and destroy what is left of the pre-1914 social order.

And how true are Jesus' words that unless these days be shortened, no flesh would be saved! Think of the destruction that would be wrought in the event of a full-scale nuclear war! Indeed, because of the destructive potential of these ghastly missiles, some are wondering if Peter's reference to "fervent heat" which causes the "elements" of the present social order to melt, might not be also intended to convey the idea of literal fire. In a 'time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation' (II Pet. 3:10), there is sure to be much and widespread destruction, regardless of how it might be brought about. However, we think that Peter is speaking largely in symbolic language.

SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL

The symbolisms of the Bible are employed because of their aptness in illustrating the subject matter discussed. In every civilization established by man there have been two cardinal aspects which are fitly illustrated by the heavens and the earth. As we know, all life on the literal earth is subject in one way or another to the influences exerted over the earth by the heavens. Our seasons, our days, and our nights, etc., are all controlled by the heavens.

Because man was created in the image of God, he is by nature a being who reaches out in worship and dependency to a higher power. And although the human race has been, to a considerable extent, alienated from the true God, the Creator, the people have had respect for religious

influences in their affairs. In heathendom this has been exercised through various types of gods, and in pagan countries the State has been set up as an object of veneration and worship.

It is this aspect of every civilization, or social order, that is symbolized in the Bible by the heavens, while the earth pictures organized society which is more or less subject to these symbolic heavens. It is this combination which Peter describes as a world, or *kosmos*, as it is stated in the Greek language. Thus when he speaks of the heavens and the earth passing away with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat, he is not telling us that the literal sun, moon, stars, and the physical earth with all its elements, are to be destroyed. If this were to occur it would mean the destruction of the universe.

The word element, as used by Peter, gives us a clue to what he means. The Apostle Paul uses this same word when, in writing to the Christians in Galatia, he speaks of turning to the "weak and beggarly elements" (Gal. 4:9)—referring to the ordinances of the Law, from the bondage of which Christians are free. The point is that Paul used the word to describe religious forms and customs by which a people had once been governed, and Peter uses the term in the same manner.

Peter's reference to the elements of the heavens and the earth, however, is much more comprehensive, for he is speaking of all the laws, customs, viewpoints, civil and religious, by which the present social order has been governed throughout the ages, and he tells us that in the Day of the LORD, these are to melt with fervent heat.

Without realizing it, men of the world who have insight into the significance of what has been occurring refer to these events as a 'fire'. During the

First World War, Woodrow Wilson said, "The world is on fire." When the second global struggle began, another statesman referred to it as a "four-alarm fire." And this symbolism is freely used in the prophecies which foretold the end of the present world.

Incidental to this symbolic melting of the elements there is, of course, much physical destruction. A great many of the cities of Europe, and many in Asia, were reduced to rubble during the second global struggle. But more significant than this in the fulfillment of prophecy was the melting of the elements of social and religious control, which for centuries had been so generally recognized and respected by the people. The cities have been rebuilt, but all efforts to restore the former European and Asiatic social orders have failed.

The horrors of the war, and the hardships which followed, left millions disillusioned as to the ability of their former leaders, using what they have come to look upon as outmoded laws, customs and viewpoints to provide the security and abundance which they consider theirs rightfully to enjoy. In Italy, for example, first the people voted out the old and established House of Savoy. They established a republic, and millions even voted against the party that is sympathetic to the religious powers of the nation. Think of the extent to which the former elements of Italy's social order have already melted!

And when we turn to the pagan nations, we find that the same melting process is relentlessly destroying their former world also. In Japan the emperor is no longer a 'god' to be worshipped and obeyed. In fact, he now has little to say, even in the civil affairs of the nation. Like the royalty of

England, he has been reduced to the status of a mere figurehead, the symbol of a passing era.

MANY ELEMENTS

This present evil world, as Paul described it, is made up of many elements, both civil and religious. They are not all evil. To the extent that the ethical standards of the Bible have been upheld in the religious control of the people, they have benefited thereby—both the rulers and the ruled. When Paul speaks of it as an ‘evil world’ he means that in the overall picture, evil predominates.

In this ‘world’ there are the labor element, the capital element, the social element, the political element, the various religious elements—professed Christians and the present heavens—the business element, the financial element, and others. It requires no special discernment today to realize that damaging friction exists between these various elements, and that they have, to a considerable extent, lost their former cohesion for one another which, prior to 1914, held the world together.

Both internationally and nationally, in the communities, and in the homes of the people, there is a trend toward looseness in obedience to former restraints and laws. International law is flouted under the slightest pretext. National governments forget their promises and responsibilities, and this example of infidelity reaches into communities, causing the masses gradually to lose respect for the religious restraints and civil laws which once they gladly obeyed.

There are noble exceptions to this trend. We are merely describing the general developments, and these are following essentially the same pattern the world over. In this country and in Europe the

churches, both Catholic and Protestant, are making strenuous efforts to hold back the tide of unbelief and godlessness, but on the whole, with meager results.

HEAVENS SHAKEN

Among the many 'signs' which Jesus gave of the time of his return and the end of the age was that "the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke 21:24-26) He foretold that as a result of this, fear would fill the hearts of the people. How true this is proving to be! If the people of all nations today believed that the religious elements of society could, through wholesome religious guidance, settle the outstanding problems of the nations, how quickly their fears would be allayed!

But they know that this is not possible. They know, for example, that the former communistic world had no respect at all for the religious concepts of the free world, and even in their present conditions they are a law unto themselves and heed not the restraints of western religious ethics. As far as they are concerned, the powers of the symbolic heavens have indeed been shaken. To a lesser extent is this true elsewhere in the world.

Outstanding groups of churchmen and women pass resolutions indicating what they think the governments of their respective countries should do in various situations, but the governments pay little or no attention. In the United States a large percentage of the people belong to one or another church, but only a few attend church services with any degree of regularity. In other countries, the situation is equally discouraging from the standpoint of the religious leaders.

We are calling attention to this dark picture, not to criticize, nor to condemn the churches for

failure; we are merely calling attention to facts which are fulfilling the Bible's prophecies of events which were to occur at the end of the age, immediately preceding the establishment of the divinely promised 'new heavens and new earth'.

Since the development of nuclear weapons for the destruction of cities and nations, wonderful strides are being made in the constructive use of modern inventions. In the field of nuclear energy, for example, a way has been discovered by which this energy renews itself, thus becoming practically inexhaustible. However, it has not been made practical or economical. This might well be in preparation for the blessings God has in store for the people in his new social order.

Medical science has also made phenomenal progress. This, to some extent, is reflected in the greatly increased average length of human life. In America that average is now more than seventy years, whereas at the turn of the century it was just a little over thirty years. This does not mean that man will, by himself, find a way to live forever. The secret of life is held under divine control, and the blessing of everlasting life will reach the people only through the institution of the 'new heavens and new earth' which God has promised. But, we believe, the LORD is permitting man to some extent to prepare the way for these blessings.

And how manifold they will be! Peace—universal and everlasting—will be one of them. Jesus, the Ruler supreme in that new social order, died for his subjects in order that he might offer them health and life. He will rule, not over a dying race, but over a race which will be given an opportunity to be restored to perfection, mentally, morally, and physically, and to live forever.

But why, someone may ask, is that new kingdom, that new social order, described in the prophecies as a 'new heavens and a new earth'? It is for the same reason that the world before the Flood and this present evil world are thus symbolically described, for God's new world will also have its spiritual and material aspects. Christ and his church—who are promised that if they now suffer with him they will also reign with him—will be the spiritual rulers, the personnel in the new heavens—the source of religious control in that new world, for the blessing of all families of earth.

