

The DAWN

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A New Year—2016

“It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”
—Isaiah 2:2,3

HOLDING FAST OUR CONFIDENCE AND HOPE

Despite the pleas and efforts of many world leaders, and the sincere desire of a majority of earth’s inhabitants, the goal of worldwide peace which so many claim to be seeking was not reached in 2015. Two thousand years ago Jesus came to earth to be “The Prince of Peace,” but it is evident that the due time in the plan of God for him to establish peace on earth has not yet come. Through various misunderstandings of the plan of God, many professed followers of Jesus have supposed that they were commissioned to establish peace in his name. All such efforts have failed, however, and as we begin 2016, the major problems which exist in the

world—financial, political, social, environmental, and religious—continue with no resolutions in sight.

Notwithstanding present conditions in the world, we enter the new year holding fast our confidence and rejoicing in expectation that God’s plan for peace on earth and good will toward men will not fail. If we wish to be assured of such a glorious future for mankind it is essential that we take into consideration the testimony of the Scriptures concerning that plan. The full truth concerning any feature of God’s purpose is never stated in a single passage of scripture, but in Isaiah’s testimony concerning “the mountain” of the Lord we have a fairly complete outline of the manner in which God will establish peace, and bring about “the desire of all nations.”—Hag. 2:7

Isaiah identifies the time for the fulfillment of his prophecy as being “in the last days.” This does not mean in the last days of the earth, nor does it mean in the last days of man’s existence on the earth. The Bible tells us that the “earth abideth forever,” and it was formed to be inhabited by man. (Eccles. 1:4; Gen. 1:26-28; Isa. 45:18) Prophetically speaking, “the last days” are those days of the closing period of the reign of sin and death, immediately after which, by divine intervention, God’s long-promised kingdom will be established. We believe that we are now living in the foretold “last days,” and that peace will be established in the earth, not by human efforts, but by the authority and power vested in Christ by the Heavenly Father.

Note what Isaiah said would take place in “the last days.” “The mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established,” or prepared. The word “mountain”

is symbolic in this verse and is used by the Lord to illustrate his kingdom. In Daniel 2:35,44, God's symbolic "mountain" is said to be established in "the days of these kings," those depicted in the human-like image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. From this prophecy, we know that when God speaks of his "mountain," the reference is to his kingdom.

MOUNT ZION

The symbolic use of a mountain to denote a kingdom, or government, would be familiar to the people of the ancient nation of Israel. God ruled over them through his chosen representatives, whose seat of government was at Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Similarly, in Isaiah's prophecy he identifies "the mountain of the LORD," referring to it as "Zion." In a reference to Jesus as the exalted new King of earth, God declares, "Yet have I set [anointed] my king upon my holy hill of Zion."—Ps. 2:6

Isaiah refers to God's mountain as "the mountain of the LORD'S house." The "house" is God's ruling house, or family. This language is familiar, for during centuries past the Roman world was governed by ruling families called "houses." In these families the right to rule was passed on from generation to generation. This was also true in the typical ruling house of David until it was overthrown by Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar.

Chief in God's antitypical ruling house is his beloved Son, Christ Jesus. He is the one destined to rule "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." (Ps. 72:8) This one who is called, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,"

died in order to redeem his subjects—mankind—from death. (Rev. 19:16) Thus, when his kingdom is operative he will rule over living subjects, not dying ones. Similarly, a dead king could not rule, so God raised Jesus from the dead, and gave him “all power . . . in heaven and in earth.”—Matt. 28:18

WITH THE LAMB

The Bible also reveals that Jesus will have associate rulers in his kingdom. These are his faithful footstep followers of the present Gospel Age. Concerning these the Apostle Paul wrote, “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.” (II Tim. 2:11,12) Again, in Romans 8:16,17, we read, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Jesus said of this same group of his faithful followers, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”—Luke 12:32

In the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John tells us that he saw a “Lamb” stand on “mount Sion,” and that there were “with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” It is explained that these followed the Lamb, and were the “firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” (Rev. 14:1,4) The “Lamb” here referred to is the glorified Jesus, and those who have his Father’s name written in their foreheads are identified as also being in the family of God. They also are part of God’s ruling house

which, in the last days, is established, or prepared, in the “top of the mountains” to constitute a new world government.

The same group is again referred to in Revelation 20:4,6, where we are told that they are “beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God,” and that “they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” They come forth in “the first resurrection,” and, as “priests of God and of Christ, . . . shall reign with him a thousand years.” It is thus clearly indicated that the ruling “house” of the Lord which is established in “the last days” is Christ and his faithful followers. These are described by Jesus as “children of the kingdom,” who “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”—Matt. 13:38,43

ALL NATIONS TO BE BLESSED

Isaiah informs us that when this “mountain of the LORD’S house” is established in the top of the mountains, indicating its control over all the kingdoms of this world, “all nations shall flow unto it.” While the prophetic testimony of the Scriptures indicates that the events of these “last days” are in preparation for the setting up of the “mountain of the LORD’S house,” the work of its establishment is not yet fulfilled. Certainly “all nations” are not now flowing into that kingdom.

The kingdom of Christ today is far from the thoughts of the nations of earth—professed Christian and non-Christian alike. They still imagine that they can solve their own problems, and in at least some cases, we may say that they are probably doing the best they can. No present efforts,

however, will be able to stem the tide of distorted thinking and general human selfishness which now holds this fear-filled world in its grip.

Mankind will not recognize and admit their inability to establish peace until the final spasms of this present “great tribulation” come to pass. Only then will they realize that by divine power “those days” have been “shortened.” (Matt. 24:21,22) At that time they will say, “Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

While the Scriptures indicate that Israel will be the geographic center of the Lord’s earthly kingdom, the reference in this prophecy to “Zion” and “Jerusalem” is symbolic. Zion, as we have seen, is symbolic of Christ and the faithful members of his true church—those who will live and reign with him. These receive the “first resurrection,” are exalted to the divine nature, and, we believe, will be invisible to men. However, they will function through perfect human representatives.

Jesus tells us who these perfect human agents will be—“Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets.” He said that in the kingdom on earth the people would “come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south,” and “sit down” with them, indicating the relationship of teachers and students. (Luke 13:28,29) In Hebrews, chapter 11, the names of many of these “worthy” ones are mentioned, and we are informed that they proved their faithfulness, and will “obtain

a better resurrection.” Paul also informs us that they will be “made perfect.” That is, having by faith already passed their trial, they will be awakened from death perfect.—Heb. 11:35,39,40

In Psalm 45:16, these are referred to as the former “fathers” of Israel, and the explanation is given that instead of maintaining this particular position, they will become the “children” of the Christ, and be made “princes in all the earth.” These intermediaries, while not the rulers of the kingdom in the proper sense of the word, will so fully represent Christ among men that they will be recognized as the kingdom’s earthly leaders by mankind. Hence, we might speak of these and their role as being the earthly ruling phase of the kingdom, symbolically referred to as “Jerusalem” by Isaiah.

It is evident that these perfect earthly leaders of the kingdom will be on terms of intimate communion, fellowship, and cooperation with its spiritual rulers, the Christ, just as Adam, in perfection prior to his transgression, could commune with the heavenly powers. The spiritual and earthly leaders of the kingdom will be related to each other as father and children, and as collaborative branches of the same heavenly government. The heavenly phase will be the law-giving department, and the earthly will be the teaching and law-administering branch. Thus we have the promise that “out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

Then will be the time when the Lord’s judgments will be abroad in the earth as depicted by Psalm 98:7-9, which reads, “Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell

therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.” What a refreshing experience that will be for the sin-sick, distressed, and fear-filled world of mankind!

Concerning the qualities of the great judge—the Christ—during the thousand-year kingdom judgment day, Isaiah wrote, “The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.”—Isa. 11:2-5

A FEW WILL NOT OBEY

It is apparent from the foregoing scripture that not all the people will obey the laws which go forth from Messiah’s kingdom. The great judge, and his associates, will be able to discern this, and will be capable of rendering just retribution and punishment. There will doubtless be some willful sinners, and it is these who are referred to as the “wicked” who are slain by “the breath of his lips,” meaning the pronouncements which will then go forth from “Zion” and “Jerusalem.”

