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September 2005

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199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073

Phone: (201) 438-6421 and 1-(888) 440-DAWN • Fax: (201) 531-8333

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Visit the Dawn web page at: www.dawnbible.com

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Seeking Peace In An Insecure World

*“They have healed
also the hurt of the
daughter of my
people slightly,
saying, Peace,
peace; when there
is no peace.”*
—*Jeremiah 6:14*

NEARLY TWENTY-SIX CENTURIES ago Jeremiah wrote this prophecy which has become a modern day slogan that well describes the frantic, but futile, efforts of the world’s leading statesmen to bring about conditions of peace on the earth. Although there is at the present time nearly continuous negotiation taking place among international diplomats concerning peace, in reality there is no peace or any lasting security for the more than six billion people who now inhabit our chaotic, violent, and insecure world.

JESUS’ TESTIMONY

During his first advent Jesus explained that he had not come to establish peace. “I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be

already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened [*Marginal Translation*, pained] till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division.” (Luke 12:49-51) During his earthly ministry, Jesus made it clear that he would come again to set up his kingdom of Truth and righteousness, and establish lasting peace upon the earth. God’s eternal purpose for the human family will surely be manifested to all during that time, and it will not come about as a result of man’s efforts.

WORLD LEADERS SEEK PEACE

Since this month is the fourth anniversary of the tragic events that occurred on September 11, 2001, statesmen and world leaders continue ever more diligently to bring terrorism under control and establish peace in the world. But obstacles to peace, such as selfishness and pride, continue to stand in the way of implementing any worthwhile plan for lasting peace. With the second term of the Bush administration’s agenda now well under way, some strategic thinkers are questioning the ability of the United States government and its policies to control the increasing tide of international terrorism, and its threat to peace. There is growing concern among many as to whether Bush’s political agenda and foreign policy will ever be able to solve the world’s problems, and establish lasting peace and security in an increasingly violent and very insecure world.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Aside from the events of 9/11, leading analysts are still unable to agree over the nature of the increasing level of lawlessness that is finding its way into nearly every segment of society in our dangerous world. They struggle to find answers to its origins, objectives, and even the definition of the enemy to peace. Their debates are important and of great consequence because the growing crisis is as much a war of cultural ideology as well as a vicious war that involves the most highly sophisticated military machine ever assembled by man.

Most share the view that the present violent scenes that are displayed on television, in news magazines and newspapers by international media nearly every day, show that the greatest threat to peace at the present time was triggered by the events of 9/11. Since that time, only four years ago, the world has been propelled into an ever-increasing level of violence. We are now witnesses to threats to peace on a much larger and more dramatic scale than ever before in the history of the world.

AN AGGRESSIVE AGENDA

Most acknowledge that terrorism is not simply a phenomenon that will disappear with the spread of democracy, but the Bush administration is proceeding with an aggressive agenda which they believe will ultimately spread peace and freedom worldwide. The government's prosecution of the present wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, with possible other targets in the middle east, embraces both the concepts of preemptive military action, as well as the spreading of freedom and peace as the only logical

means to confront the present threat to international peace. Time will tell whether or not the administration's policies will have any positive effect on establishing peace.

CULTURE OF VIOLENCE

Insecurity has led to increased levels of stress, even among the young people. A news item from the *Los Angeles Daily News* (April 15, 2005), under the caption "Culture of Violence," reports the senseless slaying of a 15-year-old boy who was killed during a violent outburst by a 13-year-old boy who struck him on the head with an aluminum baseball bat. There appears to be no way to know what was going on in the assailant's mind at the time of the event, whether this was a typical or an unusual behavior pattern.

The article continues, "What we do know is this incident is but one of many in a grim trend. Harry Edwards, a consultant to the San Francisco 49ers for the past twenty years and a sociology professor at the University of California at Berkley, says that the killing is one more instance of American's becoming desensitized to violence and other behavior that was once considered unacceptable.

"We are developing an insensitivity to incivility that increasingly recognizes no bounds as to what we feel we can do if provoked. You see it in road rage. You see it happening in schools. You most certainly see it in athletics, both in the stands, and on the field. Take pro sports: If you feel you are sufficiently provoked and you're a basketball player, you go up into the stands. If you are a baseball player you throw a chair into the stands."

NEW LEVELS OF PROVOCATION

The incivility trickles down from our professional stars to all elements of modern society. How many stories have we heard about parents getting violent at children's sporting events? This violent mentality even makes its way to our kids. How many times have we heard similar stories about teenagers who shoot up their schools? Perhaps it was just some sort of teasing that provoked the violent behavior. But should this be enough to provoke morally unconscionable violence?

Whatever provoked such a violent incident between these two boys may never be known. But it surely points to the depth of the growing problem. Perhaps it may be traced to violence on film or television, or graphic video games that are readily available to our young people everywhere. It also may be due to declining standards in our homes and schools. Whatever the cause, the problem is growing ever more severe, and the horror of such explosive acts of rage are becoming even more common in our society. The sad result of such a level of violence is that we are growing more indifferent to such episodes because they are happening all too often. In their own perverse way they are becoming the new standard of society's normal behavior.

GAMES OF VIOLENCE

Satan's evil influence as the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4) is noted in the type of entertainment that is now available for the young people. Harrison Sheppard, writing for the *Los Angeles Daily News* (April 20, 2005), in "Violent Video Games Targeted In New Bill," wrote, "A bill to ban the sale of violent

video games to minors passed a key committee where a similar effort was defeated last year. The bill would impose a \$1,000.00 fine on retailers who sell violent games to anyone 16 years or younger.

“It presents an interesting perspective to note that those testifying against the bill included representatives from the Motion Picture Association of America, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Recording Industry Association of America, the California Chamber of commerce, and the game retailers and manufacturers. On the other hand, those who testified in favor of the bill were health-care professionals, academics, various women’s rights groups, and a large group of girl scouts from all over the state of California. One of the young scouts, a girl of 13 years, said that violent video games create a harmful atmosphere for young children. They are not age-appropriate and they can scar the minds of these young children forever.

FREE SPEECH ADVOCATES

“Industry representatives and free-speech advocates argued the bill was a violation of First Amendment rights and would be difficult to implement. They also said the industry’s current system of self-rating and voluntary compliance by retailers is sufficient. They believe the legislation is unnecessary because the industry already recognizes the importance of enforcing the voluntary ratings.

“During the hearings, legislators were shown video clips of some violent games such as Grand Theft Auto, Duke Nukem, and Postal 2, in which the player shoots down random people on the street or in a church, sets them on fire and decapitates

them. Research found that there is a link between repeated use of violent video games and violent behavior in children. These video games teach our children how to kill, how to maim, how to hurt people—women, minorities, poor people. These are not lessons that we should be teaching our children.”

INCREASING TERRORISM

It is reported by the *Daily News* (April 27, 2005), that worldwide terror attacks are increasing. In a news item, “Terrorist Attacks Up Threefold,” it is reported that much of this increase may be attributed to increasing violence in Iraq. Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Los Angeles) instructed his staff to circulate to the media a letter which was written to Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, in which the figure of 650 significant terrorist attacks during the past year were probably significantly underestimated. Waxman explained that many incidents that most Americans would regard as significant had been excluded from data circulated by the State Department because they did not meet the department’s definition of a terrorist attack. Waxman has been critical of the State Department’s report and has accused Secretary of State Rice of denying Congress, as well as the general public, of information that is relevant in today’s escalating level of violence.

PLANE STRAYS OVER WASHINGTON

Since 9/11, and the crashing of one of the hijacked planes into the Pentagon building, the nation’s capital has been under high alert, and strict regulations pertaining to flight patterns. Recently two men in a small plane had lost their way and

accidentally strayed into restricted airspace. As a result, the level of concern was increased to proportions not seen since 9/11. Thousands of office workers were evacuated from federal buildings in readiness for an expected terror threat. *The Baltimore Sun's* staff writer, Stephanie Desmon, (May 13, 2005) reported the incident in her news column, "Pilots Often Struggle With D.C. Area Rules: 700 Citations Issued in '04 for Violations of Air Space." In her report she pointed out, "The pilots who strayed into restricted airspace not far from the White House, sending Washington into a panic, were not the first. The region's quirky airspace restrictions generated 700 citations last year for violations by wayward pilots—two thirds of the violations written in the country.