They will exercise their ruling authority through human representatives. These will be the resurrected ancient prophets, and other worthy ones of those past ages. (Hebrews, chapter 11) To begin with, these will be the 'new earth', as it were. But gradually all the willing and obedient of mankind will become associated with these 'princes' in a social order of peace and righteousness.—Ps. 45:16

As the psalmist explains, these princes are to be those who formerly were considered the 'fathers' in Israel. Concerning their position in God's new world, Jesus said that the people would come from the east, west, north, and south, and would "sit down" with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets. (Luke 13:28,29) This indicates that these 'princes' will be recognized by all mankind as their teachers under Christ.

The spiritual and human phases of the kingdom of Christ—the new heavens and the new earth—are also symbolically described as 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem'. The Prophet Isaiah uses this symbolism, saying, "Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us

of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”—Isa. 2:3

It will be because these righteous laws will be made known to the people and enforced, that righteousness will predominate in the promised new heavens and new earth. Internationally, this will result in beating “swords” into “plowshares,” and “spears” into “pruninghooks,” for “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”—Isa. 2:4

Individually, it will mean that every man will sit “under his vine and under his fig tree,” and “none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.” (Mic. 4:4) Dwelling under ‘vine’ and ‘fig tree’ suggests economic security and prosperity. Now the world is filled with fear of the future, but then none will be afraid, for all will realize that a new social order has been set up in which the divine Christ is the center, the Ruler, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.—Isa. 9:6,7

In our text, the Apostle Peter refers to God’s promise of a ‘new heavens and a new earth’. This promise is recorded by the Prophet Isaiah, and reads: “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. . . . There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall

make them long enjoy the work of their hands.”—
Isa. 65:17-22, *Marginal Translation* in part

On the Isle of Patmos, the Apostle John saw the fulfillment of this promise, in vision. While the original promise declares that in the new heavens and new earth there shall be no more ‘an infant of days’, John was given a more comprehensive understanding of this by the assurance that “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”—Rev. 21:1-4

Let us, then, continue to look for the promised new heavens and new earth. It is this government, this kingdom, alone, that will solve the present perplexing problems of a sin-cursed and dying race. With this hope before us, we will understand the meaning of events which are causing the elements to melt with fervent heat, and we will not be alarmed over the outcome. Indeed, as Jesus admonished, we will lift up our heads, knowing our “redemption [deliverance] draweth nigh.”—Luke 21:28 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JULY 4—“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?”—Isaiah 53:1 (Z. ’99-10,11 Hymn 156)

JULY 11—“Whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not, . . . but keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”—I John 5:18 (Z. ’99-58 Hymn 368)

JULY 18—“In the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be traitors, heady, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”—II Timothy 3:1,4 (Z. ’99-102 Hymn 124)

JULY 25—“There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?”—James 4:12 (Z. ’99-139 Hymn 129)

CELEBRATING THE GIFT OF LIFE

KEY VERSE: *“How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.”—Psalm 104:24, New International Version*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Psalm 104:24-34*

ENVIRONMENTALISTS OF TODAY have sought to draw mankind’s attention to the beauties and intricacies of nature, marveling at the interdependence of the species. The Biblical writers were also keenly aware of nature, but viewed it with an awe and reverence that is today mostly overlooked. Martin Luther once wrote that “God writes the Gospel not in the Bible alone, but on trees, and flowers and clouds and stars.” Today’s lesson from Psalm 104 emphasizes the reasonableness and necessity of understanding the wonder

of God’s creation, and giving praise and thanks for this wonderful gift.

We often dwell on the size and majesty of the stars, the oceans, the deserts, or the mountains when considering the wonder of God’s creation, but in today’s Key Verse, the psalmist draws our attention to the infinite variety of God’s creation: “The sea is teeming with creatures beyond number.” (vs. 25) How incredible, for example, that scientists have identified more than 300,000 varieties of beetles alone! The psalmist saw all these as wondrous gifts

from God. Even the dreaded leviathan is seen as good, formed to "frolic" in the sea. (vs. 26) All of this is a revelation of the wonder of God's power, and a reason for praising God.

God is not only the Creator of these multitudes of creatures, he is also their sustainer. While many would look at nature and see a struggle for survival, David sees them "look to you [God] to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things." (vss. 27,28) David saw all nature this way, a tender relationship between God and all creatures, where God makes sure that all have what they need to survive. This care for his creation is another demonstration of his great love for us.

We are told in verse 29 that all creatures are terrified when God hides his presence, and "when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust." This fact was first stated in Genesis 2:7 in describing the creation of

Adam. "The LORD God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." Without God's breath of life, none of the animals, nor man, could exist. And thus we know that life is dependent upon God.

Continuing, David describes the earthquake and the volcano, beholding them not as terrifying disasters, but simply as two more examples of God's awesome power. God merely has to look at the earth to cause an earthquake, or touch the mountain to cause a volcano. (vs. 32) This power and love demonstrated by God as the Creator and sustainer of life leads the psalmist to a deep reverence: "I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD."—vss. 33,34

We look upon all creation as instruments of God's love and see the glory of God in everything. Our meditation becomes more deep and sincere as we strive to show our appreciation for the Creator and sustainer of life. ■

REMEMBER PROMISES AND COMMITMENTS

KEY VERSE: *“Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done.”—Psalm 105:1, New International Version*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Psalm 105:1-11, 43-45*

IT HAS BEEN said that he who has no knowledge of past failure is doomed to repeat it in the future. Subsequently, history is the foundation on which civilizations and cultures are built, founded on collective memories.

The people of Israel were especially sensitive to their historical memories because their understanding of God was based more on the recollection of God's deeds than on doctrinal statements. They were repeatedly called upon to remember the covenant God had made with their ancestors, and to recall their many experiences of divine deliverance. These recol-

lections of God's promises served to lift their faith and sustain them through difficult ordeals, while memories of their own human commitments helped keep them faithful—particularly in prosperous times—when they might forsake God.

Promises and commitments go hand in hand. Under their covenant with God, Israel had received many generous promises; now they were expected to respond with a dedication worthy of such kindness. Psalm 105 is a covenant song to God's chosen people—a call to remember that God in his mercy had reached out and blessed Is-

rael when they had little to offer in return. This memory was to bring the people to praise God as stated in verse 2: "Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts."

Psalm 105 is an exuberant expression of thanksgiving to God combined with an equally strong call to commitment that is based on one command—"Remember!" By inspiring the people to give thanks, sing and seek the LORD, the psalmist let them know that they would find a reason for such a celebration if only they would remember the mighty acts that God had performed. Likewise, the church during the Gospel Age has been instructed to recall Jesus' sacrifice by partaking yearly of his memorial emblems—with the instructions, "Do this in remembrance of me." (I Cor. 11:24,25) We, like the people of Israel, find reason to celebrate by first remembering Jesus' sacrifice, and then calling to mind God's faithfulness in our lives. Just as God was active in the history of Israel, we see evidence of his guiding hand

in our lives to provide the necessary exposure to adversity which will develop us as the sons of God.

The Psalmist David recalls Israel's exodus from Egyptian bondage and how they went out with joy and with singing, and so this psalm concludes with a call to joy. When Israel passed through the Red Sea, Miriam led them with a timbrel (Exod. 15:20,21), and when the Ark of the Covenant was recovered from the Philistines, David led the way with dancing. (I Chron. 16:8-22) Truly we share with natural Israel a faith of joy. When we remember God's promises and commitments, we sing—confident that he will perform all that he has promised.—Rom. 4:21

And when we remember, we do so not for our own comfort or pleasure, but to keep the statutes of God. For Israel this meant obeying the Law. For us it means living up to our covenant of sacrifice by developing the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." —Gal. 5:25 ■

WHEN TROUBLE COMES

KEY VERSE: *“The LORD is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”—Psalm 34:18, New International Version*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Psalm 34:2-10,18-22*

TODAY'S LESSON ADDRESSES a question asked since the beginning of time: “What can we do when trouble comes?” Since none are immune to the pains and suffering of this world, how should we act when we are afflicted? And what can we expect from God in times of hardship? The psalmist, in Psalm 34, instructs us along these lines from his own personal experience.

