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Highlights of DAWN

The Days of These Kings

“In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and . . . it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”—Daniel 2:44

WHEN the older of those of us who are now genially referred to as senior citizens were dutifully studying our grade school history, a saying was in common usage to the effect that the sun never set on the British flag; for the British Empire was indeed vast and powerful, and her far-flung possessions literally girdled the globe. At the height of her glory in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, she was the greatest empire of the ancient and modern worlds in area, population, and material wealth, comprising almost a quarter of the world's land area and population. In those days of her ascendancy Britannia truly ruled the waves!

But what an astonishing change has occurred in the status of this once powerful nation over the latter decades! India, Burma, Egypt, half of Africa, and most of Ireland lost; Canada, Australia, and New Zealand virtually independent nations, as are a great many other of her former possessions; with the urge to cutting of empire ties aroused in others of her few remaining lands. In referring to an almanac recently for information on the **United Kingdom**, the index directed the inquirer to look under **Britain**, unwittingly suggesting that the United Kingdom is not so united as it formerly was! For apart from a diminishing number of scattered but independent members of the commonwealth and some small

islands and territories, the once mighty empire has virtually shrunk to what is known as the British Isles, minus, of course, the Republic of Ireland.

But the contraction of the empire has not stopped there, for even in the British Isles themselves, the very heart of the shrunken empire, nationalistic feelings are running high. Even Northern Ireland shows signs of wanting to pull away from Great Britain, in which desire the Protestant majority is joined, surprisingly, by its arch enemy, the Catholic minority; with even Great Britain itself seeming to be not too distressed over the prospect of separation from such a thorny situation.

Shrinking Empires

The Welsh have for centuries been unhappy with their ties to England, and here, too, a trend toward separation is rising. And in Scotland, aiming to hoard their newly found North Sea oil wealth for their own enrichment, the people are turning to the fast growing Nationalist Party which claims the support of one Scot in three in its struggle for separation from England. Whether any of these beginnings of nationalistic unrest will actually culminate in separation from England only time will tell; but they surely seem to be of a piece with what has already occurred in connection with that formerly great empire.

Just a short journey across the water from troubled England we find another once mighty empire coming on hard times. At its peak in the Middle Ages the little nation of Portugal was the greatest empire in the West. Her brilliant and courageous navigators sailed ships to every point of the compass, laying claims to new lands, and taking back to Portugal the wealth of the world. Brazil was discovered and colonized, vast areas of southern Africa annexed, the Madeira Islands and the Azores possessed, trading posts established in Asia.

Over the centuries the political scene in Portugal has never

been a tranquil one, her kings and princes being almost constantly embroiled in one problem or another. But at this moment we find Portugal in somewhat the situation that has befallen Great Britain. Torn by economic and political problems at home, her remaining colonies in Africa are well on the way to complete freedom from foreign domination, and the once mighty Portuguese Empire is now struggling for its very survival.

The troubles relating to these two formerly great powers here so briefly mentioned are not unique, or isolated, or inexplicable. They are merely typical of a process of world disintegration that has been in progress for some sixty years—a process triggered by the economic and political convulsions accompanying and following World War I. Since that time events have been moving so rapidly that today's student of history must be a fast reader, a keen observer, and possess a good memory.

Divine Right of Kings

A glance at a map of the nations of Europe and Asia Minor as they existed just prior to World War I is very instructive. It reveals a philosophy of rulership which had flourished in the world since before the advent of Christ—that kings ruled by divine right. In that important area of the globe, when the First World War started there were four great absolute monarchies: the Hohenzollerns of Germany, the Habsburgs of Austria-Hungary, the Romanoffs of Russia, and the Osmanlis (Ottomans) of the Turkish Empire.

There were also half a dozen other nations ruled over by kings: Spain, Italy, Greece, Serbia, Rumania, and Bulgaria. And finally there was a handful of kings or queens who ruled over most of the rest of Europe under constitutional monarchies: Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Holland, and Belgium. France and Switzerland, alone of all the nations of Europe, were republics.

And all these princes of the realm, regardless of the means

by which they might have ascended their respective thrones, leaned on and promoted the doctrine of the divine right of kings to rule, for their own perpetuation in power. Prior to World War I, when Europe was seething with intrigue, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany wrote to his cousin, Nicholas II of Russia, to warn him of the utter impropriety of making an alliance with a nation (France) that in the previous century had murdered or deposed her royal rulers, hinting that it might even bring down divine wrath upon Russia. "Take my word for it, Nicky," he wrote, "the curse of God lies heavy on that nation. Heaven had imposed a sacred duty . . . on us Christian kings and emperors to uphold the doctrine of the divine right of kings."

Nicholas II himself heartily entertained the same opinion. When a foreign diplomat, sensing the temper of the Russian masses during this same unstable period of time prior to the First World War, undertook to offer him friendly counsel, Nicholas loftily replied, "Do you mean that I am to regain the confidence of my people, Ambassador, or that **they** are to regain **my** confidence?"

Wealth and Poverty—Power and Discontent

The world over which these princely rulers exercised their sovereign power (more or less despotically, more or less beneficently, from nation to nation) was a mixed one. Among the royal and the aristocratic classes there was much ostentation, much gaiety and display of wealth. Among the masses was much poverty and discontent. And in the very heart of Europe itself, that veritable hodgepodge of races and cultures, periodically cut up and redivided by wars and conquests into uncongenial newer nations with newer boundaries and newer, diverse ethnic groupings, nationalistic resentments and yearnings were coming to a boil.

But sitting precariously on top of all this hollow structure was the grandeur and pretension of the royal courts. Royal heads of state visited amiably back and forth at royal yacht

regattas and hunting expeditions, while garden parties and military exhibitions gave opportunity to exhibit the wealth and might and brilliance of royalty—a royalty who were lulled into a false sense of security by their own self-aggrandizement, by their position and wealth—and, of course, by the doctrine of the divine right of kings. There seemed to be no sense of foreboding for the collapse of the great dynastic systems that was so shortly to occur, and which did occur in the space of a few short years with the advent of World War I.

