

The DAWN

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Death's Prisoners Released

*“Thou hast
ascended on high,
Thou hast led in
procession a body
of captives.”*

*—Psalm 68:18,
Rotherham
Emphasized Bible*

APPEARING IN THE FEBRU-
ary issue of *The Dawn* was an
article titled, “The Surety of
the Resurrection.” In this
issue, we will address some
additional scriptural details
concerning this all-important
Bible teaching. As millions

in the professed Christian world this month remember the death and resurrection of Jesus, we believe it is appropriate at this time to glean further lessons on this vital subject. It is our hope that our readers will not only continue to have faith in the resurrection, but also come to a better understanding of its many harmonious details found in the Word of God.

Millions will likely agree that, apart from his death on the cross, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the most momentous event in mankind's history. The Master's faithful followers at the time rejoiced to realize that he was no longer dead, although they needed the assurances they received by the “many infallible proofs” of his

resurrection in order to be fully convinced of the outstanding miracle which had taken place. (Acts 1:3) As Israelites, the disciples would know of the many miracles which had been performed in the past on behalf of God's chosen people. There was the crossing of the Red Sea, and forty years later of the River Jordan. There was the deliverance of Daniel from the mouths of the lions, and the protection of the three young Hebrews in the fiery furnace in which Nebuchadnezzar sought to destroy them. However, these miracles of the past, and those performed even by Jesus prior to his death, were eclipsed by the glory that was manifested in the resurrection of their Master.

A majority of the people in Jesus' day did not believe that he was raised from the dead, and those who did were not aware of the full significance of this event. This is still true. In professed Christian lands, churches are usually filled by throngs which are glad to participate in the services commemorating Jesus' resurrection. However, the greater part of these do not grasp the import of this mighty miracle performed nearly two thousand years ago. Even in the days of the apostles, there were those right within the church of Christ who did not believe that he had been raised from the dead.—I Cor. 15:12,13

Writing to the church at Corinth earlier in this same chapter, Paul said, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he

was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”—I Cor. 15:3-8

Then Paul points out to the Corinthian brethren how futile Christian faith and hope would be if Christ were not raised from the dead. He wrote, “If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.”—vss. 14-18

It is important to note the emphasis the Scriptures place on the fact that God raised Jesus from the dead. Millions profess to believe that Jesus raised himself from the dead, but the Bible does not teach this. In his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Peter said, “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”—Acts 2:22-24

ISSUES FROM DEATH

David wrote, “He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.” (Ps. 68:20) *Rotherham* translates the last phrase of this text, “escapes from death.” Our Heavenly Father is the God of salvation because in his plan he has provided for escape from death by means of a resurrection from the dead. There could be no salvation for the human race if all were to remain in death. Thus we find that the great theme of salvation set forth in the Word of God is predicated on the assurance that those “in the graves” are to be awakened from the “sleep” of death, and given a full opportunity to attain perfect, everlasting life.—John 5:28; 11:11-14

This is peculiar to the great hope of salvation set forth in the Word of God. Of all the religions in the world, virtually none speaks of a resurrection of the dead except the religion of the Bible. The principal reason for this is that the Bible alone acknowledges and emphasizes the reality of death. Most all other religions insist that there is no death, because they believe in the teaching that man has a “soul” which is immortal, and hence he cannot truly die. Such a thought is found nowhere in the Scriptures. Quite naturally, if the dead are more alive than the living, there would be no place for the resurrection of the dead.

Paul presents the matter in its proper light when, as previously quoted, he explains that if there is no resurrection of the dead then our preaching and faith are both meaningless, for this would mean that those who have “fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” Paul saw in the resurrection

of Jesus an assurance that the entire plan of God, based upon his promises to restore the dead to life, would be carried out. Thus he wrote, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so [all] in Christ shall . . . be made alive."—I Cor. 15:20-22

A thought akin to this is expressed by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:8. Quoting from the marginal translation, this text reads concerning Christ, "When he ascended up on high, he led a multitude of captives." This is a quotation from our opening scripture which, according to the *Rotherham* translation, states that Jesus led "in procession a body of captives." While the reference in these texts is particularly to Jesus' ascension and exaltation "on high," they are also vitally associated with his resurrection. It was when he was raised from the sleep of death that Jesus was highly exalted to the divine nature, far above every name that is named, and forty days later he ascended to his Father to be "at his own right hand."—Eph. 1:18-23

The first of these captives in death whom Jesus leads forth are his own body members. Jesus, together with these, is referred to by Paul as "Christ the firstfruits." (I Cor. 15:23) That Jesus' faithful footstep followers are included in the "firstfruits" is confirmed by James, who wrote, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." (James 1:18) Concerning those who faithfully follow the Lamb, we also read, "These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to

the Lamb.” (Rev. 14:4) The firstfruits class is very small in number compared with the multitudes of “afterfruits” which will be led forth from their captivity in death.—Rev. 7:4; 14:1,3

The Old Testament refers numerous times to the dead masses of mankind as being “prisoners,” or captives, in death, and their awakening as a release from captivity. (Isa. 49:9; 61:1) After mentioning the death state of the young, old, rich, poor, rulers, and even the wicked, Job adds, “There,” in death, “the prisoners rest together.”—Job 3:18

In Ezekiel 16:53, the resurrection is likened to the release of captives, or prisoners. We quote, “When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy [Israel’s] captives in the midst of them.” The expression, “bring again their captivity,” as found in this verse and in others to be subsequently quoted, means to “turn back” their captivity.

We are assured that the Gentiles as well as the Israelites will participate in that glorious future release of the prisoners of death. In Jeremiah 48:47, the Lord says, “I will bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days.” Of the Ammonites we read, “I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the LORD.” (chap. 49:6) The Elamites will also be released from their captivity. We read, “It shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD.” (vs. 39) These are but some of the vast multitudes who are to be “turned back”—led forth from their captivity in death.

In presenting the order of the resurrection, Paul said, "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are [become] Christ's at [during] his coming [Greek, presence]." (I Cor. 15:22,23) Christ's presence here referred to is the period of his kingdom, and Paul assures us that he must reign until all enemies are put under his feet, and the great enemy Death is destroyed. (vss. 25,26) It will be during this period that the multitudes who have died in unbelief will be awakened, given a knowledge of the truth concerning Christ, and an opportunity to accept him and live forever as restored humans here on earth.

THE RESURRECTION

Paul said to Felix, a Roman governor, "This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." (Acts 24:14,15) While the word resurrection is not used in the Old Testament, it is assuring to realize how many times the hope of the resurrection by the "fathers" is set forth by the use of language such as found in the foregoing text.

We have already noted some of the Old Testament references to the release of those who are held captive in death. Moses referred to the resurrection as a returning from destruction. In a prayer to God quoted in the Psalms, he said, "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men." (Ps. 90:3) Isaiah employed the same thought in a promise of the resurrection. He wrote,

“The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isa. 35:10) This same promise is repeated almost word for word in Isaiah 51:11. Paul tells us emphatically that the ransom is “for all”—none are left out.—I Tim. 2:6

“The LORD killeth, and maketh alive,” prayed Hannah. “He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.” (I Sam. 2:1,6) This reveals her assurance, even in that ancient period of the judges, that there was to be a resurrection of the dead. Hannah believed that the Lord would not leave the people in *sheol*—the grave. There is also that comforting promise to mothers who have lost their children in death. God said, “Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: . . . They shall come again from the land of the enemy [the great enemy—death]. And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border.”—Jer. 31:16,17

FROM SLEEP

David wrote concerning “the sleep of death.” (Ps. 13:3) Some of the Old Testament promises liken the resurrection to an awakening from sleep. The Lord promised Daniel, “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.” (Dan. 12:2) The word “many” is not used here to imply that only some of those in death will be awakened, but rather to emphasize the great number, or multitude, of those who are dead and are to be awakened from “the sleep of death.” They are all asleep “in the dust of the earth,” the text reads. This expression

reminds us that those to be awakened from death are those upon whom the penalty fell, through father Adam—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. 3:19) It is in keeping with Paul's words, "In Adam all die."—I Cor. 15:22

The Prophet Isaiah wrote, "Thy dead men shall live, . . . Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Here, again, the dead are said to be in the dust of the earth, sleeping there until the time when, by divine power through Christ, "the earth shall cast out the dead."—Isa. 26:19

THE JUST AND UNJUST

In his speech to Felix, Paul mentioned the resurrection of "the just and unjust" as being set forth "in the law and in the prophets." (Acts 24:14,15) The resurrection of both the just and the unjust is mentioned in God's promise to Daniel. We again quote: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some [the just] to everlasting life, and some [the unjust] to shame and everlasting [or age lasting] contempt." The next verse points out further details concerning the resurrection of the just—"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. 12:2,3) Jesus corroborates this when he says that the righteous, or just, shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.—Matt. 13:43