As it should be in all our experiences, David begins by praising God. “My soul will boast in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together.” (vss. 2,3, NIV) The boasting mentioned here has nothing to do with the writer, but

clearly explains that everything associated with righteousness comes from God. The Prophet Jeremiah put it this way: “Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me [God].” (Jer. 9:24) It is this knowledge and understanding of God that allows us to go beyond the praise of God and understand the purpose of our afflictions.

How often have we heard of people who have had a narrow escape from death—or an especially difficult trial in life—say that the experience changed their lives, that they would henceforth live a more righteous and meaningful life? The psalmist's admonition here is to be ready

for afflictions and to be rightly exercised by them. He is very general in his description of his affliction in this psalm. And so when he speaks of his fears, troubles, and wants, he includes all of us. What do we do with trouble?

How did David handle his trouble? He tells us simply that he "sought the LORD." (vs. 4) The first step in his deliverance was to be saved from his fears by coming close to God. The Apostle Paul explained it this way in Romans 12:12: "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer."

Only by staying continually close to God can we keep from becoming paralyzed by fear as are others. Our only fear should be that we might not be pleasing in following God's ways of righteousness.

David was also delivered from shame. (vs. 5) Shame usually follows trouble because we tend to worry what others will think of us. Shame is something others impose on us. David assures us that staying close to God will deliver us

from this, also. If we are sincere in following God's ways of righteousness, there can be no room for shame from others. "Since God is for us, who can be against us?"—Rom. 8:31, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*

The psalmist further assures us of God's continuing care by reminding us that there are angels encamped around us. (vs. 7) Paul says these are ministering spirits, "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."—Heb. 1:14

Let us not be misled into thinking these will keep us from afflictions. Surely there was an angel with James, who was killed, just as there was with his brother, John, who was delivered. We are not always protected from threatening disaster, but from any injurious or evil effects therefrom. Like David, we can be strong when trouble comes, knowing "God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tried beyond your ability; but with the trial, will also direct the issue, that you may be able to bear it."—I Cor. 10:13, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott* ■

NEVER ALONE

KEY VERSE: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts."—*Psalm 139:23, New International Version*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Psalm 139:1-14,23,24*

DAVID WAS A man of great passion, who often approached God for both guidance and forgiveness. He realized that God was always with him, both when he was faithful and when he was not. In today's lesson we see how David eventually came to realize that it was great news, indeed, that God was always with him.

God's attributes can be referred to in terms of omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence; that is, God is all-knowing, always present, and all-powerful. For David, these divine qualities were proven in his experiences. Is God omniscient? Absolutely. God knew David's thoughts before they were on his tongue. (vs. 4, *NIV*) Is God

omnipresent? Yes, indeed. David found God everywhere, from the heavens even unto "hell [*sheol*]." (vs. 8) Is God omnipotent? No question about it. David knew that even the darkness could not hide him, because God makes the night as bright as day. —vss. 11,12, *NIV*

While we recognize these attributes of God, we may sometimes wish it were not so. Ever since Adam and Eve sought to hide from God while God was seeking them, mankind has experienced a 'hide and seek' relationship with God. We tend to seek God most during times of distress, and hide during times when we fall short of the divine standard. Who has never said in

their heart, "I wish God was not watching me now."

David realized this, and eventually understood what a blessing it was to have God present always. When he was found in his transgression, he never tired of telling how God found him and took him back. Jesus celebrated this same theme when he told of a shepherd finding a sheep that had been lost, and called the whole community to rejoice with him. (Luke 15:3-7) David realized that wherever he might try to flee from God, "even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast."—Ps. 139:10, *NIV*

There is a good reason why God keeps us close. David said: "You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." (vss. 13,14, *NIV*) God knew us before we knew ourselves, because he was involved in making us who we are!

When we envision God's complete love for us and

his continual presence in our lives, we come to the realization of the necessity of praying for his direction in all our daily affairs, as David states in our Key Verse. David knew that this omnipresent God was his only guarantee of freedom from evil. Though his presence, at times, might have seemed oppressive, David finally concluded that it was, instead, a constant source of blessing.

Because God knows us better than we know ourselves, David asked God to search him and test him. In so doing he may have had some evil ways revealed that he did not know he had, which could then be rooted out. This is much like David's earlier plea, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." —Ps. 19:12

The beauty of this psalm is in knowing that we are never alone, and are cared for so deeply by our Heavenly Father! It should be one of our greatest comforts. Like David, we should not be frightened by God's omnipresence in our lives, but thank him for his constant guidance. What a marvelous blessing! ■

CHRISTIAN SABBATH KEEPING

"He that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His."

—Hebrews 4:10

THE WORD SABBATH means 'rest', and in the inspired words of our text the Apostle Paul explains that the rest, or Sabbath, of a Christian is similar to the rest which God entered at the conclusion of the six days of Creative work. The Creator did not cease from his creative activities because of weariness, for the Prophet Isaiah writes, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" (Isa. 40:28) As the Christian's rest is like that of the Creator's, it, too, could not mean a ceasing from activity because of weariness.

Included among the commandments which God gave to Israel at Mount Sinai was the one which obligated them to observe every seventh day as a Sabbath, or rest day, with the explanation that they were to rest on the seventh day because God rested on the seventh day. The Jews, to this day, continue to observe the seventh day of the week as their Sabbath. The professing Christian world also observes, in a perfunctory manner, one day in

seven as a time of rest and recreation, basing the custom on the command given to Israel, but considering the first day of the week more appropriate for the purpose in that it also commemorates the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Some Christians, claiming that the Sabbath was unscripturally changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, are very zealous in keeping the seventh day, claiming that any other course is very displeasing to God, and may cost the disobedient ones the loss of salvation. The apostle's explanation in our text that Christian Sabbath-keeping is an entering into rest similar to that into which God entered at the close of the sixth Creative day, would seem to indicate the possibility that it involves more than merely to refrain from physical toil on either the first or the seventh day of the week.

We agree that God never authorized anyone to change the Sabbath of the Decalogue from the seventh day of the week to the first, but the propriety of observing either one, or both, of these days seems unnecessary when we accept the New Testament explanation that the Law given to Israel was intended to be merely a 'shadow' of God's will as it applies to the followers of Christ. On this point, Paul says, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath Days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."—Col. 2:16,17

It may be argued that the apostle's reference to Sabbath Days means the various holy days observed by the Jews, which also were sometimes called Sabbath Days. That this is not the thought, however, seems clear from the fact that he makes special mention of these other holy days. In keep-

ing with his usual systematic manner of expression, Paul first speaks of these *yearly* holy days, then the *monthly* festivals—the new moons—and finally the *weekly* rest days. All of these, he claims, were but ‘shadows’ of ‘things to come’, and that Christians should not be judged by whether or not they observe them today.

But did not the LORD, in Exodus 31:16, speak of the seventh-day Sabbath as a “perpetual covenant”? This is true, but it should be noted that the LORD uses identical language with respect to the harvest offering (Lev. 23:14), the Pentecostal sacrifice (Lev. 23:21), the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:31,32), and the Feast of Tabernacles. (Lev. 23:41) The same Hebrew word *olam*, which is translated “perpetual” in the seventh-day reference, is the word translated “forever” in these other passages.

The Hebrew word *olam* may mean ‘everlasting’ where the text so indicates, but it is apparent that in the passages we have cited it carries the thought merely of ‘that which lasts to a completion’. The same word is used in Exodus 29:9, where we read that the priestly office was given to Aaron and his descendants “for a perpetual statute.” That this does not properly mean ‘forever’ is evident, for Aaron’s family lost the priesthood nearly two thousand years ago.—Heb. 7:11-14

THE SHADOW OF THE LAW

The Law and its ordinances were shadows, or illustrations of bigger and better things to come. This is clearly shown in the New Testament. The High Priests of Israel were supplanted by Christ, the true High Priest. The Holiest of the Tabernacle pointed forward to the heavenly places in which Christians now dwell with Christ, and

heaven itself, where their hope of future glory is centered.—Heb. 6:19,20; 9:24; Eph. 2:5,6

When the apostle speaks of the “holy places made with hands” as being “figures of the true” (Heb. 9:24), it is well to remember that he includes in the typical Holiest of all, the “tables of the covenant.” (Heb. 9:4) In the last verse of Hebrews 8, Paul speaks of this entire typical arrangement as that which “decayeth and waxeth old,” hence is “ready to vanish away.”