The Demise of the Dynasties

At the close of that war the four great absolute monarchies no longer existed as such. Germany became a republic, Austria became a republic, the Russian royal family was executed, with Russia becoming a dictatorship under the Bolsheviks, while Turkey was declared a republic in 1923. And the remaining lesser kingdoms were in similar disarray: Serbia became a part of Yugoslavia; Romania later became a republic; Bulgaria has become a communist-dominated Peoples Republic; Greece has, much later, become a republic (1973); Italy became a republic in 1948; and Spain has become a republic, or more properly, a dictatorship. There are left of all the pre-1914 kingly governments but a few constitutional monarchies, the rulers of which have hardly more power than to order the chauffeur to bring the royal car to the palace door.

Historian Edmond Taylor writes of this remarkable time, “The monarchies of pre-1914 Europe were rushing to their final extinction for the same reason that the dinosaurs of the Carboniferous Age had waddled to theirs. They had simply ceased to be adapted to their environment. . . . Revolution or the threat of revolution helped push the decaying European dynasties into war, and war, or the threat of war, touched off new revolutions in a deadly chain-reaction that is still continuing in our day.” (page 43, *The Fall of the Dynasties*)

Mr. Taylor has accurately reported **what** has happened and

is happening, but there is only one place where we can learn **why** it happened, and why it occurred **when** it occurred. For the answers to these questions we must look to the Word of God, the Bible.

The Times of the Gentiles

In Luke 21:24 our Lord is recorded as having used the expression "the times of the Gentiles." He said, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." As used by Jesus, the times of the Gentiles refers to that period of earth's history during which the dominion of earth was to be exercised by Gentile governments.

Our Lord's words "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" imply that these "times" must have a definitely appointed limit, because an unlimited, indefinite period could not be said to be fulfilled. Thus we must conclude that Gentile rule had a beginning, that it would last for a fixed time, and that it would end at the time appointed. And we find that this is so.

But when did this period begin? How long was it to last? And when would it end?

We learn from the Bible that the first to exercise this Gentile dominion was Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The account is given in the second chapter of the Book of Daniel. "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all."—Dan. 2:37, 38

Babylon was but the first of several universal kingdoms, to be followed by others which history has identified, in turn, as Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. While God did not approve of or commend these Gentile governments, he permitted their dominion for an appointed time.

“Take Off the Crown”

The nation of Israel was God's chosen people, and their kingdom was typical of that glorious kingdom of God for which we were taught by our Lord to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” Also, the kings of Israel were regarded as sitting on “the throne of the Lord.” (Amos 3:2; Matt. 6:10; I Chron. 29:23; II Chron. 9:8) When, therefore, God determined to let the Gentile kingdoms take control and try the experiment of ruling the world (that thus the world might learn the futility of its own efforts at self-government while in its present sinful condition) it was appropriate that he should first remove the typical crown from Israel, and that the typical kingdom should no longer be recognized.

This occurred in the days of King Zedekiah, the last of Israel's kings, and the event is recorded in the following words of the prophet: “Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.”—Ezek. 21:24-27

According to the words of the prophet the crown was taken from Zedekiah, and Jerusalem was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar's army and laid in ruins, and so remained for seventy years—until the restoration in the first year of Cyrus. (Ezek. 21:25-27; II Chron. 36:21-23) Though Jerusalem was then rebuilt, and the captives returned, Israel has never had another king from that time to the present day. They were subject, as a nation, successively to the Persians, Grecians and Romans, and were living under the yoke of the latter when our Lord's first advent occurred.

The Beginning of the Gentile Times

Thus we can readily find the date for the beginning of the Gentile Times of dominion; for the first year of the reign of

Cyrus is a very clearly fixed date, both secular and religious history placing it at 536 B.C. And if this was the year in which the seventy years of Jerusalem's desolation ended, it follows that their kingdom was overthrown in 606 B.C. when the crown was removed from Zedekiah. This gives us the date of the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles.

To find the length of the period for which the Gentile dominion was to exist, we again go to the Scriptures. Turning to Leviticus, we find recorded a list of blessings and of cursings, to either of which Israel would be subjected. If Israel would obey God faithfully they would be blessed above other nations; if not, the forewarned evils would befall them. The conclusion of the prophecy is stated thus: "And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more [further] for your sins."—Lev. 26:17, 18, 24, 29

The connection in which the "seven times more" (additional) are threatened indicates that they include a final and conclusive punishment to be dealt out to Israel because the other and lesser chastisements would have failed to reform them. These seven times therefore refer to the length of time during which the Gentiles would rule over them. And it is to this period of seven times that our Lord undoubtedly referred when speaking of "the times of the Gentiles." This final great national chastisement lasting for seven times began when their last king, Zedekiah, was removed—the foretold seven times of Gentile dominion.

Literal Years? or Symbolic?

Were these seven times literal or symbolic? Did they refer to seven literal years, or to seven symbolic years, each consisting of 360 days, with each day representing a year? We answer that they were symbolic times, or 2,520 years (seven times 360 years). They cannot be understood as seven literal years, for Israel had many captivities of longer duration. These captivities being far longer than seven literal years shows that symbolic time is meant.

This use in the Scriptures of a symbolic "time" as representing a period of 360 years is shown in the book of Revelation where the period of papacy's greatest power is designated as a "time, and times, and half a time," or three-and-a-half times, each consisting of 360 years for a total of 1,260 years. This 1,260-year period began in 539 A.D. with papacy's assumption of civil power at the time of the overthrow of the Ostrogothic monarch, and it continued until 1799 when Napoleon's military successes marked the limit of papal dominion over the nations. Thus we have recorded history confirming the fact that a symbolic "time" as used in scripture represents a period of 360 years.

A Scriptural Milestone

It follows, then, that if a scriptural "time" is a period of 360 years, Israel's seven times of national chastisement would be seven times 360 years, or a period of 2,520 years. And since we found earlier that this period began in 606 B.C. with the overthrow of Israel's last king, then we see that the period designated by our Lord as "the times of the Gentiles," or Gentile dominion, would end in 1914.