"The area around Frederick, MD is further complicated by the nearby presence of Camp David, the presidential retreat. Planes are prohibited within a 3-5 mile radius of the refuge near Thurmont. But, when President Bush is there, and is scheduled to be for the next few days, that zone is expanded to about 11 miles. Wherever the president is going the airspace there is restricted."

THE COMING STORMS

Jay Tolson, *U. S. News & World Report* (March 14, 2005), in his article "The Coming Storms," writes that Eliot Cohen, professor at Johns Hopkin's Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, says that "the war against terrorism is too nebulous a term. He compared the current struggle to the Cold War—because of its global and protracted character, its mix of violent and nonviolent means,

its mobilization of human resources (not all military), and its roots in an ideological conflict.”

Tolson further reports that Norman Podhoretz, Editor-at-large of *Commentary Magazine*, and author of numerous books and articles, has been one of the most steadfast supporters of the Bush administration’s agenda for the spread of peace. In one of his most recent collection of writings he highly praised and supported the Bush doctrine. He asks whether President Bush, in his second term, will abandon his aggressive agenda, but then argues that he believes the president will proceed with his previously outlined agenda for peace and freedom. He points out that the only thing that stands in the way of America’s success in this agenda is a defeatist outlook that harps on the setbacks or possible dangers, whether in the Middle East or in America.

NUCLEAR THREAT TO PEACE

In recent years, a very serious obstacle to peace has arisen that involves the nations of Iran and North Korea, and their programs to develop nuclear weapons. In a United Nations report, Maggie Farley, Staff Writer for the *Los Angeles Times* (April 2, 2005) under the caption “Nuclear Terror Pact Advances,” said, “After seven years of negotiations, the U. N. finalized a convention to prevent nuclear terrorism, paving the way for a broader international agreement to fight terrorist groups.

“The Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism is meant to stop rogue groups from using nuclear weapons. It criminalizes

individual's possession of radioactive material or devices, requires nations to prosecute or extradite those who threaten others while possessing such materials, and calls for exchanges of information and assistance among governments. The treaty does not, however, prohibit a nation from using nuclear weapons militarily.

U.N. SECRETARY-GENERAL COMMENTS

“Nuclear terrorism is one of the most urgent threats of our times, said Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who had made the completion of the treaty one of the goals of his U.N. reform program, which he introduced last month. Even one such attack could inflict mass casualties and change our world forever. That prospect should compel all of us to do our part to strengthen our common defenses. The General Assembly is expected to endorse the convention and open it for signature in September during a summit of world leaders.

“Nuclear terrorism is no longer science fiction,’ Annan said, ‘I wish it were but, unfortunately, we live in a world of excess hazardous materials and abundant technological know-how, in which some terrorists clearly state their intentions to inflict catastrophic casualties.’” These warnings are an indication of the severity of the obstacles to establish peace in the world.

GOD TO ESTABLISH PEACE

During the six-thousand years since Adam and Eve introduced sin into the world, God has allowed mankind to experience a wide range of self-governing schemes. All of these institutions and efforts to govern failed to bring peace because of

sin. The relationship between God and his earthly creatures had been severed. Throughout this dark night of sin and death there have been few short periods of peace among peoples and nations of the world.

During this long period of time, God has been carrying out his ultimate design for the reconciliation of his human family and their eternal peace as expressed in his promise to Abraham, "By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."—Gen. 22:16-18

The provision of the Abrahamic Covenant to develop a 'seed' that would bless all the families of the earth, is the only means by which mankind may have any hope of lasting peace in the world. The Gospel Age calling of the spiritual seed of promise, as represented in the 'stars,' will be the means by which the world of mankind, as represented by the 'sand,' will be blessed. Jesus was the promised seed through which provision was made for the recovery of the human family from alienation from God. He, together with his faithful bride class as members of the seed, will have the power and authority to carry out the wonderful plan of God for the blessing of all the families of the earth, and the establishment of everlasting peace.

PROMISES OF EVERLASTING PEACE

May we be inspired to greater levels of trust in God's long-range plans for the future blessing and peace of the world. Malachi, Micah, Isaiah, and other prophets of old were moved by the Holy Spirit of God to provide us with a vision of this wonderful time. "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it." "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."—Mal. 4:2; Mic. 4:4; Isa. 32:17 ■

Above Is Peace

*When on the surface of the earth the wind doth
howl and blow,
And up above, a distance short, the wind and
tempest rage,
We only have to higher go to leave the storm
below.*

*When flesh and man us trouble make at every
turn we take,
Let thots then rise to things above, far from our
earthly cares,
And faith shall pilot us to God, into his love
and peace.*

—*Poems of the Way*

Encountering the Spirit

Key Verse: *“Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*
—Acts 2:38

Selected Scripture:
Acts 2:1-8,38-42

made evident to all by a miraculous sound coming from heaven of a mighty wind which filled the house, even though there was no actual wind blowing. (chap. 2:2) Additionally, the appearance of fiery tongues came upon the eleven apostles, who immediately began to speak and be heard in all the many different languages represented at the gathering, and not just their native Hebrew tongue. (vss. 3-11) These were clear indications that this mighty power had come from none other than God himself, through the agency of his faithful Son, now exalted in the heavens.

Although the outward manifestations of the giving of

SHORTLY BEFORE JESUS

ascended to the Father, forty days following his resurrection, he instructed his followers to remain in Jerusalem and wait for “the promise of the Father,” that they would be “baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” (Acts 1:4,5) True to this promise, ten days later, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon those gathered together. The manifestation of the gift of this holy power of God was

the Holy Spirit were powerful and unmistakable, yet it was the inward effect, especially as evidenced in the eleven apostles, which was of far greater and lasting importance. The greatest example of this is shown in the Apostle Peter. Just a short time before, Peter had considered leaving the ministry of his Lord to go back to the fishing business (John 21), and did not understand the reasons for Jesus' death, the purpose of his resurrection, or what the future held for those who had been his followers. Now, though, as a result of the revealing power of the Holy Spirit, all the pieces of the puzzle came together for Peter. Not only so, but he was intent on sharing this message of Truth to all those gathered there. He gave a sermon, speaking clearly and in great detail, as to the purpose of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, quoting from the Old Testament as it foretold of these very events.

Peter concluded his sermon with these words, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36) Many of those gathered there, having heard Peter's powerful sermon, were touched in their heart and asked, "What shall we do?" (vs. 37) Peter responded with the words contained in our Key Verse. Paraphrasing, he stated that if they were truly touched in their hearts, had repented of sin and accepted Jesus Christ as their only means of remission of sins, had given themselves wholly in consecration to God and desiring to be baptized into Jesus Christ, they would then be recipients of this same Holy Spirit as had been evidenced in Peter and the other apostles. Peter further said that this promise was not only for those there, but would be for "even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (vs. 39) This includes those, even today, who take the same steps of repentance, faith in Jesus' blood, full consecration and baptism into his death. These too, even now, receive of the same Holy Spirit—power and influence of God—which guides their lives in service to him. ■

Sharing Community

Key Verse: “*All that believed were together, and had all things common.*”
—Acts 2:44

Selected Scripture:
Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-35

every man had need.” “Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” (Acts 2:45; 4:34,35) Later, though not part of this lesson, the Lord indicated, through some of the difficulties that the church encountered, that this practice of literally sharing all things in common was not an ideal arrangement, and so it was abandoned after a brief time.

Although in practice the arrangement of communal living was found not to be the Lord’s will, the heart motivation and love which prompted it was certainly pleasing in his sight. This is shown by the following verses of our lesson, “They, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

THE ZEAL OF THE EARLY

Christian church was so strong that they felt it was appropriate, as expressed in the Key Verse, that they dwell together and share in common all their earthly possessions. The account states that they “sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as

(chap. 2:46,47) How all the Lord's people of today should strive to emulate these sentiments. We should daily desire to dwell together with unity of purpose in God's temple, feasting together symbolically on the true bread and meat of God's Word. We should have the same attitude of gladness and praise toward God. We should desire to dwell with others of like minds, going from 'house to house,' being enriched by the fellowship of kindred minds.