The Apostle Peter refers to these in Acts, chapter 3. In the context, Peter tells about “the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” This period, he explains, occurs during the Second Advent or “presence” of Christ Jesus, whom he speaks of in this sermon as “that prophet.” He states that “it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”—vss. 20-23

What rich blessings, however, will accrue to those who obey the laws of the new kingdom! These are the ones who will then say, “He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.” When they do learn God’s ways, and walk in the paths of peace he outlines for them, “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”—Isa. 2:3,4

In a similar prophecy by Micah, he adds that then “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.” (Mic. 4:4) At long last, the world will then have freedom from fear, distress, and want. All will have economic security, and together will dwell in safety and in peace forever.

FROM SICKNESS AND DEATH

In Isaiah 25:6-9, we have another prophecy of Christ’s kingdom in which it is referred to as a “mountain.” In these wonderful verses we are assured that the Lord will make unto all people “a feast of fat things,” and that he will “destroy [*margin*, swallow

up] . . . the face of the covering cast over all people.” This is a reference to the people’s general lack of knowledge concerning God due to the fact that Satan has covered their mental discernment and kept them in darkness. However, then it will be different. The “earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”—Isa. 11:9

The prophet assures us also that God will “swallow up death in victory,” and “wipe away tears from off all faces.” (chap. 25:8) These words present truly a glorious prospect! They assure us that Christ will reign until “all enemies” are put down, and “the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” (I Cor. 15:25,26) Then “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”—Rev. 21:4

As we enter upon the year 2016, a sense of danger, distress, perplexity, and fear holds the world in its clutches. The purpose of the events of these “last days,” which will soon reach a culmination, is to transform the hearts of the whole world of mankind, and make them ready for the wonderful blessings of the kingdom. Thus, let us view these things from God’s eternal perspective, and see the silver lining to the present clouds of trouble. The Apostle Peter told us where to focus our mental vision, saying, “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” (II Pet. 3:13,14) So minded, we can “hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”—Heb. 3:6 ■

A Bride Worth Waiting For

Key Verse: “*So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years.*”
—**Genesis 29:30**
(*New American Standard Bible*)

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 29:15-30

however, Jacob fled his homeland, following his father’s instructions to journey to the house of Laban and take one of his daughters as his wife.—Gen. 28:1-3

As Jacob travelled, he was strengthened by God, who renewed his promises to him. Then he “came into the land of the people of the east.” (Gen. 28:10-22; 29:1) Upon reaching his destination, he saw shepherds watering their flocks near a well. He found that they knew Laban. As they talked, Rachel, one of Laban’s daughters, came to the well. Jacob was taken by Rachel’s beauty. Upon arriving at Laban’s home, he related his reason for being there. Laban suggested that “wages” be paid to Jacob

THE BACKGROUND OF OUR

lesson centers on Jacob’s departure from his brother, Esau. We recall that Esau had sold his firstborn “birthright” to Jacob for “bread and pottage of lentils.” Later, Jacob also obtained the chief blessing from his father Isaac. (Gen. 25:29-34; 27:1-46) As a result of these incidents, Esau hated his brother and resolved in his heart that he would kill him after the death of their father. Through the overruling providences of God,

however, Jacob fled his homeland, following his father’s instructions to journey to the house of Laban and take one of his daughters as his wife.—Gen. 28:1-3

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for his work on behalf of the household.—Gen. 29:2-15

Jacob proposed that he serve Laban for seven years in return for his younger daughter Rachel, who would then become his wife. To this Laban agreed. However, at the end of the seven years, because Leah, his older daughter, was not yet married, Laban found himself in a difficult position. According to the custom of the day, it was improper to give a younger daughter in marriage while an older one remained unwed. Laban's solution was to give Leah, the older daughter, to Jacob, instead of Rachel, which he did. Jacob was not satisfied with this arrangement, because he loved Rachel much more than Leah. (vss. 16-26) He then agreed to work another seven years in order to gain Rachel for his wife, as stated in our Key Verse.

Various pictures are presented to us in the account of these events. Concerning Jacob and Esau, we see how the natural seed of Abraham—fleshly Israel, represented by Esau—was first given the opportunity to be God's specially chosen and blessed people. They failed, however, to receive God's chief blessing. Like Esau, natural Israel, when they might have inherited the spiritual promises, preferred instead earthly things. The Gospel Age church, represented by Jacob, though developed later, receives the choicest blessings—the spiritual.—Rom. 9:11,12,30,31

Similarly, as Rachel was the one loved most and first promised to Jacob, the Abrahamic Covenant is that which the church is developed under, and was given by promise from God prior to "the law" covenant. (Gal. 3:8,16-18) Leah, the eldest daughter, represented the Law Covenant arrangement, which operated prior to the arrival of the Abrahamic seed of promise. Thus, natural Israel was first recognized, being called "children of the flesh" and "Israel after the flesh." (Rom. 9:8; I Cor. 10:18) Their experiences were used by God as an "example and shadow of heavenly things," and of "good things to come" to all the families of the earth.—Heb. 8:5; 10:1 ■

The Most Beautiful Bride

Key Verse: *“My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.”*
—*Song of Solomon*
6:9

Selected Scripture:
Song of Solomon
6:4-12

completely filled with love for him. The bride keeps herself undefiled from the world and its ways. She does this by daily going to the throne of heavenly grace in prayer for assistance, that she might be presented as “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle.”—Eph. 5:27

The Apostle Peter says, “Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” (II Pet. 3:14) We also note these important words from the psalmist, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation

IN THE KEY VERSE OF OUR lesson, the “dove, my undefiled” is used as a symbol of the purity of the church. The phrase, “she is the only one of her mother,” further indicates that symbolic reference is being made to the bride of Christ. There is only one true spiritual bride, the “choice one of her that bare her”—that is, the Sarah feature of the Abrahamic Covenant. (Gal. 4:22-26) Jesus’ bride is fully and completely in his heart, and he loves her exceedingly. She, in turn, desires to be like him in heart, mind, and being. She strives to be humble, gentle, peaceful, and

of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight.” (Ps. 19:14) The Prophet Isaiah describes the preparation which takes place in advance of the marriage of the spiritual bride to the bridegroom. “God . . . hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”—Isa. 61:10

Similar thoughts concerning the bride of Christ are given prophetically in Psalm, chapter 45, where the marriage scene is symbolically described. There Christ Jesus is shown as the “king” who greatly desires the beauty of his bride. The bride, Isaiah says, “is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold,” and she will be “brought unto the king in raiment of needlework.” She will have beauty of character and purity in heart, and be given a unique, special place of honor. In addition, “the virgins her companions that follow her shall [also] be brought . . . with gladness and rejoicing.” They all “shall enter into the king’s palace.”—Ps. 45:11-15

This is in agreement with the custom of past times. When a wedding was held, the father of the bride would present, along with his daughter, a maidservant who would accompany or “follow” her and, after the marriage, continue to be associated with her from that time forward. Sometimes, more than one maidservant would be presented, as pictured in this psalm. While the bridegroom, when speaking of his family, would only refer to one person as his wife, he would include as part of his extended family, or household, the bride’s maidservants. It is the faithful body of Christ who becomes his bride, and joint-heirs with him of all God’s heavenly promises. The “virgins her companions” will attain an honorable position and “serve” God “day and night.” They will be “before the throne,” and not on it, as will be the bride, who will share in all the glories, honor, and the immortal nature of the bridegroom.—Rev. 7:15; 3:21; Rom. 2:7 ■

An Unfaithful Bride

Key Verse: *“The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.”*
—Hosea 1:2

Selected Scripture:
Hosea 1

The opening chapter of the Book of Hosea appears to have been recorded in conjunction with the latter part of the reign of “Jeroboam the son of Joash.” (Hos. 1:1) Although Jeroboam “did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD,” he was better than those who followed him. In his mercy, God said that he would not “blot out the name of Israel from under heaven” during his reign, but save them “by the hand of Jeroboam.”—II Kings 14:24-27

As recorded in our Key Verse, God spoke to Hosea, telling him to take a wife who had been an adulteress,

THE PROPHECY OF HOSEA

was particularly addressed to the ten tribes of Israel. It was given during a time of great decline in their kingdom, and was soon followed by their captivity to the Assyrian empire. This was also the time of Israel’s deepest depravity, although God still maintained his covenant with them. Hosea’s name signifies “salvation,” which fits well with his prophecy. Of the minor prophets, only Zechariah speaks more often than Hosea concerning Israel’s future hope of being “saved” by the mighty power of God.

and have children by her. Children born of a woman who had lived in immorality were at that time held in very low regard, and deemed as having their mother's disposition and spirit. God's words, although spoken to Hosea, were symbolically in reference to his displeasure with the nation of Israel. Israel, who had been united to God by the Law Covenant, repeatedly ran after other gods, uniting to them in an adulterous manner. As each new generation of Israelites was "born," these "children" continued in the disobedient ways of their predecessors. This further pointed out the general unfaithfulness of the nation to their true "husband"—the Heavenly Father.