Jesus also referred to the resurrection of the just and the unjust, speaking of these two classes as those who have done "good" and others who have

done “evil.” After saying that all in the “tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth,” he states that those who have done good will receive “a resurrection of life,” and they that have done evil will come to “a resurrection of judgment.”—John 5:28,29, *New American Standard Bible*

The distinction here is between those who receive their full reward immediately upon being awakened from the sleep of death, and those who come forth to judgment. The former includes the faithful of all ages, and the latter the unfaithful. The faithful receive life. For the overcoming footstep followers of Jesus during the present Gospel Age, it will be immortal life on the divine plane. (Rom. 2:7; II Pet. 1:4) For the faithful Ancient Worthies of past ages, it will be perfect human life here on the earth. Their reward of life is earthly because they lived prior to the special “call” of the present age. However, they will be given important responsibilities as “princes in all the earth” during the Messianic kingdom. (Ps. 45:16) The Scriptures also identify a “great multitude,” those less faithful than Christ’s “bride” who sits “on the throne” with him. These less faithful ones will also come forth to life, and will live on the spirit plane as servants “before the throne” in the spiritual phase of the kingdom.—Rev. 7:9,13-17

All others will come forth to a resurrection of judgment or, as the Greek text states it, to a *krisis*. Our English word “crisis” conveys a similar thought. It means that the awakened prisoners of death will be confronted with a crisis, in that if they wish to continue living and to be restored to human perfection they will have to accept the provisions of divine

grace through Christ, and obey the laws of his kingdom.

It will be a turning point for them. They will be fully enlightened concerning the issues involved. If they then choose to turn to the Lord and serve him with their whole heart, they will be “judged” worthy of everlasting life on the earth. On the other hand, if they turn away from Christ and prove to be incorrigible and willfully wicked, they will die in what the Bible describes as “the second death,” from which there will be no awakening.—Rev. 20:14,15; 21:8; Acts 3:23

WITH WHAT BODY?

The Apostle Paul raised an important question concerning the resurrection, and answered it. We quote: “Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. . . . There are . . . celestial [heavenly] bodies, and bodies terrestrial [earthly]: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: . . . It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body [in the resurrection], and there is a spiritual body.”—I Cor. 15:35-44

Certain important points should be noted in Paul’s reasoning. One is that in the resurrection the body

that has died is not the one which is resurrected. (vss. 36,37) Another is that some in the resurrection will have celestial, or heavenly bodies, and that others will have terrestrial, or earthly bodies. (vss. 40-44) The Lord is the one who determines this. He “giveth it” a body as it pleases him, according to the “seed” planted.—vs. 38

The “it” is the “seed,” the “bare grain” that is sown in death. This is the mind, personality, or character of the individual. When an infant is born, while it has a brain, it has not yet developed a personality or character. These are developed by the impressions received upon the brain during life, through the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. What the mind does with these impressions, how it reacts to them and governs the behavior of the individual, is what determines the sort of person the infant eventually becomes upon maturity.

Followers of the Master were essentially no different in outlook and behavior than mankind in general until, by God’s providence, they were brought into contact with his Word of truth. Through that Word they received the invitation to devote their lives to his service and to run “toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14) Forthwith, these began to meditate on the heavenly promises of God’s Word. Their minds began to be “renewed” as they endeavored to know and to do the Father’s will. (Rom. 12:1-3) Through the influences of the heavenly promises, these set their “affection”—their mind and character—“on things above, not on things on the earth.”—Col. 3:1,2

Thus these disciples of Christ are prepared for a heavenly body, which God will give to them in the resurrection. This heavenly body will be their “own” in the sense that it will be the sort of body which will suit best the individual spiritual personality which they have developed. Prior to death this spiritual personality, called also by Paul a “new creature,” depends upon a “corrupt” body in which to operate, but in the resurrection this “corruptible must put on incorruption,” which, for the faithful followers of the Lamb, will be immortality.—I Cor. 15:53; II Cor. 5:14-17

Paul’s letter to the brethren at Corinth is addressed to those who were “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.” (I Cor. 1:1,2) For this reason he stresses more particularly the resurrection of those who will attain immortality. It is this that he describes as THE resurrection of THE dead, as indicated in the Greek text. (chap. 15:42) However, Paul reminds us that in the resurrection there will also be those who will receive “natural,” or “terrestrial” bodies. The Ancient Worthies will be the first of this class, and their terrestrial bodies and accompanying characters will be perfect from the start. They did not come under the influence of spiritual promises, but they set their affections upon the hope of a restored paradise on earth, and by faith desired for themselves to live in perfection in that paradise. Perfect human bodies will therefore be appropriate for them.

The unbelieving, unjust world of mankind certainly have not developed a mind and character to suit them for a spiritual body. When released from their captivity in death, God will give them a new

body, capable of perfection. However, their desires, ambitions, and aims—their character—will be that which they have “sown” in this life. Thankfully, those—and we believe it will be the vast majority—who appreciate the blessings of that new day in which they are awakened from the sleep of death, and grasp those opportunities of belief and obedience, will be assisted up the ladder of progress, developing along the way a righteous character, toward human perfection. The Prophet Isaiah likens this process to traveling over “The way of holiness.”—Isa. 35:8

DIVINE POWER SUFFICIENT

Some may wonder how an individual’s thoughts can be restored when the brain in which they are developed is destroyed in death. This is possible only through the almighty power of the Creator. The psalmist wrote concerning him, “He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.” (Ps. 147:4) Man, with all his scientific knowledge and instruments, cannot do this, but God can. God, who knows the number and names of all the heavenly bodies in the whole vast universe, will have no difficulty remembering every thought impulse of every human brain and character that has ever existed. He will reproduce them in the freed prisoners of death to which he will give appropriate new bodies. How wonderfully this will fulfill the statement concerning him, “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their griefs.”—vs. 3, marginal translation

Paul clearly sets forth the time sequence of the resurrection as it relates to those who receive celestial

bodies and those who receive terrestrial bodies. He says: "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"—I Cor. 15:54,55

The apostle here refers to the Old Testament promise, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa. 25:8) He explains that the fulfillment of this wonderful promise must wait until those who are seeking the prize of immortality have all attained—when "this mortal shall have put on immortality." Then will come the time for the releasing of all the remaining prisoners of death, and their restoration to human perfection, with the ability to obey God's law perfectly and live forever.

This is the great objective of the reign of Christ over the earth. "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (I Cor. 15:25,26) Thus will be fulfilled the promise of Revelation 21:4—"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Let us rejoice that Christ has been raised from the dead, and that it is he who will lead a "multitude of captives" forth from death, even all who have died. This is the hope of every true follower of the Master, and it is our hope for the whole world of mankind. ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

APRIL 2—“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”—Galatians 6:10 (Z. '03-121 Hymn 277)

APRIL 9—“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.”—I Corinthians 9:24 (Z. '95-93 Hymn 183)

APRIL 16—“They shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”—Malachi 3:17 (Z. '03-223 Hymn 322)

APRIL 23—“That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”—Luke 8:15 (Z. '03-408 Hymn 166)

APRIL 30—“Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”—I Peter 2:9 (Z. '03-165 Hymn 236)

“Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.”—Philippians 2:8-10

2015 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, April 2, 2015.

Resurrection Hope Guaranteed

Key Verse: “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”
—I Corinthians 15:22

Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians 15:1-11,20-22

AN ALL-IMPORTANT TRUTH brought to remembrance when studying the Key Verse of our lesson is that, due to Adam’s disobedience, the penalty of death placed upon him has passed down to the entire human race. The wording of the first part of this scripture from the *Revised Version* emphasizes this fact, and reads, “As all in Adam die.” A further study of God’s Word reveals that since Adam was originally perfect, it would take a perfect man to balance the scales of justice, and provide a means of redemption for Adam and his posterity.—Rom. 5:12,18,19; I Tim. 2:5,6

We read concerning Jesus that he was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” (Heb. 7:26) Through his miraculous conception, he was not born into the world as a condemned sinner, yet he was of Adamic human stock, “made of a woman.” (Luke 1:30-35; Gal. 4:4) He “who knew no sin” remained “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (II Cor. 5:21; Phil. 2:8; Matt. 27:33-37) However, Jesus’ death was not the end of the lesson. He was then raised from the dead by the power of God. “It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God.—Rom. 8:34

The 24th chapter of Luke provides details concerning the resurrection of Jesus, and various appearances by him to those whom he had ministered to during his life. The account states that he appeared to Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. After this the risen Lord encountered others, such as the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, who were unsure and perplexed about the report that he had indeed risen from the grave. (Luke 24:13-32) He shared with them many important lessons. The account says, “Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”—vs. 27

In another verse of our lesson, Paul says, “Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” (I Cor. 15:20) There is an important truth to be considered when we read that the dead “sleep” in the grave. Even Jesus “slept” in death for parts of three days, then rose again. (Luke 18:33) To regard death as a sleep is the proper thought in light of the many Scriptural promises which point to a time when an “awakening” from death will take place. Such a viewpoint strengthens our faith in God, and fortifies our hope for the dead. The last part of our Key Verse tells us: “in Christ shall all be made alive.” These words provide “good news” concerning the promise of a full resurrection and restoration to perfect human life for all mankind who obey from the heart the righteous laws of Messiah’s kingdom.