Another admirable quality among these early Christians was the sacrificial love shown one toward the other, that they were willing to give up their earthly possessions and have them distributed to others in need. Truly this was the love expressed by Jesus himself, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34) Apostle John further expressed, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." (I John 3:18) These early brethren set an example of unselfish love. The Lord blessed their heart motivations and noble intentions by bringing success to their efforts of spreading the Gospel, stating that they had 'favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.'

Further in our lesson, it is stated that the apostles, too, were the recipients of God's favor during these early days of the church. "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." (Acts 4:33) Today, the blessing of God continues to reside with those who are engaged in giving witness to his Word, have a proper heart motivation, desire to partake of the spiritual food contained in his Word, and have a sacrificial love for their fellow brethren shown by action and not mere words. Only such will share in the rewards of the faithful, and be counted worthy to be of the Christ, to bless all the families of the earth in the coming kingdom. ■

The Gift of Healing

Key Verse: *“Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.”*
—Acts 3:6

Selected Scripture:
Acts 3:1-16

TODAY’S LESSON FOCUSES

on an experience shortly after the Day of Pentecost involving the Apostles Peter and John. They were preparing to go into the Temple in Jerusalem at the hour of prayer. As they approached the Temple, they noticed a lame man lying at the gate begging for alms. The scriptural account states, “A certain man lame from his

mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple.” (Acts 3:2) When Peter and John came to the man, they asked him to look upon them. (vs. 4) Verse 5 says he did so, expecting to receive alms of money, food, or other physical need, as they passed by on their way into the Temple.

Peter’s response, as recorded in the Key Verse, was not at all what the lame man expected. After all, he might have supposed, what more could be done for him other than a token gift of silver or gold. Yet, as Peter stated, there was something far more wonderful that could be done for this lame man, the miracle of being able to walk, which he had never before done in his life. “He [Peter] took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ancle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and

entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.” (vss. 7,8) Not only was he able to walk, but so dramatic and complete was the healing that he leaped up to his feet from his former lying position on the ground, and walked and leaped with Peter and John into the Temple. What a scene this must have been! The fact that the account states he was ‘praising God’ also gives indication that he had exercised faith in the power of God’s Holy Spirit as being the source of his healing.

Word of this miracle of healing immediately began to be made known to the many others gathered there at the Temple, and when they saw with their own eyes what had happened, and witnessed the man walking and leaping, who had never before in his life taken even one step, “they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And . . . all the people ran together unto them [Peter and John] in the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering.”—vss. 10,11

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, did not let this opportunity pass by. Having the attention of the people, he immediately began to speak, giving an outline of God’s plan of salvation. He began by disclaiming any credit to himself or John, stating, “Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?” (vs. 12, *New International Version*) Peter went on to recount that it was the same God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who had provided his son Jesus as their Redeemer and had now glorified him, despite the fact that they [Israel in general] had rejected him and “killed the Prince of life,” yet “God hath raised [him] from the dead.” (vs. 15) Peter concludes by stating it was “By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.”—vs. 16, *NIV* ■

Power to Be Bold

Key Verse: “*Now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.*”
—Acts 4:29

Selected Scripture:
Acts 4:1-4,23-31

THE GIVING OF THE HOLY Spirit at Pentecost had enlightened the minds of the apostles so that they had a clear understanding of God’s plans and purposes and the ability to spread this message to others. Additionally, though, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit had given them a boldness to speak the Truth, despite those who opposed the message, a boldness they did not possess prior to that time. Such boldness was needed as the leaders of Israel began to see the popularity of the apostles’ message. Much as when Jesus had been in their midst, the leaders began to feel their positions of authority and influence among the people being threatened. So much was this the case that they took the apostles into custody. As the account states, they were “grieved that they [the apostles] taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now even-tide.”—Acts 4:2,3

The day after the apostles were taken into custody, a large group gathered to question them, hoping to find something by which they could continue to hold them. The group included the rulers, elders, scribes, the high priest, and his entire family. The apostles’ responses to

their questions, however, were quick and without reproach. The evidence of the healing of the lame man (see previous lesson) was irrefutable, and the response of the people so overwhelmingly positive toward the apostles, that the leaders concluded there was nothing they could do against them without running the risk of causing an uproar among the people. “When they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.”—vs. 21

Upon their release, the apostles joined their fellow brethren and praised God for his overruling on their behalf. They quoted from the second Psalm, which prophesied that many would gather “together against the Lord [God], and against his Christ.” (vs. 26) They recounted that Jesus had also been the object of threats from those who desired to kill him. “Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.” (vss. 27,28, *New International Version*) As the account states, everything that was done to Jesus by his enemies, even his death, had been foreknown by God, and was exactly in line with his plans and purposes. How faith-strengthening this was to the apostles, who were now facing similar experiences as Jesus’ footstep followers.

The Key Verse indicates that the apostles recognized the need for their continued reliance on God and the power of his Holy Spirit, to give them boldness to continue to preach the message of the Gospel, and they prayed to God that this might be so. True to his faithfulness, God did not leave any doubt as to the answer to their prayer. The account states, “When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”—vs. 31 ■

Sealed by the Holy Spirit

*“Grieve not the
holy Spirit of God,
whereby ye are
sealed unto the day
of redemption.”
—Ephesians 4:30*

THE GREEK WORD IN OUR text translated ‘sealed’ means preserved, also attested. In ancient times, a signet ring, or a stamp, was used to seal important documents. This is still done today. A letter is sealed to secure secrecy for its contents. Contracts are sealed, or attested, to guarantee the fulfillment of what is agreed upon.

In Ephesians 1:13-14, Paul speaks of the believer being “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” The ‘sealed,’ or attested, guarantees the fulfillment of what is agreed in the form of a down payment until the full inheritance is received. Here again we are familiar with the illustration, for it is still customary in transacting business to make down payments to secure agreements until they are fully consummated. In Romans 8:23, this down payment is referred to as the “firstfruits of the Spirit.”

In Acts 20:28, Paul speaks of the “church of God” which has been “purchased” by the blood of Christ. Those who have been called out from the world, and have come under the baptism of the Holy Spirit, constitute the ‘purchased possession’ awaiting deliverance in the “first resurrection.” (Rev. 20:5) The ‘holy Spirit of promise’ is given to them as a down payment, a surety, that the full inheritance will eventually be received. It is a wonderful inheritance, an “inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power [Spirit] of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”—I Pet. 1:4,5

The glorious inheritance of the “new creation” (II Cor. 5:17, *New International Version*) will be entered into only by those who have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, or, as Peter otherwise explains it, ‘kept,’ or secured, ‘by the power of God.’ Peter says this keeping power of the Holy Spirit is effective only in the lives of those who exercise faith. God does not arbitrarily preserve his saints and usher them triumphantly into the kingdom. They must exercise faith in his promises, and conform their lives to the conditions attached to those promises if they are to benefit from the sealing power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul says that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit upon his disciples, and at Pentecost it was “shed forth” on those assembled in the upper room. (Acts 2:33) These represented the entire church which, by the Holy Spirit, have been baptized and anointed. Individually, the Holy Spirit of Truth has also

begotten the LORD's consecrated people to a new hope of life, and through ways indicated in, and by, the written Word, witnesses to them that they are the children of God. Surely, then, the baptism, anointing, begetting, and witness of the Holy Spirit constitute a very substantial down payment on the inheritance that has been promised.

Also, we believe it is proper to think of the expression, Holy Spirit of promise, which seals the Spirit-begotten children of God, as indicative of what we know to be a fact. By his Spirit, God caused to be recorded in his written Word scores of promises by which he guarantees that if we yield to the molding influences of his Spirit, and obey its directives, we shall be given strength for our every time of need, and that "an entrance shall be ministered" unto us "abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (II Pet. 1:11) What more could the LORD do to attest our victory in Christ than to reiterate his promises of grace sufficient and overcoming strength! We know that his promises are sure. Paul says, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—I Cor. 15:57

IMPERFECTIONS COVERED

We know that in our flesh "dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18), that in the merit of our own righteousness we could never hope to attain that glorious 'inheritance' that is 'incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' But God, in his great love, has made provision to cover our imperfections with the robe of Christ's righteousness. Because of this we have his assurance, his promise,

that he is not dealing with us according to our imperfections, but according to the desire of our hearts. This assurance should do much to seal our hope of the heavenly inheritance. “If we confess our sins,” John wrote, “he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”—I John 1:9

This does not mean that we can in any measure become lax in our endeavors to keep the fallen flesh under control. To do so would be to ‘grieve’ the Holy Spirit—that is, go contrary to what its influence should be accomplishing in our lives. The context in which our text is found indicates this. We quote, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption [deliverance]. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”—Eph. 4:29-32

Thank God that through Christ he has forgiven us, which means that our fleshly imperfections need not stand in our way of inheriting the kingdom. But this means that we also should forgive others, and not exercise bitterness and malice toward them. If we harbor bitterness in our hearts toward others, or allow the imperfections of the flesh to influence us in any way, we ‘grieve’ the Spirit—that is, we resist its molding influence in our lives. It is God, by the Holy Spirit of promise,

who does the sealing, but we can resist the sealing process by not conforming fully to his will.