The sins of Israel continued even to the time of the coming of their Messiah, whom they rejected. Lamenting their condition, Jesus spoke these words to them, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23:37,38) The favor which had previously been exclusively theirs was now being withdrawn. Jesus continued, saying, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (vs. 39) This provided a ray of hope, that eventually Israel will recognize their Messiah, Christ Jesus, and once again receive God's blessing. Centuries earlier, David had prophesied of these things, similarly stating that Israel would again be blessed.—Ps. 118:18-26

God's words to Hosea, as they symbolically apply to Israel, appear harsh. Yet, in reality they show his deep love, which had been severely wounded by their unfaithfulness. We are thankful, however, that God will bless Israel, and all mankind, in Messiah's kingdom, as he promised to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."—Gen. 22:18 ■

A Wedding in Cana

Key Verse: *“The governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.”*
—John 2:9,10

Selected Scripture:
John 2:1-12

Cana was the home town of Nathanael—one of the latest additions to the number of Jesus’ disciples.

Nathanael at first had doubts when he was told by Philip that Jesus was the one “of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write.” He asked Philip, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip replied, “Come and see.” (John 1:45,46) Upon meeting Jesus, the Lord said of Nathanael, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” Nathanael inquired how Jesus knew of him. Jesus explained that he had seen him under a fig tree before Philip had approached him.

THE SETTING OF OUR LESSON

is in the region of Galilee. Jesus had been traveling in this area, selecting his disciples, when he was invited to attend a marriage celebration in Cana, a small village less than ten miles from his home town of Nazareth. Traveling from the northern portion of the province, Jesus arrived in “Cana of Galilee” on “the third day” of his journey. Those who had invited him, his mother, and his disciples to the wedding were evidently either relatives or close friends, given the proximity of Cana to Nazareth. (John 2:1,2) In addition,

Knowing this to be true, Nathanael proclaimed, “Rabbi [Master], thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.”—vss. 47-49

Continuing with the account of the marriage in Cana, upon his arrival Jesus was informed by Mary his mother, “They have no wine.” (John 2:3) Jewish wedding customs included supplying their guests with wine, and with none available, Jesus saw this as an opportunity to perform what would be the “beginning of miracles” during his earthly ministry. Although the immediate result of Jesus’ miracle was to supply the marriage feast with wine, the more important lesson was that it increased the faith of his disciples. It “manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”—vs.11

In preparation for the miracle, Jesus instructed servants to take six water pots and fill them with water, which they did. The change of the water into wine was evidently instantaneous, because Jesus told the servants to take the pots of water and “draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.” (vss. 6-8) When the governor tasted the water that was now made wine, he inquired as to how this had come to pass. (vs. 9) Although no answer was given, the governor spoke to the bridegroom the words of our Key Verse, gladly pronouncing the wine to be of the very finest quality. He praised the one who had provided it, noting that the best wine had been served, rather than that of lesser quality, which was often the case.

There is a symbolic lesson in this experience. Water is used in the Scriptures as a symbol of the Word of truth, and is also called the “water of life.” (Eph. 5:26; Rev. 22:17) As Jesus instructed the servants to fill the vessels with water, we are to be imbued with the Truth, and “filled with the Spirit.” (Eph. 5:18) Thus, the water of truth becomes the “wine” of sound doctrine, by which we are changed—“transformed by the renewing” of our minds.—Rom. 12:2

■

The Death of a Friend

Key Verse: “*When he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.*”
—*John 11:43*

Selected Scripture:
John 11:38-44

involved a family of Jesus’ special friends, and the mighty power of God which was displayed on their behalf. It is one of the most touching events recorded during the period of our Lord’s earthly ministry.

Turning to the Gospel of John, chapter 11, we immediately recognize this experience as having to do with the death of Lazarus, who, along with his sisters Mary and Martha, were close friends of Jesus. Mary and Martha had previously rendered service to him at their home in Bethany, and it was Mary who would later anoint Jesus with costly ointment. (Luke 10:38-42; John 12:3) Now, however, their brother Lazarus was sick. They sent for Jesus, hoping he would come quickly and heal him, as he had done in so many other cases during his ministry. Upon hearing the news about the illness of his friend, Jesus, testing the faith of Mary and Martha, delayed two days before coming to Bethany. Finally, knowing that Lazarus was now dead, he said that he would go and “awake him out of [the] sleep” of death.—John 11:11-14

WE HAVE ALL BEEN

blessed in life by having special friends. Jesus also had several close companions, whom he loved greatly. On some occasions, especially at those times when he would travel to Jerusalem, he stayed in the home of his beloved friends. Our lesson for today recounts an incident

When Jesus arrived and saw Mary weeping, he asked, "Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see." Then, in a touching display of his sympathy and love, the account says "Jesus wept." (vss. 33-35) He wept, not only because of the sorrow surrounding the death of a close friend, but also on account of his personally witnessing the effects of the curse of sin and death which was upon mankind. (Gen. 2:17; 3:16-19; I Cor. 15:21,22) Jesus then reassured Mary and Martha, saying, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" The stone was taken away from the place where Lazarus was laid. Lifting up his eyes, Jesus said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me," in acknowledgement of God's power, giving all praise and glory to him.—John 11:40,41

The words in our Key Verse spoken by Jesus resonate yet today—"Lazarus, come forth." "He that was dead came forth," quickened by God's power. (vs. 44) This was not a "resurrection" in the full sense of its meaning. Lazarus later fell asleep in death once again, this time to await the resurrection which would come when all "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God." Indeed, Jesus said, "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth."—John 5:25,28,29

The Apostle Paul refers to the mighty power of God which was exercised to raise Jesus from the dead, and to exalt him to his right hand. He told the brethren at Ephesus that he was praying for them, that the eyes of their understanding would be enlightened to know the hope of their calling and "exceeding greatness" of divine power which had been exercised in the resurrection of Jesus. This same power, he says, is available to "us-ward who believe." (Eph. 1:17-22) It is because the eyes of our understanding are enlightened that we are able to look at the things "which are not seen," those which are "eternal," in the heavens.—II Cor. 4:17,18 ■

The Rich Man and Lazarus

*“If they hear not
Moses and the
prophets, neither
will they be
persuaded, though
one rose from
the dead.”
—Luke 16:31*

THE PARABLE OF THE rich man and Lazarus is one that is used widely by certain church denominations in their efforts to prove that eternal torment is the punishment for sin, rather than death, as so clearly stated by the

Apostle Paul. (Rom. 6:23) In this parable, recorded in Luke, chapter 16, Jesus speaks of a “certain rich man,” who was clothed in “purple and fine linen,” and who “fared sumptuously every day.”—vs. 19

There was also a “certain beggar named Lazarus,” who lay at the doorway of the rich man’s house. This beggar was “full of sores.” He desired to be fed, and was quite willing to eat the “crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table.” In the parable, dogs were present which licked the sores of the beggar.—vss. 20,21

In the course of time the rich man and the beggar of the parable both died. When the beggar died he was “carried by the angels into Abraham’s

bosom.” When the rich man died he was buried, and “in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.” He saw Abraham afar off, with Lazarus “in his bosom,” and he said, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.”—vss. 22-24

Abraham did not grant this favor, but simply reminded the rich man of his former favorable position, and the previous unfavorable lot of the beggar. He explained also that there was a “great gulf fixed” between them and the rich man, making it impossible for communication between them.—vss. 25,26

In the concluding verses of the parable, the rich man told Abraham that he had “five brethren.” He asked that they be warned against the same course he had taken, so that when they died they would not find themselves in “this place of torment.” In reply to this it was explained that these five brethren, like the rich man himself, had “Moses and the prophets” as their instructors, and that if they had not sufficiently heeded their warnings and repented, nothing more could be done, “though one rose from the dead.”—vss. 27-31

IS IT A PARABLE?