We should not think of any of God’s plans or works as failing. The Law not only served as a ‘shadow of good things to come’, but also it was a “schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” (Gal. 3:24) This purpose of the Law was admirably served. Those who learn well this lesson of the Law now realize that they cannot hope to attain justification by their efforts to keep the Law, but that, through faith in Christ and his atoning blood alone, they may enjoy the privileges of those who come to God through him.

Jesus said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” (Matt. 5:17) There is a vast difference between the Law being destroyed, and the thought of its passing away as a result of fulfillment. The law of circumcision was not destroyed when the true circumcision of the heart, of which it was but a shadow, took its place.—Rom. 2:28,29; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11-15

Obviously, therefore, to consider the Law given through Moses as binding upon the Christian, is to doubt if Christ has accomplished that for which he came; namely, to fulfill the Law. True, Christians should study that Law, and in it they find jewels of inspired wisdom; but we should study it

as a shadow of better things to come—things that are now realities to us—under the leadership of the Greater than Moses, Jesus Christ.

LAW MAGNIFIED FOR CHRISTIANS

We are not to understand that Christians are under no law at all. We are under a much higher law than that which was binding upon the Israelites. Just as we have a better High Priest, and a better sacrifice than the Jews, so we have a better law—a law which contains a better Sabbath. The Prophet Isaiah foretold that Christ was to “magnify the Law, and make it honorable.” (Isa. 42:21) The Christian, then, should observe the Law as it was magnified by Christ.

The Jewish Law said, “Thou shalt not kill.” But Jesus magnified it by indicating that hatred of a brother is equivalent to murder. (Matt. 5:21-28) How heart-searching this is! How it should make us realize the importance of keeping our hearts cleansed from all malice, envy, hatred, and strife.

God’s Law to the Israelites said, “Thou shalt not steal.” But Christ taught us that we should not merely refrain from robbing our neighbors, but be ever ready to share our blessings with them. Indeed, Christ exhorted that we should be willing to lay down our lives for our brethren.—John 13:34; I John 3:16

The Law said to Israel: “Honor thy father and thy mother.” Jesus said, “Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” (Matt. 12:50) In keeping with this, Jesus also explained that those who love their father and mother more than they love him, are not worthy of him. (Matt. 10:37) Jesus made it plain that those who are fully consecrated to do God’s will and to follow in his

footsteps, will consider allegiance to their Heavenly Father and to their spiritual brethren as superseding their love toward earthly parents. Earthly parents should be cherished and loved by Christian children, but once they reach adulthood and find the wishes of their parents are contrary to the will of God, the Christian has no alternative but to disregard the parents' wishes.

THE CHRISTIAN'S REST

Noting that Jesus did magnify the Law, we should look for the manner in which the Scriptures point out a larger application of the Sabbath Day commandment. In Isaiah 58:13,14, we are given a comprehensive outline of what the Sabbath signifies. Typically, it was a holy day, a day in which the people of God were not to seek their own ways, find their own pleasure, nor speak their own words. Instead they were to honor God by doing his good pleasure, and speaking his words. This is true Sabbath-keeping; but the Christian is to keep the Sabbath in this way not one day in seven, but all seven days in the week.

Every day the Christian is to "speak as the oracle of God." (I Pet. 4:11) Every day the Christian must follow the example of Christ who spoke only those things which the Heavenly Father taught him. (John 8:28) Every day the Christian should practice "holy conversation and godliness." (II Pet. 3:11) Every day the Christian should rest from speaking his own words. Even those words which are necessary in connection with the routine affairs of life should be spoken to the glory of God, not merely on one day of the week, but all the time.—Col. 3:16,17

(Continued on page 37)

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"O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles."

—Psalm 43:3

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(Continued from page 31)

Christians are called to be co-laborers with God and with Christ. (II Cor. 6:1; I Cor. 3:9) Our partnership in the work of Christ is not, however, merely a one-day-a-week engagement. It is a full-time contract. With New Creatures in Christ all the old things of the flesh have passed away, being supplanted by the things of God. Yes, every day of the week is a holy day for Christians, and the sentiments of their hearts should ever be:

“Take my will and make it thine;
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is thine own;
Thus in me thyself enthrone.”

Christians are never to seek their own pleasure, but instead are humbly to submit themselves to God every day, that he might work in them “to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:13) Every day the Christian should be so wholeheartedly devoted to the doing of God’s will that he will be “worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.”—II Thess. 1:11

It is in order that we may cooperate with Christ in performing the good pleasure of God, that he has “made known unto us the mystery of his will.” (Eph. 1:9) God’s will is revealed to us through the truth of his plan, and thereby we learn of his purpose to “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” (Eph. 1:10) We are invited to cooperate in the accomplishment of this divine purpose, and our ‘all’ should be devoted to the doing of God’s will, all the time, and not only on one particular day of the week.

This was true of Jesus, our great Exemplar, of whom it was prophetically written that he delighted to do the Father's will. (Ps. 40:8) Because Jesus was so wholeheartedly devoted to the doing of his Father's will, it is also written of him that the pleasure of the LORD would "prosper in his hand." (Isa. 53:10) This 'pleasure of the LORD' is shown by the prophet to be the regeneration of the human race, with which, when accomplished, and as a result of the "travail" of Jesus' soul, he shall "be satisfied."—Isa. 53:11

GOD'S REST

This brings us back to our text, which declares that Christians who believe 'enter into' God's rest, ceasing from their own works, as God did from his. During the six Creative days—which were long periods, or epochs, of time—the Creator, together with his only begotten Son, the *Logos*, carried forward the work of Creation. Finally, and as the crowning feature of the sixth Creative day, God said to his Son, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."—Gen. 1:26

God blessed this perfect pair whom he created to head his earthly dominion, and he said to them: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [Hebrew, 'fill'] the earth, and subdue it." (Gen. 1:28) From this it is obvious that God's pleasure in the creation of the earth, and man in his own image to have dominion over it, was that this planet should be filled with a perfect and happy human family representing him as rulers of this earthly domain.

But sin and death came, and man was driven out of his garden home to die. His dominion over the earth was forfeited, and life itself was lost. We cannot suppose that anything could interfere with the good pleasure of God's will, and the Scriptures warrant us in this conclusion by revealing the divine plan for the recovery of man through Christ. This divine plan called for an atoning work through Jesus, hence he is spoken of as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."—Rev. 13:8

The Creator had, and still has, the utmost confidence in his beloved Son, and so fully entrusted to him the work of recovering man from his fallen state that he 'rested' from his own work. God did not cease from any activity which might be necessary in connection with the orderly procedure and governing of the universe, and this is not what the Scriptures mean when they say that he 'rested' on the seventh day.

It is the Creative work in respect to this earth, and man's position on it, that the Scriptures refer to when they speak of God's rest on the seventh day. As each of the six Creative days were long periods of time, so also is the seventh day on which God rested, and, indeed, is still resting; for the seventh day is not yet ended. By the close of the seventh day, the good pleasure of God concerning humanity will have prospered to completion in the hands of Christ. This means that then man will have been restored—through the process of regeneration—to all that was lost as a result of sin.—Matt. 19:28

The beginning and ending of each of the Creative days of Genesis are described as the 'evening and the morning'. The evening was the beginning of each epoch, and the morning was the close.