DIVERSIFIED PROMISES

The promises of God, recorded in his Word under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, cover every possible situation in our consecrated lives. This is why the sealing by the Holy Spirit of promise is so complete, so all-comprehensive. For example, as a rule the LORD's people realize their lack of wisdom in dealing with the daily problems of the Christian life. But, through the Apostle James, the LORD has promised, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." (James 1:5) How understandingly has the Holy Spirit of promise given us this assurance. Let us never hesitate to ask God for the things which he has promised, for he will always understand. God will never upbraid us for taking him at his word.

The foes of the New Creation are many and powerful. We tremble with fear when we think how weak and how utterly incapable we are of fighting victoriously against the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Were it not for the promises of God we would have no hope of attaining the heavenly inheritance. But God has given us the assurance of his protection and care. In Psalm 91, the Holy Spirit of promise has clearly attested to the LORD's ability to protect his people, and to show them his salvation. We quote some of these sealing promises:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my

fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.”—vss. 1-4

“A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.”—vs. 7

“There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”—vs. 10

“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.”—vss. 15,16

How wonderfully these precious promises guarantee help and protection under all circumstances, assuring deliverance from ‘the snare of the fowler.’ It is only if we dwell ‘in the secret place of the most High’ that we can have his protection, under the ‘shadow’ of the Almighty. None of the sealing promises of God are unconditional. In every instance it is our obligation to conform to the conditions attached to them—to yield to the imprint of the Divine stamp. To be sealed with the Holy Spirit does not imply the erroneous view, “once in grace, always in grace.”

Being sealed by the Spirit does not imply perfection of character development, or full control over the weaknesses of the flesh. Paul says that we who “have the firstfruits [the down payment] of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption [deliverance] of our body [the body of Christ].”

(Rom. 8:23) But, despite our weaknesses and imperfections, we have the assurance that “It is God that justifieth.” (vs. 33) Satan will endeavor to discourage us, and others may condemn us. But God has drawn us to Christ, and has given us the hope of that glorious inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us. Christ died for us and is risen again, and is now “at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” (vs. 34) In view of this, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”—vs. 35

Paul’s answer to his own question as to whether any of these difficulties, these hardships, will separate us from Divine love, and cause us the loss of our inheritance, is most reassuring—a seal indeed to assure us of final victory. He wrote, “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”—vss. 37-39

WILL FINISH THE WORK

Another sealing text of scripture is Philippians 1:6. Here the Apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says to the brethren at Philippi, and to us, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [finish, *Marginal Translation*] it until the day of Jesus Christ.” The strength of this seal is the unchangeableness of our God. It was

God who began the good work of grace in our hearts. He drew us to Christ, through whom we are justified. He inspired us by his promises even of the “divine nature.” (II Pet. 1:4) He encourages us to set our affections on things above. He has made us “heirs” of himself, and “joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17), and he will not change. We know that he wants us to enter into our inheritance; so, like Paul, we too can be confident the LORD will finish his work of grace in our hearts, and eventually we will hear his, “Well done.”—Matt. 25:21

There is the necessity of our continuing to cooperate with our Heavenly Father. We are to “work out” our own “salvation,” even though God is working in us “to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:12,13) It is God’s ‘good pleasure’ that we shall have an inheritance with Jesus in the rulership of his kingdom. Jesus said so. (Luke 12:32) It is to this that we have been called. It is for this that we have been, to use Paul’s language, “apprehended of Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 3:12

Paul explains that for himself he did not then consider that he had ‘apprehended,’ or finished working out his own salvation. “Not as though I had already attained,” he says, “either were already perfect: but I follow after,”—that is, I continue on in cooperation with God who is working in me ‘to will and to do of his good pleasure.’ “This one thing I do,” Paul said, “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (vss. 13,14) Our own part in this arrangement must be the ‘one

thing,' the all-important, all-consuming thing in our lives. If it is, and continues to be, we can have full assurance of faith that God will finish his work in us, that we will be made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."—Col. 1:12

PROGRESS ESSENTIAL

The sealing promises of God apply to his Spirit-begotten children from the beginning of their walk in the narrow way. He drew them, called them, and through the Holy Spirit of Truth, begat them to be his children. Even as "babes in Christ" (I Cor. 3:1) it is God's pleasure that they receive the inheritance which he has promised, that through his strength they may 'apprehend that for which they have been apprehended' by him. His wonderful assurances of conquering grace and strength become increasingly reassuring to us as we endure patiently the experiences which his wisdom permits to mold us more and more into the image of his dear Son.

This thought is brought out beautifully by the Apostle in Romans 5:1-5. "Being justified by faith," he says, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Through Christ also we "have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand," a grace so boundless, so marvelous, that now we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." What a rich inheritance is 'the glory of God.' It is the Divine nature, and the Divine glory. Jesus said, "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

But there are conditions; we must be tested and found worthy. Paul says, "Not only so, but we glory

in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience [Greek, 'test' or 'proof']; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." (Rom. 5:3-5) The key to this passage is in the meaning of the Greek word mistranslated 'experience.' Its literal meaning is 'test.' It is this word that Paul uses in II Corinthians 2:9, which reads, "To this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things."

After begetting us by the Holy Spirit of Truth, and engendering in our hearts the hope of partaking of his glory, the LORD permits tribulation. If we patiently endure the trials that his love and wisdom allow as a test of our obedience, it proves our standing before him, and strengthens our hope. It is then, Paul says, that we have a hope which 'maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.'

From the very beginning of our Spirit-begotten life, we have a glorious hope—the hope of the glory of God. By God's grace, that hope is maintained throughout our entire Christian way. When, through the LORD's help, we patiently endure the tests which he permits, this hope becomes one of which we will not be ashamed. In the Greek text the thought is that we will not be 'disgraced.' When one starts out to accomplish a certain undertaking and by his own negligence fails, he is disgraced in the eyes of others. We can be sure that God will always do his part on our (Continued on page 35)

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(Continued from page 31) behalf, working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. The question is, Will we do ours? In our text, Paul is speaking of those who have endured patiently and have thus demonstrated, up to a point, that they will continue to be faithful. His assurance is that these now have an abiding hope because they will not be disgraced through failure of their own.

Paul then takes us a step further into this tested relationship with God. We will not be ashamed of our hope, he says, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. It was through the written Word that the Holy Spirit began to shed the love of God abroad in our hearts from the time we first became New Creatures in Christ Jesus. Even before this the Word revealed God's love to us, and it was his love that drew us to him, and prompted us to surrender our wills to him and devote all we have and are to his service.

John wrote, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." (I John 3:1) This full 'manner' of the Father's love continues to be an increasing power in our lives, inducing sacrificial obedience, and helping us patiently to endure the tribulation by which we are tested. Even these trials are evidences of God's love, for "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." (Heb. 12:6) Thus daily, through his Word and providence, God's Holy Spirit continues to shed Divine love abroad in our hearts. It becomes an increasing power to sustain and help, and we become overwhelmed with determination to make our "calling and election sure." (II Pet. 1:10) In

this wonderful manner, then, the sealing power of the Holy Spirit continues to work, causing its imprint to sink deeper and deeper into the hearts of those who are being molded into the likeness of Christ.

This increasing ability of the believer to receive the imprint of the Holy Spirit's seal is seen in the experience of the Apostle Paul. As we have noted, when he wrote to the brethren at Philippi he acknowledged that he had not yet apprehended that for which he had been apprehended by Christ. Up to this time Paul had endured much, and under most difficult circumstances had demonstrated his loyalty to God and to the Messianic cause. He had in no way been unfaithful, and he enjoyed the smile of his Heavenly Father's approval. But would this continue to be the case?