Those who advocate the teaching of the eternal torment theory insist that the account of the rich man and Lazarus is not a parable at all, but a statement of fact. They call attention to the fact that Jesus did not refer to it as a parable. They also refer to the statement, “a certain rich man,” claiming that Jesus was telling a story of a man who actually

lived and who, when he died, found himself being tormented in a literal hell of fire.

This story of the rich man, it is claimed by the eternal torture proponents, teaches that wicked, unconverted sinners go to a place of torture when they die, and that righteous believers in Christ go to heaven. However, since the story, by their own claim, is a literal statement, it does not prove these points at all. Nothing is said in this account about the rich man being an unbeliever, or even a sinner. It simply states that he was rich, "fared sumptuously every day," being evidently well fed. Moreover, the story does not inform us that the beggar was righteous, or a believer in Christ, but merely a "certain beggar." It also does not say that he went to heaven when he died. It does say, however, that he was "carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom."

So far as we know, there is no group of professed Christians who believe that the righteous are carried to Abraham's bosom by the angels when they die. According to the professed beliefs of those who teach the eternal torment theory, that part of the story is not a statement of fact and, therefore, must be a parable. We are also unaware of any groups which believe that Abraham can be addressed by those suffering in the flames of eternal torment, and that he is able to talk back to them, as occurs in this story. These verses also must be parabolic in nature.

There are other details of the story which would be equally unreasonable if we considered them to be literal statements. Thus, it seems manifestly evident that the whole account is a parable, even though, as in the case of a number of other parables, Jesus did not so designate it. Deeming it to be a

parable, therefore, it is proper that we consider the lesson which it teaches. This is one of Jesus' parables which he did not explain, so we should not be dogmatic as to its meaning, although there are certain statements in the story itself which provide clues as to what it teaches.

One of these statements is found near the close of the parable. When the rich man asks Abraham to testify to his five brethren concerning the situation, Abraham's reply is, "They have Moses and the prophets." (Luke 16:29) Here we have a family of six brothers who are said to have had Moses and the prophets as their teachers. The Scriptures state explicitly the fact that the only ones, up to Jesus' First Advent, who had Moses and the prophets as their teachers were those of the nation of Israel. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," God said to the Jews through the Prophet Amos. In this same verse, the Lord explains that because of this he would punish them for all their iniquities.—Amos 3:2

THE RICH MAN

Indeed, the Israelites, as a nation, were God's chosen people, and his means of communicating with them was through the Mosaic Law and the prophets. With this clue to guide us, we believe it is reasonable to consider that the "rich man" of the parable represents Israel as it existed at the time of our Lord's earthly ministry. This type of symbolism is used even today. For example, the term "Uncle Sam" is used to signify the United States, and the "Land Down Under" is a reference to Australia. Circumstances or events mentioned in context with

these terms would readily be understood as having reference to the two countries—United States and Australia.

Let us notice the characteristics of the rich man in the parable. He fared sumptuously every day. The nation of Israel did also fare sumptuously. That is, their table was filled with the nourishing symbolic food furnished by the Law and through the prophets. Paul wrote that they had much advantage in “every way” over the Gentiles in that to them were given “the oracles of God.”—Rom. 3:1,2

The rich man was arrayed in a purple robe and fine linen. Purple is a symbol of royalty, and Israel had the promise of becoming a royal, holy nation under God, through which, under the headship of the Messiah, all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Exod. 19:5,6) The white linen worn by the rich man is a symbol of righteousness. (Rev. 19:8) The measure of typical righteousness enjoyed by the Israelites under the Law gave them a standing before God which other nations did not enjoy.

As a nation, however, Israel “died” shortly after our Lord’s First Advent, losing the special blessings which God had promised them as a people. Nevertheless, the individuals comprising this nation continued to live, but because God no longer deemed them his holy nation, each generation of the Jewish people throughout the centuries has suffered to a greater or lesser extent. They have suffered because of being members of a nation that lost God’s exclusive favor and “died” in that sense.

There is a prophecy in which the Lord, using highly symbolic language, forecast the punishment which he would visit upon the Israelites because of

their iniquities. He states, “A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.”—Deut. 32:22

As noted, this is highly symbolic language, but it denotes the use of fire and speaks of “hell.” This is the Hebrew word *sheol*, the equivalent of the Greek word *hades* found in the New Testament. *Hades* is translated “hell” in the parable under consideration, and is used in association with punishments which Jesus warned that he would visit upon his people. Israel was indeed in *hades* throughout most of the Gospel Age—dead as a nation, just like the rich man. Individually, however, it has been different. During this same period, the Jewish people have almost continuously been persecuted, which, in the parable, is symbolized by the flames which engulf the rich man. Thus, the rich man of the parable who died denotes both the “dead” condition of the nation, as well as the resulting persecution and suffering of its people.

THE BEGGAR

The beggar, we believe, also symbolizes a group—not just one nation, but all non-Israelite peoples—that is, the Gentiles. So far as the promises and blessings of God were concerned, the Gentiles were a poverty-stricken people prior to the First Advent of Jesus. The Israelites themselves often referred to them as “dogs.” We note the Syrophenician woman, a Gentile, who asked Jesus for a blessing. He asked her if she thought it was proper to “take the children’s bread” and “cast it unto the dogs.” To this, she replied that dogs are quite willing to

eat the crumbs which fall from the children's table. (Mark 7:25-30) It is worthy to mention the similarity of these words to those of the beggar in the parable when he asked to be "fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table."

The incident involving Jesus and the Syrophenician woman serves as an illustration of the wide distinction between the standing of the Israelites at that time and the position of the Gentiles. However, a change was due. Beginning shortly after Pentecost, God visited the Gentiles. (Acts 15:14) Through the proclamation of the Gospel to them, they were given an opportunity to enter into his favor, and to rejoice in the hope held out in his promises to the faithful followers of Jesus.

This change of position is represented in the parable by the beggar being carried into Abraham's bosom. The believers among the Gentiles were now given the opportunity to embrace the faith of Abraham—that through his seed all the families of the earth were to be blessed. (Gal. 3:7-9,16,26-29) This does not mean that all Gentiles have embraced this Messianic hope—the Gospel of Christ which was first preached to Abraham. It simply indicates that there has been no discrimination against them from God's standpoint as there was when Jesus said to his apostles, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."—Matt. 10:5,6

THE FIVE BRETHREN

The rich man in the parable mentioned having five brethren to whom he wanted a message sent

concerning that which had befallen him. There were twelve tribes of Israel. In Palestine at the time of our Lord's First Advent, the great majority were of the former two-tribe kingdom of Judah and Benjamin. There were some of the other tribes there, but the majority of the other ten tribes were scattered among various nations, and did not have the same opportunity as the two-tribe group to hear the testimony of Jesus. We believe it is reasonable that the one "rich man" represents chiefly the two tribes then in Palestine, and that his five brethren symbolize those of the other ten tribes.

In this connection, the statement in the parable accredited to "Abraham" is significant. He said that these other brethren would not believe even though one should rise from the dead. How true this has been! Indeed, the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus has been one of the additional stumbling stones to unbelieving Israelites. The opposition of many Israelites in Palestine and in other nations to the teaching that Jesus was raised from the dead led to much persecution of Paul and others at the beginning of the Gospel Age.—Acts 4:1-3; 17:18,32

The words concerning one rising from the dead may have also pointed forward to the miracle Jesus later performed, as recorded in John, chapter 11, in which he raised Lazarus from the dead. This was not the symbolic Lazarus of the parable, but Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, all three of whom were close friends of Jesus. Here, too, although Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the Jewish leaders were not persuaded to repent or believe, but, in fact, redoubled their efforts to put him to death.—vss. 45,46,53

The parable states that a “great gulf” had been created between the symbolic rich man and the beggar—between unbelieving Jews and believing Gentiles. This has also been true. It has been impossible to bridge this gulf, although at times the suffering Israelites have appealed to Gentile believers to do something that might ease their sufferings, as symbolized by the drop of water for which the rich man asked.

As herein discussed, we believe this parable lends itself to a reasonable interpretation. As in all parables, every detail of the story may not fit the facts perfectly, but the general picture is there. A nation that was rich toward God died to that favored position, and, as a people, has suffered. By contrast, those considered by that nation as cast off from God and his blessings were given, as individuals, the opportunity to accept the Gospel as embodied in the oath bound covenant with Abraham. God has blessed all who have entered into their privileges along this line. To all such, “There is neither Jew nor Greek [Gentile], . . . for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”—Gal. 3:28 ■

*All glory to Jesus be given,
That life and salvation are free,
And all may be washed and forgiven;
Yes, Jesus has saved even me.*

2016 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, April 21, 2016.