Likewise, the seventh epoch has its 'evening and morning'. The evening of this day began amidst darkness and gloom. Man, the crowning feature of God's work in the morning of the sixth day, had sinned, and divine favor was consequently withdrawn from him. Death came as a result, and throughout all the centuries of this 'long night of sin' of the seventh day, humankind has been walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

Leeser's Translation of Psalm 30:5—in which he makes the sixth verse tell us about this—says: "His anger is momentary, [but] life is in his favor: in the evening [cometh] weeping to stay for a night, but in the morning there is joyful song." While weeping and death have continued for more than six thousand years, yet in God's sight they are merely 'momentary'. 'Momentarily' God withdrew his favor from those whom he had created in his image, ceasing to deal with them directly; but at the same time, he set in motion his plan embodying redemption through Christ, by which at-one-ment between himself and his creatures would ultimately be reestablished, in the morning, or close of the seventh day. This will be the last of the seven thousand-year days of the LORD, or the end of the Millennial Age.—II Pet. 3:8; Rev. 5:10; 20:6

Having in the evening of the seventh day turned over to Christ the task of reconciling a lost world, God rested in full confidence. His beloved Son, who had served him so faithfully throughout all the previous six days of Creation, could now be trusted with the full responsibility of repairing the damage to that Creative work which had been caused by the sin of disobedience.

The apostle tells us in our text that God rested from his own work. The Creative work was his. It

is true that his only begotten Son collaborated with him in the work of Creation, but it was merely as a *logos*, 'a mouthpiece', or 'representative'. The responsibility of all that was done was the Father's. But with the creation and subsequent fall of man, God delegated his Son to be the executor of the plan of redemption in his own name.

From the fall of man to the First Advent of Jesus, many promises were made by God which were to be fulfilled through his Son, but not until the First Advent of Christ did the actual outworking of the plan begin. At this point, Jesus enters prominently into the arrangement, declaring, after his resurrection, that all power in heaven and in earth had been given to him. (Matt. 28:18) God has continued to be interested in the human race, however. Indeed, by his Spirit he has inspired the writers of the Bible to reveal his great plan of love which centers in Jesus, in order that we may know that he cares for the children of men, even though his justice demanded the death sentence because of sin.

The actual outworking of his plan God has entrusted to Jesus, thereby ceasing from his own works. This is the great lesson to us of God's seventh-day rest. The Jewish Christians, to whom our text was first addressed, had endeavored to restore themselves to God's favor by their own efforts in keeping the Law. The apostle wanted them to know that the only sure means of returning to the favor of God, and thus obtaining justification to life, was not through the deeds of the Law, but by belief in Christ. (Rom. 3:20) As God had entrusted the work of salvation to Christ, Christians are admonished to do the same, to cease from their own works, as God did from his.

If the keeping of the Law justified to life, then there would be no need for a Redeemer.

How wonderfully, then, is the Law of the Sabbath magnified in the Christian's life. While the Jew, under the Law, gave one-seventh of his time to the LORD, the Christian gives seven-sevenths—all his time and all his powers. To the Israelites the LORD said, "Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary." (Lev. 19:30) God's sanctuary to Israel, like the Sabbath, was also a shadow of better things to come. To them the sanctuary was a place made by human hands, but the Christian finds his sanctuary wherever he may be; for now God seeketh those to worship him who worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:21-24) Every place is holy to the Christian. Similarly, every day is a holy day—a Sabbath of rest of heart and mind in the completed work of Christ.

ANTITYPICAL TABLES OF STONE

Just as God's rest does not imply idleness on his part, so the Christian's rest does not mean that he ceases from all work. We do cease from our own work, but in so doing, become coworkers with Christ. God gave typical Israel an opportunity to save themselves by their own works. The Law, which they undertook to keep, was written on tables of stone. These tablets, like the Law written upon them, were also shadows of better things to come. II Corinthians 3:3 reveals what constitutes the reality of that which the tables of stone foreshadowed. From this text we learn that each member of the church of Christ is being prepared as an epistle of Christ to appear later with him in glory, as the typical tables of stone were with Moses when he appeared in glory to establish the Old Law Covenant.

In II Corinthians 3:3-11, the apostle argues that because God is now writing the Law of the New Covenant in the hearts of the followers of Jesus, the Law which was the basis of the Old Covenant has 'passed away'. He shows that the church has a hope of future glory with Christ, as able ministers of the New Covenant, and that this was foreshadowed by the tables of the Law accompanying Moses in the inauguration of the Old Covenant.

What a wondrous magnifying of the whole Law is apparent by the manner in which Christians are invited to be co-laborers with Christ. It does not mean, however, that it is a sin to refrain from secular work one day in seven, whether it be the first or the seventh day of the week. It does mean that even our necessary secular work is to be carried on to the glory of God.

The fact that Jesus and the apostles, all of whom were Jews, used golden opportunities of witnessing the Gospel message in synagogues on the Sabbath Day, does not mean that they thereby mandated the keeping of the seventh day as obligatory to Christians. Prior to the death of Jesus, it was necessary for the disciples, as Jews, to keep the Sabbath Day. Jesus, the perfect Law-keeper, also observed the Sabbath. However, in his answers to critics concerning the good work of healing the sick on the Sabbath, he said that hitherto the Father had worked on the Sabbath and now he was working, hinting at the larger meaning of the Sabbath which was soon to be revealed for the guidance of his followers.

And so it is that Christians today have the privilege of co-laboring with Jesus on the Sabbath Day, the larger Sabbath Day during which the Heavenly Father is entrusting to his Son the out-working of his plan. We work under the leadership

PRIDE- ITS MANIFESTATIONS

PRIDE IS A poisonous manifestation of selfishness. It is, as someone has well said, 'selfishness gone to seed'. Every Christian should be on the alert to resist the encroachment of pride, because to whatever extent it is permitted to influence our thoughts and actions, it will blight our peace and joy in the LORD, and distort our every outlook in keeping with its own ugly form.

One manifestation of pride is undue regard for self. Paul speaks of it as thinking more highly of one's self than is warranted—than one ought to think. Self-esteem manifests itself in many and unsuspecting ways. It may prevent one from accepting the truth from a humble source; and by the truth we mean not only the doctrines relating to the divine plan, but details of truth on any and all subjects. It is so easy for any of us to be wrong, even in the everyday things of life, that we should be willing to be corrected no matter from what origin the correction may come.

If a person hesitates to seek advice for fear that it may reveal his own lack of knowledge, it is a sign of pride. In the world, the men and women who are the most successful are those who seek the advice of others, especially in fields with which they are not too well informed themselves. This is

still more applicable to the Christian life. Our understanding of the truth of God's Word is less likely to be complete if we are unwilling to take into consideration the viewpoints of others of like precious faith. That is the reason it is so essential that we meet together for mutual study and fellowship.

Undue contention in presenting our views may be a manifestation of pride. The truth is such a bulwark of strength against error that we do not need to be contentious in its use. To be overly concerned about a point may indicate that what we are presenting is partly our own view, rather than God's, and our pride is causing us to be contentious in its presentation. If such is the case, then pride will cause us to be very reluctant to change our opinion; that is, to admit that we are wrong even when the truth is apparent.

This self-esteem manifestation of pride also may cause us to resent reproof, even though the reproof may have been deserved and necessary. On the other hand, a Christian who is properly humble before the LORD, and before his brethren, will not resent reproof, even though it may not be merited. Elders of the church should be especially on guard along this line; for unless they are, pride may ruin their usefulness as servants of the brethren. If an elder resents having his thoughts called into question by even the humblest member of the ecclesia, it is a sign of undue self-esteem, and he should take the matter in hand before he is slain by the monster. This is true, even as the Apostle Paul has said: "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."—Phil. 2:3

Elders are servants of the Heavenly Father's people, and it is not fitting for servants to resent

questioning by those whom they serve. If there is any doubt in the mind of a brother, or sister, as to where one of their servants, or would-be servants, stands, with respect to doctrine and practice, it behooves that servant to display the greatest of patience and painstaking care to make his position clear. A refusal to do this may represent a lack of true humility before the LORD, and before the brethren.