In God’s plan, Jesus was to be “the firstborn from the dead.” (Col. 1:18) Although the Scriptures tell of others who had previously been awakened from death by the power of God, they all died again. Christ was the first to experience a resurrection in the full and permanent sense. He was “raised from the dead,” Paul says, and “dieth no more.” (Rom. 6:9) What a wonderful hope of a future life is provided through the death of our Redeemer and the demonstration of God’s power in the resurrection of his “only begotten Son.” ■

Love One Another

Key Verse: *“This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”*
—I John 3:11

Selected Scripture:
I John 3:11-24

Those whom God has called have the opportunity “by patient continuance in well doing” to “seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.” (Rom. 2:7) This prospect brings with it much responsibility and work if it is to be realized. Each individual thus called is to lay aside the fallen flesh and its ways. Paul instructs us to “put off . . . the old man,” and “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Eph. 4:22-24) A key part of this work is accomplished through the development of love for one another, as spoken of in our Key Verse.

Love of the brethren is so important that Jesus put it into the form of a commandment: “That ye love one another; as I have loved you.” (John 13:34,35) We should be learning the importance and value of love every day as God’s consecrated children. Through our love for him we responded to the invitation—“present your bodies a living sacrifice, . . . which is your reasonable service.” (Rom. 12:1) Indeed, the exercise of love is constantly urged upon Christians throughout the New Testament. Such actions are by no means confined to material things, although it may include them. Paul says we are to be “kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.”—vs. 10

Paul, in I Corinthians 13, gives us many important words concerning love, summarizing his thoughts with the statement, "Love never faileth." (vs. 8) In this account, Paul does not attempt to define love, but rather gives us many manifestations which would indicate its presence in our character. These evidences, given in verses 4-7, are the ingredients which, when properly understood, make up one great lesson concerning love which we must learn and apply in our lives. In short, it is a lesson of "Christ-likeness" and "God-likeness," for they are the ultimate examples of these manifestations of the quality of love.

One of these important elements which Paul mentions is that "Love suffereth long." (vs. 4) This should remind us of the words concerning our great example, Jesus: "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (Heb. 12:3) Love also "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," Paul says. That is, it is humble and not boastful of self. In Philippians 2:8-13, we are reminded of the great humility of Jesus, and of the need that we "work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling." In harmony with the thought of humility, "love envieth not." It is not jealous when others prosper.

In all the various manifestations of love provided by Paul in I Corinthians 13, the Greek word used is *agape*. This word defines a completely unselfish love, disinterested in self, as is the love of God. It is a love which should inspire us to a willing, joyful sacrifice of every earthly interest, hope, and ambition, and which gladly would lay down even life itself for the brethren. It also is evidenced by a love for God's Word of truth, his holy law, and a desire to be of service to him and his people.

As we seek to fulfill the words of our Key Verse, may it be said of us, "Remembering . . . your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.—I Thess. 1:3,4 ■

Believe God's Love

Key Verse:
“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is [begotten] of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”
—I John 5:1

Selected Scripture:
I John 4:13-5:5

life.”—John 3:16

One of the important responses to God's love which we must develop is to “believe” in it and its effect upon our lives. This is brought to our attention in these words from our lesson: “We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” (I John 4:16) In this is expressed the need that we believe in God's love and that he will accomplish the work that he has begun in us. In so doing, we then are enabled to come to the realization that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Rom. 8:28) In another place, Paul says, “Our Father, which hath loved us, . . . hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.”—II Thess. 2:16

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

has made special provision for us as his consecrated children. We are provided, through the words of the Apostle Paul, the assurance that “the God of love and peace shall be with you.” (II Cor. 13:11) This wonderful promise was made possible through the giving of God's son—“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting

As a faithful Father, God will continue to show his love to those whom he has called. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” (Jer. 31:3) If we have given our “all” to him from the heart, we can claim the promise that “he would also finish” in us “the same grace also.” (II Cor. 8:6) To know God and “believe” in his love, we must know Christ. This is because God, through Christ, has been in the process of “reconciling the world unto himself.” (chap. 5:19) In his love and wisdom, God has committed a special work to his son. Thus, we “believe” in God’s love by “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”—Heb. 12:2

It is important in this lesson to note that the words of our Key Verse are specially addressed to those “begotten of God”—those who have responded to his call and have given their hearts to him in unreserved consecration to do his will. This should be a very humbling thought, and serve as a reminder that “We love him, because he first loved us.” (I John 4:19) A further reflection on this is found in these words: “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”—Rom. 5:8

Belief in God’s love as manifested in the gift of his son, Jesus, is expressed to us in the Bible as that of faith. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. . . . Without faith it is impossible to please [God].” “By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”—Heb. 11:1,6; Eph. 2:8

Paul takes this matter one step further, saying that we are to develop “faith which worketh by love.” (Gal. 5:6) Indeed, true faith is given evidence to by the workings of the law of love in our life. To be pleasing to God thus requires a proper character, obedience of heart and mind, and the demonstration of these by the works of love. Let us, therefore, strive to fully believe God’s love by daily cultivating the fruits and graces of the Spirit.—Gal. 5:22,23; II Peter 1:5-7 ■

Watch Out for Deceivers

Key Verse: “*Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.*”
—II John 8

Selected Scripture:
II John

11:28; II Cor. 13:5) The need to closely examine ourselves is based on the fact that, by nature, we fall under the condition described in the Word of God—“There is none righteous, no, not one.”—Rom. 3:10

We have also been assured, however, that “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” (Ps. 34:18) Having such sincere sorrow for sin, and placing our faith in the precious blood of Jesus, allows us to stand whole before God. With joy we claim the words, “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” (Isa. 61:10) God thus covers our unwilling, Adamic imperfections by means of Christ’s “robe of righteousness.”

As we consider this provision of God’s grace, we are

to remember that our continuation in this standing is not of our own strength, but in that which God supplies through the precious promises of his Word, and through the power and influence of the Holy Spirit in our life. Indeed, the moment that we may begin to feel self-confident is a dangerous one. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”—I Cor. 10:12

As footstep followers of the Lord, we are to examine our hearts daily to see that everything in our life is centered on doing the will of God. When we examine and judge our heart condition, we are specifically to be looking at our motives, will, and intentions. Our goal should be that which the psalmist wrote, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.” (Ps. 19:14) Nothing short of heart purity is acceptable to God.

In our lesson, the thought is expressed that there is a possibility of falling away from God’s grace. (II John 8,9) We should be aware of those who “abideth not in the doctrine of Christ,” including ourselves. Such soberness of mind and heart is emphasized in these words from Paul: “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” (Heb. 4:1) Our greatest safety is in the vivid realization of our own helplessness and dependence upon God’s mercy and favor.

Jesus tells us, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” He also said concerning himself, “I do nothing of myself.” (John 15:5; 8:28) Therefore, let us rely on the assistance of God and his son, Jesus, at all times, and remember the words, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them.” (I Tim. 4:16) If we do these things faithfully “unto death,” we will hear the words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”—Rev. 2:10; Matt. 25:21 ■

The Parable of the Virgins

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.”
—*Matthew 25:1*

THE PARABLE OF THE virgins begins with the words of our opening text. It closes with the words, “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” (Matt. 25:13) The parable is part of

Jesus’ answer to the disciples’ questions, “When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming [Greek: presence], and of the end of the world [Greek: age]?”—chap. 24:3

This parable emphasizes that Jesus’ disciples would not know the time of his return and subsequent presence in advance of its occurrence, hence the need of their being alert and continuing to watch. The faithful watchers could expect to know of the Master’s return once it had occurred, because they would be alert to the various signs given in the Scriptures which would begin to have fulfillment at that time. Thus they would rejoice in the evidences of his presence.