Thus the Bible points out the year 1914 as marking the end of the dominion that was granted to the Gentile nations, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar in 606 B.C. And since 1914 marked the end of Gentile dominion, it would be proper to expect the kingly governments of earth to be shorn of their power beginning with that date. This, of course, is just what happened, and right on time. Just prior to the beginning of World War I in June, 1914, the great monarchical systems of Europe were still basking in their transient glory; at the close of that terrible war they were in a shambles. And since that time the disintegration that started there has continued, even to this day, as is obvious to all. Their lease of dominion has expired; they are being evicted.

As we noted earlier, historian Taylor has accurately observed that "the monarchies of pre-1914 Europe were rushing to their final extinction . . . in a deadly chain-reaction

that is still continuing in our day.” Mr. Taylor accurately reports **what** happened, and is still happening. The Bible tells us **why** it happened. It was because the pre-determined dominion of these Gentile nations expired in 1914.

Referring to the specific incident that is generally conceded as having touched off World War I and the ensuing disintegration of the ruling powers (the murder in Sarajevo in June of 1914 of Francis Ferdinand, nephew and heir of Francis Joseph, Emperor of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) Taylor writes, “In the expressive Chinese phrase, the dynasty . . . had lost the Mandate of Heaven (as . . . most of the other surviving twentieth century dynasties had lost, or were about to lose it, too).” How well Mr. Taylor has stated the matter! And how fully in accord with the teaching of the Bible, which informs us that the Gentile Times have been fulfilled, that the dominion of the Gentile powers has expired.

A New and Righteous Royalty

And what is to be the final outcome of the matter? It will be glorious! After announcing that the Gentile kingdoms would be granted dominion for a period of time that the Bible calls the Times of the Gentiles, the Prophet Daniel says, “In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and . . . it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”—Dan. 2:44

Here we are told that it is the God of heaven who has been directing the destruction of these earthly kingdoms since the lapse of their lease of power in 1914. And when the destruction that is still continuing comes to an end, these imperfect earthly kingdoms will be replaced by a new kingdom, God’s kingdom, under the righteous rulership of a new royal family—under Jesus Christ as the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and his faithful followers, the church, who will be “priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”—Rev. 19:16; 20:6

Yes, this will be a righteous kingdom, and all the world will joyfully receive it. There will be no more poverty, no more oppression, no more sorrow or sighing, no more death. And no more wars! There will be peace, with plenty for all. All this is abundantly assured, for it is the Lord himself who has promised it.

“For 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.” — Micah 4:1-4

**“CAN WE TALK WITH
THE DEAD?”**

To be discussed by

‘FRANK and ERNEST’

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19

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OCTOBER SPECIAL: On Sunday, October 19, “Frank and Ernest” will discuss a topic of interest to many. Attractive circulars will be available for announcing this program, and you are invited to send for as many as you can use. They are free. Address your request to: The Dawn, East Rutherford, New Jersey 07073

RADIO TOPICS FOR OCTOBER

5— “Whosoever Believeth”
12— “Our Lord’s Return”

19— “Can We Talk with the Dead?”
26— “Our Day in Prophecy”

The Easy Yoke

“Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”—Matthew 11:28-30

Satan, the prince of this world, has placed many yokes upon the necks of all mankind. They are bound and fettered by every device which he could arrange. But Jesus invites all such to come to him and find rest—the blessed rest of freedom from the galling yoke of the oppressor. That rest is found in the meek and quiet spirit which humbly submits to the easy yoke of the divine will and ceases the strife to gratify the perverted human will. The burden of the divinely imposed yoke is easy and light when we let it rest naturally upon us. It is placed upon us only for our good, and only those who cheerfully submit to it have rest and safety.

Our Lord's words were addressed to those of his day, bound by Jewish creeds and traditions and their own fears, engendered by their erroneous conception of God and his plan. As with the Jewish church, so with the Christian church, the “yokes” of sectarianism and the “burdens” of tradition fetter and gall those who possess the spirit of Christ, whose zeal and love are according to knowledge and for Christ and the church which is his body, rather than for a sect of human organization. Such cannot be comfortable with the yokes and burdens of men, and must claim the freedom of sons of God, the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free.



Bible Study

LESSON FOR OCTOBER 5

Going Where God Leads

MEMORY SELECTION: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."—Hebrews 11:8

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Genesis 12:1-9

ABRAHAM is known as "the father of the faithful." He attained this stature because of his obedience under difficult and trying circumstances. God developed and tested Abraham's faith by many experiences, and leaving his homeland without knowing where the Lord was leading him was the first of these experiences.

Apparently after the Flood the descendants of Noah soon reverted to idol worship, for we read in Joshua 24:2, "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods." But Abraham, in spite of this evil influence, believed

God, and therefore God could use him as a servant.

There is much in archeological discoveries to indicate that Ur of the Chaldees was a prosperous city, and apparently Abraham shared in this prosperity. It is hard for us to appreciate fully the difficult test of faith that this call of the Lord must have been. It involved leaving an established way of life, with security, and embarking on a totally new way of existence as a nomad, with no security or protection except as provided by the Lord. He did not even know where or how far he was to go.

God's instructions to Abraham were, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee."

Abraham's faithful obedience to the Lord's call is given as an example to the Christian in Hebrews, the 11th chapter. We can appreciate the analogy, for when the Lord calls us we too are asked to give up all earthly ties, even to families and friends, and to entrust our lives to the leadings and overruling providences of the Lord.

In Matthew 10:36-39 Jesus states, "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

The thought is, of course, that the Christian must cut all earthly ties so that nothing interferes with the Lord's requirement: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."—Matt. 22:37

Just as the Lord promised Abraham that he would have great rewards if he was faithful, so Jesus also promises rewards to his followers who are faithful. We read in Luke 18:28-30, "Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. And

he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

In Hebrews 11:10 the apostle tells us of the hope that sustained Abraham through all of his trials and testings. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Abraham apparently realized that the arrangement that he had left in Ur was not to be compared with the government, or arrangement, that will prevail when God's kingdom is established here in the earth. And apparently he looked forward to his place in that kingdom as it had been revealed to him by God.