Self-esteem also sometimes manifests itself in the habit of interrupting others when they are talking. This may not always be the cause for such rudeness; sometimes it is just a plain case of nervousness. But if we find ourselves constantly interrupting others in order that we may talk ourselves, it could easily be that inwardly we think that what we have to say is more important than what the other person is saying. Such would represent undue self-esteem.

A willingness to listen to others is one of the evidences of true humility, and is of prime importance to our growth in grace and knowledge. The lowliest saints of God, from the standpoint of education and ability, may often express thoughts which are golden nuggets of truth, more valuable, perhaps, than a whole discourse by one more talented. If we are not listening when these thoughts are expressed, we lose them; hence we lose the blessings that would accrue from them.

If we are not humble enough to listen to our brethren, we could easily become proud enough not to listen to the Almighty One. God speaks to us through his Word. If we go to his Word merely to find that which will bolster up an idea which we have developed in our own minds, it means that we are not truly listening to the Heavenly Father, but misusing his Word to satisfy the desires of our

own self-esteem. Let us be on the alert, dear brethren, to note the slightest manifestation of pride along this line, and in prayer before the LORD ask him to help us to be free from it. Or, as Peter has advised, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—I Pet. 5:6

SOCIAL PRIDE

Social distinctions among the brethren are, thank God, pretty well broken down, but the spirit of pride which was responsible for fastening the ungodlike theory of class distinctions upon the unhappy world is still apt to manifest itself among the brethren. We may, for example, find ourselves seeking the fellowship of only the better educated and talented among the brethren, and ignoring those whom we consider not to be of 'our kind'. If we find any such tendency to be influencing us, we may be sure that the grace of God has not yet taken as full control of our lives as it should.

There is also danger that we may develop what might be called a 'spiritual class distinction' complex. That is, we may wish to fellowship with only those whom we consider to be as 'well developed' spiritually as we consider ourselves to be. Sometimes a fear is expressed that newly interested brethren coming into the church may spoil our deep fellowship. This is to our shame, and is unlike the spirit manifested by the Master. If we feel that we are well-developed spiritually, let us rejoice in whatever privileges we may have in helping others to the same condition. If we do not rejoice in helping the weak, it is a very good sign that our own development is not as rounded out as it should be.

While it is true that Jesus seemed to regard some of his apostles more affectionately than others, this does not mean that he did not love them all, and was not glad for every opportunity he had of being with them all, and serving them. In our truth association there will be those to whom we are drawn more than to others, but this does not mean that we should ignore any of the brethren, and not rejoice in every privilege we have of being with them and enjoying their fellowship. There should be no cliques among God's people—"All ye are brethren."—Matt. 23:8

APPROBATIVENESS

Too great a desire to be well thought of by the brethren may manifest itself in various ways. One may hesitate to speak, read, or pray in meetings. To onlookers this may seem to be a display of humility, yet, actually, it could be on account of fearing criticism if a mistake is made. We might decide that it is better not to give a testimony at all than to give a poor one which would give the brethren the thought that we are not very good at giving testimonies. Pride, in a very subtle form, could be ruling our hearts.

We may have an ambition to lead. The apostle says that one who desires the office of a bishop, or elder, desires "a good work." (I Tim. 3:1) To have a desire to bless others through leading meetings, etc., is not, in itself, an evidence of pride, but it does expose those so disposed to the dangers of pride. We can check ourselves in this connection by noting our own attitude when others are speaking or leading meetings. Do we feel like staying away from meetings if we are not leading? Or, if present, are we uneasy and not paying attention to what is being said, all the while thinking to

ourselves that we could bring out the thoughts in a much better way than is being done? If we thus muse, let us beware—pride is gaining the ascendancy and, if encouraged, will cause our downfall.

Along this same line, pride will hinder us from rendering faithful service unless we can be foremost in affairs. One who is truly humble will be just as happy to serve as a deacon as he is to serve as elder. Indeed, he will be happy to serve in every way possible even though the ecclesia does not recognize his service, or confer any office upon him. For some reason the idea of preaching has taken on altogether too important an aspect in the minds of many of the LORD's people, with the result that, at times, brethren may get the idea that if they cannot be foremost in the service along this line they are being neglected and ostracized. If we find ourselves feeling that way about it, let us beware.

From the LORD's standpoint, the brother or sister who serves faithfully even in an obscure way, and who does not, therefore, receive the praise of the brethren, is just as honorable as those who are out at the forefront—perhaps even more so. At least, there is less danger that such service is rendered, in part, because of the expressions of appreciation by the fellow-workers. It is most proper that we afford every encouragement to those who serve. But how nice it would be to accord those who serve unheralded and unsung, a little more attention along this line. They deserve it; and if they continue to be faithful in that which is least, surely rich blessings will be theirs in the kingdom, whether or not we recognize and appreciate their service now.

Another possible manifestation of pride is the disposition to talk too much about one's humility,

as though our friends would not know we were humble unless we told them! Humility does not need to be advertised. Like the fragrance of a beautiful rose, its presence is manifested without the necessity of special attention being called to it. The rose does not need to say: "How sweet is my perfume!" nor does a truly humble Christian need to call attention to his humility.

If we discover, then, that we are fearful that anyone will not recognize our humility, and feel that we have to call their attention to it, it is a sign that we have more approbateness than we thought. Of course, no one would actually say to others: "See how humble I am?" No, the flesh finds more clever ways of advertising its feigned humility than that. A brother might get up on the platform to speak, and open his discourse by saying that he did not understand why he was there, for there were others who could serve so much better. The chances are, that if the brother really felt that way about it, he would have seen to it that he was not there. This might not necessarily be the case, but it could be, so deceitful is the human heart, and so desperately wicked. True humility will cause one to serve as well as possible in whatever position in the LORD's providences he may find himself, without making apologies, excuses, and explanations.

Another habit which might represent the spirit of approbateness is that of constantly referring to what "I said," or "I did." "So-and-so asked me such-and-such, and my answer was thus-and-so," is an attitude we will do well to avoid. Deep down in our hearts, referring to matters of this kind may be a desire to let the friends know that we are very brilliant, and in such high standing with God that our advice in spiritual matters is con-

stantly sought. We say it "*might*" display something of this kind. In any case, it is well to be on guard.

Another good test of humility is to note our attitude when others get credit which may properly belong to us. An interesting thought concerning some passage of Scripture may be under discussion. The thought may be based upon a suggestion that came from us. Do we 'itch' to let the brethren know this; or are we happy simply in the knowledge that they are being blessed as a result of our efforts? Right along this line it is well to scrutinize the motives of our every word and deed.

In our association with the brethren, opportunities are constantly arising for rendering a little assistance here and there, by kind words and deeds. If, when we do these things, we look to see whether or not they were noticed, it means that a little bit of pride is still left in our hearts. 'Playing to the gallery', as the thought is expressed in modern language, will never get us into the kingdom.

Along this line of seeking approval from our friends for what we do, is the other test of what our attitude is when someone else is complimented, and we are ignored. Do we resent this, instead of rejoicing in it? This is a heart-searching test, yet by it we are able to measure our growth in humility and to determine whether or not we have reached the point where we are able actually to esteem others as being better than ourselves, and are therefore glad to see them put forward.—Phil. 2:3

MORE OBSCURE EVIDENCES OF PRIDE

Although the habit of "foolish talking, or jesting," as mentioned by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:4, is generally looked upon by the brethren

as merely a waste of time, yet it could manifest a spirit of approbateness in that one may seek to draw attention to himself and his brilliance through his ability to make the brethren laugh. In such an event, the motive back of the jesting would be a whole lot more detrimental to the brother than the jesting itself. A humorous play on words, if wholesome and harmless, may help to relieve nervous tension; but, if prompted by approbateness, it will do serious injury to any Christian indulging in it.