The parable of the virgins is not just a set of circumstances which Jesus put together in story form. Rather, it is a true reflection of the marriage custom of his day. Furthermore, in it we find a clear illustration of the essential point of the lesson Jesus desired to teach—that is, the importance of watching.

According to ancient Jewish custom, during the period between a betrothal and the wedding, the bride-to-be lived with her friends, and was not permitted to see her future husband, or have any communication with him. When the day and time arrived for the wedding ceremonial activities to begin, which was usually late in the evening, the bridegroom left his house, attended by his groomsmen. A band of musicians preceded them as they made their way to the home where the bride was waiting.

The bride and her companions anxiously awaited the coming of the bridegroom. When he arrived with his groomsmen, he led the combined group, including his bride-to-be, to his own or his father's house, accompanied by many demonstrations of happiness. On their way to his home they would be joined by a party of maidens who were friends of the bride and the bridegroom. These had been waiting to join the procession as it passed by, and would now become a part of the entire group. Upon arrival at the bridegroom's house, all would be invited to participate in the joys of the wedding, including the feast.

These maidens are, symbolically speaking, the "ten virgins" referred to by Jesus. In the parable, the virgins went out to meet the bridegroom too early—in their estimation he had "tarried." As they waited for him, "they all slumbered and slept." At

“midnight” they heard the announcement, “Behold, the bridegroom . . . go ye out to meet him.” The virgins all arose and “trimmed” the wicks of their lamps.—Matt. 25:5-7

Five of these virgins are described as “wise” because of having a full supply of oil in their vessels—several translations say “flasks.” These flasks—full of oil—would be used to continuously replenish the lamps, so that they would keep shining at all times. The other five virgins are said to be “foolish” because they failed to provide the necessary supply of oil in their flasks. Although they had trimmed their wicks, as had the wise virgins, the lamps of the foolish virgins had “gone out,” because they ran out of oil. They asked the five wise virgins if they could have some of their oil, but the wise said, “Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you.” Thus the foolish virgins were not prepared to go into the wedding with the bridegroom.—vss. 2-4,8-10

WATCH

The admonition to “watch” has doubtless been a blessing to the Lord’s people in every part of the Gospel Age. They have all been encouraged by the belief that the return of Christ was near. Indeed, so far as individual experience is concerned, the return of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom have never been any farther away than the end of each one’s faithful walk in the narrow way of sacrifice. So far as consciousness of passing time is concerned, it is the next moment after death in which the faithful follower of Jesus is ushered into his reward on the other side of the veil.

While the parable of the virgins assuredly served to stimulate the “virgins” throughout the age to greater watchfulness, it has a special application at the end of the age. It teaches that no one would know in advance the specific time of the Lord’s return, but reveals that as the time of the Second Advent drew near, there would be some who thought they knew ahead of time. These would go out to “meet” him, but not having a sufficiency of oil, the light of truth they bore would begin to dim and go out as a result of their disappointment.

It is interesting to note that just such a thing did occur. Many who had become interested in the Second Advent, through the movement begun by William Miller during the first half of the nineteenth century, actually expected in advance the Lord’s return to occur at a certain time. The parable states that the bridegroom “tarried.” This seemingly expresses the viewpoint of the virgins. To them it seemed that he had tarried, but actually they had gone out too early to meet him. We know that every feature of God’s plan is carried out at exactly the proper time. Nothing in God’s plan ever tarries.

A SIGN

In addition to being an admonition to watchfulness, we may well consider this parable as calling attention to one of the “signs” of the Lord’s return and Second Presence. In answering his disciples’ questions pertaining to the signs of his presence, Jesus drew somewhat from the prophecies of the Old Testament. For example, he quoted from Daniel 12:1, which speaks of a “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation” and,

referring to it as a time of “great tribulation,” offered it as one of the indications of his presence and of the end of the age.—Matt. 24:21,22

It seems reasonable that Jesus employed the parable of the virgins to illustrate the principle set forth in another prophecy relating to the time of his return found in Habakkuk 2:3. This text reads, “The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”

The Apostle Paul quotes from this prophecy and applies it to the time of Christ’s return. (Heb. 10:35-38) Paul indicates that our “need of patience” is one of the important lessons of this prophecy. “For yet a little while,” he continues, “and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” As we have seen, it is only from the human viewpoint that the Lord would seem to tarry.

James also stressed the need of patience in connection with the return of Christ. He states: “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming [presence] of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming [presence] of the Lord draweth nigh.”—James 5:7,8

The thought of patience in these passages is “to endure.” It was lack of endurance on the part of the apostles in the Garden of Gethsemane that was responsible for their inability to remain awake and watch with their Master. Likewise at the end of the age, those who lack patient endurance cannot be alert and faithful watchers. They become spiritually drowsy and often fall “asleep.”

During the middle of the nineteenth century many of the Lord's people became convinced that the return of Christ was imminent, and their enthusiasm was great. However, when it seemed that the Bridegroom had tarried, their zeal and interest was tested. For some, their faith waned and faded completely. Later, however, when the announcement went forth, "Behold the Bridegroom," the interest of many was aroused and rekindled. They began to rejoice in the presence of their returned Lord, and with renewed zeal prepared themselves so as to be ready to join the Bridegroom when the time of the wedding would arrive.

According to the Jewish custom, when the maidens, or virgins, met the bridegroom and his party, who were traveling toward his home, they simply journeyed along with them. The length of time required for this journey would depend on how far distant the bridegroom's home might be. While Jesus did not mention this point, we think that this background of the parable warrants us in extending its lesson of watchfulness throughout the entire harvest period of the Master's presence.

In every part of the harvest it has been important for the virgin class to be alert and watchful. This is especially true due to the fact that the length of the harvest period has been significantly longer than was at first expected. Thus the quality of patient endurance has been greatly needed in order that the virgins not become spiritually lethargic or discouraged.

On the other hand, the fact that this seeming tarrying was foretold, should in itself be a great stimulus to our faith and zeal while we continue to watch and serve. As the harvest period has continued, the

reassurance of the Lord's presence has served in a similar manner. The announcement, "Behold the Bridegroom," has been made continuously throughout the period since his return. While it is true that the seeming delay in the establishment of the kingdom is a test upon our faith and patience, we should rejoice in the fact that the fulfillment of the "vision" does not, and cannot, actually tarry.

THE BRIDE CLASS

It is seldom possible to make a specific application of all the details of any of our Lord's parables, and this is true of the parable of the virgins. The wise virgins of the parable seem clearly to picture the members of the bride class living at the end of the age who continue faithful, even unto death. The foolish virgins, being less alert and watchful, would well represent those less faithful to their vows of consecration.

The parable was not given for the primary purpose of identifying the bride of Christ, but, as we have seen, to emphasize the need to watch. It so happens that the role of the maidens, or virgins, in the ancient Jewish wedding custom lent itself well to teach this lesson. Faithfulness on their part was revealed by their possession not only of oil in their lamps, but also an extra supply in their vessels.

OIL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The oil would represent what we need in order to be faithful watchers who are spiritually alert and prepared to go with our heavenly Bridegroom and to enter the wedding. In various instances in the Bible, oil is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. It would seem that also in the lesson of this parable

the possession and use of a large measure of the Holy Spirit is vital to be a faithful watcher.

The possession of the Holy Spirit implies the need of faithfulness along all lines of Christian endeavor. First, it calls for a full surrender of our hearts to the Lord, a complete denial of self, and a dedication of all that we have and are to the knowing and doing of our Heavenly Father's will. We cannot expect to go our own way, or do our own will in life, and also be filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

The possession of the Holy Spirit by the consecrated also requires the study of the truths of God's Word, and their application in the daily affairs of life. We need to accept and be exercised by the guidance of the Scriptures regardless of the difficulties of the way that is pointed out as the one pleasing to the Lord.

Possession of the Holy Spirit impels us to faithful activity in the Lord's service. By so doing, we, in turn, receive God's Spirit in an ever increasing measure. Jesus said that our Father was more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him than an earthly father is to give good gifts to his children. (Luke 11:13) Prayer, then, is another means of obtaining and of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Knowing the great importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives, it is not surprising that the wise virgins of the parable could not give their oil to the foolish virgins. They told them to go into the market place to obtain their own supply. (Matt. 25:9) Since the market place of experience involves time to live the consecrated life, time to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, time to study, to serve and to

pray, there is the danger of waiting until it is too late to do our “purchasing” of the oil of the Holy Spirit.