Paul indicates that he was reasonably sure of being released from the Roman prison in which he wrote the letter. If this were true, he knew that there were many trials and tests ahead. He knew that he could depend upon God to help him, yet in his humility he felt that it was too soon to claim that he had proved faithful. Later, during his second imprisonment, and when he knew that soon he would be executed, he was in a position to take a different view. Doubtless, even at this late date, the apostle could have renounced his Lord, saved his life and gone free. But he did not do this; he had met this final test. Deep in his own heart he was still willing to die in the Master's service. His actual execution would now be but a detail, a formality.

In Paul's own mind and heart he had already been faithful unto death, and by faith he now knew

that he would receive the crown of life. So no longer did he say, "I count not myself to have apprehended," but instead, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—Phil. 3:13; II Tim. 4:7,8

'And not to me only.' This Spirit-inspired statement by Paul is another of the sealing promises. Because Paul had fought 'a good fight,' because he had faithfully 'finished' his 'course' and 'kept the faith,' he knew he would receive the promised crown of life. He knew this because the Holy Spirit of Truth had revealed it to him, and had assured him that the Lord was a 'righteous judge,' a judge that would not fail to fulfill all his good promises. These reassuring facts that Paul sets forth apply not to him only, but to all who continue to put their trust in the LORD.

Concerning God's faithfulness there can be no doubt. Paul wrote of him as the One "who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (I Cor. 1:8,9) Again, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."—I Thess. 5:24

Will we be faithful? Every test through which, by God's grace, we successfully pass, increases our confidence of final victory; for we are confident that he who loved and helped us in the past will continue to do so. We expect that the trials will

continue to the end of the way, but we know that, because God is faithful, he will not permit us to be tempted or tried “above that ye are able” to bear, and if and when the difficulties become too severe, the fiery trials too hot, he will provide a way of escape. (I Cor. 10:13) What more could the LORD say to seal, to secure, our inheritance for us? Let us rejoice in his assurances of victory, and continue on faithfully to the end! ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

SEPTEMBER 1—“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”—Acts 9:15 (Z. '03-206 Hymn 229)

SEPTEMBER 8—“Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”—James 4:4 (Z. '99-70 Hymn 299)

SEPTEMBER 15—“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”—II Corinthians 6:17 (Z. '99-203 Hymn 312)

SEPTEMBER 22—“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”—Psalm 23:6 (Z. '03-413 Hymn 170)

SEPTEMBER 29—“Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD.”—Proverbs 16:5 (Z. '03-329 Hymn 312A)

Trials Essential

*“My brethren,
count it all joy
when ye fall into
divers
temptations.”
—James 1:2*

ALL THOSE WHO HAVE been called of the LORD during this present Gospel Age are called with what the Apostle Paul styles the “high calling,” the “heavenly calling,”

which is a call to share with Jesus in his “glory and honour and immortality.” But the call is not the decision in the matter; it is merely an invitation with certain definite conditions.—Phil. 3:14; Heb. 3:1; Rom. 2:7

We are called not only to righteousness, but to walk in the Master’s footsteps of suffering and self-sacrifice. Those are the only terms on which any are received as disciples of Christ. We understand the Scriptures to teach that during the future Millennial Age there will be other terms of acceptance that God will offer to the world. But there are no conditions offered now other than those of becoming followers and disciples of Jesus, to walk “in newness of life” as he walked.—Rom. 6:4

The Apostle James intimates that temptations may overtake these followers of Christ, into which they will fall as into a snare. As for an army, traps are set by the enemy, so the great Adversary sets

traps and snares for us. He endeavors to misguide our minds and to lead us away from proper conceptions of Truth and righteousness. We should be very careful to avoid his snares.

Temptation is not sin, but every temptation, persecution, and difficulty in life, permitted to come upon us who have made the covenant of sacrifice with the LORD, is intended to prove us, to test our love, to see whether or not our characters are fixed, rooted, and grounded in righteousness and being built up in love. To realize this should put all these trials, difficulties, and temptations in a new light before us, and greatly assist us in fighting a good fight, and in overcoming.

When we find ourselves suddenly in trials, we should say: If by these trials the LORD is proving my love and devotion to him, then, however trifling they may be, or however severe, I will diligently use them as favorable opportunities to demonstrate to my LORD the fullness of my love and devotion to him and his cause. I must fight a good fight against this thing—the world, the flesh, or the Adversary—whatever it might be that brought the trials.

We can rejoice because we know that if we overcome under such trials our characters will make advancement towards crystallization. We can rejoice also because we know that the LORD would not let us fall into any temptation which he would not cause to work out for us a blessing if we are wholly loyal.

Let us dwell often upon the words of the apostles: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.” “Greatly rejoice, though now

for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”—if we are rightly exercised by these trials.—James 1:2; I Pet. 1:6,7; James 1:12; II Cor. 4:17

“HE THAT ENDURETH”

We are assured that those who love the LORD, and who because of this will receive the kingdom, will be those whose love will have been tested by trials and temptations. Those who do not love the LORD with all their heart—in whom self, or some other idol, has first place—will be seduced by the world, the flesh, or the Adversary into some form of rebellion against the Divine Word, or Divine providence.

They will have schemes and theories that they will prefer to the LORD’s plan. These, when analyzed, will usually be found to be based either upon selfishness, or ambition, or an evil spirit of envy or hatred. The LORD’s leading and words lose their attraction to such, and they lose their interest correspondingly. Like those who turned away from the Lord at the First Advent, declaring, “This is an hard saying,” they walk no more with him.—John 6:60

As there are some substances that are weak and brittle, so are there some that have fiber, strength, and endurance. The LORD chooses for himself such characters as have the strong, enduring qualities—fortitude, patience, and long-suffering. Some there are who walk close to the LORD, who will not be driven from him by any of the arts and wiles of the Adversary. They are such as are at heart fully the LORD's—not their own; they follow wherever the LORD may lead, because they have no will except the will of God. These will follow the Lord in the narrow way of trial, discipline, and testings during the present life, and by and by, as he has declared, "They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."—Rev. 3:4

He who escapes all trials, temptations, and difficulties has every reason to doubt that he is really in relationship with God as a son. If he were a son, the LORD would surely find it necessary to give him trials and difficulties. If he does not have these, he should go to the Father and make sure that there is no impediment on his part—make sure that he has put himself in the proper place where he can be prepared for the kingdom. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."—Heb. 12:6

All of us will rejoice when the testings are over and we are accepted as overcomers, to share with the Lord in his throne. But patience, trust, and love must first do a refining work in our hearts, making us mellow, submissive, and obedient to God. Let the good work go on! Let us rejoice if our trials have made us stronger in character, more humble and Christlike, more aware of our

blemishes and imperfections, more watchful and earnest in our endeavors to correct them as far as possible.

“STEPPING STONES”

Even the conflicts in which we have had only partial victory may have resulted in blessings to us. Even in those experiences where we have suffered absolute failure, there may be, through the humiliation and the pain of defeat, a strengthening of our character, a firm determination for greater watchfulness, and a more fervent prayer for the Lord’s sustaining grace, the need of which has been more deeply impressed upon our hearts. Thus even failures may become ‘stepping stones’ by which we rise toward God and heaven. Only through much tribulation shall we enter the kingdom of heaven at all.

If, therefore, the LORD’s people find themselves involved in temptations, tribulations, instead of feeling downcast they are to rejoice and say, “These are evidences that the LORD is preparing me for a place in the kingdom.” This should give one courage to fight the good fight against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. The flesh is suffering; but the new mind, the new will, has the joy of the end result and, therefore, the New Creature can rejoice, knowing that these trials are not for his harm, but for his good.—I Pet. 4:12,13

A WAY OF ESCAPE

The Heavenly Father will, with every temptation provide a way of escape. Hence, when we find ourselves in difficulty, we are to say, The Heavenly Father is permitting this trial—the Lord Jesus will

help me, and so I will rejoice in the fact that the Lord will not allow me to be overthrown; for he has promised that all things shall work out for my good, because I love God and seek to know and do his will.

As our text expressly says, we are to count it all joy when we 'fall' into temptation. But if we fall into temptation we are to say, I have been striving against this trial, and the LORD has permitted it, and there must, therefore, come some blessing out of it for me.