“Let Brotherly Love Continue”

“Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.”

—Hebrews 13:1-3

THE BEGINNING OF THE

year is an opportune time to renew afresh our vows of consecration. It is also appropriate that we examine ourselves carefully as to our progress in the narrow way, and in the development of the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter counsels us to “give diligence” in adding the various attributes of Christian character to our foundation of faith, that we might make our “calling and election sure.” Only

“if these things be in you, and abound,” Peter says, can we expect to share an abundant entrance “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:8,10,11

Among the various “graces” Peter tells us we are to “add to” our faith, and

(Continued on page 36)

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(Continued from page 31) which must “abound” in our thoughts, words, and actions, is the quality of “brotherly kindness,” or brotherly love. (II Pet. 1:7) Love of the brethren has always been of vital importance throughout the Gospel Age, but it seems that now it is even more critical in order that we may maintain our steadfastness in the faith. As the present “harvest” period has hastened onward, the consecrated followers of Christ on this side of the veil have become fewer in number. This is not to our surprise, for it is God’s will that the body of Christ be soon completed, in order that the Messianic kingdom can be instituted for the blessing of mankind. With fewer numbers of brethren in our fellowship, it is all the more important that we draw together ever more tightly the cords which bind us together in brotherly love.

“As being yourselves also in the body.” These closing words of our opening text reveal the true meaning of the term “brotherly love” as used by the Apostle Paul in this passage of scripture. Simply stated, it is a love which we bear toward our fellow brethren in the body of Christ. In a natural body which functions normally, each member, or part, works harmoniously with every other member. When one part of the body suffers, the entire body suffers; and no member of a natural body deliberately inflicts injuries upon another member. So it should be in the body of Christ, and so it is in that body to the extent that brotherly love continues to operate among all its members.

Our text has a setting which suggests its special appropriateness for the Lord’s people at this end of the age. In the closing verses of the preceding

chapter, Paul gives a prophecy which is having its fulfillment in the world-shaking events of our day. He tells us that not only the symbolic earth, “but also heaven” is to be shaken. (Heb. 12:26) Today we stand in awe as we watch the fulfillment of this and other prophecies which tell of the shaking of both civil and religious systems in the earth.

We know from the Word of God that this shaking will continue until, as the apostle declares, the only things which will remain are “those things which cannot be shaken.” That “which cannot be moved” is the kingdom of Christ soon to be established. (vss. 27,28) It is our hope to receive a share in that kingdom, and to live and reign “with Christ a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4,6) With this prophetic lesson in mind, Paul then counsels those who desire to have a part in the heavenly phase of Christ’s kingdom to “let brotherly love continue.”

Brotherly love is a quality of character which seeks uniformly to bless and help, not merely when things are going smoothly for fellow members of the body. Just as importantly, it desires to act when our brethren need help the most. It is brotherly love which prompts us to “remember them that are in bonds.” We are to do this not only in the sense of wishing them well, but also with the same deep concern and determination to help as though we were in a similar position, “as bound with them.”

At the time this epistle was written, it was not an uncommon experience for some of the believers to be in prison, and to suffer adversity in other ways. Many of these Hebrew brethren to whom Paul wrote had endured “joyfully the spoiling” of their goods, and had been “made a gazingstock both by

reproaches and afflictions.” A true brotherly spirit had been manifest among them, in that those who had not been apprehended and punished became the “companions of them that were so used.” (Heb. 10:33,34) It was, no doubt, because of this that Paul uses the word “continue” in our text. They had displayed brotherly love toward those in the body, and his admonition was that they should continue doing so. In Hebrews 6:10,11, Paul tells this same group that “God is not unrighteous” to forget their “work and labour of love” in ministering to the saints. He encourages them to continue this program of sacrifice on behalf of the brethren with “full assurance of hope unto the end.”

BROTHERLY LOVE IN SUFFERING

Brotherly love is an essential element to bind the body members together, not only in their mutual joys, but also in their communion of suffering. The apostle explains that it was God’s will “in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” (chap. 2:10) These “many sons” are the fellow members of the body of Christ—his brethren. Paul speaks of them as “holy brethren,” and explains that Jesus is the “Apostle and High Priest” of their profession. (chap. 3:1) Thus, we are provided the added understanding that the “brethren,” the “many sons,” and the “body” members are also priests.

Priests, Peter explains, are those who offer up sacrifices. (I Pet. 2:5) As we put these thoughts together and associate them with Paul’s admonition to “let brotherly love continue,” there is no escaping the thought that Christian love is closely associated

with sacrifice. Sacrifice is to be the motivating principle which governs the heart of every follower of the Master, and which prompts to faithfulness in service to the brethren. Such sacrifice leads to death—as indeed it must before the Christian’s walk in the narrow way is finished.

This is in harmony with the Master’s own exposition on the subject of brotherly love. He said to his disciples, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you.” (John 13:34) We all know the manner in which Jesus loved us. It was a self-sacrificing love, a love that motivated him to sacrifice his life in order that we might live. His “new commandment” to us is that we love one another as he loved us—that our brotherly love be shown toward our brethren in the same self-sacrificing way. Christian love is more than an emotional sentiment of kind feelings toward our brethren. It is also an impelling force which manifests itself in unselfish devotion to a great cause. The great, common cause of all the fellow members of the body of Christ, and the cause of sacrifice in the interests of one another, is that all may receive an abundant entrance into the kingdom.

As Jesus delves deeper into the subject of love, he uncovers another heart-searching fact concerning it in the question, “If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?” (Matt. 5:46) We are loved—or should be—by our own brethren in Christ. At first glance it might appear that Jesus is here discounting somewhat the importance of his own “new commandment” to love our brethren, indicating that there is no

sacrifice involved, nor a particular reward, in loving those who love us.

There is a danger that we may adopt this viewpoint, and in our hearts and minds try to separate love from sacrifice. If we do this, the next easy viewpoint to embrace is that sacrifice is not essential in the Christian life, and that only love is required. Such reasoning is of the fleshly mind, not the new mind, and those overtaken in this thought will begin to go into spiritual decline.

However, the commandment Jesus gave us to love one another certainly does not imply that we love, and are willing to sacrifice on behalf of, only those who love us. Note the Lord's added explanation, "as I have loved you." Our love for one another is to be the same kind of love, and to operate under similar conditions, as Jesus' love for us. When we take this into consideration, the whole viewpoint of the new commandment is broadened considerably. Divine love through Christ was exercised on our behalf "while we were yet sinners," long before we were in a position to love him.—Rom. 5:8

God's will for consecrated followers of Jesus, whereby they exercise love toward one another upon the same basis as Jesus loved them, is outlined by the Master himself. He commanded his followers, including those living at this end of the age, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel for the purpose of making disciples. These disciples which are to be "made" through the ministry of the Truth become our brethren—for whom we have the privilege of sacrificing, even while they are still sinners, just as Jesus laid down his life for us before we came to him in faith.

LOVE DESPITE INGRAINED SIN

Not only did Jesus lay down his life for us while we were yet sinners, but his love continues after we hear and accept the call to follow in his steps. This is the case despite the many imperfections which continue with us and cause us many times to transgress the laws of righteousness. Therefore, if we love one another as he loved us, we will have a love that manifests itself for the good of our brethren even though there may be many things about them which may not be pleasing to us. Such blemishes in our brethren may, in fact, be a real trial to us.

In this connection, we are again reminded of the Master's assertion that if we love only those who love us, our love is not of a very high order, being merely on the same level as that of the "publicans." Jesus' expression, "them which love you," might well be broadened to mean those who are congenial to us, and whose ways of life do not irritate or vex us. It is easy to love these, and it is a pleasure to serve them. To love those among the brethren who are in this category is not, therefore, the final test of loving one another as Jesus loved us.