LET US BE WISE

The parable is not designed to illustrate what the rewards of the faithful followers of the Master will be. It simply emphasizes that the wise virgins are invited in to the wedding, and that the door of this opportunity is closed to the foolish virgins. The bridegroom addresses and treats these as strangers, and they are greatly disappointed. The two classes of virgins does not suggest the difference between the righteous and the wicked. After all, they were all virgins who, together, went out to meet the bridegroom and accompany him to his home. However, five of them were “wise” and the others were not.

The manner in which the wise virgins displayed their faithfulness, in contrast to the general lack of faithfulness on the part of the foolish virgins, is the vital lesson of the parable, and underlines its great importance to us. We are to be alert watchers in every aspect of our Christian walk. This is just as essential now as it was before our Lord returned, for while we are walking with the Bridegroom, we do not know when our individual journey will end.

A little spiritual drowsiness on our part might give us the impression that we have plenty of time for preparation when, as far as our walk is concerned, the time may indeed be “short.” If, as alert watchers, however, we are daily faithful in the use of all the means by which our “vessels” are kept filled with the Spirit, we will be ready at any time to hear the Bridegroom extend his invitation, “Enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”—Matt. 25:21 ■

Overcoming the World

“In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

—*John 16:33*

AS JESUS NEARED THE

close of his ministry in the flesh, the Scriptures indicate how solicitous he was for the welfare of his disciples. He knew that without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit they would not be able to understand fully the meaning of the seemingly tragic events which were fast closing in around him. He endeavored to prepare their minds and hearts as fully as possible, lest they be completely stumbled and thus not be ready to enter into the privileges of the Gospel Age which were to soon open up with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. He not only ministered to them directly, but prayed for them to this end.

Already the disciples had learned that being a follower of the lowly Nazarene did not bring them the good will and plaudits of the world, particularly the religious world of that day. Indeed, there were times when the multitudes flocked around their beloved Master. Too often, however, the motive

turned out to be the “loaves and fishes” of material benefit which they hoped to receive from him. Few were interested to the point of being willing to make sacrifices in order to be disciples of Jesus, and often there was outright opposition manifested toward him.

Before Jesus was crucified, his disciples probably thought that in some way he would overcome this opposition and become the accepted leader and King of Israel, and ultimately of the whole world. Had not the prophet written concerning him that of the “increase of his government and peace” there would be no end? (Isa. 9:7) As yet they did not know that first it was necessary that he suffer and die for the world before the prophecies concerning his kingdom glory would be fulfilled. It was their hope to share in the Master’s glory, which they believed was near.

Jesus did not withhold from his disciples the fact of his imminent death, but somehow they felt that what he had said to them pertaining thereto must have another meaning. “My flesh, . . . I will give for the life of the world,” he had said. (John 6:51) He told them also that he must go to Jerusalem where he would “suffer many things,” and finally “be killed.” When hearing this, Peter said, “Be it far from thee, Lord,” indicating that he thought Jesus was wrong in estimating the strength of his enemies, or that he could be dissuaded from recklessly exposing himself to danger.—Matt. 16:21,22

However, Jesus meant exactly what he said concerning his fast approaching death, even though the disciples could not bring themselves to believe that it would actually occur. Jesus knew that they

were still viewing their privileges of discipleship too largely from the standpoint of the material advantages of glory they hoped to attain from being associated with him. While they loved him, and the Messianic cause of which they were convinced he was the divinely appointed leader, they did not yet know as clearly as they understood later that there was to be suffering and death associated with that cause, as well as glory and honor. The prophets had foretold the “sufferings of Christ” as well as the “glory that should follow,” but thus far they appreciated only of the promised glory, in which they hoped to share.—I Pet. 1:11

Jesus knew this, so in the closing days of his ministry he endeavored to prepare them for what he foresaw would be their experience. “If the world hate you,” he said, “ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: . . . but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” “These things have I spoken unto you,” the Master continued, “that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.”—John 15:18-20; 16:1,2

There would seem to be no way of misunderstanding the meaning of statements such as these, for they were charged with impending tragedy. In addition to telling his disciples that death might be their reward for following him, he also warned, “The hour . . . is now come, that ye shall be scattered,

every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” (John 16:32) Such warnings as these, coming from a reliable source, would certainly be liable to engender fear and a fretful foreboding of future disaster. Jesus explained, however, repeating the words of our opening text, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”—vs. 33

This seems to be a strange way of cheering people and of quieting their hearts. Yet, it is well to note that it was not the warning of coming persecution that was calculated to give the disciples peace and good cheer, but rather the fact that when it came they would understand its meaning and realize that they were having the privilege of suffering with him. He wanted them to know also that he overcame the world and that they too would be given strength to overcome the world if they continued to be his disciples. With this assurance of victory they could have “good cheer” despite the opposition and persecution of the world. Knowledge that they were suffering with their Master, while not lessening the pain, would nevertheless give them courage to continue on.

THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE

In the example set by Jesus’ own life and ministry, and through his teachings as well as the teachings of his apostles, it is clear that the Christian life is one of struggle against opposition. It is a warfare, as it were, in which we are engaged in deadly combat with formidable enemies, which most certainly would overpower us unless we were given divine

strength to overcome them. Satan, the devil, is the chief of our enemies, and his allies are the world and our own fallen flesh. As New Creatures in Christ Jesus we are at enmity with all three of these, and this struggle will continue as long as we are in the flesh.

Descriptive of our efforts to subdue the flesh are such scriptural terms as “mortify” and “crucify.” (Col. 3:5; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14) Speaking of himself, the Apostle Paul wrote, “I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection.” (I Cor. 9:27) The term “overcome” which appears in our theme text is used in the New Testament to describe the Christian’s victory over the Devil, over the Devil’s world, and over the principle of evil which is the foundation of the world of which Satan is the prince. “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good,” writes Paul. (Rom. 12:21) John speaks of overcoming “the wicked one.” (I John 2:13,14) He also writes that he who is begotten of God “overcometh the world.”—I John 5:4

Apparently the Apostle John was greatly impressed with what the Master said about overcoming the world, for not only did he make a record of it in his Gospel (Matthew, Mark, and Luke do not), but he enlarges upon this theme in his epistles. It is interesting to note that John is the only apostle who writes specifically about overcoming the world. John also seemed to appreciate greatly the thought of divine love as it was manifested in the sending of Jesus to be man’s Redeemer—“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,” he records. (John 3:16) With reference to our privilege of joint heirship with Jesus he writes, “Behold,

what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.”—I John 3:1-3

It is helpful, we believe, in considering the matter of overcoming the world, to remember that there are two great opposing principles operating in the earth since man's original sin. These are love and selfishness, or good and evil. It was probably the Apostle John's clear vision of divine love, and what it means to God's creatures, that helped him to discern the importance of the Master's statement concerning the matter of overcoming the world. He evidently saw that it meant Jesus had been victorious over the evil, selfish spirit of the world.

The Creator, our Heavenly Father, is the author of the principle of love, and throughout the ages has been its sponsor. Satan is the sponsor of selfishness. These two principles have been at war with each other since the fall of man. The people of God who have been faithful to the terms of their calling have been motivated by love during this Gospel Age. They are “begotten of God”—that is, by his Spirit—while the remainder of mankind have gone through life with the principle of selfishness largely controlling them. This does not mean that all have been willfully wicked, unjust, or unkind. Man was created in the image of God, and traces of this image remain and manifest themselves in deeds of kindness on the part of many.

It is not the occasional kind deed or act of charity—however much these are to be commended—that constitutes overcoming the world and its spirit, as Jesus set us the example. Rather, it is a matter of a changed viewpoint on the objective of life, a conversion from the principle of living for self to

the principle of living for God by devoting our lives to his service. “Self-preservation,” it has been said, is “nature’s great law,” and this is undoubtedly true with respect to all the lower orders of God’s creatures here on the earth, and properly so. It is only because of sin and the misrule of Satan, however, that it has been adopted by human beings as the dominating motive of life.

It has been embraced by the human race and has become so much a way of life in the world that it is considered normal and commendatory. Self-interest, broadened perhaps to include one’s family, is the principle which rules the world—this “present evil world” over which Satan is the prince. (Gal. 1:4; John 12:31) This was also true during the world before the flood. Indeed, it has been true throughout the more than four thousand years of “this world” since. There have been a few exceptions. Some, instead of drifting with the tide of selfishness which sweeps the masses along to inevitable destruction, have gone against it. These have devoted their lives unselfishly in efforts which they hope might eventually turn the tide, or at least alleviate the sufferings of those who were unable to help themselves. They will have their reward in God’s due time.