Again the Apostle Paul, in Hebrews 13:14, compares the experience of Abraham to that of the true follower of Jesus: "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." That is, the true follower of Jesus is a stranger and sojourner in the land now, and his citizenship is not here, but in a city, or government, that is to be established in the future—the kingdom of God. □

Struggling with Doubt

MEMORY SELECTION: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness."—II Corinthians 12:9

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Genesis 17:1-8, 15-19

WHEN God first made the promise to Abram that he would have a seed, Abram was approximately seventy-five years old. At that time the prospect seemed reasonable and proper. But as time elapsed and Abram grew older, the probability of having the promise fulfilled in a natural way was getting more and more remote.

At the time of our present lesson Abram was ninety-nine years old and Sarah was ninety. From the human standpoint the fulfillment of the promise was an impossibility, and yet the Lord reaffirmed his promise in a most emphatic way. He made the covenant of circumcision with Abram, saying, "My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." (Gen. 17:13) In reaffirming the promise God said, "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my

covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." —Gen. 17:5-7

For the moment Abraham was overcome by the seeming impossibility of this wonderful promise. "Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?"—vs. 17

In Abraham's mind the whole matter could have been concluded in a much more obvious way. From his previous relationship with Hagar, Sarah's handmaid (Gen. 16:2-16), Ishmael was born, and Abraham loved his son Ishmael. In verse 18 of our selected scripture Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" But it was God's design that the circumstances be conclusive that a child could not be born to Abraham and Sarah unless it was by a miracle from

God. This, of course, was necessary, because the Apostle Paul tells us in Galatians 4:22-26 that the lives of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar were an allegory; that in the picture portrayed Abraham represented God, Sarah represented the Abrahamic Covenant, and the child born to Sarah represented the Seed of that covenant, which was by grace. In Galatians 3:16 the Apostle Paul states, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ."

And so the child promised to Abraham and Sarah, whose name was to be Isaac, was to picture Christ. From the accounts given to us in the Gospels, especially in Luke, we know that Jesus, too, had a miraculous birth, and that his birth was the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his

holy covenant; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham."—Luke 1:68-73

In Genesis 21:1-3 we read, "And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac."

After this demonstration of the faithfulness of God in keeping his promises, Abraham was content to submit himself and the course of his life entirely to the overruling providences of God.

It is interesting to note God's tenderness in regard to Abraham's love for Ishmael, for in Genesis 17:20 God said, "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation."

We are told by the Apostle Paul in Galatians, the fourth chapter, that Hagar pictured the Law Covenant and her children pictured the Jewish nation. God kept this promise, also, to Abraham, for he did make of Ishmael a strong nation. □

Giving What God Asks

MEMORY SELECTION: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son."—Hebrews 11:17

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Genesis 22:1-13

THE experience of Abraham recorded in our lesson today was the supreme test of faith in his life.

The account reads, in Genesis 22:2,5, "And he said, 'Take now thy son, thine only . . . Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. . . . And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.'"

As Abraham left his entourage to go with Isaac to the mountain that God had indicated, he revealed why he was able to carry out God's command even though he suffered agony in his heart. He said, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." Abraham had unfaltering

faith in the promises of God, and he believed that what Jehovah had promised he would perform, even if it required that Isaac be restored to life.

The Apostle Paul, in Hebrews 11:17-19, recounts this incident as an evidence of Abraham's abounding faith: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

From the account given in Genesis 22:9-11 we learn that God permitted Abraham to build the altar and to bind and place Isaac on the altar upon the wood. "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son." (vs. 10)

But an angel of the Lord stayed Abraham's hand and provided a ram for a burnt offering instead of Isaac. But God had tested Abraham's faith to the uttermost, for he knew that in his heart Abraham was prepared to carry out God's instruction. Hence, the Apostle Paul could say that Abraham received Isaac from the dead in a figure.

We can understand that it was necessary for Isaac to live, in order that the promises made to Abraham might be fulfilled. Everything was centered in Isaac and his ability to propagate the seed.

We also understand that the experience of Abraham was designed by the Heavenly Father to be a picture of the reality; that is, how God gave his only begotten Son as a sacrifice in order that mankind might have an opportunity for life. We think of the statement of Jesus himself in John 3:16,17, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

But this gift to the world was not without immense cost to God. For just as Abraham

suffered in offering the dearest treasure of his heart, so God must have suffered untold anguish in permitting his beloved Son to die the horrible death of the cross.

It was necessary also that Jesus live so that the promises of God might be fulfilled. The merit of Jesus' sacrifice was efficacious to lift adamic condemnation from the human race, but this would not have accomplished God's purpose of restoring mankind to perfection. God's plan of restoration calls for a long period of training in order that mankind, when brought back from the grave, might learn righteousness and have a real opportunity to be obedient and thus earn life.—Acts 3:19-23

This is to be accomplished during the thousand years of Christ's kingdom. Since Jesus is to be the Mediator of this arrangement he, of necessity, had to be resurrected. And so Jesus became the firstfruits of them that slept. (I Cor. 15:20) It is necessary, also, that the church, which is to be associated with Jesus in the great work of mediation, be resurrected and exalted to the divine nature; for Christ and his church together are the seed of Abraham, the spiritual seed of blessing.—Galatians 3:16, 27-29 □

Attempting Self-sufficiency

MEMORY SELECTION: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."—Proverbs 3:5

SELECTED SCRIPTURES: Genesis 25:29-34; 29:21-30

THE Apostle Paul in Romans 9:10-14 states, "But when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even our father Isaac, (for the children being not yet born neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have hated."

Our text quoted above states specifically that Jacob was chosen by God before he was born, and therefore before he had an opportunity to do good or evil. Works could not, therefore, have been a factor in his selection. But evidently God, in the exercise of his foreknowledge, knew the type of character that Jacob would have; that he would appreciate and cherish the birthright and God's favor.

Esau, on the other hand, was a profane person. That is, he

was worldly, a man of the world who loved worldly pleasures and his associations with worldly people.