The quality of love which reached out for our salvation while we were yet sinners is a superlative expression of unselfishness. It is this example which we need to emulate in order to fully lay down our lives for the brethren, and to love them as Jesus loved us. We are to love all the brethren, and not merely those who take a special interest in us, or whose company we especially enjoy. This manifestation of love covers a "multitude of sins." (I Pet. 4:8) It helps us to esteem our brethren not according to

their outward appearance, but according to “righteous judgment.” (John 7:24) It extends mercy when our brethren fail, and a helping hand in their weakness. All this is implied in the words of our text, “Let brotherly love continue.”

LOVE—A MOTIVATING FORCE

Brotherly love is that great principle of unselfishness which each member of the body of Christ exercises toward every other member of the body. Consequently, it is the motivating force of all true Christian activity, and is a principle which must find expression in service if it is to remain alive. The Scriptures tell us that the “body of Christ” is a cooperative arrangement, set forth by God, for engaging in active service in the outworking of his plan. This is clearly shown to us by Paul in his lesson found in I Corinthians, chapter 12.

In this body, he explains, “there are diversities of operations,” or activities. (vs. 6) We note the emphasis on “operations.” When there ceases to be operation, or activity, that member of the body which becomes inactive must either be revived or else risk loss of his place in the body. In this remarkable chapter, the apostle emphasizes that there is given to each member of the body some special function of service, and that these all combine to accomplish the Lord’s will. One member cannot truthfully say to another, “I have no need of you.” (vs. 21) In the same way, no true member of the body can say to himself, “There is no service that I need to render, so I will just enjoy the benefits of the body, but not exert myself to do anything for the other members.”

Organized and continual activity is one of the important lessons of the “body” illustration. It is only in connection with Christian activity that brotherly love has an opportunity to function in a complete sense. Let us never think of brotherly love as being manifested merely in kindness of manner, or as a lofty platitude to be talked about in our meetings. God has set every member in the body as it has pleased him. (vs. 18) His purpose in giving us a place in the body at all is that we may actively function in whatever capacity he indicates is his will for us.

By way of contrast, inactivity is an unnatural state for any of God’s intelligent creatures. We are so constituted that we are truly happy only when we are active. However, the mere fact of being active is not sufficient. It is perhaps for this reason that in I Corinthians, chapter 13, Paul enhances his lesson concerning the active functioning of the body of Christ. He gives us the warning that without love as the motive, nothing we might do would have the Lord’s approval. In other words, we are not to think that all God is looking for in his people is that they be continually engaged in a frenzy of activity. He wants us to be active, but he wants us to be motivated in what we do by brotherly love.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,” writes the apostle, “and have not charity [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy . . . and have not charity [love], I am nothing.” (vss. 1,2) In the preceding chapter, Paul stated that some in the Early Church had been given the gift of speaking and interpreting other languages, or “tongues.”

Others had received the gift of “prophecy,” or public speaking. These were gifts of God, given by him to be used for ministering the Gospel of Christ. The apostle is not implying that it would be better to possess love than to use these gifts. Rather, he wants us to realize that even these gifts of God could be used selfishly—without love as their motivating force.

The miraculous gift of speaking with tongues, or other languages, did not continue with the church, but the gift of prophecy, or public speaking, has. Some may have this talent, and those who do should use it. Public speaking, as an activity of a body member of Christ, does not imply the necessity of addressing an audience from a platform. The most effective preaching is often done to an audience of one. Think of the wonderful sermon that Jesus preached to the Samaritan woman at the well. Regardless of what our opportunities may be, if we are overflowing with brotherly love, we will be using every possible occasion to speak of the loving-kindness of our God. Indeed, we will wish that we had “a thousand tongues to sing” our “great Redeemer’s praise!”

Verse 2 continues, “Though I . . . understand all mysteries, and all knowledge.” (I Cor. 13:2) Paul gloried in the fact that God had made known to him the “mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations.” (Col. 1:26) We rejoice also in our knowledge of that mystery today. How essential is a knowledge of the plan of God if we are to be acceptable coworkers with him. Yet the apostle hints here that it may be possible to possess this wonderful knowledge, and not hold it in love.

Brotherly love will cause us to proclaim the Truth to others. Not only will we want to do this, but we will be happy to have the effort cost us something—even the vitality of life. It is exactly this sort of love which we see exemplified in Christ. We have covenanted to follow in his steps, and to follow the pattern of living and dying which he shaped for us.

The apostle tells us that even a mountain-moving faith would not be of great profit to us spiritually, if unaccompanied by love. Indeed, we will need this sort of faith if we are active in God's service, for there will be many difficulties to overcome due to diverse trials that will be encountered. (James 1:2) Faith without love, however, will leave us as being "nothing" in the Lord's sight.

FEEDING THE POOR

When the rich young ruler inquired of Jesus the way of life, the Master outlined the terms of discipleship to him, explaining that he would need to sell all that he had and give to the poor. (Matt. 19:16-22) Paul alludes to this, yet emphasizes that even in doing this, unless love is the motive, it will profit us nothing. (I Cor. 13:3) Jesus told the young ruler that his profits would be great—that in sacrificing all his earthly wealth he would be laying up treasures in heaven. However, as Paul explains, this is true only in the case of those who give all their goods to feed the poor because of their love.

The most poverty-stricken people in the world today, and those who need our help the most, are those who are "poor in spirit," and who "hunger and thirst after righteousness." (Matt. 5:3,6) It is our privilege to feed these spiritually with the bread

of life, and to refresh them with the water of truth. This is what we will be doing with all that we have and are, as long as brotherly love continues to rule in our hearts.

Giving our bodies “to be burned” may be a reference to a heathen form of worship. We are inclined to think, however, that the apostle is speaking primarily of the privilege of presenting our bodies “a living sacrifice,” as mentioned in Romans 12:1. The typical picture of this privilege was shown by the offering of the “LORD’S goat” on Israel’s Day of Atonement, when the body of the goat was burned “without the camp.” (Lev. 16:9,27; Heb. 13:13) Here again, love must be the motive, else our sacrifices in the service of the Heavenly Father will profit us nothing.

THE BEHAVIOR OF LOVE

Love “suffereth long, and is kind,” says the apostle. (I Cor. 13:4) The way of love is a difficult one, a way of sacrifice and suffering. Selfishness as a motive might spur us on for a while, but there is no motive more powerful than love. Love will enable us to suffer long—yea, even unto death.

Herein also will come the need of love from the standpoint mentioned by Jesus—that we are to love one another as he loved us, even as sinners. He “suffereth long” in his love to us despite those things which are unlovable, and often contrary to his will. So it is to be also in our association with one another. Some of our greatest trials may come from our brethren, but love will enable us to endure these experiences and be longsuffering to one another.

The way in which we know that brotherly love is enabling us to endure and suffer long is shown by the words which immediately follow—“and is kind.” If we discover that we are dealing unkindly with our brethren, we may know that we are deficient in brotherly love. There can be no legitimate excuse for a Christian ever to be unkind. Let us not deceive ourselves along this line. If we are unkind, we may know that selfishness is still ruling to some extent in our hearts, or that we have been deceived by the spirit of the Adversary.

Love “envieth not,” Paul continues. Envy is a very subtle enemy of the New Creature, because we seldom show it in an outward manner. If we did, we would most likely recognize it immediately and be ashamed. Instead of announcing that we are envious of others, their position in the ecclesia, or special blessings they enjoy, we may be inclined to criticize them, calling attention to things they do which we think are wrong. We might emphasize that our ways would be much better. Thus, perhaps without recognizing our wrong course, we endeavor to debase those whom we envy, and exalt ourselves. This is not the way of brotherly love.

Love “vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.” Just as with envy, the fallen human heart is too cunning to openly boast about itself, and no Christian goes around announcing that he is “puffed up.” These conditions of heart and mind seem, rather, to manifest themselves in strange things which one says and does. A brother, for example, may manifest humility in his association with the Lord’s people for many years. He is meek and teachable. In time, the local ecclesia perhaps elects him to eldership.

Soon, however, a marked change is noticeable in the brother. He becomes opinionated and considers that his judgment is better than that of those who have been serving faithfully as elders for many years. At times he is almost arrogant in his insistence that he have his own way. In such a case, what has happened? He has become “puffed up,” and is no longer being governed by brotherly love. Indeed, an overly inflated attitude can cause brethren to act in unexpected ways. Thus, in the very next verse, Paul reminds us that love does not “behave itself unseemly”—that is, in such an unbecoming fashion.—I Cor. 13:5

Verse 5 continues, saying that love “seeketh not her own,” particularly her own way. Motivated by love, we have presented ourselves and all that we possess to the Lord. We have agreed to give up everything. If we have been sincere, we will not be concerned about what we feel are our “rights.” Every Christian should stand for right principles, but let us be sure that we do not make principles out of mere preferences.