The only “cause” which actually will do away with selfishness and establish love throughout the whole earth as the motive of life is God’s plan of redemption through Christ. The only ones, therefore, who can overcome the world in the scriptural sense are those who follow faithfully in his footsteps of sacrifice. Before the First Advent of Jesus there were some who caught the spirit of the Messianic

cause and gladly gave their lives for it. Paul lists a number of these in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. Moses was one of them. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."—Heb. 11:24-26

John wrote that the victory which overcomes the world is faith. (I John 5:4) On this basis, Moses was an overcomer. As the world views matters, it would have been in every way to Moses' advantage to remain in Egypt and accept legal membership in Pharaoh's family. From the standpoint of self-interest, he had everything to lose and nothing to gain by leaving and espousing the cause of his people. However, as the apostle explains, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." (Heb. 11:27) Moses had faith in the promises of God and was confident that a course of life consistent with those promises would be to his best eternal interests, even though it meant the loss of practically all temporal advantage.

JESUS, THE GREAT EXAMPLE

In Jesus we have our greatest and most comprehensive pattern of love as a way of life. He not only gave us an example, but enjoined love upon his followers, saying, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you." (John 13:34) This viewpoint was not understood nor appreciated by the people of Jesus' day, and not

until Pentecost did his own disciples grasp its real import. When the rich young ruler was told to sell all he had and show love by giving to the poor, he went away sorrowful. In following the law of self-preservation, he had accumulated those goods as a protection against a “rainy day.” He was not prepared to abandon the idea that someday he would need his wealth.—Matt. 19:16-22

Even the disciples were perplexed at this advice to the rich young man, which seemed to reflect so reckless an abandoning of all self-interest. Commenting on the incident, Jesus explained to his disciples that it would be “easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” Then they asked, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus did not answer this question directly, observing merely, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” Peter, wishing to get to the core of a philosophy so different from anything to which they were accustomed, asked, “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?”—vss. 23-27

The import of Peter’s question is obvious. “We have forsaken all,” he said. In other words, he was reminding the Master that as his disciples they had complied with the conditions of discipleship he sought to impose upon the rich young ruler. Their “all” was probably not as much as his “all,” but the principle was the same. Having made this sacrifice, they naturally wanted to know what they could expect to get out of it. This was the point of Peter’s question. It reveals that as yet he had not caught the real spirit of discipleship. To him it was still

more or less of a business proposition, one which he hoped would net him greater returns, at least in honor and prestige, than his fishing business. Instead of being a humble fisherman, he had hopes of a prominent position in Messiah's kingdom, to be a ruler, a prince, a great one among men.

When Jesus announced to his disciples that he was going to Jerusalem and that he expected to be arrested there and put to death, Peter admonished, "Be it far from thee, Lord." (Matt. 16:22) Jesus' reply to this well-meant advice was to the point. He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (vs. 23) Peter was attempting to persuade the Master that he should permit self-interest to influence him and not go to Jerusalem, where he knew his enemies had set a trap for his arrest. In doing this, Peter was espousing the cause of Satan, who always encourages men to consider self first.

Those of the world and its spirit—over which Satan is the prince—naturally think of self first. It is openly and avowedly their way of life, and has been since the days of Eden, but it is not God's way. It is the way of men in Satan's world. Now Jesus was introducing a new way, the way of love. In God's world, "wherein dwelleth righteousness," it is the only way which will be permitted to continue, but is now the way merely of Jesus' disciples, introduced by him at his First Advent.—II Pet. 3:13

Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall

find it.” (Matt. 16:24,25) Peter advised Jesus to save his life, but the Master explained to him that those who endeavor to save their lives shall lose them, and those who lose their lives in sacrifice shall save them. It is doubtful if the disciples understood the depth of this remark at that time, but it was simply one method by which Jesus explained the difference between the way of selfishness—self-interest—and the way of love that is manifested by a self-sacrificing attention to the needs of others.

Jesus was even then losing his life sacrificially for others—the whole world of mankind. Later, to the women at his empty tomb, the commission was given to go and tell the disciples that he had been raised from the dead. In that commission, special mention was made of Peter—“Go . . . tell his disciples, and Peter.” (Mark 16:7) When Jesus explained to Peter that those who lose their lives in the divinely directed service of God shall save them, Peter probably comprehended little of what it meant. However, now it would seem that Jesus was driving the lesson home to Peter’s mind and heart by calling his special attention to the fact of the resurrection. “Tell Peter, yes, tell him that my life has been saved. He wanted me to save it by selfishly avoiding the privilege of sacrifice. Like men of the world, he considered it foolish that in an emergency I should think of anyone but myself. He thought I should protect myself, but when you tell him that I have been raised from the dead, he will realize that my life has been saved. It has been saved in God’s way, not by following the worldly principle of self first.”

OVERCOMING THE WORLD

To overcome the world, therefore, means that in living up to the terms of our consecration we stand up against the principle of selfishness with which we are surrounded on every hand, and continue to lay down our lives unselfishly in the service of God, the truth, and the brethren. Jesus said, "I have chosen you out of the world," so we are to remain separate from it, and not permit ourselves to be influenced by its self-interest viewpoint. (John 15:19) We cannot reform the world nor change any of its institutions to that of the sacrifice of self—the denying of self. Thus, the test upon us is to continue to be separate from the world, abandoning the self-first point of view, and endeavoring to lose our lives in the cause of divine love.

Overcoming the world has far more serious implications than merely to refrain from participating in some of its pleasures. The spirit of the world is largely the result of Satan's influence, and we cannot take part in its arrangements, nor should we be influenced by its viewpoint. The world has its pleasures, and even these are, for the most part, selfishly inspired. Hence, they should be shunned by those who are endeavoring to overcome the world. Let us not think, however, that we are faithful overcomers simply because we stay away from the world's pleasures.

As followers of the Master, we are being prepared to share with him in the rulership of God's new world, hence we are being trained in the principles of love. Under the influence of love we are losing our lives in sacrifice. This does not mean that we have no joy in life, for if we are living up to

our privileges, the joy of the Lord will be ours. If we have not learned to appreciate the way of love and sacrifice sufficiently to find in it, and in the promises of God associated with it, a fully satisfying portion which more than compensates for all the trifling joys of this world, we should examine our hearts to find out what is wrong. If we have to go to the world and its pleasures to find “diversion” while we lay down our lives for God, we might seriously question whether or not we are as victorious as we should be in overcoming the world.

“In the world ye shall have tribulation,” said the Master, “but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” The tribulation we have in the world will be in proportion to the degree that our course in life runs counter to its spirit. “If ye were of the world,” Jesus explained, “the world would love his own.” (John 15:19) If the world does not find anything in us, or in our way of life that is contrary to its own, then we may well question the course we have been taking or the degree of our overcoming.

However, if we are overcoming the world, we are bound, at some point, and in some way, to feel its opposition—“In the world ye shall have tribulation.” Nevertheless, we can be of “good cheer,” not because we rejoice in trouble, but because of this evidence of divine approval. Having faith in God’s promises, even as we are now losing our lives, giving up everything which the world considers valuable, will surely enable us to find this joy of spirit. By “patient continuance in well doing,” we will gladly continue to seek for “glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.”—Rom. 2:7

THE BREAD AND THE CUP

During those closing days of the Master's earthly ministry he taught his disciples many things concerning his impending death and its meaning to him, to them, and to the world. One of these lessons was in the "upper room" where he inaugurated the Memorial Supper. "This is my body, which is broken for you," he said concerning the bread. (I Cor. 11:24) "This is my blood, . . . shed for many," he explained with respect to the cup. (Matt. 26:28) He invited his disciples gathered together with him to partake of these symbolic emblems. Doing so signified that they not only were to benefit individually from that which they represented, but also that they would now share in a common fellowship as a result. This latter point was afterward emphasized by Paul when he wrote about our "participation" of the body and blood of Christ as pictured by the bread and the cup.—I Cor. 10:16,17, *Emphatic Diaglott*

A rich blessing awaits the Lord's people each year as they commemorate the death of Jesus, and there are many vitally important and practical lessons we can get from our meditations on the Memorial bread and cup. For the moment, let us think of them as providing, through Jesus our Passover lamb, the means by which we have the privilege of following his example of overcoming the world. They represent sacrifice—the breaking of Jesus' body and the shedding of his blood through his adherence to the principle of love. It was love which resulted in his sacrifice of everything that the world might live. Because of his perfect obedience in having his body "broken" and his blood "shed" for us, we have the privilege of being "planted

together in the likeness of his death,” and of following his example of faithfulness, that we might “be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”—Rom. 6:5

The world of Jesus’ day hated him, and finally put him to death. We should expect no better treatment from the world today. Jesus explained that the servant cannot expect to be above his Master. (Matt. 10:24) The reason the world hated Jesus was that his way of life was contrary to theirs. By his example of sacrifice he condemned their way of selfishness, and by his teachings he exposed their popular errors while teaching unpopular truths himself. Thus he was hated.