The context of the scripture states that Jacob had prepared pottage. Esau came in from the field very hungry, and he asked for a portion of the food. Jacob said, "Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob."—Genesis 25:31-33

We, of course, recognize that the birthright in this transaction was the promise that God made to Abraham. When Abraham died, the promise became a birthright which was passed on to Isaac. And now that Isaac was near death, the birthright according to custom should have been passed on to the eldest son, Esau. His appraisal of the

inheritance, however, was measured by his willingness to sell it for a mess of pottage. We know that by subtleness Jacob received the blessing that Isaac intended to give to Esau.

Esau's sale of his birthright was bona fide. He even sealed the arrangement with his oath. When it came time to bestow the blessing of the birthright, Esau should have explained this transaction and have seen to it that Jacob be given the blessing. But he did not. Only by clever maneuvering did Jacob receive that which properly belonged to him.

The Apostle Paul, in Romans the 9th chapter, uses this experience of Jacob and Esau to illustrate the point that God's favor is by his grace. He states in verse 15, "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

The Jews in Paul's day found it difficult to accept the fact that the Gentiles were being invited to the high calling. They felt, since they were the natural seed of Abraham, that the promise belonged exclusively to them. But because of their hardness of heart and their unfaithfulness God chose to select only those of the Jewish people who were of the right heart attitude, and the

remainder from the Gentiles.

In Romans 9:7,8 we read, "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

In other words, the fact that the Jews were the natural seed did not mean that they had a birthright to the high calling. This does not mean that individuals of that nation were excluded. The exclusion applied only to the nation. The apostle emphasizes this fact in Hebrews 9:15, which reads, "And for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament [covenant], that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament [covenant], they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

And so the Jews as a nation, because they placed their hope of salvation in their ability to keep the law, did not recognize their need for a mediator and did not recognize Him when He came to them. Instead, they rejected Him and, as a nation, were therefore cast off.—Matt. 23:37,38 []

Vineyard Echoes



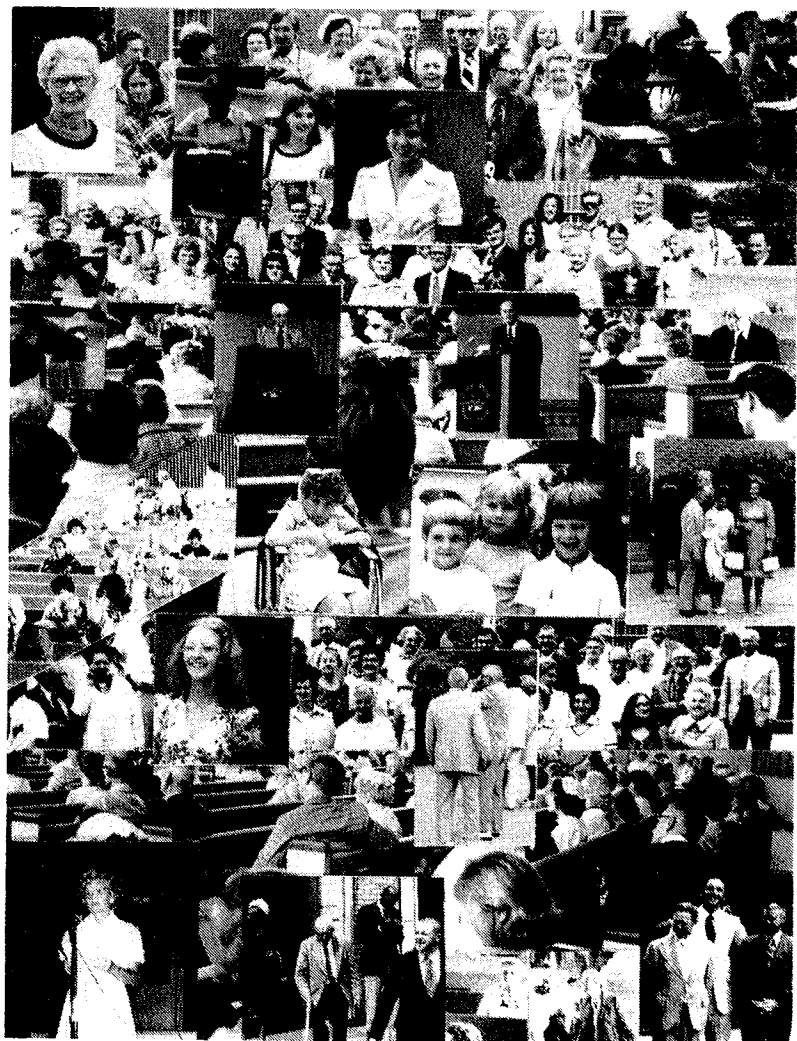
Reflections of

The General Convention—1975

AS WE look forward each year to the General Convention, it seems so very far away. Then it comes on us with a rush, we are there—and all too quickly it is over! But the lessons we have learned, the warm fellowship with brethren we have longed to see again, the delightful vesper services, and meeting our new brethren who have just given themselves to the Lord—the sweet memories of all this remain.

But as we get older, our memories begin to fail us; the faces of the loved ones in distant places grow dim in our minds. And so we have prepared this picture report of some phases of the convention. We hope it will keep alive in your heart a sense of the wonderful blessings enjoyed together at Albion during that privileged week of August 2-7, 1975! And that it will encourage you to begin now to make plans for attending next year, for it is not too early to do so. Wouldn't you like to join all those happy people of the Lord?

The place will be the same—Albion College, Albion, Michigan. The dates will be July 31—August 5, 1976. We hope we shall see you there; and until then, may the Lord's rich blessing be upon you!



General Convention
August 2-7, 1975



Program Participants
Saturday, August 2, 1975



Chicago Brethren
(bottom)



Indiana Brethren



Convention Committee, bottom
Recording Room, upper right



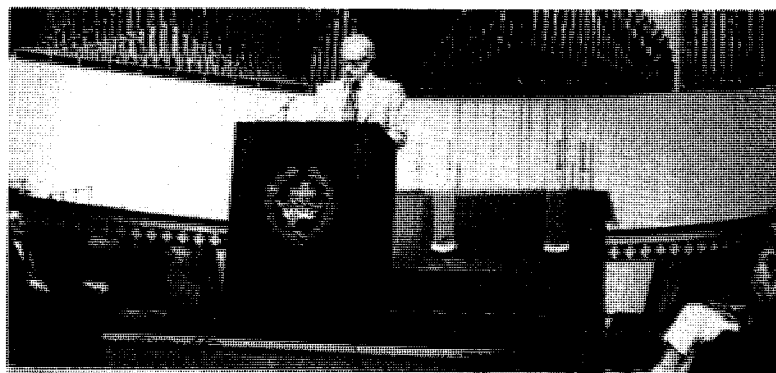
Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C.