Just as one may hold back from giving a testimony for fear of making a mistake and having his pride injured, so a Christian may seek to give a very eloquent testimony in order to display his ability. Here again, approbateness would be displayed. To make sure that love, zeal, thankfulness, sincerity, etc., are the motives that prompt us in speaking, it is well to ask ourselves questions. "Is it my desire to speak only to praise the Heavenly Father? Am I truly seeking to be clothed in humility? Am I depending wholly on the LORD's strength to help me speak? Do I really sense my own weakness?"

Pride may also be manifested in our characters by a reluctance to distribute the message of the kingdom, for fear our friends and neighbors might see us, and on account of it not think so well of us. Then again, does pride in any way hinder us from firmly, freely, and gladly acknowledging our belief in God's plan, no matter who may ask us? Or are we just a little bit ashamed of being a Bible student? Are we reluctant about being seen associating with God's people; or do we rather own them as our friends wherever and whenever we may be seen with them? In these ways, also, we may check

to determine the degree to which pride rules our hearts.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Success in life, whether connected directly or indirectly with the LORD's service, proves a test to our humility. If we have, by God's grace, learned to do something well, how anxious are we to display our ability? Do we become fretful, and assume a persecuted attitude, when we imagine someone is holding us back? If so, it is well to realize that it is probably God who is holding us back until we have learned well the lesson of humility. If our ambitions or plans are frustrated, let us not blame this brother or that sister, but realize that all our brethren on earth could not keep from us that which the Heavenly Father wishes us to enjoy.

When we maintain this proper viewpoint of our relationship to God, and of his watchcare over our highest spiritual interest, we will be greatly helped along the road to true humility. If our ambitions are checked we will search our hearts, and inquire of the LORD for the reason why, instead of blaming the brethren and becoming embittered toward them. Perhaps the brethren may be wrong in their dealings with us; if so, that is something with which God must deal. Of this we can be sure, that our own position in the matter could only be possible through the LORD's permission. And our faith in his watchcare should enable us to believe that he will permit nothing to happen in our lives but what will be for our highest spiritual welfare. In this let us rejoice.

The same viewpoint holds true even though our brethren in Christ may not be involved. In the business world, at our work in the factory, or the

office, we may seem to be held back from doing things which we aspire to do, and which we believe we have the ability to do. If this be the case, let us not blame our competitor, our foreman, our office manager, or our fellow worker. Let us, rather, as in our association with our brethren, seek to ascertain what lessons the LORD may have for us in our experiences. If they accomplish nothing more than to keep us humble before God, they are very valuable, indeed. But if we become embittered toward those whom we imagine to be responsible, we have failed in the test.

Some of us may have imaginary accomplishments, and these cause more trouble than real accomplishments. Real accomplishments often represent years of patient toil and trials and tests in the school of Christ, hence the cost of attainment should be a counterbalance to keep the Christian who has attained humble. On the other hand, mushroom-like development of ability, real ability, unaccompanied by development along other lines, requires the possessor to especially guard against a lack of humility. But if one's attainments are only imaginary, then the danger is truly great. Such an one may prove to be a great trial to many of God's people. Seemingly, there is always someone to sponsor the cause of a brother who imagines he is being persecuted by the brethren. Thus his pride is further encouraged, and his overcoming made the harder. Paul said: "Let nothing be done through . . . vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things [accomplishments], but every man also on the things [accomplishments] of others."—Phil. 2:3,4

We may have heard the fable of the bird which tried to make an impression by wearing borrowed

feathers. We may be tempted to do this along spiritual lines. We may reason that we wish to serve the truth in the best way possible, hence to use the material of others, permitting the brethren to believe that it is our own. The friends may say, as they have said of various ones in the past, "What a talented brother!" The friends no doubt received a blessing, but the brother's blessing would have been greater had he presented his own, though inferior outline, or else told the brethren the source of the thoughts he was presenting. The point in this is that the desire to get ahead among the brethren, which is a form of pride, may lead also to mild forms of deception.

We can check the attitude of our hearts along this line by carefully scrutinizing the motive of everything we say and do. For example, it is always commendable to quote the Bible in proof of what we believe, whether it be from the platform or in private conversation. But there is a possibility of quoting long passages of Scripture merely for the purpose of parading our knowledge before our friends. Let us watch ourselves along this line, and make sure that all we say and do is with the motive of glorifying the LORD, and not to display self.

SPIRITUAL ACHIEVEMENTS

It is well to examine ourselves to discover what progress we have made in overcoming pride. Along this line, here are a few thoughts for prayerful consideration:

- Are we truly glad to express approval of any grace of the Spirit we see manifested in others, feeling, at the same time, that we have not reached such a high attainment ourselves?

- Are we always looking for superior qualities in others, and happy to acknowledge them when suitable opportunity offers?
- Have we learned to measure ourselves, not by ourselves, but by the perfect standard, Christ Jesus?—II Cor. 10:12
- Are we humble enough not to fear that the brethren will think we are not humble?
- Are we truly glad to take a back seat while others are taking a leading part in the service?
- Are we patient and gentle in defending the truth?
- Do we rejoice when various doctrines of the truth are repeated for the benefit of learners, even though we know them ourselves?
- Are we able to enter wholeheartedly into the comments and prayers of others, even of the least talented, and not permit them to rankle us with the feeling that we could do so much better ourselves?
- Have we developed to the point where we are not resting on the laurels of past service, but instead, are rejoicing in the golden opportunities of the present?

In this whole lesson on pride, Jesus is our pattern. He had all knowledge, all ability—earthly and heavenly—yet he said that his teachings were not his, but his Father's. He said that he could do nothing of himself, but only as the Father helped him. His words, Jesus claimed, were not his own, but the Father's. In view of this wonderful example of humility, how should we walk who once were sinners, enemies of God, and without any spiritual knowledge, wisdom, or ability?

May we, indeed, remember that “before honor is humility” (Prov. 15:33; 18:12); “before destruction” is pride (Prov. 16:18,19); and that pride is so displeasing to God that it is classed with murder, bearing false witness, and with lying. (Prov. 6:16,17) Let us, then, endeavor to be clothed with humility and being adorned with this and other graces of the Spirit, be truly “meet for the Master’s use.”—II Tim. 2:21 ■

A SWEET SAVOUR UNTO GOD

“We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ.”
II Corinthians 2:15

THE STATEMENT OF the Apostle Paul that it is our privilege to spread abroad “the savour of his [Christ’s] knowledge by us in every place” (II Cor. 2:14), suggests that it is the message of truth we preach that is the sweet savour to the LORD’s people with whom we come in contact. But Paul also says that we are “unto God” a sweet savour of Christ. How is it possible for us to be this to the great Jehovah? The Head of the body—our Lord Jesus—always did the things pleasing to the Father. (John 8:29) With his beloved Son, he was always well pleased.—Matt. 3:17

We, fallen and imperfect, have by nature nothing wherewith to commend us to God. But we have been washed, we have been justified, and by one Spirit have been baptized and made members of the one body of Christ. (I Cor. 6:11-13) And now, giving all we have in obedience to the Father, we are acceptable in his sight. Our offerings of prayer, praise, and service, ascend as a sweet savour from the Golden Altar.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

QUESTION:

Dear Dawn: When Jesus sent his disciples into the ministry he told them it would be "more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment" than for the cities which did not receive them. Is not this merely a form of speech implying that neither the wicked of the past nor Jewish cities of Jesus' day which rejected the message would pass through the Day of Judgment successfully?