Our joy is largely dependent upon our study of the Word, and our knowledge of the precious promises contained therein for those who overcome. The LORD wants those who will endure a great fight of afflictions, who will endure patiently, though the temptations continue long, and the tribulations become more and more severe. But if we should lose our faith, all our previous good resolutions and standing for what is right would not make us overcomers.

A WORD OF WARNING

To those who are of this anointed company, and who are striving to attain the glory promised to the faithful followers of Christ, the Apostle Peter issues a very definite word of warning. In the opening chapter of his second epistle, he urges the church to add quality after quality of character that thus they may be fitted for the glorious things that God has promised to the faithful. He specifies faith as the primary qualification. To this he says that we are to add fortitude, knowledge, patience, self-control, godliness, brotherly kindness, and a

broad, generous love for all mankind. The reason the Scriptures declare that our judgment will be according to our faith is that while in the flesh we shall never be able to perform works such as God could approve.—II Pet. 1:4-7

What God approves is the New Creature. By exercising faith, and by demonstrating loyalty, these New Creatures will be able to please him, and to work out the proper character as enjoined in his Word, developing the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. “If ye do these things,” says the apostle, “ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—vss. 10,11

Faith is necessary all along the line. Without it we could not have courage to go on. If we did not have faith what would be our source of encouragement? The ‘fall’ mentioned in the text above quoted is evidently a fall from the position to which we have been invited. We were called to be joint-heirs with our Lord. If we are obedient to the Word of the LORD, and are properly exercised by the experiences which are given us in the school of Christ, we shall gain his approval; for faithful is he that hath called us. (I Thess. 5:24) If there is a fall in our case it will be due to failure to do our part. If we fail to cultivate character, we shall fail to gain the kingdom.

Among those who fall it will be more serious with some than others. Those who fail to go on will receive certain tests that will determine whether they will turn back to the world or will continue in the narrow way. Some will fail in that they will not

manifest sufficient zeal. These will come through great tribulations. If, by these experiences, they are brought to a full loyalty to the LORD, they will be granted everlasting life; but not on so high a plane as if they had not failed in their manifestation of zeal for the LORD, and of faith, energy, and perseverance in doing the LORD's will.

Again, from lack of zeal in the LORD's service, or from cultivating a spirit of bitterness, one may deteriorate until he becomes an enemy of the LORD, loving sin rather than righteousness. As an opponent of God, such a one would suffer a complete fall; but those who have a temporary fall, and who afterwards overcome in the trials which the LORD allows to come upon them, thus showing their loyalty to him, will be fully recovered. Those who fall utterly can never be recovered. Such will lose everything. They had sacrificed their human hopes before they could be accepted, therefore their falling away from this condition as New Creatures will be hopeless.

The fall of such will be far worse than the fall of Adam, which resulted from having only limited knowledge, and from lack of experience in the results of evil; for these have come to a clear knowledge of the Truth and have experienced a share in the redemption. The falling away of such would mean a "fearful looking for of judgment"—destruction as enemies of God. (Heb. 10:27) Adam had only a small knowledge of the grace of God, and therefore is redeemed and will ultimately be restored if he will come into harmony with God. Let us take heed to our ways, and earnestly cultivate the fruits of the Spirit. ■

Home at Last

THE CHURCH ON this side of the veil at the present time is like a ship drawing near to the port of its destination. It has crossed the main ocean of life with its numerous vicissitudes—its storms, setbacks, delusions, and disappointments. It is now nearing port. Eager anticipation prevails.—Luke 21:28

Before reaching port, however, there is a long and tedious channel to negotiate. This channel is fraught with danger to the ship. There are rocks, sandbanks, shifting sands, and other invisible dangers. But these are well known to the one in charge of the ship, the skillful Pilot. We must trust him implicitly. Any of these dangers could cause the shipwreck of our faith, which now, with home in sight, would be tragic.—Eph. 6:10-18

PRECIOUS PROMISES

There are buoys which mark out the channel, or way of approach, to the port. These would include Divine warnings given against taking a course contrary to the Holy Scripture; also, exceeding great and precious spiritual promises, together with stated conditions, so necessary to their fulfillment. And there are those principles of Christian character—Christlikeness—all of which lead to immortal

life and our eternal heavenly home.—Acts 20:28,30; Rom. 2:7; 8:28-31; I Cor. 15:57,58

Our hearts glow within us as we think of the promise made to us years ago: “Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.” (Isa. 33:17) Now, the fulfillment of this is almost within sight.

We pass buoy after buoy, diligently observing each one. We begin to see the radiant beauty of the city of glory. It has been revealed to us that the king has prepared a special place there for us, and that in the king’s palace there is exquisite beauty and glory—wonders so marvelous that human language could not describe it.—John 14:1-4; I Cor. 2:9-14

TRUSTING IMPLICITLY

The haven of rest is approached. Eventually we arrive off the shore of the celestial city. The only way for us to get nearer our heavenly abode is through the waters, and these, we must wade. Faith (through which our Father’s mighty power has done great things for us) has brought us thus far. Now we must trust implicitly. We are lowered into the waters. Then we confidently call to the Father, “Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.” Then we reflect upon the words of comfort: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.”—Ps. 69:1,2; 23:4

Immediately we are on the shore of the celestial city. We feel that we have undergone a great and

wondrous transformation. Now, we are full of exuberant life, abounding in energy, glowing with vitality. We feel as though a spring of life is rising within us.—I Cor. 15:42-44,52-55; John 4:14

A glorious heavenly being awaits us, so beautiful in every way that his glory could not be described. He directs our vision to the exquisite palace of the king, where we are informed a great convention is shortly to be held—“The general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.” In the distance, this great palace looks brilliant, standing upon a lofty eminence.—Heb. 12:23

We move along swiftly as the wind. Arriving at the base of the hill we hear a voice saying, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”—Ps. 24:3-5

VOICE OF THE BELOVED

We hesitate at the foot of the hill. Then we hear another voice of inexpressible sweetness speak to us. Our hearts leap within us, for this is surely the voice of our Beloved saying, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” Come to that place I have prepared for you.—Matt. 25:21

Then we are ushered along to the sound of exquisite and harmonious music, magnifying and praising the name of the great God of love. We reach the beautiful palace, the king’s palace, where

a large number of victorious saints are already assembled. It is a wonderful company, each one shining with the same resplendent glory as their beloved Bridegroom. We behold his dear face, full of joyous love, exultant and triumphant.—Ps. 45:13-15; I John 3:2

WELCOME HOME

He leads us to our great Heavenly Father, who is majestic, sublime, pure, and holy; whose effulgent glory and impressive grandeur we hardly dare behold. He looks upon us with a Father's look of tender love, as though his great heart is full to overflowing, as he says, "My jewels; my inheritance; my children, welcome home."—Jude 24,25; Mal. 3:17; Eph. 1:18

For a while he remains silent in his great love, and joy; then he breaks forth into singing. (Zeph. 3:17) The grand refrain is taken up by the Bridegroom and bride, and all the heavenly hosts, "A voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."—Rev. 19:5-7

These beautiful words of the Revelator will have a glorious fulfillment. The completed church—the bride—then having been proved faithful unto death, will be duly glorified with her Lord. Today, however, some of the last members of the true

church are this side of the veil, giving diligence to make their “calling and election sure.” (II Pet. 1:10) They are growing in grace and heavenly knowledge; denying self, taking up their cross daily, and following the Master.

THE OVERCOMERS

They are shining as lights in the world, faithfully witnessing to the Truth. They are encouraged and stimulated by the exceeding great and precious promises of God’s Word. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.” “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” It is realized that this reigning with Christ will establish God’s wondrous, long-prayed-for, everlasting kingdom in the earth.—Luke 9:23; Phil. 2:14,15; Rev. 3:21; 20:6; Matt. 6:10

Meanwhile, within the heart of each fully consecrated child of God here below, there is a longing to be gathered home. ■

“He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, . . . His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him.

“Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar.

“. . . The Lord is our king; it is he who will save us.”