Program participants
Sunday, August 3, 1975



Greek Brethren (bottom)



Four Generations of Bible Students (bottom)



Auditorium



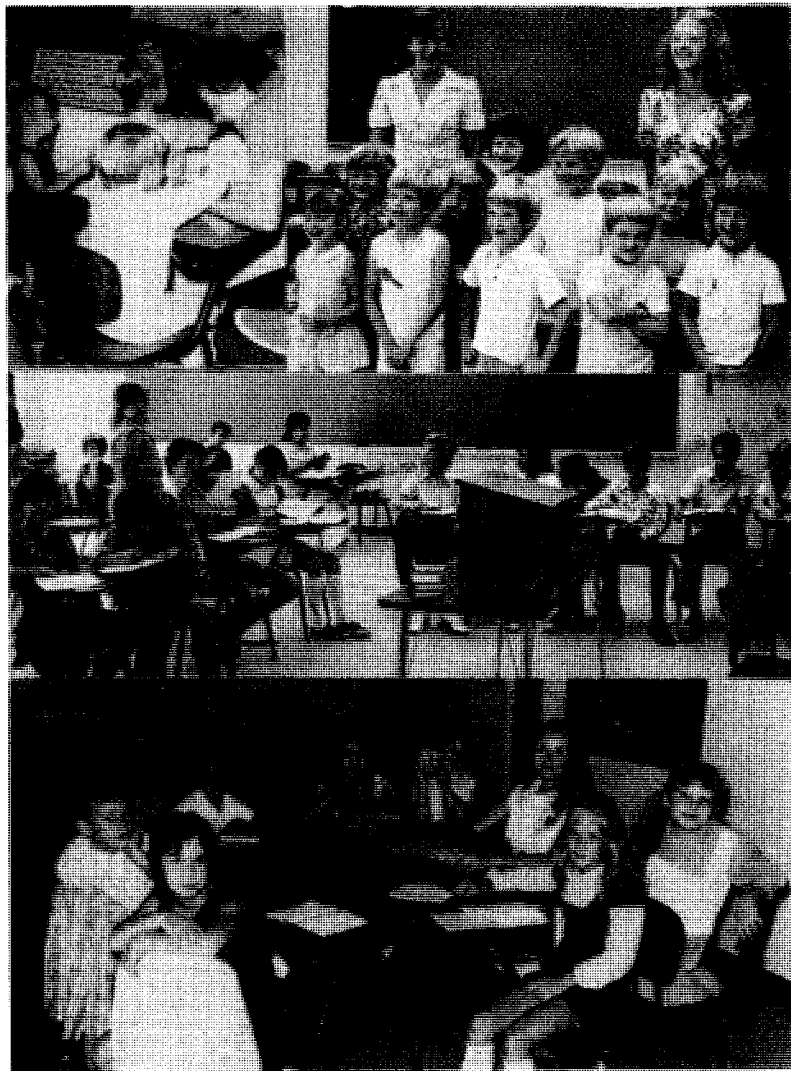
Albion College, Albion, Michigan



New York and New Jersey Brethren



Program Participants
Monday, August 4, 1975



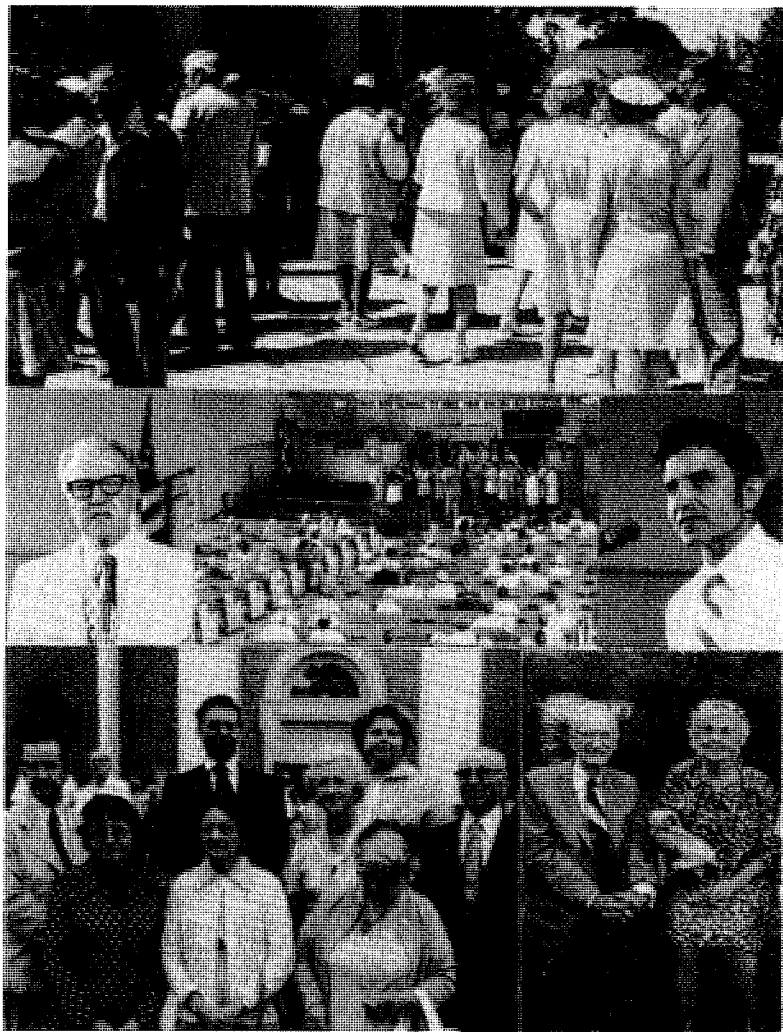
Children's Bible Study Classes



California Brethren



General Convention
August, 1975



Midwest Brethren
(lower left)