ANSWER:

We believe that this language is a straightforward statement of fact. The general testimony of God's Word on this matter indicates that Jesus meant exactly what he said. Later the Apostle Paul wrote concerning the unbelieving Jews who rejected Jesus, that the LORD counted them all "in unbelief" (Rom. 11:32) that he might "have mercy upon all." He also said that the "Deliverer" would come out of "Sion" and "turn away ungodliness from Jacob," and that "all Israel shall be saved."—Rom 11:26-32

Jesus knew of the promise God had made through the Prophet Ezekiel giving assurance that the Sodomites and the wicked Israelites would be resurrected, or returned to their 'former estate'. The promise reads: "When thy sisters, Sodom and

her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate.”—Ezek. 16:55

Verses 48-50 of this chapter describe the sins of the Sodomites, explaining that they were not so heinous in God’s sight as were the sins of the Israelites. This is because they had not been favored with so much knowledge of God’s will. The LORD says that he took the Sodomites away in death as he “saw good.” This statement alone clearly indicates that the LORD referred to the Sodomites, whom he destroyed in the days of Abraham. And it is these who are to return to their former estate.

Because of the greater advantages enjoyed by the Israelites, and their failure to respond to them, the LORD says that they will be a comfort to the Sodomites. This is because the Israelites, who sinned against greater light, will be subjected to more stripes and severer discipline in the Day of Judgment than will the Sodomites and other heathen people who did not sin against so much light. Probably Jesus had this very statement in mind when he said it would be more tolerable, or favorable, for the Sodomites in the Day of Judgment than for those who rejected his message after hearing it. But, as Paul assures us, even these are to have an opportunity to be saved. ■



“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: ‘Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name; make known his deeds among the nations. Proclaim that his name is exalted’.”

—Isaiah 12:3,4, *RSV*

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

JOY AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Dear Ones in Christ: We do so look forward to your magazine. It brings us such joy and encouragement! We thank you all for the wonderful work you are doing. May God bless you and guide your good work. With Christian love.—TN

CLOSER TO GOD

Dear "Frank and Ernest": I heard the tail end of your WOR radio show last Sunday. I am very impressed with it—it made me feel very close to God. Please send me the free booklet, called: "*How God Answers Prayer?*" Sincerely yours.—NY

A TRUE BLESSING

Dear Dawn Publications: I am sorry that I cannot afford to send anyone other than myself your wonderful, inspiring magazine. Those who have not read any of them do not understand the inspiration and help that I have received from them, but being alone and on disability hasn't

been an easy task, and I wish that I could do more. But thank you so very much for your wonderful work. You see, you have truly been a blessing in my life. Don't ever stop your work! Not ever! Sincerely.—VA

WE LOVE YOUR BOOKS

Dear Dawn: I am adding \$5.00 extra to my check for postage and handling. We love your books. Where have you been all of our lives? Thanks.—AL

EXPLORING

To Whom It May Concern: I happened to see your TV program dealing with death. This is certainly a departure from accepted Christian thinking, and I would be most interested in following up by reading the booklet you offer free, and comparing it step-by-step with your Bible references. I thank you for the offer of "*Hope beyond the Grave.*" Perhaps in the future I will want to contribute to your cause, but as of now I would just like to explore a bit first.—TN

INSPIRING AND HELPFUL

Dear Personnel of the Video Cassette Department: I truly enjoyed this last convention tape you sent to me. Again I must tell you thank you very, very much for such inspiring and helpful tapes to do witness work with out here in California. I must once more thank you gratefully from my heart, truly and send me more of these types of tape. Thanks again. With Christian love.—CA

ORDERS TAPES FOR HOME-SCHOOL GROUP

To Whom It May Concern: Our home-school group is currently studying ancient Egypt, and would like to borrow the following videotapes: "*The Great Pyramid*," and "*Archaeology Proves the Bible*." Since we are currently studying ancient Egypt, we could use this film as soon as you can send it. Thank you for your time and consideration in lending me these tapes. I am, Yours very sincerely.—LA

BEAUTIFULLY WRITTEN BOOKS

Dear Dawn Publications: Please send me the following books, and thank you so very much for these beautifully written books. They are so full of understanding and truth. You should be very happy with your great work for our Heavenly Father! Could you please send me the book, "*The Battle of Armageddon*," and "*The Time is at Hand*." Much thanks.—VA

SO CLEAR ANYONE CAN UNDERSTAND!

Dear Christians: I can hardly wait for my next magazine. The articles are so interesting and bring out true Bible teachings so clearly that anyone can understand them—it is an eye-opener to the Bible. I thought that I would send a renewal subscription to friends and hope they may become better Christians from reading them. I do thank you from my heart for introducing the magazine to me. Thank you, and God bless you all.—IN ■

SPEAKER'S APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below are routed through the Pilgrim Department of the Dawn. Visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Dept., East Rutherford, NJ 07073. Visits are arranged whenever possible.

M. Balko

Alberta, Can. July 27,28

S. Jones

Alberta, Can. July 27,28

The listings in this schedule have been arranged by local ecclesias cooperating with the Dawn:

J.B. Brown

Vernon, Can. July 13,14

R. Cooper

Alberta, Can. July 27,28

D. Bruce

Los Angeles, CA July 6,7

K. Fernets

Alberta, Can. July 27,28

C. Chandler

Vernon, Can. July 13,14

Alberta, Can. July 27,28

R. Gorecki

Los Angeles, CA July 6,7

P. Cooper

Vernon, Can. July 13,14

Alberta, Can. July 27,28

Wm. Harp

Los Angeles, CA July 6,7

E.F. Lankford

Vernon, Can. July 13,14

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 W. Becker, Fresno, CA—April 19. Age, 79.

Sister Sara Ruggerillo, Chicago, IL—May 8. Age, 76.

Brother Don Thompson, Olympia, WA—May 11. Age 81

"Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill, God treasures up his bright designs, and works his sovereign will." —Hymns of Dawn

CONVENTIONS

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

LOS ANGELES, CA., JULY 7—Auditorium, 248 E. Olive Ave., Burbank. Contact: Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Ln, Pac. Palisades, CA 90272 (or e-mail nekora@aol.com.). Phone: (310) 454-5248

OKANAGAN BIBLE STUDENTS, July 13,14—Eagles Hall, 5101 29th Avenue, Vernon, BC. For information and reservations contact Bernice Blencowe, 5335 Pearson Rd., Vernon, BC, Canada V1B 3K8 Phone: (604) 545-0780

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 13-18—Missouri Western State College, St. Joseph, MO. Contact: Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Ln., Pac. Palisades, CA 90272 (or e-mail Nekora@aol.com). Phone: (310) 454-5248

ALBERTA BIBLE STUDENTS, July 27,28—Fort Ethier Lodge, Wetaskiwin, Alta., Can. Contact: Janice Neumeier, Box 428, Fox Creek, Alta. T0H 1P0, Can.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 4-9—Miskolc, Hungary. Write: International Convention, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272 (or e-mail: nekora@aol.com). Phone: (310) 454-5248

KALISPELL/HAVRE/SALT LAKE CITY CONVENTION, August 9,10,11—690 Trap Road, Columbia Falls, MT. Contact: Marie Lewis, P.O. Box 7205, Kalispell, MT 59904. Cancellation deadline: *July 10*. Phone: (406) 892-4103

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, Aug. 31-Sept. 2—Holiday Inn,I-94 at 127 North, Jackson. Contact: Mrs. Ray Lumley, 2531 Ashton Rd., 49203 Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, Aug. 30-Sept. 1—Ramada Inn, Two Bridges Rd. & Exit 52, Route 80, Fairfield, NJ 07006. Contact: Janet Jeuck, 145 W. Passaic Ave., Rutherford, NJ 07070 for information and room reservations. Let us know your attendance for meals *by August 18*. Phone: (201) 438-6421

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, Aug. 31,Sept. 1,2—Best Western Lynnwood Inn, 4300-200th St.SW, Lynnwood, WA 1-800-775-0805 (reservations must be made before *Aug. 1* to receive group rate).Contact:Michael Brann, 20 1/2 E.Intercity Avenue, Everett, WA 98208 (or e-mail: brannx@aol.com). Phone: (206) 353-8983