—Isaiah 33:15-22, New International Version

Trip to India

February 5-18, 2005

Report by Bro. Ernie and Sr. Janice Kuenzli

IT WAS OUR privilege to travel in February with Bro. Chris and Sr. Stephanie Kuenzli (U.S.) and Bro. Marin Gronic (Moldova) to visit our brethren in India. We arrived by air in the city of Bangalore on the morning of February 5. We were met at the airport by Bro. Samuel, son of Bro. and Sr. Prasad. Sr. Jayanthi and her two daughters also greeted us there with flowers and hugs. A taxi was waiting to take us to the Prasad's home, where we were greeted lovingly, provided with some refreshments, and had a prayer of thanksgiving for our safe arrival.

Bro. Raju, from Bangalore, arrived shortly to accompany us in the taxi to Mysore, where a convention had begun that morning. Mysore is a 3-hour taxi ride from Bangalore. We arrived at the convention during the evening session and listened to several discourses given in the Tamil language. One was a public discourse by Bro. Udhaya Kumar of Chennai. His subject was "Why God Permits Evil," and focused on the devastation caused by the tsunami a month before. After the discourses, there was special singing by the young people, and

then a late night dinner served on banana leaves. After dinner, the brethren gathered outside for fellowship and singing around a bonfire.

BAPTISMAL SERVICE AT THE RIVER

Sunday morning, we rose up early (6 A.M.) to accompany about half the brethren (100 or so) to a river 10 km away from Mysore, for a baptismal service. Two large trucks with canvas tops came to



Arriving at baptismal site

transport the brethren to the river. At the river there were 32 immersed, from various ecclesias all over southern India. After the baptismal, there was a ‘tea break’

under a giant jackfruit tree, before heading back to the convention site.

During the tea break several Hindu extremists came up to the brethren and began causing trouble. They had been watching the baptismal service, and were convinced that we were “forcibly converting Hindus to Christianity.” This made them very angry. They called other extremists, took the keys to the trucks and taxi so the brethren were unable to leave, and began to threaten the brethren. They took cell phones and cameras from the brethren, and hit several of the young brethren.

Someone was able to contact the police and the police began arriving, for which we were very thankful. About 10 policemen arrived, but they did not prevent the growing crowd of 20-30 extremists from

harassing the brethren. The Indian brethren were wonderful examples to us, letting their light shine, by being submissive in the experience, and not rendering "evil for evil." The extremist Hindus took some of our Bibles and literature, and laid it out on the front of the taxi, and filmed it, mocking us and the literature. They made Bro. Chris and Bro. Ernie get out of the taxi and hold some of the literature, and asked, "Are you Jesus?" After several hours at the riverside, the police finally escorted all of us to the local town police station. The angry crowd, which was still growing, followed. The Indian brethren were asked to sit under some trees, where the police kept them safe from harm, and ourselves (the foreigners), were escorted into the police station, for our protection. For 6 hours, the police tried to dispel the angry crowd outside, and, after taking complaints and statements from both the extremists and the brethren, they were successful.

While the police questioned us roughly at times, this was done more for show to the Hindu extremists that we were not receiving preferential treatment. The police recovered and returned our belongings to us, which had been taken that morning, and when the police felt it was safe, they escorted the brethren in the trucks, and us, back to the convention site. The rest of that evening police cars were parked outside the convention site for our protection, and several undercover policemen were present among the brethren. We were impressed with the ability of the police to solve the situation without violence, and with their kindness to us.

Bro. Maria Das, an elder in Mysore, who had been threatened by the extremists, called for a meeting of

thanksgiving that evening at the convention. Many testimonies were given, and great thankfulness was expressed to our Heavenly Father for his presence with us during the experience.

During that meeting, the brethren heard that the Hindu extremists were coming to the convention site to cause additional trouble. They insisted that our group of 5 should immediately leave and take a taxi to our next stop at Coimbatore. We left with Bro. Alex Barnabas and Bro. David for the 6-hour taxi ride, arriving at our hotel in Coimbatore safely about 3 A.M. Monday morning. Our concerns were for the Mysore brethren we left behind, and we were thankful to hear later that they had had no more trouble.

COIMBATORE MEETING

Monday afternoon we visited briefly with Bro. Alex's family. His sister, Sr. Jayanthi, and husband, Bro. James, had a son born seven days before, so we were able to see the new baby and have some fellowship. Then we went on to the Coimbatore meeting hall where greetings and a discourse were given. It was a special blessing to see Bro. Daniel, a faithful, pilgrim brother who has been used by the Lord to spiritually build up and encourage the Indian brethren for many years. After the meeting, we walked a few blocks to the home of



Bro. Daniel

Bro. David and his wife, for a lovely dinner and more fellowship.

THREE ECCLESIAS IN THE MOUNTAINS

Tuesday we rose up early to catch a tourist train that runs once a day from the town of Mettapulayam, up the mountains to Coonoor and Ooty. It is a narrow gauge, cog-rail train, built by the British 150 years ago. It uses a steam engine at the back of the train, and cogs on the rails, to push the train up the Nilgiri or “blue” mountains. The train travels very slowly, but no one minds because the scenery is so beautiful. It took about 4 hours to reach the city of Coonoor. We were met there by Bro. George of the Wellington ecclesia. He led us to our hotel, which was a YWCA on the top of one of the mountains. That evening, we attended the Coonoor ecclesia, which meets in a meeting, or prayer, hall, built on the top of Bro. and Sr. Segar’s home. The children of the ecclesia sang a special hymn for us, and, after the discourse, we had a wonderful dinner and fellowship with the brethren there. About 20 were in attendance.

Bro. George took us, on Wednesday, to their home for refreshments and fellowship before going to the Wellington ecclesia meeting hall. At the meeting hall, special hymns were again sung for us, and a discourse was given. The Wellington ecclesia has about 40 brethren, including about 10 teen and college-age young people who are very well versed in the Truth, and use their talents in witnessing in nearby villages.

Thursday, Bro. Prem and Bro. Abraham led us by motorcycle to their meeting hall in Ooty, where

Bro. Prem's wife, Sr. Flora, and their two daughters, Rachel and Ruth, were waiting. About 15 brethren were there, and a study on the "Heavens" was held in which nearly all participated. Bro. Daniel Suresh and his wife brought their 6-month-old baby, and asked to have their baby officially named by an elder. They had chosen the name of John Samuel, so a few words were said regarding the beautiful characters of the Apostle John and the Prophet Samuel. After a lovely meal provided by Sr. Flora, we travelled back down the mountains, this time by taxi, to Coimbatore.

YOUTH SEMINAR

Friday morning marked the start of the 3-day Youth Seminar, held 10 km south of Coimbatore. It is conducted at a lovely facility out in the country,



Preparing for youth study

where it is very peaceful, and away from the bustle of the city. About 200 'youths' gathered there, along with many adults—elders who led the meetings, and sisters who helped with

many other services, including translating for us. The seminar included three days of studies, discussions, Bible games, and speeches given by the youth on various Bible subjects, singing, and fellowship.

There were two large halls used during the day, one for meetings and the other for eating. Then, as it got dark, the meetings moved outside to an outdoor amphitheater, and the large rooms

were then turned into sleeping quarters. It was a wonderful experience to sit out under the stars at night and listen to the youth singing praises to our Heavenly Father. The days' activities ran from 9 A.M. until almost midnight, and then there were additional discussions and singing into the early morning hours.

While at the Seminar, we were shown copies of Volume 5 of *Studies in the Scriptures*, which had just been printed in the Tamil language. There are brethren in Chennai, who are finishing the translation of Volume 6 into Tamil, and should be ready for printing in the near future. Also, we were shown a book which is being compiled by Bro. Christidas of Madurai, on the History of the Bible Students in India.

The Seminar ended on Sunday afternoon and, as always, no one wanted to say good-bye, not knowing when we might be together again. That evening several brethren came to our hotel for more fellowship.

MEETING IN METTAPULAYAM

Monday afternoon, we took a taxi to Mettapulayam to meet with the ecclesia there. Bro. Francis Paul, and his wife, Sr. Anbarasi, greeted us exuberantly at their prayer hall. A discourse was given on the 103rd Psalm, and Sr. Anbarasi provided us with a wonderful meal. Bro. Francis Paul loves to sing, and after the meal the ecclesia sang a hymn based on the 103rd Psalm. It was beautiful.

Tuesday it was time to leave the Coimbatore area and fly back to Bangalore. A group of loving brethren came to see us off at the airport, and it was sad to have to say good-bye.