Vesper Services



Florida Brethren (bottom)



Program Participants
Tuesday, August 5, 1975



Michigan Brethren



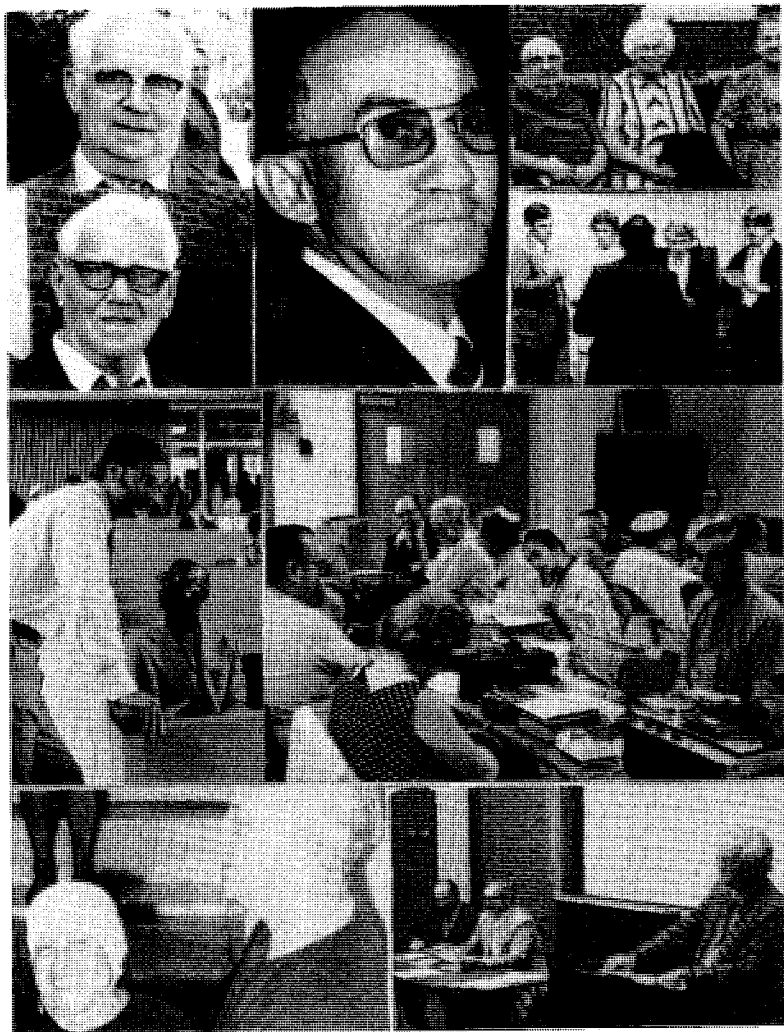
Children's Bible Study Classes



Brethren from the Northwest



Immersion Service



Immersion Service (lower left)

Recording Room (right center)



Program Participants
Wednesday, August 6, 1975



**General Convention
Albion College, August, 1975**



A Few of the Illinois Brethren



Brethren from New England



Ohio Delegation



Albion, Michigan, August, 1975



Dining Room (top picture)



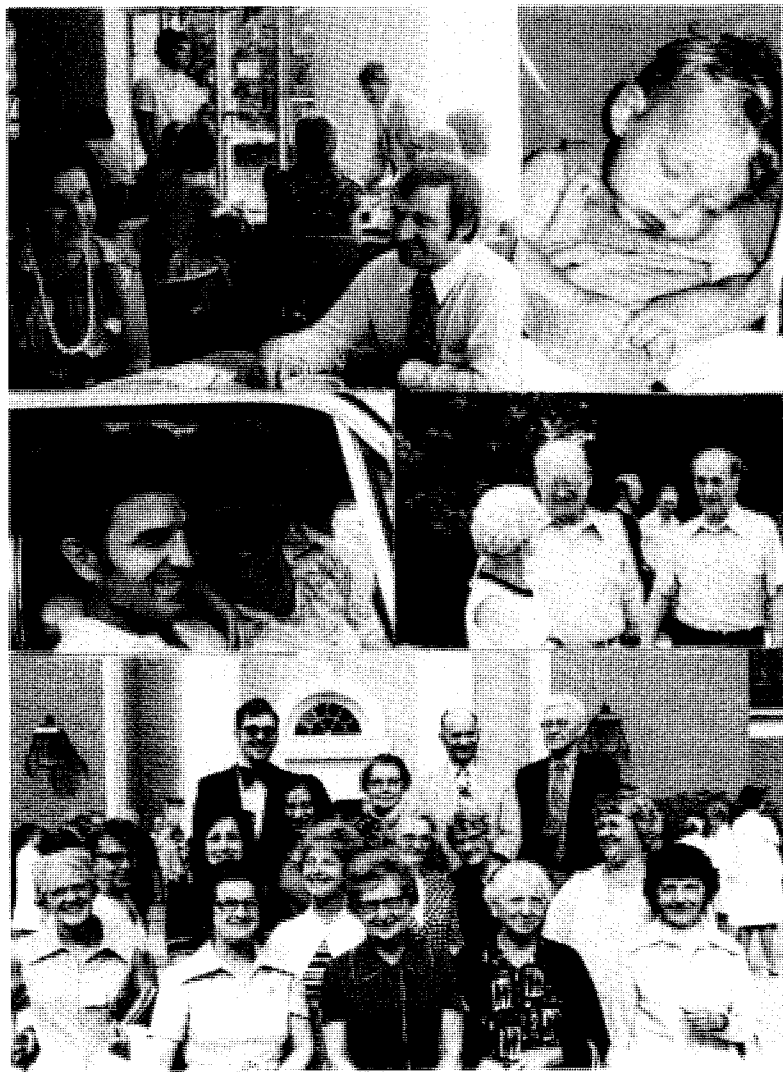
Program Participants
Thursday, August 7, 1975