Love “is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.” At no time in the history of the world have people been so prone to attribute evil motives to others as now. Every consecrated believer is surrounded by these influences, and nothing but a rich indwelling of brotherly love will prevent him from indulging in the same sin. We may get “provoked” at a brother or sister over what we suppose they have said or done. Then, unless we are on our guard, we will begin to think evil of them. Too often, thoughts of this kind are not based on anything except hearsay or surmising. It is always well to ask ourselves if

we actually know that the brother or sister truly said or did what we have supposed. Moreover, a rumor, or even what seems to be a definite report, is not sufficient grounds for thinking evil of a fellow body member. If the matter is serious enough, we should go to our “brother . . . alone” to find out for ourselves. (Matt. 18:15) In most cases, when this is done it will be discovered that the report was merely a misunderstanding, or as in some cases, idle gossip that has been passed on to us.

If our thinking is governed by brotherly love, our joy will be in the Lord, his truth, and his people, for love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.” (I Cor. 13:6) Let us examine our habits of thought. Are they wrongly seeking to find flaws and imperfections in our brethren? If so, we may know that we are severely lacking in brotherly love. Love rejoices in the Truth, and if that is the fountain of our rejoicing, we will see in our brethren the things which we love, and we will rejoice together with them in all those things which pertain to our common cause as fellow members of the body of Christ.

Love “beareth [covereth] all things,” even the imperfections of our brethren. Love “believeth all things,” not rumors of evil, but the good reports of our brethren, and their professions to be faithful to their consecration vows. Love “hopeth all things,” even when circumstances seem to present a dark picture. Finally, love “endureth all things.” (vs.7) How important this is, for only those who “endure unto the end . . . shall be saved” with that “great salvation; which . . . began to be spoken by the Lord.”—Matt. 24:13; Heb. 2:3

Having mentioned these many situations in which brotherly love should be depended upon to keep the Christian in the right way, the apostle makes a blanket statement by way of summary, adding that love “never faileth.” (I Cor. 13:8) It never falls from its position of importance. Love was essential in the Early Church, and is no less essential now. The gift of tongues was important then, but Paul said the need for it would “vanish away”—not so with love.

The importance of brotherly love cannot be over-emphasized, but we are not to suppose that it can take the place of other important considerations in the Christian’s life. It cannot take the place of sound doctrine, but it guides us in the proper use of doctrine. Love cannot take the place of activity in the Lord’s service, but it is the only motive for service which is acceptable to God.

We cannot limit brotherly love to those in the body whose natural characteristics may be especially pleasing to us. We are neither to restrict it only to those who may be in agreement with our understanding of the Truth in all its details. Those who may err from the Truth need our love even more than others, and often it is on behalf of these that we find our real opportunities for sacrifice.

Let us, dear brethren, at the beginning of this new year, resolve to more fully love one another, not merely in “word, . . . but in deed and in truth. (I John 3:18) Love is far more than merely something to talk about. Those who possess it do not need to tell others of their love. It will be manifested in self-sacrificing zeal on behalf of all the brethren, and in devoting time, strength, and means

to reach and assist all those who can be contacted through a proclamation of the Truth. “Actions speak louder than words,” and, if the tender voice of love is to be heard, there must be activity on our part which will cost us our lives before we reach the end of the way. May our prayer for 2016 be that we “let brotherly love continue” toward its full attainment in the body of Christ. ■

*Take my life and may it be
Lord, acceptable to thee;
Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of thy love.*

*Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in constant praise;
Take my intellect and use
Every power as thou shalt choose.*

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 Garry Gowryluk, Winnipeg, MB, Canada—
November 30. Age, 64

Brother Charlie Homolka, Casper, WY—December 11.
Age, 74

Sister Estelle Litzenberger, Abbotsford, BC, Canada—
December 11. Age, 99

Sister Beverly Montague, Highland Park, NY—
December 22.

Sister Oriliana Briganti, New York, NY—December
29. Age, 81

Sister Alicia Mazzone, Berazategui, Argentina—
December 31. Age, 70

Statistical Report

For the year ended September 30, 2015

THE DAWN IS pleased to provide this annual report to our readers. It has been a privilege to continue the work of spreading the Gospel message throughout the world during the past year, and we greatly appreciate the cooperation of many brethren in these efforts. As you read this report, we believe you will be confident, as we are, that it is the Lord's will that the spreading of the Gospel message during this present Harvest time continues. Accordingly, we are happy to report that our efforts in this work have expanded during the past year.

During 2015 the Dawn was able, by the Lord's grace, to increase its witnessing expenditures by 8% compared to the previous year. These increases comprised both domestic and foreign activities, including the categories of radio, television, electronic media, pilgrim service, printing, and shipping of literature. Total operating expenses, excluding contingencies, were 7% below budget. We had a net operating loss (excluding bequests and investment income) of (\$499,457) in 2015, compared to a 2014 loss of (\$442,185). The table which follows provides details of revenue and expenses for the 2015 fiscal year:

Income	Receipts	Expenditures
Revenue (excluding bequests and investment income)	<u>\$107,551</u>	
Expenses		
Radio (domestic and foreign)		\$ 107,795
TV (includes spots and recordings)		32,622
Internet and Other Media		67,057
Pilgrim Service (domestic and foreign)		22,986
Other Foreign Support		21,188
Shipping/Mailing (domestic and foreign)		85,198
Outside Printing		18,188
Shop Operating Expense		48,219
Plant Operating Expense		139,931
House Operating Expense		<u>63,824</u>
Total Expenses		\$607,008
Less Income	<u>107,551</u>	
Net Operating Loss	<u>\$(499,457)</u>	

We have budgeted to increase witnessing expenditures in 2016 by an aggregate of 15%, excluding contingencies, but to limit to no more than \$400,000 any reduction in total cash and reserves during the year, including contingency spending. Further increases in witnessing expenditures, beyond the planned increase noted above, will be considered if additional opportunities arise, and for which necessary resources are available.

We rejoice that the Gospel message, first preached by our Lord and the apostles, is still being declared today, and the continuing share we are privileged to have in that work. Indeed, the “most holy faith . . . once delivered unto the saints” is still proclaimed by faithful “workers in the vineyard” who are willing to sacrifice time and energy witnessing it far and wide.

The Dawn continues to utilize many types of media to proclaim the Gospel message—television, radio, commercial spots, audio and video recordings, the Internet, digital electronic media, YouTube, and a variety of magazine, almanac, and other printed media advertising, as well as our current inventory of many printed booklets and books. The importance of these combined efforts is attested to by the fact that many responses continue to be received. The Dawn processed thousands of literature orders during the past year from these responses. Individually, these ranged from orders of just one booklet in some cases, to orders for hundreds of pieces of literature in others.

We continued to increase our overseas and foreign language witness work during the past year. *The Dawn* magazine is now available in thirteen languages besides English. In total, literature offerings of various kinds are now available in seventeen languages in addition to English. We would like to express heartfelt thanks to all those who provide assistance with the translation work into these various languages.

The Dawn recorded lecture service and Dawn video service continue their work, and the Dawn web page brings in many requests for literature from around the world. In a recent development, we are currently in the process of implementing a mobile version of the web site for use on smart phones and tablets.

Hope booklets continue to be provided to funeral directors in the United States, as well as to individual ecclesias, bringing a message of comfort to those who have lost their loved ones in death.

In 2015 the Dawn continued its Internet keyword advertising on Google and Microsoft for thirty-nine booklets in English, twelve booklets in Spanish, eight booklets in French (two added in 2015), and three booklets in German. During the past year, the number of “clicks” to these keywords, which brings the user to the Dawn’s ad page for viewing, was over 375,000 for all languages combined. The viewing of these ads generated over 6,000 mail responses for booklets during the past year. In addition, booklets either downloaded or read online as a result of the same ads are estimated to have numbered in excess of 50,000. Specific totals on these are not presently available from our Internet Service Provider. Additional booklet offerings in all four languages are planned for 2016, as well as formatting web pages so that they will work with mobile devices.