Now we hear his call, “Follow me.” (Matt. 4:19) To follow Jesus means much more than merely to admire him. To follow him faithfully means that our experiences in the world will be similar to his. However, “be of good cheer,” he said, “I have overcome the world.” We too can overcome the world if, like him, we keep before us the great objective of the divine will and confidently rely on the Heavenly Father’s promised “grace to help in time of need.”—Heb. 4:16

As we partake of the Memorial emblems this year, let us rejoice more than ever in what they mean as symbols of divine grace toward us. Being appropriated by us, they have then provided us the privilege of dying with Jesus by denying ourselves and laying down our lives in doing God’s will. If we are faithful in this we will be true overcomers, and can apply to ourselves the promise of the Master, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”—Rev. 3:21 ■

Commissioned to Teach

“The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye should abide in [it].”

—I John 2:27

MANY ARE THE BLESSINGS

which reach the consecrated people of God through the medium of his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God is his holy power. In our case, it is the power of his thoughts, his will, over our lives, and also his holy power as it operates in connection with his providential overruling of all our experiences.

God's thoughts, as they relate to his will for his consecrated people, are recorded in his Holy Word. It is through the humble and submissive study of his Word, and obedience to the precepts revealed therein, that we show ourselves approved unto him. (II Tim. 2:15) Those who surrender themselves fully to the doing of God's will are begotten of the Spirit to the hope of a new life. Thus they become the sons of God. The Holy Spirit, operating

through his Word, also anoints them to the high honor of being God's servants.

When Jesus began his earthly ministry, he quoted Isaiah 61:1,2 and explained that this was his commission to serve his Heavenly Father. This passage reads, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

Verse 2 of this commission includes the proclaiming of "the day of vengeance of our God," and the comforting of "all that mourn." This is a reference to the day of vengeance upon the nations at this end of the Gospel Age, when many would be caused to mourn as a result of the "time of trouble" it would bring upon the people. Jesus did not apply this to himself because he knew that it was not due to be fulfilled at that time.—Luke 4:16-21

Shortly after Jesus began his ministry, he sent his twelve apostles out to do a similar work. (Matt. 10:5-7) They too were to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom. In addition, he sent out seventy evangelists to represent him in the great work he had come to do. (Luke 10:1) On the night before Jesus was crucified, he said in prayer to his Heavenly Father, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."—John 17:18

The commission which Jesus gave to his disciples was ratified at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon them. Then it was that the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which came upon Jesus at the time

of his baptism, became truly effective on behalf of his consecrated followers—all who are baptized into his body. It was this that John had in mind when, in our text, he speaks of the “anointing” which we have received of him.

TO TEACH

In our text, John wrote that those who receive this anointing of the Holy Spirit do not need to have a man teach them. This does not imply that these are exempt from the need of Bible study, either individually or in association with others. John is emphasizing the fact that if we are truly anointed by the Holy Spirit to be the Lord’s representatives, then we have been taught by God and have learned the Truth which he wants us to make known to others. We are taught by God through the Scriptures and by various servants who he has provided to help us understand his Word.

In order to be qualified representatives of the Lord, we need to be acquainted with the glorious message contained in his Word. This is not a human message. It does not come from man, nor can it be understood by any except those whom the Lord enlightens by his Holy Spirit. Only such are able to understand “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 13:11) Jesus told his disciples, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear,” and added that many “righteous men” of old “desired to see” these things but were not permitted to do so.”—vss. 16,17

We may not know just how the Holy Spirit of God enables those whom he draws to himself to understand “the mysteries of the kingdom.”

Through his faithful people, the seeds of truth are sown as widely and continuously as possible. However, only one here and there responds with understanding and appreciation. It is a marvelous thing to note the readiness with which these receive the Word, and how quickly they come to an understanding of God's plan.

The wise man wrote, "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all." To this Solomon added, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."—Eccles. 11:5,6

How encouraging to realize that the results of "seed sowing" are in the hands of the Lord. We rejoice to realize that by his Spirit God assists those whom he calls in the study of his Word. We may think of this as a part of the anointing work of the Holy Spirit, for by it we are both authorized and qualified to be "the light of the world," workmen who do not need to be ashamed, because we have rightly divided the Word of truth.—Matt. 5:14; II Tim. 2:15

THE MESSAGE

The Holy Spirit's commission to Jesus, as recorded in Isaiah 61:1-3, presents a comprehensive idea of the message of truth we are authorized to proclaim. It is the good news of the kingdom, including the glorious hope of the resurrection of the dead. It also embraces the message of the High

Calling, because we are still to proclaim “the acceptable year of the LORD.”

In this end of the age we are also anointed to proclaim “the day of vengeance of our God.” This does not mean that we are to pronounce vengeance, either upon individuals or upon groups. It simply means that we are to explain to those who are meek and teachable the meaning of the present “distress of nations, with perplexity”—that it is a manifestation of God’s displeasure upon a sin-cursed and dying world.—Luke 21:25

Closely associated with the proclaiming of “the day of vengeance” is the commission to “comfort all that mourn.” (Isa. 61:2) This might well be a special reference to those who are caused to mourn by the distressing circumstances of “the day of vengeance.” Jesus said that “all the tribes of the earth” would mourn because of his coming and resulting presence at the end of the age, and it is our privilege to comfort at least some of these by pointing out to them the real cause of the world’s troubles.—Matt. 24:30

This seems to be the thought set forth in Isaiah 35:4, where we are commissioned to “say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.” Today the hearts of the people are filled with fear, even as Jesus foretold, and it is our privilege to explain to these that they have no real cause to fear, that while the Lord’s vengeance is upon the governments, under Satan’s control, his ultimate object is to save the people through the agencies of the Messianic kingdom.

WITNESSES FOR JESUS

Some of the details of the Holy Spirit's commission are brought to our attention in the New Testament. For example, Jesus made it plain that his people were to go forth in his name. After his resurrection, he said to his disciples, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—Acts 1:8

The apostles came to understand this point very clearly. Peter made Jesus the very center of his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, and thousands of the Jews gathered there repented and were baptized. Shortly after this Peter preached his wonderful sermon on restitution, and again he gave prominence to the name and power of Jesus.—chap. 2:14-41; 3:12-26

We are informed that following this sermon on restitution, "the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." (chap. 4:1,2) Peter could not refrain from preaching Jesus Christ, even though his name was an offense to many who heard.

Paul's preaching was after the same pattern. With reference to his visit to a synagogue of the Jews in Thessalonica, we read, "Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."—Acts 17:1-3

TO WHOM?

Having come under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, to whom are we to proclaim the good news of the kingdom? The commission of Isaiah 61, quoted in part by Jesus, emphasizes that we are to minister to the “meek,” meaning the teachable—those willing and anxious to learn. However, this is quite general in the sense that it does not specify any particular group of people.

We are not to single out those whom we assume to be meek and confine our message to these. We are incapable of judging who, among all the people with whom we come in contact, are meek, and who are not. To use a scriptural expression, we are to “sow beside all waters,” in the belief that the Lord will overrule in such a way that the message will reach the hearts of those who are meek, while those who are not meek will have no ear for it.—Isa. 32:20

However, we have a special responsibility toward the meek who respond to the message. It is our privilege to further instruct these in the ways of the Lord. There is not only the evangelistic phase of the ministry, but the teaching and pastoral work as well. We are not only to witness the truth to others, but we are to build up one another in our most holy faith, and it is only the meek who benefit from this aspect of our ministry.

The kingdom message should not be held back from any who indicate a willingness to listen. Jesus made it clear that the whole world is to be considered our field of activity, and we should have a willingness to impart the message far and wide to Gentile and Jew, professed Christians and those of

the world, believers and unbelievers, the young and old, as we have opportunity.

At the same time, we are to recognize the hand of the Lord in the matter of just where and when to proclaim the kingdom message. As an example, while Jesus commissioned his disciples to go into all the world to preach the Gospel, the divine overruling was such that the message was taken mostly to the west and north, rather than to the east, from its origins in the land of Judaea. Paul obediently and gladly responded to the call, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us," when his own plan was to go in another direction.—Acts 16:9,10

As individuals our field of activity is quite marked out—at least, this is true with most of us. Doubtless we would like to extend our sphere of activity in the Lord's service, and it is well to have this desire. It denotes that the anointing power of the Holy Spirit is urging us on to greater sacrifices in the ministry of the Truth. However, we should not overlook the opportunities of service which are waiting for us close at hand—the little ways of witnessing which are known only to us and to the Lord. God may be watching to see how faithfully we are using these before entrusting us with larger opportunities.