Children's Bible Study Classes



Brethren from Canada



Wisconsin Brethren



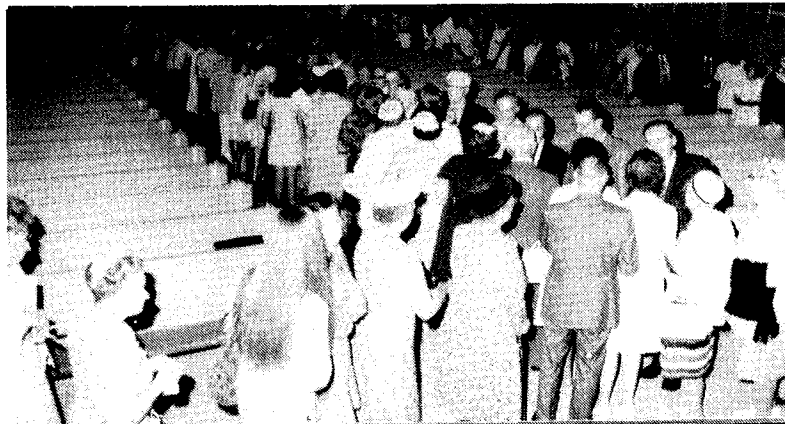
Delegation from Pennsylvania



General Convention
Albion, August, 1975



Love Feast



Love Feast, Albion, Michigan, August, 1975
"Till We Meet Again" (at the 1976 General Convention!)

Speakers' Appointments

MINISTERING THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF CHRIST

These speakers are associated with the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their services are furnished free upon request. Address your request to Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, N.J. 07073. A visit will be arranged when possible.

S. ALLEN		St. Petersburg, FL	24
Allentown, PA	Oct. 19	Orlando, FL	26
G. JEUCK		Virginia Beach, VA	30
New Haven, CT	Oct. 12	Blackstone, VA	31
A. KRUMPOLT		E. K. PENROSE	
Sayville, NY	Oct. 19	Oklahoma City, OK	Oct. 2
K. M. NAIL		Weatherford, TX	3
Milwaukee, WI	Oct. 11, 12	Shreveport, LA	5
Philadelphia, PA	19	Louisville, AL	7
G. PASSIOS		Birmingham, AL	8
Berwick, PA	Oct. 12	Nashville, TN	9
H. PASSIOS		Columbus, OH	12
Cincinnati, OH	Oct. 9	Knoxville, TN	28
Knoxville, TN	10	Hendersonville, NC	29
Nashville, TN	12	Lynchburg, VA	30
Chatanooga, TN	13	Virginia Beach, VA	31
Muscle Shoals, AL	14	L. POST	
Birmingham, AL	15	Philadelphia, PA	Oct. 19
New Orleans, LA	17	T. T. TRZECIAK	
Louisville, AL	19	Milwaukee, WI	Oct. 23
Columbus, GA	20	F. S. WASSMANN	
Miami, FL	23	Philadelphia, PA	Oct. 26

BRITISH SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

E. T. NADAL		W. F. READER	
Newport	Oct. 4	Latchford	Oct. 19
Dewsbury	25		
Hull	Nov. 8		

Subscriptions and Literature—70 Station Road, Gidea Park, Romford, Essex. RM2 6DA

Tapes and Cassettes on loan—15, Southwood Gardens, Gants Hill, Ilford, Essex. IG2 6YF

Conventions

MINNEAPOLIS, MN, Oct. 5—2601 Fillmore St., N.E. Mrs. Mike Nekora, 2601 Fillmore St., N.E. 55418

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA, Oct. 11, 12—Odd Fellows Hall, 520 Dana St. Mrs. Elmer A. Nord, 1235 Peach St., #B 93401

GRAND RAPIDS, MI, Oct. 11, 12—Walker Junior High, 4252 - 3 Mile Rd., N.W. Mrs. Bernard Fuerst, 804 Conger St., N.E. 49505

MILWAUKEE, WI, Oct. 11, 12—Aurora Lodge, 734 N. 26 St. Mrs. Violet Pazucha, 4454 S. 14 St. 53221

NEW LONDON-NORWICH, CT, Oct. 19—Mohegan Community College, Mahan Dr., Norwich. Candidates for immersion, please write secretary: Mrs. Joseph Goullis, 155 W. Thames St., Norwich 06360

CINCINNATI, OH, Oct. 18, 19—Masonic Temple, Social Room 3, 317 E. Fifth St. Mrs. Margaret Ellis, R.F.D. 1, Box 71, Melbourne, KY 41059

CLEVELAND, OH, Oct. 19—Masonic Temple, 3615 Euclid Ave. Mrs. Irwin J. Doran, 3442 Monticello Blvd. 44121

PHILADELPHIA, PA, Oct. 19 (Note change of date)—Y.W.C.A., 2027 Chestnut St. Mr. Earl Famous, 39 Marlborough Rd., Upper Darby 19082, or Mrs. Otis R. Barrall, 37 Wilson Ave., Rutherford, NJ 07070

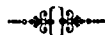
ORLANDO, FL, Oct. 26—Orlando Garden Club, 710 E. Rollins St. Mrs. S. W. Jeuck, 587 Queens Mirror Circle, Casselberry 32707

CHICAGO, IL, Oct. 26—Masonic Temple, 5352 W. Chicago Ave. Mr. George Tabac, 900 Brentwood Dr., Bensenville 60106

DETROIT, MI, Oct. 26—Northwest Branch, Y.W.C.A., 25940 Grand River. Mr. Frank Nemesh, 25354 Cunningham, Warren 48091

PORTLAND, OR, Nov. 8, 9

PHOENIX, AZ, Jan. 1-4



Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

OCTOBER 2—"Forgetting those things which are behind."—Philippians 3:13 (Z. '04-23 Hymn 192)

OCTOBER 9—"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"—Matthew 8:26 (Z. '04-60 Hymn App. Z)

OCTOBER 16—"He maketh the storm a calm."—Psalm 107:29 (Z.

'04-60 Hymn 328)

OCTOBER 23—"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."—Matthew 20:27 (Z. '04-140 Hymn 244)

OCTOBER 30—"No man can serve two masters."—Matthew 6:24 (Z. '01-61 Hymn 301)