OUR VISIT IN BANGALORE

After our arrival in Bangalore, we went to the home of Bro. Varma and Sr. Jackie for dinner. After dinner, we proceeded to meet with the Airport Road ecclesia, which included a discourse and fellowship. About 60 were in attendance.

Wednesday there was a testimony meeting at the home of Bro. and Sr. Prasad, with about 25 in attendance. It was a great blessing to hear how the brethren were drawn to the Truth of God's Word, and the great difficulties that some of them experienced in the process. We were greatly uplifted by their stories of faith and courage.

On Thursday a one-day convention had been planned at a local school. It was a lovely day with around 60 brethren in attendance. Instead of discourses, studies had been planned, with questions given out ahead of time. There was very good participation from the brethren, and good discussions on three different topics. That evening, after the close of the convention, we went to Bro. and Sr. Suresh's home for a testimony meeting in their prayer hall, located on the roof of their home. About 40 brethren were in attendance. Bro. Charles Suresh was away from home because of work-related responsibilities, but we had lovely fellowship with Sr. Gheeta Suresh, and their two grown children, Bro. Jonathan and Sr. Monica.

Bro. J. Samuel Philip took us, on Friday morning, to a nursing facility, where we met with a dear elderly brother, Bro. Luke. He has been a faithful brother and elder for many years, leading one of Bangalore's four ecclesias. While he is almost blind and very feeble, he is still strong in the Truth, and

discussed with us some of the challenges facing the Indian brethren. We were very glad to have the opportunity to see him once more, and to hear some of his thoughts on the times in which we are living, and our need to be careful in spiritual things. Our visit was closed with a prayer.

Later that day, we had to say good-bye to our brethren in Bangalore, and in all of India, as we began our flight home. We left India more enriched spiritually than when we arrived, and we thank our Heavenly Father for this wonderful opportunity.

May we always keep in our hearts and prayers all of our brethren around the world, who are walking together with us in this narrow way. "Blest be the tie that binds, our hearts in Christian love. The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above." ■

In Thy Name

*Where two or three with sweet accord,
Meet in thy name, O blessed Lord!
Meet to recount thine acts of grace,
O, how thy presence fills the place!*

*There thou hast promised, Lord, to be,
To bless the little company;
And while we offer prayer and praise,
O, may we learn more of thy ways!*

*O! fill our hearts with heavenly love,
And may we at its impulse move,
That all around may clearly see
That we have been, dear Lord, with thee.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

Meekness, Gentleness, Boldness

NEVER WAS THERE a more important moment for the church than now as respect to the above listed elements of the Lord's Spirit. When the great enemy has special power because it is "the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth," every soldier of the cross must be more alert than ever. (Rev. 3:10) But let us put character and principle first, then patience, gentleness, meekness. As Paul wrote to Timothy, "In meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves."—II Tim. 2:25

Our love for the brethren, coupled with our knowledge of the testing strain they are under, will supply the needed incentive for the exercise and cultivation of the graces named. And let us remember, that this is our testing hour no less than theirs. The test to some may be false teachings; the test to others may be their positiveness and character in dealing with the error; or their love for the brethren and the gentleness with which they seek to do all in their power to rescue them, even though they feel the task a hopeless one. (Heb. 6:3) If we fail of love we are failing on the most important point of all. Hence it is important to each of us to take our stand for the right and against the wrong, but lovingly, gently, firmly. ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

A. Allers

Melbourne, AU Sept. 8-12
Perth, AU 13-15
Brisbane, AU 16-19
Sydney, AU 20,21
Adelaide, AU 22,23
Melbourne, AU 24-27

M. Balko

Seattle, WA Sept. 3-5
Clay City, IN 23-25

K. Fernets

Milwaukee, WI Sept. 17,18
Clay City, IN 23-25

S. Jones

Clay City, IN Sept. 23-25

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

W. Austin

Seattle, WA Sept. 3-5
Kalispell, MT 6
Havre, MT 7
 Fargo, ND 9

B. Clark

Clay City, IN Sept. 23-25

R. Gorecki

Kalispell, MT Sept. 6
Havre, MT 7
 Fargo, ND 9

M. J. Balko

Milwaukee, WI Sept. 17,18

W. Blicharz

Milwaukee, WI Sept. 17,18

E. Byrd

Clay City, IN Sept. 23-25

A. Lankford

Clay City, IN Sept. 23-25

R. Sconyers

St. Petersburg, FL Sept. 11

C. Willis

Clay City, IN Sept. 23-25

OBITUARIES

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

**Brother Vincent Kowalski, Nichols, NY—May 8.
Age, 86**

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.

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3,4—FaHaLo Camp & Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact Mrs. Ray Lumley. Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3,4—Wellesley Inn (formerly Ramada Inn), Two Bridges Road & Exit 52, Route 80, Fairfield, NJ 07006. Contact Debra Szybinski, 250 West 102 Street, 1 A, New York, NY 10025. Phone: (212) 998-2095

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3,4,5—Seabeck Christian Conference Center, 15395 Seabeck Highway NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact Laurie Flinn. Phone: (253) 939-9838

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, September 17,18—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, WI 53207. Contact Debi Moore. Phone: (414) 541-8937, or contact Chris Kuenzli. Phone: (414) 257-2672

CLAY CITY CONVENTION, September 24,25—Canyon Inn, McCormick's Creek State Park, Clay City, IN. Contact Sondra Clark, 7861 Clearwater Parkway, Indianapolis, IN 46240. Phone: (317) 578-2634

DETROIT MONTH-END CONVENTION, September 25—Redford YWCA, Grand River at Beech Daly. Contact Norm Zendler. Phone: (248) 399-8843

LOS ANGELES QUARTERLY CONVENTION, September 25—Burbank Masonic Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA. Contact Russell Wojcik. Phone: (818) 982-7253

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 30, October 1,2—Holiday Inn Select (formally Huntsville Hilton), 401 Williams Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35801. Phone: (256) 533-1400. Contact Phillip Mosley, 1006 Mill Race Circle, Guntersville, AL 35976. Phone: (256) 582-3640

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 8,9—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue, MI 49544. Contact Joanne Houlmont. Phone: (231) 972-4259

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 8,9—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA. Contact George Balko, Jr., 1300 High Street, West Newton, PA 15089. Phone: (724) 872-6418

NEW ENGLAND CONVENTION, October 14,15,16—Ramada Inn, Crooked Street, Plainville, CT. Contact Mrs. Richard Suraci, 171 Johnson Road, Hamden, CT 06518. Phone: (203) 248-3793

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 15,16—Masonic Temple, 859 Marsh Street. Contact Lynn Murray. Phone: (805) 544-3037

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 29,30—Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Drive (corner of Hwy. 17-92), Sanford, FL. Contact Helen Jeuck, 587 Queens Mirror Circle, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 699-8303

JERSEY CITY PRE-THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 19,20—Loyalty Lodge, 1912 Morris Avenue, Union, NJ 07083. Phone: (908) 688-9842. Contact Mrs. Marilyn J. Rodriguez, P. O. Box 6685, Bridgewater, NJ 08807-6685. Phone: (908) 917-8211

SAN DIEGO THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 25,26,27—Doubletree Club Hotel, 1515 Hotel Circle South. Phone: (800) 489-9671 or (619) 881-6900. Contact David Rice. Phone: (619) 589-1534

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

THAT THE CHURCH IS “THE TEMPLE” OF THE LIVING GOD —peculiarly “his workmanship;” that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age—ever since Christ became the world’s Redeemer and the chief “corner stone” of this temple, through which, when finished, God’s blessings shall come “to all people,” and they find access to him.—I Cor. 3:16,17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29

THAT MEANTIME THE CHISELING, SHAPING, AND POLISHING of the consecrated believers in Christ’s atonement for sin progresses, and when the last of these “living stones,” “elect and precious,” shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Rev. 15:5-8

THAT THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD lies in the fact that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God “tasted death for every man,” “a ransom for all,” and will be “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” “in due time.”—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; I Tim. 2:5,6

THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH is that she may be like her Lord, “see him as he is,” be a “partaker of the divine nature,” and share his glory as his joint-heir.—I John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; II Pet. 1:4

THAT THE PRESENT MISSION OF THE CHURCH is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God’s witness to the world; and to prepare to be the kings and priests in the next age.—Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6, 20:6

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