It is also important to watch the leadings of the Lord in connection with our cooperative ministry of the Truth. He knows how to open doors of opportunity, and how to close them. We should never try to force open any door of opportunity to serve the Heavenly Father, nor should we hesitate to enter those which he unmistakably opens.

NOT WORLD CONVERSION

We are not to look for large numbers to accept the Truth at this time. We are in the “harvest” time at the end of the age, and ours is a harvesting work, although it is accomplished by a general “sowing” or proclaiming of the Truth. While we believe that seeds of truth are now being sown which will be a blessing to the world in the coming Messianic kingdom, our primary objective is to reach and assist those whom the Lord is inviting to run for the mark of the prize of the High Calling.

The Heavenly Father’s time for the conversion of the world, both Jew and Gentile, is still future. While we are glad to lay down our lives in the ministry of the Truth now, and to be figuratively “beheaded for the witness of Jesus,” we rejoice to know that in God’s due time the true knowledge of him shall fill the earth “as the waters cover the sea.”—Rev. 20:4; Isa. 11:9

Indeed, a glorious prospect awaits the whole world of mankind. Just as today “we see Jesus,” and rejoice in all that he means to us and will mean to the world, so later he will become the one around whom the people of all nations will rally. (Heb. 2:9) Then, with that “pure language” turned to the people, they will “all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.—Zeph. 3:9

IN THE CHURCH

All who are under the Holy Spirit’s anointing are authorized to be ambassadors for Christ and, as such, to proclaim glad tidings to the meek. There are no exceptions to this. The Scriptures do not

divide the Lord's people into two classes called "clergy" and "laity." However, in the assemblies of the Lord's people called churches—Greek, *ekklesias*—the Scriptures indicate certain arrangements to be followed, and certain restrictions to be observed.

Paul wrote, "I suffer [permit] not a woman to teach." (I Tim. 2:12) The reference here is to being a teacher in formal ecclesia meetings. It does not mean that women, enlightened by the Truth and fully consecrated to the Lord, are not anointed to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom by word of mouth, distribution of the printed page, or by other means. It is simply that God, in his wisdom and to carry out certain typical lessons, has limited teaching in the church to male members of the congregation.

In this also there are limitations. In his letter to Titus, Paul mentions those who serve as "bishops," or overseers—elders—in the church, and sets forth their qualifications. "A bishop [overseer or elder] must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men [things], sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision."—Titus 1:7-10

From this it is clear that one who serves as a teacher in a congregation of the Lord's people should measure up to a very high standard of

righteous conduct in his life. He must also be able “by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” The enemies of the Truth in Paul’s day were largely those of the circumcision—Jews who endeavored to convince believers in Christ that they should subscribe to certain features of the Mosaic Law. Doubtless the Truth was attacked in other ways also.

It was important in the Early Church that teachers be sound in the doctrines of the Truth, and have a measure of ability to teach, that they might be able to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 3) Along this line, we note in his various epistles Paul faithfully endeavors to correct the wrong doctrinal viewpoints of those to whom he writes. In his letters to the brethren at Thessalonica, he discusses and clarifies the truth concerning our Lord’s return and Second Presence. In his letter to the Galatians, he devotes considerable space to God’s covenants.

Today, it is likewise important that those who serve as teachers in our ecclesias be sound in the Truth—“established in the present truth.” (II Pet. 1:12) These doctrines comprise “meat in due season” during this harvest period. (Matt. 24:45) The issues of truth and error today may vary in detail from those confronting the Early Church, but it is just as important now for teachers to be able to defend the doctrines of our faith as it was at that time.

With our elders and teachers setting forth the Truth in its purity, we all benefit as learners. The more clearly we understand these things, the

more effectively we can proclaim them to others, as together we tell out, as widely as possible, the glad tidings of the kingdom, that fearful hearts may be given courage, and sorrowing hearts made glad. ■

*Blest Jesus, grant us strength to take
Our daily cross, what e'er it be,
And gladly, for thine own dear sake,
In paths of duty follow thee.*

*And day by day, we humbly ask
That holy mem'ries of thy cross
May sanctify each common task,
And turn to gain each earthly loss.*

*Help us, dear Lord, our cross to bear,
Till at thy feet we lay it down;
Win thro' thy blood our pardon there,
And thro' the cross attain the crown.*

—Hymns of Dawn

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Teresa Svab, Duncan, BC, Canada—February 28. Age, 103

Sister Reina Soraparau, New Orleans, LA—March 6. Age, 61

Rosemary Phillips, Bradenton, FL—March 12. Age, 79

Sister Beverly Christiansen, Seattle, WA—March 17. Age, 88

Brother Raymond Lumley, Jackson, MI—March 20. Age, 77

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

T. Alexander		K. Humphreys	
Albuquerque, NM	April 3-5	Vigy, France	April 5,6
G. Balko		Olfen, Germany	11,12
New York, NY	April 12	B. Montague	
M. Balko		New York, NY	April 12
Louisville, AL	April 19	H. Montague	
R. Goodman		Albuquerque, NM	April 3-5
Albuquerque, NM	April 3-5		

*I come to thee, I come to thee,
Thou precious Lamb who died for me:
I rest confiding in thy Word,
And cast my burden on the Lord.*

*I come to thee, whose sov'reign pow'r
Can cheer me in the darkest hour;
I come to thee thru storm and shade,
Since thou hast said, "Be not afraid."*

*O wondrous love! what joy is mine,
To feel that I am truly thine.
Thou precious Lamb who died for me,
I come to thee, I come to thee.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

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CONVENTIONS

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

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 3-5—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. For reservations, contact S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 268-8170 or Email: srbt@juno.com

AGWA, NIGERIA CONVENTION, April 4—Umuhii Obudi Agwa Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact B. Obiukwu, Umushim Obudi Agwa. Phone: 234-803-911-2501 or Email: abiblestudecc@yahoo.com

NEW YORK CONVENTION, April 12—DoubleTree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Contact A. Williams. Phone: (718) 261-3053 or Email: austin@osnetinc.com

JACKSONVILLE CONVENTION, May 3—Holiday Inn, 620 Wells Road, Orange Park, FL 32073. Contact C. Hughes. Phone: (904) 781-0506 or Email: Clanky3@att.net

WEST NEWTON CONVENTION, May 3—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact G. Balko. Phone: (724) 771-0139

AGAWAM CONVENTION, May 17—Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. For accommodations, contact M. Wardak. Phone: (413) 789-6198 or Email: mtwardack@verizon.net. For other information, contact A. Gonczewski. Email: aga49@yahoo.com

CHICAGO CONVENTION, May 23-25—Prisco Community Center, 150 W. Illinois Avenue, Aurora, IL 60506. Contact A. Schneider. Phone: (847) 533-1874 or Email: secretary@chicagobible.org

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, May 23,24—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91605. Contact J. Wojcik. Phone:(818) 438-1086 or Email: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, June 7—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA. Contact R. Griehs. Phone: (267) 456-8889 or Email: rgriehs@gmail.com

VANCOUVER CONVENTION, June 13,14—Jaycee House, 1251 Lillooet Road, North Vancouver, BC V7J 3H7. Contact B. Smith. Phone: (604) 576-6070 or Email: bas@telus.net

DETROIT JOINT CONVENTION, June 14—Pleasant Ridge Community Center, 4 Ridge Road, Pleasant Ridge, MI. Contact G. Zendler. Phone: (248) 399-8843 or Email: ngzendler@wowway.com

PORTLAND CONVENTION, June 19-21—June 19 at BSRC. Remaining days at Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel, 8235 NE Airport Way, Portland, OR 97220. Contact B Hislop. Phone: (503) 691-2699 or Email: bwhislop@aol.com

PRINCE ALBERT-SASKATOON CONVENTION, July 3-5—Siwak Farm. Contact A. Siwak, RR 1 Stn Mpp, Prince Albert, SK, Canada S6V 5P8. Phone: (306) 764-7692 or Email: ahsiwak@inet2000.com

EAST SASKATCHEWAN CONVENTION, July 10-12—Sturgis Community Hall, Highway #9, Sturgis, SK. Contact N. Paley, Box 1522, Canora, SK S0A 0L0. Phone: (306) 563-5441 or Email: thepaleys@sasktel.net

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 18-23—University of Pittsburgh, 450 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown, PA. Contact E. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or Email: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com