Orders continue to come in for the reprinted *Daily Heavenly Manna and Songs in the Night* book, as well as the library edition of six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, including *Tabernacle Shadows*, all of which were completed three years ago. They are all hard cover with sewn bindings, and available at nominal prices.

In 2016, the Dawn plans to complete work on several new books and booklets in English. We also hope to print a new paperback French *Manna* for use in Cameroon, Africa. With the addition recently of translation help in Brazil, we have arranged for expanded work to be done with regard to translating and updating literature in the Portuguese language. Reprinting of other existing booklets and new literature will be done as the need arises and manpower resources are available.

During the past year, the activity of the Dawn Pilgrim service substantially increased. A total of eleven pilgrim trips were taken of varying lengths during the year by nine different brethren. One of these was a nearly four-week trip to Europe which included visits with hundreds of brethren. The Pilgrim department hopes to continue its expansion of this important service in the coming year.

Various improvements were made at the Dawn's facilities during the past year. At the Dawn Home, repairs to interior walls and ceilings, installation of new blinds, and interior repainting were done, some of which had been started in 2014. At the Dawn Plant, improvements to the roof's drainage system were made during the year to alleviate problems of freezing water, and resulting leakage, during winter months.

We continue to publish the *Digital Dawn* magazine, a service which began in 2014. Subscribers to the *Digital Dawn* receive an email each month which contains a link to open the latest digital edition. It is viewable on computers and mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones. In addition to all the material which appears in the printed *Dawn* magazine, the digital edition also contains direct links to booklets, "Bible Answers" videos, and "Frank & Ernest" audio programs. As an introductory offer, a free three-month subscription to the *Digital Dawn* is offered, and an annual subscription is available at a nominal cost. Email addresses which we receive from Internet keyword advertising responses are used to make the free introductory offer.

The *Digital Dawn* does not take the place of the printed *Dawn* magazine which most readers are used to receiving each month. However, it allows the magazine and its embedded links to be made available to a wide audience of readers in electronic format—something that is becoming increasingly popular among the public. It also provides a way of promoting *The Dawn* magazine to thousands of new readers who have provided their email contact information to us over a period of time. Over the long term, the *Digital Dawn* has the potential to attract many new readers and interested public by a “delivery” method which is growing in its usage among most people.

The Dawn’s YouTube channel, “The Dawn Magazine—Monthly Video,” is now in its second year of operation. Currently there are thirty videos posted on the channel, with more to be added in 2016. This method of presenting the message of truth is growing in popularity. During the past year, the videos were viewed over 1,500 times, for a total of nearly 9,000 minutes. Viewership came from sixty-two different countries during the year, with the largest numbers coming from the United States, Canada, India, United Kingdom, and Greece.

In summary, we are thankful for the many willing hands and hearts of brethren throughout the world which have assisted directly and indirectly with the work of the Dawn during the past year. Without this help, the work could not continue. We are excited about the prospects for 2016, and rejoice in the continued privilege of bearing witness to the Truth given to us by our Heavenly Father. We ask

for your prayers on behalf of the work of the Dawn, as daily we seek to proclaim the Gospel message throughout the earth, and strive to be good stewards over the opportunities which God's providence has made available to us. ■

“Pray for me, that words may be given to me when I open my mouth, to proclaim boldly the mystery of the good news [of salvation],

“For which I am an ambassador in chains. And pray that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly and courageously, as I should.”

—Apostle Paul

Ephesians 6:19,20, Amplified Bible

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JANUARY 7—“Speak evil of no man.”—Titus 3:2 (Z. '03-425 Hymn 267)

JANUARY 14—“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.”—I Corinthians 9:26 (Z. '03-421 Hymn 266)

JANUARY 21—“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”—Matthew 16:24 (Z. '00-118 Hymn 279)

JANUARY 28—“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”—Revelation 3:5 (Z.'97-16 Hymn 82)

General Convention Bulletin

July 16-21, 2016

THE 2016 GENERAL CONVENTION returns again to the facilities of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Air conditioned hotel-like rooms with private bathrooms in the Living-Learning Center (LLC), family-style air conditioned apartments with private bathrooms (APTS), and housing with two rooms sharing one bathroom (not air conditioned) in other facilities will be available on campus. A child may sleep on a bedroom floor at no charge if both beds are occupied.

All room and meal costs for children 12 years old or younger will be paid by the convention. In addition, 100% of the room and meal cost of those from ages 13 through 17 will be refunded if the young person attends at least 75% of the studies for his or her age group. This subsidy does not cover meals paid at the door.

The convention theme text is taken from Haggai 2:7, "I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come." Two dialogue sessions will be held on the topics, "Lest Ye Be Wearied" and "The Antiquity and Authenticity of the Old Testament." Special discourses will consider "The God of All Comfort" and "Current Events of 2016." A discussion will be held which examines the importance of taking personal responsibility for our lives and

General Convention Registration

330 Jasmine Road—Casselberry, FL 32707

E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com (407) 670-4189

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 15, 2016				
Saturday, 16th				
Sunday, 17th				
Monday, 18th				
Tuesday, 19th				
Wednesday, 20th				
Thursday, 21st				

Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals
or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts)

Check: private bath **or** shared bath
 double occupancy single occupancy
 interested in APTS

Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)

Address:

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.

B. Keith

<u>Australia</u>		Sydney	February 6
Anglesea	January 22-25		
Melbourne	29-31		

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

T. N. Alexander

Chicago, IL January 1-3

R. Goodman

Louisville, AL January 31

L. Griehs

Chicago, IL January 1-3
Phoenix, AZ 16-18

H. Montague

Phoenix, AZ January 16-18

J. Parkinson

Chicago, IL January 1-3

“So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”—Psalm 90:12

The Christian, in numbering his days, does not do so with a doleful or disconsolate sentiment, although he does so with sobriety. He counts the days as they go as so many blessings, so many privileges, so many opportunities to “show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light,” to render assistance to others in the pilgrim journey, and to develop in himself more and more of the character pleasing in the sight of God—to become more and more a copy of God’s dear Son.

—Daily Heavenly Manna, January 4

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.

CHICAGO CONVENTION, January 1-3—Prisco Community Center, 150 W. Illinois Avenue, Aurora, IL 60506. Contact A. Schneider. Phone: (847) 533-1874 or Email: secretary@chicagobible.org

PHOENIX CONVENTION, January 16-18—Drury Inn - Happy Valley, 2335 W. Pinnacle Peak Road, Phoenix, AZ 85027. Contact C. Humphreys. Phone: (480) 226-9076 or Email: christyscastles@gmail.com

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, January 31—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91605. Contact J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 438-1086 or E-mail: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 12-14—Holiday Inn Express, 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821. Contact K. Freer, 8012 Vintage Way, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Phone: (916) 967-0635 or Email: winnerwear@aol.com

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 5-7—Holiday Inn Orlando International, 5750 T. G. Lee Boulevard, Orlando, FL 32822. Phone: (407) 851-6400. Specify “Florida Bible Students” to receive special rate through February 25. Other information, contact R. Sconyers. Phone: (407) 923-8067 or Email: rsguitarman59@gmail.com

NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION, March 12,13—Holiday Inn Gulfport Airport, 9515 Highway 49, Gulfport, MS 39503. Contact: M. Costelli. Phone: (228) 861-2822 or Email: michael@simpkins-costelli.com

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, March 25-27—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 268-8170 or Email: srbt@juno.com

PAN-AMERICAN CONVENTION, March 25-27—The Presbyterian Women’s Centre, Akokobi, Legon, Accra, Ghana. Contact: H. Montague. Phone: (516) 485-1041 or Email: montags3ny@aol.com

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 16,17—Quality Inn of Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48003. Contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588 or Email: nemeshfp@aol.com

METRO DETROIT CONVENTION, April 30-May 1—Brighton Community Center, 555 Brighton Street, Brighton, MI 48114. Contact J. Kienast. Phone: (248) 496-5611 or Email: jenkienast@gmail.com

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, May 28,29—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91504. For room reservations (subsidized rate of \$55/night ending April 20), contact N. Nekora. Phone: (310) 454-5246 or Email: npnekora@aol.com. Other information, contact J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 438-1086 or Email: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com. Please place LABible in the subject line of the email.

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, June 12—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA. Contact R. Griehs. Phone: (267) 456-8889 or Email: rgriehs@gmail.com

*“They continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine
and fellowship, and in breaking of bread,
and in prayers.”*
—Acts 2:42